

mind higher profits for the national economy, rather than short-term bureaucratic economizing. So far, it seems, the latter receives the most attention. We faced a similar situation earlier, when discussing the problems of constructing "Arktika"-type ice-breakers. Manipulating figures, some experts arrogantly and categorically rejected the very expediency of constructing this type of vessel. Later events refuted these opponents, but valuable time was lost. Because of this, the process of developing northern territories went on slower than it could have.

With the launching of second-generation nuclear ice-breakers "Arktika" and "Sibir", the navigation period in Dudinka was lengthened, smooth functioning of the Noril'sk mining and metallurgical complex was assured. Winter passages to Yamal through coastal ice have considerably speeded up the industrial development of this most important oil and gas field region. Expenditures for the construction of a number of nuclear ships were justified many times over.

'Economic benefits' is a convincing argument today. Nevertheless, as soon as the question was raised regarding the development of third-generation nuclear ice-breakers, without which safe year-round arctic navigation cannot be organized, active resistance began again. The reasons are the same: the high cost of vessels. The argument, we think, is unsound, and it is time to cut short the unduly prolonged debate.

If reducing the cost of nuclear-powered vessels is really of importance, the source of reduction should be looked for in another direction. First, methods must be found to drastically shorten