

"Elementary competition," said Sorokin, obviously pleased with his deal. "Monopolies are the death of enterprise. But competition... It isn't so much a matter of saving money, although that is important, but you get better service."

Once the world's northernmost airport is open, An-12 aircraft arrive daily, one after another. While the airdrop of equipment on freight platforms was carried out by pilots of the Antonov Design Bureau at Kiev, the remainder of the air operations are the responsibility of the Krasnoyarsk Civil Aviation Administration. The biggest portion of the money - one and a half million rubles - goes for transporting the freight. Only half of this amount is due to the cost of the light aircraft: four An-2 aircraft and 3 MI-8 helicopters, which fly directly to the camp. The 200-member party on the ice consists of 120 in the aviation group, 60 workers from "Sevmorgeo" and 20 from outside. The camp itself costs 600,000 - 3000 per person - for construction of the landing strip, gasoline, diesel fuel, foodstuffs, shelter...

"What's the most difficult thing?"

"The pace of the expedition is very fast. If you've forgotten something in Leningrad, consider it lost. The work is extremely intense."

April is the only suitable time for the High Latitude Expedition. There's lots of light - the polar summer is on its way. There are no storms, visibility is excellent. There's the sun, but still you have the cold - minus 30, minus 40 degrees. At the beginning of May it gets warmer, fog appears, and the bad weather becomes more frequent - the arctic idyll comes to an end.