

fleets. This may be explained, in part, by increasingly expensive materials and machinery. This, however, only partially accounts for the increase, while the designers, who literally "tie up" the project with artful designs calling for expensive equipment, must bear responsibility for the increase in the cost of ships. This is particularly evident in the large-capacity passenger fleet. The Leningrad Central Technical Design Office of the Ministry of Inland Water Transport has exclusive rights for designing large-capacity passenger ships. So what happens? Even if we were to look at the "Dem'yan Bednyi" once more, for all of its outward splendor, its speed of 20 kilometres per hour leaves something to be desired. Instead, it is equipped with automatic doors in its salon and corridors while lacking living quarters for the crew and storage space for bed linens.

Nor can we leave untouched the problem of replacing the high-speed fleet. The passenger lines in our Lena, Kolyma, Yana and Indigirka River Basins cover more than 34 thousand kilometres, but 90% of the more than 320 stops do not have special moorings. The Lena-Steamship Line clearly needs ships which can travel at high speeds and which are also capable of mooring at shores lacking the proper facilities. However, the Ministry of Inland Water Transport does not possess such vessels. The air cushion motor ship "Luch", in our estimation, is not capable of working under the conditions found in the Lena River Basin. So, what does this leave? Of all the ships being built today, the most suitable is a motor vessel equipped with hydrofoils, of the same type as the "Poles'e", constructed by the Gomel' shipyard, but even that ship requires special moorings. Once again we have been done out of our fair share. It is obvious that in order to even try