

from the management. Management does not know about it. In relation to this, it is interesting to ask, if the ministry knows of it. If not, then this means that our old economic mechanism survives as before and that it is not entirely healthy, as before.

But here we are, already taking our seats. Our flight is the final one during spring navigation. Soon the icy armour of the Arctic will begin to move, it will break up the zone and the next opportunity will be only prior to the New Year.

The radio operator announces: "The temperature is  $-16^{\circ}\text{C}$ ." I recall that a week ago I was flying from Khabarovsk amid blossoming lilacs and temperatures of  $26^{\circ}\text{C}$ . A short run and the plane is frozen together with the station.

How many times have I been to these far-flung, frost-covered and ocean-surrounded human habitats. The initial feelings were mixed and not totally clear. They began to form with time. I learned that during the course of a year, under the most difficult conditions, outstanding people worked here. The conditions under which they live correspond more to the Middle Ages than to the 20th Century. Cramped trailers with primitive bunks, sometimes two-tiered. Primitive comforts. No structural imagination - "barrack-style" architecture. No present-day materials - only boards, lanterns, nails and oakum. All of this clearly belongs to yesterday.

The real state of affairs is achingly familiar: of the several million rubles allocated for the organization and upkeep of each station, the lesser portion is left for human necessities. Yet there are no more than three such stations in our