

locomotive, while "in the rear" it is pushed by a locomotive belonging to the owner of the freight.

We have tried to consider the situation in the light of the experience of other countries and of the Soviet railway industry, which run heavy freight trains with the aid of an unmanned locomotive in the rear of the train. It pushes a string of cars and is controlled by radio from the main locomotive.

Our design office created a similar ship-module, basically a radio-controlled pontoon, which would be attached to the back of a raft. The design is perhaps not perfect, but it is undoubtedly promising.

The rivermen also took part in test runs with this radio-controlled ship module and became convinced that in principle it is possible for one person, the raft tug operator, to control a raft. Ho, we sighed, finally everything will fall into place and there will be one person in charge of tug operations - the rivermen. They will find it necessary to look for efficient ways of carrying out their transport duties, ways of experimenting. And, when all is said and done, they will also succeed in speeding up the delivery of timber to the consumers, while reducing their losses.

However, rejoicing was premature. At first the rivermen who took part in the experiment praised us, but then they repudiated us. The Northern River Steamship Line rejected our proposals at a meeting of the technical council.

Why? By tradition they will not have to meet any extra expense arising from the operation of escorting vessels. We, the raftsmen, will have to