

of water. When the floods recede and the dry weather sets in (these ships) are left aground. Cargoes "expire" on route. They sink into the permanently freezing peat bogs. And freight transport using tracked and wheeled vehicles leaves permanent ruts, like open wounds, in the North.

The people of Siberia could not have solved this difficult problem alone. On their initiative a scientific production association was created as part of the Tomsk Industrial Transport Complex. Joining the association on a shared basis were scientific, design and production collectives of Tomsk, Gorkii, Moscow, Novosibirsk, Leningrad, the Mari ASSR, and elsewhere. The integration of science and production shortened the research phase by roughly two-thirds.

"The most important thing," reports P. Drachev, director of the association and head of the Tomsk River Port, "is that ships of the amphibious type do not damage the fragile environment of the North. They quadruple the size of the transport zone for the Ob-Irtysh Basin. Their introduction in this region will confer an annual economic benefit of approximately 9 million rubles."

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