

Committee of the District Soviet of People's Deputies; telephones ring off the hook at the civil aviation directorate in Tyumen.

"If it's impossible by plane, give us a helicopter," people nag inside the enterprise commander's office.

What can one answer? That civil aviation switched to cost accounting effective January 1st? That the collective loses 477 rubles 50 kopecks for every flight hour that the Mi-8 helicopter is used to transport passengers? They just wouldn't understand...

There's no choice but to abandon the plan and cost accounting, remove the Mi-8s from service and use them to fill in the latest gap in passenger service. Fill in, while mentally calculating losses. Last year, for example, the losses amounted to nearly 700,000 rubles, and that's a very rough estimate.

The introduction of a double fare for the transport of passengers via helicopter might help rectify the situation somewhat. But USSR Ministry of Civil Aviation Edict No. 91 of 6 May 1986 permits use of a double fare only if there is no runway or when roads are in bad condition.

I do not wish it to be inferred that I am proposing to correct our problems at the passenger's expense. Even with a double fare, we still lose 215 rubles of potential profit per hour. This is with full seat occupancy in both directions, which rarely occurs in the Polar Regions. So it is unlikely that someone would resort to helicopters if An-2 aircraft were available to transport passengers. This is why