

from his observations on marine currents, and was discovered by him in 1930. The recent party found that it was half as large again as was shown on existing maps.

SPECIAL WORKING CONDITIONS IN THE FAR NORTH OF THE U.S.S.R.

[Summarised from the text of instructions issued by the People's Commissariat of Finance and the All-Union Central Committee of Trade Unions on the application of the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., dated 1 August 1945: "On Privileges for Persons Working in Regions of the Far North; *Vedomosti Verhovnogo Soveta* (Moscow) 20 August 1945, and *Sobraniye Postanovlenii i Rasporyazhenii Pravitelstva S.S.S.R.* (Moscow), No. 9, 31 October 1945; No. 10, 30 October 1945.]

There have recently been awarded special privileges for certain categories of people working in the Far North of the U.S.S.R. The term "Far North" includes all islands in the Arctic Ocean and adjacent seas, besides specified areas of the mainland. The privileges are in the form of increased pay (a 10% bonus on basic rates), increased leave and free return travel for the worker, and certain facilities for his family. In the calculation of pension rights one year's service in the Far North is to count as two years elsewhere. Leave may be accumulated for three years but may not exceed six months total, including one month's travelling time. Accumulated leave beyond six months and any other leave not actually taken, will be compensated by additional pay.

The purpose of the awards is presumed to be some compensation for the enforced isolation and for the severity of conditions. It is not clear, however, whether the awards are intended to attract labour to these new pioneer areas, or are designed primarily to mitigate conditions for members of the various classes of directed labour which are listed. The privileges are not available for those directed to work in the Far North for periods of less than a year, nor for those recruited locally, nor for those under sentence.

Since the inception of the scheme further areas have been defined in which privileges are applicable but with lower percentage benefits and lesser periods of leave.

THE KURIL ISLANDS (CHISHIMA)

In a broadcast speech of 2 September 1945, Marshal Stalin stated that the Kuril Islands and Southern Sakhalin would pass to the Soviet Union to serve "not as a means of isolating the Soviet Union from the ocean and as a base for a Japanese attack on our Far East, but as a means of direct communication for the Soviet Union with the ocean and as a base for the defence of our country against Japanese aggression". This constituted the first announcement of the terms of the secret agreement reached at the Yalta Conference on 11 February 1945, which were subsequently published as a White Paper on 11 February 1946.¹

¹ *Agreement concerning the Entry of the Soviet Union into the war against Japan*. Miscellaneous No. 4 (1946). Cmd. 6735. H.M. Stationery Office, London.