

which was very familiar with IL-14 aircraft. Soon, however, the huge ice floe made up of solid masses of pack ice, made a sharp change in its course. Instead of drifting quietly northward, as is usually the case, the ice floe quickly moved south, at a speed of up to ten kilometres an hour.

Probably the ice floe was caught up in a powerful current which suddenly arose in the ocean. Under the influence of this current the huge drifting field suddenly broke away. The airstrip which had appeared so trustworthy was destroyed. It's true that the fissures quickly sealed up, but, still, it is no longer possible to land an IL-14 there. Now cargo being flown in has to be dropped onto the tricky ice floe. Helicopters, however, can land there, but in the Arctic regulations require that they fly in pairs.

Helicopters carry everything that's needed from the island of Zhokhovo, making their way four hundred and fifty kilometres north-eastwards. Zhokhovo ranks second after Chersk when it comes to services offered to the Severnyi Polyus stations. A current saying in the Arctic is: "The North Pole begins at Zhokhovo Island". Zhokhovo is part of the De Long archipelago and was discovered by courageous Russian hydrographers, sailing on board the "Vaigach" and "Taimyr". The island was named after a member of that long-ago expedition...

By spring, the crew manning Severnyi Polyus 30 will have received quite a lot of food, various materials and fuel for the diesel power generator and for the AN-2 aircraft which will be based there.

...The air brigade operates in six regions of the most northerly autonomous re-public. The six regions are scattered through the basins of the