

head, you could ferry the needed craft from Pevek. But circumstances get the better of common sense - they are not going to refuel helicopters from Pevek in Cherskii.

They say that when the Main Administration of the Northern Sea Route was disbanded, everyone was saying that the Soviet organs in the Far North had supposedly got so strong that they were quite capable of developing the region independently. A classic case of wishful thinking. Even today, the majority of the local soviets are not up to this task. Just one example. Four years ago the builders were withdrawn from Khatanga. They left behind a good settlement, a little asphalt-concrete plant, an unfinished garage... Now the empty cottages are becoming dilapidated. The executive committee could not resolve the problem with the departments. It could not obtain the abandoned town from them.

And this is here at the regional center. But what about the islands, where there are neither enterprises nor administrations... That is, there is not only no possibility, but not even any desire or necessity to look after the interior.

"We watch 'The Traveller's Club' and read the newspaper", says the chief engineer of a group supplying high-latitude expeditions of the Krasnoyarsk Civil Aviation Administration, V. Trush. "In general, we see that the Americans have developed Alaska: housing, transport, supplies, communications... While we have neglected the North and have reach an impasse. We are living here at the level of the 30s..."

Of course we must make allowance for some emotionalism here, but in general the aviator is right. The life of the polar hand is filled not with romance, but with difficulties about which he is supposed to know only from old newspapers.