

ARCTIC DEVELOPMENT

Need For Better Co-operation In The Arctic

"To the sea, to the sun - by airplane!" This palm-tree embellished billboard on the road to "Domodedovo" really amused my companion.

"That's us", laughed Aleksandr Viktorovich Borodko, chief of the expedition of the Moscow Aerogeodesic Enterprise. "I can't promise any palm trees, but I can promise unlimited sea and sun."

There will be nothing of the exotic in my notes. People go to the Arctic to get things done. A half century ago the job was to subjugate previously inaccessible points, today it is time for the industrial development of the northern sea.

To many this will sound unusual, even fantastic. What is there to get here, but ice and salt water? And if there is something to be got, then how? Even those who had worked in the North were asking such questions until relatively recently. It was known that both the Arctic shelf and deep waters were rich in mineral deposits. But to develop them and to transport the yield seemed scarcely possible or at least unprofitable.

But it suddenly turned out that today little time passes between the expression of an idea in science fiction and its technical development. Just a while ago we smiled sceptically at the idea of towing icebergs as reservoirs of fresh water, but now we find nothing impossible about proposals to extract petroleum right here in the ocean depths under the ice and to load up underwater transport boats with it in the deep...

In short, if not tomorrow and not next year then in any case in the foreseeable future even the highest latitudes are destined to become an industrial region.