

that meets a substantial portion of the economy's need for phosphorus, lead, nickel, copper and other nonferrous metals. The fishing industry has taken on national importance. Now a major seaport and nuclear-powered icebreaker base, Murmansk plays an important role in the development of outside economic links and the development of the Arctic coast of the USSR". These words from the March decree of the Central Committee of the party and government highlight the importance of Murmansk Oblast in the life of the country.

The President of the Murmansk Regional Executive Committee, Yurii Zosimovich Balakshin talks about its major landmarks.

Our Oblast is an offspring of the Soviet regime. The pre-revolutionary history of the peninsula is romantic; no more can be said. It was romantic because of its wildness, its exotic nature. In the Karelian epic poem "Kalevala", the Kola land is the "kingdom of the old woman Loukha", the gloom Pokh"ela, where the birds freeze on the wing and everything living dies. There you have a portrait of the region, which you would find hard not to believe when you look at the pre-revolutionary statistics. Or for that matter at the exhibits in the museum of local history.

For two centuries, the Kola Peninsula formed part of Archangel province, the district centers of which were first Kola, and later Aleksandrovsk. The construction of the Murmansk railway and port changed the picture and the centre of all activities on the peninsula moved to the new district capital - Murmansk.

When the civil war was over, the question of establishing a Murmansk district was finally decided and on June 13th, 1921, by a decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, Murmansk province was created on the territory of the Kola Peninsula.