

WINTER NIGHT CONTINUED

deceptive. Meteorologists have worked out a rule-of-thumb estimate that one degree of cooling results from one knot of wind. So a temperature of minus 50, fanned by 40-knot winds of nearly constant duration at McMurdo Sound was tantamount to minus 90-degree weather as men worked in the open.

The two bases faced different problems during the winter night but they had one common denominator for grief—snow.

At Little America unloading operations had been rushed when the bay ice unloading platform began to break up in January 1956. As a result, sleds were loaded at shipside, rushed to the harrier and unloaded pell-mell in an effort to avoid losing cargo through breaking bay ice. While no cargo was lost through the ice the jumbled cargo at the offloading point was to cause grief throughout the long night. Electronic tubes were mixed with potatoes and panels. Electric wire was mixed with lumber and hair tonic. Byrd Station materials were blended with Little America operating supplies.

Before everything could be located and segregated the snows fell. Some items, like the mail-cancelling machine for Byrd Station, were recovered from be-

neath 16 feet of snow as late as October 1956. Other items will never be found. Among these are metal objects which, by their very nature, burrow themselves deeper and deeper into the 800-foot-thick ice barrier.

While many men searched for and segregated supplies, others got the 19-house city called Little America V completed, with an interlocking tunnel made of chicken wire and burlap connecting every building. Meantime two buildings comprising Kiel Field were put together, completed, and snowed under so that radars, radio antennas, and GCA antennas were all that showed above the snow when daylight returned.

By the time the thermometer read minus 78 there was little need for outdoor work at Little America. Tractors could be pulled inside (almost) the garage for maintenance before the long jaunt to Marie Byrd Land. Sleds with cargo for Byrd Station had been so loaded that four sleds carried four buildings, another carried utilities, five others carried fuel and other essentials which could be put to immediate use on arrival. Winnigans for cooking, eating, and sleeping occupied two of the twelve sleds.

Now, time to wait for trailblazers to arrive and locate a safe trail from Little America to Byrd Station.

GENG GRAHAM AND CDR WHITNEY (LEFT AND CENTER) CONFER ON CONSTRUCTION DETAIL, AT LITTLE AMERICA.

