

seeming timid manner one would expect in a mathematician. But like a mathematician he apparently does his bold adventuring in less fragile ~~ways~~ than language. A few sentences with him is a long conversation: but when it comes to being able to take it, there are few men even among this hard-bitten company who can approach him for stamina, physical strength, and pertinacity. He has the trunk and shoulders of a lumberjack, and we still talk of the ~~astounding~~ **astonishing** weights he heaved about when we were building Little America.

That's the manner of man who completed this splendid journey to Advance Base - who quietly declined to be discouraged by two failures - who blasted the ancient superstition that a protracted winter journey in the Antarctic is a bold invitation to disaster - and who finally fought his way through darkness, bitter cold, snow storms, overcoming the mechanical incertitudes of his vehicle, to the faintly burning light marking Advance Base. On the first unsuccessful attempt, when he was reluctantly obliged to ~~retreat~~ from 50-Mile Depot, he sat for nearly a day and a half on the hood of the tractor, directing Skinner, the driver, with a searchlight. The temperature was 71 degrees below here and colder, but the only time he left his post was to duck into the cabin for a few minutes to thaw out his face mask over a stove. Unlike his companions he hadn't the protection of fur pants. He is the biggest man on the expedition, and supply officer Corey couldn't fit him. Under his windproofs he wore ordinary woolen pants, none too skilfully patched.

The brief conversations with Advance Base late yesterday and this morning confirmed what we ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ learned shortly after midnight, Saturday: that Admiral Byrd was poisoned by fumes from his kerosene stove in June, that as a result of it he was so badly weakened he lacked the strength to give proper attention to the preparation of his food and the regulation of his diet. His stomach was constantly upset, and the odor of the fumes were so upsetting, together with his apprehensions he might again be overcome, ~~persuaded him to run~~ the stove as little as possible. The cold weakened him further, and as his strength diminished he found it an increasingly heavy tax upon his physical resources even to fulfill his household duties, and he was in ~~xxxxxx~~ his sleeping bag a good part of the time. For ~~wh~~ a while he thought his strength was slowly mending, but in July he had another setback and after that his ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ health steadily sank.

The conversations confirmed, too, what we had already known: that he was too proud to call for help and expose men to the risk of a winter journey on his behalf alone. Even in his direst ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ extremity ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Byrd held to his personal code of honor and to the code of his profession. To repeated questions from your correspondent, who ~~talked~~ talked to him twice a week over radio telephone, as to the state of his health, he persistently and steadily replied: "ok - ok - ok". No matter how often the

question was repeated, nor how it was framed, he never changed his answer.

Still, for some time it was evident something was wrong. Your correspondent has had a long and intimate acquaintance with Admiral Byrd: and as these conversations progressed during June and July he sensed, more through intuition than anything else, that something had gone wrong at Advance Base. However, before leaving for Advance Base in March Dr. Poulter had left definite instructions with Dr. Poulter that under no circumstances was a journey to the base be attempted unless he called for it.

On June 28th

~~Early in July~~ Dr. Poulter took up with Admiral Byrd a request for permission to make a tractor trip to Advance Base in connection with meteor observations. We had previously disclosed to him that the tractors were being overhauled and equipped with wooden superstructures which would give the crew adequate protection against cold, and this had tempted him, ~~xxxxxx Dr. Poulter~~ as we had hoped it might, to ask Poulter how soon he thought a southern journey might be attempted, after the light grew better. Poulter ~~replied~~ he didn't want to wait for the sun: that he was anxious to get two observers out there in time for August meteor showers, and that he was ready to attempt the trip during the moon period toward the end of July.

would be

Admiral Byrd assented to the plan, saying he ~~was~~ eager to return to Little America in time to take active direction of spring preparations. "I'm mighty glad the sun has started back," Admiral Byrd remarked towards the end of that conversation. "What I miss most of all is light as I can only use a lantern on account of fumes."

Here at Little America preparations for the trip were pushed at full speed. The details were discussed over radio telephone with Admiral Byrd, and he responded by telegraph. His solicitude was entirely for the welfare and safety of the party. Repeatedly he warned Poulter under no circumstances to take any chances with the lives of the men: and under no circumstances to lose the trail. That meant that if the flags marking the original southern trail couldn't be found, the party was to retreat to Little America, rather than risk adventuring through a heavily and dangerously crevassed area.

The first attempt was made July 20. After stubbornly persisting past 50-Mile Depot, in the coldest temperatures of the winter, the party, which comprised Poulter, Skinner driver, Waite radio operator, and Petersen and Fleming meteor observers, found that for a distance of five miles to the east the flags were wholly buried, and in light of Byrd's instructions, Poulter had no alternative but to withdraw.

the determination of reaching Advance Base if they had to walk.
by two observers for Advance Base in the tractor, although he wanted those meteor observations badly. Extra men meant extra weight, extra rations and equipment, extra hazards.

The oppressive thing here was not knowing: not being sure Byrd was in distress: not knowing whether to trust to intuition and fly in the face of his instructions. In the end it was decided it was better to err on the side of honor and affection rather than prudence.

Poulter, Demas, and Waite were ready to leave July 30th, having been preparing since the return of the first tractor: but weather was uncertain and Haines, the meteorologist, advised delay. On August 1 we unexpectedly reestablished contact with Advance Base. "Where is tractor?" Byrd asked. "I have heard nothing for days".

Apparently he had misunderstood us to say it had already left. Our telephoned reports, he said, he could barely hear - "only a few words". He repeated that he would keep the light burning on top of his shack, repeated that constant phrase: "take no chances with lives of men", and signed off, saying: "sorry to be so much trouble - will try to hear you again - then see you tomorrow."

He didn't come on next day, but on the following day reported in, saying he was trying to repair the receiver and advising the light would be kept burning. Over and over again we reported to him the tractor was making ready for a fresh attempt - that it would leave as soon as Haines' gave the word on weather.

The second start was made August 4. On the 5th we were in contact with Byrd again. Directly he came on the air he asked where the tractor was. We reported it was having difficulty finding a passage across Amundsen Arm. He then slowly sent a message about exercising caution and not taking chances with the men which at first we had difficulty deciphering. When we asked him to repeat - these questions were framed over and over again to be heard through the defect in his receiver - the answer was a long time coming: and it said: "haven't strength to crank more."

It was a dismaying thing to see in black and white: and your correspondent asked him again and yet again - at least fifteen times - are you ill - have you been hurt - are you in distress - to which the only answer was: "please don't ask me to crank any more - thanks".

That was all, but it was enough. Our apprehensions and the lingering, uncertain whispering of intuition were all seemingly confirmed. A message was dispatched to Poulter on the trail. Mechanical failures drove him and his two men back to Little America for repairs - but when they cleared again and pointed that vehicle into the black tide of night, it was with