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AND THE ANTARCTIC
MARCH 1989

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ABBREVIATIONS

The abbreviations used in the text are given in this section. The abbreviations for the various physical quantities are given in the following table.

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AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PRODUCTION

Excessive Quotas Discourage Soviet Fishermen

When will this confusion over targets finally end for us fishermen? After all, no matter what the scientists and publicists write or say about changes in the economic system, at our level, the gross product still reigns supreme, just as before. Here is an obvious example. Last winter we caught 9 000 tonnes of pollock. A misfortune was instrumental in our fortune. Instead of five fishing trawlers there were only three. Two ships broke down and returned to port. The floating factories were only working off the three ships. Therefore, we were giving them fish very quickly. There were three ships catching fish from the schools which we discovered instead of five. Now all five trawlers are operating, but the target for each of them is the same as last year's level achieved by each of the three ships under emergency conditions. The objective has been more than doubled!

There is another hidden misfortune here. The thing is that the major portion of the fishermen's wages is made up of the bonuses for overfullfilling targets. Mind you, this is not some vast sum. Due to the generally low fixed prices - 57 kopeks per centner of fish caught - even considering last year's share bonuses, we got almost half as much as we would on seiners, which only catch about 1 500 to 2 000 tonnes. And now what will happen with such an excessive target? Won't the fisherman leave, feeling that they won't get anything for extremely difficult work in the winter seas and the bitter cold wind?

When the Magadanrybprom* Association changed over to self-financing and self-sufficiency, there was a lot of talk about hard, long-term economic standards which would allow us to face the future with the greatest certainty. In fact, none of this has happened yet. This is why I would really like to

see objective economic laws triumph over the administrative-command system in our economy.

Sotsialistcheskaya
Industriya

10 March 1989

Page 1 (full text)

Local Co-operative Produces New Fodder For Siberian Livestock

The first scientific production co-operative in the district, the "Krasnyi Yar", established in Yemel'yanovo region, is planning to produce aspen "flour", fertiliser made from bark, silver oil and much else besides, all from the waste products of the forestry industry.

The co-operative is planning to work closely with the Siberian Scientific Research Institute for the Forestry Industry, whose technology they will be using. The first priority for the co-operative is to reach planned output volumes of the vitamin-rich aspen "flour", which they are planning to produce on leased premises at the Maiskii State Farm.

The establishment of this co-operative is an important step on the road to providing valuable fodder for Siberia's livestock industry. Reprocessing aspen waste in Krasnoyarsk district alone can provide up to a million tonnes annually of coarse, sweetened fodder.

Sotsialistcheskaya
Industriya

7 March 1989

Page 2 (full text)

High-Yield Vegetable Plots In The Arctic

The name of the northern Ural settlement of Kharp translated from the Nenets language means "Northern Lights". Apparently that must be why it didn't take much philosophizing to name the local dining hall "Light of the North". And it looks as though they weren't far from the truth.

* * *

You go into the spacious premises and stand for some time transfixed: this is the subtropics, not the north! Everywhere there are flowers and evergreen plants and in general the whole interior is reminiscent of the south and warmth.

OK, you say, all this is fine, but in a dining hall it's not the interior that counts. But the food they serve here is also different. The selection of appetizers and first and second course dishes is varied, and the prices are moderate: a dinner consisting of four dishes rarely exceeds one ruble.

"But where did you get the fresh green vegetable?" I ask the dining hall workers.

"They're our own, they're not imported", they reply.

Ten years ago few people even in the Urals or Tyumen'Oblast knew about the tiny settlement of Kharp, situated on the banks of the little mountain river Sob'. Then intense work on the construction of gas-related industries began. Paved roads were needed. Transporting reinforced concrete panels from the "mainland" was expensive: it was far, there were

a lot of loads to transport, and navigation on the northern rivers was short.

In Kharp, construction of a factory to manufacture reinforced concrete articles was assigned to the SU-38 subdivision of the Yamalgazstroy (Yamal'skiy State Construction and Assembly Trust, Ministry of Construction Enterprises of the Oil and Gas Industry of the USSR). Time went by and soon administrative head Givi Arsenovich Utrugashvili, a southerner to the core, grew to love the north. He became an old-timer in the village. It was his idea to build a greenhouse. They found pipes to bring heat from the water-cooling towers of a thermoelectric power plant. To economize, the same pipes were used as load-bearing components in the greenhouse. Then the question came up: What do we grow? How?

They contacted scientists at the Yamal'skiy Agricultural Experimental Station, who gave them recommendations. The only thing they didn't have was their own agronomist in Kharp. No one had ever attempted to grow anything here on this permafrost until now. So Utrugashvili began reading the specialized literature. Others followed suit. A little more and they'd all have turned into agronomists. Now they don't have to ask anyone to work in the greenhouses (they have three there now).

Each square metre yields around 23 kg of vegetables. Using improved technologies, says Utrugashvili, they could yield fully 40 kg.

"Soon we'll have to become livestock farmers", jokes Givi Arsenovich. "We're getting to fatten some pigs. We're almost finished preparing the facilities, and we're installing equipment in the

feed plant. We're doing everything slowly: It's easy to obtain cattle; it's more difficult to avoid losses and to learn how to get steady gains in weight. We estimate that every working person will receive a yearly table supplement of 23 kg of meat. We are so confident that we've even provided for a small smoking shed".

In these regions the supply of meat is not bad. So what's forcing the workers of SU-38 to build a livestock farm? The problem is that the delivery of meat is irregular. Either the transport system lets them down, a blizzard blows up and blocks the roads, or the suppliers take their sweet time. That's why the people in Kharp think things will be more reliable if they have their own farm.

Stroitel'naya Gazeta

12 April 1989

Page 1 (full text)

ANTARCTIC

Environmental Concerns Delay Yamal Projects

Yamalo-Nenets Region: The Yamalo-Nenets Regional Committee recently confirmed a ban on construction projects in the areas around the gas-fields situated on the Yamal peninsula. The technical and economic substantiation documentation presented by the Ministry of the Gas Industry was acknowledged to be lacking, particularly with regard to the ecological aspects. The completion dates for the opening of the Yamal gas industry have thus been postponed by several years. However, the proprietors of the territory think that rash decisions could result in even greater losses

Stroitel'naya Gazeta
5 February 1989
Page 3 (full text)

Soviet Ship Makes Fourteenth Trip to Antarctica

It is autumn in the Antarctic. There are swells and clouds, and ice and icebergs are starting to crowd together in the coastal areas. This is the situation in which the crew and scientists on six USSR Naval Ministry and USSR State Hydrometeorological Centre vessels started on the second stage of operations under the programme of the 34th Soviet Antarctic Expedition.

Once again the Mikhail Somov was ploughing the expanses of the Southern ocean, as for the fourteenth time it reached the shores of the White

continent, delivering over 80 scientists and specialists, 1 500 tonnes of various equipment and gear. There was also cargo aboard the vessel addressed to the stations run by Poland and East Germany.

The voyage takes almost three months. The crew, headed by captain M. Kaloshin and training captain F. Pes'yakov, are covering a considerable area of water in these high cold expanses for a series of USSR scientific centres and those of fraternal socialist countries. They have already visited the Druzhnaya seasonal geological and geophysical base on the shore of the Weddell Sea. They have put ashore part of its personnel and delivered a consignment of its freight. At times during their voyage, they have worked under difficult weather conditions.

Vodnyi Transport

11 March 1989

Page 6 (full text)

Soviet Research Vessel Completes Antarctic Studies

The Murmansk-based scientific research vessel was working in the sixth continent as part of the programme of the 34th Soviet Antarctic Expedition. For over a month, specialists have been conducting a series of research projects studying the ocean bed. The data they have collected will add to the scientific knowledge we already have about the

structure of the Earth's crust near the South Pole, and will enable us to make a physical geological map of the region under study.

Pravda

22 March 1989

Page 2 (full text)

Vojnyy Transport
11 March 1989
Page 6 (full text)

Ataxas avay'lat'it's
6981 yisurud' 5
(text line) 3 avay'

Soviet Research Vessel Combed Antarctic Shores

The scientific knowledge of the Antarctic region has been enriched by the results of the expedition of the Soviet Antarctic expedition. For over a month, specialists have been conducting a series of research projects involving the ocean bed. The data they have collected will add to the scientific knowledge of the region.

Although the Soviet Antarctic expedition has been working in the sixth continent for a long time, it is only now that it has reached the shores of the White Sea.

ARCTIC

Soviet Icebreaker Rescues Researchers In Arctic

The scientific research vessel, the ice-breaker Otto Schmidt, has returned to port in Murmansk after a long voyage of many months in the Arctic.

After they had been forced to evacuate the SP-28 drift-ice research station in January, the scientists continued their research work to the north of Greenland aboard the ice-breaker Otto Schmidt. With the help of the nuclear-powered Rossiya, the vessel penetrated right into the ice-pack where the SP-28 station was located and was able to continue the rest of the drift project with the station.

It was a very risky experiment, because if there had been any sudden pressure from the ice, the vessel could have been crushed. But the minute there were any signs of increased pressure, the ice-breaker moved to safety in an area of ice-free water, a safe distance from danger.

Vessel and ice drifted together over 950 miles. The information gathered by the Soviet scientists during this time has been of great interest to scientists from northern Europe and North America, since this was the first time that this area of the Arctic had been systematically studied.

Izvestiya

22 March 1989

Page 1 (full text)

Soviet Icebreaker Turned Into Arctic Research Station

The Musmansk Regional Directorate for Hydrometeorology's scientific research ice-breaker, the Otto Schmidt has completed its unique Arctic expedition. For more than 40 days and nights it drifted in the ice of the Greenland Sea, carrying out a series of scientific experiments in the difficult to access expanses of the Arctic.

It was on 24 January that the Rossiya nuclear-powered vessel took the over-winterers and their equipment off the SP-28 station on its crumbling ice-floe drifting in the Greenland Sea, and "froze in" the ice-breaker, the Otto Schmidt, as a replacement for the SP-28 station, to continue with the scientific research. It was not long before the effect of the swell and strong underwater currents had made themselves felt, "base" ice-floe broke up, leaving the Otto Schmidt trapped in the ice fields. The ice-breaker continued to drift while the scientific expedition on board busily carried out its meteorological, hydrological and hydrochemical research. They didn't even stop work when the ice-breaker found itself in a critical situation, between Greenland and the island of Jan-Mayen, where it came under pressure from pack ice many metres thick. But everything turned out well and the Otto Schmidt ended its drift of 950 miles at the mouth of the Danish gulf.

Pravda

12 March 1989

(full text)

At The Limits Of The Possible

SHMIDT ISLAND, SEVERNAYA ZEMLYA
ARCHIPELAGO. The northwest extremity of Shmidt Island in the archipelago of Severnaya Zemlya. 4 March. 12:50 Moscow time. Temperature minus 37 degrees. The expedition "Arktika", organized by Ekonomicheskaya gazeta and the Moscow branch of the Geographical Society of the USSR Academy of Sciences, has set off for the North Pole.

* * *

The difference between this expedition and previous expeditions is its autonomous nature - during the entire trip there will be no air support. There is enough food for 55 days. During that period the group, headed by Vladimir Chukov, expects to reach the top of the world and demonstrate that it is possible to survive under extreme conditions.

In 1987 this group, consisting of ten people, left the same archipelago, Svernaya Zemlya. But the polar barrier did not fall to them at that time. At 88 degree north latitude they had to stop because one of the members of the group fell ill. Only 180 kilometres of terrain (and not the most difficult at that) remained to the recalcitrant Pole-a mere ten days' march.

And now a fresh attempt to reach the top of the world. It seems as though on this day the Arctic has decided to give "Arktika" a gift: The usual blizzard is absent and visibility is excellent. But everyone is concerned about a large patch of open water. How long will it delay the group? It's quite possible that the expedition may have to "retreat" west to get around the water. And only then go north toward the Pole.

And so, the expedition has no support from outside. Still, there was support for all that.

V. Chukov:

"Our expedition received a lot of help from the Moscow branch of the Geographical Society of the USSR Academy of Sciences, and Ekonomicheskaya gazeta, which took on a large part of the organizational responsibilities.

"All the members of the group are sincerely grateful to those who contributed financial and material support. The expedition's principal sponsors were: the L'vov production association 'Elektron', the joint Soviet-Luxembourg company 'Otema', the city Nakhodka social initiative fund, the Voronezh cooperative production and trade association 'Orion', and many others. For example, the inflatable boats were manufactured for the trekkers in Uzbekistan, the sleds for transportation loads over the ice were made in Latvia, and the high-calorie food products were prepared by workers at the Biryulevskiy Experimental Plant run by the food concentrate industry's Scientific Production Association.

"As for the equipment, for the most part it was made by the voyagers themselves. Unfortunately, our industry does not produce much of what was needed. And needed, incidentally, not just for trips in the severe Arctic, but also for the work of specialists setting out to develop this region. And for this reason the members of the group had to call on their considerable knowhow and skills to make, for example, the clothes they are wearing.

"The group took with it enough supplies for an unsupported voyage of 55 days, which works out to a load of 75 kg per person. All this will have to be carried over ice hummocks, snow drifts and patches of ice-free water many metres wide. Hellish work! But the members of the expedition want to achieve their dream - the dream of many an adventurer: to travel by sled without outside support to the top of the world.

"Their work in the Arctic is also complicated by the fact that during the course of the entire trip, expedition members will be conducting various scientific studies. At the request of a number of scientific research institutes, they will be busy studying the medical and biological problems of human life and activity at high latitudes, and testing the efficiency of communications equipment. The All-union Institute of natural Research in particular has asked them to undertake a scientific study of animal life in the Arctic. And then there's the Penzenskiy Clock Factory, which is interested in the efficiency of its products."

"How do you intend to cope with such an intense program?" we asked the expedition's leader V. Chukov.

"Our days have been planned literally down to the hour", he replies. "At this time of the year in the Arctic there are only seven hours of daylight. This means that we will be using them for travelling. In a week or two the daylight will increase to 10-11 hours. We have set aside around six hours in each day for sleeping. The remainder of the time is reserved for setting up camp, eating, radio communication and scientific studies".

By the way, a number of groups are setting off for the North Pole from Canada this year.

"Of course, as sportmen we would want to get to the North Pole first, says V. Chukov, "but we would be glad to meet them all at the finish. We wish those who are starting out success. I'm convinced that they would wish the same to us".

In addition to us, the trekkers were also being accompanied by a puppy, given to them on Dikson Island, which they called "Polyus".

"Fly to the Pole with Polyus", the expedition members told us.

"Till we meet at the North Pole", we said, bidding them farewell.

Our MI-8 helicopter circled a few times over the ice of the Arctic Ocean. But now the land didn't seem like such a white silence any more. The helicopter crew, captained by Yu. Reymerov, saluted the polar explorers with green rockets.

Economicheskaya Gazeta

March 11, 1989

Page 24 (abridged)

Radio Report From "Arktika"

The "Arktika" expedition, organized by Ekonomicheskaya gazeta and the Moscow branch of the Geographical Society of the USSR Academy of Sciences, has been en route now for almost a month. It has

travelled more than a third of the distance to its goal -the North Pole. Behind them lies the 84th parallel.

* * *

During a regular radio communication, the expedition's leader, Vladimir Chukov, passed this information on specially for Ekonomicheskaya gazeta:

"The voyage has met with great difficulties. At the beginning we encountered solid hummock fields, crevasses and patches of ice-free water. Temperatures reached minus 45 degrees. Because there was no time to get acclimatized, expedition members suffered from minor frostbite. The group's doctor, Vladimir Petlakh, had his hands full. Incidentally, the sea-buckthorn oil and OLAZOL', made in Biysk by the Agro-Industrial Association's "Altayvitamina" Company, came in handy. These preparations are helpful in cases of frost-bite.

"I think that our experience in the extreme conditions of the Arctic might be of use to people in very different professions- polar explorers, geologists, hunters and oil workers. The Arctic is also subjecting our equipment to impartial testing. On the first day our plastic sleds broke down. The inflatable ones also did not withstand the cold. Only the metal ones survived. The group has two cine-cameras (the KVARITS-3 and the KRASNOGORSK-3), and two still cameras (the SMENA and the KIYEV-19). In spite of the severe cold, our cameramen, Aleksandr Vykhristyuk and Andrey Podryadchikov, are keeping a cine and photo diary of the expedition. All the data on the operation of our apparatus and equipment is recorded in the diary. We will give a more detailed report on them after we return.

"We couldn't not express our gratitude to the food concentrate industry's All-Union Scientific Production Association, and their special food production technology, for preparing our rations, and also to the Biryulevskiy experimental factory, which is run by the same Association. The products they supplied us with are rich in calories and do not require a long time to prepare, which allows us to save on fuel.

"Furthermore, in our view, when the expedition returns, industry should have a close look at our clothing, which we made ourselves. In spite of the high humidity, the abundance of condensation and the low temperatures, we feel comfortable in it. The clothing (as well as the sleeping gear) was made from synthetic materials known for their low hygroscopicity. Moisture "freezes out" of them well. Any other material, be it fur, wool or down, even eider down, would turn into blocks of ice in such conditions unless aired periodically. It seems to us that this clothing is simply indispensable to all professional polar explorers. It is cheap and reliable".

* * *

Having learned that expedition members had found the preparations made by Altayvitamina to be useful in Arctic conditions, I telephoned the general director of the Association, Yu Koshelev.

"We willingly supplied the expedition with our medicines", said Yuriy Antonovich. "You couldn't imagine better test conditions than those in the Arctic. Our OLAZOL' and sea-buckthorn oil are excellent remedies in cases of frostbite. The oil is also very good for stomach disorders, and can be used

as a vitamin supplement. However, I hope no-one gets sick or suffers from frost-bite".

"And what can you tell us about the Association's production activities?"

"As we mentioned, we plan to expand production of pure sea-buckthorn oil up to 140 tonnes per year by 1990. The capacity for such production has already been created. What's more, it is entirely possible that we might increase production of the oil to 200 tonnes per year. Furthermore, this year we created capacities that will allow us to expand the production of aerosols and finished medicines, and we also tested a new plant layout that will allow us to increase labour productivity drastically. The main problem today is raw materials".

"Is there hope that there will be enough?".

"A procurement association has been set up in Altayskiy Kray, whose task is to supply us with as many seabuckthorn berries as we need".

"We hope that your miraculous preparations will soon cease to be such a scarce commodity".

"We will make every effort to make sure that is does".

Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta

April 15, 1989

Page 19 (full text)

CONSTRUCTION

Bureacracy Has Become a Hindrance to the Implementation of New Work Methods in the Construction Trust

TYUMEN'. The conflict was a distress signal of sorts. But no one in the "managerial staff" was upset by it. "so what else is new", they said. "Some people left. They come and they go". But what we're dealing with here is the fate of one of the best teams.

Almost twenty years ago a Tyumen' builder, I. Smirnov, formed a crack integrated team from among the first enthusiasts. The team began building "turnkey" facilities, working according to the contract method. Subsequently transformed into a section, then into an integrated production line, through all these years the team remained a "beacon" within the Ministry of Oil and Gas Construction system. The collective earned for itself the honour to be registered on the USSR Exhibition of Economic Achievement Board of Honour. People came from all over the country to learn from the team. Nauka Press was preparing to publish a book by Ivan Vladimirovich Smirnov. But today the celebrated collective no longer exists. It was disbanded, classified "unsuitable" for solving the new tasks facing the industry. Such was the gist of the justification given by the leaders of the Sibkomplektstroy (Siberian Construction and Assembly) Trust. In actual fact the reasons were quite different. And what reasons!

* * *

I remember how we mastered the principles of team contracts. In less than ten years the team built twenty five-storey residential buildings, two kindergartens, several stores, and a polyclinic. There were about 200 people in the team, and our yearly volume of work was valued at up to five million rubles. This was a plan for solid construction management. We brought the annual output per person up to 20,000 rubles - twice the average work productivity for residential construction in Tyumen!.

It's a well-known fact, however, that the team contract method in construction met with great difficulty on its way to becoming a reality. According to reports, the number of contract collectives reached 60-70 percent. But they were only contract collectives on paper. Rampant disorganization was eating away at their roots. The "levelling" principle -offspring of the administrative-command system -did its utmost to suffocate everything. And the story of how our collective fell apart is further proof of this.

I have already mentioned that in terms of work productivity we exceeded the average by a factor of two. It would seem that the team members, who were working harder and more efficiently than others, should have been earning significantly more. But that was never the case. Why? Perhaps by keeping the pace high, we drove away the rejects and consequently lost their wages at redistribution? No, there were no problems with quality.

The reason was that since the earliest days wages in construction have been adjusted artificially to some single level by planning different standards of wage fund formation for different teams, both the

hard-working ones and the slow ones. When we were building a residential microdistrict in the settlement of Bogovskoy, they explained this "averaging" by saying we were in a convenient situation: We were building several facilities at the same time; the facilities were all together; it was simpler to organize supplies for us than for "single-facility" sites. Of course, a certain correction coefficient depending on the working conditions is needed. All the same, this levelling of front-rank workers and leggards should not be allowed.

Somehow, while building a "self-contained" building, we learned that for a team in just such a situation as we were in, the plan wage fund was 35 percent of the estimated cost. We were given only 17 percent. In addition, our output per person per month was 2,500 rubles. They had planned for 1,300. But the sums for which both we and they signed in the register did not differ much.

Nor did the first model of economic management we switched to change anything. Thus in the fourth quarter of last year, when we reorganized the team into an integrated production line, the collective earned a profit of 99,000 rubles. In the next five months it earned 244,000. And all of it was consumed by some Trust needs.

It would be pointless to hide the fact that in this situation people gradually lost interest in the team method. The intense pace of work began to irritate people. It's true, there quite a few people in the collective who valued their work honour and the team's excellent reputation. In addition, the economic reforms that were developing inspired hope. People believed that we could apply a form of work

organization that would prevent anyone from touching the money we earned, and would give us true independence. And that is precisely why we decided to switch to cooperative contracting and self-crediting. We intended to lease the concrete and mortar unit. The specialists at the Ministry's Centre for the Scientific Organization of Labour developed new working principles for us. Unfortunately, none of this was destined to become reality.

Last year the Trust's money for bricks was cut several times. The construction material situation in Tyumen' became very acute. To stay working, the line production collective signed an agreement with the Vinzilinskiy Lime and Sand Brick Factory. We promised to build them a 40-unit residential building over and above the plan, and they agreed to supply us with 1.5 million bricks over and above their resources. The trust tore a strip off us at every level. It cost me to land in the hospital: they barred the team from working on the project.

The Trust administration laid the final straw on the collective's back at the time we were preparing to switch to lease contracting. The manager, A. Konstantinov, persuaded the team to finish building some subsidiary farm facilities belonging to our "Sibkomplektmontazh" Association begun ten years ago. Until then other teams had worked on the projects - and done a slipshod job of it. Construction was almost at a standstill, but they kept signing their percentage vouchers, and the money flowed in regularly. We discovered upward distortions of results totalling more than a million rubles! We wrote reports and sent them to the Trust. We ourselves began literally clearing out the

rubble, transforming someone else's waste, and restoring order to the project. Naturally, the usually high productivity was missing, and since the fund for wages had all been used up, we had to ask the Trust for money. In general, we got the project going again, but we fell into the category of "those who have not fulfilled the plan". They also accused us of overspending the payroll. In addition, the Trust's chief engineer, V. Obletov, accused us of every imaginable "sin", and the manager pretended he had nothing to do with it. After all this, an order came down to disband our No. 1 Integrated Production Line. They eliminated other production lines too.

I don't have to tell you what the team's veterans lived through or what went through their minds. And of course, I went through the same. I'll only say that the scars will last a long time. I got tired of fighting red tape, and management by order and decree, so I left. I joined a construction organization in another sector. A good half of the production line's collective, which already numbered more than 300, also departed.

But though I've left, I haven't dropped the standard. I've begun applying my lease contracting idea in my new workplace.

We're without work, as you can see. But there is something else that bothers me. Will workers believe, after everything that has happened, in social justice? How long can bureaucracy go on sabotaging everything new that comes into our lives?

Trud

19 April 1989

Page 1 (full text)

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Distant Chukotka Experiences Problems Of Soviet Reforms

Several years ago, I came across a curious article in the magazine called Morskoi Flot, which gave a break-down by nationality of the Soviet merchant navy. At the bottom of the list came the Chukchi, of which only one had decided to become a sailor.

Unfortunately, I did not come across him during my trip to Chukotka. If I had, I would have liked to ask him why it is that the Chukchi, Eskimos and other peoples of the Soviet North, with their excellent knowledge of the polar sea, long renewed as courageous hunters of walrus, whales and seals, have not chosen to enter this service. Surely their skills and their knowledge would have been just the thing for negotiating convoys of vessels through the Arctic routes.

I did manage to find a partial answer to this question by seeing life in modern Chukotka at close quarters. I was able to talk with the first secretary of the Chukotka district Party, Nikolai I. Kashtykin, about the problems of this autonomous district. They are many. However, almost all of them arise from economic problems. Let's take, said Mr. Kashtykin, a problem like the fall in the number of reindeer. One of the reasons is that there are no youngsters taking over from the old reindeer herdsman. Family links have been more or less severed. The family contract is not being introduced because there are no families left which preserve this centuries-old way of life.

But the leasing contract is also not catching on in Chukotka's agriculture. The main thing holding this back is the large government apparatus.

Unfortunately, this trend can be seen in the navy as well. The government offices in Chukotka's ports are growing out of all proportion. At Anadyr' they employ about 600 people. Elementary logic tells us that such a huge staff is not needed. These waters can only be navigated during four months of the year and, during this period, no more than fifteen vessels can be handled by the quays. This work is mostly done by seasonal workers. So you may well ask yourself what these civil servants do with themselves for the remaining eight months until the waters are open for navigation again?.

REINDEER BREEDERS ARE LEAVING THE TUNDRA

In the 1950's, particularly following the adoption in 1957 of the Decree of CCCPSU* and USSR Council of Ministers dealing with the further development of the economy and culture of the peoples of the Soviet North, it was decided that the native population of Chukotka should immediately be elevated to the level of other nations in the Soviet Union. With this objective, boarding schools were built. Separated from their parents, from their normal way of life, from the tundra, these small children were housed in spacious, light wooden structures and surrounded by attention and care. On the surface everything seemed fine. However, the consequences of this decision turned out to be truly catastrophic.

The children gradually forget their native language, traditions and customs. They felt less and

less inclined to go back to their native land, back to their homes in yarangs (round dwelling roofed with reindeer skin - Tr), back to the stone age. Yes, I mean it.

Because in the tundra everything has remained just the same as it was hundreds of years ago. No matter how hard the scientists and designers tried to come up with comfortable, modern housing for the tundra dwellers, all their efforts came to naught. Take for example, mobile homes, like the "Sever". Equipped with ovens resembling small stoves, they soon lost heat in the severe cold, and needed so much fuel that one needed to bring a whole wagonload of coal along.

This shows yet again that these structures were developed by people far away from the tundra and who only knew about it from second-hand information.

The snowmobiles turned out to be useless as well, since in conditions of heavy snowfall and cold they could not be used for moving along with wandering herds of reindeer.

In a word, the reindeer herdsman still have the same yarangs, reindeer in harness and unsettled way of life.

NATIVE PEOPLE IN LOWEST PAID JOBS

And now the time has come to talk about another side of the problem: employment for the native population.

Over recent decades, a flow of newcomers has arrived in Chukotka from the interior of the country, from Russia, the Ukraine and Moldavia. They came

here looking for easy money. Having found it, they sent joyful letters home praising the delights of life here. And so, in the farthest north-eastern corner of the country, in an area of permafrost, Ukranian, Russian and Moldavian settlements, villages and towns sprang up. They tried to bring their relatives here as well. And that is how the state farm's administration, to give an example, became made up of, not only one nationality, but one extended family.

The new arrivals also worked as fishermen and in hunting and trapping work teams, i.e., in the jobs with the best wages, thus squeezing out the local people.

Is this not why the Chukchi have ended up in the lowest paid and dirtiest jobs? For example, the overwhelming majority of stokers in the settlements are members of the native populations.

Who is to blame for this? Many people here are asking this question. And it constantly appears on the agenda at meetings of the informal association of Chukotka intelligentsia, the "Zov". It is a difficult question and the answer is not easy. It seems to me that it is first and foremost the fruits of the administrative-command methods, when all decisions were taken centrally with no regard for the particular requirements of the district. After all, regardless of nationality, people live amicably side by side in Chukotka, always ready to help each other, to share their crust of bread.

But distortions in economic and social development have led to a situation in which a local person is ready to reproach his long standing neighbour who came here from the mainland. And this can only be a cause for anxiety.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE AMGUEHMA RIVER?

"I read the socio-economic development plan for Chukotka to the year 2000 in the paper," said captain and instructor Viktor F. Ol'khovik, and was astonished. It turns out that quite without consulting the people, they have decided to build a hydroelectric station on the Amguehma river. You see they are going to flood the reindeers' pasture grounds, and nobody knows how this is going to affect the climate in Chukotka. The reindeer breeding state farm will have to be closed down in the affected areas. Yet people have lived there for centuries. I have no doubt that they could manage perfectly well without this hydroelectric station if they were to build, for example, a wind-powered electric station, since never a day goes by here without wind. It wouldn't harm anyone, and the benefits are obvious.

Mr. Ol'khovik cannot be indifferent to the problems here, since he has lived here for more than twenty years, and considers this to be his home. This is why.

SERIOUS NAVIGATION AND SHIPPING PROBLEMS

Chukotka's social and economic growth relies primarily on sea freight, which includes quite a large number of river vessels. The freight arriving from the mainland provides the basic living necessities for the people in this autonomous district. It is handled in the sea ports and then delivered to remote settlements by river.

One would think that a lot of time must be spent on the transportation problem here. However, this is far from the truth. The forces of inertia

and the wish to think in global categories are still strong. However paradoxical it may seem, the most vital rivers in the Chukotka, the Anadyr', Kanchalan and the Velikaya, are basically ownerless. They do not appear on the USSR Ministry of Inland Waterways' list, and are not included in the USSR Ministry of Seaways' lists either. The seaport of Anadyr' is mainly responsible for putting up navigational and warning notices on them. However, it obviously has very little power. The rivers are certainly not maintained everywhere. And, as captain Yu. Mel'nikov at the port of Anadyr' told me, vessels have to navigate "by the bush, by the little promontory, by the colour of the water". At times of low water, which occurs in August and September, vessels have to make their way along the channel literally "on their bellies". Usually they are led by a tug. The waves they create make it possible to pick out sandbanks. This is how the Chukotka rivermen work.

But the trickiest and, I would say, dangerous time comes in October, when there is ice coming down the rivers, and one after the other the vessels of the Far Eastern Steamship Company are coming in to the port of Anadyr' carrying the most precious loads of all: potatoes, meat and vegetables. They have to be unloaded quickly, without hold-ups, so that the produce doesn't get frozen or spoilt, otherwise the area will be left without food throughout the entire long winter.

The low water gulf of Onemen freezes over quickly and, during the ebb, the ice moves at a speed of eight knots towards the mouth of the Anadyr' River, which is no more than two miles wide in the port region. A huge ice pack is formed. The sea vessel moorings break, unable to withstand the pressure. They have to use anchors on the bollards

and to put the engines on at full steam. This is the only way to keep the vessels alongside the quay, but the vessels themselves suffer as a result and often need repairing: by no means are all of them strong enough for this sort of treatment.

From the middle of October until the end of November, the far eastern ice breakers, the Magadan, the Ivan Moskvitin and the Erofey Khabarov, start working here. At the very end of the navigation period, conditions in the port of Anadyr' are difficult and extreme. This happens every year. So far their luck has held out and there have been no major accidents involving port workers and crews.

Yet there is a way out: they could build a pier to hold the ice back. Then the vessels would not be left unprotected. This simple structure would bear the full brunt of the elements. So why has nothing been done, since a pier of this sort would only cost 200 000 rubles, which is a drop in the ocean for the port?.

Again we have to ask the same question: what's the matter? Is the answer bad management or carelessness? No! The answer is big ideas. The port's management dream of the time when a basin will be built for the lighters at a cost of 9 million rubles. But this is so far in the future that you could not call it anything else but pie in the sky. After all, there are still many problems to be resolved. In the first place, it will need designing; in second place, so far there is no such thing as a freight lighter which could get through the low waters of the Anadyr' estuary, so this project can only be a dream, whereas reality is harsher.

One comes to this pessimistic conclusion upon better acquaintance with the opportunities for future development of lighter freighting in the Soviet Far North. As we all know, a lighter called the Aleksei Kosygin was built. While it was still in the design stage, its designers visited the ports in Chukotka and listened very carefully to the advice and requests of local specialists. They assured them that everything they had said would be taken into consideration. However, in actual fact this was by no means so. Just look at the Aleksei Kosygin's attempt to come in to Anadyr'. It was unsuccessful, since the shallowness of the Anadyr' stuary did not allow the sea-going vessel to get anywhere near the quayside.

Lighters could have been used to replace river vessels as well, if the designers had listened to the port workers' suggestions and built them with a draught not of three metres, but of one and a half. However, this did not happen. Everything stayed just the same as it was before these good ideas ever appeared.

RIVERS EXPERIENCING POLLUTION PROBLEMS

Protection of the environment and preservation of the ecological balance have become prime objectives in Chukotka.

Not everything is alright in this sense on river and sea-going vessels. Captain A. Koval'chuk of the M/S Onemen, told me a rather strange story. Apparently there is a strict procedure in force on the Anadyr' which aims at preventing the waters from becoming poisoned, and under which all bilge waters and sewage from the vessel must be handed over upon arrival in Anadyr' to a special purifying plant.

However, the plant isn't working, but still accepts the sewage, which it then calmly proceeds to pour into the very same river, but now, of course, "purified". Who do they think they are kidding?

Barrels have become another calamity for Chukotka. They are left lying around on the seashore and river banks, and turn up on hills and in reindeer feeding grounds. They are everywhere. Why?

Over many years the fuel for cross-country vehicles, tractors, automobiles and other equipment has been brought to these remote parts in barrels. This was considered to be the most convenient method. However, at that time nobody thought what would happen to all those metal barrels, who would collect them and take them away.

Now this problem is being discussed in the media. But it is obvious that there will still need to be a lot more regulations and approvals to finally succeed in ridding the tundra of these fruits of "civilisation".

Of course, one way out of the situation could be to have a specialized fleet of shallow draught tankers capable of coming in to a shore which has no facilities and which could use hoses to pump petroleum products into on-shore tanks. People are talking about this. However, there is still a very long way to go before it actually happens.

* * *

Chukotka is a wonderful district. People very often refer to it as "golden Chukotka", both in the literal and the figurative sense of the word. They mine gold here, as well as harvest furs and sea

animals. Unfortunately, the race for Chukotka's riches has eclipsed the problems of Chukotka itself, both social and economic, of which there are quite a few by now. One would like to believe that now, at such a delicate and difficult time for perestroika, Chukotka will start counting down to the time of its rebirth.

Vodnyi Transport

March 1989

P.2 (full text)

In Search Of The Formula For Clean Air

The growing scale of pollution and deterioration in our natural environment is giving grounds for alarm in our society, and for that reason the Academy of Sciences of the USSR recently called a general meeting to discuss the following issue: In conditions which are, without exaggeration, critical, how can we create a reliable basis on which to build a rational scientific system of interrelationship between nature and the man?

It is irrefutable that we must step up research into the global problems of the biosphere. But today it is not a lack of knowledge which is standing in the way of solving the ecology crisis, rather an accumulation of deficiencies in the organisation of nature conservation.

It is patently obvious that the USSR State Committee for the Conservation of Nature, set up a year ago, is responsible for this trend. However, it is just as obvious that the Committee will not cope

with the task it has before it unless all the country's scientific community takes active part at a time when a systematic approach to conservation is needed.

And what makes me raise this question in such negative terms?

The Siberian Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences has expanded considerably over recent years and continues to increase its volume of fundamental and applied research in ecology. The Branch's institutes are making a detailed study of the natural resources and eco-systems of Siberia and how they change under man's influence. In the area around the Noril'sk metallurgical complex, the Katun' Automobile, Tractor, Electrical Equipment and Carburator Factory (KATEHK), and other large-scale industrial centres, they are actively helping to set up a programme of conservation for the Lake Baikal basin. During the course of this work, we became firmly convinced that we and the Academy of Sciences as a whole could simply drown in the attempt to resolve the growing mass of acute problems facing us. In our view, one way to avoid this in the next few years is to direct part of the scientific community into building up a clearly-defined national system of conservation. This system is being worked on at the moment but, we think, not vigorously enough.

At the same time, problems which require immediate attention are continuing to mount up. And the most pressing of these is that of clarifying the actual situation. We shall not be able achieve any changes for the better in nature conservation until we have sufficiently comprehensive information about the chemical composition and volume of waste from every enterprise, until we can single out the most

dangerous amongst them, and until we can compare waste products specific to each item of production from every enterprise, using the best available evidence in the country and the world. Without this, it is impossible to formulate a clear plan of action or estimate the resources and period of time necessary for setting up effective programmes to improve the ecology in this country.

Today these kinds of programmes are drawn up, on the whole, as a result of proposals from the enterprises themselves and from the ministries: for example, proposals to construct purification plants and to provide the relevant capital investment. As far as the territory is concerned, is this the best possible or optimum way of spending those resources? Let me remind you that these are considerable resources. This question is not even asked. And how can the efficiency of any measure be determined, since present-day programmes do not, as a rule, show to what extent the total amount of waste and specific waste and specific waste products will be changed. In other words, we do not know the final result. There is only one indicator: how many funds have been used. This is the classical pattern of a gross expenditure approach so characteristic of the national economy as a whole.

Lacking sufficiently comprehensive, systemized information about the actual situation, local Councils are deprived of the opportunity to initiate and follow up on conservation programmes. Without this, the legal authorities cannot examine cases of damage to the natural world. The general public needs this information, too.

The Siberian Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences maintains that there is a pressing need to

bring in ecological certification of enterprises, which would contain details of total and specific waste products side by side with a review of world literature on advanced technology and on the best methods of containing and managing the waste generated by that particular branch of industry. The Irkutsk and Kemerovo Regional Council of People's Deputies and also the Council of Ministers of the Buryat Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, who share this opinion, have already taken the decision to bring in compulsory ecological certification of enterprises. In Siberia, "the ice has begun to break". But, looking at the scale of our country, it is just a drop in the ocean.

Furthermore, it must be taken into account that the enterprises themselves and the ministries at their head will oppose this certification. Not only will they have to break this opposition, but they must be made to agree to be responsible for carrying out this work. And it is important to establish proper accountability for concealment or distortion of facts. I propose that the Academy of Sciences should, together with the appropriate agencies and within certain time limits, work out the necessary legislation and bring it before the government for ratification.

A second, but no less important problem, is how to set about continuous monitoring of environmental conditions. Here, above all, it is necessary to define and record the division of functions and responsibilities. The services of the State Committee for Nature and the USSR State Hydrometeorological Committee (unless they could expand their staff by an infinite number) will not be able to provide the comprehensive control system necessary for monitoring the waste products of tens

of thousands of enterprises. In my opinion, expediency demands that they concentrate on monitoring the overall situation and systematically observe the most dangerous kinds of waste and inspect enterprises on a selective basis. As far as continuous and comprehensive monitoring is concerned, the enterprises themselves must carry this out in accordance with the Law on State Enterprises and record this in their documentation.

If the state monitoring services discover that the documentation of a factory or industrial complex does not give a true account of the state of affairs, then they must impose exceptionally severe penalties and sanctions. This, in particular, will make it possible to cut the criminal practice of waste dumping which has been fairly widespread in industry.

But which technology should they use for the monitoring process? The development of conservation equipment (by people working at the Academy of Sciences and various other industries) must become an important part of this programme. At the present time we don't have enough of this equipment. There is no clear provision for this in the State's planned ecology programme. It is true that there is a "puzzling" section in the plan: one ministry is to send out remote-control spectrum analysers to measure pollutants in the atmosphere; another is to send out gas analysers, instruments for measuring the chemical requirement in oxygen, etc. But there is not a word about whether anybody has analysed what equipment will be needed, or whether the specifications for such have been formulated or the quantities determined.

A third strategic issue is the creation of an economic mechanism which would make the squandering and spoiling of natural resources an unprofitable activity. The principal elements of this kind of mechanism are set out in the well-known decree issued by the USSR Central Committee and the USSR Council of Ministers. The State Committee for Nature, the State Planning Commission, the State Pricing Committee and the USSR Ministry of Finance, with the assistance of the Academy of Sciences, should have developed and approved within a period of six months a payment procedure (both the amount and collection of payments) for the use of natural resources and for polluting, as well as the amounts of fines for exceeding permitted waste levels. A year has passed and what has been done?

Another vital area will be to radically improve technology. We know that prototypes of ecologically sound technology often come about during the process of fundamental research. Scientists, of course, should aim for them to be put into production as soon as possible. It was in this way that technological innovations of various sorts were first produced within the walls of the Siberian Branch of the Academy of Sciences: an ecologically friendly product which keeps down agricultural pests, based on a sprayer with adjustable dispersion, which means fewer toxic chemicals are needed. Other technology offers the possibility of gathering information about underground water reserves without having to drill. A third provides a catalytic process which can neutralise the waste gas produced by enterprises. There are many more, too.

However, making industry ecology-conscious is too important a matter to be left to chance. What is needed is a single-minded effort to evolve new,

ecologically sound forms of technology. The Ministry for Energy set us an example in its basic specifications (both ecological and economic) for the thermal power stations of the future. The State Committee for Science and Technology has announced a competition to develop the design principles for these power-stations and our Siberian institutes have taken a very active role in it. Our institutions made use of their advanced work with new types of heat exchange apparatus, torch fuel ignition, catalytic and chemical radiation methods of furnace gas purification, etc.

From my point view, this kind of competition should become the rule rather than the exception.

The methodology of ecological and economic expertise is still the Achilles heel of large scale projects in the national economy. The Siberian Branch experienced this when it was fighting against the project to alter the flow of part of the Siberian rivers to the south, as well as against the construction of an apatite factory in the Lake Baikal district when we were carrying out a study for a project at Katun' Hydroelectric Power Station and when we turned down a feasibility study for the Turukhansk Hydroelectric Power Station.

It must be admitted that we have not yet learned to estimate the acceptable level of man's influence on the environment or to establish the economic damage effected by economic activity on the environment or to take into account ecological factors when planning regional industrial development programmes. The draft state programme and the basic principles of the general academic programme envisage research in all these areas. Here we have no right to hold back; indeed, these recommendations should

have been made yesterday! It would seem necessary to form temporary work groups with strict time limits on their work schedule.

I may be reproached for concentrating on questions of organisation in the solution of which the USSR Academy of Sciences cannot and should not be a major player, rather than concentrating on global problems of biospheric research. However, in the last few years the number of messages and appeals to the Siberian Branch (and, I think, to the Academy as a whole) has increased to avalanche proportions: "Help us solve our ecological problems"; "Perform ecological analysis". If we do not channel this work into a clear system as soon as possible, then we will suffocate under the pile of queries and requests and we will hardly be in position to deal with the truly fundamental problems of ecology.

Of course, the future lessening of damage to the natural world will demand a huge effort, considerable means and an extended time-scale: a problem of these proportions cannot be solved with a wave of the hand. It is important that all efforts at nature conservation rely on a comprehensive knowledge of the actual situation and a thorough analysis of it. A grasp of the aims, a clear idea of the tasks of the most immediate importance, the optimum distribution of resources - only that sort of systematic approach will make it possible to achieve, so to speak - the formula for clean air.

Pravda

11 March 1989

Page 3 (full text)

Cleaner Air Comes To The Kola Peninsula

The smoke "tails" over the chimneys of the Severonikel' Works in Murmansk province, have become noticeably lighter. The enterprise's new technological line for disposing of sulphide gases has come onstream. From now on there will be a lot less harmful gas waste emitted into the atmosphere.

Severonikel' is the main air polluter on the Kola Peninsula. That is why every measure taken by the metal workers to improve the ecological situation in Monchegorsk is so important. This new line was built in a very short time. As soon as it had received the initial drawings, the nickel works didn't wait for the rest of the documentation before setting to work to install this most important ecological project. Even as the walls were going up, the enterprise's buyers were literally scouring the whole country in search of suppliers able to provide the necessary technology.

The nickel works has plans for more ecological projects in the near future. For example, preparatory work on installing the next unit for autogenous ore smelting has already begun, and the paperwork is being drawn up for yet another sulfuric acid complex and purifying installations.

Stroitel'naya Gazeta

15 March 1989

Page 1 (full text)

The Ob' Is Seriously Ill

TYUMEN'. "For Official Use Only" is stamped on many documents belonging to Sibrybniiprojekt (the Siberian Scientific-Research, Planning and Design Institute of the Fishing Industry). But now its "secrets" have been revealed and the figures virtually scream out: this great Siberian river is very sick. It is perishing beneath the confident strides of the West Siberian Oil and Gas Complex.

Residents of the region around the middle Ob' River are not amazed by the film of heavy oil on the water -the boreholes are quite close by, after all. But the ichthyology laboratory of Sibrybniiprojekt has information obtained a thousand kilometres from the industries - in Tambey, where the Ob' Inlet ends. The content of harmful substances exceeds maximum permissible concentrations twentyfold! From source to mouth, effluents flow into the Ob' from industrial plants, chemical fertilizers wash into the river from fields, and resins and decay products seep into the river from timber dumped during logging operations.

The head of the laboratory, V. Kroshalevskiy, is convinced that "the situation is extremely dangerous". Industrial development of territories adjacent to the Ob' has brought with it changes in hydrochemical conditions. Suffice it to say that around 122,000 [sic] soluble aromatic hydrocarbons flow into the Ob' Inlet each year. In the northern zone, catches of all species of fish, from sturgeon to roach, have dropped drastically. And though there are still lots of fish, fishing in many places is nevertheless impossible since the fish are not suitable for eating owing to the strong odour

of oil products. Scientists have found their traces not only in the muscles of the fish, but also in their spawn.

The top priorities for many years in the region were oil and gas. Ecology took a back seat. The situation is now changing - slowly, but surely. At the suggestion of the residents of Tyumen', a social committee is being formed to save the Ob'. The committee will be made up of representatives from all the cities situated on the river as far north as the Arctic Ocean.

We must all heal the river together. And fast. Otherwise it will die within our own generation, let alone the next.

Sovetskaya Rossiya

4 April 1989

Page (full text)

MINING AND MINERALS

Miners In Soviet North Strike For Better Wages,
Protest Against Management

An unusual situation has arisen at the Severnaya mine belonging to the Vorkutaugol' Association. This mine is one of the best, not only in the polar region, but in the country as a whole. On 2 March, the first shift in section No. 9 announced that they were not coming out of the mine until the miners' demands were satisfied. Most of their demands were about wages. The second shift went underground, and also decided not to come back up again. Then the third shift went down to join them, then the fourth... By the morning of 3 March there were 107 people down the mine.

The miners did not resort to this extreme measure straight away. First of all, they took their questions to the mine's works council. This was in early February. The works council met and considered their demands, but the final result, on 20 February was a negative decision.

The miners also went to the association's deputy general financial director, A.A. Tsurupa and to the Party city committee, but got no satisfaction.

The Minister of the USSR Coal Industry M.I. Shhadov flew immediately to Vorkuta, as did his deputies A.P. Fisun, A.K. Belikov, V.V. Vil'chitskii and G.I. Nuzhdikhin, the chairman of the Central Committee of the Mineworkers' Union M.A. Srebnyi, and the secretary of the trade union's Central Committee, A.F. Chebotaev.

We contacted the USSR Ministry of the Coal Industry and the secretary of the trade union's Central Committee, A.F. Chebotaev, and asked them to comment on what was happening in Vorkuta.

First we asked the Deputy Minister, Mr. A. Belikov, what demands the miners had put forward.

"There were six demands in all. They were mostly concerned with wages and how their work is organised. Before going into details, I would like to give you an idea of the economic situation in the mine. The miners are working on a cost-efficient basis, using the second model of cost-efficiency, which means they can only transfer to the labour remuneration fund or distribute amongst the employees those resources which they have earned.

"But in this particular case the miners found themselves in a difficult position which was in many ways not of their own doing. They have been mining the coal properly but have serious difficulties transporting it to their customers. There is a severe shortage of railcars, and despite all our pleading with the USSR Ministry of Highways and Transport, there has been no significant improvement in the situation. This not only affects Vorkuta, but the whole country. To date, we have amassed around 36 million tonnes of coal which is waiting to be sent off, of which there are 6000 tonnes waiting in Vorkuta. And since the customer is not getting his coal, we are not getting paid for it. The miners have been given their wages but their bonuses for the last few months have been 40 to 50 rubles below what they should have been.

And so the miners' first demand was that they should be given the rest of their bonuses for December, January and February, which amounts to a total of 13 356 rubles.

"We solved this problem straight away. We made up the shortfall in resources from the Ministry's fund. However, under present cost-efficient conditions, these resources should have been taken from the Ministry of Highways and Transport's funds, since it is due to the shortage of railcars that we have this crisis in Vorkuta.

"The miners' second demand was that we should set strict rates for the amounts of coal mined. And here one has to agree with them. Is it really acceptable to have rates changing almost every month? Only it is not very clear why the people at the top of the Ministry should have to be doing this. After all, questions like this nowadays fall within the authority of the employees themselves. As, incidentally, does the problem of setting work quotas. And here there was also a problem. The miners announced that they did not agree with the new, higher output norms. In their opinion we must recalculate the wages based on the old norms, and pay the difference.

"We solved this question and another one connected with labour remuneration, although, as I have said, it is really up to the employees to do this.

"As far as the rest of their demands are concerned, we told them plainly that nobody but themselves and their colleagues could find a solution to them. For example, they want to make a 40% cut-back in the mine's management personnel. This

can only be welcomed. Go ahead and cut back, and good luck to you. But the workforce itself must do this. As long ago as last December the Minister sent the enterprise's managers and the works council a letter, in which he pointed out the necessity of reducing management staff when they made the change-over to cost efficiency. This letter is still in the Vorkutaugol' Association files. The employees have all the rights and opportunities to do this. And nobody else can do it for them.

"Another demand was to introduce extra payment for night shift work. On this point we are absolutely clear. This payment is mandatory. But the money to make the payment with must be earned by the enterprise itself. Nobody can breach the existing regulations, neither the Minister nor the chairman of the union's central committee.

The miners' last demand was about the fact that they have no confidence in the mine's director, N.V. Tishhenko, or in the financial services. Well, in my opinion this is not such a difficult problem. At an employees' meeting (at which there were about 70 present), Minister M. Shhadov said, "If you pass a vote of no confidence in your director, then you have the right to elect a new one. Those who have no confidence, please raise your hands..."

"The meeting voted.

"This means, the Minister summarised, 'that you must call a conference and elect a director, a works council, and, in a word, solve your own problems yourselves, participate in the management of your association. You can announce elections for the post of director, everyone knows the procedure...'"

"Mr. Belikov, how many days did the conflict last? When did you find out about it and when did you fly to Vorkuta?

"I found out immediately, on 2 March. At the time I was in Novokuznetsk. I arrived in Moscow and on 4 March, together with the Minister, I left for Vorkuta. We landed at night and went straight to the mine together with the leaders of the Party provincial committee. We went underground and spoke with the miners, suggested that they came up and discuss things calmly on the surface. But they were all wound up and didn't want to leave the mine before they had received definite answers.

"We couldn't do anything at five in the morning except go back to our hotels, catch an hour's sleep and then go back to the mine again. We got all the departments together, quickly solved the problems, told the miners what had happened and in the afternoon of 5 March they came up to the surface. So the conflict had lasted for approximately three days".

"How would you assess the whole situation?"

"There were many different aspects to it. The workers' demands were to a great extent justified. But, of course, I cannot approve of the methods they used. They had not exhausted all avenues before taking the final extreme step. Not to mention the fact that almost all the problems could have been resolved at enterprise level, and were within the authority of the employees to do so.

"As far as the administration of the mine, the association, the managers, economists and other engineering and technical staff, then I will say

plainly that they have not shown themselves up to it; they have allowed themselves to get left far behind the items. Just look at the works council which was headed by the director of the mine himself. So much for democracy. Instead of helping the employees to take the levers of production management into their own hands, they continued to use the long discredited command-administrative methods. We all know what this led to.

"And the Ministry must draw some serious lessons from this episode. Obviously, we are letting some things go; we are not always able to give employees help in time or to feel the pulse of a spiralling conflict".

"As far as we know, the Vorkuta Party city committee met in session. What conclusions do they come to?

"The miners' method for pressing their demands was not approved of. At the same time the managers of the mine, the association and the social organisations were sharply criticised for making serious mistakes. Strict penalties according to Party lines were imposed on the mine's director, N. Tishhenko, the Party committee secretary, A. Borovkin, and the chairman of the trade union committee, I. Brazhko, and these were recorded in their records. They also set out what measures were to be taken to correct the situation".

Following this interview, we rang Vorkuta yesterday, and spoke with the secretary of the Mineworkers' Union Central Committee, A.F. Chebotaev, and asked him a few questions.

"Why did the workers go to the works council, to the heads of the association and to the Party city council, but not even look in the trade union committee? Doesn't this show that the trade union committee has very little authority in the eyes of the mine workers?"

"Yes, this is in fact so. Since the works council was formed, several trade union committees have sort of lost their way; they couldn't decide how to divide up their "spheres of influence", which meant, of course, that they suffered a loss of authority. In this particular case, the trade union committee adopted a position of non-intervention, saying that as it is the miners' questions are being dealt with in the works council, the Party city committee and by the heads of the association, and no doubt they will come up with the answers. This highly significant fact is not in the trade union committee's favour".

"Have there been any times when the trade union committee has defended the workers' interests and entered into conflict with the mine and association management?"

"I don't know of any".

The events in Vorkuta and the two interviews hardly need extensive commentary. The situation is clear. Instead of real cost-efficiency and self-management, the miners had come up against formalism, severe bureaucratic pressure and the old command methods of management. All their efforts to discuss their problems had met with cold indifference, non-comprehension and incompetence. While one may not approve of the extreme measure they decided to take (and it did indeed cost the country

as well as themselves dearly), one cannot help but agree that the workers were to a large extent pushed into this by the bureaucratic position of the officials. Yes and the workforce should have been more energetic about taking power into its own hands, but it needs to be helped to do this, to be given the right conditions, and not to have artificial barriers erected in its way.

And, of course, throughout this whole story a not inconsiderable share of the blame lies with the Ministry of Highways and Transport. What sort of cost-efficiency can there possibly be when the enterprise cannot even dispatch its own product to its customers? This alone has contributed greatly to holding up the mine's transition to cost-efficiency. And it's the workers who have to pay for it. Is this really fair?

Economic, party and trade union bodies need to draw serious conclusions from this story. The employees themselves must do the same.

Trud

10 March 1989

Page 2 (full text)

Common Sense Wins The Day

NORIL'SK KRASNOYARSKIY KRAY (TASS). Work is returning to normal at the mines of the Noril'sk Mining and Metallurgy Plant. The last group of miners surfaced several hours ago. For five days the miners had remained underground, refusing to go to work.

After the arrival in Noril'sk of the Minister of Non-Ferrous Metallurgy of the USSR, V.A. Durasov, and the Chairman of the State Committee of the USSR for Labour and Social issues, I.I. Gladkiy, an agreement was worked out that met the basic demands of the miners. But the group that initiated the strike made a new condition: They wanted a 30 percent increase in pay. The condition could not be met, however, owing to the conversion of the Noril'sk Plant to new economic management conditions. And so the strike continued.

V.A. Durasov and the First Secretary of the Krasnoyarsk Territorial Committee of the CPSU, O.S. Shenin, appealed to the workers and all the working people of the city. They assured the miners that all the conditions that had been put forth would be carefully examined.

And in the end common sense won out. In spite of stubborn resistance from a small group of miners, who called on others not to end the strike, the workers came to the surface.

"We realized that we would not solve our problems by striking", drilling team leader Aleksandr Nemcheko told our TASS correspondent. "By prolonging it we could have placed the entire plant in a difficult situation. The appeal of Ministry and Krasnoyarsk Territorial Party Committee leaders to start work convinced us of the need to search for new ways of solving the conflict".

A large segment of the workers realized that to prolong the conflict would be to play into the hands of those who wanted to profit from the strike, "said electrical fitter Vasilii Kolomiyets, breaking into the conversation, "and that did not fit in with our plans".

It was decided that the situation should be analyzed at the upcoming conference of miners' work collectives. The first hundreds of tonnes of ore were delivered to the iron and steel mills of the Noril'sk plant today.

Sovetskaya Rossiya
9 April 1989
Page 2 (full text)

A Community Of Co-operating Enterprises

CHEREPOVETS. The collectives of enterprises of the north-west, members of an inter-sector community, have summed up the results of their work during the second half of the previous year. Representatives of the delegations noted that by helping each other, all the members of the community managed to successfully fill their state orders and fulfill their obligations. The residents of Cherepovets, for example, smelted 200,000 tonnes of pig iron, 140,000 tonnes of steel and 25,000 tonnes of rolled products over and above the plan. The above-plan profit was over 30 million rubles. The miners of the Kola Peninsula, particularly those from Olenegorsk, provided them with invaluable assistance. Not only did they fulfill to the letter their obligations to deliver iron ore concentrate, but they also brought the content of iron in the ore up to 65.5 percent. The miners of Vorkuta produced over 100,000 tonnes of coal concentrate over and

above the plan, and reduced to 0.3 percent the ash content of the coal delivered to the iron and steel workers.

Sotsialisticheskaya

Industriya

21 March 1989

Page 3 (Abridged)

OIL AND GAS

New Hope For Nyagan

TYUMEN'. Recent discoveries by geologists will help to extend the life of the operating industries of Nyagan'. Yesterday oil flowed from a borehole that was being tested by a team headed by A. Apel'gants. The value of the discovery lies in the fact that the productive stratum is situated at the depth of only one and one half kilometres.

Trud

7 April 1989

Page 1 (full text)

Soil Construction Qualities Improved

The application of science has helped to solve a difficult technical problem in the "Medvezh'e" gas field.

The National Gas Scientific Research Institute has found a way to improve the construction qualities of soils. A special chemical solution has been used to make them more stable, more frost-resistant and water-resistant.

Sovetskaya Rossiya

24 March 1989

Page 1 (full text)

You Can't Replace Salt With Tears

TYUMEN'. Since the end of last year, the oil workers of western Siberia have found themselves in a disastrous situation: industrial salt from Solikamsk station on the Sverdlovsk line has started to arrive at Glavtyumenneftegaz (Tyumen' Oil and Gas Production Association, Ministry of the Oil and Gas Industry of the USSR) irregularly and at less than full capacity. Specifically, the precarious situation with regard to filling the State order arose within the key Nizhnevartovskneftegaz (Nizhne-Vartovskoye Oil and Gas) Production Association. The problem is that salt is an extremely important component in the solutions used to drill and overhaul the boreholes. To make a long story short, without salt you can't drill for oil.

In order to ship 80 tonnes of salt to the oil workers at Glavtyumenneftegaz on the Sverdlovsk line, 2,083 railway cars, spaced out over the months, were allocated during the first quarter. Already by January the line was short 196 flatcars, and though in February it had cut the shortfall by 24, the 172 flatcar shortfall carried over into March and continued to increase. Today the oil workers are short 600 tonnes of very scarce and badly needed salt.

At a meeting with the vice-chairman of Gossnab (State Committee of the USSR for Material and Technical Supplies), B. Yakovlev, at which were present representatives of the Ministry of Railways, the Ministry of the Oil Industry and the Ministry for the Production of Mineral Fertilizers, it was noted that at the end of last year and in the first quarter of this year, the "Sil'vinit" Production Association had been undersupplying the oil workers of western

Siberia with industrial salt. The basic reason given was the unsatisfactory delivery of flatcars for transporting the salt on the Sverdlovsk line.

This matter was also discussed at a select meeting held at the Ministry of Railways. In connection with this, special instructions were issued by the deputy minister of railways, A. Sidenko, to the director of the Sverdlovsk line, V. Skvortsov, and his deputy, V. Androsyuk.

Specifically, the railway line administration was asked to deliver no less than 58 flatcars and eight closed cars to the Solikamsk station for "Sil'vinit" daily. But these instructions are not being carried out, and the delivery of industrial salt to the oil workers of western Siberia is still poor.

Through the fault of the Sverdlovsk line, the precarious situation involving the shipment of gasoline and diesel fuel from Omsk to the oil workers of Glavyumenneftegaz has also grown worse.

The oil workers' demands and tearful pleadings for sympathy are making the rounds of all the authorities. But in this case, you can't replace salt with tears.

Gudok

16 April 1989

Page 2 (full text)

SOCIOLOGICAL ISSUES

Bureaucrats Fight Employee Participation

Arguing with the bosses only gets you into trouble. In Noyabr'sk as everywhere in the Tyumen' region of the Soviet North, this popular axiom from the Breznev era is particularly alive and well, for people come here only for a short time. If you know that you are only going to be in a place for a limited period, you can put up with discomfort in your everyday life and with petty tyranny from the boss. Why make your life more difficult?

But lately people have been less willing to keep quiet and to shut their eyes to abuses and bad management. Even nowadays it is not totally safe to stand out against such things. But those who do take a stand against official arbitrariness are aware that by losing management's goodwill, they stand a chance of acquiring something even more valuable: the feeling of spiritual freedom and of defending their human dignity.

The first person at Noyabr'skneftespetsstroi* to come to this realisation was probably a driver called Vladimir Nikolevich Slyusar'. He has been working here for seven years, ever since the enterprise first opened. He has never been afraid to argue with the administration. And it must be said that there are many things he does not agree with: he thinks that there are far too many managers, that State resources are being squandered, conditions at work are unsatisfactory, and he does not like the way in which decisions are taken about how the workers will live and what they will do, without so much as consulting them first.

When he didn't manage to achieve change through local action, Slyusar' used to write a different official organisations for help. His letters were usually returned to Noyabr'sk. Commissions would arrive and make meticulous enquiries. Usually they supported what he had been saying, but little was ever changed, since plain facts can be interpreted differently, depending where you stand. Vladimir Slyusar' was often overly emotional in the way he couched things and this provided ammunition for those he was criticising to describe him as prejudiced and "painting a black picture". If, for example, the roof was leaking in the workshop, one could simply state the bare bones of the matter by saying what was happening, or one could say that "After a heavy rainfall you need a boat to get around our workshops". The second version is more Slyusar's style. And, no doubt, this sort of "imagery" was greatly offensive to the management. So what would a responsible manager have done? Why of course, he would have had those holes blocked up and that would have been that. But the manager of this particular trust, Mr. L. Petrenko, took offence; he got on his high horse and asked "What have you personally done to stop the roof leaking? Anyone can write a complaint, but a real worker wouldn't write..."

Yet this "real worker" wasn't concerned with the roof in his own apartment, but was trying to get something done about state property. And again he came forward, this time about a certain manager who was breaching financial discipline. This led to criminal proceedings. And again Slyusar' gets it in the neck; this time he's "dishonourable, callous, wouldn't let the man carry on quietly until he retired". It would be a different matter if it had just been women gossiping on their doorsteps, but

this was said from the podium at a trade union conference. And it wasn't just said by anybody, but by the manager of the trust.

Vladimir Slyusar' exposed the drinking habits of the directorate's chief engineer, and declared at the meeting that the administration and the trade union committee were trying to cover it up so that the employees would not know. Everything he said was proven, but again the management accused him of whipping up passions, and asked him why he thought it was any of his business.

So you can see how cleverly the tables are turned: Slyusar' is talking about things that are going wrong; the management is complaining about Slyusar. And so the centre of attention is switched from the roof that needs repairing, the wages that are being fiddled and the amoral conduct of a manager, to the "unhelpful scribblings of a trouble-maker and demagogue", who does nothing but sniff out problems and constantly whip up the employees, and prevent them from "living and working normally".

What bureaucrat will be pleased that Slyusar' is encouraging people to throw off the heavy burden of indifference and to realise that what happens today depends upon you personally? This attitude should be supported. After all, it is sure guarantee that perestroika will not get bogged down in the mire of half-measures, semi-reforms and half-truths. But the trust's managers never tire of repeating that it is precisely this "sniffing out" of problems that prevents the employees from "moving forward".

Vladimir Slyusar' has already twice been hauled over the coals for "poking his nose in where it doesn't belong". He was sacked for absenteeism, which wasn't true, and the court reinstated him. They tried to take his driving licence. They have bullied him almost constantly, but he proved a hard nut to crack and he was helped by some higher organisations which intervened on his behalf.

Somebody or other in the Noyabr'skneftegaz** association badly wants to present the situation as though Slyusar' himself were not much liked by his fellow employees, as though they are all fed up with him. But this is obviously not true. Many of them come to him for advice and help, because they know him to be competent, fair and honest. They elected him to the commission for the fight against drunkenness, and now he is the head of the garage co-operative called Tatra. The workers would hardly have put their trust in a man with a doubtful reputation.

He is not alone in the fight for improvement. Over two hundred people signed the petition complaining that the workshops were too cold, there was nowhere to change, wash or eat. The workers wrote angrily that instead of improving the working conditions for the maintenance men, the bosses decided to build a new office building for the administration. The material incentive scheme is such that managers always get bonuses, but the drivers only get them if they should overfulfil their quotas. There is no glasnost (openness) when it comes to housing allocation or place in kindergartens; in fact, there is a lot that goes on behind closed doors. The way that the production process is managed needs reviewing and there are very many who do not like working for their money.

Having filtered down through the various organisations as usual, the letter was returned to the trust from Moscow. And again a commission was set up, which galloped around the departments, discovered that some significant things were wrong and avoided the main points altogether, which were the unsatisfactory working conditions in the maintenance workshops and the system of housing allocation. They apparently saw nothing wrong in the fact that, allegedly for particular achievements at work, a certain manager had "wrung out" of the Ministry and the association a new Volga car for his own use, to replace his old one, and the trade union committee had meekly gone along with him, despite the fact many of the trust's workers, who had been with them for years and years, were still waiting in vain for the opportunity to buy a car. As for the "unprecedented successes" supposedly achieved by the workforce under Mr. Petrenko, economists who have looked at the figures confirm that it is all a myth. If there had been a "great leap forward" in anything, then it was first and foremost in the number of administrative and managerial personnel: since the new boss had arrived, the administrative offices had become two and a half time more crowded.

The employees all thought that there should be cutbacks in the trust's office staff and that the production teams should change over to leasing contracts, which could only improve matters. The management, naturally enough, gave the idea a hostile reception. It is true that production was reorganised nonetheless, but it was done without consulting the workers, in fact, quite the opposite, in opposition to them. The nascent idea in the administrative offices of renting out equipment was at first presented as the panacea to all ills, quite forgetting that there could only be any effect from

its introduction in places where there already was a large maintenance and repair depot, and where there were reliable supplies. There was neither one nor the other at the trust. Therefore, the economists believe, the results were, to put it mildly, lower than expected.

"No good at all will come of this sort of "perestroika", "Mr. L. Grebenkii, chief driver and deputy to the city council, confided, "nothing's improved in the maintenance workshop. They still don't have a proper boss; the metal workers are still paid by the hour and their wages are not linked to the quality of the services they perform. If a driver wants his vehicle to go through quickly, then he has to do the servicing himself. Everything is just as it used to be".

"No, nothing's changed," adds Vladimir Slysar', "yet the funny thing is that people come to us for advice. After all, on paper we now have a progressive system! All of this is the result of advertising ourselves. The commotion will serve the manager's purpose well: without much difficulty he can manage to stay on the crest of the wave for a bit longer, since "innovators", are forgiven a great deal..."

I wouldn't be surprised if this opinion of Vladimir's didn't get added to the list of "demagogy and painting a black picture". They would be quite capable of it.

Yet, at the same time, the questions which the administration doesn't want to answer in front of the employees are mounting up. Why are dozens of vehicles which could be bringing in profits standing around idle; what's stopping them from changing over

to a five-day week; when will they finally get "glasnost bulletin boards" in the departments? And now it is not only Mr. Slyusar' who is asking these questions; he has a lot of supporters.

Of course, the employees are perfectly capable of sorting out their own problems. But the management, relying upon the "neutrality" of the trade union committee and other social organisations, prefers to carry on with its all-round defence, and to use any means possible to try and avoid discussing urgent problems, and to take in hand those who are openly criticising what is wrong. The workers are quietly but firmly being given to understand that they shouldn't count on any special change in their role in the current social processes. Your role is to wield the spanner while we get on with thinking for you.

They continue to resist.

TRUD

2 April 1989

Page 2 (full text)

Candidate For Political Office Has Fresh Approach

The toughest pre-election campaign in the Komi ASSR** has been taking place in Kuratov national-territorial constituency No. 580. This is because it is the only constituency in the Komi Autonomous Republic to field three candidates for election to the Congress of People's Deputies. All three are active candidates with relevant approaches to the problems of the day; all three are putting

forward attractive election programmes. So, in whose favour should the electorate decide, given that today we are trying to elect to the highest authority in the country the people who are the best qualified to carry out duties that will be incumbent upon them?

Personally I find much to recommend the views put forward by Tamara I. Sorvacheva, a plasterer-painter working at the Syktyvkargorstroï Association. Her programme is notable for its human factor; she is interested in people's needs, requirements and interests; she spends a lot of time on social questions.

Being a construction worker herself, Tamara Sorvacheva's first priority is to do everything she can to resolve one of the most important political issues, that of ensuring that, by the year 2000, every family has their own individual apartment or house. But, given today's conditions in the construction industry, this is by no means an easy task: there are never enough building materials; what materials there are remain of poor quality, and natural labour is still widely used in the construction industry. Sorvacheva's election platform contains certain well-defined proposals for the Housing Programme.

The first of these proposals is that our republic must get down to seriously building up its supply reserves for the construction and the construction materials industries, using waste products from other industries, such as clinker, the mineral waste produced during mining, etc. Ms. Sorvacheva can hold up the figures and prove that the Komi ASSR is well able to do this. She also has definite proposals for improving efficiency in other sectors of the national economy. In her opinion, we

must gradually change over the republic's economy, and that of other regions, to the principles of regional cost-efficiency, so that each and every person will become truly responsible for their enterprises, all over the republic and the country.

As a member of the construction directorate's trade union committee, Tamara Sorvacheva is a person who gets things done. She has done much to improve conditions at work for the Syktyvkar housing construction workers and to make their life here a healthy one. She was very active in setting up our sports and health centre with its skiing facilities, saunas and sports facilities, which, incidentally, are open to the public.

Sorvacheva's programme is one of concern for improving people's lives in the difficult conditions of the Soviet North. For example, is a fortnight's leave really long enough for the workers here? After all, subsidised stays in sanatoria and vacation retreats are for a longer period than this. She dedicates a good part of her programme to the education of the younger generation. As a mother of two teenagers herself, she knows what the problems are. She proposes that young people should be entrusted with more and taught to be independent. And she actually practices what she preaches.

There is a great deal of argument going on at the moment about who should be at the top of the power ladder: should they be manual workers, people with higher education or professional politicians? It would seem that both the academician and the carpenter are equally able to run the state. The most important thing is that whoever it is should be well in touch with the needs, expectations and

interests of the public at large, and should be able to think in political terms. It is they who should pass laws.

People are not born politicians; they become politicians. The important thing is to have an instinct for it. Tamara Sorvacheva has that instinct. She was a deputy in the city council for two terms, has always been active in trade union affairs, and knows how to convince people, to rouse them and to lead them. But, most importantly of all, she knows how to defend their interests.

Trud

24 March

Page 1 (full text)

* Syktyvkargorstroi - Syktyvkar city
construction association

** ASSR - Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic

City Taxes Enterprises To Finance Programmes

When the Sumy City Council of People's Deputies passed a resolution to impose taxation on enterprises, they were thinking about the interests of each and every person. For example, the enterprises will be liable to taxation for recruiting employees from other towns and cities and for the use of land. Any who pollute the environment will be liable to heavy fines. The resources will go towards the town's integrated socio-economic programme.

"There are many enterprises in the town which are very willing to help build up the infrastructure", said the deputy chairman of the city executive council, and chairman of the planning commission, V. Zhurba. "They are financing the construction of a cultural and sports centre, a trade centre, schools and kindergartens".

However, not all the enterprises are showing interest in this, and the town obviously still does not have the resources it needs.

Now an enterprise will be obliged to think about providing housing for its employees, places in kindergarten, setting up medical and cultural and sporting facilities. The economic sanctions will force employees and their managers to speed up the scientific and technological process and to manage with stable personnel levels.

On the recommendations of the economics faculty at the Sumy Branch of Khar!kov Polytechnic, a flexible sliding scale of taxation has been drawn up.

Sotsialisticheskaya
Industriya

4 March 1989

Page 1 (full text)

Candidates To USSR Congress Of Deputies Make
Environment, Minorities A Priority

In Tyumen' province, 11 million hectares of reindeer pasture and quite a few rivers have been ruined. Every year, 14 billion cubic metres of gas is burned off in the open. The aims set out by the head of the Irtysh Steam Ship Company, Ivan I. Yanovskii, in his election programme for the USSR Congress of National Deputies are to save minority nationalities from dying out and to put a stop to the barbarous plundering of nature.

National-territorial constituency No. 22 combines the electorate of two large RSFSR* provinces, Tyumen' province and Omsk province. That is why 253 delegates from each province, people of different ages, educational background and social standing, were invited to the Dzerzhinsky Palace of Culture. The meeting did not have an easy task before it: out of a total of eight candidates - four from each province - it had to elect the two best.

Among the candidates were two river transport employees - Leonid I Sokolov, captain and mechanic of the M/S OT-2024 of the Omsk Ship-Repair and Ship-Building Yard, and Ivan I. Yankovskii, head of the Irtysh Steam Ship Company.

What did the river transport candidates bring with them to the meeting? The first to speak was Leonid Sokolov. The main thesis of his programme was full power to the councils and everything possible to improve their economic position. He maintained that, in order to put as many goods onto the market as quickly as possible, we need co-operatives in industrial enterprises and joint-stock companies. We must change the import

structure by buying less equipment and raw material and more everyday necessities. Mr. Sokolov said that he was in favour of nationwide referenda on major state questions. He also proposed making significant cut-backs in the administrative apparatus and, moreover, completely closing down the transport ministries, and replacing them instead with a State Transport Committee under the aegis of the USSR Council of Ministers. It was very important, he emphasised, to increase the legal and material liability of economic managers who fail to take measures to prevent air and water pollution.

The programme put forward by the head of the steam ship company, Ivan Yanovskii, was divided into three main sections. These were legal guarantees for social welfare and defence of the Soviet citizen, the further development of the state's democratic foundations, strengthening the legislative, economic and other functions of the councils. He particularly spoke in favour of extending the special advantages and increasing the allowances for single mothers, pensioners, war invalids, those disabled at work and students. He called for an end to the imbalances in the development of the Western Siberian oil and gas drilling complex, where the main emphasis is still on industrial construction to the detriment of the social sphere. As a potential candidate, he promised to vote for reduced spending on defence and space, and for cutting down on the various sorts of "long-term constructions", to fight to make sure that the law on local self-government was passed without delay, to fight for the guaranteed equality of all citizens before the law and finally for making trade unions into the genuine defenders of the workers' interests.

It was embodied in the form of the system under which Aeroflot works.

Like the other candidates, he devotes a great deal of time in his programme to the national question, especially the fate of Western Siberia's minority nationalities, whose position has worsened over the years of the oil and gas boom.

Following their ten minute election speeches, each candidate opened a discussion with the electors. Many people were given the right to speak either for or against. Moreover, even here they made sure that both provinces had their fair crack of the whip. It seemed as though there would be no end to the arguments, the many questions and answers. They only managed to get down to the voting late in the evening. By decision of those present, the ballot was secret. The majority of the votes (264) were to the head of the Irtysh Steam Ship Company, Ivan I. Yanovskii, with the docent of the Omsk State university, A. Kazannik receiving 243. They will go forward to the next round of voting. On Sunday 26 March, we will know who will be the deputy to the USSR Congress Nationalities.

Vodnyi Transport

8 March 1989

(Full text)

TRANSPORT AIR

Soviet Crew Leases Aircraft To Earn Profit

The Magadan Aviation Authority has leased an AN-12 transport plane to a flight crew team. The agreement was signed a few days ago. Since this is no ordinary event (a first in the air freight business), our correspondent spoke briefly with the team's leader, Mr. V. Brainin.

"How did this idea come about"?

"About a year ago, I was taking the heads of the authority's leading services, led by their boss, to Pevek. During the flight, I said half-jokingly, "If you lease me an aircraft, you won't be sorry". And we jotted down the first calculations right there and then on a paper napkin. When I got home, I did the sums again and felt sure it had to work. I started to test the water. In August even our specialists had started doing the calculations. Then we started working out the conditions of the agreement, and now it has finally been signed".

"Taking everything into account, it couldn't have been easy to get this boulder rolling?"

"No, it certainly wasn't. But I must say that I didn't come across any particular opposition anywhere amongst the authority's administration. On the contrary, they tried to find compromises which would enable us to conclude this sort of agreement. However, there was a certain amount of antagonism. It was embodied in the form of the system under which Aeroflot works".

"Could you tell us more about this?"

Basically it all arose because this new way of doing things somehow had to be squeezed into the old-dated methods. After all, we had to make it worthwhile for the pilots to increase their productivity. But the present system operates on completely the opposite principles: the lower your productivity, the higher your salary".

"So how did you find a solution?"

"We linked everything to the final result, that is, to profit. We have cut out everything, salary scales, per kilometre payments, classes, bonuses of all sorts, night time payments, group payments and so on. We only use 40% of the above-target profit for crew salaries".

"In other words, even if they fullfil the plan, the crew doesn't get anything?"

"Not a ruble".

"But aren't you running a risk? After all, there are twelve of you, and for a whole year..."

"I don't think so. Our calculations back us up. But, of course, any experiment carries a risk, and we do have a certain amount here. After all, the manager of our enterprise also took a risk when he signed this agreement. He knew that sooner or later leasing aircraft would be a reality. So it is better to try out and learn with this concept on one plane now than with the whole fleet later and live to regret it".

"Incidentally, was it difficult to get the team together"?

"No, I even got to pick and choose".

"And how did the others react?"

"The others are curious to see what happens".

Many pilots will now be experiencing the same feeling. Look out for updates on this experiment in Vozdushnyi Transport.

Vozdushnyi Transport

7 March 1989

Page 1 (full text)

New Aircraft Tested For Soviet North

This news was first heard in Chersk. Here in the heights of the Polar region, they were waiting for the arrival of the new AN-74 aircraft, designed by the Antonov Aviation Design Bureau. This aircraft, designed to take the place of that veteran of the northern skies, the IL-14, was to be tested in the low temperature conditions of Yakutiya, and get the thumbs up from the polar pilots.

Then came the announcement from Yakutiya: the AN-74 had started its test flights in the skies of the "cold republic". It must be said that this prototype had already been used in the Arctic for carrying freight, including construction materials for the drifting polar station, and has flown to the South Pole as well. The new plane with its two unusually placed turbines - they are underneath the

wings - has the very latest navigational equipment, and is easy to use. For example, it can land on small airstrips and on ice-covered snow, which is worth having in the conditions of the North. The 74 has no difficulty with turning and banking steeply, which is especially important for guiding vessels through the ice and for precision dropping of freight. It can fly at speeds from 200 to 600 km per hour. It can carry five times as much freight as the IL-14.

The plane, flown by the Aviation Design Bureau's test pilots, has already made several flights to Oymyakon, where the temperatures are still low, and to several other settlements in Yakutiya. It is assumed that the new aircraft will come into permanent service by the middle of the year. The first planes will be delivered to the Kolyma-Indigirka Aviation Enterprise. Several crews from Chersk have already been trained in using this new generation aircraft.

Vozdushnyi Transport
April 1989
(full text)

TRANSPORT - WATER

Ship's Captains Receive Awards For Difficult Deliveries In Siberia

During the 1985 navigation season, the Ob'-Irtysk Steam Ship Company brought large super generator units from Tyumen' to Yamburg. last year, for example, they carried 58 similar structures along the Tura, Tobol, Irtysk and Ob' rivers.

The chief committee of the Exhibition of Economic Achievements has awarded the Ob'-Irtysk Steamship Company a first class certificate for transporting the super generator units from Tyumen' to Yamburg.

In the coming navigation season, the Ob'-Irtysk Steam Ship Company is going to deliver 70 super generator units to the Tyumen' area, 22 of which they will be taking through the ice-covered canal in spring.

Vozdushnyi Transport

4 March 1989

Page (Extract)

Siberian City bars Soviet Nuclear-Powered Vessel

For four days and nights the nuclear-powered freight lighter, the Sevморput' has lain at anchor just outside Vladivostok. On 2 March, the city executive council took the unprecedented decision of barring the vessel from entering port, demanding additional information about its radiation safety

measures. Several days earlier, the Nakhodka City Council had vetoed the entry of this vessel, valued at more than 160 million rubles, into its port, and distant Magadan did likewise. Tens of thousands of people living in the Soviet Far East sent categorical protests to Radio Pacific, the local radio station. Meanwhile, for every 24 hours of enforced inactivity, the ship is "eating up" 54 000 rubles.

It took our coastal launch almost an hour to reach the orange-coloured freight lighter, frozen in the seven winds. The vessel looked tired. It was launched by the Kerchenskiy shipbuilders on the last day of 1988 and took a long circular route to the Soviet East. The voyage passed off without incident. There were some technical problems, but they did not affect the nuclear heart of the vessel. There were no complaints about its "pulse" from interested observers. In the Bosphorus, the Strait of Malacca and around the Cape of Good Hope, special launches and helicopters persistently circled around the lighter, measuring its radioactivity. But there was not the slightest complaint. This is not surprising: the Sevmorput' is within the bounds of the international safety code for nuclear-powered freight vessels. However, what is well understood by specialists can be a well-hidden mystery for the local people. The lack of information which has built up in the murky shadow of the Chernobyl' tragedy and the highly complicated ecological situation in the region, have detonated a powerful explosion of indignation.

The freight lighter has been over-designed from the safety point of view. The designers have even provided for a Boeing falling out of the sky on top of it, or for an ice-breaker like the Arktika going into its side or running aground. But what

if something really fantastic did happen to it?. What contingency plans have been laid for dealing with a possible emergency? Alas, the press did not get an answer to this question; they were told that something of that sort could simply not happen. But this sort of explanation does not satisfy anyone nowadays. There is another no less fundamental problem, namely, do we actually need this sea monster, which was originally planned in the age of giantomania? This is not a rethorical question, since as long ago as 1985 the former head of the far East Merchant marine Steamship Company, Yurii M. Vol'mer was speaking out against using nuclear-powered lighters in the basin. But, when he became a minister, Mr. Vol'mer quickly changed tack.

According to the Steam Ship Company and the Soviet Far Eastern Merchant Fleet Scientific and Research Institute, the Sevmorput' will make a loss of 12 million rubles this year, and 14 million rubles next year.

Lighter-carriers are only efficient in certain conditions, which are a large volume of goods traffic over large distances, a connecting system of estuary and river shallow-water ports and stations", explained the deputy director of the Soviet far East Merchant Fleet Scientific and Research Institute, P. Averchenko, "and we do not have these conditions in the Soviet Far Eastern basin and do not foresee them in the future. It is not the sailors who are the losers. The people in the north who are waiting to receive the goods are also not winning".

You must agree that it is a dramatic situation. A huge vessel, just like a cast-off waif, drifting aimlessly for four days and nights

It would be logical to first listen to the explanations of those in charge. But at a meeting between the crew and the public, the head of the Soviet Far Eastern Steamship company, V. Mis'kov, simply washed his hands of it.

And what is guiding the Ministry of the Merchant Fleet? They also flew a group of specialists headed by deputy Minister O. Savinym to Vladivostok. However, they had come for something else, for a meeting on the problems of sea navigation. It is interesting that it took place in one session of the meeting between the crew and the public. But the visitors from the capital didn't feel it necessary to go into the neighbouring meeting room.

On their days off, the freight lighter's crew organised an open house aboard their vessel. The public could come and look at anything they wanted. Maybe this will defuse the situation somewhat.

Sovetskaya Rossiya
7 March 1989
Page 2 (full text)

Extraordinary Event In Port

MAGADAN. In November of last year longshoremen at Magadan's commercial seaport flatly refused to unload the diesel powered "Vankarem", which had arrived from the People's Democratic Republic of Korea with a load of cement on board. The vessel was forced to continue on to Vladivostok.

* * *

This event caused an eruption of indignation that was entirely justified. The more than 30,000 tonnes of imported cement was to have been delivered to Magadan Oblast. Construction industry enterprises were placed in a very difficult situation, since any interruption in the supply of raw materials threatened an industry shutdown. What was the cause of the unusual event?

The unloading of Korean cement in Magadan, and also in other far eastern ports, has been creating an intolerable situation for some time. Contrary to generally accepted standards of international trade, almost half the deliveries of this raw material from the People's Republic of Korea arrive in an unpackaged state. At the loading ports the paper bags containing the cement are thrown directly into the holds of the vessels from the transport vehicles. Owing to the extreme flimsiness of the packaging, which consists of three or four leaves of kraft-paper sewn together instead of the required seven, knee-deep piles of cement form.

Unloading this type of load is a hellish process. The dust content in the holds exceeds maximum permissible levels by a factor of between 70 and 90. The longshoremen have no means of reliable personal protection. Gas masks and respirators are useless in such situations. In Magadan some people have already been hospitalized with chemical burns.

For many years the longshoremen have been bombarding higher authorities with letters and reports. The necessity of packaging the cement has been demonstrated at various levels of Magadanglavsnaab (Magadan Central Agency for Material and Technical Supplies) and other Oblast organizations. In 1985 some executive agencies

adopted resolutions banning the transport of unpackaged imported cement.

The "Stroymaterialintorg" Association, however, stubbornly continued to sign contracts for the delivery of unpackaged goods. Having despaired of changing the situation, the Minister of the Merchant Marine of the USSR, Yu Vol'mer, gave the longshoremen permission to refuse to service such vessels as of July of last year. Even after that, however, the longshoremen, who understood the builders' needs and were hoping that swift measures would be taken, continued to unload the ships for another four whole months after 1 July. Then their patience ran out.

Certain local leaders were quick to call the longshoremen everything short of saboteurs, who had deliberately done damage to their native Oblast. But if we consider the losses, let us also consider the original cause of the situation. And in my view the situation stems from the fact that foreign trade organizations bear no responsibility for the consequences of their activities. Chasing after apparently low prices often leads to the purchase of outdated equipment and technologies, and products that are ecologically harmful, or, as in the case described above, products that are damaging to human health.

The "Vankarem", which the Magadan longshoremen had refused to unload, was unloaded by the longshoremen of Primor'e, who turned out to be more tractable. And "Stroymaterialintorg", delighted

with this turn of events, has once again failed to include a paragraph in this year's contract calling for compulsory packaging of loads.

Sotsialisticheskaya

Industriya

23 March 1989

Page 1 (full text)

TRANSPORT
LAND

New Soviet Log Truck Matches Japanese

Testing has been completed on new log trucks for the severe climatic conditions of the northern regions of the USSR.

These powerful vehicles, based on the KRAZ truck, which is assembled in the Russian city of Kremenchug, are destined to squeeze out their competitor, the Japanese Kamatsu-Nissan log truck. Tests have shown that the Soviet vehicles perform as well as the proven Japanese make. The designers have considerably increased the new trucks capacity. Now it can transport up to 30 tonnes of timber at once. They have thought about the drivers too. Even in temperatures of -50°C , the double glazing and thick panelling enable the cabin to be maintained at room temperature. Orders from forestry enterprises are already being filled.

Sovetskaya Rossiya
14 March 1989
Page 1 (full text)

Soviet Amateurs Show Off All-Terrain Vehicles In Competition

For three days the people of Yaroslavl' watched open-mouthed as strange looking vehicles passed through the city's streets, bravely climbing the steep precipices of the banks of the Kotorosl'

River and storming its shining shores washed by melted ice. This was all part of the National Demonstration Competition of amateur cross-country vehicles with low-pressure pneumatic tires.

This fantastic parade included light framed three-wheelers, almost like grasshoppers, more solidly built four-wheelers with closed cabins - or without - and mysterious six-wheeled constructions resembling some of the vehicles used on the Moon. Mixed variations were also allowed, such as two wheels and a front ski, says our Tass correspondent.

To look at, they appear to be very simple constructions built from handy materials. "We get most of what we need from dumps," said the winner of the two previous competitions, N. Sych from Nadym, half-jokingly. However, specialists regard it as the technology of tomorrow, providing auxiliary transportation for the tough conditions of this region.

"The North is full of powerful mostly tracked vehicles such as the GAZ-71, the URAL and other large vehicles, but there are no small satisfactory cross-country vehicles for individual use", says one of the organisers of the show, N. Shapiro, section head of the VILS Association. "The volume of Burans snowmobiles produced is patently insufficient, just over 10 000 a year; secondly, they are highly specialised and not very reliable. Finally, they guzzle fuel at the rate of 30 litres per 100 km. Any one of the amateur custom automobiles at the show used a third of the amount!

The inventors are amateurs who one way or another have been involved with all-terrain vehicle technology for about 15 years. However, during the

last three or four years, the interest in these vehicles has grown because of increased concern for the environment. Tracked vehicles relentlessly plough up the tundra, whereas a low pressure tire produces a much lighter pressure on the surface. During the show, the team from Arkhangel'sk demonstrated with obvious pleasure their "deadly" stunt which involved driving a six-wheeler called the "Taibola" over one of their colleagues at full speed, as he lay in the snow. To the amusement and delight of the spectators he got up smiling. Those amateur vehicles are also indispensable in swamps where they do not sink and can even swim through clear water; and they can go through deep, wet snow. In addition, these vehicles can also pull a half-tonne trailer. This type of transport is necessary for hunters, reindeer breeders, fishermen, geologists, oilmen and for the northern postal service.

The national shows of amateur custom automobiles, organised by the NSID (National Society of Inventors and Developers) and the Central Committee of the National Voluntary Society for Support for the Armed Services, have done much to popularise these sorts of vehicles. In the first such show in Nadym, there were only three entrants, but now in Yaroslavl' there are custom car designers from fifteen republics and provinces.

The USSR Ministry of Agricultural Machinery and the USSR Ministry of Oil and Gas Construction have joined forces with the organisers of the Yaroslavl' show, because they themselves need this sort of transportation and because the huge demand guarantees an unlimited market for any successful design.

"We are not happy with either the Buran nor the Japanese cross-country vehicle which uses hard tires", says jury member and director of the Arktiktransgastroi Organisation, S. Kushnarenko; "that's why we set up our own club at the factory. It is called Vezdekhod (Cross-country Vehicle - Tr). In Yaroslavl' we demonstrated a six-wheeler vehicle, the Flora, capable of delivering a team of seven to ten people to their place of work in any weather and on any surface".

The latest show has also attracted the attention of several scientific institutes. They looked at the designs and variety of technology which could well become consumer products with unlimited demand. But who will undertake to produce it?

It is time for the NSID to help the movement, and not only by organising shows like this. The amateurs' work, which has overtaken that of the professionals, needs to be studied seriously, to find out how they do it.

"There is a real need for this", jury member E. Semenov, deputy head of the department of amateur design at NSID's Central Council. "This latest show has demonstrated how quickly this type of transportation is developing. Apart from the light construction vehicles, there were many heavy, almost car-like types, which looked ideal for use in the conditions of the Soviet Far North, and were multi-functional. All this needs a new approach to assessing the features of amateur automobiles. Obviously in the future there should be different classes in the competition, based on what the vehicles is used for, not only on technical specifications, economy, speed and other features.

Unfortunately, it was too late to change the entry conditions for this particular show to accomodate the varieties of vehicles on display. This explains why a team from Arkhangel'sk, which was exhibiting one of the most interesting examples of cross-country vehicles, lost the competition. The winners were the designs from Rybinsk, Yaroslavl', Minsk, Nadym, Tyla and Zelenodol'sk. According to established practice, the most serious test of all is now awaiting the winners and their vehicles, that is a drive through the regions of the Soviet Far North.

Sovetskaya Rossiya

9 March 1989

Page 1 (full text)

MISCELLANEOUS

Old Guard Hampers Reforms In Soviet Forestry Industry

The current difficult, even critical situation in enterprises under the USSR Ministry of the Forestry Industry (Minlesprom) in Tyumen' province has forced me on behalf of several thousand workers to appeal to the heads of the USRR Ministry of Highways and Transport, the Ministry of the Forestry Industry and USSR Gosbank*. There are two main issues worrying many employees in the forestry industry, and which have reached boiling point: these are the dearth of railcars for transporting finished products and the restrictions that were imposed this year on wages, which have meant a drop in people's standard of living.

The employees of the Komsomol'sk Forestry Enterprise are working on a self-sufficient and self-financing basis. It is particularly important for them to sell their products. If we cannot dispatch it, this means that we get no money for it. And, without money, one cannot survive in a cost-efficient system; not only is there not enough for operations, but not enough for wages.

Perestroika demands that everyone work energetically and show initiative. And we are trying to give support to perestroika and to make our contribution to bolstering the country's economic foundation. Last year, the employees of the Komsomol'sk Forestry Enterprise completed all the tasks they had been set: they over-fulfilled the profit objective and payed off all their debts from previous years. Today, out of the six forestry enterprises in the industry, we are the only profitable one in our region.

However, at the end of last year and the beginning of this, we started having serious problems, as there was a sudden sharp decline in the number of railcars sent to us for dispatch of our finished products. In December, we were 96 railcars short, in January, 139, and in February, 250 short out of 767 planned. In other words, almost a third down.

In our warehouses timber worth 2 749 000 rubles had mounted up. High-quality timber destined for export cannot be left to lie in the warehouse for too long without risk of deterioration, loss of saleability and marketability. We are bringing foreign currency into the country. Surely the national economy needs it? Why should we do such heavy work and destroy trees, if the end product of our work is simply going to rot in the warehouse? What normal businessman would run things in this senseless way?

Now we have started getting irregular wage payments (no sales means no resources in the enterprise's account). Because the warehouses are full to bursting we have had to slow down and severely reduce our productivity, which means that we are not fulfilling our production target. It is not our fault that we are breaching delivery agreements and having to pay fines. All of this creates tension amongst people and undermines their faith in economic reforms. We cannot afford to let this conflict get any worse.

Last February, I came to Moscow and met the top people in the USSR Ministry of Highways and Transport, Gossnab** and other organisations. The first deputy Minister for Highways and Transport, Mr. V.N. Gin'ko, saw me straight away and agreed that

the situation was unacceptable. An immediate order was issued that the required number of railcars should be sent. My first reaction was one of joy: so this is how they work at the top, a quick and business-like solution, and we can get back to normal working.

But alas, the order got no further than the piece of paper it was written on; nobody had any intention of carrying it out. Only in the first two or three days did the number of railcars increase slightly, then another lull. The final result, was that, in February, which was when the Ministry of Highways and Transport order was issued, we were short of a record number of railcars, which as I have already mentioned, was 250 out of 767. So what was the point of all this "business-like" approach and "efficiency" in the Ministry; why waste paper on orders that are nothing but hollow words?

The second problem is no less important. Having exhausted the present felling site, the Komsomol's Forestry Enterprise is moving on to new areas where the forest is not so good and the trees are thinner. It takes almost the same time to load a wide tree onto a feller forwarder as it does a thin one. But it will produce a lot less. So in order to fulfil the plan we must load up more trees, for which we need more people. And quite apart from this, since the warehouse is now much further away, it takes more people to drive the trees, now stripped of their branches, back there. Whereas previously ten drivers could cope with the work, now we need fifteen.

I am describing all this so that it becomes clear why it is that circumstances beyond our control have meant that we need more manpower and, consequently, a larger wage fund. In other words,

the average wage increase, due to factors which have nothing to do with us, should be higher than the increase in labour productivity. We have the resources for this, and we can earn the profit. But, it turns out that we cannot hand out all the money we earn, since there is a strict limitation: if the fixed correlation between average wage growth and increased productivity is broken, then the bank will "freeze" part of the resources you have earned and the workforce will not be allowed to have them. So wages fall and people's indignation at the injustice of this instruction increases. (The instructions in question are contained in USSR Gosbank's letter dated 2 February 1989).

In fact, if the country needs what we produce (which it does very much), then why should the workers have to pay for worsening natural conditions? They don't work any less than they did before, but they are getting paid less. Is this really fair?

We do understand that in principle wages should not increase faster than labour productivity. But we must consider each individual case.

The USSR Gosbank instruction also undermines the employees' efforts to reduce production costs. What happens is that, when production costs are down, this naturally means higher profit, which in turn means more for the labour remuneration fund. Wages increase, but productivity doesn't, since there is no increase in the amount of production. In this case, a restriction on wages growth comes into play. The wages-productivity correlation is broken, and the bank "freezes" part of the resources. Paradoxically, whereas lower production costs benefit the country, the enterprise, the employees, and in fact everybody,

the infamous instruction puts an unassailable barrier in the way. It does no good at all, only damage.

Last year, we reduced production costs to 62 000 rubles, but even this has turned against the employees. who are now being accused of breaching the wages-productivity correlation. Where is the encouragement in these conditions for the employees to manage their affairs assiduously and economically?

At times, we seem to find it very easy to make up instructions in high places that are very far removed from industry. In this connection, I would like to ask the people in charge at the relevant Ministries and Departments why we may not manage the resources we earn ourselves? Unlike many others, we do not take any subsidies from the State; on the contrary, we bring in profit and we work efficiently, yet in all major issues, such as labour remuneration, we are hamstrung by a variety of restrictive instructions. Why is the remuneration system so complicated that not only the workers, but even at times the economists cannot fathom it?

Together with other people from the forestry enterprise I will have to go to Moscow again to tackle these and a series of other long overdue problems. I am bringing with me the signatures of 635 workers and specialists at the Komsomol'sk Forestry Enterprise, who have asked us to appeal to your paper and to the Ministries and Departments already mentioned above. But why is it still necessary now, in the period of renewal and perestroika, of rejection of the old command-administrative methods of management, to still have to travel to Moscow to approach people and

prove to them the obvious? Why can't people get on with the business of working normally and peacefully? When will there be some sort of order?

Trud

24 Mar 1989

Page 2 (full text)

Scientists Determine The Centre Of Yakutiya

The local mapping facility has discovered the geographical centre of Yakutiya. Or, more correctly, specialists have calculated the centre, since they used accurate topographical maps and computers to do so. The centre turned out to be the top of a unnamed 1 048 metre high mountain, situated in the Verkhoyansk region, 28 kilometres from Lake Nyuehle. An obelisk will be set up to mark the place and special tourist trips to the site will be arranged.

Sotsialisticheskaya

Industriya

14 March 1989

Page 4 (full text)

Soviet Weather Service Outdated And Inaccurate

Although today in the fields of the collective and state farms in this province there is one and a half times as much snow as usual, the Tyumen' Hydrometeorological Centre has called upon

the farmers to increase their efforts to retain the snow where it lies. However, none of the farms has been in a hurry to follow the weathermans' recommendations, as they are wondering what will happen if their forecasts are inaccurate and they have a repeat of 1986 when the countryside was awash in spring.

"This is not a new situation", said the head of centre, Mr. L. Cherkasov, "unfortunately there is no system of legal and economic responsibility for use or non-use of meteorological information".

We learned how to make a careful analysis of the volume of losses caused by natural disasters. It turns out that somebody who makes dead sure bears additional costs, whereas somebody who just keeps his fingers crossed, will write off his own sins and miscalculations to some "twist of fate". Neither one side nor the other has any interest in co-operating. The whole problem is that we are a State-run organisation. This is why we see the way out through changing to cost-efficiency, working on a contractual basis, and we have come up with a proposal to allow the Tyumen' Centre, as an experiment, to try out a new form of labour management.

We were interested in following uncontested figures, which are published in many scientific works: for every ruble invested in weather services, the state receives on average four rubles profit, and in certain industries this is much higher. Foreign statistics show a similar situation in other countries. So one is fully justified in asking where these rubles go, certainly not into our forecasting service which is, for the most part, deep in the backwoods and far behind that of other countries? For example, capital investments of 13 billion rubles

are used up in this same Tyumen' province, yet no more than 5 million rubles of this goes into forecasting work. Yes, we do use satellites and computers, but this is nothing new. It must be admitted that technologically we are hopelessly behind. But the main problem is that nobody is obliged to act on the free information we give out.

Today we are not offering seasonal forecasts in rural areas, yet if we were to do so, the collective and state farms would be able to select what varieties of grain, potato and other crops to go for, given expected weather conditions.

Oil and gas producers are also showing great interest in a reliable weather service. The industry suffers colossal losses when it is forced to shut down owing to the electrical supply being disconnected. Early storm warnings would give them time to switch over the reserve power supplies. They ask us to let them know exactly when and for how long bogs will be frozen over or thaw out, and it is extremely important for the people installing super generator units to know how high the river waters will be. It is also vital for the forestry, freight and construction industries to have good quality forecasting.

"Yes, good quality forecasting. But don't you frequently get it wrong?"

"You are right; we get it wrong more often than many of our western colleagues do. Despite the fact that the work of our service is considered satisfactory, as it was 30-40 years ago, we are aware of the fact that we are simply still using out-dated methods. And this is the whole problem, there is no incentive for creative research; our equipment and

facilities are not really being improved; we do not have sufficient resources. And only cost-efficiency, in our view, can correct this situation and give people the interest to earn money for the equipment we need, without having to beg the state for it. Don't misunderstand me, we don't want to get paid for good weather reports without doing anything to earn the money. If you want to manage without us, then you are welcome to use the information relating to average climate, but this could be fraught with sure losses. But if you sign an agreement to have a good quality weather service, you must act upon its advice. If we have warned of flooding, that water levels are above the critical mark, then build a dam, and your fields won't suffer. You will still be the winner even after having paid for the information, and if we have made a mistake, you can recover the extra costs involved.

Pravda
13 March 1989
Page 1 (full text)

Earthquake In Magadan

MAGADAN, 9 (TASS). Today at 8:16 Moscow time seismic stations in Magadan Oblast recorded an earthquake in the coastal region around the Sea of Okhotsk. According to preliminary information, the force of the earthquake at the epicentre 280 kilometres west of Magadan was between five and six on the 12-point scale. The residents of magadan felt a shock registering up to 3.5. There were no casualties or damage.

Pravda
10 April 1989
Page 8 (full text)

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Pravda
 16 April 1989
 Page 8 (full text)



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