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TRANSPORT RAIL

in the continent of Antarctica, some one hundred kilometres from the shores of the Southern Ocean. Thirty-two icebergs and icebergs are stationed there. They are Antarctic Expedition are stationed there. They are

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corresponding to the Antarctic and who has long been our regular correspondent. He receives one of his regular

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MISCELLANEOUS

Leningrad inlet, constitutes a unique sea gateway to scientific settlements. It's from here that men and supplies are forwarded to the oasis by ships MI-8 and MI-9. The latter vehicles often make the trip along a difficult ice route, which runs between the crevasses.

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In the course of the last season, the last of the expedition's ships to set a course for the Far South was the diesel-electric "Mikhail Somov", holder of the Order of the Red Banner of Labour. On board were a group of scientists and specialists from two fraternal socialist countries and their equipment. The main field of operations for the crew, led by that experienced polar captain, F. Fed'yakov, was the ice coaking at Cape Ostyri.

The ship reached her destination at the height of the Antarctic autumn. The crew ran into a storm in the Lazarev Sea and this developed into a hurricane. The wind-speed sometimes reached forty to fifty metres a second. The ship tore herself away from her ice anchors and was forced to go back out to

THE ANTARCTIC

The Sea Gateway To Antarctica

Deep in the continent of Antarctica, some one hundred kilometres from the shores of the Southern Ocean, lies the oasis of Schirmacher Ponds. Thirty two members of the Thirty Third Soviet Antarctic Expedition are stationed there. They are led by V. Shirshov, who has spent seven winter seasons in Antarctica and who has long been our correspondent. Recently we receive one of his regular radio reports.

"Not far from us is the first Antarctic station to be set up by the German Democratic Republic. The German station is named in honour of the famous German scientist Georg Forster. The station was established in October of last year with the help of Soviet polar experts. Cape Ostryi, on Leningrad inlet, constitutes a unique sea gateway to the two scientific settlements. It's from here that men and supplies are forwarded to the oasis by ships' MI-8 helicopters and by snowmobile convoys. The latter vehicles often make the trip along a difficult ice route, which runs between the crevasses.

In the course of the last season, the last of the expedition's ships to set a course for the Far South was the diesel-electric "Mikhail Somov", holder of the Order of the Red Banner of Labour. On board were a group of scientists and specialists from two fraternal socialist countries and their equipment. The main field of operations for the crew, led by that experienced polar captain, F. Pec'yakov, was the ice mooring at Cape Ostryi.

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sea, where she was carefully manoeuvred among the drifting icebergs. For ten days the elements rendered this large-scale transport operation very difficult. No sooner had the weather calmed down, then the "Mikhail Somov" found herself once more moored off the Lazarev shelf-glacier barrier, where she proceeded with her unloading operations.

We went on with the helicopter-transport operation begun earlier, carrying the men, the scientific equipment and vegetables, including potatoes, off to the oasis. For almost a whole day and night the seamen worked in friendly accord with the polar men and with the helicopters, piloted by S. Maslov and A. Erokhin, to deliver approximately thirteen hundred tonnes of equipment, gear, provisions and diesel fuel to the men newly stationed there. They unloaded thirty-tonne caterpillar tractors and such heavy-weight items as diesel generators, building elements and construction and airport machinery.

The men at Novolazerev Station are carrying out comprehensive and extensive aerometeorological, geophysical, glaciological and other research. In collaboration with the German specialists they have also developed and are carrying out a new and unique programme to study the ozone.

Vodnyi Transport

18 August 1988

Page 4 (full text)

Antarctica Has To Be Looked After

Scientists from various countries are carrying out research in Antarctica for the benefit

of all of mankind. Thus, protecting the ecology of the "White Continent" from global and local pollution is a matter of international concern. Soviet polarmen are also making their contribution. The deputy director of the Arctic and Antarctic Scientific Research Institute, Evgenii Sergeevich Korotkevich, Doctor of Geographical Sciences, talks to a "Novosti Press" correspondent about this problem:

"It's been more than thirty years now since Soviet researchers first set foot on the coast of Antarctica. They called it the "Pravda" coast. There they built "Mirnyi" observatory, the first Soviet Antarctic station. That was how they began to settle the continent. Today approximately forty scientific stations operate there on a year-round basis and of these stations, eight are Soviet. Moreover, seasonal bases manned by polarmen from various countries also operate in Antarctica. On the whole coast of the continent and to a lesser extent inland, there is more and more pressure from the strain caused by the presence of man. Apart from the everyday waste arising from the activities of several thousand men, the purity of the water and land environment is also being affected by the ships which deliver an ever-increasing amount of freight for the polarmen, the snowmobile convoys which lay down routes deep into the continent, the electric power stations, the scientific experiments and so on.

"It goes without saying that this build-up of negative ecological factors is gradually exacerbating the situation. Things are particularly disturbing along the coast. For only a narrow section of the continent in the Antarctic is free of snow and ice. Also along the coast there has been an intensive construction of stations. There is a danger that soon there won't be any area at all which

hasn't been touched by civilization. I believe that the time has come for us to learn to build stations on the ice. Soviet polarmen have some experience in this field. In fact, we had one such station, Lazarevskaya. It lasted two years and was then moved. Novolazarevskaya was then established."

Is environmental protection obligatory for researchers working in Antarctica, or is it a policy adopted by individual polarmen?"

"Environmental protection requirements are written into the Agreement on Antarctica, as one of the basic principles to be applied during the opening up of the continent. And it should also be noted that all the countries involved, pay a considerable amount of attention to the ecology of Antarctica. You know, the specialists comprehend how valuable this unique continent is. There is no longer such an unspoiled area anywhere else in the world. This natural laboratory has already enriched world science with many discoveries in the field of geophysics, glaciology and research on the atmosphere. Not only that, but there will be many more discoveries in the future. In order that these discoveries can be made, we need to show the maximum amount of care in the Antarctic towards nature, which, unfortunately is highly vulnerable. From time to time one sector or another of the continent is declared to be a nature preserve and that means that all work there must be halted. Environmental protection measures have become standard practice in the work of the Soviet Antarctic stations."

"What specifically is being done at our stations?"

"First of all it should be noted that no scientific programme for future work is adopted

without being carefully considered by the Institute's ecology experts. This is the job of a special commission.

"For many years now we have been operating an environmental station at Mirnyi. Workers from the Institute use it constantly to monitor the condition of the snow, the ice and the atmosphere. In particular they watch the depth of the ozone layer in the stratosphere. Thus, we are able to make a direct evaluation of the consequences of our economic activity and to coordinate any possible environmental damage. Unfortunately, we can't stop new construction work from taking place in Antarctica. In order to carry out their normal work, the polarmen need stations, airfields and moorings. However, it is in our power to reduce the possible ecological disturbance to a minimum. To do this, for example, at Molodezhnaya Station on the coast of the Sea of Cosmonauts, they have built sewage purifying works and sewers have been laid down.

"Fuels and lubricants used by all diesel electric power stations and other machinery do the greatest damage to the purity of the continent. However, it has turned out that if these things are handled carefully, penguins will live even at a fuel dump. This is what happened on Stroitelii Island. The polarmen constructed a fuel dump there and the penguins stayed at their favour *e site, which means that the ecological balance had not been disturbed."

"How much serious pollution to the Antarctic seas do the ever-increasing number of ships cause?"

"I think that there are serious grounds for concern. In any case, all the Soviet ships are

equipped with storage tanks for collecting used fuel and lubricant waste. These tanks are taken back to Leningrad, where the waste is reclaimed."

"What economic factors are the most dangerous for the ecology of Antarctica?"

"The conjectural geological exploration and subsequent mining operations would be very dangerous. Particularly alarming is the oil-mining of the shelf areas of the seas. This will really seriously affect the ecology of Antarctica. For this reason an international concensus is now being prepared. This will specify all possible cases of damage to the environment and how the balance can be corrected.

"Nor should we forget about the so-called "hole in the ozone layer". Although on the continent of Antarctica itself there is no excess of freon substances, which, as we know, decompose the ozone layer of the air, nevertheless, it is Antarctica which has received the full brunt of the freon attack. As a result of atmospheric currents, these substances collect over the south pole from everywhere on the planet. As a result of the freons, the ozone layer is drained and harsh ultraviolet solar radiation falls on the continent and the surrounding seas. This radiation, as we know, has a disastrous effect on the health of people, animals and on the vegetation which, nevertheless, does exist on the Antarctic peninsula and along the coast of the continent. For this reason we are extremely interested in seeing the Montréal Protocol applied as soon as possible. According to the terms of this Protocol, the signatory countries, including the Soviet Union, undertake to sharply curtail and, by 1993, to eliminate altogether the use of freons in various aerosol and refrigeration units.

"Antarctica must be looked after. This is understood by every Soviet polarman and we are trying not only to talk about it, but to do something about it as well."

Vodnyi Transport

9 August 1988

Page 4 (full text)

Winter In Full Swing

Soviet and foreign researchers in Antarctica have passed the middle of the south-pole winter. They have now entered the second half of their long stay on the sixth continent. Behind them lie wide-ranging, seasonal scientific, transport and construction and installation works, the voyages of the six ships belonging to the Ministry of the Marine Fleet and the USSR State Committee on Hydro-meteorology and the flights of Aeroflot planes and helicopters. On the day of the winter solstice, the expeditions of many countries exchanged congratulatory radiograms on the occasion of this traditional holiday and wished one another new successes in the acquisition of knowledge related to the icy Far South.

Our expedition is one of the largest in Antarctica. More than three hundred scientists and specialists work at the main scientific centre of Mirnyi and at the six permanent stations, which include the newly opened Progress on the coast of the Sea of Cooperation. Among us there are several veteran-researchers of the northern and southern latitudes. Continuing the challenge which we have

taken over from our predecessors, we are carrying out a comprehensive and in-depth study of natural processes and phenomena.

Based on Soviet and international programmes, we are carrying out various year-round observations and several experiments in many different Earth-related scientific disciplines. We are studying the ozone content in the atmosphere, ultraviolet radiation and the interaction between the ionosphere and the magnetosphere and the hydrological and ice characteristics of the coastal zone. We are drilling the deepest borehole in the world and are carrying out vertical and oblique soundings of the ionosphere. We have useful links with the scientific bases operated by Australia, Argentina, Great Britain, New Zealand, the United States of America, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, the German Democratic Republic, Poland, India, China, Uruguay and other countries, all of which are united by the International Agreement on Antarctica.

Vodnyi Transport

9 August 1988

Page 4 (full text)

ARCTIC DEVELOPMENT

The "Sibir'" Off On Northern Voyage

This morning an expedition mounted by the Arctic and Antarctic Scientific Research Institute left on a special flight from Leningrad to Dikson. This group of specialists will be responsible for the scientific and operational organization of the Far North voyage of the nuclear-powered icebreaker "Sibir'", which will be evacuating the drifting station "Severnyi Polyus-29".

In June of last year, the "Sibir'" was also responsible for setting up this station in the Laptev Sea. The scientific research programme, which was calculated to run for a year, included oceanological, hydrochemical, meteorological and ice-physics observations. The floating island on which eleven polarmen have been serving their tour of duty has drifted from its starting point for more than one thousand, five hundred kilometres since it was established and is now located at eighty five degrees north latitude, four hundred kilometres north of Franz Josef Land.

Pravda

12 August 1988

Page 2 (full text)

CONSTRUCTION

House with Garden Attached

Cherepovets (Vologda Oblast), 7. (Pravda correspondent). On a spacious lot, surrounded by forest, V. Yudichev, a worker employed by the metallurgical combine, has sunk a well on the section of land assigned to him. On the same lot, work has begun on the construction of houses. The work will be carried out by workers from the combine.

More than fifteen thousand employees of this, the largest enterprise in the town of Cherepovets, are in line for housing. One way of coping with this difficult situation is to allow individuals to build their own housing in this subdivision which is located on the other side of the Sheksnaya River. The combine has created favourable conditions for the reorganized cooperative. Everyone who wants to build himself a house is allocated three thousand roubles with no strings attached. The rest of the money needed is given in the form of a loan for fifteen to twenty years. The enterprise carried out the utilities installation in the subdivision in good time, so that individuals can build their homes with all the modern conveniences.

Pravda
8 August 1988
Page 3 (full text)

The Bank Guarantees Quality

(When Bad Workmanship Doesn't Pay)

The saying "a complaint runs around in a vicious circle" has gradually disappeared from the vocabulary of the men employed by the "Magadangrazhdanstroi" Planning and Construction Association. The disappearance of this concept came about when, after the transition to a comprehensive profit and loss system of accounting, an industry-wide bank was established.

Now, what sort of link is there between the complaints, which often used to be levied against the builders, and a bank being set up?

"There's a very direct connection," answers the Deputy Director of the Association, V. Shulunova. "You know, one of the functions of the bank is to impose sanctions when the quality of workmanship is allowed to fall. Let's say, for example, that one complaint alone directed against a construction brigade by someone who has just moved into new housing, will cost that brigade five hundred roubles. A cheque for that amount is handed over to whoever deals with the shortcomings in the original work. And now it is no longer the customers with complaints who have to try to catch the "uncatchable" poor-quality workers, but, on the contrary, it is the workers who are on guard and who respond in a twinkling to the wishes and requests of the new tenants.

The financial department of the "Magadangrazhdanstroi" Association was the foundation of the bank. The department puts into circulation cheques to cover the cost of goods and materials,

service and amortization and also pays fines. Every subsidiary which is run on the profit and loss accounting system, from the work brigade to the administration, has its own individual account with the bank. The amount of money in the account is directly dependant on how efficiently materials and electric power are utilized, how effectively the construction machinery is used and how strictly contractual obligations vis-à-vis the subcontracting enterprises are adhered to.

The introduction of this system has made it possible for the workers employed by the "Magadangrazhdanstroi" Planning and Construction Association to finish in the course of a six-month period more apartments than last year. At the same time they have been able to raise labour productivity and reduce their labour costs.

Stroitel'naya Gazeta

9 August 1988

Page 1 (full text)

Housing Problems at Neryungri

At one of the meetings of the Ministry of the Coal Industry several years ago, it was pointed out that it would be a good idea if the expertise in planning and building towns, which has been acquired in southern Yakutia, could be extended to the whole country. It's true that blocks of apartments are springing up like mushrooms here in Neryungri. The local authorities show them off to visitors with great enthusiasm. However, they pass over in silence the so-called "wooden shacks" which form a considerable part of the town. It's there that

those, who are spoken of with respect and pride as the pioneers of the region, have to live.

I, Vladimir Vladimirovich Osadchii, live in one of those depressing 111-15-86 SM (prefabricated panelled) houses. I arrived at Neryungri in 1979, when not even a stake had yet been driven at the site of the future town.

Five years ago my wife, who is a secretary-typist employed by the "Yakutugol" Industrial Association, was put on the list for better housing. She is now the top of the list. However, she hasn't been offered a new place to live. Your family, they tell her, has permanent accommodation, the standard of 6.6 square metres per person is being maintained.

It's the same thing with me at work (I'm a driver with the agricultural machinery complex of the same Association). I've been on the list for better housing since 1987, in fact since the day the complex I work for was established. Now I am also at the top of that list. However, just like my wife I am told, "Your housing is permanent, we won't give you a new place to live". And nobody gives a thought to the fact that conditions in our "permanent housing" are antediluvian or that each person gets his 6.6 square metres, although in newer housing they allow between nine and twelve square metres for each person.

In this I see what we are all now rebelling against - injustice. Why should my wife and I, who have lived for so long in the Far North and who came here to live permanently, why should we have to live under such difficult conditions, without any hope of ever getting anything better, while the recent arrivals (most of whom have their own apartments back on the mainland) get good housing, once they have their names on the list for a certain length of time?

I couldn't put up with that and I told the Director, V. Yu. Pozdnyshev, that that sort of policy on the part of the administration gives rise to injustice. If in fact the complex is so in need of workers, why don't they put them (of course, like us "temporarily") in our wooden shacks, while we, the oldtimers, get put in the new apartments? But the only response I got from Pozdnyshev was a smile.

Sovetskaya Rossiya

7 August 1988

Page 3 (full text)

Moldavian Brigade in Urengoi

The Moldavia-Urengoi construction conveyor is operating without interruption. At the height of summer, the most favourable time of the year for builders in Siberia, the construction industry of the republic is delivering more northern-type homes for the population.

A trainload of building materials and parts is on its way to Surgut from Kishinev.

The first part of the special Moldavurengoizhilstroi building and installation train arrived in Siberia almost three years ago, says P. Mikhnevich, Minister of the Construction Industry of Moldavia. Along with the workers of other republics, our builders have been working on the new town of Novyi Urengoi for the oil and gas workers of Siberia. During this time, they have delivered over 40,000 m² of housing, one-half of the 5-year target. A school for 1100 students, a political literature book store, and other social amenities have been planned for the "Severnyi" neighbourhood unit.

Stroitel'naya G zeta

4 August 1988

Page 1 (full text)

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The Ecology Of The Arctic Rivers

PEVEK. The helicopter pilots employed by the Chaun Aviation Enterprise have to carry out many kinds of jobs. This time the crew, led by MI-9 Commander Konstantin Lukyanenko, was responsible for transporting some hydrobiologists to their destination.

The hydrobiologists, who are employed by the Magadan Institute of Northern Biological Problems, have begun a hydrobiological study of a number of Arctic rivers with the aim of publicizing the ecological situation, arising from the construction of the Amguema hydroelectrical power plant.

As we all know, environmental protection is now a world-wide problem. Concern for the purity of the water of the rivers which feed into the Arctic Ocean is a matter of prime importance. Members of the Chaun helicopter crew, who regularly carry out flights over the Arctic rivers, are therefore making their own contribution to this important environmental cause.

Over a period of several weeks, the group of biologists, led by V. Karitonov, studied the mouth of the River Chaun and collected scientific data which will be used for further study. After that, a helicopter transported them to the upper reaches of the Anadyr River.

Vozdushnyi Transport

1 September 1988

Page 4 (full text)

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

More Harm Than Good

Every morning the people of Tagil look up uneasily at the sky to see what direction will be taken by the plumes of multi-coloured smoke, which that industrial giant, the Nizhnii Tagil Metallurgical Combine, so generously bestows upon the town. The citizens of Tagil became much more concerned after the start-up of the ninth coking battery, which adds even more pollution to the already poisoned air.

The people have not calmed down. There have been demonstrations and meetings in favour of protecting the environment. The May appeal to the Bureau of the Municipal Committee of the Communist Party, to the executive committee of the town Council of National Deputies and to the Bureau of the Municipal Committee of the All-Union Lenin Young Communist League, was received with understanding. The appeal was addressed to the need for them to come out in favour of clean air and clean water, not just in word, but in deed.

What sort of example are the Nizhnii Tagil railway workers offering? You know, unlike, for example, the metallurgical industry, electrified transport is clean from the ecological point of view and we could spearhead a movement in the town in favour of a healthy environment. Alas, that is only a well-meaning wish. Today, it is as if we, too, are engaged in some sort of competition with the other enterprises of the town, to see which will be the first to foul its own section of the environment.

The Nizhnii Tagil locomotive depot is located right in the centre of the town. Last year, one analysis in six showed considerable oil content

in the effluent water from the depot. So, who got the idea that effluent has to be clean? The depot's oil trap is a primitive device, which recalls the invention of pioneer craftsmen. For a float, that is, the oil trap, they use an ordinary wooden cart-shaft!

When there is a light rain, the cart-shaft actually does hold back some of the oil and then they scoop it out with buckets, just like they did in our grandfather's time. However, when there is a heavy rain, the cart-shaft simply isn't able to hold back the current and the oil flows straight into the nearest body of water. They should have had a flotation unit here long ago. But there are no plans for building one even during the next Five-Year planning period!

Things aren't any better at the Smychka electric depot. The May analysis of effluent waters showed that the oil content was five hundred times the normal amount! The Smychka railway station is also making its "contribution" to the environmental pollution problem. Unlike the other enterprises, which operate in the region, even now they don't have sewage and water supply systems. They do have the plans for these systems... drawn up eleven years ago!

If you look at the "Air Pollution" graphs, at first glance the railway workers don't look at all bad. Of the cloud, weighing one and a half tonnes - the amount of dust which falls on the head of a resident of Tagil every year - the railworkers are responsible for only a kilogram.

But, how do the monitoring bodies act under these conditions? A laboratory for monitoring noxious effects in the air was set up more than three

years ago. It only began sampling the air as of November last year. However, so far, the laboratory hasn't won the right to apply sanctions against offenders. Nor has the head public health doctor, N. Sosnovskii, any real authority.

The standing committee for environmental protection, headed by the chief engineer of the department, E. Chechik, is also idle. In fact, someone has accurately labelled it the "idling committee". The committee's recommendations and resolutions aren't carried out by anyone. The laboratory of the water supply division, for example, is supposed to carry out a regular analysis of the industrial effluents produced by the Smychka railway car depot, but in fact it isn't doing that. When your reporter checked up on this, the head of the laboratory, S. Smol'yaninova declared:

"If the public prosecutor's office tells us to carry out analyses, then we will".

There we have it, the "don't get involved" mentality. Our hopes that someone, apart from ourselves, would come to the defence of the environment using a wooden cart-shaft have not been justified. The natural environment is home to all of us and all of us should be putting that house in order.

Gudok

21 August 1988

Page 4 (full text)

We Won't Let Them Steal Our River

Thoughtless oilfield workers set the Ob'River "on fire"

This paper has already written about the fate of the northern river Sob', when we published the Urals diary of Sergei Solov'ev, the leader of the Sovets'aya Rossiya polar expedition. What has happened this summer compels us to return to the same theme.

On the seventh of June, 1988, a group of citizens met spontaneously at the settlement of Katrovozh in the Yamalo-Nenets Okrug (Tyumen' Olbast). It was hard to recognize the quiet, laconic residents of the settlement. In fact, Katrovozh was seething, boiling with emotion and with rage. Even shouts of "Hey, guys, grab your shotguns and go down to the river bank. We won't let anyone pass!" rang out.

The gathering decided on the following: "Between 1984 through 1988 the inhabitants of Katrovozh repeatedly appealed to various authorities, all the way up to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, proposing that the dredging of sand and gravel mix from the River Sob' be stopped. However, not a single authority replied to our appeals. Therefore, the inhabitants of the settlement henceforth reserve the right to block the passage of vessels arriving to collect gravel."

At the start of the shipping season, a group of ships from the river port of Salekhard sailed up the Ob' River to the Sob'. Not far from the mouth of the latter the ships had to cast anchor, for a boom barrier was stretched across the river. In the ripples along the banks boats full of children bobbed

up and down, ready to cut across the bows of the ships. People were standing on the banks. They had a simple plan of action: "We won't let them steal out river!"

This time they really didn't let anyone steal their river. But in the course of the previous four river shipping seasons a fair amount had been stolen. In fact they took about thirteen million tonnes of sand and gravel from the main channel of the river. However, on the ninth of July, the Public Prosecutor's office of the Ikrug finally noticed that these workings were being carried out illegally. The injunction of the Public Prosecutor's office marks the end of the freewheeling exploitation of the Sob'.

You know, the whole business started in 1984, when, at the opening of the shipping season on the river, the first earthmoving machines and floating cranes appeared. In fact, it may even have started earlier during the winter of eighty three, when some geologists made a detailed study of the Katrovozh field, or in the nineteen seventies when the question of the shoaling of the Sob' and the resulting need to carry out dredging work first arose. In those days the ichthyologists were still arguing as to whether there was anything of value in the river. Incidentally, there were also the sixties, when for obscure reasons the Sob' was not listed as an important spawning waterway. It was only officially recognized as such much later, in 1982.

More and more sand and gravel are needed as the North is opened up. Because of the shortage of building materials, the construction of the surface facilities at the Yamburg gas-condensate field has been slowed down. Previously millions of tonnes of

gravel mixture were dredged up from the bed of the Tom River. The level of the water dropped accordingly, the adjacent fields and meadows dried up and the environment ended up a victim of man's blind will. But those in charge learned an extremely peculiar lesson from the Tom River incident: we've exhausted the Tom so let's start in on the Sob! This was what the Western Siberia government commission opted for.

Now, this solution was presented as a way out of a critical situation, that is, to duplicate the causes of the crisis somewhere else. Then the same thing happened again. After the above-mentioned Public Prosecutor's ban on further ravaging of the Sob, the Ob'-Irtysk Steamship Line alone reckoned its losses as tens of millions of roubles. Almost a thousand men have found themselves more or less unemployed and part of the Line's fleet has become redundant. An extensive social, cultural and communal-services programme has lost its material-resources backup. Freight delivery plans have been disrupted and quite a few economic sanctions are looming on the horizon. Furthermore, construction projects and road-laying work come to a standstill without construction materials. Construction workers are idle. So here we have it, the price which has to be paid for our economic and ecological ignorance, for the absurd pitting of industrial requirements against the laws of nature, for the blind belief that the economic expediency of the moment is the ultimate rationale of effective action. In this particular instance, the thoughtless producer has been paid off in his own coin.

According to the observations of the ichthyologist A. Prokopchuk, who has carried out an environmental inspection from the ichthyological

point of view, the Sob' River has not yet suffered irreversible changes, fish continue to make their way up the river to their spawning grounds and the number of larvae to emerge from the roe apparently has not diminished. However, the hydrological parameters of the river show fundamental changes and what this may lead to is still not clear. There has been an abrupt increase in the number of commercially unimportant species of fish now competing with the whitefish. The question of restocking the river is still being worked out, and, although the rivermen have said that they are ready to start restoring the waterway, some people think that it may take between five and seven hundred years to return the waterway to its earlier condition.

Some departments have defined the value of the river in terms of tonnes of gravel. This supply is supposed to last for several more years. But there have also been others. When it comes to the question of real economic gain, it would not be amiss here to recall the data produced by "Sibrybprom". According to these data, the Sob' possesses considerable economic value as a spawning ground for the whitefish. At the same time, the marketable generation of the mature individuals, which can be caught without undermining the fish population, has been valued at five thousand centers annually.

But, over a period of four short years, an enormous spawning ground, which extended for more than thirty kilometers, was torn up by dredging scoops. Other bottom formations, which hampered free access to the sand and gravel deposits, were tumbled upside down into the shallows. In cases where the bottom-level feeding ground for the fish - the so-called benthos - wasn't torn up along with the gravel, it was buried under unneeded rock. Moreover,

this dumping has either partly or fully blocked off the way out of the flood-plain lakes, where the fish fingerlings feed and grow. How could the local residents have known that all this damage to their river was evaluated at 13.2 million roubles back before any of the work started and that this sum was already paid? Also that they were not to "worry" about their future for a system of compensation had already been worked out and would be put into effect. And where might you think this system would be introduced? For the Sob'? No way. This system of compensation was for the towns of Tyumen', Salkehard and for the Khanty-Mansiisk Okrug.

Until this year, the rivermen were proud to credit themselves with the development of the Katrovozh field. It was also to their credit that there had been no time for exploration, but, in spite of that ... That approach is known as "carrying out work on the basis of a temporary plan"., that is to say, without the proper authorities, including the environmental organizations, having a chance to confirm or agree on the work plans. In particularly urgent cases, the Council of Ministers gives permission for work to begin and the scheme is then officially registered retroactively.

This approach was also in operation when the fate of the Sob' was being decided. It's true that the length of time this temporary plan was to operate was limited to the year 1986, by which time the plans for the development of the Katrovozh field should have been confirmed. However, it proved impossible in principle to come to an agreement about these plans with the Central Administration for Fisheries Inspections and for the Protection and Reproduction of Fish Resources. The Administration pointed out that infringements of the law would not be acceptable.

However, it proved difficult to call a halt. There were hundreds of customers for the sand and gravel dredged up from the River Sob', and here we are also dealing with the question of last year's flooding in the southern regions of the Tyumen' Oblast. So, once again, we were faced with an "urgent" situation and once again special permission to produce sand and gravel was agreed upon. By the end of the season, the earth-moving machinery had progressed to within thirty five kilometres from the mouth of the river. The machinery left behind a deep navigable channel, a badly damaged benthos and unsightly tailings along the banks.

According to Inspector E. Lebedev, the workers employed by the Okrug Fish-Protection Inspectorate, who are bound by the decisions taken by higher authorities and who are forced into the role of passive observers, also came to their own conclusions: the large lower spawning grounds were totally destroyed and the feeding grounds were also wiped out. The fish arriving to spawn, were forced to feed on their own roe. Nine wintering holes were razed and in all probability, the fishes' wintering conditions looked like being extremely difficult.

That is exactly what happened. In all weathers, the water in the Sob' was rich in oxygen, because it poured over the surface of the ice of the frozen shallows and then ran into the wintering holes, where it maintained life. These same shallows prevented the oxygen-deficient water of the Ob' from penetrating the wintering holes. However, by 1988 man had literally carted away the shallows and this spring, when the ice receded, an awful situation appeared: thousands of dead roach, ides, sturgeon and other fish lay whitening along the banks of the

river. The fish had died in the "burnt out" water, which had flowed freely up the Ob' along the navigable channel.

The spring waters washed away this picture of death and once again the rivermen appeared at the mouth of the river full of good intentions and with the latest "urgent" permit.

You already know how the story ended. But is it really over?

So many agencies were involved in this affair: managers, clients and executives. And none of them wanted to know that their energetic activities boded economic disaster. Now the rivermen have turned out to be the last. They have repaid with interest their thoughtless exploitation and, according to the Director of the Ob'-Irtysk Steamship Line, A Lyuft, they will learn a lesson for the future from this incident. However, not one of those, whose signatures stand behind the permit documentation, is in any hurry to take on the responsibility for the fate of the Sob'.

The shortage of non-metal construction materials and the absence in the Oblast of any realistic, comprehensively thought out development programme continues to complicate an already critical situation. Is the Sob', or some other river, awaiting the next "urgent" onslaught?

Sovetskaya Rossiya

7 August 1988

Page 6 (full text)

Bad Attitude Towards Permafrost

The long-existing strategy of man conquering nature has resulted in an extremely acute ecological situation in our country. It suffices to mention but a few places of unrelenting interference in nature such as the Aral Sea, Kara-Bogaz-Gol, the Volga, the Yenisei, Lake Baikal... The public is worried about the situation on the Baikal-Amur Mainline Railway, and about new projects like the Caucasian Railway Pass (Kavkazskaya pereval'naya zheleznaya doroga). Our correspondent, V. Zenkov, interviewed A. Tsernant, Assistant Scientific Director of the All-Union Scientific Research Institute of Transport Construction and Laureate of the State Prize, about the scientific principles of efficient environmental exploitation and adherence to these principles during the construction of transport mainlines.

Q: Alexander Alfredovich, you have spent two and a half decades doing research at the road and railway construction sites of Siberia. How do you assess the present ecological situation at the Siberian construction sites, including the Baikal-Amur Mainline Railway?

A: The ecological situation in the North is cause for concern. Each building site brings irreversible destruction of the soil and plant cover, contamination of the soil, noise, thermal and chemical contamination of the atmosphere and bodies of water, subterranean and surface waters. This so-called "anthropogenic" load on nature is caused, on the one hand, by the inadequacy of the machinery and technology used, and also by the low level of the ecological awareness and professional expertise of the people that come to work here.

As for the Baikal-Amur Railway, we have to admit that, at the start of the work, nobody could tell exactly how much it would cost, when it could be put into operation, and what resources would have to be utilized. The designers sometimes set about their work without adequate preparation and often without sufficient information about the surrounding conditions. Decisions were often made on intuition; scientific recommendations always came late because of the rapid tempo of the designing and construction work. Naturally, this had its consequences. Take, for example, the Urgal station. It was designed by the "Kievgiprotrans" team. The designers showed little faith in the scientific recommendations that were submitted. The result? A large part of the station was sited on the spot of the former Urgal river bed, while the river itself was sidetracked. To accomplish this, the workers had to build a by-pass canal about seven kilometres in length, and destroy approximately 60 hectares of forest which could have been a natural park for the adjacent settlement. The amount of excavation and earth moving increased significantly. Since the station was moved away from the town, the length of the communication lines also increased. Naturally, this upped construction costs, and much more time was needed to complete the work.

Q: BAM is now in operation, but still there is no through train traffic. We know the reason for this. The key to the mainline, the Northern Muya tunnel, has not been built yet. The unresolved technical problems of its construction have been discussed many times, but are there any unsolved ecological problems here?

A: The more complex the project, the greater the destruction to nature, and the more extensive and profound the ecological problems caused

by our intervention. The Northern Muya tunnel is a uniquely complex geotechnical system. Here we encounter a multitude of tectonic faults, rocks of different strength, an abundance of thermal and pressure waters, and a high degree of seismicity. This is, perhaps, the world's most complex tunnel project. The work on the tunnel has caused a number of serious environmental changes with an ecological effect. The natural regime of subterranean and surface springs has been disrupted. The upland moors have disappeared. The Japanese stone pine and growths of rhododendron that once covered the slopes have dried up. The brooks have disappeared. The run-off of polluted waters from the tunnel has contaminated the water in the Muyakan R., which over the past years has resulted in a significant decrease of the white-fish population (lenok, grayling). Because the slopes were cut down somewhat, the intensity of landslides increased. There are also the standard problems of clearing away, burying and utilizing household waste, as well as smoke pollution of the atmosphere. How are these problems being solved? It would be unfair to ignore the extensive measures being taken by the environmental institutes of the Siberian Department of the USSR Academy of Sciences in the zone affected by BAM in accordance with the "Siberia" program, or the substantial expenditure and efforts of "Bamtonnelstroi" in purifying the waters of the Northern Muya tunnel, undertaken in accordance with the recommendations of the Environmental Protection Laboratory of our Institute. However, none of the problems, including water purification, have been adequately resolved, despite the millions of roubles spent on this.

Q: Had any scientifically proven principles of environmental exploitation under permafrost conditions been developed before construction work got underway?

A: Yes, of course. We had accumulated a great deal of experience in the economic development of territories in the Soviet North, Eastern Siberia and Soviet Far East. Thanks to this experience, the principles of efficient environmental exploitation for the entire mainline were defined correctly. They were based on three concepts, 1) engineered structures to protect the installations, 2) conservation of nature, and 3) transformation of natural complexes, i.e. alteration of areas of land to ensure high operational reliability of the installations and a high-quality environment.

The experiments carried out by specialists of the Permafrost Institute of the Siberian Department of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Moscow University and the All-Union Scientific Research Institute of Transport Construction have enabled designing organizations of the Ministry of Transport Construction to complete a substantial volume of work on individual projects of the mainline.

The use of new engineering solutions has made it possible to save natural resources and money.

Q: Were the new developments always followed up successfully and on time?

A: If only they had been, we wouldn't have had the problems we did. In 1977, due to the melting of ice-laden permafrost sandy ground, a small washed-out hole formed on the spot of the by-pass canal in the Goudzhikit R. valley in the western sector of BAM. It was not filled then and there. Three months later, a troublesome gully appeared in its place. Thirty-two thousand cubic metres of fill was required to eliminate it. Similar situations arose in other areas as well, for example in the

Syul'ban R. valley. At the same time, simple engineering procedures, e.g. the installation of drains and heat insulators, or the conservation and restoration of the moss and plant cover, can reduce the intensity of the melting. This is now being considered as a means of speeding up the stabilization of embankments and eliminating the causes of deformation.

Unfortunately, there are still many cases where the environment is treated carelessly, in fact barbarically. In some places, for example, the engineering work to prepare certain territories for builders' settlements, including the import of gravelly-pebbly fill, eventually altered the natural heat and moisture regime in the root zone of the soil, resulting in the destruction of large trees. In the quest for inexpensive ballast and sand for drainage, many of the gravelly-pebbly river banks and stretches of water close the mainline, especially those around large stations, were destroyed. Consequently, the future inhabitants of BAM settlements lost their natural parks and recreation grounds, while the scarce supply of drainage material was wastefully and detrimentally brought to a conditions of little use for further development, even by means of hydromechanical equipment.

Q: During the construction of BAM, a great deal of experience has been acquired in building under permafrost conditions. Are you making use of this experience now? What lessons have been learned from the mistakes?

A: Both the accomplishments and the errors of BAM can be regarded as a "contribution" to organizations that take an interest in this; for example, they are being taken into consideration on

the construction sites of the Yagel'naya-Yamburg, Obskaya-Bovanenkovo and the Amur-Yakutsk Mainline railway lines. Many of the engineering solutions first used on BAM are being put to use there.

However, the biggest lesson of BAM for the branch of transport construction lies in the fact that a new concept of efficient environmental exploitation has been formulated; it is based on the development of system models of re-established (planned) complexes (the natural environment - engineering structures of geotechnical systems). This concept is based on the provision of ecological balance in the geotechnical system being established, i.e. thermodynamic balance of all the natural complexes, including engineering structures, which will ensure the self-reproduction of landscapes, including biocoenoses. Unlike the conventional approaches, the approach here is to place human ecology in the centre of our ecological problems. The point is that the nature-transforming economic activity of man should be aimed at solving the complex problems of improving the quality of the habitat of Homo sapiens, which is part of nature itself. We must make people aware of the natural need of living creatures to protect their habitat and improve it on the basis of scientific foresight and the use of ecologically acceptable geotechnology.

Gudok

28 August 1988

Page 2 (full text)

Ploughing Through the Tundra

Finding myself in the winter tundra, I spent many an evening drinking tea with Bulgarian jam, but

I was never treated with local preserved berries, despite the fact that berries, like mushrooms, are abundant here. Nearly 100% of this wealth vanishes under the snow each year. At the same time, the workers of co-operative lament the sparseness of nature as they pass through trampled down areas.

The tundra frightens the layman with its uninhabitedness, though it is now far from uninhabited. I am certain that many of the older students would love to spend their summer vacation in the tundra, combining fun activities with useful work. Each pair of hands is worth its weight in gold here. Why not have students help out and earn some money at the same time? It would do our children good to learn the value of a rouble and how to overcome difficulties from a young age.

I know for a fact that the Arctic attracts young people. What attracts them. Perhaps it is the untouched beauty of nature, or the opportunity to experience the pressures of the elements and test their physical and moral strength. The bitter truth is that we are not leaving our children much of a heritage: the sandswept cranberry woods of Poles'ye, the written off lands of Russia, the experiment-exhausted Dara-Bogaz-Gol... In the Arctic, however, the young can experience, though now not everywhere, that untouched world which extols man in its responsibility for him, and serves as a reminder of man's sinful deeds in other parts of the world.

Perhaps my emotions have gotten the better of me, but I feel this straight from the heart. Only a newcomer can evaluate the wealth that is already being destroyed, for my thoughts are of the native peoples of the Far North, for whom the Arctic is both home and a school of life, food and clothing, a song

and indissoluble love. Nothing can replace this, not any industrial benefits. I once brought a plant back to Moscow from the rocky Chukchi land, thinking I was doing it a favour. I got fertilizer for the native soil around its roots, place it in the warm sun, and never forgot to water it. It grew beautifully for a while, as if admiring its new surroundings, and then died.

Smart management is needed in the Arctic, or else things can get pretty hot even with ice and snow all around. Those who for centuries have been out here have had the pleasure of tasting smoked venison (remarkably tasty, dietetic meat). Where is it? You can get it at any store in Sweden, though they have fewer deer there. Masses of sea cabbage can be found in the western sector of the Arctic near the numerous coastal islands, but we haul this product to the Far North from the Pacific Ocean. Hunters cannot find good winter abodes, for they are often used as firewood by geologists and drillers. Does that make sense? Piles of metal scrap and industrial waste plague the land (nobody answerable for wastefulness).

New horizons are opening before us in the development of the Arctic which promises a wealth of oil and gas in the coastal zone, and we are already directing our energy at possessing this wealth. Our advance on the shelf deposits, planned for the nearest future, will also take place from the islands. Proceeding from our first and pretty sad experience, I want to sound a warning immediately. Look at what happened to Kolguyev Is. where oil was recently extracted. Everything there cries out against thoughtless management. When will we learn to appreciate the polar regions for which many of our ancestors have given their lives? The islands are fragile natural formations, and each of them is an

independent phenomenon. Errors here would be more costly than anywhere else. We have done hardly any research on island life, so let us take heed of what foreign experts are saying. It is a known fact that ecological changes may be both the cause and effect of economic and cultural changes. This is why efficient exploitation of nature requires a balanced solution of the economic, ecological and socio-cultural problems of each island. As we develop the islands, we must always remember that even a small sudden change in their demography can have a destructive ecological and social effect.

We must hold dear all that Nature has given us, and that which we ourselves have achieved in the Arctic through suffering. Only after weighing all the possible consequences should we consider applying our mainland know-how in the vast northern areas, keeping in mind that the life there is very different from the life we are accustomed to. There is another problem that must be mentioned here as well.

The delivery of even a small piece of iron to these parts is not a simply matter. Navigation is short-lived, and so goods and various equipment must be supplied in quantities to last the very long winter. And so, a brewery was established here with great effort and to the delight of the local inhabitants. And the good word about Providenskoye spread all the way to the mainland. It was also praised by the Japanese television crew filming the 12-serial film "The Arctic", which I last met in Provideniye Bay. They praised it and wondered why the production of such an extremely well-brewed beer was going to be cut down. And this in the Chukchi region where it is valued more than any exotic fruit and is more difficult to find than a gold nugget. What about the anti-alcohol campaign? Who said beer

consumption had to be stopped entirely? If we are going to condemn it because it contains alcohol, then let's also get rid of ayran*, kefir and kumyss**. They also contain "alcohol".

There are only two breweries on the eastern coast of the Arctic, the Provideniye and Pevek breweries. Thanks to their excellent water, both produce excellent beer which is not inferior to any beer in the west, believe me. If not beer, what will these breweries produce? Fruit drinks and juices from fruit that is usually delivered in an unmarketable rotted state? The supply organizations tend to ignore good suggestions. The trade representative of the USSR in China, P. Gurov, had only this to say, "I found "Thoughts About the Arctic", published in Pravda on 23 March 1988, very interesting".

My own interest in this problem stems from the circumstance that the first attempt of our team to somehow become involved in the difficult life of the northern peoples did not produce any remarkable results. Simple humanistic motives and a new way of thinking spurred the members of the USSR Trade Organization in China and its party organization to conduct certain measures, and in June 1987, a proposal was submitted to Gossnab*** of the USSR that

* soured milk common in Siberia, Central Asia, the Crimea and the Caucasus;

** lac fermentatum - transl.

***State Committee of the USSR Council of Ministers for Supplies and Machinery - transl.

measures be taken to alleviate the problem of supplies for Soviet people living in the Far North and the eastern sector of the Arctic. Unfortunately, there has been no response so far.

We are either totally indifferent to certain things, or we carry something too far. The anti-alcohol campaign, basically a good idea, ran helter-skelter to be honest. And what happened to the native inhabitants is simply disgraceful. The supply of vodka was sufficient, but where the cultural life is concerned... Only recently were folklore ensembles organized to preserve the local ethnic art. The spiritual life of the people here is still at a very low level. True, the Chukchi, Eskimos, Nentsy and Evenki did get large villages, but they had to leave their traditional hunting grounds, so that a settled life became a nomadic one for many. They now have to travel hundreds of kilometres from their villages to hunt, living for long periods without their families, without the "good things" that some overzealous, thoughtless people have thrust upon the North.

It would have been better to spend this money on the organization of the first local resort, for example. Hot healthful springs are located not far from the village of Lorino. Even on the coldest day, you can bathe here under the open sky, and feel exceptionally energetic and full of life afterwards.

What do we have at the springs today? A primitive bath and barrack-type structure to which "honoured guests" are sometimes brought to relax. This oasis in a "snowy kingdom" is visited most of all by the polar bears wandering through the tundra. In Sireniki, the main Eskimo village on the Chukchi Peninsula, there was a shortage of gear for hunting

the bowhead whale when this was recently allowed once again for the native population. After all, this is their livelihood. The whale provides the local inhabitants with everything they need.

Nature feeds and clothes the native peoples of the Arctic. Still, machines are implacably destroying the tundra, invading it with increasing force as industrial development of the Far North intensifies. Various pipelines cut off the paths to pastures, and the herdsmen and herds are rushing about in search of a solution, but the onslaught of the machinery leaves no hope. There are fewer lemmings around, and the number of polar fox have dropped sharply. The once abundant birds have flown off to new nesting grounds. Not important? Permit me to disagree. If the birds don't nest here, then there won't be any in the southern part of our country whence they migrate to their "summer home". Everything in nature is interrelated. By destroying the Arctic, we destroy other parts of the country.

We either attack Nature mercilessly, or forget about her completely as our provider who is always at our side. We go to the other end of the world to fish (think of the cost to our country), and yet we do hardly any fishing in the coastal waters of the Arctic where there is an abundance of excellent fish. The only thing is that ordinary fishing boats have to be used here, but in these days, why venture into the icy cold sea in primitive vessels... The greatness mania has blinded us to the experience and wisdom of the northern peoples who know that a primitive boat, rather than a nuclear-powered vessel, is needed for shallow waters where the fish forage and grow.

I think that the recently established State Arctic Committee will take up these ready-made urgent problems.

Pravda

3 September 1988

Page 3 (full text)

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

For The Health Of The Whole Village

Our village, Sovum, is in the most northerly region of the Khanty-Mansiisk Autonomous Okrug. Our winters are harsh, with lots of snow, and they are long. Even at the beginning of April the temperature outdoors is often as low as minus thirty degrees celsius. On top of that there is the wind to contend with. A lot of people were convinced that in such circumstances, there was no point in even dreaming about growing our own cucumbers or, for example, producing our own milk. For this reason not only our cow barn sat empty, but also a greenhouse of some three hundred square metres.

For many long years the freezing winds blew through this building, until Il'ya Fedorovich Kotorobai and his wife Elena Kuz'minichna took it over on a family contract. They had to do a fair amount of work before they got everything in order, but now our school cafeteria regularly serves salads consisting of fresh cucumbers, radishes, onions, all seasoned with dill, on top of everything - and this even on the coldest days. The cafeteria now smells of the sun and of spring! Il'ya Fedorovich and Elena Kuz'minichna haven't given up their main jobs either, so they run the greenhouse in their spare time. They are helped by their two oldest children. Another two are growing up and Kotorobai thinks that the greenhouse area could be expanded. For the family this means extra work and rather a lot of it, but for the village it means joy and good health!

I couldn't say that the success enjoyed by the Kotorobai family was altogether unexpected. Many of us have succeeded in growing potatoes. The first

family greenhouses are beginning to appear. And then there is this proper cow barn, which cost a considerable amount of money and which is sitting empty. It is a constant source of unhappiness. Our children are growing up without getting any natural milk in winter. They only recognize the taste of fresh milk if they go somewhere to the south in summer.

"Nobody wants to work on the farm", one of the managers of the administration of the Sorum Establishment for Medical Preventive Treatment of the "Tyumen'transstroj" Association.

The question has been raised many times at meetings, but beyond a lot of talk, nothing gets done. Why? They say to us, the main thing is for us to ship the gas, that's all that matters. This is an out-of-date approach to the matter and an empty cow barn is a direct reproach against the gas-field workers' leaders. They should have leased it out long ago. I am convinced that we'll find people who are willing to come here.

Sovetskaya Rossiya

3 August 1988

Page 4 (full text)

OIL AND GAS

Problems At The Yamburg Gas Field

Two powerful explosions resounded with rolling thunder over the swamps and taiga of the Yamburg field. And in the sky a huge pillar of fire struck with a savage booming sound. A flame of burning gas rose almost one hundred metres in the air, exploding under seventy atmospheres of pressure. It was visible for dozens of kilometres on that sunny morning and the fantastic sight continued for more than two hours ...

Everyone immediately agreed that the cause of these Yamburg "lights" was completely prosaic, although, alas, it is still very prevalent today, that is, irresponsibility and reliance on "chance".

For these were the principles which guided the Chief Engineer of "Tyumen'gazprom", Yu. Topchev, and the Deputy Director General of the "Urengoigazdobycha" Industrial Association, A. Margulov, when they ignored the fire-fighting units at their projects and accepted these structures with "slight" shortcomings.

So, therefore, in March of this year they accepted and brought on line the No. 5 comprehensive gas-treatment installation. This highly complex, twenty million rouble project, which is somewhat dangerous to operate, did not have the automatic fire-suppression system and the automatic emergency shut-down system provided for in the original plans. The representative of the fire-supervision services flatly refused to sign the acceptance document. However, his protest was quite simply ignored: "The country needs gas!"

"We have informed the Public Prosecutor's Office of these blatant violations", your reporter was told by the head of the fire-prevention services for the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, A. Cherednikov. "We have also told the Nadym branch of the industrial construction works bank and the Okrug executive committee. But, they too ignored us, although they are supposed to see to the observance of state legality. The construction bank even paid the construction workers their wages in full and bonuses for this faultily built project. The local and Oblast employees of the Public Prosecutor's Office covered themselves with a screen of meaningless paperwork. The leaders of the Okrug Executive Committee also acted as if nothing had happened.

Then again the team-leaders of "Tyumen'gasprom" weren't afraid of any fire and naturally they reported the "urgent start-up" of the project. And they started up the unfinished No. 5 comprehensive gas-treatment installation. As it turned out this was also done in a slipshod way. The installation was operated with a poor level of production and technical awareness and the gas was shipped off to the customers without having been sufficiently purified.

Incidentally, how can we talk about quality, when, in violation of all standards and rules, the shift workers worked not for twelve hours, but for twenty four hours at a stretch? The engineers mainly worked at the installation during the day. The workers had not been trained to cope with an emergency situation and they did not put on heat-protective clothing. For this reason, when, because of violations of standard technical procedures, a small fire initially broke out, they weren't able to

localize it. There was no automatic fire-suppression system. Because of the fact that the automatic emergency shut-down system wasn't operating, the operators weren't able to stop the flow of gas into the installation. The maintenance crew ran around near and far to close off each cluster head of the borehole. These were feeding the gas into the installation. In the end it was only thanks to the arrival of the fire brigade from Yamburg that the accident was dealt with:

To sum up: fortunately there were no casualties. Only one operator was burned. But the material loss was enormous: half a million roubles worth of complex equipment was twisted and burnt. On top of that there was the month's shutdown, which was needed so that the repairs could be carried out. Because of this incident, the country was deprived of approximately two billion cubic metres of gas. It is possible that, in an effort to somehow compensate for the shut-down of the No. 5 installation, the other fields will be ordered to go all-out in their production. However, that sort of "forcing" will also produce repercussions somewhere, sometime...

In an article published on the nineteenth of January this year in the correspondence section under the heading "Don't Blame the Firemen", Pravda wrote about blatant violations of fire-prevention rules at the fields of the Tyumen' Oblast. There is a shortage of the necessary equipment and foam compounds and nothing has been set up so that firemen can function properly.

Alas, in the heat of their everyday work life, the gas field workers apparently didn't have time to read that article and to react to the criticism of their methods.

"Even today," announced the deputy head of the Administration of Internal Affairs of the Tyumen' Oblast Executive Committee, A. Vyaznikovtsev, "the situation at "Tyumen'gazprom" projects is alarming. Two similar comprehensive gas-treatment installations are also operating without any fire-suppression system and many compressor stations are not equipped with automatic fire-suppression systems. We are categorically against the operation of these units. However, the Ministry of the Gas Industry has not responded to our protests. The motto of the Ministry seems to be "gas at any price"."

Just like the all-powerful gas-field workers, other "conquerors" of the resources of the Far North also take a devil-may-care attitude towards the requirements of the fire-fighting units. Over the last seven months alone, property and products valued at ten million roubles have gone up in smoke.

Pravda

14 August 1988

Page 3 (full text)

Squandering Of Energy Resources Promoted By System In The Gas Industry

In one of our recent editorials, R. Suleimanov, a delegate to the 19th party conference and General Director of a major industrial combine, "Urengoigazdobycha", wrote with anguish about the wasteful attitude towards our national wealth, the irreplaceable underground stores of natural gas. Indeed, why is the turn towards a resource-conserving economy so difficult? How is it that profit and loss accounting at times coexists

with wastefulness? Why are spendthrifts given such a free rein? "Puzzled" by these questions, correspondents of "Sotsialisticheskaya industriya" and TASS departed on an expedition along the gas mains extending from the Tyumen' North to the western border of the USSR.

1. The Problem: why do those who try to save fuel always lose out?

Let's begin with impartial statistics. In the gas fields of our country, 289,000,000,000m³ of natural gas was extracted in 1975, 435,000,000,000m³ in 1980, and 643,000,000,000m³ five years later. In the near future, the Ministry of the Gas Industry plans to extract over a trillion cubic metres of this valuable fuel.

Until recently, these figures sounded exceptional in triumphant communiqués. However, they now appear more often in other contexts. In order to provide an annual increment, the Ministry of the Gas Industry and its partners (construction ministries) have to open up new areas farther north. They are already working in the Arctic, on the Yamal Peninsula. Where do we go after that? The second, highly relevant question is how much will this all cost? If in the past 5-year-plan period a 1% increase in the all-union output of gas cost 16,200,000 roubles, today it will cost 24,800,000 roubles.

On the other hand, if we approach the problem from the point of view of consumption and take the level attained in developed capitalist countries as a reference point, we find that it would be possible to reduce the unit consumption of gas by 40-50% in cement production, by 50-55% for the

heating of rolled stock, and by 70-75% for the heating of forging and stamping metal. Since the energy crisis of the 1970s, the unit consumption of gas in industrial production in the West decreased by an average 40%. Last year, the absolute consumption of gas there dropped to the 1973 level, whereas in the USSR it reached record figures. Why is that?

We were told in Moscow by Ministry executives that, on the instructions of the Government, the Ministry of the Gas Industry is trying to get consumers to utilize the fuel more efficiently and economically. How then, under this mass attack on wastefulness, does the squanderer manage to survive?

... If we were to collect all of the authorized "instructions", "orders" and "requests" received by the Gorky Automobile Plant from the Ministry of the Gas Industry, we would get a multivolume documentary epic. It might even prove to be an intriguing story about how the Ministry of the Gas Industry is battling with one of its largest consumers, which does not wish to take a more assiduous attitude towards gas. The subject will culminate in an Overall Economy Campaign developed especially for this enterprise and approved by two deputy ministers. Alas! This chapter will not be followed by a happy ending. Of the 300,000,000 cubic metres of gas that the auto workers were supposed to save over a five-year period, only about 10,000,000m³ has been saved so far.

"There is no justification for this," says assistant technical director E. Parkman with a gesture of helplessness. "I guess we're just not working hard enough."

It is with this critical assessment that he opened the small meeting called at our request, which was attended by representatives of the various services of the enterprise and the local units responsible for fuel distribution.

It was a heated discussion, but strangely enough, we soon got the feeling that we had become witnesses to an intricate game. According to its unwritten rules, some of the participants of the meeting were supposed to demonstrate an intolerance to the squanderers of gas and vigilant zeal for state property, while others were supposed to repent of their mistakes and tell how they plan to correct them. All this so that nothing would have to change.

Our conjecture were borne out by the following episode. As proof that the workers of Gorky are on an economy drive, we were told about the plans to convert an entire complex of machines from gas to electricity in the nearest future. But how much fuel is needed to produce the additional electrical energy? This innocent question caused a commotion. Simple calculations showed that the plant's thermal power station will in the long run consume far more gas than is used up by these shops at the present time. Now that's "economy"!

"There's no need for irony," burst out one of the participants of the discussion. "If only you knew how dearly this economy cost at times."

These same words were spoken again and again by many of the economic managers. Some light was finally shed on the problem by specialists of the Novotrubnyi (New Pipe) Plant of Novouralsk in the Sverdlovsk Region.

Of all the enterprises along our route, this appears to be the only one that is truly doing something about the efficient use of fuel. Under the supervision of the plant's assistant chief power engineer V. Kuznetsov and the supervisor of the power engineering laboratory N. Khukharev, an initiative group of engineers has been operating here for years. Having increased the volume of production over the past five years, the Pervouralsk metal workers have reduced the annual consumption of natural gas by 23,000,000m³.

"And as a result of this, they got into a lot of trouble," says V. Kuznetsov.

The trouble begins as soon as the gauges in the control room of the local unit of Gorgaz register "underutilization" by the consumer of the fuel allotted to him. The profits of Gorgaz depend on the amount of gas consumed, and so they do everything they can to keep gas consumption up. Not so long ago, assiduous consumers were even fined for underutilization of their gas allocation. However, spoiling good relations with Gorgaz is far more threatening than a fine for any manager.

For example, with the present rigid limitations, gas consumption is allotted according to enterprises, almost to the cubic metre per hour. However, the living organism of production cannot adhere to such a strict regime. The daily fluctuations sometimes constitute 12-15%. The people at Gorgaz, which by the way are troubled by this situation, can live with these fluctuations. On the other hand, they can regard them as violations, and act accordingly, right up to the point of turning off the supply.

Or, imagine that it has suddenly grown cold. To provide the workers' settlement with heat, a single over-the-limit fuel supplement is needed. Do we turn to the Ministry? It would take till spring to get an answer. Our only hope is Gorgaz which, depending on the mood of management, may or may not find extra reserves.

It is, therefore, not surprising that most of the consumers who happen to save some gas prefer to keep this fact to themselves. The fuel is either burnt up in torches, or, having paid for the unused fuel, the latter is sent farther along the pipeline.

What if the plant managers do decide to wage an open war on wastefulness despite all the consequences, and all the objective data related to this are sent to the central economic planning bodies? Well, the zealots of economy will have a pretty hard time then. They'll be "suffocated" with all the same limits.

In the gas-limit policy, there reigns the repeatedly criticized, but still prospering principle "based on achievements". Those who have increased gas consumption are known for this tendency in the years to come, while those who have managed to save have their limits reduced in advance.

"Some smart-alecs cut them to such an extent that we had a fuel shortage of about 17,000,000m³ this year", says V. Kuznetsov.

Knowing all this, one isn't surprised by that intentionally created confusion that prevails in the policy of material incentive for saving gas. Judging by the accounts, enterprises spend quite a

lot on this. Yet, we have never encountered anyone who has shown a keen personal interest in the economical use of fuel.

In addition to all this, enterprises have recently introduced regulations which nobody has been able to explain from the point of view of efficiency. According to these regulations, neither the shop superintendent, nor the plants' power engineers, designers, technologists, in a word, not a single manager or specialist who actually determines the strategy of resource conservation has the right to receive a bonus for assiduity.

Is it not in this paradoxical situation that we must search for the main causes of the numerous "objective difficulties" which interfere with the introduction of resource-conserving technology?

Sotsialisticheskaya Industriya

5 August 1988

Page 1 (full text)

TRANSPORT RAIL

The Baikal-Amur Mainline Railway Needs Rehabilitation

It is Efim Vladimirovo Basin, delegate to the Nineteenth All-Union Party Conference, Director of the "Bamtransstroï" Planning, Industrial and Construction Association and Deputy Minister of Transport-related Construction Works, who considers that the BAM line is in need of rehabilitation.

... There was something of the spirit of the All-Union Party Conference in the atmosphere of this meeting. When one of the engineers came out on the platform and began to read generalities from a paper there was a lot of disapproving banging which forced the speaker to put his text aside.

Most likely it couldn't have happened in any other way, for everyone still remembers the exciting days of the Conference with the heated discussions, passionate speeches and the unrestrained dialogue between the podium and the floor. Of course he was a witness to everything that happened during that time in the Kremlin Congress Centre. He was present here at the open Party meeting of the association. He was in fact the first to speak.

The Deputy Minister of Transport-related Construction Works gave a report to those who had elected him delegate to the All-Union Conference. He told his audience how demanding the delegates' work schedule had been and about the Conference itself. There was no ostentation, no gifts and no trading. He shared his impressions of the report delivered by the Secretary General of the Central Committee of the Party, M.S. Gorbachev: it was constructive and

brought up the most important problems arising in the life of the Party and of the country as a whole. He told them how excited he was, as he prepared to speak. However, he didn't get to address the Conference. He handed the text of his short speech to the Secretariat and in all probability it will be published with the other materials from the Conference.

During the breaks television and radio reporters asked many of the delegates the most important question of the day:

"What would you have said if you had been asked to speak at the Conference?"

Basin was also asked that question. Now, at the meeting, he actually repeated what he had already said on the All-Union radio.

During these years, for the newspapers, the Baikal-Amur Mainline Railway went from being the "construction project of the century" to being labelled an "undertaking the country doesn't need". What don't they call the BAM project these days - a "diversion of rivers type of escapade" and a "make-work creation". Although he himself would not call the project "a creation", but rather a safety-valve during a period of stagnation. In fact the work went ahead with an all-out effort on the part of everyone involved: The BAM workers are quite rightly offended by what the press writes: at the outset, the press rushed into print with stories about the end of construction work on the project, but now, the same press is trying to bury the BAM line, along with all the good aspects of the project.

We have to rehabilitate the BAM line and to study the expertise developed during the project, expertise in labour and inter-ethnic relations acquired by young people working on the project. We should analyze the lessons which have been learned from this giant project, so that the same mistakes won't be repeated again in the future. This experience will prove useful when the long-term state programme for the development of the productive forces of the Far Eastern region is being carried out. At the moment this development is "skidding" because it has been drawn into the framework of a Five-Year Plan, which was already drawn up, without extensive discussion. Moreover, under the new economic conditions, the Ministries, which should be participating in the development of the BAM zone, have shown themselves to be uninterested in the construction of costly projects in the eastern regions of the country. For this reason it has been suggested that the state take on part of the cost of carrying out the programme. The interests of people, of the enterprise and of the state all have to be taken into account. Only then will things be successfully dealt with.

Basin also wants to reply to the USSR Ministry of Health, E. Chazov, who at the Conference criticized the builders of the project: they say they built the Tynda station out of marble, but the only hospital in the town is housed in a tumble-down barrack. He ought to be asking why the Ministry of Health will not allocate funds for the construction of the hospital. So far, the Ministry has been all promises and criticisms, with no action at all.

He also thought to raise yet another serious problem at the Conference, and that is, the question of the construction of the Amur-Yakutsk Main Line.

The need for this railway line is obvious: because there isn't such a line at the moment, millions of roubles are being lost. It has been calculated that the cost of constructing this line would be paid off over only three and half years. Nevertheless, something incomprehensible is being done: thirteen times the financing of the project has been announced... and then withdrawn.

Basin would also have said something about the Procrustean bed of instructions, about the bank, which the builders expect to be their partners, about ideas on the greater independence of the economic authorities and of the enterprises themselves. He would have quoted figures like these: over the last two and a half years, thirty two monitoring committees have visited the BAM project. How much time has been lost as a result of this, and how much paper wasted?

We have also to deal with this question: the former central board has been transformed into the planning, production and construction association "Bamtransstroi". Corresponding changes are also needed in the structure of the Party, trade-union and other collective organizations involved in the BAM project.

Basin came back from Moscow feeling very responsible for the decisions, which he and the other delegates to the Conference, had taken. He rode the BAM route, meeting with workers' brigades and talking about the conference. He tried to convey to the awareness and the hearts of the workers what the spirit of the Conference was about. He looked at the construction projects with new eyes and saw how much remains to be done.

The Association has shown good indices for the half-year period and the work-plans have been overfulfilled. During the half-year profits were as high as they were for the whole of last year. The housing construction programme is being successfully fulfilled. However, we shouldn't flatter ourselves with that, for the Uoyan- Angarakan section of the line isn't finished and the deed of the state commission hasn't been signed by one man - the representative of the Industrial Construction Bank/Promstroibank. There is a difficult situation with the construction of the Severomuisk tunnel detour. Wages have been raised and the supply problems have been overcome, but the workers operate in a kind of apathy. The director of the Association visited the council of the workers' collective and discussed with them the state of affairs at the Bamovskii brick works. A cooperative has been functioning there since the first of July. Sixty people have lost their jobs and the plant has begun to produce forty thousand bricks per shift, where previously it had only produced fifteen thousand. The workers from Taishet decided to follow this example and set up a cooperative in the "keramzit" /a light-weight concrete aggregate - translator/plant. Well, there are always problems when something is just getting underway.

After Basin spoke, the director of the planning and contracting department, L. Belkin, took the floor. He told the meeting about the results of an analysis which was made of the work of a similar combine in Shimanovsk. The inquiry discovered some curious facts. For example, the combine is not fulfilling its plans for its products inventory, but the managers and foremen of the workshops are receiving full bonuses. Or another story. Bonuses are being paid for saving materials. But how can

this be reckoned when there are no monitoring devices, when the hopper weighing machine is broken and the scales in the workshops don't work. And another story. The granite-producing unit causes the combine losses. The granite from their own quarry costs one hundred and thirty two roubles a cubic metre, but they prefer to import granite from Krasnoyarsk and to pay twice the price for it. Where's the profit in that?

The specialists have proposed the following: that the combine should introduce a minimum cost-accounting system, not an official system, but a real one. Today this is the only way of ensuring that the work flows smoothly...

There were a lot of speakers at the meeting and they all spoke about different problems, relating these problems to the main theme, as worked out by the Conference.

There are differing views with regard to the decision taken at the Party meeting. A majority voted to eliminate the irritating bill "Providing for the coming on-line of sectors...". The members of the Party were firm: we won't mix Party and economic functions. And as item number one in the resolution they stated: "To support E. Basin, delegate to the Nineteenth All-Union Party Conference in carrying out his planned measures aimed at improving the operations of the Association.

It was a correct decision.

Gudok

2 August 1988

Page 1 (slightly abridged)

TRANSPORT WATER

Northern Deliveries

Having chalked up more than 4,500 kilometres, since leaving the port of Osetrovo, the first ships belonging to the Lena River Steamship Line have arrived at Nizhneyansk. Many thousands of tonnes of important freight have thus been delivered to the construction workers employed by the tin-producing mining and enriching combine at Deputatskii settlement, to the gold miners and to the reindeer herdsman who live and work in the Arctic tundra. Taking advantage of favourable weather conditions, the rivermen delivered their cargoes in large capacity ships, which use the so-called direct ship-to-shore method, obviating the need for en route handling. The rivermen are determined to deliver all the cargoes which have been earmarked for the Yana region.

Sovetskaya Rossiya

2 August 1988

Page 1 (full text 1)

Shipping the harvest on time and without losses
Vegetable grow in Polar Regions!

The peak harvest work-season is now under way for the river-men of the Ob'-Irtysh Steamship Line. In a very short period of time they have to take on more than twenty three thousand tonnes of onions, cabbage and carrots from the state procurement bases in the Tyumen' region and deliver

them to the northern regions of the Oblast. The first motorships, the "Tyumenskii-5" and the "GTM-52" are in the process of being loaded.

The "Tyumenskii-5" is bound for the town of Nadym.

The other ship will proceed to the port of Khanty-Mansiisk.

The first meeting of the administrative centre for shipping the harvest has already taken place at Tyumen'. Here is what the Chief Dispatcher for Agriculture Produce, B. Sevost'yanov, had to say to our reporter.

"The shipment quotas of the vegetables, including potatoes, to be carried by the river fleet have been set. Additions have been made to the fleet in order to meet these objectives. Ships of the "Tyumenskii" and "GTM" type will be involved in transporting the harvest. Ships with a freight capacity of seven hundred tonnes will also take part in this campaign. They have already started shipping vegetables at Tyumen' and at Labythangi. At the docks of this Arctic port they have already started loading the motorship "CT-769" with onions. The "CT-769" will be heading for Nadym."

The vegetable harvest time has only just begun, but the rivermen of Tyumen' are already sounding the alarm. The problem is that the water-level of the Tura River has fallen drastically. For this reason it will be impossible to pick up all the harvested vegetables, including potatoes, from the storage centres in the Tyumen" region.

The oil and gas field workers are urgently in need of freight, which has to be shipped by rail to Tobol'sk, Sergino and Salekhard. There it will have to be transshipped onto river-going boats. However, at those locations they are not transshipping harvested produce onto the ships. This is the problem which faces the workers employed by the Sverdlovsk Railway Line. The fate of the harvest is now in the hands of all the middlemen, that is, the railway workers, the rivermen, the shippers and recipients of nature's bounty. It is important that all these people don't waste time.

The people who live in the Far North should receive all the vegetables destined for them - in full and without losses.

Vodnyi Transport
23 August 1988
Page 1 (full text)

Restructuring En Route

The second half of this year's shipping season began with an unexpected surprise for the rivermen of the Ob'. Due to the stopping of gravel production on the river Sob', the Ob'-Irtys' Steamship Line stopped leasing twenty two-tonne pusher tugs, registered to the Maryakovskii Maintenance and Operations Base, run by the Western Siberian Steamship Line. How are these Siberians coping in the face of such a difficult situation? Yu. Subbotin, Director of Shipping and Traffic Services for the fleet of the Western Siberian Steamship Line spoke with our freelance Correspondent, V. Lesnikova.

"I wouldn't wish such a breakdown in all the plans right in the middle of the shipping season on anyone," said the director. The twenty crews of those powerful pusher tugs should have brought the line a profit of at least five million roubles. And now, instead, we are rushing around trying to find work for these boats to do. Above all we've had to find work with new cargo routes, to find new customers and to deal with a lot of other problems. In the end we found solutions. Now we are transporting a sand and gravel mixture from Krasnoiglovsk, crushed rock from Tomsk and sand from Novosibirsk..."

Our correspondent: "But some crews haven't found work even now. Tell us about other steps the Shipping Line has taken since the river Sob' operation was closed down."

Subbotin: Unfortunately, right at the height of the shipping season, we had to deal with the problem of transferring the fleet to other waterways and to set workers up in other jobs. So we have handed our motorships, the OT-2017, OT-2072, OT-2045 and OT-2046 (all belonging to the Moryakovskii Maintenance and Operations Base) to the Lena Union Steamship Line. Two motorships, the OTA-894 and the OTA-936 and also two tugs, the PT-701 and the PT-751, will be operating with our neighbours, the Yenisei Steamship Line.

At the same time, we have transferred two of the latter ships in exchange for three-hundred horsepower ships of the "Angara" type, which are urgently needed for navigating the small rivers. Moreover, two motorships belonging to the Samus' Maintenance and Operations Base have been put into mothballs. Four others are now undergoing medium-scale repairs."

Our correspondent: "In the end more than ten ships have been withdrawn from service. What will the crews of these ships be doing?"

Subbotin: " I can answer that one right away. Not a single member of these crews will end up unemployed. Our personnel people are already busy finding them jobs, and then again, we aren't just standing around twiddling our thumbs. We're trying to keep on all the specialized fleet workers, to provide something useful for them to do and to make sure that they have a regular salary.

"What exactly are we doing? Well, first of all, we are helping out the Moryakovskii Maintenance and Operations Base, since this workers' collective has suffered the worst from the extraordinary situation which has developed on the Ob' River. The Moryakovskii base will be given five freighters from the new line of ships and a supply ship. Evidently some of the crew members will transfer to shore work at the Samus' Maintenance and Operations Base, where a large ship-building workshop is now under construction. The new shipyard will turn out barges which will be used on the smaller rivers. And finally, the Line employs quite a few crews which have been doing double shift work. We will now have qualified workers to bolster these work-teams."

Our correspondent: "Given this sort of situation, it is rather difficult for you to carry out your main task. What is the freight transshipment situation like?"

Subbotin: Our goals for the second quarter of the year have been met. The fleet functioned quite well in July as well. We handled thirty nine thousand tonnes of freight over and above the planned

amount, and as far as profits are concerned, well, the port workers fell behind on the freight-handling side, but so did the crews of the passenger ships. As before, we are somewhat disturbed by ships' layovers at the docks of "Tomsklesprom". A lot of the available potential is not being used in the shipment of gravel from Shul'ginka. Our work is made a lot more difficult by the very shallow waters of the rivers in the Tomsk Oblast. However, the morale of the rivermen working the Ob' region is resolute. The shipping assignments should be fully carried out, including even the extra socialist work obligations.

Novosibirsk

Editor's note: At its meeting the collegium of the Ministry of the River Fleet of the Russian SFSR discussed the question, "On the amendment of state purchasing plans for the year 1988 for the supply and shipment of non-metal construction materials". The resolution, which was adopted, states that with regard to the ban on the production of non-metal construction materials from the channel of the river Sob', the Ob'-Irtys' Steamship Line should reduce state orders for the supply of sand-gravel mix by one million nine hundred thousand cubic metres and state orders for transporting this should be cut by two million tonnes. Taking into account the increase in the consumption of non-metal construction materials, at the same time - and in accordance with the demand - the workers employed by the Volga Union, Moscow, Kama and Western Siberian Steamship Lines should increase their orders for the shipment of non-metal construction materials by two million tonnes.

Vodnyi Transport
23 August 1988
Page 1(full text)

Ships Carrying Fresh Potatoes

The port workers of Archangel have started shipping fresh potatoes to various regions in the Far North. The agricultural produce, which been arriving at the cargo area of Bakaritsa, is being packed into the holds of sea-going freighters, which will then deliver it to the consumers who live along the arctic Ocean seaboard. The motorship "Perm" has set a course for Anderma and in her wake, proceeding in the same direction, is the "Valdailes". The produce resulting from the new harvest will be delivered to Arctic Dudinka by the motorship "Petrozavodsk".

"Altogether in the course of the campaign to deliver this year's produce, the port workers of Archangel will have to handle about thirty thousand tonnes of potatoes, other vegetables and fruit," your reporter was told by Yu. Grigor'ev, the director of the Bakaritsa cargo area. "All the basic preparations have been made, unloading teams have been picked, extra work brigades have been recruited and dockworkers from the Baltic ports have come to our assistance. However, one thing is disturbing and that is the fact that the suppliers have been slow in delivering us the potatoes."

The harvesting and delivery of agricultural produce was in fact late in getting under way. for this the weather is to blame. Particularly disturbing is the first instance of a disruption in the transport system. A railway car full of potatoes, shipped by the Peremyskl' State Procurement Office of the Kaluga Oblast Consumers' Union, had to sit idle for several days. This was due to the fact that mistakes had been made in filling out the railway documents, where the address of the recipient of the freight had been filled out incorrectly. The

port and the Archangel division of the Severnaya/Northern/Railway Line started to argue about whose responsibility it was to ship the potatoes by sea.

"Then both agencies started attacking me," your reporter was told by the Director of the Archangel Transport and expediting Division of the Murmansk Branch of the Noril'sk Trade Administration, V. Shestakov. "But I don't have those powers. I sent off telegrams to the authorities involved and now I'm waiting for a reply..."

That's a familiar and disturbing recurrence of what happened in previous years. The agencies involved have created a barrage of telephone and telegram red tape, while the potatoes are going bad in those stuffy railway cars. What is also disturbing is the fact that so far they haven't settled the question of who will monitor the quality of the fruit and vegetable produce at the transshipment port and how they will go about doing it. The state inspection board is avoiding the job, on the grounds that they have suffered manpower reductions and have a shortage of specialists. The Noril'sk Trade Administration hasn't sent any representatives.

It might seem that these are petty unsettled issues, but in the past they have led to a considerable number of layovers and to various losses. Is this depressing experience going to be repeated this year as well?

Vodnyi Transport
20 August 1988
Page 1 (full text)

In the Grip of "Work Norms"
(How the workers of the Pevek marine port ended up
after the transition to a full cost-accounting system)

At Pevek, after the long polar night, everyone was waiting for the first convoy of ships. It was the beginning of June, however, the only thing which showed that it was summer was the merry song of the snow-bunting, that bright and happy polar sparrow. Snow still covered the hills and the sea was locked in the powerful grip of the ice. The nights were still freezing cold.

At the marine port of Pevek they were ready for the start of the shipping season. Involuntarily I compared everything I saw with the situation at the marine port of Anadyr'. This is, after all, understandable, since one and the same question interested me at both Anadyr' and at Pevek, that is, how the full system of cost-accounting and self-financing was being implemented.

At first glance, conditions at both ports appear to be similar. There is a long, harsh winter, the short shipping season, a steady flow of freight. Yes, and even the freight itself is of approximately the same type. However, at the same time, there are quite a few differences. Pevek lies far beyond the Arctic Circle, on the shores of the Arctic Ocean. Anadyr' on the other hand, is further south and enjoys the more or less favourable conditions which prevail on the Pacific coast. However, the main differences lie above all in the approach the two ports take toward dealing with economic issues.

For purposes of comparison I will quote only a few figures. About six hundred men are employed at the port of Anadyr' and of these, one hundred and

twenty are managers or administrators. The principle capital investment there runs to forty million roubles. Part of this investment capital has recently had to be set aside.

The port of Pevek employs slightly more than three hundred workers (thirty seven managers), but the principle capital investment there is half that of the other port, that is about twenty million roubles. The port of Pevek, however, handles one and a half times more freight than does Anadyr'.

What's going on?

The Director of the Pevek commercial marine port, Boris Fedorovich Abakumov answered this question in the following way:

"Quite simply, we have always tried to count our pennies. We learned this ourselves and we taught the workers. Thus, we have gradually learned about economics and we have built up a strong workforce. For, you know, a man who has a clear idea of what he is working for, is capable of working far better."

It's true - and Boris Fedorovich modestly said nothing about it - that now and long before the advent of perestroika, he always consulted with the port workers, took an interest in their affairs and helped as best he could everyone who needed help. This is why everyone in Pevek knows and respects him. It's almost impossible to get a job at the port since practically nobody ever leaves of his own free will. And this is all because at the port they have always followed a hard and fast rule: economics is for man and not the other way around.

Lets go back six months, to the time when the Ministry of the Marine Fleet went over to a system of full cost accounting and self-financing. The port of Pevek had been prepared for this move, before it actually happened. A lot of work had to be done by the economists, the chief accountant Nina Aleksandrovna Nikolaeva and the director of the Labour and Wages Department, Vasilii Yakovlevich Shilin..

At the port everything was done so that everyone would be fully prepared to take part in the economic reform. As far as was possible they eliminated machinery and equipment which was worn out or obsolete.

Last year alone, one hundred and forty-four thousand roubles worth of outdated equipment was written off: several automatic loaders, a scow, an "Abus" gantry crane and so on. Items were written off mercilessly. While previously an "Abus" crane, which had served for thirty years, would be retained in reserve and transferred to back-up duties for auxiliary cargo-handling operations, now, on the other hand, the crane was simply consigned to the scrap heap. It works out cheaper that way.

Last year the sale of superfluous machinery and equipment brought in one hundred and ninety-eight thousand roubles. Sales of capital machinery and equipment to other enterprises brought in ninety-two thousand roubles. All sorts of things had accumulated in various warehouses for a rainy day, including spare parts, underwear, hydrochloric acid, canvas raincoats....

The final result was a saving of fifty-two thousand roubles. You know, in the end this money

would have been paid into the state budget out of the pockets of the port workers.

Then again, when the manpower reduction phase started, not a single Pevek marine port worker was let go. They thought about the situation for a long time. No extra workers were taken on and no unnecessary positions or office jobs were created. Fewer than fifty seasonal workers had to be hired during the shipping season.

What have the port workers got out of the new port-management methods?

"You know, at first glance, nothing seemed to have changed," your reporter was told by N. Kriger, the team-leader of the dock-workers and mechanics brigade. "Wages were basically the same, or if they increased, it was by very little."

That means that the whole struggle to bring in economies, all the efforts of the economists were in vain, then? Does that mean that nothing has changed in the financial condition of the port? Well, let's not jump to hasty conclusions...

All the Chukotka ports belonging to the Ministry of the Marine Fleet received similar radiograms more or less on the same day. The authorities of the Far East Marine Shipping Line were suggesting that, in agreement with the work brigades involved, the administration be informed as to which mode the port workers prefer to work in, that is, with the rights of an independent state enterprise, or, on the other hand, as a structural unit of the steamship line.

At the marine port of Pevek they chose the independent way.

"Already we can not only be a self-compensating enterprise, but a self-financing one as well," your reporter was told by B. Abakumov. "But we are hampered by the excessively high amounts of the deductions which are liable to be sent out by the steamship line.

Taking into account the short shipping season, all the Chukotka ports pay no more than two percent of their profit for the maintenance of the fixed productive capital. Egvekinot, for example, is completely free of such deductions for the state budget. Arctic Pevek has been forced to pay twelve percent of its profit on this account, a sum amounting to two million, three hundred and fifty thousand roubles. The payment for the fixed capital fund is excessively high, particularly if one takes into account the fact that in the current year, in the system operated by the Ministry of the Marine Fleet, the maximum payment has been set at eight percent.

The amounts and deductions taken from the current profit for the budget are unacceptably high. At the port of Pevek, these deductions amount to 41.8 percent. At other ports in Chukotka, by contrast, this type of deduction is scarcely more than thirty percent.

In a word, we are faced with the obvious desire of the authorities of the Far East Marine Steamship Line to skim off a solid chunk of the profits, earned by the workers of the port of Pevek and to hand these sums over to support those ports which run at a loss.

However, as we have often seen, this wage-levelling process gives rise to deplorable results. Above all, it is harmful because it kills

initiative, spreads cynicism among its own workers and deprives people of the possibility of working constructively. And then again, what justifies the Far East Steamship Line disposing of the profits of an independent state enterprise?

The profit, which remains at the disposal of the marine port of Pevek is, if one considers the question of need, purely symbolic, that is to say, 1,034,000 roubles. Only four hundred thousand roubles are allocated for the enterprise's development fund. And again, three hundred and fifty six thousand roubles for the social development fund is scarcely enough (even when taken together with one hundred and forty thousand roubles of aid from the steamship line) for the maintenance of the social, cultural and communal services projects. There can be no question of the workers being able to construct housing using their own resources. Funds are handled in a centralized way. So then, the question arises, why this shifting of resources from one pocket into another? Why all this red-tape? Maybe, it's in order to justify the existence of the line's bureaucracy and its maintenance?

Nor is the material incentives fund of two hundred and seventy eight thousand roubles all that great. Moreover, with the agreement of the workers, some of these funds are handed over to the social, cultural and communal services development fund.

Why have things turned out this way?

The chief accountant for the port of Pevek, N. Nikolaeva answered that question as follows: "Well, it's because the amounts of the deductions for the economic incentives fund are not based on accounting principles, but on simple arithmetic. At

the steamship line they reason in the old way: don't give more funds for the material incentives fund than was done before, prior to the restructuring process. They have turned the material incentives contribution into a percentage of the whole amount.

B. Abakumov had an interesting idea. He reckons that there should be no enterprises running at a loss. If a plant or a factory runs at a loss, it should not be allowed to survive and should close down. This is why, it seems, that the policy of maintaining, regardless, enterprises which run at a loss, is fundamentally false. This idea contradicts the laws of economics. Is it really fair that the Far East Marine Steamship Line should "sink" the promising port of Pevek, by taking away the port's resources to use for those who don't want to think or reckon income and expenses, or in general take enterprise into account?

Vodnyi Transport

11 August 1988

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MISCELLANEOUS

Thrifty "Prometei" Shop

Tyumen', 30. (Pravda correspondent V. Orlov). A recently opened "salon-shop" named "Prometei" has caught the fancy of the residents of Tyumen'. The shop sells goods made by subsidiary enterprises of "Glavsibkomplektmontazh.

A particular feature of the shop is the fact that there is a great demand for things which only yesterday would have been thrown out on the scrapheap. Now they are making sets of furniture for country holiday cottages out of scrap. They are also making glass and plastic hothouses with both metal and wooden frames, forcing huts, panels for garden sheds, aluminum tile, well-top structures, aquariums, parts for the construction of garages, for apartment repair-work, items for constructing garden plot appurtenances and much more. If a customer can't find what he's looking for in the shop, then he can leave behind a sample or a sketch of what he needs. This order will be filled quickly and delivered to the desired address.

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MISCELLANEOUS

the shop; you do not at present yet and pinpoints the
 Thrilly "Preston" See later on for about 1900 give
 second manufacturer of the kind, noted such was
 not only the name of the firm but also the name of the
 (Orlov). A recently issued "London and" series of a conti
 "Promoter" has caught the fancy of the residents of
 Tyman, on the other hand, goods made by subsidiary
 enterprises of "Glasgow and London" exist that snicker
 about a new factory to hold a full size at
 goods. The factory is situated at the shop in the fact
 that there is a great demand, especially in the
 yesterday, which has the numerous over the shop in
 Now the shop is situated in the fact that the
 holiday, especially in the fact that the
 glass and the shop is situated in the fact that the
 wooden frames, especially in the fact that the
 aluminium, especially in the fact that the
 for the construction of the shop, especially in the fact that the
 repair-work, items for construction, especially in the fact that the
 appliances and much more. If a customer can't
 find what he's looking for in the shop, then he can
 leave behind a message for the shop, then he can
 This order will be filled quickly and delivered to
 the desired address.

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