

On Hay, Bricks and Millions

(Changes in Transportation Patterns)

To an article under the above heading (Vodnyi transport, November 25 1989), our newspaper received a reply signed by deputy chief V. Leshchenko of the Main Administration of Shipping and Ship Repair Establishments of the USSR Ministry of the Maritime Fleet.

In the reply it is stated that the total volume of shipments by sea to the port of Tiksi, the Yana and the Indigirka rivers during the years of the 12th Five-Year Plan has constantly decreased. In 1986 shipments into these regions from the west and the east totalled 276 thousand tons, in 1989 - 169 thousand tons and from orders received for 1990 - 120 thousand tons.

Besides the drop in the absolute volume of supplies to the regions of the Extreme North, the expansion of shipments in the form of mixed railroad-river traffic by ships of the Lena United River Steamship Agency (LORP) from the port of Osetrovo caused a reduction in the flow of freight along the Northern Sea Route. The ever increasing volume of general bulk and bulk-oil freight for the needs of the economy and the population of regions gravitating towards the Lena River, and in recent years - the Indigirka, Yana and other rivers - is being transported by the ships of LORP.

For an objective evaluation of the facts presented in the article it is necessary to take into account that local products cannot be substituted for specific types of goods which either don't exist in this region or are not extracted or produced here. Gravel was delivered from Murmansk to Tiksi for the express purpose of especially important construction work, since the local variants did