

newspapers we picked up at the air terminal news stand, are packed in barrels, with parachutes attached. This is an invention of the "Sever" expedition leader, Vladimir Kiselev. A young successor to Shmidt (for the first leader of this expedition was the illustrious Otto Yul'evich Shmidt), he has already crossed the Antarctic and managed to do a lot of useful work in the Arctic. Now Kiselev and his assistants are preparing the drop.

The plane flies over the station. What an expansion! Last year, at about the same time, I witnessed its unloading. Then there were just a few houses. Now it is an entire settlement.

That was a range-finding flight, and now the actual drop starts. At the blast of a siren, the door is opened and a barrel placed on its edge. The navigator waves his hand and over it goes. "How is the drop?" "Perfect!" This is repeated eight times, for there are eight barrels.

And now to find the ice-floe.

- Vacilii Semenovich, what are the criteria for choosing an ice-floe?

- It has to be many years old - the older the floe, the thicker, and therefore the stronger it is. The surface features of such ice-floes have been known for a long time: their hummocks have become smooth, taking on a soft, oval appearance, there should be lakes (frozen by now, of course) and even small river courses. They are bright blue in colour. The surface layer of such ice-floes consists of fresh water. This too is important, because a station needs a lot of water.