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EXTRACTS FROM THE SOVIET PRESS ON THE SOVIET NORTH

AND THE ANTARCTIC

JULY - 1988

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In short, if not tomorrow and not next year then in any case in the foreseeable future even the highest latitudes are destined to become an industrial region.

ARCTIC DEVELOPMENT

Need For Better Co-operation In The Arctic

"To the sea, to the sun - by airplane!" This palm-tree embellished billboard on the road to "Domodedovo" really amused my companion.

"That's us", laughed Aleksandr Viktorovich Borodko, chief of the expedition of the Moscow Aerogeodesic Enterprise. "I can't promise any palm trees, but I can promise unlimited sea and sun."

There will be nothing of the exotic in my notes. People go to the Arctic to get things done. A half century ago the job was to subjugate previously inaccessible points, today it is time for the industrial development of the northern sea.

To many this will sound unusual, even fantastic. What is there to get here, but ice and salt water? And if there is something to be got, then how? Even those who had worked in the North were asking such questions until relatively recently. It was known that both the Arctic shelf and deep waters were rich in mineral deposits. But to develop them and to transport the yield seemed scarcely possible or at least unprofitable.

But it suddenly turned out that today little time passes between the expression of an idea in science fiction and its technical development. Just a while ago we smiled sceptically at the idea of towing icebergs as reservoirs of fresh water, but now we find nothing impossible about proposals to extract petroleum right here in the ocean depths under the ice and to load up underwater transport boats with it in the deep...

In short, if not tomorrow and not next year then in any case in the foreseeable future even the highest latitudes are destined to become an industrial region.

In the Arctic everything is temporary - both buildings and men. For the simple reason that there is nothing more permanent than temporary solutions. I saw, for example, that fast-frozen tents and wagons that had been erected for a season have been standing many years. It is the same with the people. They go as a rule for a short time but many get stuck for a long spell. What keeps them here? Is it money? Romance? The beauty of the white silence? Or perhaps most of all a sense of their own importance? One way or another, once you get the Northern bug, there is no cure. I have talked to dozens of Arctic hands and not one would admit that he was planning to live here to a ripe old age. Each dreamed of soon going home, or to the capital or "south"... But few have any idea when they will carry out this intention. There are some who pack their bags twice a year, but they linger again and again for the last sunset. It happens that a person may spend dozens of years here, all the time under the impression that it is all temporary. And this is not a coincidence - such is the style, the psychology, the mode of life.

On Zhokova I., for example, besides the Arctic party of the Moscow geodesic expedition, the polar station of the Tiksi hydrometeorological service and a base of the Arctic and Antarctic Scientific Research Institute are also situated. All three settlements, while not far, are removed from each other. And they are completely independent.

The reader has probably got the point by now: would it not be better to bring them closer together and to create a common life support system? Combining the food service alone would cut the need for cooks at least in half. And how much could be saved with a single engine room, radio room and air-dispatcher's room... But this is just rhetoric of course. In terms of common sense, it might be. But circumstances make it impossible.

Different organizations, you see, have their own accounts and finances. Just try to combine them! No use. You will wear out your nerves and bring auditors down on your head like mosquitoes. Most important - nobody needed real savings.

They did... But now in the epoch of awakening khozraschet (profit and loss accounting), is there a need to save? Over there are some aviators on khozraschet, while at the air field on Srednii I., they are racing a high-power diesel. Sometimes they don't even know what to connect it to get the use out of it, but they are in no hurry to share their electric power with their neighbours. An old habit, to clamp down on reserves? Or maybe khozraschet offers no incentive to bend down even for a ruble?

Incidentally, on Zhokhova I., the dogs of the three different settlements have long since divided up the territory and do not allow each other on their domains... As they say, like master like dog... Very well that a common air field for all has been leveled on the ice of the lagoon. I say this without meaning any sarcasm because in the Arctic I have seen two airfields seven kilometres apart.

But these are just peanuts compared to the system of financing unnecessary work. This term was borrowed from the commander of "AN-12" Yakuts combined detachment, N. Dunaev. Unnecessary work he considers the shipment of fuel by airplane. The arithmetic here is simple. Dunaev's crew delivered a full load of 12 tonnes from Cherskii settlement to Zhokova I. There and back - eight hours of flight. Each hour costs one and a half thousand rubles. That is, a tonne of fuel has gone up in price by one thousand rubles.

And what is 12 tonnes? A drop in the bucket! Human life in the Arctic is literally maintained by petroleum products. They provide heat and electricity and freedom of movement. At a high cost, as we shall see. In order to transport one tonne of fuel over an average distance, one and half tonnes must be consumed.

Where is the bureaucratism here, you ask? Well, the bulk of all air freight shipments at high latitudes could be curtailed if the fuel was brought in by steamship. But...A simple example. Next year the geodesists are planning to set up a base on Graham Bell I. There is a convenient wharf there and reservoirs. They would like to transfer the fuel this summer... Nothing will come of it. It would have been necessary to apply a whole year ago for steamship transport. But a year ago nobody had asked the geodesists to work in that region.

Old polar hands remember that it didn't used to be this way. The Main Administration of the Northern Sea Route, which was eliminated a few years ago, used to solve such problems straight away.

"All the pilots used to be under the same polar aviation authority", relates the Commander of the Khatanga airline, A. Kalhmet'ev. "Many of today's problems just didn't exist. But now - if I land my airplane in Yakutia, no one will allow me, a stranger, to refuel. Unless the local commander happens to be a good friend..."

Well, commanders, even if they don't know one another, can talk to each other. But what about customers? The chief of a group of the Magadan aerogeodesic enterprise, E. Galeev, for example, was simply stumped. He needed "MI-6" helicopters for regular trips between Cherskii Settlement and Chetyrekhstolbovoi I. There were none in Cherskii. But if you use your

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.

Let us start from the very beginning. Try to get an airplane ticket for the North in early winter or spring - it is just about as hard as to get a ticket now for the south. Let's say you got one and you make it, say, to Dikson. You need to go further? Then you will have to travel, as they say by stopover. You wait until someone organizes a charter to your destination. Maybe they will take you. You might wait a week, even a month. This is a problem just in itself. Dikson is not Sochi; you can't spend the night on a park bench. There are only 20 places for flight passengers at the hotel...

Well, here you are at last. Where are you going to stay? If you're lucky, in a temporary barracks built many years ago. But more likely in a truck or a tent with walls that freeze through. A nice little frost covers the floor, while at the ceiling your ears burn like in a steam room.

And supplies? A. Kurygin, director of the polar hydrometeorological station on Zhokova I. remembers how ten years ago canned meat alone was brought in in dozens of brands. There are still brands today. In "Arktiksnab's" catalogues. In reality, all you can get is canned stew. How much powdered eggs can you eat in peacetime? The problem is not transportation. The "Sever-88" high-latitude expedition was able to get fresh potatoes in to its base on the ice, but on Sredniy I., the crossroads of the Arctic basin, the only bulbs available are dried.

In the Arctic basin regions, it is sometimes easier to get foreign stations on the transistor radio than it is to receive "Mayak". In some places, you will never catch a word of Russian on the receiver. The mail service is bad. An airplane makes a mail drop once in two or three months. It would be possible, it is true, to transmit at last some central publications by

phototelegraph, but so far northerners receive daily only the newspaper "Southern fisherman". A real possibility, not requiring any special effort, of attenuating the isolation factor - one of the most oppressive conditions of the North - is thus lost.

Incidentally, it appears that the mail service will be even worse: the "IL-14's", which were equipped for mail-dropping, are going to be written off. This airplane is disappearing as a class. What will replace them? The "AN-2", the famous "Annushka's" are also getting old, and their replacement is also not foreseen. Somewhere in Moscow, colleagues and committees are getting together and taking decisions to create a special aviation for the Arctic... The years pass, and the pretty decisions are not carried out. This relates not only to airplanes, but also to many other crucial problems of the Far North.

And the quiet... Nobody tries to bring to order, even by the old tactics of intimidation, those who disturb the silence. That is because there is nobody to do so. There is no boss in the Arctic. There are many little bosses, who cannot do otherwise than follow the principle, "It will last for our time".

It is true that recently the Council of Ministers of the USSR organized a State Committee on Arctic Affairs. We shall hope that in this Committee the Arctic will find a boss who will give serious thought to this paradox: in this unique ecological region, where the snow water is so pure that you can pour it into the reservoir, why do you have to wash your hands every hour or so? And if he thinks about it, he will understand that the thousands of diesel and airplane engines here blacken the skies not only to no purpose but even to the detriment of the economy and the ecology. That it is bad management to cart fuel in the air and to scatter barrels from the skies

all over the coast. He will understand that millions of rubles can be gained by adopting nontraditional energy sources. These are more expensive than the traditional ones in the developed regions. But here, with a total lack of roads, to throw money to the winds, as a renewable resource, is pure profit.

Talk about a boss is not just wishful thinking. It is what we need most urgently today. Many polar workers are already aware of this.

I have already mentioned the dogs that divided up the territory on Zhokova I. But when a polar bear approaches any of the settlements, they forget their "departmental affiliation" and together rush to drive off the trouble.

Must we people wait for a bear before we look after our common interest?

Sotsialisticheskaya Industriya
July 10, 1988
Page 4 (full text)

CONSTRUCTION

The "Dnepr" Building - Possible Use In The North

The Pavlodar Experimental Factory for the Manufacture of Mobile Buildings is making container-type buildings using the "Dnepr" construction system.

What this innovation is all about and how it can be used

The "Dnepr" system can be used in various types of climate throughout the country. It is intended for both linear and pioneer industrial and communal services purposes, as well as for housing complexes for construction and installation organizations. It uses an insulating material made from basalt rock, which makes it possible for people to work in the building even when the temperature outside falls to minus forty degrees centigrade.

The "Dnepr" system buildings consist of a set of basic module-containers, each of which measures 6 by 3 by 2.85 metres. It includes removable linear walls and final-finishing elements with corridor additions. The premises have working and auxiliary rooms, where metal-working and work-processing units can be installed. There is also a lobby space, which as a rule is used for communal purposes. A pourable polymer compound is used to provide total hermetic sealing of the building and this makes it resistant to heavy rains, snowstorms and gale-force winds.

Technical characteristics

The overall area occupied by the building measures eighteen square metres. Several people can work in this space, which can also accommodate equipment and instruments. The auxiliary space can serve for storage for finished products. The "Dnepr's" useful life extends up to fifteen years, which is considerably longer than with the usual container-type buildings. And finally, this model's principal advantage over similar buildings is its great mobility and higher standard of factory-finishing.

Technology

Imagine that you are a construction worker who has been sent to open up a region in the Far North. What materials can you use to build temporary industrial premises? This problem can be dealt with efficiently using the "Dnepr" system, and at the same time the cost is minimal.

The system employs frame and lining panels with metal supports of roll-formed sections. The exterior lining is made of steel plates. The small size of the building (which is 2.4 metres high and six metres long) makes it possible to assemble it in a few hours. It takes only two or three men to put the building up.

The method employed in the erection of the building is simple. The individual construction elements are fastened together with bolt joints and the hermetic sealant materials are laid between them. The equipment is then installed, the door is hung and the building is ready for use. Dismantling the building is also easy: you take

the elements apart, put them in a truck and off you go to a new site. There the building is reassembled and is once again ready for use.

Facts and figures

These buildings are economical because of the savings in steel, timber and insulating materials. While the "Dnepr" uses seventy kilograms of metal for each square metre, other designs for container-type buildings use up to one hundred kilograms of scarce material. The result is that for every thousand square metres of usable space, the "Dnepr" saves up to three tonnes of metal. There is yet another significant advantage: the client can use the building over and over again in different climatic conditions throughout the country, for the "Dnepr" can be assembled and dismantled thirty or more times. Such a building pays for itself in one or two years.

However, regardless of its obvious advantages, the "Dnepr" construction system, with its high standard of factory-readiness, is not being widely used.

At the moment only two thousand units a year are being produced. This is clearly not enough to satisfy the builders' demands. So, what is wrong? In the opinion of the specialists, there are two fundamental problems which are holding up the wider use of the "Dnepr" building.

The first problem is that for a long time such building design systems remained outside the ken of the builders.

The second problem, which is hampering the larger-scale production of container-type buildings, stems

from defects in planning and from the predominance of the infamous gross output. Its a paradox, but, in fact, it is the low cost of the basic materials which makes this design unprofitable for enterprises to use. This is what impels the managers of factories to refuse to produce these highly efficient "Dnepr"-type buildings.

If you are interested in these mobile container-type "Dnepr"-design system buildings, you may write to: 323000, Dnepropetrovskaya oblast', gorod Pavlodar, Pavlodar Experimental Factory for the Manufacture of Mobile Buildings.

Stroitel'naya Gazeta

July 15, 1988

Page 2 (full text)

The Resources Are Right At Hand - Gypsum Deposits

Nature was truly generous when she created six white flattened mounds by the mountain river Serechen, in north-eastern Yakutia. Each of these mounds is the outlet to the surface of virgin bodies of gypsum deposits.

The Scientific Council of the North-Eastern Integrated Scientific Research Institute of the Far Eastern Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences has drawn up a programme entitled "Gips", which also provides for the thorough exploitation of this natural resource, reports a TASS correspondent. According to estimates, the large-scale introduction of the gypsum produced from the Serechen deposits into the construction industry will make it possible for the people living in the Far North to save between 150,000 and 170,000 tonnes of cement every year and up to 8,000 tonnes of standard fuel. It will also reduce the manpower requirements of the construction industry by more than 5,000 workers. At the present time the enterprises based in Yakutia alone bring in about 500,000 tonnes of cement, slate and dry plaster every year. The cost of transporting all this runs to more than 16,000,000 roubles.

The predicted potential of the deposits are 1,384 million tonnes of gypsum-bearing rock. The mounds, which rise up among the valleys, are seventy five percent gypsum. These deposits can be exploited without stripping.

The list of the advantages of these northern deposits is long. In the opinion of the one of the first discoverers of the deposits, V. Merzlyakov, the development and exploitation of these resources can solve the problem of the gypsum shortage, not only for the Far North, but also for the whole country.

However, until recently, nothing had been done, not even an application to have the deposits evaluated. The issuing of the documentation was hampered by the USSR Ministry of the Construction Materials Industry. Only now have the first necessary steps in the plan been undertaken by the Russian SFSR Ministry of the Construction Materials Industry. However, the application is only for 1989. Meanwhile, the geologists in Yakutia are using their own funds to finance their work.

The years go by and the mounds rise up like monuments. Still no progress is made. One notable detail: it turns out that the deposits were known long before our time. Evidence of this has been found near the gypsum mounds. The unknown prospector left two marking posts made of dressed wood behind. They carry the date... 1915!

Stroitel'naya Gazeta

July 28, 1988

Page 3 (full text)

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The Workers' Supply Departments Now Have A Competitor

Noyabr'sk is a city of oil men with a population of about 100,000 and is situated in the swampy taiga. Vegetables and fruits are imported here and stocks usually don't last from the fall to May. The fruits of the new harvest can be expected no sooner than July-August.

The oil men, geologists and builders have to go nearly two months with no vitamins. The green onions and cucumbers from the local hothouse provide some, it is true, but that is just a drop in the bucket.

Over many years, they have become reconciled to this state of affairs, and have thought that things couldn't be otherwise: it's the North, after all. But this spring, cucumbers have appeared in shops already by mid-March. Their price has gradually gone from nine to two rubles per kilo. Cabbage has been imported sooner than is usual and at the end of April consumers were offered prime radish at 2 rubles per large bunch, and dock, dill and parsley for 1 ruble. Prices for greens were high, of course, especially at first, but still in line with local wages. Watermelons at 5 rubles 50 kopecks per kilo, sweet pepper at 4 rubles 50 kopecks, and mazzard cherries at 3 rubles have shown up lately at the city wholesale outlet. Tomatoes have gone down sharply in price to 4 rubles 50 kopecks. Prices are now changing quickly overall and fruits and vegetables are getting cheaper.

"The members of the recently created 'Leto' co-op have helped to improve the supply of early vegetables and fruits to the townspeople", says the director of the trade section of the Noyabr'sk executive committee, A. Egozova.

"They have shown how to work for both their own and the consumers' advantage. The Workers' Supply Departments of the enterprises, disturbed by the appearance of competitors, are trying to keep ahead of the co-op: tomatoes are now always available at 6-7 rubles, cucumbers at 2 rubles, as well as cabbage and onions. We are advising the enterprises to take upon themselves the cost of airplane rental and to organize imports of mazzard cherries, hautboy strawberries, plums and apricots to the Departments. We hope that this will help to reduce the current market prices: a private trader charges 10-12 rubles per kilo of berries and fruits".

At the "pyatachka" are concentrated the city wholesale outlets, the co-op booths of the co-ops and counters of the individual farmers. It is crowded and noisy, just like a market, of which there is still none in Noyabr'sk. Here is a flower stall, there they are selling seeds and offering pickles for sampling. The longest line up is for potatoes at 80 kopecks per kilo. Clean, dry, big. At another counter, where there is not a soul, the same potatoes cost 1 ruble 60 kopecks. In both cases this is the agreed price. It is just that the goods have been purchased by different Workers' Supply Departments. Well, whatever they agreed upon, that is what they are going for now.

In the new way of doing things, business "smarts" is undoubtedly playing a greater role and solutions are appearing for a number of problems previously thought to be insoluble. For instance, potatoes - they are available on shop counters in the summer for the first time in many years. And maybe something can be done to put an end to shortages for good?

"Yes. The first thing to do is to increase fall potato procurements", says A. Egozova. "We will then ensure a stable market at a low price. This cannot be

done now because of the shortage of vegetable storehouses. More than 20% of the potatoes is lost in the overfilled and obsolete storehouses - just about that much is lacking to provide a year-round uninterrupted supply."

In the city, the construction of the first real market is being completed. Just last year some people joked: well, go ahead and build it, but there will be nothing to sell and nobody to sell it to. Time has changed the situation: co-op and individual trade has appeared and Workers' Supply Departments now have more independence. This has meant a drastic improvement in meeting northerners' needs. It may seem to some that the assortment of produce mentioned here is pretty poor. But that depends on what you compare it with. The townspeople know very well that compared with recent times, the selection of fruits and vegetables now appearing on the counters is quite decent.

Izvestiya

July 4, 1988

Page 2 (full text)

July 12, 1988
Page 2 (full text)

Patrol Over The Rivers

The inspectors of the fish protection service in Magadan Oblast have begun air patrols over the rivers where fish spawn.

It was not so very long ago that poachers pushed their way along animal trails into remote areas, secluded from the eyes of strangers, partitioned off the rivers with nets, and enjoyed the fruits of their illegal acts. Helicopters have enabled the inspectors of "Okhotskrybvoda" to bring the most inaccessible spawning grounds under their observation.

During the season when fish of the salmon family are spawning in the rivers, quiet conditions rule and there is a prohibition order in effect on the use of motor boats and on fording water obstacles with trucks, tractors, or cross-country vehicles. From now until the coming of the frosts, only the shadow of a helicopter can disturb the schools of fish in the water, as clear as a teardrop, as they go to spawn at the sources of the taiga rivers.

Trud

July 15, 1988

Page 2 (full text)

Heralds of the Fishing Season

The salmon schools have arrived at the coast of the Sea of Okhotsk. Their heralds have swiftly advanced into the upper reaches of the taiga spawning rivers. The "red" fishing season has begun in Magadan Oblast.

"There's a change in the main fishing season of the year now", comments A. Pyn'ko, the director of "Okhotskrybvod". Besides the state fisheries enterprises, some co-operatives, particularly the "Agat" on the Tauri and the "Ersh" on the Ola, are catching pink salmon, sockeye, chum and coho. These co-operatives are planning to sell about four hundred tonnes of fresh delicatessen fish to the population of Magadan Oblast.

Izvestiya
July 12, 1988
Page 2 (full text)

OIL AND GAS

They Named It Tyan

The orange MI-8 lifted off smoothly into the air and, gaining altitude, it left the wide Ob and Surgut, with its new residential districts, far behind. We are flying with O. Katkov, the chief geologist of Obneftegazgeologiya's Surgut expedition, to the north, where a new oil field has been opened up.

They put down a deep well there in the middle of the seventies - there was no oil. It later turned out that it had been sunk unsuccessfully because it had ended up on a "leg" of the oil-bearing bed; that is why it proved barren. Work in that region was discontinued; but it was resumed after ten years.

The first borehole drilled by the foreman A. Mustafin produced oil. Other wells followed, confirming the presence of oil there. Some wells are still being drilled; others are awaiting studies of the beds; and still others have been capped and are ready to be handed over to the oil producers. The deposit has been named Tyan, in memory of Arkadii Vasil'evich Tyan, the well-known geologist.

The helicopter landed and we were at a borehole, one of those now being drilled at the deposit. One of the crews of the nationally renowned team of foreman V. Solov'ev is working here. The senior assistant foreman is A Smirnov, who is already a crew leader.

"We can really work," said Anatolii. "Our boys are hard workers. But there are difficulties: obsolete rigs, a lack of equipment, and a mass of work to be done

by hand. It is high time to consider specialized versions of drilling installations for the northern districts of western Siberia, and not to think only about producing."

We talked about everyday matters with the drillers. The talk turned to the team leader, Smirnov.

"Smirnov is the kind that people usually call a workaholic," said one. "He's the salt of the earth. You know how it goes: someone manages to advance and become a leader, and then can't cope; but he has been a real leader for years, like our team leader. The main feeling in our team is really one of mutual help."

Here we are with the new Tyan deposit under our feet. The plan calls for turning it over to the State Commission for Commercial Mineral Reserves of the USSR Council of Ministers as early as next year. This means that a lot of strenuous work has to be done. It is still early to talk of the successful acquisition of Tyan - that is yet to come. But the fact that the nearest oil pipeline passes relatively close to it is of great importance, since its extension to the new deposit will require only a small expenditure of money, labor, and resources. The opening of this new deposit is a very important victory. The oil workers are literally following right on the heels of the drillers.

Pravda
July 19, 1988
Page 1 (full text)

Outfitting of "Klyuchevoe" Oil Field Completed

The personnel of "Megionneftepromstroi" were able to complete the outfitting of the new "Klyuchevoe" oil field three months ahead of schedule.

The skillful application of profit-and-loss accounting [khozraschet], which ensured the harmonious co-ordination of the efforts of all team units, became a key factor in their fast work pace. The team was concerned primarily with the final results - composite building and the laying of transport communications - and not with the notorious index of gross output.

Sotsialisticheskaya Industriya

July 15, 1988

Page 2 (full text)

SOCIOLOGICAL ISSUES

How Are You, Northerner?

A visit by the USSR and RSFSR ministers of public health.

One of the main goals in the domain of social policy, as noted at the XIX All-Union Party Conference, is the complete satisfaction of the population's requirements for highly qualified medical help. Indeed, nowadays the level of progress in medicine serves as a measure of progress for every nation. What are the chief tasks that face medical personnel in the USSR as a consequence of this? This and other questions were placed on the agenda of the conference of involved medical personnel from Krasnoyarsk Kray, Magadan and Kamchatka oblasts, and the Yakut ASSR, which was held recently in the capital of the Yakut ASSR. The leaders of local Party and government bodies and of local economic organizations also participated. This extensive and most serious discussion was preceded by a week-long visit to districts in the Siberian north by delegates to the XIX All-Union Party Conference and by the USSR and RSFSR ministers of public health, E.I. Chazov and A.I. Potapov. Our correspondent accompanied them and we recommend his observations to our readers.

A MINISTER CALLS OUT THE AMBULANCE

I do not know who came off the better - the minister or the ambulance service, but on this occasion the vehicle with the red cross on its sides was standing at the entrance three minutes after Anatolii Ivanovich Potapov had dialed the renowned "03" on the telephone.

The Minister of Public Health was not in any danger; it was only a test call, the purpose of which was to find out how efficiently and how well the city's ambulance service operated.

To me, this episode seemed to be symbolic to some extent. Certainly, emergency assistance is a necessity nowadays for the ambulance service of the North, which is often incapable of easing a patient's lot. This is due to the fact that in Yakutia (as in other areas), for example, almost 80 per cent of ambulance calls are answered by doctors' assistants and only three per cent by special teams - whose qualifications, in any case, often leave much to be desired. To be precise, this was the reason that, for example, in Magadan Oblast and in Yakutia more than one third of all patients with intestinal obstructions and almost half of those with a perforated ulcer are brought to hospital on the second day (and perhaps even later) after the onset of the complaint. Emergency ambulance hospitals, which could not only become centers for extraneous medical intervention but could also provide organizational and regular leadership for the ambulance service, have still not been set up in these districts. But here is the paradox. In spite of the helplessness of the ambulance service, the number of appeals to doctors by dialing "03" is growing at an uncontrolled rate. This has become especially noticeable during the past two years. As an example, over a one-year period almost every other inhabitant of Krasnoyarsk Kray was obliged to call for the services of an ambulance. And the situation is the same in other oblasts. This once again supports the finding that a very serious rhythmic disturbance is to be observed in the functioning of the polyclinics, and of the public health units, and of the hospitals. When people fail to receive any medical help where they live or where they work, they have gotten in the habit of dialing "03". Why do so many links in the public health service chain malfunction?

"This is, in fact, the reason we have come - in order to look into the matter," said E.I. Ghazov, the USSR Minister of Public Health, when we met. "Clearly, the northern regions have not shaken off the old viewpoint of the "leftover" [low-priority] principle that was previously used in financing public medicine. But funds - very considerable funds - are now being distributed, and we are hoping for even more substantial increases in the future. We are disturbed by the fact that the return on these allocations has been so meagre - a fact that is confirmed by the numerous complaints from working people that are arriving at the ministry."

We are deep inside Yakutia, in the city of Mirnyi, in Polyclinic No. 10; in front of the doctors' offices is a line up of mothers with small children in their arms.

"I am a housewife," says T. Samus', "I can't even think about working. I have three children and severe colds are common visitors in our house. My youngest child was seriously ill and I had to travel a thousand kilometres to Moscow in order to see a doctor."

R. Shafeeva, the head of a polyclinic for children explains the situation in simple terms: there are not enough specialists and the necessary equipment and medicines are not available. Listening to this conversation, I. Mestnikov, the Minister of Public Health of the Yakut ASSR, lowered his gaze - and with good reason. Who, if not his ministry, is responsible for supplying the interior with qualified personnel? Last year, 750 doctors and more than a thousand nurses and assistant nurses quit the public health service of the autonomous republic.

As for the equipment... We carried out an experiment in Mirnyi; we asked one and the same question

of all the doctors who were complaining about the lack of equipment: "Exactly what is it that you are lacking?" The physicians did not come up with a single concrete request. It turned out that they themselves did not know what they required. It is no accident that last year in the Yakut ASSR as a whole, modern medical equipment worth practically 400,000 rubles remained in storage - and half of it remains untouched even today. More or less the same muddle exists with regard to medicines.

If the will were present, even the problem of severe colds among children could be solved. But not one of the fifteen children's pre-school institutions in Mirnyi, as it turned out, was of the sanatorium type, even though the capability exists. The Municipal Executive Council even passed a resolution in regard to this matter. One element is missing: anguish over the children's health and the will to show some initiative.

We can see the importance of this by glancing at the example of Noril'sk, where 17 of the 30 kindergartens and day nurseries are classified as "sanatoria." The health-improvement efforts that were carried out in these institutions not only reduced severe colds among children, they also reduced the need for parents to stay home from work in order to care for their children.

The poor level of knowledge displayed by the local doctors is, very likely, one of the most neglected illnesses in regional public health. The guilty parties in this situation are, first of all, the Krasnoyarsk Medical Institute and Yakutia University, who "produce" the local personnel. Recently, the local population's confidence in their physicians has fallen quite noticeably. Many people are now prepared to spend the time required to make a long journey simply in order to obtain qualified medical advice. Some 1288 people from

the Yakut ASSR alone (and 800 from Krasnoyarsk Kray...) have turned of late to Moscow in order to obtain expert medical care.

But there are also examples of a different kind. The number of patients who receive effective care at the Kamchatka Oblast Hospital has been increasing every year, even though in-patient resources have not been altered and the same medical staff remains.

"We ourselves have adopted the team method of organizing our work," related A. Chuiko, the hospital's Chief Physician, when we met. "Not only our nurses, but even our doctors operate on this principle, and in this manner we ensure that all treatment and diagnostic work in the department is completed without interruptions. And this bears fruit."

It is also worthwhile noting the innovation of personnel at the Central Polyclinic in Abakan, where they have introduced a computerized control system for prophylactic medical examinations - and the results were quick to appear. Some people have enquired about where the polyclinic obtained the money for computer equipment. But in Abakan no one even suggested purchasing a computer - they acquired one on lease. By analogy, this brings up a suggestion: why don't other doctors follow the example set by their neighbours in Abakan and lease boats on which they could establish temporary mobile laboratories to provide prophylactic medical examinations for hunters, fishermen, and reindeer herdsman who live far from any built-up areas?

During meeting held at the Yakut Republic Hospital, many leaders of local Party and government organs, including N. Prokop'ev, First Secretary of the Oblast Party Committee, were reproached a number of times for not paying attention to medical personnel and for

having but a poor idea of their needs and their problems. Such reproaches can only receive our support. Doctors and nurses in Yakutia, and in other areas of the Siberian north as well, are practically the last in line to receive residential housing and places for their children in pre-school institutions. Many have to wait for promised housing for ten or even fifteen years. Indeed, this, above all else, is the explanation for the high turnover of medical personnel in the region, and no changes can be expected until this problem can be solved.

HOW DO YOU FREEZE BACILLI?

I somehow had occasion to sojourn in Yakutia during the winter, in 60 degrees of frost. In one village I saw a strange sight: a pile of broken and rather dirty ice heaped up right next to a fence.

"We collect ice at the nearby lake and then we thaw it for water," they explained to me. "Other than that we can't get water anywhere."

As it turned out, this sight is a rather common one, and not just in Yakutia. I. Ismakaev, the Chief State Public Health Physician of the Chuckchee Autonomous Okrug - Chukotia - cited the following figures: more than one third of the inhabited areas under the jurisdiction of his service have no regular sources of water supply - in summer they utilize imported water, and in winter they thaw ice. When we consider further, that the majority of combines in the Chuckchee food industry are operating with obsolete equipment (half of the products that they turn out are contaminated with bacteria), then we can imagine just how complex is the epidemiologic situation in this region.

"All of this misfortune has come about because the executive committees of the local soviets and the management of local economic organizations are taking their time to act on the implementation of the resolution of the Presidium of the RSFSR Council of Ministers on the situation with regard to procedures for intensifying the prevention of infectious diseases in the RSFSR," thinks I. Egorov, the Chief State Public Health Physician of the Yakut ASSR. "Since the personnel of the local sanitary and epidemiologic service are not making an attempt to stimulate the interest of the local leadership in regard to this problem, their opinion is rarely considered..."

Given such an attitude towards the health of people in the North, it is scarcely possible to hinder pathogenic bacilli. Cardinal measures are called for. It would seem that there is an urgent need to change the functional style of the health service at its root, to shift the emphasis from "putting out" epidemiologic "conflagrations" to closer co-operation with enterprises and government organs in order to liquidate all potential sources of infection promptly - all the more so since recent government decrees have considerably extended the authority of medical personnel. Here, again, nothing can be done without making use of accumulated experience. The system of sanitary and epidemiologic control in regard to acute intestinal infections has already proven itself in many rayons in the Russian SFSR. The operation of such services has been particularly effective in Leningrad and Sverdlovsk. Why can't medical personnel from these cities assist the Northerners? The point is that the necessary experience in providing such "emergency" medical care exists - this was confirmed by the medical campaign conducted in Chita Oblast by the RSFSR Ministry of Public Health, the V.I. Lenin Soviet Children's Fund, and the newspaper Sovetskaya Rossiya. This campaign involved epidemiologists and doctors, who received considerable

systematic support from village sanitary and epidemiologic stations. Here is the view of A.I. Potapov, the RSFSR Minister of Public Health.

"In April 1988 the government of the RSFSR adopted the program entitled 'The Health of the Ethnic Groups of the North in 1988-1995.' It provides for an increase in the supplies required for prophylactic medical institutions in the North, for the purposeful engagement of medical personnel in that region, for medical transport with greater cross-country capability, and for mobile medical laboratories. But no noticeable increase in the activities of local public health agencies took place. In Magadan Oblast they have yet to begin implementing the adopted program, and in Kamchatka these matters are being dealt with poorly. We shall review the resulting situation very carefully in the collegium. As for the matter of a 'medical campaign,' it is already being studied at the ministry."

We cannot avoid examining one of the worst of the many problems that characterize the present-day situation among the residents of the Siberian north - the prevalence of tuberculosis. Its level of occurrence is more than one third higher in the Yakut ASSR than it is in the RSFSR, and the situation is almost as bad in the rural rayons of Magadan Oblast. The prevalence of tuberculosis among the native population in some okrugs is five times greater than the average for the RSFSR.

What is the reason for this state of affairs? In the RSFSR Ministry of Public Health, they believe that it is primarily due to the absence of a comprehensive approach to solving the problem. The meeting of medical personnel [held in Yakutsk] noted, with justification, that tuberculosis at the local level continues to be regarded as a purely medical problem, disregarding the social issues involved.

The meeting in Yakutsk openly discussed the alarming demographic situation. The overall death rate among the Northern ethnic groups is 1.7 times higher than the rate for the total population of the region; 70 per cent of the native Northerners die before the age of 60.

The major components in producing the mortality rate are accidents, poisoning, and trauma, which are in most cases related to the consumption of alcohol. In Kamchatka, for instance, total mortality and infant mortality in the population was reduced successfully in 1986, the first time in many years, by slightly reducing the consumption of spirits. But there was no subsequent improvement in these figures. In the opinion of Chief Physician A. Chuiko, the obstacle in this case has been the wave of bootleg distilling, which has also broken out in Kamchatka.

A SWIMMING POOL INSTEAD OF TABLETS

Readers of Sovetskaya Rossiya who have been attentively following the progress of the medical campaign in Chita Oblast have quite properly asked: why do you identify public health problems solely with hospitals, polyclinics, and medicines? Why are swimming pools and gymnasiums in our country the monopoly of athletes?

This question automatically called to mind our visit to enterprises of the Yakutalmaz Industrial Association [obedinenie] in the city of Mirnyi. V. Piskunov, the association's general manager, showed us, with a certain measure of pride, residential housing that had everything - a laundry room, showers, and even saunas with swimming pools. But, if instead of asking the local doctors questions about diseases, you ask about health-improvement efforts, they only shrug their shoulders.

Some 400 individuals from among the numerous quarry workers, among whom musculocutaneous problems take first place, are entered in doctors' registers, but, according to doctor A. Kuznetsova, only a few of them participate in group therapy. A more or less similar picture presents itself at the ore dressing plant.

We tried to find out from M. Romanenko, the Chief Physician at the Central Rayon Hospital, why the local doctors in essence disregard these alternative health "remedies." The Chief Physician said that they had not yet taken up these matters. Could that be why there is such a huge loss at enterprises of the Yakutalmaz Industrial Association due to illness - each working person is off work 14 days per year - despite the efforts of medical personnel. A similar situation can be found in many other cities of the northern region.

It would appear, however, that the new terms of economic management should force the managers of industrial enterprises to view public health in a new light. In the Khakass Autonomous Oblast, for instance, the state insurance fund saved more than a million rubles over the past two years as a result of a three per cent reduction in working time lost by illness, and the total economic savings amounted to three million rubles. Medicine was also a winner.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The sickness rate for dysentery and virus hepatitis is practically twice as high in the Yakut ASSR and in Krasnoyarsk Kray as the average for the Russian SFSR. In the last two and a half years alone, 17 outbreaks of acute intestinal infections have been recorded in Krasnoyarsk

Kray, caused by the local population's use of drinking water and food products of poor quality. The situation in Magadan Oblast and Kamchatka is no better.

Sovetskaya Rossiya
July 28, 1988
Page two (full text)

TRANSPORT AIR

"We Will Now Be Offering You" - On Board Service On Northern Flights

Magadan is linked by several scheduled flights with cities in the European part of the USSR. These flights are carried out by members of the aviation Party committees and by the crews employed by the Magadan Aviation Administration. It's a long trip and it's flown by our TU-154 aircraft, which touch down several times en route. Of course, while the planes are airborne between landings, the flight attendants offer the passengers refreshments. All very straightforward, it would seem. What could one find interesting to say about that? Just imagine, even here they have their problems, and it's about these problems that I want to write.

I'll start with the following example. The flight from Kemerovo to Yakutsk takes three hours and thirty five minutes. It would be logical to offer the passengers a hot meal on this section of the flight. It's also convenient for the stewardesses - they have enough time both to prepare and clear away afterward. However, those who schedule refreshments for flights considered it expedient to issue soft drinks for this flight, putting off the hot meal until the Yakutsk - Magadan stretch of the flight, which only lasts an hour and a half. In such a short time the passengers don't have enough time to finish their food in a civilized manner, nor do the stewardesses have enough time to serve the meals properly, since heating the meals alone takes fifty minutes. On the other hand, cold soft drinks at this point would be just right. Everything, however, comes out topsy-turvey.

This muddle isn't just an isolated case, it's characteristic of many long-distance flights. On the whole, the food for a flight is scheduled in accordance with instructions and in sufficient quantities. However, sometimes it makes no sense to schedule meals for particular sections of a flight. This probably happens because the flight attendants are not involved in drawing up timetables for on-board services. However, if their representatives were to take part at some stage it would be possible to avoid similar misunderstandings. Now they will soon be resuming the Magadan - Yakutsk - Kemerovo - Sverdlovsk - Donetsk flight. On the four segments of the flight we will be served Selection No. 1, a hot meal and soft drinks (twice). However, in all four instances, these refreshments are wrongly scheduled. Incidentally, among other explanations for this kind of logic was the fact that the refreshment unit at Kemerovo airport is not able, so they say, to provide a large plane with hot meals. I recently stopped in at the refreshment unit in order to find out why this should be so. And what did I learn? Well, it turned out that not only has the unit not refused to take on a larger amount of work, it is even interested in doing so in order to meet its planned work quotas successfully.

A totally incomprehensible situation has developed here with regard to fruit and vegetables. In the early spring, for example, in northern Yakutsk they start to offer fresh tomatoes and cucumbers on board. Apples are served almost all year round. At the same time at Simferopol', Krasnodar and even in Alma-Ata, you won't get any of these things even in summer or in the autumn. There they serve us pickled vegetables. One gets the impression that this is the way that these airports shabbily dispose of stale produce.

And here is yet another example of things being out of kilter: this spring the runway at Irkutsk was

closed for repairs and several of our flights had to be diverted to Novosibirsk. However, no one made any advance arrangements about refreshments. As a result both passengers and aircrews flew out of Novosibirsk hungry. And the situation won't be dealt with in a hurry, since to do anything requires both an order from Moscow and a greater degree of understanding with the local enterprises. All of that takes time.

Vozdushnyi Transport
July 19, 1988
Page 1 (full text)

New Style Of Management In Magadan Air Enterprise

The councils of workers' collectives were only created recently and it's early yet to speak about them as already organized management bodies. Nevertheless, they have already acquired some experience and have already learned some lessons. The Commander of the First Magadan Air Enterprise, A. Bashlachev, has just spoken to our correspondent, M. Il'ves, about these questions.

Alexander Ermolaevich how did the council at your enterprise get started? Did everything go smoothly?

"Of course not. For example, when the statute on the councils of workers' collectives had only just appeared, the airmen demanded that they should have greater representation on the new body. Their proposal was based on the principle of professional worth, on the fact that they are constantly flying out, and on the "natural losses" at meetings of the council, which arise from these enforced absences, etc. It was decided to discuss this question at the conference, at which the council was scheduled to be selected. The delegates to the conference rejected the principle of an unequal approach and showed the pilots that their argument was untenable. Thus, using a democratic approach to the various topics, other problems were also gradually settled."

So, the council was elected. How would you rate those who were chosen?

"They are quite a diverse lot. Among the council's forty members there are people who are very active types. They are not afraid of speaking the truth straight out and they have their own point of view and are ready to defend it anywhere and anytime. Then there are

business-like people and you can also rely on them too, although they are not so active as the first group. And last there are those who are simply dead-weights. They're the ones who say nothing and who only raise their hands to vote."

In the beginning you were elected chairman of the council of workers' collectives. Now, however, the council is headed by someone else. What is the reason for the change?

"I see both these decisions as logical. When the council had only just got started and had absolutely no experience in the management of the enterprise, the Party Committee thought it would be a good idea to nominate the commander of the united aviation squadron to the post of chairman of the council. You know, during that time the collective was faced with the highly difficult task of coping with perestroika /restructuring/. The enterprise's workers had to make the transition to a new pay system, to profit and loss accounting and to work out a new bonus system. Now those three tasks have been more or less dealt with, at least as far as the organizational planning side is concerned. It was in this connection that the question of replacing me arose. It's true that in this there was also a purely psychological aspect. The fact is that having one person filling both jobs, that is as commander of the enterprise and chairman of the council of workers' collectives creates the impression that democracy is being stifled and of a kind of rule by decree. That's because people tend to see me as above all an administrator. I felt this mood and put forward the suggestion that it was time for a change. Everybody agreed with the logic of that and three candidates were considered. The man finally chosen was a personnel manager from one of the aviation subsidiaries. There were absolutely no misunderstandings either during my re-election nor afterwards.

That's interesting, and what do you think the mood is now during the meetings of the council?

"In the first place, there is a kind of relief. I'm finding things a lot easier, since a lot of worries have now been removed from my shoulders. Moreover, you see things somewhat differently when you're part of the audience and that's also interesting. But the essence of the matter has remained the same and that is, that in order to defend your point of view you need serious discussions. That's the way it was before and that's the way it's going to continue."

Let's suppose that some worthy man gets elected to the council. In his regular job he looks great. Now, however, in his new capacity, he had to deal with things on an entirely new scale. Will he be up to that? Won't he bungle things when formulating questions?

"We felt that weakness right away. It's true that a member of the council has to have a wider economic point of view, otherwise he will not be able to understand in depth a lot of the problems which the enterprise must constantly face. For that reason we also organized a training course for the members of the council of workers' collectives. By the way, the initiative for that came from both sides. Specialists from our enterprise, working in collaboration with the members of the council, drew up the main documents, relating to our current situation. It's characteristic that the managers of the various services also took part in this work. We intend to continue with this approach."

I'm getting the impression that the councils of workers' collectives and the trade union committees of the enterprise haven't yet delineated sufficiently clearly their spheres of activity and in a number of instances both are working on the same problems...

"I entirely agree with you. We also have some duplication and muddling. For example, it's the council which looks at the results of the competition between the various services and the trade union committee reviews the results of the competition between the shifts employed at the airport. And there are more serious overlaps. Take the question of the distribution of housing. According to some documents, the specialists have given the council the right to priority access to housing, but, according to other documents, this right belongs to the trade union committee members. It seems to me that this division of functions is a question of time. It will gradually work out."

Recently I heard someone voice the opinion that the collective agreement between the administration and the workers' collective has now become out of date. The explanation was like this: while previously the enterprise was run by the administration, now, on the other hand, since the Law on State Enterprises came into force, the enterprise is run by the workers' collective itself, while the administration only applies the policies formulated by the council. What's your thinking on that point of view?

"I don't agree with that. The council of the workers' collective carries out the overall management of the activities of the enterprise, however, the legal unit is the administration. It's the administration, for example, which has the right to sign at the bank. That means that for me the form of the collective agreement doesn't seem to have outlived its usefulness."

As head of the administration are you satisfied with the work of your enterprise's council?

"Not completely. There are several points in this regard. First: you can feel a certain one-sidedness

in the work of the council. When, let's say, they are looking at the question of bonuses, everybody is very involved. Of course, that's understandable overall, since everyone has a personal stake in what's going on. However, why on earth are they uninvolved when it comes to discussing the serious question of the fate of the squadron of cargo planes, which arises because we are soon going to be writing off our AN-12's. Second: so far the council has been preoccupied with petty, everyday questions, for example, about sharing the bus. Is this really what the council was set up for? It should be considering long-term problems. Perhaps we, the administrators are responsible for this situation, since we don't present the council with serious subjects. And third: we have to get rid of the passive element, of those council members who essentially play the role of mere onlookers. And in this regard, it seems to me that the workers' collectives employed in the services sector should have their say. Above all, they don't need a non-participating, passive representative.

"However, if you combine all those points, than I woul say that our coucil so far has not experienced a taste for managing a business. They've got their feet a little wet, but on the whole the council members haven't yet become proprietors. But, you know, they are now, in fact, the actual proprietors."

Vozdushnyi Transport

July 14, 1988

Page 2 (full text)

Problems of the AN-2 Pilots

I read your article entitled "Not Counting on Luck" (Vozdushnyi transport, No. 153 of December 24, 1987) and it induced me to write this letter. My son flies an AN-2 and so I would be very grateful if some advice, guidelines, or solutions were provided on behalf of those working with small aircraft.

The Ministry considers them second-class aviators. I draw this conclusion from a number of facts. For instance, the lack of flight rations. The AN-2 crews fly over routes where, as a rule, there are no restaurants, and so the airmen on AN-2s practically go hungry the whole day. And it is no one's responsibility if the crew is fed or not. The restaurant at the detachment's base is often closed for renovation, so having flown in from one mission, they fly out again, hungry. I think that this is a crying shame.

And there is more. It is clear to everyone that you cannot work properly in Yakutia without special clothing, which is also prescribed for the pilots of AN-2s. They provide them with winter fur coats, but without hoods, or if they do provide them with hoods, then they do not provide them with spring/autumn flying suits. Surely you will agree that each special uniform is suitable only for certain weather conditions during the year in a place where winter is 50 below zero and windy - among themselves the aviators call the AN-2 a "flying draft." Nor are they now providing AN-2 pilots with leather jackets, although they did so previously. It has been three or four years since they put a ban on them. Not even the summer treats us kindly, so that a leather jacket is a necessity; it is not just a comfortable piece of clothing, it also contributes to flight safety. That is why it should be provided only to the flight crews of

small aircraft, and not to the clerical and administrative workers. Instead of a leather jacket, the pilot receives a poncho; just ask yourself, how well can you work in a poncho?

If the Ministry considers it disadvantageous for the branch to distribute special uniforms, then let them work out a means to provide a cash payment and fix a wearing term. Then when the term expires, the flight crews could acquire new special clothing. These are long-standing problems, and while they are working on the problem of housing, no one is taking responsibility for these other matters. The detachment commander and the administration are simply unable to solve these problems.

Something about myself - I am a bus driver for an aviation enterprise. That is why I see a lot and have an opportunity to speak at length with aviators, man-to-man - not about work, but sometimes we discuss work. So, I am aware that many aviators are suffering from gastro-intestinal problems and catch colds because of these unsolved problems.

Vozdushnyi Transport
July 18, 1988
Page 3 (full text)

Too Many Regulations In Air Industry

I am not alone - many employees of Aeroflot have certainly been agitated by those lines in the report of the CC CPSU referring to the lack of headway made by the new economic methods of management and to the opposition of the bureaucratic apparatus to changes in the direction of democratic leadership.

"Economic reform would be much better implemented, if there were not so much tenacious conservatism in the management apparatus," noted M.S. Gorbachev. "The command and the administration cling stubbornly to their positions. When we are engaged in the practical application of reforms, we actually feel the resistance of the forces of inertia, and this leads at times to the adoption of half-way, compromise, and often inappropriate, solutions."

What has been said applies directly to us. Who can attempt to calculate the number of regulations that govern the work of flight personnel? Dozens? Hundreds? Or even thousands? It is even conceivable to read and to observe all of them? Assuming that there is an objective basis for them, what exactly must a pilot know in order to complete a flight successfully?

"[Propellor] pitch is exactly five degrees" - do we adhere to the instructions of air control, even though the radar screen of the Mi-3 indicates ten? And what is the value of numerous guidelines such as the "Methods for pre-descent preparation for helicopters of the Tyumen Directorate of Civil Aviation," which, even though it contradicts Flight Manual GA-85, is nevertheless in force. The feeling is that they do not exist for the benefit of operations, but as proof of the indispensability of the notorious regulative apparatus. I

am not against regulations in general, but a strict, orderly, well-conceived system is required in order to produce them.

Or take the augmented role of labor collectives in aviation. There are decrees and there are also nice-sounding words. Well, we met in the sub-unit to report and to elect a detachment commander. "No!" said the directorate. In an effort to improve operational effectiveness, we attempted to switch over to the team [zveno] structure - and again a sharp "No!" It would be all right if someone were to try and convince us of its unsuitability and to demonstrate that the administrative superstructure in the form of the squadron command is a vital necessity.

"But who will do the paperwork?" was the trump card thrown out by Yu. Evreinov, Deputy Head of the Tyumen Directorate of Civil Aviation. We heard his voice setting out a number of other arguments, but it seemed to us that it was exactly this paperwork that worried the directorate apparatus.

Where is the fairness in this? We are allowed to participate when the fate of the nation is being decided - this has been shown quite clearly by the key points put forward by the CG at the Party conference. But when the issue is our own professional work - everything that we have learned and the work we have been doing all our adult lives - they tell us "no!"

Vozdushnyi Transport

July 7, 1988

Page 1 (full text)

"Overhead" Losses: And Without Them?

While preparing a report to the directorate on defects in the organization of fruit shipments, I listened to the address that M.S. Gorbachev delivered to the XIX All-Union Party Conference on the radio in my office. That is surely why the part about the food distribution program evoked such a warm and immediate response from me: it corresponded quite accurately with the facts that I was setting out at that moment on the unemotional paper.

We do, in fact, lose so much of the early fruit and vegetable crop during the process of transporting it. I recently had occasion to make the flight from Tashkent to Nadym with tomatoes on board. The packaging was so poor and damaged that it could not withstand the simple operation of loading and unloading before departure and on arrival. We waited for more than an hour and a half on the freight handlers' platform. They finally showed up, but the situation did not improve: the unloading went on for seven hours. And when they had finally freed the last pallet of crates, about twenty or twenty-five kilograms of pressed "fruit of the south" remained on the floor - they scraped it out of the plane with a shovel.

I will not bother to calculate the money lost because of the huge Il-76's downtime and the loss of products delivered to the Arctic from 2500 kilometres away. But those tomatoes might have fed an entire children's nursery for a week - there is the real cost!

That is only one flight, only one fact. Every one of my comrades can relate ten such. Hours of waiting in Severomorsk, for the simple reason that they have not provided for the departure of flights at night; we wait a long time for a place to park at Rostov-on-Don; in some other places there is nowhere for the flight crews to rest (Severomorsk is one of these places, as an example).

And the operational equipment? We wait hours for unloading because the necessary mechanization does not exist at many airports. There are not only no conveyers, there are not even simple pallets, which could be interchanged without detaining the airplane at the platform. But at least things have improved - earlier we used to end up delivering crushed sweet-scented strawberry mush to Khabarovsk instead of strawberries.

Not all of these troubles should be blamed on our clients. We airmen are also in a position to do something about the just criticism contained in the speech [by M.S. Gorbachev]. We have the ability to do a lot to arrange fruit shipments properly. They have been able to organize the work excellently in Nefteyugansk; why not everywhere?

Vozdushnyi Transport

July 7, 1988

Page 1 (Slightly abridged)

New Methods Needed To Develop Northern Aviation

There will probably be more questions than answers in this article - even more than in the letter that arrived at the editor's office in the name of the Party organization at the airport of Sovetskii: What shall we do when the staff is not adequate for the present volume of work? How can we accelerate the reconstitution and expansion of the collective's supplies? And finally, how do we untie the tight knot that has been wound around residential space for the last ten or fifteen years?

It goes without saying that it would be marvellous if a reporter could go and visit V. Illarionov, the Commander of the Ural Aviation Enterprise, under whose jurisdiction Sovetskii falls, or to G. Laskin, the Head of the Tyumen Directorate, and if these two could - perhaps not at once, but maybe in a month or so - provide answers

to all these questions. But if they already had the answers, they would not be hiding them in a desk drawer. After all, these problems are also their problems.

It happens like that - often quite independently of our wishes - what was once a secondary issue is suddenly in the foreground and becomes a major issue. And the decision that is taken today decides not just the fate of one small group of workers, but how work will be performed in the future.

Here is how V. Sidorenko, the Deputy Head of the Tyumen Directorate of Civil Aviation in charge of ground services, began his commentary on the letter, a little dismissively:

"Three years ago I was not faced with any such problems. The more you built, the better the ratings. Now, you also have to consider the efficiency with which you build and how profitable the work is after it has been completed. It has to be admitted that at this time we are not always prepared for such a turn of events."

In similar fashion, the roots of the present troubles facing this northern community can be found in this discrepancy between "yesterday" and "today." Indeed, it was as far back as ten years ago, when renovation of the airport at Sovetskii had just started, that the situation began to appear problematic. About 70,000 individuals live in the rayon; there is a rail link to Sverdlovsk, from whence the routes fan out to all corners of the Soviet Union. It had been said that a runway capable of accommodating the Tu-154 and the Il-76 was needed in order to service the complex of pipelines that linked the industry of the North with the central regions of the Soviet Union. Today, no one even mentions such a need, since there are other airfields all along the way, which have taken over the brunt of air shipments.

The program received a new impetus, however, when oil deposits began to turn up on the Krasnoleninskaya arch, some two hundred kilometers from Sovetskii. A stream of shift workers gushed forth from dozens of cities and Urai, in whose zone of responsibility the promising oil field was located, simply became choked up. Then work on the new airfield was given top priority and it was transferred from the jurisdiction of the Tyumen Aviation Enterprise to that of Urai.

At the same time, yet another new airport was laid out at Nyangan', a new supply town for the oil workers. According to the plan, it should receive its first aircraft, AN-26s, by autumn of this year - and the client being served is already mentally visualizing the arrival of larger aircraft. What does it matter if, in practical terms, there is already another airport just a three-hour train journey away. The oil workers need their own - millions of rubles have already been appropriated and partially spent.

There is another point of view, however, and it is weighty enough to be worth giving some consideration under the new conditions of economic management. It was clearly formulated in a letter addressed to the directorate by M. Grinyuk, the First Deputy Commander of the Urai Aviation Enterprise: "In 1988 the balance sheet of the enterprise will acquire the fixed capital assets for the airports at Sovetskii (13.459 million rubles) and Nyagan' (12.318 million rubles); but no increase is anticipated in the volume of shipping, since most of what comes to these airports will consist of the teams of shift workers that are already in existence."

The result of this is that the enterprise will not be able to support its operations on its own and, consequently, it is urgently necessary to increase its budgeted expenses and its staff strength. In other words,

if the directorate does not take a hand in the matter, the addition of these fixed capital assets - 26 million rubles that will come to rest on the shoulders of the enterprise - will simply undermine the economic and operational stability of the enterprise.

Do we really need to add that neither this letter nor other letters in a similar vein received any answer at Urai? This, too, was one of the reasons for the letter to the editor from the airport workers at Sovetskii.

It cannot be said that they did not look for a way out on their own in this instance. By reducing staff at other airports subordinate to them, they increased the staff at Sovetskii. Team contracting was a great help, but even it was not able to plug all the holes. In 1985 Sovetskii handled just under 39,000 passengers, and last year almost two and a half times that number. And it did this with the staff of an airport of the fourth category, using four individuals for each passenger service shift.

"And how are we supposed to help?" - the astonishment in the Labor and Wages Department of the directorate was genuine, "Those are the problems of the Urai enterprise."

In another office they advised me not to get mixed up in this matter at all - as if the problems would simply go away by themselves if we all shut our eyes. But how can you remain silent when an answer is demanded by the Party organization of a member airport and by the workers at the main airport as well? How can you remain silent when, at the latest, one year after the Yamburg airport comes on stream, these same questions will be raised at Nadym?

On the one hand, these are the natural costs associated with the deliberate provision of air services

in the region. On the other hand, however, it is the result of the weak influence that the airmen themselves have on the matter. The primary task is the comprehensive and complete satisfaction of the region's air support requirements. But to day there is also profit-and-loss accounting.

Nevertheless, the situation is not that hopeless. Sovetskii itself has raised the suggestion that it separate from Urai and become an independent structural unit of the directorate.

"Would you be able to cope?" I asked.

"We are convinced of it," answered V. Ponomarev, the head of the airport. "In just two months our Pankhov squadron earned more than a million in revenue. The fact that we don't have any benefit from this money is another matter..."

There are other proposals - to limit the landing strip and the facilities at Nyangan' to accommodating the AN-26 and the Yak-40, for example, while allowing at the same time the Yak-42 and the Tu-134 at Sovetskii. But this is seen only as a way to even the flow of shift workers and this solution would only benefit Sovetskii; the Urai enterprise would not gain anything from it.

Let us pause for a moment at this point. It is chiefly the aviators themselves who must work out the problem at the directorate level. We have strewn this article with questions for another purpose: in order to draw attention to this "obstruction"; in order to say, at last, that today the former, primarily extensive, methods of developing Tyumen aviation are, if not untenable, at least problematic, and that they have become so as a result of the new conditions of economic management. It seems that today it is not enough simply to agree with the

proposals of the gas, the oil, and the construction workers. Their solutions may even be good ones, considering the concrete situation just the way it stands today - just as it was good at one time to have an Il-76 squadron at Roshchina. But now that it has become such a burden for the other Tyumen aviation enterprises, no one cares about it.

This had to be aired not only because the oblast map shows other such problems, but also because it is important not to create more of these problems in the future - let us say, for instance, in the process of opening up the Yamal Peninsula, on the threshold of which construction and gas workers and airmen are now poised. The peninsula is scheduled to begin producing gas in 1991, but to this day no harmonious concept for air service exists. And is this so far removed from the errors that were committed at Sovetskii?

Four months ago, I had occasion to interview the head of a branch of Gosplan USSR, E. Altunin, the Chairman of the Co-ordinating Commission for Western Siberia. At that time, he rather categorically stated: "Complications in the construction of airports will continue until the people involved in aviation themselves assume the responsibilities for initiating and managing the work. Both the oil and the gas industries are willing to transfer the necessary funds to the Tyumen Directorate of Civil Aviation. Then let the Directorate get to work!"

Vozdushnyi Transport

July 9, 1988

Page 1 (full text)

The Flight Simulator - A Real Aid Or A Bureaucratic Diversion?

"One hundred and twenty-one, execute a left turn; bank fifteen degrees." The calm, muffled voice of the air controller was matched by the same calm action of the navigator turning "on a dime." This same operation was repeated a minute and a half later, only to the right. It is a bore, but nothing can be done about it. They think that we couldn't go on existing without it. In this case, "it" is really an Mi-8 helicopter simulator - just an electronic toy; indeed, the kind which my son loved "to fly" when he was about five years old.

"One hundred and twenty-one, after flying past the far actuator, keep tracking without descending onto the runway." Why can't we do something just a little bit different for a change? Once more, like always, there will be a "failure of both engines in flight." Perhaps they will change their minds? No, the lights on the board over there were already lit up. Did we make it? Of course not; we overshot the runway limits. This simulator is a "marvel of technology" only on paper; in actual use, it cannot simulate hovering nor a soft landing - only descents and "manoeuvres" in the flight zone...

"Korotkov, Petr Borisovich; an instructor pilot for Mi-6 helicopters from the Nyurba Aviation Enterprise, Yakutia," said my neighbor in the plane by way of introduction, settling back into his seat with obvious satisfaction. "I've rested up for ten days; now it is time to go back to work."

"You were on vacation?"

"Oh, no. On the simulator. We don't have our own in Nyurba, so they send us on down to Tyumen. On the

other hand, it's clearly not too bad: you spend some 40 days a year on it, and they send you to the big city by air for free. On the other hand, when you think of the cost involved for the state, you are simply ashamed. There are a hundred of us helicopter pilots in Byurba. Multiply that by the cost of a round-trip ticket to Tyumen and then add on the travelling allowances, the operation expenses, and the other money spent on that training contraption. A crazy sum of money! And all for what? To play with some controls in the cockpit. I have been sitting in cockpits for thirty years, so I am pretty well familiar with them."

"But, emergency situations? I guess they are rare in actual practice, fortunately."

"Of course. And, you know, you can work out these situations in an ordinary mock-up, in other words, in a real cockpit with a tapped in power supply and a console for providing on-off commands. Every training detachment has such cockpits, and it is not a great problem for any amateur engineer to set up something similar all by himself, if he wants to. Provide only one-tenth of what is spent on all this jaunts to Tyumen and that cockpit will 'fly' right into a place in the training class - even without a pilot to guide it."

We had a laugh, and then I recalled my recent meeting with an old friend; he is a pilot in the detachment at Yakutsk - and I met him in Moscow!

"I am flying to Tyumen to use the simulator."

"Huh!?!?"

"Don't even ask. I could have flown by way of Novosibirsk, but they have only three flights a week from there to Tyumen, so the higher ups decided that it would

be better to go by way of Moscow - they might even have sent me by way of New York, if they could have gotten hold of the tickets..."

He is a good pilot, this old acquaintance of mine, and I know that he takes his work seriously. But the years have frozen him in this attitude of "do what you are told and don't ask questions." What could you do to thaw him out of it, now?

"Out of seven 'sixes' [Mi-6s] lost in yakutia," continued Petr Borisovich, "five - and this is the absolute truth - ended up in accidents though pilot error. And they had all passed their simulator training with excellent marks. This means that the simulator system failed; it is only pretend, and sitting in the peaceful simulator cockpit does not prepare you for the real thing - when your helicopter is jerking and bouncing around. Such toys are diversions that enable some people [bureaucrats - Tr.] to say: 'We did everything that we were supposed to; it was the crew that could not cope and ended up in a mess.' The truth is that one of the primary causes of all air accidents is the inadequate training and poor preparation of the flight personnel, and this is even doubly true of [training for] a harsh climate. Whether this is deliberate or not is another matter. The important point is that the crew was not prepared because they had been hemmed in by hundreds of restrictions of all kinds [i.e. they were told what to do and how to do it so there was never any question of initiative--Tr.], which isolated them from reality.

Since my meeting [with Petr Borisovich] in the plane, I can't keep certain thoughts out of my head: yes, the laws of the air are written in blood; yes, the pioneer airmen, the real aces, paid a high price for them. But the code of the air should not be fettered with a dense layer of bureaucratic red tape produced by a rather large

number of authoritative papers that have been "created" only in order to justify the existence of the paper pusher, who understands quite clearly that if he does not come up with something new, people may ask if he actually serves any useful purpose - and so he "comes up with something."

And so we have the simulator - and for years pilots have been flying from all around the country, paying out millions for someone else's cautious apathy. Thousands of passengers remain stranded on the ground in order to satisfy the play-it-safe types who are trying to protect themselves from real work.

If we are going to learn, then we are going to learn in such a way as to obtain some real benefits - we are not going to learn anything by playing pretend on a simulator that is only a toy.

Vozdushnyi Transport

July 26, 1988

Page 3 (full text)

The Helicopters Are Grounded

An extraordinary situation has developed on the air routes between Nadym, Yamburg, and the new energy bridgeheads on the Yamal Peninsula. More than half of the Helicopters that are concentrated in and on call in this important region have found themselves grounded due to a shortage of aviation fuel. Meanwhile, the tanker Ob of the Irtys River Steamship Line has been standing idle on the route to Ob Bay while in the process of delivering 2600 tonnes of fuel. This shipment represents almost a six-month supply for the helicopters of the Nadym Combined Aviation Detachment.

"Departmental ambitions are interfering with things," responded I. Dendymarchenk, the head of Yamburg Airport. "The construction and the gas industries can't agree on the transfer of the local depot of fuel and lubricants [from the former to the latter]..."

It turned out that the fuel depot belonged to the "Yamburggazpromstroi" Trust, which is concurrently outfitting a new depot for fuel and lubricants, which meets all operational and health requirements. Not long ago, the labor commission finally signed the authorization for its acceptance. Meanwhile, the construction industry, having closed up shop in Yamburg, is gradually regrouping on the Yamal Peninsula. Then up popped the question: who will be the new manager of the fuel warehouse?

"They decided to transfer this facility to the gas industry," explained A. Pribov, the head of the production and technical servicing and outfitting depot of "Tyumen'gazsnabkomplekt." "But we have neither the staffing schedule nor the capacity to correct some defects as required by the state commission: in brief, as long as the wrangling continues, the shift-team relay of gas, construction, and transport workers cannot fly out of Nadym. The intermediate fuel supply stations in the settlement of Nyda are down to zero. Even Yamburg itself, where the helicopters that carry personnel and freight to the Bovanenkovskoe field fill up their tanks, has a minimum of aviation fuel on hand, and it is earmarked for air search and rescue operations."

"A week ago, I sent off a telegram to the management of 'Glavtyumen'gazprom' about the catastrophic fuel situation," said A. Mezhenin, Deputy Chairman of the Yamburg Settlement Soviet, "but we have yet to receive any kind of response from them, let alone an answer..."

Vozdushnyi Transport

July 30, 1988

Page 1 (full text)

TRANSPORT RAIL

Complaints About Rail Services

How inter-industry communications fail to operate at transport trans-shipment points and who is responsible for this failure.

The river ports of the towns of Tyumen', Tobol'sk, Surgut, Labytnangi and the settlement of Sergino are the points where the Ob'-Irtysh River Steamship Line comes into contact with various sub-divisions of the USSR Ministry of Railways, mainly those coming under the Sverdlovsk Railway Administration. It is at these points that freight for the rapidly growing Western-Siberian oil and gas industry is transshipped from railway cars into the holds and onto the decks of river-going ships.

It is really regrettable that even today at these transshipment points one can hear the depressing squawk arising from the lack of co-ordination prevailing in the business contacts between the two partners in this operation, which is so important to the national economy.

In the first quarter of this year 195,000 tonnes of freight were due to be shipped by rail to the river ports managed by the Ob'-Irtysh River Steamship Line. Before the shipping season opened only 110,000 tonnes of freight had actually arrived at the wharves of these Western-Siberian rivers. Nor were the figures for April satisfactory, when only two thirds of the planned amount of freight was actually delivered. Among shipments for the enterprises belonging to the Western-Siberian oil industry there was a shortfall of 12,000 tonnes of reinforced concrete, 49,000 tonnes of crushed rock and 7,000 tonnes each of metal and concrete.

This is how the Director of the Freight and Commercial Operations Service of the Ob'-Irtysh River Steamship Line, B. Smolyakov, describes the situation:

"On October 29th, 1987, the State Supply Committee of the USSR Council of Ministers decreed that 1,085,000 tonnes of freight should be accumulated during the period between shipping seasons at the riverside agency centres alone. However, by the 1st May only slightly more than half this amount had been stockpiled. Among those who lagged behind in their deliveries to Tobol'sk, Labytnangi and Sergino were the Ministry of Oil and Gas Industry Construction Works and the Ministry of Ural and Siberian Construction Works. The USSR Ministry of Geology delivered only 65,000 tonnes of the the 225,000 tonnes of freight they were expected to ship to the rivermen."

The shipping season has begun in the Ob'-Irtysh basin. The rivermen are moving out the freight which built up over the winter, while rail shipments are hardly moving at all. So, are the ships supposed to set out empty? There is one solution: to put some financial pressure on the guilty parties. But that's been tried already. In the first quarter of the year the Sverdlovk railway Administration had to pay out one hundred and one thousand roubles. However, this fining system did not eliminate the transport mess. The railway men quickly passed the cost of the fines on to the suppliers of the freight. And everyone is satisfied, except, of course, the rivermen. The freight has never arrived on time, after all, and it still doesn't.

Now it is the turn of the State Supply Committee of the USSR Council of Ministers. Incidentally, on the twelfth of May an urgent message was sent to the committee, to the Deputy Chairman, B. Yakovlev. He acted also in the name of the USSR Minister of Railways, N.

Konarev and the Minister of the River Fleet of the Russian SFSR, L. Bagrov. This document, which was signed by the Director of the Ob'-Irtysk Steamship Line, A. Lyuft, expresses concern about the fact that, in particular, the ports where freight is transshipped from railway cars to ships, specifically at Tyumen', Tobol'sk and Surgut, are at a standstill. The "Uralasbest" Combine and the Bogdanovicheskii, Pezhevskii and Pervoyural'skii crushed rock quarries have wrecked the April freight shipment plan. The shipment of fertilizers from the Sudogda Quarry Administration run by the USSR Ministry of Construction Materials is highly unsatisfactory. Shipments of cement are being held up by the Novotroitskii, Korkinskii, Sukholozhskii and Zhigulevskii cement plants, which are run by the Ministry of Industrial Construction Materials.

The Tyumen' rivermen are expecting a solution to this problem, first and foremost from the authorities of the State Supply Committee of the USSR Council of Ministers and of the Ministry of the Railways. This extremely difficult situation has apparently developed because of the fact that the plans for distributing railway cars to the factories and plants - the suppliers of the freight - are usually only announced by the Sverdlovsk and other railway administrations around about the eighth to the tenth of the month in which they are already supposed to deliver the freight to the river ports. But, before that time no one ships off anything to the rivermen.

Then again, here is yet another paradoxical fact. At the village of Kharp in the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, not far from the Labytnangi railway station, alongside which is located the river port of the same name, the "Yamalneftegazzhelezobeton" Industrial Association manufactures construction elements for the enterprises and organizations of the Western Siberian oil and gas industries. It would seem that the simplest thing

to do would be to take the reinforced concrete items produced by the Association, load them onto railway flatcars and ship them off by rail from Kharp to the neighbouring town of Laybtagi. From there you transship them onto ships and dispatch them to the customers, who are setting up the oil and gas-producing fields and who are investigating the underground resources of the Yamal and Ob' basin regions. Not at all!

In fact, the "Yamalneftegazhelezobeton" Association of the Ministry of Oil and Gas Industry Construction Works loads its goods onto railway cars, which are then dispatched via Kotlas - Kirov - Tyumen' and Tobol'sk to Novyi Urengoi. And the rail system of the Ministry of Railways isn't even involved. In fact they use the tracks of the Temporary Exploitation Department of the Ministry of Transport-Related Construction Works to Yamburg. This goes on all year round.

What kind of economic accounting system can we be dealing with here? Moreover, there is a temporary agreement between the Ob'-Irtysk Steamship Line and the Northern Railway Administration on the stockpiling of freight for transshipment from rail to river at the river port of Labytagi. However, the railmen are not living up to this agreement.

The situation at the river port of Sergino is the same. The port is located at the eastern end of the railway line, which runs from the Central Urals /Srednyi Ural/ to the Ob', where the rails run right up to the left bank of this great river. Naturally, the gas and oil field workers, the geologists and other specialists employed by the Ministries' enterprises and by various other agencies, who are involved in developing the Western Siberian oil and gas industries, expect that their freight will arrive from Sergino, however...

This is not the first year now that the river port has been operating at ten to fifteen percent of its operational capacity.

On the nineteenth of January this year the question of speeding up the opening of the port of Sergino for the transshipment of freight was discussed in the presence of representatives of the USSR Ministry of Railways, the USSR Ministry of Transport-Related Construction Works, the USSR Ministry of the Gas Industry and the Ministry of the River Fleet of the Russian SFSR. Those present took note of the announcement made by the Ministry of the River Fleet of the Russian SFSR with regard to the fact that its second phase development for the reception of freight for transshipment from rail to water transport was ready. It was also proposed that the Sverdlovsk Railway Administration, in collaboration with the Ob'-Irtysk River Steamship Line, should provide for the transshipment of construction industry freight at the port of Sergino in the 1988 plan. This would cover the declared amount of freight on the basis of the temporary agreement.

Moreover, at the beginning of this year a document was sent to the Ob'-Irtysk Steamship Line from the Deputy Minister of Railways, F. Fadeev. The document stated that "with the aim of utilizing the facilities, the Ministry of Railways believes it would be possible to carry out the transshipment of construction industry freight on the basis of the temporary agreement following current practices". As far as the rivermen are concerned, they set about carrying out these solutions.

Moreover, in March, a representative of the Ob'-Irtysk Steamship Line visited the Ministry of Railways with the idea of co-ordinating activities. But the horse is still in the stable, as they say. The State Supply Committee of the USSR Council of Ministers gave the port

of Sergino the task of stockpiling 80,000 tonnes of freight during the intershipping season, that is during the winter. In fact, something less than half that amount of freight was actually delivered. As a result, there is machinery standing idle at Sergino and many workers there are underemployed. At the same time, freight destined for the Western Siberian oil and gas industries, located in the region right next to the port of Sergino, travels via the Trans-Siberian railway to Omsk, where it is transshipped to boats to make the return journey to the region of Sergino.

In a word, even now the uncoiled wheels, so to speak, of the agreement between the parties involved in the transshipment of freight from railway cars to ships, are still squeaking.

Vodnyi Transport
July 19, 1988
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Vodnyi Transport
July 23, 1988
Page 1 (full text)

Cargo Ahead of Schedule

The steamer 'Nikol' has opened the Arctic shipping season five days ahead of schedule. The northerners have received food supplies, industrial goods, building materials, and all other equipment. The large transport ship does its work at the headwaters, river estuaries then transport the goods to settlements located in the basins of the Lena, Kolyva, Indigirka, and Yana rivers.

Vodnyi Transport
July 26, 1988
Page 1 (full text)

TRANSPORT WATER

Shipping In The Arctic

A considerable amount of shipping has arrived at the Arctic port of Novyi Port. Its roadstead has seen the beginning of the annual operation of transshipping large-diameter pipes from ocean-going ships to barges, which then carry them to Nadym and Yamburg. The first consignment of pipes, weighing a total of 18,000 tonnes, has been brought from Western Europe to Ob Bay by the dry-cargo vessels Pioner Severodvinska, Arkhangel'sk, Pioner Kazakhstan, and Tiksi.

Some 14,000 tonnes have been reloaded and sent off to Nadym ahead of schedule.

A total of 400,000 tonnes of steel cargo is scheduled for handling at the Novyi Port roadstead during this shipping season; the construction workers engaged at the new, high-capacity main gas lines in northern Tyumen are anxiously awaiting these shipments.

Vodnyi Transport

July 23, 1988

Page 1 (full text)

Cargo Ahead Of Schedule

The steamship Nikel' has opened the Arctic shipping season to Tiksi five days ahead of schedule. The northerners have received food supplies, industrial goods, building material, and all terrain equipment. The large transport ship does its work at the roadstead; river vessels then transport the goods to settlements located in the basins of the Lena, Kolyma, Indigirka, and Yana rivers.

Vodnyi Transport

July 26, 1988

Page 1 (full text)

MISCELLANEOUS

Water Against Water

Experts from the Novosibirsk Institute of Mining, Siberian Section of the USSR Academy of Sciences, and miners from the Sibtrud Industrial Association [obedinenie] have developed an original means of dampening a shock wave by using special bulkheads.

The construction of the bulkheads is exceedingly simple and reliable, and they can be used repeatedly. The bulkhead is constructed of a frame that consists of a cable net with large pockets in which large containers made of elastic material are situated. The containers are filled with water. When a shock wave breaks the elastic material, it is dampened, and the water simply drains off without causing any damage. This device (certificate of invention No. 754088), which can find application in the mining industry, in construction, and in other branches of the economy, has already saved the miners of Sibtrud a hundred thousand rubles.

Stroitel'naya Gazeta
July 19, 1988
Page 3 (full text)

We Will Write The Region's Biography Ourselves

"Thanks to deliberate measures to develop the natural riches of the Kola Peninsula, Murmansk Oblast has been transformed into an economically developed region of the country. A mighty mining complex has been created

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.

In September 1927, the province became a district and was included in Leningrad Oblast. Although Murmansk was called a city at that time, it was underpopulated (10,000 residents), made of wood and dirty.

The creation of the Murmansk district and the all-round help of the country and Leningrad speeded up the development of Khibiny, the creation of a fishing industry and the formation of a working class in the Trans-Polar region. But centralization of the economy and remoteness from Leningrad in many cases hindered effective decision making and made Murmansk district a difficult-to-manage part of Leningrad Oblast. The question of separating the Murmansk district was again the order of the day.

On May 28th, 1938, Murmansk Oblast' was created by an Order of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

And just what was Murmansk Oblast? It was 127,000 km² in area with a population of about 300,000. Over the last 50 years, the population of the Kola Peninsula has just about quadrupled and is now 1,138,000. Eleven major cities have sprung up in the oblast, including 8 of oblast subordination, five regions and more than 20 workers' settlements. Our oblast can be called one of the most "urban" in the country. The structure of the local Soviets has changed accordingly, although their number remains practically the same.

In 50 years, the total industrial output has grown about 23 times. The value of fixed assets as of January 1st, 1988 was 19 billion rubles.

The railway, which connected the capital of the Soviet Trans-Polar region with the rest of the country, has played an enormous, if not to say decisive role in the development of the area. Constructed during the First

World War for strategic purposes to provide access to the Barents Sea, which does not freeze over, it remained little used. Only since the Revolution did the main line take on a second life, becoming the main artery for the rapid development of the inexhaustible wealth of the Kola Peninsula.

A mighty factor in advancing the development of the management of the railway was the decree "On prospects for the development of Murmansk and the reconstruction of the Murmansk railway" adopted in January 1932 by the Sovnarkom. The basis of reconstruction was electrification, which was carried out as a rapid pace. Trains had already begun to run between Kandalaksha and Apatity Station by November 7th, 1935. These trains were drawn by the first Soviet locomotives of the VL19 series. A new page was turned in the development of the railway - electrification, which was followed by the construction of secondary lines, and the introduction of the most up-to-date signals and automation.

The industries connected with the mining and processing of minerals developed at a rapid tempo on the Kola Peninsula. The Kola Peninsula is a preserve of minerals: of the three thousand minerals known to science, more than eight hundred have been found here, some of which are unique in their associations and economic importance.

The effort and resources invested in the development of the natural resources of the Kola Peninsula have made it possible to develop its productive forces. Now Khibiny is being succeeded by the no less wealthy Kaivy. The oblast is becoming an oil-producer.

We could not imagine our life without the sea. Since the late 20s, the Oblast has become the country's fish getter.

The Kola Peninsula is a gigantic construction site. Major combines, factories and plants, homes, schools and hospitals, power plants, roads and agricultural sites, stores, cinemas, Palaces of Culture, etc., have been built. But the development of the social sector has so far been unable to satisfy us. We live in difficult climatic and geographic conditions, remote from the center and we have to do everything we can to see that the residents of the region are able to develop their creative potential so that they do not feel like transients in the North.

There are other problems too in the development of our Oblast. The pace and efficiency of production in many sectors must be improved. We must eliminate the disproportion between the expansion of the production of primary raw resources and the development of a processing industry. There are many problems connected with the ecology.

All of this was pointed out by the General Secretary of the CC of the CPSU, M.S. Gorbachev during a visit to our Oblast, when he awarded Murmansk the Order of Lenin and the "Gold Star" Medal. These high awards are a tribute to the exceptional courage of the soldiers who fought on the Murmansk front and also the toilers who made up the heroic rear.

In response to the concerns of the party and government about the economic and social development of Murmansk Oblast, the toilers of the Soviet Trans-Polar region, by the year 2000, will increase industrial output by at least 1.7-1.8 fold and agricultural output by at least 1.7 fold. The volume of production of consumer goods and services will nearly triple.

Particular attention is being paid to improving the level of integrated utilization of the natural

resources of the Kola Peninsula, including the output of the mining and fishing complex. The transition to a new system of management of enterprises will do much to further this.

All of us Murmanskers understand that the future of our Oblast is tied up with perestroika which is now unfolding in the country. To provide the people with decent housing, high-quality services and goods and food - this is only possible by seeking unusual approaches, overcoming stereotypes and by constantly improving. And we are up to the job.

Gudok

July 7, 1988

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A Heat Wave In The "Cold Belt"

Unusually hot days have been occurring in Yakutia. These are the first such high temperatures to be recorded there in many years. In Yakutsk and in the villages of Amga and Borogontsy, for example, it is 38 degrees in the shade, while it is 36 degrees in the city of Verkhoyansk in the "cold belt."

This same kind of heat wave now predominates in almost all of the agricultural districts of the Yakut ASSR, creating serious difficulties in procuring feeds. In the sun, the temperature exceeds the fifty degree mark.

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