

ministerial telegram directing the settlement be built at Seyakha. Why did the choice fall on a spot with no suitable site for loading terminals, no sources of electric power, and no existing gas wells, as in Sabetta, for example? In our attempt to find an answer to this question, we heard the following startling explanation: a legend served as the starting point for the idea... It is said that since time immemorial, coastal dwellers passed through here on their way to the west coast, portaging the necks of land. And so in the silence of an office the idea was hatched of creating a beachhead from where it would be possible for caravans of large-tonnage superblocs to start out over an ancient route...

A tempting idea to be sure, but impractical. This is the unanimous, admittedly belated, conclusion reached by experts in command of survey findings. The idea was buried, but the settlement and base, where a few guards live today, stayed behind. Pending better times, so to speak.

For a construction project of such a huge scale, the costs born from the first "attack" might not appear to be very high. But how can we not ponder the fact that today the scope of work for each of these sections is growing by leaps and bounds. And so it is impossible to work as in the past, without clear-cut plans.

We asked naive questions: could design work not be accelerated?, couldn't group experts be quickly dispatched to Yamal?, could the efforts of surveyors be combined?, could bureaucratic obstacles on the road to agreement on and issuance of working drawings be avoided?