

Now people are talking a lot about conversion, about factories that are producing the latest military hardware starting to produce children's cribs, bread slicers, meat grinders and sausage stuffing mixers. This is laudable, but the Arctic, as well as the customers, is crippled without modern technology, especially light aviation. Does it make sense to utilize the enormous intellectual potential of this sector so wastefully?

"In recent years ice reconnaissance has become an expensive luxury for us", says B. Ugryumov, instructor-captain of the Dikson marine operations staff for the western Arctic. We used to be able to fly over the sea for 12 hours in the Il-14 airplane, but today it's only five or six hours in a helicopter. And it's costing us two or three times as much. This is unquestionably beneficial to Aerflot, but what about those of us involved in shipping?

In the final analysis, developing the Arctic is our common task. We have long needed to work out an overall governmental program of such operations, and renewing the air fleet should be one of the highest priorities in this program.

Vodnyi Transport

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Page 2

Drifting Ice Station Still Awaiting
Replacements for Retired Il-14s

If you are very lucky and one day, by the will of fate, you find yourself with a team of polar specialists, consider yourself fortunate to be a guest of Yurii Pavlovich Tikhonov, head of the "Severnii Polyus 31" drifting scientific research station. Let this Arctic veteran tell you about daily life beyond the Arctic Circle, in this region of the long dreary night, of the howl of snowstorms and the treachery of the ice. In this region where the only link with civilization is a radio station and aviation. Aviation is the first friend and protector in the event of misfortune, whether it is a medical flight, reconnaissance mission, or planes bringing in cargo and specialists. Or, at New Year's, a real fir tree that makes the humble worker's hut a cozy home.