

TRANSPORT AIR

A Pilot on the Ground

I am 30 years old, and am, by profession, a civil aviation pilot. I have been flying in the North for seven years and am very fond of my work. I have a family, with two children. I shall not write about the harsh working conditions in the North: everyone knows about them. But why make them even harsher?

I live at a hostel, in a room 9.6 square metres in area, with a common kitchen for four families. One neighbour, also a pilot, lives in the same type of miserable little room along with two children. Another neighbour, a navigator, has one child. Not long ago, we too had an addition to the family. You yourselves will understand that our room is filled with babies' cries, diapers, an older son who goes to school and never gets enough sleep, and a high-strung wife. Any kind of rest is entirely out of the question. No matter - tomorrow you have another flight to do; there are the passengers seated behind you, and you have to get them to their destination, making sure that in the process you observe "flight safety and a high level of service".

This is the way things are with most of the fliers in our Magadan Integrated Air Unit. And we are not alone. When a transport accident happens, one cause often named by the investigating commission is domestic disorder and overstressed nerves.

I do no dispute the fact that much is being done in aviation to keep flying safe. Studies are