

Nothing good, I dare say, and I will cite a number of examples. A contract to build Austrian timber carriers for the Northern Maritime Steamship Line, which was approved by our bureaucracy nearly a year and a half ago, has finally been signed. As a result, seamen will be pumping ballast by hand and using a depth rod to measure tank levels. Automating this process would lead to "increased costs" for the project. "Sudoimport" is trying to cram in as much clearly obsolete Soviet equipment as possible, forgetting the simple truth: a miser pays twice. But while "Sudoimport" is miserly, it will be up to the steamship line to pay in the future for all of its oversights by modernizing the obsolete Soviet equipment.

There are additional plans for us to obtain Romanian timber carriers of automation class A-2. But what kind of automation can it be if it is based on obsolete components and if the size of the crew is reduced to 25?

An entirely different situation results when one installs modern microprocessor-based automation on ships. The size of the crew can immediately be reduced, the length of cabling can be significantly shortened, and the number of spare parts for electronic devices is reduced. Working with ships of this type also makes it possible to think of reducing operating expenditures.

All attempts to obtain hard currency for centralized acquisition of automation equipment have been unsuccessful. But it is we, after all, who earn this currency, and we intend to earn it even more effectively by utilizing highly automated ships. What is the solution? I think we need to look at the possibility of having the steamship lines themselves