

River and storming its shining shores washed by melted ice. This was all part of the National Demonstration Competition of amateur cross-country vehicles with low-pressure pneumatic tires.

This fantastic parade included light framed three-wheelers, almost like grasshoppers, more solidly built four-wheelers with closed cabins - or without - and mysterious six-wheeled constructions resembling some of the vehicles used on the Moon. Mixed variations were also allowed, such as two wheels and a front ski, says our Tass correspondent.

To look at, they appear to be very simple constructions built from handy materials. "We get most of what we need from dumps," said the winner of the two previous competitions, N. Sych from Nadym, half-jokingly. However, specialists regard it as the technology of tomorrow, providing auxiliary transportation for the tough conditions of this region.

"The North is full of powerful mostly tracked vehicles such as the GAZ-71, the URAL and other large vehicles, but there are no small satisfactory cross-country vehicles for individual use", says one of the organisers of the show, N. Shapiro, section head of the VILS Association. "The volume of Burans snowmobiles produced is patently insufficient, just over 10 000 a year; secondly, they are highly specialised and not very reliable. Finally, they guzzle fuel at the rate of 30 litres per 100 km. Any one of the amateur custom automobiles at the show used a third of the amount!

The inventors are amateurs who one way or another have been involved with all-terrain vehicle technology for about 15 years. However, during the