

# Oceanographers Prepare to Sail

A&M oceanographers are preparing to probe the depths of the Drake Passage in the Southern Ocean.

Dr. Dale Leipper, head of the Department of Oceanography and Meteorology, has announced two National Science Foundation-sponsored projects currently underway to gain physical and biological data in the 1,000-mile wide ocean passage that flows between the tip of South America and the Antarctic.

Argentine scientist Luis Capurro, who is a part-time staff member of the A&M Research Foundation, will take surface and deep current measurements in the Drake Passage under a \$28,300 continuation grant from the NSF.

A study of the primary life-giving food elements—so essential in the Southern Ocean homewaters of the whales—will be conducted by Dr. Sayed Z. El Sayed, assistant professor at A&M, aided by a \$26,200 NSF grant.

Dr. Sayed will join with Capurro, who is captain of the Argentine Navy vessel, "Capitan

Canepa," to conduct the dual-research project. The ship is scheduled to leave its Cape Horn port at Ushuaia on Deception Island late in February.

Capurro's investigations are expected to shed more light on the deep water circulation between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans as well as the flow of Antarctic water that is drained from that frigid region to the South American coastlines.

There is no counterpart in the Northern Hemisphere of this "bottleneck" where waters of three ocean currents flow and counterflow in such a restricted area. Surface currents will be measured by a geomagnetic electrokinetograph, while Swallow floats, preset to various depths, will radio deep current movements to the A&M researchers.

El Sayed and his research assistants will study phytoplankton—minute sea plants drifting in the sea—and zooplankton—minute animal life in the ocean. Both are vital components of the life food chain for all fish and whale life in that region.

He is especially interested in the lower elements in the life food chain. Because the Antarctic birds, fish and whales depend on the phytoplankton for food, it is important to gain some knowledge concerning the seasonal, geographical and vertical distribution of the plankton, and the factors that regulate primary production, he said.

El Sayed plans to use both Carbon 14 and pigment analysis methods in his studies. Data gathered in this study will be integrated with other physical and chemical measurements that collectively will tell more about the variations in geographical distribution of phytoplankton of the Antarctic waters.

"Because of the abundance of fish living here, due to this pyramid of chemicals and plankton, the region is one of the greatest fishing areas of the world," he added.

A native of Egypt, El Sayed's research workers will collect his phyto and zoo plankton specimens while Capurro takes measurements



### Seeking Data

Dr. Sayed El Sayed, researcher in the Department of Oceanography, will join with Capt. Luis Capurro of Argentina, another A&M research staff member, in oceanographic research in the Drake Passage. He is pointing to the passage between the southern tip of South America and the Antarctic, where their ship will sail this year.

of the current flows. They will work in cooperation with the Marine Biological Institute and other institutions in Argentina.

El Sayed expects to complete some of this research aboard the Capitan Canepa, but most of his zooplankton specimens will be brought to the campus for laboratory analysis.

Capurro is the chief hydrographer for the Argentine Navy, a graduate of Argentina's Naval School, and holds an M.S. degree in oceanography from the University of California's Scripps Institution. He was a research scientist on campus from 1959-1961.

Degrees in zoology and oceanography from the University of Alexandria, Egypt, were earned by El Sayed before he came to the United States in 1952 as a Ful-

### Articles Published

Three articles about academic requirements and instrumentation in oceanography have been published by A&M oceanographers.

Roy Gaul, research oceanographer, is co-author of "Oceanographic Requirements vs. Instrumentation Capabilities" in the January issue of the I.S.A. Journal published by the Instrument Society of America. He wrote the article with J. J. Schule Jr., U.S. Navy Hydrographic Office.

Dr. Louis S. Kornicker, associate professor of oceanography, discusses "Inland Education of Oceanography" in the AIBS Bulletin published in December by the American Institute of Biological Sciences.

"Oceanography — A Definition for Academic Use" is the title of an article by Dr. Dale Leipper, oceanography and meteorology department head, in the December quarterly issue of the Transactions, American Geophysical Union. In it he discusses the contributions of the basic sciences and their interrelationship with oceanography, an "object" science.

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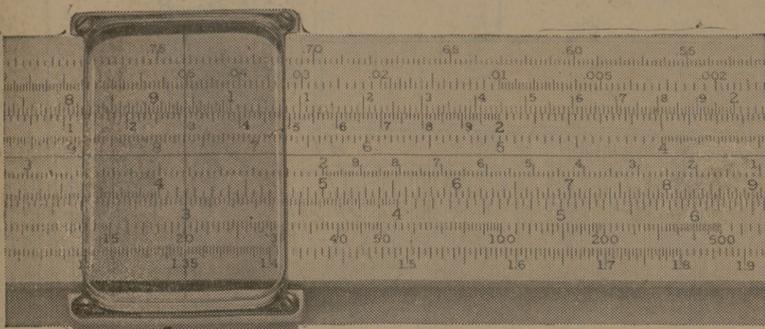
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