

"Something else," Sorokin continues. "The transport of hundreds of tons of cargo has to be strictly regulated. Some operations you would like to get a good jump on. But for people living on the ice you need an autonomous support system. After all, the ice could break up at any moment. Deliveries would be halted. People would be left with just what they have. For this reason, every airplane arriving at the camp must carry a full assortment of cargo. Making this happen is far from simple."

"Is it possible to save money?"

"Yes, if we had more manoeuvrable aircraft that used less fuel. The An-74 is good. I cannot understand why Aeroflot to this day has still not accepted this jet aircraft, which has shown itself to be excellent in the Arctic and Antarctic."

I noticed that the geologists speak about themselves little and reluctantly. Sorokin is no exception. He is from Leningrad, is a geophysicist, and graduated from the Leningrad Mining Institute. He is 38 years old. He spent ten years in Yakutiya "working on diamonds", and was head of a detachment and a geological party. He became the head of the High Latitude Expedition last year.

"Drifting ice is a constant risk," he said.

"Last year at the end of the season the ice island broke up. We had completed most of the work, but we still had to move our base, which cost us almost 700,000 rubles. We found a suitable piece of ice which, fortunately, was not very far away. We went through the deployment stage again. The formation of ice hummocks is primarily a danger to the equipment. A tractor or airplane could be lost. It's much less a risk for humans. And yet, last year one fellow fell into the water. Fortunately, he was in full