

Or take the crew of the NMS-37 oil spill cleanup vessel. Its harbour fleet is maintained entirely at the expense of the other ships, we don't receive any subsidies for it. And we don't need State money. If the fines collected from polluters of the bay were not forwarded to some abstract address but were used to solve ecological problems, this would be another matter entirely.

We are, of course, attempting to find additional cargo for the fleet to carry. If we sit idle from one navigation season to another - and our navigation season is short - the harbour fleet will simply go to ruin. For this reason, we are actively leasing our ships. The tug 'Kapitan Belomestnov', for example, has concluded an agreement with a ship repair plant of the Kamchatka Steamship Line.

Q. "Chukotka has begun participating in the lighter program. How is this program working at the port of Provideniya?"

A. We are working with two barge carriers - the 'Alekssei Kosygin' and 'Sevmorput'. Generally speaking, this program is working well both for us and for the crews, who have virtually no idle time ashore. For our part, we have constructed a lighter holding base in the port, so we are awaiting their arrival. By the way, the nuclear powered 'Sevmorput' is due to open the current navigation season. Unlike certain other ports, we are not afraid of this ship, we understand that the stories about possible radioactive contamination are greatly exaggerated. In my opinion, this is a good, reliable ship, and it will have a big future in the Arctic."

Q. "And finally, one last question: what does the up-coming navigation season mean for the collective of the harbour fleet?"