

merely substituting illusory solutions for the search for a real way out? Can it possibly be that the port, which is equipped with the most modern facilities and has well-trained personnel, is of no use to anyone?

Specialists of the Murmansk Steamship Line and the Port of Kandalaksha have not only posed this question at the highest levels but have also suggested some possible answers of their own. One of these is to attract foreign freight into import-export operations, since, as always there is not enough Soviet freight. Well, just the other day, literally, the long efforts of the steamship line finally began to bear fruit. Another section of the "Iron Curtain" has fallen down: foreigners have been given permission to visit Kandalaksha.

But what can we expect of external links if we still haven't mastered our own domestic situation? For weeks on end an excellent modern complex for transloading iron ore concentrate sits idle. The local Kovdorskii and Olenegorskii combines produce enough of this raw material, but while the complex has a capacity of 2.3 million tonnes, only 1,534,000 tonnes were handled in the record year 1984. And this year the result is expected to be altogether lamentable: 850,000 tonnes.

Meanwhile, concrete from the combines is being transported by rail to Cherepovets - a journey of 4 to 5 days - and then the cars return to the Kola Peninsula empty. The burden on the Oktyabrskaya Railroad, which is breaking down under an excess of freight, could be lightened, directing as many cars as possible onto the short "Kandalaksha" stretch where it's only 2 to 3 hours journey to the port. What's more, the ore-carrying ships would not be returning from Cherepovets empty but would transport coal for Apatity.

In principle, of course, this is what is being done, but a lack of ships is causing problems. V. Ryntsyn, deputy head of the Kandalaksha port, explains: "We need for them to stop transferring oil and ore carriers and the ships of the "Volgo-Baltic" type to other lines." I