

Actually, slits had been tried earlier, but they were done in a quite arbitrary manner and the result was virtually nil. But this time they were making a first, albeit timid, attempt to give a scientific foundation to the battle with the natural elements.

During this time the lights burned late in the office of the port director. The engineer, the hydraulics specialist and the seaman weighed all of the possible alternatives for cutting the slits, until what seemed to be the best possible method was found. Next, the port leased the icebreaker "Kapitan Sorokin" and entrusted the job of carrying out the first experiment to Lyubogoshchinskii. Naturally, at that time there were many who doubted that such experiments could work. But despite the skeptics, the slits did their job. In 1983 the ice followed the path laid out for it by humans.

The lessons learned from this ice breakup were thoroughly studied and analyzed. A year later the experiment was repeated, this time with a new plan. This attempt failed. Since that time people at the port have been dreaming of creating their own special installation that would allow them to model ice movements, and not just one but a hundred or two hundred per year. The researchers decided to take the well-known Finnish ice basin as their basis.

In the mid 1980's freight traffic at the Dudinka port surpassed seven million tonnes for the first time, a third of this total arriving at the port in the winter. It's true, of course, that the flow of freight on the Murmansk - Dudinka line has now levelled off somewhat on account of the completion of development of the Norilsk Mining and Metallurgical Combine. But port personnel today are already facing new challenges. They are engaged in a serious reconstruction effort and are installing powerful new cranes on the docks. All sorts of modern new ships, including nuclear-powered ones, are sailing into the Arctic, and this means further development of shipping in