

The route that was worked out stretched along the Arctic Kolyma and the East-Siberian Sea, crossing the Malyi Chaunksii Strait. There had been no navigation here previously -- the depth is insufficient for sea ships, while river navigation workers had not yet ventured to confront the unknown.

And then the experimental voyage began, under the leadership of the preceptor of steamship navigation Captain A. Mikheev and the Headquarters for Marine Operations of the Eastern Section of the Arctic. Without assistance, the ballasted "Sibirskii-2130" crossed Kolyma, passed the polar sea and reached the Chaunskaya Bay -- Port Pevek. There, 2800 tons of general cargo were loaded into the holds. For the return passage, the ice-breaker "Ivan Moskvitin" piloted. The weather was not indulgent with us, the thickness of open-pack ice reached the 3-6 mark, sea disturbance was 2-3, and the wind force was 12-14. These are tough conditions for an experiment. And yet it was carried out quite successfully.

On board of "Sibirskii 2130" during the voyage were Yu. Dolzhenko, Head of the Lenskoe Basin Administration of Waterways, M. Spiridonov, Head of Navigational Inspection, and an expedition of scientists from the Moscow State University. Joint analysis demonstrated that the time has come to change the existing arrangement of cargo delivery or to work out a new one. The fact is that coastal navigation across the Malyi Chaunskii Strait makes it possible to begin navigation almost a month earlier than usual. And the effect that "Sibirskii's" can transport cargo in both directions without extra trans-shipments, greatly reduces the cost price of the delivery. In May-June 1989, scientists from the Moscow State University will investigate the