

All Barges Arrive at Prudhoe Bay

LOS ANGELES, OCT. 3—The last unit of a fleet of 15 ocean-going barges, laden with vital equipment for development of Alaska's Prudhoe Bay oil field, arrived late last night at Prudhoe Bay after a dramatic voyage across 180 miles of icy water passage from Point Barrow, Atlantic Richfield Company announced here.

"We are greatly pleased at the successful movement of the barges to Prudhoe Bay under abnormally challenging conditions," said Louis F. Davis, vice chairman of Atlantic Richfield. "Now, we are no longer dependent upon a 1976 sealift for having field production ready at 600,000 barrels per day for the trans-Alaska pipeline as scheduled in mid-1977."

The unusual contingent reached its destination during the past two days behind the path-breaking of the Coast Guard Icebreaker Burton Island and the Cutters Citrus and Storis.

Promptly on arrival, the huge barges, towed in by 15 tugboats,

were maneuvered toward positions that would facilitate unloading of their cargo. Lightering barges began transferring equipment so that the principal barges could be brought into the shallow waters of the Prudhoe Bay dock for unloading there.

Sophisticated rigging gear, heavy duty crawlers and lift equipment were on hand for off-loading large building modules and a variety of other heavy cargo.

Oil field flow stations, a gas reinjection plant and an electrical generating system are among the facilities to be installed at the Prudhoe Bay field with the newly arrived equipment.

After assembly from points as far away as Seattle and Houston, the barge fleet had taken position in late July west of Point Barrow, anticipating the annual summer movement of the arctic ice pack out to sea. This moving allows a clear water route on to Prudhoe Bay taken by similar barge fleets each summer for the past eight

years.

Unusually adverse weather patterns, however, kept the ice generally shore bound beyond the normal breakup period. Early last month, a brief opening permitted 10 barges to be brought through to Prudhoe.

On Saturday, Sept. 27, following a weather shift that moved the ice pack out accompanied by favorable forecasts, the 15 barges still maneuvering in standby positions were moved ahead past Point Barrow, then continued on to their destination.

It is anticipated, a spokesman said, that most of the tugboats will return westward beyond Point Barrow and ultimately back to their home ports. Those remaining at Prudhoe Bay, along with all the barges, will be kept in safe moorings for the winter.

Some three weeks ago, 19 barges, carrying general cargo, were directed back to Seward, Alaska, for movement of the equipment by railroad and truck to Prudhoe Bay. Some of this material has already arrived at Fairbanks and at Prudhoe Bay.