

And so, the delivery contract was not met; an emergency convoy that had no success turned into a massive cost increase. I would not hazard a guess as to whether the purchasers' request to engage a shallow-draft ice breaker in the operation in the estuary would have helped--that is a matter for the experts. But this will not get us to the root of a complicated situation that was unpleasant for everyone concerned. Why, indeed, was it only after the close of the shipping season, during which everything that is required in the Far North is shipped there, that the Chukotka construction workers sounded the alarm?

It turns out that enough cement was delivered to Chukotka--the imported BS-12 - 1958 brand. According to a finding of "Stroimaterialintorg" [Building Materials Import] Combine, the cement that was furnished "met GOST requirements and could be equated with the Soviet 400 brand." The cement had been tested. Then when the shipping season had ended and everything had frozen, the Ferroconcrete Scientific Research Institute of Gosstroï USSR concluded that it was not possible to use the imported cement in the Far Northern environment.

This cement, however, had been shipped to Chukotka previously. How does it come about that no one had come to the realization that it was unsuited to local conditions sooner? "No," S. Erkhan declares, "we immediately began saying that the imported cement was not suited to our frosts."

"As early as April," recalls Yu. Shipulenko, "we began bombarding the head of Magadanglavsnaab with telegrams urgently requesting that Chukotka construction organizations be supplied with 500 brand cement. In fact, laboratory research on the cement we had on hand revealed its zero-value frost resistance. But we did not receive the necessary construction material during the open shipping season."