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advanced technology for the manufacture of artificial filters to be used. Millions of roubles in gold were sent to foreign firms for the technology and the equipment. The idea was that this money would be used to foreign firms for the technology and the equipment. The idea was that this money would be used to foreign firms for the technology and the equipment.

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According to Candidate of Economic Sciences, G. Smetanina, the new filters would enable farmers to deliver all of their milk as Class 1. And we, the people who pay for it, could then obtain excellent milk. The Syktyvkar experimental station, where Gennadii Fedorovich works, was the first to try out the filters. The results surpassed all expectations.

No less important is the fact that plant production can save on scarce materials - cotton wool, gauze and flannel.

But what, in fact, did happen?

Four years have passed since the country's first production shop went into operation. The shop was supposed to produce 75 million sieve-type filters made of artificial cloth and intended for use with milking machines. Today, the shop is operating at 25 to 30 percent capacity. Why is it that there are so few people, and that included people in the

AGRICULTURE AND THE FOOD INDUSTRY

Dairy Industry Clings to Old Technology

In 1984, the Syktyvkar non-woven materials factory installed major facilities for the production of filter materials to be used for cleaning milk. This was the first time in the Soviet Union that an advanced technology for the manufacture of artificial cloth was to be used. Millions of roubles in gold were paid to foreign firms for the technology and the equipment. The assumption was that this money would return in the form of greater profitability. After all, scientists of the Estonian Scientific Research Institute of Animal Breeding and Veterinary Sciences had calculated that the State and collective farms of this country were losing 159 million roubles every year due to the poor quality of their milk. And the most important thing was that the consumers were suffering.

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Komi ASSR', who want to buy the production of the Syktyvkar textile plant?

But maybe one shouldn't get excited? The rural folk just need time to adjust to the new product. They'll get used to it, and then everything will be alright.

Today, there can be little hope of that. In 1986, the farms of the USSR 'Gosagroprom' (possibly "State Committee of the Agricultural Industry") and plants producing milking equipment, purchased a little more than 30 million filters, and last year already a million fewer. For 1988, 'Souyuzglavzoovetsnab' (possibly "USSR Main Administration for Zoological and Veterinary Supply") asked for only 15 million, and then later reduced this order to 10 million. The same situation exists with the shop's production of 'termoskreplennoe' (possible 'heat bonded') cloth for filtering the milk as it is bottled.

"We don't even accept filters from the Syktyvkar plant," said V. Polushina, chief livestock specialist with the "Prigorodnyi" State Farm. "There's no particular need to use the new product. Cotton wool and gauze are perfectly satisfactory for us. We're used to them."

The same conclusions have been reached at state farms in other regions.

As it turns out, the right hand -- the USSR State Planning Committee -- does not know what the left hand -- the USSR 'Gossnab' (State Planning Committee for Supply of the National Economy) -- is doing. One pays out hard currency to create new capacities to produce substitutes for natural

materials, and the other gives Gosagroprom as much cotton wool, gauze and flannel as it requests, and more. After all, the prices for natural materials are still being set at a level where it does not make any sense to buy substitutes. In a word, spending money without any return.

Who manages money like that?

Sotsialisticheskaya
Industriya

18 November 1988

Page 1 (Full text)

ANTARCTIC

"Metelitsa" Ski Team in the Antarctic

Yesterday the following radiogram was received in our editorial offices: "The women's Antarctic scientific and sport expedition, "Metelitsa" [Blizzard] has arrived at the Soviet scientific research station, Molodyozhnaya. S. Gur'yeva, Navigation Officer."

Our readers have been familiar with the "Metelitsa" ski team and its permanent leader, V. Kuznetsova, Master of Sport, for a long time. Between 1966-69 these skiers made 3 long-distance treks, one of them international: Moscow-Leningrad-Helsinki-Turku-Tampere-Tornino. Between 1974-87 the team skied into the Arctic, completing 9 expeditions at extreme northern latitudes.

And now the Antarctic! Before departing by air from Leningrad for the Antarctic Molodyozhnaya station, V. Kuznetsova told the Trud reporter that the main goal of the present expedition was to reach the earth's southern geomagnetic pole in 1989.

After 2 weeks of training near the Molodyozhnaya station, the female skiers will transfer to their second base, the Mirnyi Observatory, from which they will set off on their ski trek to the Vostok station. They should arrive in early February, 1989. Their trek to the geomagnetic pole will thus take them across almost 1800 kilometres.

After this, the "Metelitsa" team intends to travel from Vostok Station to the southern geographic pole in 70-75 days (December 1989-February 1990). The length of this trek will be approximately 1700 kilometres.

Expedition members (11 women in all) will conduct medical, biological, and meteorological research.

All this work is being carried out in accordance with a resolution by the All-Union Central Trade Union Secretariat. The All-Union Council for the Trade Unions' Voluntary Physical Cultural and Sports Society acted as coordinator for the expedition and was responsible for its preparation and realization.

Trud

18 November 1988

Page 3 (Full text)

CONSTRUCTION

New Apartment Dwellers ... In a Storm

Radiant with happiness, the new apartment dweller, holding in hand the cherished permit for the long-awaited apartment, stepped across the threshold of his new home... and collapsed, senseless. Then, the same thing occurred to another, and to a third... But, what happened this summer in the towns of Solnechnyi and Lyantorskii in the Surgut Raion was not caused by an excess of joy.

These northern residents are not ones to be swept off their feet by emotions. But even these conquerors of Siberia's underground riches, hardened against toxic chemical substances, cannot withstand this surprise. And who served up this latest survival test for the new oil field and gas field workers of northern Tyumen region but the "rationalizers" of the Perm' Housing Construction Combine (DSK). Inside the panels of these 16-unit apartment houses, they decided to use a new chemical insulator in place of the traditional mineral wool. Unsuspecting, the workers of Tyumen assembled the buildings using these "improved" structural members.

What happened then is convincingly reflected in a document drawn up by personnel of 'Gosarkhistroikontrol' (State Control Board for Architecture and Construction) and the public health service: "Inside the housing units one can smell an unpleasant odor emanating from the building's structural members. People are suffering from watery

eyes, irritation of the upper respiratory tract and coughing. Laboratory tests indicate the presence of substances rated as Class 2 to Class 4 health risks, which have 36 times the maximum allowable concentrations of phenols, 342 times the permissible limits of formaldehyde, and 60 times the limits for ammonia"!

Reading this document, local medical officials found the solution to a puzzling question: Why, under the favourable conditions of the past summer, there was a sharp increase in the number of cases of bronchitis and acute asthma, especially among the children of new residents.

"When we heard the results of the studies," declared N. Nakonechnyi, head of the Main Administration of Oil and Gas Industry Construction of the Tyumen Region, "we immediately ordered our branches in all towns to halt construction on buildings from the Perm' DSK. The directors of this enterprise were also notified about what had happened. We requested that they undertake immediate measures. The logic underlying normal relations is: if you turn out a defective product, you undermine your partner-factory, and so you make haste to correct the mistake. But our 'partners' chose a different route and began stalling."

Initially, the people at Perm' attempted to prove that the new insulating material was, in their words, altogether harmless. Then, they started trying to reduce the maximum allowable concentrations of the toxic substances from 300 to 10. The procrastination continued through the entire third quarter. Finally, the Main Administration cancelled the ten-month plan for housing deliveries, threatening thereby the fulfillment of the annual plan as well.

At the Main Administration of Oil and Gas Industry Construction, Tyumen Region, I was shown a whole file of telegrams. They are addressed to the Perm' Oblast Committee of the Communist Party, to the Perm' Oblast Committee of People's Control, to M. Busygin, Minister of the Forestry Industry, and to various scientific and legal bodies. But the "rationalizers" in Perm', as the saying goes, are not champing at the bit.

Meanwhile, Pravda's news centre in Tyumen is receiving alarm signals from Yamburg, Purpe, Fedorovskii, Poikovskii, and other cities and towns of the oil and gas field regions. Here, too, people have already sampled the charms of the polluted dwellings. Hundreds of new residences have been spoiled and abandoned.

Now the Perm' home builders can rightly certify that their buildings have no mice or cockroaches. Unfortunately, human beings cannot live in them either, and for this one must face up to the full rigour of the law.

Pravda

14 November 1988

Page 1 (Full text)

Processed Waste Products Used in New Building Material

A 20-storey apartment house -- the first in the Soviet Union to be constructed from materials based on specially-processed waste products of metallurgical production -- is now ready to welcome residents. The allocation of apartments has begun at the

'Tsentrmetallurgremont' (Central Metallurgical Repair) Administration, which erected the new building with its own resources.

"The potential of this new material is truly unlimited," our TASS correspondent was told by A. Konovalov, head of the Administration. No cement is required for its manufacture. It is a concrete composed of granulated tailings and other waste products of the Novolipetsk Metallurgical Combine. To prepare this new building material, specialists of the Administration developed and set up new types of facilities.

This lightweight, sound-proof material possesses good insulating properties and permits rapid construction, regardless of the degree of complexity. For example, the first 20-storey building in the oblast capital city was put up at a rate twice the standard pace of construction.

The Combine has an impressive quantity of raw materials at its disposal, but not enough use is made of them in Lipetsk. The city must significantly expand housing construction; the appearance of a new source of cheap and reliable building materials is, therefore, very timely.

Stroitel'naya Gazeta

18 November 1988

Page 1 (Full text)

New Bridge Erected in Arkhangelsk

Twenty trucks loaded with sand drove in a tight column onto the half-kilometer-long bridge erected over the right arm of the Northern Dvina River. Tests of the strength of the new bridge, which spans the river in this large northern city, Arkhangelsk, have been successfully completed. The city is now linked up with Krasnoflotskii Island.

Sotsialisticheskyy
Industriya

10 November 1988

Page 1 (Full text)

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Accelerated Development of Yamal Peninsula a Threat to Ecological Balance

Our experience over the past 20 years in opening up the Soviet North in the Tyumen' area - Samotlor, Medvezh'ye, Urengoi, and last, Yamburg - has taught us many "lessons". It was thought that the experience of developing the Yamburg condensed gas-field in the Arctic would lead the gas-field workers and construction crews, now looking further north to the newly-found raw hydrocarbon deposits on the Yamal Peninsula, to reject the 'Go get it' strategy typical of the past.

Unfortunately, despite these good intentions, the development of the Yamal Peninsula -- "Treasure Peninsula" as it is called, -- has been underway for some time. Geologists have been drilling on the peninsula for over 10 years - in the Bovanenkovo and Kharasaveisk fields and on Beliy Island in the Arctic. Mechanized mobile construction units working on the Obskaya-Bovanenkovo railway are advancing steadily towards the heart of the Yamal. Nor is the peninsula unknown territory to the Ministry for the Construction of the Oil and Gas Industry. Crews from Arkhnftegazstroi, the general contractor for industrial construction on the peninsula, and from the Urengoineftegazstroi Association have succeeded in laying roads to Yamal's furthest reaches, Se-Yakhe and Sabett.

The onslaught has begun and the waterfowl population on the peninsula has already decreased eight-fold over the past 10 years. During the somewhat less than four years that the Arkhangelsk

Geological Prospecting Expedition has been operating on Belyi Island, the vegetation cover on 16% of the island's territory has been totally removed and the deer population has plummeted from 3,500 to 600 head. The northern rivers have lost 30% of their valuable fish species. These are the results today of the initial effort to open up the Yamal Peninsula. What will happen tomorrow?

Let us look at a few extracts from a recent statement by V. Melnikov, Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Vice-President of the International Association for the Study of Permafrost, and Director of the Academy of Sciences' Institute for Northern Development Problems, published in a Tyumen' regional youth newspaper in August: "The use of caterpillar all-terrain vehicles on the Yamal Peninsula threatens disaster..." Dr. Melnikov goes on to list the reasons for his concern: "The natural complexes here are very unstable even without human interference. Highly active cryogenic processes, especially thermoerosion, thermokarst, and soil creep determine the high natural mobility of the peninsula's generally gently-sloping surface. Some slopes are constantly sliding downward, while others may remain immobile for years and then suddenly slip, exposing icy subsoil. Ravines grow and branch out very quickly, and small puddles turn into lakes." Finally, he remarked: "Once the thin protective layer over the ice masses, which is unable to withstand the slightest mechanical action, is removed, the way is wide open to increasingly active processes penetrating to great depths with unpredictable consequences."

Sergey Zalygin's opinions on environmental questions are widely respected; he was the first to oppose the notorious 'project of the century' -

reversing the current of the northern rivers. There is even more reason to listen to his opinions on the Yamal Peninsula. At one time he lived and worked in this area and fought against another sadly well-known 'global project' - construction of the Nizhne-Obstkaya Hydroelectric Station. Sergey Zalygin sent the following telegram to the recent All-Union Conference on "The Ecology of the Oil and Gas Complex" held in Nadym: "I share your concerns about the future of the Yamal. I believe that development of the peninsula's gas and oil fields is premature. We need to confront the problems of the Northern ethnic minorities. A comprehensive ecological study of the project is needed."

The text of the telegram was posted so that everyone could read it. Was Zalygin's urgent message heard? And in general, have the sweeping promises made by the Ministry for Construction for the Oil and Gas Industry - the organizer of this forum - been fulfilled? Let us try to answer these questions.

It was clear at the outset of the conference that many participants were ready for serious discussions. What have we left behind in the Ob River oil-fields and the Far Northern gas-fields? Almost immediately the discussion goes beyond departmental interest and touches on problems requiring serious scientific research. The statement by V. Zavizion, chief engineer for Arktneftegazstroi, sounds very strange in this context: "When we planned this conference, we did not intend to discuss the timing of the development of the Yamal Peninsula".

In other words, rather than frightening us with impending ecological disaster, just tell us how to handle the existing situation.

Possible opponents may reproach us for our journalistic ardour and lack of restraint, but the development of the Yamal Peninsula is a serious, large-scale government project. The date on which the Yamal gas must be delivered to consumers has been set: 1991. Nechernozem'ya is the first area slated to receive this gas.

Besides, we are told again, we must be realistic: the development of the Yamal gas fields will enable the gas industry to achieve a rapid increase in the annual output, raising it to one trillion cubic metres of natural gas. A delay in reaching this volume could create a perceptible imbalance in the country's fuel and power supply.

These arguments, it must be admitted, are weighty. Nonetheless, we can't help recalling similar arguments 5-10 years ago when the Samotlor fields were developed at the same forced pace. There is a firm, widely-held conviction that the rapid development of the Samotlor fields was fully justified. By happy coincidence, its peak output occurred at the time of the highest oil prices on the world market. Samotlor provided a lot of hard currency and an abundance of foodstuffs for sale: the shops in the capital were filled with a broad range of food which is no longer available, and the shelves were stocked with a wealth of imported consumer goods. Although we knew that domestic productions of consumer goods was less than could be desired, we still held fast to the illusion that we lived as well as others.

The opinion of experts was recently supported in the press by Dr. A. Arbatov, a Moscow economist: "If it hadn't been for the Samotlor oil, we would have had to begin perestroika 10-15 years ago."

Even if we accept the Soviet economy as it is, not as we would like it to be, even if indeed we cannot live without producing one trillion cubic metres of gas in the near future, there are alternative ways to achieve this output. Scientists tasked by the USSR State Planning Committee with carrying out a study of the preparatory work needed to open up the Yamal Fields have advised not to hasten development of the peninsula, and have recommended that the targeted gas output be achieved by developing the adjacent fields around the developed Medvezh'ye, Urengoi, and Yamburg fields.

Unfortunately, the scientists' opinion did not prevail.

The major conclusions of the State Planning Committee experts did, however, have an impact. The feasibility studies submitted for the Yamal gas-fields were rejected, mainly due to the obvious oversights of the designers in the section on "Environmental Protection".

In some matters we have to behave like stubborn bureaucrats. If the feasibility studies were rejected, then it is pointless to conduct discussions as if they had been accepted. That is not just our point of view, but one expressed repeatedly by I. Mazur, Deputy Minister for Construction for the Oil and Gas Industry, at the Nadym conference. Isn't it paradoxical, though, that without any feasibility studies, that is, without looking before leaping, the Ministry has nonetheless sent several hundred of its construction workers to a number of sites on the Yamal Peninsula?

Not so many, you say? I. Shapovalov, Director of the Arktneftegazstroi Association, made the following observation on this point: "The first

man who goes out into the tundra leaves tracks, the next man leaves a path, and the third leaves a desert behind him." The construction crews did not decide on their own to begin work on the peninsula. They were sent by their Ministry, which takes such a firm public stand in defense of the fragile Northern environment!

There is nothing very puzzling here, however: this is a narrow, departmental approach to the Yamal. The government has set a task and it needs to be carried out - that's all.

Let's be honest. At last we have the courage to discuss how government decisions are reached. All the preliminary work is often carried out by representatives of industries most vitally interested in seeing that these decisions are adopted. That is why alternatives are often ignored. Take the Yamal Peninsula as an example - this represents a very large volume of work, an excellent prospect for gas-field workers and construction crews alike in the years ahead. The Yamburg and Urengoi satellite-fields, to which the dissenting scientists are pointing, appear much less attractive: the volumes are not as large and the prospects are less promising.

It is difficult to reconcile the interest of one or more ministries to those of society as a whole.

This spring one of the present writers travelled to the Yamal with a government commission composed of representatives of the gas and construction industries and design organizations. The commission was headed by V. Kuramin, Chairman of the Bureau for the Fuel and Power Complex under the USSR Council of Ministers. The purpose of the trip

was to prepare additional recommendations to be included in a draft version of government resolutions concerning the Yamal Peninsula.

As we flew in a comfortable helicopter to Yar-Sele settlement, one of the members of the commission, a senior representative of the Ministry for the Gas Industry, made the following observation concerning the life of the tundra-dwellers, which he regarded as unenviable and deprived: "It's savagery!" Within a few hours the passengers on this 'executive flight' would be meeting Party and local council representatives from the Yamal region. The outburst by the ministerial representative made one wonder sadly whether the guests from Moscow and Tyumen' understood that for the tundra-dwellers, home was not just a house with four walls and a roof, even though this might be a very comfortable house, but the tundra itself, its streams and lakes. Did they understand that nature was more than just an environment to these people?

V. Kuramin formulated the topic for discussion in the following way to the Party and local council representatives: "Government guidelines are being drawn up concerning the Yamal Peninsula. We must clarify how we are to organize the work so as to minimize damage to nature. As a form of compensation, we must also solve the region's problems in social and living conditions."

After this statement, S. Pashev, the chief animal husbandry specialist at the Yarsalinsky State Farm remarked bitterly: "How many years have passed since we came to this area before such a meeting is taking place!" For the native inhabitants of this area, the 'benefits of civilization' have so far meant the loss of their ancestral lands and

occupations. Over 1,000 people - 1 in 20 of the local population in the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District - are presently unemployed. Deer-breeding may be cut by half in the future.

The Ministry for the Gas Industry and the Ministry for Construction for the Gas and Oil Industry have given the native population a difficult choice: either you support the development of the Yamal, in which case we shall built good housing, child day-care centres, schools, and hospitals for the native population, or else you take care of your own problems. Are the deer-grazing and hunting grounds which have already been turned into gas-fields at Urengoi and Yamburg not enough for the ministries? Do they have to add the Yamal Peninsula, too? The attack on the local population continued even at the ecological conference.

The discussions between the executives who had organized the conference and the scientists who were participating in it took an even stranger turn later in the conference: "We need recommendations toady, not sometime in the future," - the executives said to the scientists. "Remember that the extent of the damage to nature on the peninsula depends on you."

This was obviously an attempt to shift the blame to the innocent party.

Nonetheless, we must give the Ministry for Construction for the Gas and Oil Industry its due for organizing the conference. We do not know how the Ministry may assess the conference, but in our opinion, its chief lesson is that science, including applied science in this industry, is increasingly unwilling to meekly carry out the client's will. "What result do you want?" is no longer an acceptable

approach. We heard many convincing affirmations of this in Nadym. We cannot presume to speak for all the conference participants, but one of the four sections, which discussed scientific and methodological questions affecting the ecology of the oil and gas complex, resolved to petition Party and government leaders to delay industrial development of the Yamal Peninsula. Nearly 80 scientists and experts signed the text of the petition at the closing plenary session. Here are some of the statements they made:

Dr. E. Melnikov, mineralogist, Director of the Laboratory of the All-Union Scientific Research Institute of Hydrogeology and Engineering Geology under the USSR Ministry of Geology: "Development of the Yamal gas-fields has begun without comprehensive scientific and technological preparation. There are still none of the necessary nature conservation maps for the Bovanenkovo field, where the industrial development of the Yamal region is planned to begin, for communications corridors or for areas where advance bases will be located. Neither lake depths nor the water balance of the land is known. Thus, neither individual parts of the environment, nor these parts as a whole and their interaction, nor their possible reaction to man's intrusion onto the Yamal Peninsula have been studied."

V. Lukichev, Candidate of Sciences, Senior Researcher at the Academy of Sciences' Institute for Northern Development Problems: "Apparently, some people prefer to say that science has stubbornly refused to deal with the Yamal's problems, and so now the industrial sector has to handle them alone. In fact, our group is now undertaking research in earnest for the third time on the peninsula. Research begun twice before, in the mid-seventies and

early eighties, had to be halted because funding was cut off by the ministries."

O. Rebristaya, Researcher at the Academy of Sciences' Botanical Institute: "Each of the Yamal problems requires not only a serious approach, but also patience. Oil and gas-field managers in Yamburg already requested our help in restoring the damaged tundra cover, but a couple of years later they lost interest in our work because it would have taken too long to wait for the results. Yet a minimum of 5-7 years is needed to produce serious, well-founded recommendations here in the sub-arctic zones..."

The Yamal problems cannot be 'stormed' in the usual fashion - even if 10 scientists are assigned to work on them instead of one. It takes time to make up for time lost in the past - for which science is less to blame than bureaucratic short-sightedness.

Nevertheless, at the height of the closing plenary session a banner bearing huge letters was raised over the hall: "Pure science - go out into the Yamal expanses!" Another eye-catching banner was simultaneously raised in the glare of flashing camera bulbs set off by Soviet and foreign news photographers attending the conference: "Drivers support developing the Yamal right away!"

These are the sort of tricks that are used on television game shows and team quiz shows.

The conference which served to stimulate these reflections was not a T.V. quiz show, however, on which all questions must be answered as quickly as possible. We need enough time to find the right

solutions to the problems posed by the Yamal Peninsula.

Stroitel'naya Gazeta
2 November 1988
Pages 1 - 3 (Full text)

Pechora River Salmon Headed for Extinction

When I was a child, my mother, Irina Afanas'yevna, used to tell me a fairy tale about "Czar Fish", which weighed 40 poods. And it was only many years later, when I grew up, that I discovered it wasn't a fairy tale. The journal "Komi Zemlya" (Komi Country), which appeared in the mid 1930's, reported that a giant 'losos' (type of salmon), weighing over 600 kilograms, had been caught at the mouth of the Usa River.

Not long ago I was visiting my home region and called on the last remaining commercial fisherman, Nikolai Andreevich Patrakov. As the custom is, he immediately put food on the table -- a bowl of capelin -- and, catching my look, waved his arms proudly. "This is the only thing we have in abundance now." And this happened in a village on the banks of the Kolva River, whose name in the Nenets language means "fish water". Patrakov used to be in charge of the processing plant in the village, which handled up to 25 tonnes of fish. Today, there is no work.

For ages, the Pechora River was famous for its 'semga' (type of salmon). It was caught here by young and old, and its silvery colour filled the waters endlessly. Before the Revolution,

approximately 4000 tonnes of fish were shipped out for sale, and the total catch used to be as much as 6000 tonnes. And nowadays? In 1986, only 22 tonnes were taken.

At "Komirybvod" (possibly "Komi Board of Fish Breeding") colourful posters hang on the walls with pictures of the Pechora's noble fish -- semga, nelma, pelyad, and white fish. I look at them and think: if we don't come to our senses, these pictures will end up in the Red Book. That's where things are headed, and this is confirmed by P. Chebereg, director of the 'Komirybprom' (Komi Commercial Fishing) Combine.

"Last year we delivered only 379 tonnes of fish," says Petr Vasil'yevich. "And that includes fish caught in distant tundra lakes ..."

The director is embarrassed and doesn't say much. The fact is that almost half of the combine's production consists of that same smoked capelin which I was served by the old Kolva fisherman. And so, what is happening to our "Mother" Pechora, which for us Komi people is like the Volga for Russians?

What is happening is that what once was the country's largest population of 'losos' is condemned to extinction. At the Ninth Party Congress, V. Melnikov, first secretary of the Komi Oblast Committee of the Communist Party, spoke with alarm about one of the causes. Here are his words: "Only here, in the Soviet Union, is it possible to stretch a metal net across several kilometers in the lower reaches of the Pechora River and claim that this was done in order to increase the number of fish."

As part of public service work on behalf of nature protection, I often have occasion to visit the upper reaches of the Pechora, where the Pechora-Ilych Reserve is located. It is precisely here, 2000 kilometers from the mouth of the river, that one finds the principal spawning tributaries. The only fish that reaches this point is one that somehow manages to break through the iron barrier. Involuntarily, a gloomy analogy comes to mind. During the "period of stagnation" (euphemism for the Brezhnev era), one of the directors of the reserve invented a hellish device that made possible the "commercial shooting of the losos". A barrier, resembling a funnel with a narrow opening, was placed on the salmon's route. The "forest giant" swam into the trap, unsuspecting, and was awaited at the narrowest point by the noble "nature enthusiasts". These shot the salmon at point-blank range, from behind the barrier. The losos scarcely benefited from this kind of "rationalization". Its numbers began to dwindle rapidly. The infernal barrier was taken down. But the iron net has remained standing on the river for almost 30 years, shored up by talk of State usefulness. A lot of monstrosities in this country are justified by such "State concepts", but it is the State that is the poorer for them.

Here are the scientists' figures: to ensure the survival of the Pechora losos population, a minimum of 50,000 'producers' must be permitted to pass through the iron net to reach spawning grounds. And what happens in practice? Even by official figures, the number of fish which have passed through the net in recent years is 350,000 fewer than required. And how many fish tore their gills on the iron fence and perished? Official secrets are well guarded.

The picture will be almost complete when one adds that the so-called "rationed" fish that break through the fence come under pressure from poachers. Extremely well-organized and well-equipped bandits destroy another 10,000 or so "egg carriers" each year. What's more, they look on the legally sanctioned fence across the river as a kind of absolution for their wrongdoing. In such an immoral atmosphere, all inspections or prohibitions are useless. The principle "What you protect belongs to you" is flourishing. Things have come to such a point that the Troitsko-Pechora Regional Executive Committee was forced recently to overhaul its Fishery Inspection Service and transfer responsibility for protection of fish resources (and it is precisely here that the principal spawning rivers are located) to inspectors from Ukhta, who are stationed 200 kilometres from the Pechora.

Pollution of the river has already reached catastrophic proportions. Every year, workers of the oil, geological and other sectors discharge over 11,000 tonnes of oil and oil products into the river and into the streams of the Pechora Basin. To dilute this poison to a level of maximum allowable concentration would require a minimum of 230 cubic kilometres of water, twice the present flow of this northern river. Just last year, an emergency had to be handled at Borehole Number 9 of the Nar'yan-Mar Oil Prospecting Expedition of the "Arkhangelskgeologiya" (Arkhangelsk Geological) Corporation. For seven years, millions of cubic meters of sulfur condensate has been thrown into Korovinskaya Bay, which is a kind of freshwater incubator for the Pechora.

The head of the expedition, before making a safe departure, left behind this explanation: "The cause of the accident was the technically inept work

of those directly engaged in packing the borehole, and the lack of proper supervision of this high-risk operation on the part both of the chief engineer, S. Perov, and myself." The only thing I have to add is that Perov is now head of the "Irkutskneftegazgeologiya" (Irkutsk Oil and Gas Geological) Corporation, and the author of the explanation, Konarev, heads an expedition in Siberia. And as for what they left behind, here is the analysis given by N. Kotlyar, USSR Minister of the Fishing Industry: "Ichthyological studies indicate that pollution of Korovinskaya Bay," he answered in response to letters of concern from social activist, "has not only led to a change in the condition of this body of water, but has also caused a decline in the biological condition of the fish ..."

One would not reproach the government of the republic and the Oblast Committee of the Communist Party for being inactive, but their concern for the Pechora is limited to well-wishing and filling out papers. The fact of the matter is that nobody has properly called to account any of those managers who worship the plan above all. What could reasonably explain the fact, for example, that over the past three five-year plans nearly 40 million roubles have been "economized" on nature conservation works in the Pechora Basin? There is no explanation except connivance and the absence of strict accountability. Some may say to me: "People who talk of the past ..." But no, this isn't the past. This year, with the knowledge and approval of the Oblast Committee and the Council of Ministers of the republic, construction workers are preparing to put into operation a brick-making plant in Ukhta. With a production capacity of 100 million bricks, the plant has no waste treatment facilities. At the present moment, in the Yaksha Lumbering Establishment,

located in the very heart of the Pechora-Ilych Nature Reserve, facilities designed to protect the river are not in operation.

Unprincipled conduct in the matter of nature protection is showing itself even at this very moment. Quite recently, at last, a new republican organization - the State Committee on Nature - was created. Its chairman is N. Balin, former director of the Syktyvkar LPK (Lumber Industry Complex). There can be little doubt that Nikolai Nikolaevich will be understanding in dealing with the "difficulties" of the Pechora's major polluters - oil and lumber industry workers and geologists. All the more so since the enterprise he headed until recently contributed in no small way to the deterioration of water reservoirs in the Vychegda Basin.

The time has come to build fish hatcheries on the Pechora. And to build them as rapidly as the oil fields and factories were built. The money for this should come from the ministries and other entities which have done the most to destroy the river. It is time that all the terms of the famous decree on protection of bodies of water in the basin of the Volga River be extended to the Pechora. Millions of tonnes of oil or cubic meters of timber or natural gas will not be enough to pay for the loss of such a unique resource. A good example is Norway, where, thanks to the creation of a network of fish breeding enterprises, the losos catch has already grown to 30,000 tonnes a year. Plans call for increasing this to 80,000 tonnes by 1990.

Are we not ashamed of ourselves? Before the Revolution our grandfathers were already conducting

successful artificial breeding of semga - and that even at a time when it was abundant.

Sotsialisticheskaya
Industriya

11 November 1988

Page 4 (Full text)

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Special Furnace for Drying

The USSR Exhibition of National Economic Achievements Gold Medal has been awarded for a new and highly effective method of electrode calcination. This technology reduces drying time by a factor of 5 to 8 and significantly lowers energy consumption.

During construction of the most recent blast furnace for the Cherepovets Metallurgical Combine, plans called for erecting over 130,000 tonnes of metal structures fabricated from alloyed steels which may react very 'capriciously' to welding. To ensure high-quality welded joints, the first thing needed was well-calcinated electrodes.

A number of different types of electrical furnaces have been developed for drying electrodes, but, in this case, none of the furnaces satisfied the welders as to the quality of the calcination.

Help finally arrived from specialists of the Combined Department of Welding of VNIPI Promstalkingonstruksiya (All-Union Scientific Research and Planning Institute for the Main Administration of Steel Structural Parts Manufacture) of Minmontazhspetsstroi SSSR (USSR Ministry of Installation and Special Construction). Two of these specialists, V. Gorbunov and A. Basukinskii, developed a fundamentally new technology, and then designed and built a special furnace that functions on the principle of aerodynamic heating and has automatic temperature control. This furnace made it possible to obtain the proper electrode condition in

only 15 minutes. Slightly larger than a household refrigerator, the furnace can easily be set up at any construction site.

"In this furnace," explained S. Zhiznyakov, head of the Welding Department, "electrodes are dried in a high-speed, extremely hot air current formed by the rotation of a specially-designed rotor. This type of furnace is especially useful in large-scale welding operations. It saves 470 kilowatt hours of electricity in the drying of a tonne of electrodes.

The authors of the invention are continuously expanding the range of application for this new and highly-effective technology. Cooperation with customers has already led to the manufacture of a number of furnaces for drying wood, marble, polymer-impregnated concrete, refractory compounds, and various loose materials.

Stroitel'naya Gazeta

21 November 1988

Page 3 (Full text)

New Device to Remove Welding Flux and Trap Aerosols

Specialists of the All-Union Scientific Research and Technological Design Institute of Steel Structures (VNIKTstal'konstruktsiya) of the USSR Ministry of Installation and Special Construction have developed a gas apparatus (Certificate of Invention No. 1323289) which sharply reduces concentrations of harmful substances in the air that welders breathe. Concentrations are 2 to 3 times below allowable limits.

"Our devices," explains Candidate of Technical Sciences N. Roshchupkin, head of the Welding Department of VNIKTISTal'konstruktsiya, "can find wide application in submerged arc welding of buildings and other metal structures when most of the work is to be carried out with the use of special welding tractors. No devices for removing welding flux and trapping aerosols are in series production for these tractors. And the usual plenum exhaust ventilation is not of much help in this situation ..."

These proposed "flux-gas" devices eliminate the need for the generally ineffective manual gathering of flux.

"Flux-gas" devices can be employed with any welding tractors for doing butt and fillet welds. The economic savings from implementation of a single unit amounts to 5000 roubles per year. At the present time, over 150 of these devices have been put into operation at various plants.

Stroitel'naya Gazeta

21 November 1988

Page 3 (Full text)

MINERAL RESOURCES/MINING

Status of Fifth Continuous Casting Machine at
Cherepovetz Metallurgical Complex Unclear

In a statement, S. Kolpakov, Minister for Ferrous Metallurgy, declared: "Construction of the fifth continuous casting machine at the Cherepovets Metallurgical Complex is taking place as a result of a special government decision, and the target date for its commissioning is 1988. The design specifications were completed on time in June, 1987. The orders were not unexpected for the machine-builders because this task was established in the production quotas for the Five-Year Plan. In addition, the dates of issue to the State Supplies Committee of orders for equipment to complete the unit and for automation devices are determined by the government in accordance with the readiness of the technical documentation.

The manufacture of equipment and automation devices is nearing completion and they are being delivered to the site in a timely fashion. By 28 October, 2,500 tonnes had been delivered. The assembly work, however, has been poorly organized: even though the site is ready, only 300 tonnes of equipment have been accepted for assembly, and the oil pan and lubricating systems already on hand have not yet been assembled.

In order to ensure successful completion of the work, a round-the-clock assembly schedule with flexible working hours must be established and the number of machine assembly workers must be increased.

"Work has been poorly organized on the third conveyor where the start-up schedule has been held up for more than two weeks despite the fact that all the equipment has already been delivered."

In response to the Minister's statement the Industrial Construction Division of Stroitel'naya Gazeta stated: "Judging by his statement in response to the question, the Minister believes that the Ministry for Ferrous Metallurgy has done everything necessary to ensure the commissioning of production capacities in Cherepovets and Volgograd. On-the-spot reports contradict this."

"While it is true that 2,500 tonnes of equipment for the continuous casting machine has been delivered to Cherepovets, no more or less than 6,500 tonnes are needed! Moreover, what is missing is the equipment needed to begin work in the established technological sequence. In particular, the assembly workers need equipment for the casting bed, the crystallizer, and the roller sections. This is the starting point for the sequence to follow. The USSR Ministry for Specialized Assembly and Construction claims there is enough qualified personnel at the site to perform work on a broad scale."

"Unfortunately, the other capacities due to be commissioned in the near future at the complex - the aluminizing unit and the "2800/1700" rolling mill, which is undergoing modernization and which Mr. Kolpakov neglects to mention - have not received all the necessary equipment."

Stroitel'naya Gazeta

4 November 1988

Page 1 (Full text)

Coal Production Over and Above Plan

The amount of coal hauled from Vorkuta over and above plan has passed the 5-million-tonne mark. Since the beginning of the current five-year Plan, a thousand trains, loaded with coal mined above quota, have been sent off to consumers. Miners of the Pechora Coal Basin celebrated the October Revolution holiday with all mines producing on schedule. One hundred forty-five workers' collectives are participating in the competition for improved labour productivity with the work rate for nearly a third of these up by one-and-a-half times.

Pravda

9 November 1988

Page 1 (Full text)

OIL & GAS

Tyumen Gas Workers get new Computer System

Computers -- the Tyumen' gas-workers' faithful, irreplaceable helpers -- are among the new inhabitants of Arctic Yamburg. Final adjustments to the computer system for a new enterprise at one of the country's largest natural gas fields have been completed. From the very first day, the electronic brain was plugged into the Torch system, making it possible to automatically control natural gas output and transportation in the region.

"We couldn't possibly get by without computers in our system," said M. Nikolayev, chief engineer at the computer data centre of the Glavtyumen'gazprom enterprise. "The over-all length of the gas pipelines in the oblast' is equal to half the length of the equator. The raw hydrocarbons are pumped by 180 compressor units. In the past, hundreds of people were occupied in collecting and processing information. Today, it only takes seconds to obtain the necessary data, along with recommendations for the best operating modes on the display screen.

Pravda

18 November 1988

Page 3 (Full text)

Automated Control Systems for Urengoi Gas Fields

The Krasnodar research and industrial association Promavtomatika has shipped equipment to

Urengoi which will make it possible to create an autonomous gas-field beyond the Arctic Circle.

A very small group of specialists will service this field. The automated control systems manufactured in Krasnodar are well known to gas-field workers in the Far North, Central Asia, and Kazakhstan. Promavtomatika recently filled an order for the State Agro-Industrial Committee, developing a system to automatically water tea plantations in Dagomys and rice paddies in the Kuban marshlands.

Izvestiya

5 November 1988

Page 1 (Full text)

Emission Control Technology for Nadym Gas Industry

Gas-field workers in Nadym are successfully developing resource-efficient technology for well completion and operation. Together with specialists from the scientific and industrial association, Tyumen'gaztekhnologiya, they have developed and introduced the Nadym unit which makes it possible to totally eliminate nitric acid and natural gas emissions into the atmosphere.

This innovation is without parallel in the Soviet Union and surpasses the best models made by Western companies. Although small in size, it is highly efficient. It is planned to equip all the wells in the Medvezh'ye gas-field with this unit by 1991. Its utilization will make it possible to solve

a number of important economic, social, and ecological problems in the region.

Sovetskaya Rossiya

11 November 1988

Page 1 (Full text)

Siberian Oil Flows to the Desert

Construction has been completed on the Tyumen - Neftezavodsk Oil Pipeline, which will carry oil from Siberia to the Chardzhou Oil Refinery.

Neither swamps nor quicksand could prevent the specialists of the 'Glavturkmenneftegazstroi' Corporation (Main Administration of Oil and Natural Gas Industry Construction, Turkmen Region) from completing this project on time. Neftezavodsk, which has grown up in the middle of the desert, is to become a major industrial centre of the Chardzhou Oblast, and it is here that the Eastern Turkmen Territorial Production Complex is taking shape. Among the industrial sectors planned for development here are natural gas, mining and chemicals, among others.

Stroitel'naya Gazeta

21 November 1988

Page 1 (Full text)

SOCIOLOGICAL ISSUES

Child-care System Extended in the North

Although they will soon be 1-1/2 years old, the children of 30 female employees at the Obelektromontazh firm are staying home with their mothers. The firm's employees' council unanimously resolved to extend monthly child-care payments until children are 3 years old. Following this example, employees' councils at 12 more enterprises in Nizhnevartovsk adopted similar decisions. Their initiative received a vote of confidence at a session of the City Council and strong support from the city Party committee.

"I've reflected at length on why perestroika is being held back, even though it is clear to everyone that there is no real alternative to it now", said V. Sidorchev, First Secretary of the city Party committee. "In the years preceding the April Plenary Session, we experienced many noisy campaigns which clearly did not correspond to real needs and only served to create distrust towards the slogans of the moment, regardless of how correct they may have been. Not having seen any decisive changes or practical results, many people today have adopted a wait-and-see attitude: is it just empty slogans again? True, we need the latest equipment in factories, we want to buy Soviet-made products that are as good as imported goods, we want to go into a shop and see an abundance of foodstuffs on sale. Unfortunately, however, there are a great many gaps which, we must honestly admit, cannot all be filled at once. We cannot make everything top priority. We say that human needs are paramount, yet we continue the old strategy of assigning insufficient funds -

whatever is left over - to the social sphere. The Nizhnevartovsk city Party committee decided to show people the real results of perestroika - not tomorrow, but today - to show them that only their active participation can change the existing situation.

"Someone may say," continued Victor Sidorchev, "that a few dozen mothers received a special favour. Well, so what? That's not at all the way things are. We regard the electrical workers' initiative as a serious first step towards a long-term program. We would like to eliminate nursery groups altogether, to create elementary classes from grades 0-3 in child day-care centres in their place, and to establish shorter workdays for working mothers at the start of the next Five-Year Plan."

I did not ask Victor Sidorchev why the Party committee and the deputies decided to deal with this problem. I believe it is clear. The "equality" enjoyed by Soviet women has been a standing joke for a long time.

"I would go further", added Sidorchev. "This innovative policy is not another burden for enterprises to bear, but is aimed at providing for the younger generation. If a child remains at home at first, then is placed in a familiar environment until the age of 9 or 10, he will be physically strong and emotionally stable, and capable of adapting easily at school. We also plan to change the current system with regard to schools. We want to do away with obligatory enrollment at a school in the district where one resides, since each school will now have its own vocational orientation. Children will have the right to attend the school which will prepare them for their future profession."

"We should also mention an interesting decision made by the employees at Nizhnevartovsk enterprises - to make a one-time payment when a person receives his/her pension (between 5,000-10,000 roubles or more). The question arises: where can we get the money to take care of both women and pensioners? Are Siberians taking on more than they can handle? No, they have justified everything in economic terms. A positive factor is that Nizhnevartovsk will be the first town in Western Siberia to change over to a full cost-recovery system as of January 1, 1989."

"We began preparations to switch over to a regional cost-recovery system by consolidating the position of the local councils," continued Sidorchev. "The City Council must be sole 'master' of Nizhnevartovsk. We must do away with 'departmental' child day-care centres and take responsibility for all the day-care centres, schools, and health-care establishments. We are now calculating the necessary norms and quotas and the required payments to be made by each enterprise for social projects. Enough of the notorious system of departmental 'patronage' with the local executive committees being forced to beg for funds. We support putting an end to social privilege: in the past, everything belonging to government departments was of superior quality, while whatever belonged to the local councils was inferior. There should be one 'master' with the power and authority to bring everything up to one level."

"Don't think, though, that the renewal process is proceeding smoothly and all problems have been resolved. Most innovations, unfortunately, are, strictly speaking, unauthorized. The decisions reached have no legal basis. There is no law

guaranteeing social security. If we take those young mothers I mentioned before, their enterprises have to resort to all types of legal trickery to ensure their uninterrupted work record. We are trying to take the interests of all social groups into consideration. The allowance for single mothers is 50 roubles higher than the average. Several nursery groups in child day-care centres will be reserved for their children and for children from large families. On the whole, our new policies have met with full support."

Sidorchev's strength as a Party leader lies in the fact that he is surrounded by people who share his ideas. He is well-known in Nizhnevartovsk. Only 10 years ago he began working here as a machine-fitter, then he held a number of managerial positions, and is now an experienced oil industry worker. He knows first-hand the needs of those living in the North. People in Nizhnevartovsk recall his decision not to consider unsigned complaints made even before appropriate instructions were issued on this matter. It was at his initiative that the first neighbourhood cultural and sports centre was opened, where a man could spend his day off with his family. I saw Victor Sidorchev alone in his office, at meetings, and in a gym he visits in the evenings to relax on the volleyball court after a long day. He will often begin a lively discussion of his latest idea before he has even caught his breath after a game.

"There is no need for perestroika as far as Siberians' eagerness to work is concerned," Sidorchev says, smiling. "Their energy just needs to be channeled in the right direction. We can't sit back and relax today - we are living at an exciting time."

Sovetskaya Rossiya
11 November 1988
Page 6 (Full text)

TRANSPORT AIR

New Air Route to Northern Oil Cities

The residents of Raduzhnyi, a young oil city, have given up a long bumpy drive in buses and 'vakhtovki'* in exchange for comfortable air travel. A new airport has opened here and regular flights of AN-24 and YAK-40 airplanes have begun. Even larger aircraft will eventually be authorized. On the heels of this opening in Raduzhnyi, other airports are preparing to start operations in Nagan, Kogalyma and Yamburg.

* Although no standard English equivalent is available for the Russian noun vakhtovka, past experience with a similar noun, vakhta (meaning "a remote-shift field camp"), suggests a land vehicle used in transporting workers to and from such camps.

Stroitel'naya Gazeta

20 November 1988

Page 1 (Full text)

The streets still have no names in the settlement near Oymya station, known to the railway construction workers only by name. One street may be named after the "patrons" - the workers of the specialized mobile mechanized construction unit, Moldavtrestroi. V. Gorbunov, head of the Baikal-Amur

TRANSPORT LAND

Logging on Ice Roads

Loggers of Karelia are happily welcoming the arrival of winter: it is only at this time of year that they are able to transport the timber felled in the summer, moving it over the swamps on temporary ice roads.

These northern residents have used over a hundred heavy tractors to clear future logging routes. Karelian woodsmen stockpiled approximately a million cubic meters of timber for winter transport. The laying-in of wood in remote locations will continue at an accelerated pace even during winter months. In all, these northern workers have the task of moving nearly five million cubic meters of wood to dressing sites before the onset of bad road conditions in the spring.

Pravda

17 November 1988

Page 1 (Full text)

Sovetskaya Rossiya

11 November 1988

Page 6 (Full text)

TRANSPORT RAIL

Fevral'sk-Tungala Section of the BAM Railway Opened for Regular Use

If you look at the map, you can see how difficult it was for the construction crews to lay railway lines to Tungala. The railroad crosses swamplands and cuts across many streams. Skalistaya Mountain, beside which a siding of the same name is already in operation, also rises on its path. The section has two large stations - Dugda and Fevral'sk. A third station - Tungala - is slated to be opened next year.

L. Alekseev, chief engineer for rail traffic services, has stated that when this section is transferred to the Ministry of Railroads it will reduce freight costs, and consequently will also reduce the State subsidy to the Baikal-Amur Railway. The section was opened on schedule and both its sidings and stations will be operational this winter; the railway personnel have received housing, electricity, and heat - everything required for normal living conditions and the operation of the railroad. A suburban passenger train is already travelling between Fevral'sk-Tungala. A new passenger route - Tynda-Fevral'sk - will soon appear on the schedule, enabling passengers to travel on the Baikal-Amur Railway as far as Komsomol'sk-na-Amure.

The streets still have no names in the settlement near Dugda station, known to the railway construction workers only by name. One street may be named after the "patrons" - the workers of the specialized mobile mechanized construction unit, Moldavbamstroï. V. Gorbunov, head of the Baikal-Amur

Railway and chairman of the State Acceptance Commission, expressed his gratitude to this organization for the outstanding quality of construction of all the buildings at Dugda - housing units, a child day-care centre, a school, a water treatment plant, vegetable storage facilities, and a railway station with interesting architectural features.

If we place two calls to Dugda, the telephone is answered by Marina Bochenkova, a telephone operator, and Tatyana Linnik, the on-duty station operator. Both have only just arrived at the new taiga settlement. One is from Gerbi Station in the Khabarovsk Krai and the other is from Novosibirsk Oblast'. They say they like everything in the new settlement.

The first batch of bread was baked in Fevral'sk's new bread-baking plant, an important event for the railway workers because bread deliveries to Fevral'sk have been very irregular. E. Venze, director of the bread-baking plant, told us that three types of bread and seven types of rolls would be baked here. She thanked the "patron" construction workers from Penze who had built such a high-quality plant.

Unfortunately, there was no praise for the Krasnoyarsk construction workers and the Urgalbamtransstroi firm. Most of the facilities built by them in Fevral'sk were poorly finished. A great deal of criticism was levelled at the quality of the housing units, the fire station, and other buildings which were their handiwork.

On the other hand, the joint work performed by the construction workers and operating staff who set up, started, and carried out final adjustments to

the signalization, centralization, and block system, and to the central electrical control and communications units must be singled out for praise. The central electrical controls for the switches and signals system is functioning well at all 8 block posts, telephone and radio links are working, and the automatic block system is operating on the track sections.

It is a familiar picture: one sees signal lights go on at the stations and commands being given at the traffic control panels. The Fevral'sk-Tungala section of the railway has come to life with passenger and freight traffic streaming along its tracks.

Gudok

1 November 1988

Page 1 (Full text)

Sort of Anadyr still has not implemented Economic Reform

The "Utesiki", a river ice-ship sailing from Leningrad to Anadyr along the Northern Sea Route, did not arrive on schedule at its destination, nor did it reach Chersky by the final arrival time, allowing for delays due to the worst weather and the thick Arctic ice.

Fortunately, no other tragic had happened. The reason was very simple, although unusual: at the outset of its journey the ice-ship was sold to the Northern Marine Steadship Agency. Some three years ago, this decision would have seemed at least strange, but now, with the new management policy requiring the fleet to meet its expenses from its own

TRANSPORT WATER

Nuclear-Powered Icebreaker Passes Test

Dockside trials for the Soviet Union's first nuclear lighter tug, the "Sevmorput", have been concluded in Kerch at the "Zaliv imeni Butoma" plant.

The main part of these trials is a comprehensive test of the nuclear power installation, which has been designed to meet standards set by international agreements.

Pravda

7 January 1989

Page 2 (Full text)

Mini-Trawler Joins Archangelsk Fishing Fleet

The first small-tonnage fishing ship, the "Zharovikha", has joined the sea-going fishing fleet. This mini-trawler will enable fishermen to catch fish in coastal waters. Although small in size -- only 27 meters long -- the ship is furnished with all the necessary equipment for autonomous navigation at distances up to 100 nautical miles from shore. Its refrigerated hold has a capacity for 35 tonnes of fish.

Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta
November 1988, No. 98
Page 6 (Full text)

Port of Anadyr still has not Implemented Economic Reform

The "Utesiki", a river motor-ship sailing from Leningrad to Anadyr along the Northern Sea Route, did not arrive on schedule at its destination, nor did it reach Chukotka by the final arrival time, allowing for delays due to inclement weather and the thick Arctic ice.

Fortunately, nothing tragic had happened. The reason was very simple, although unusual: at the outset of its journey the motorship was sold to the Northern Marine Steamship Agency. Some three years ago, this decision would have seemed at least strange, but now, with the new management policy requiring the fleet to meet its expenses from its own

revenue, it was a logical decision to make. The fact is that the finances of the port of Anadyr were in such desparate shape that it could not afford to keep one more ship. Here, as perhaps nowhere else, the administrative system has enormously affected the economy. When there was a much-publicized drive to open up the North as quickly as possible, regardless of cost, large stocks of realizable assets were accumulated in the Chukotka area, often with disregard for real needs. For example, fixed assets in the amount of 39.7 million roubles have until now accumulated in the port of Anadyr alone. That this is a great deal has only been felt now, for the short time the port has been operating under the conversion to full cost recovery and self-financing. Although the Far Eastern Marine Steamship Agency has taken the lion's share of the expenses on itself, setting the port's budgetary contributions for its capital assets at 2%, this percentage, nonetheless, represents about 800,000 roubles.

This is essentially a hidden subsidy. Imagine if the port of Anadyr were to lose the Steamship Agency's support and if it were obliged to contribute 12% of its profits, as the Pevek port does. What would happen then? All the port's profits would not be enough to cover the budgetary contributions for its capital assets.

Last year the freight flow fell by almost 25%. The pit on Nerpichaya Spit, where freighters from the port's fleet (mainly river motor-ships) loaded a mixture of sand and gravel for the town's construction projects, was closed for environmental reasons. The freight flow declined sharply, and it was decided to put two motor-ships into storage. They might have suffered the same fate as the Utesiki, but there were no buyers. Yet the port

still has to pay, as a budgetary contribution and for depreciation, about 36,000 roubles. This may not seem much, but if you add it to the 400,000 roubles in lost revenue for sand and gravel transportation, it becomes significant.

This is a very perceptible loss for the port, especially if one takes into account that vessels can only navigate in this region for 4-1/2 months out of the year and freight deliveries to the port are firmly established according to orders placed by local enterprises and organizations, remaining basically unchanged from year to year.

In short, the task is to unload the freight delivered on vessels belonging to the Far Eastern Marine Steamship Agency and send almost half this freight on by river motor-ships to settlements on the upper reaches of the Anadyr River. Then a break between two navigation seasons lasting more than 7 months begins. Seasonal workers, of whom there are more than 200, leave to go home. Full-time workers take holidays and leaves of absence. When they return, they are engaged for the most part in preparing the vessels and port equipment for the coming navigation period. The volume of this work is not very large, however, and some dock-workers are obliged to seek work for themselves, or simpler yet, to pretend they are working.

It is not hard to imagine how costly maintaining this work force is to the port. After eliminating 151 jobs, 586 workers still remained on the permanent salary register. With the northern differential, salaries for each employee are almost 3 times higher than in the rest of the country.

It would be logical to undertake some auxiliary type of activity using port facilities during the non-navigational season. It is not so easy, though. Last year there was a plan to make metal garages for the local population. This effort was defeated at the outset by a shortage of metal which can only be brought here from the central areas of the country.

Well, so what if it didn't work out? The traditional solution would have been to send dock-workers to work at other enterprises in the town. According to the existing regulations, however, they could not work there for more than a month. Unfortunately, there have been frequent problems in this area, too. Now that the labour force is being reduced everywhere, the need for additional workers is steadily declining. Judging by everything, the problem of finding work for dockers in the non-navigational season will become more acute in time. What is the solution? To reduce the permanent work force even further?

"But then, who will work on the docks during the shipping season?" objected V. Matveyev, chief manager of the port at the time. "Today, we have only just enough workers to unload freight from incoming ships. You see, everything - foodstuffs, manufactured goods, and equipment for enterprises, from nuts and bolts to machine tools - is brought here by water."

This is understandable, but how can we explain the fact that, despite the surplus of fixed production assets, there is a great deal of manual work to be performed here - roughly 60% of the total? You don't have to be an economist to understand that the lower the level of mechanization, the more manpower is required.

In Chukotka, the consequences of poor management are especially visible. The irregular arrival of ships for freight-handling has become so commonplace, it is hardly perceived as a problem anymore. The Far Eastern Marine Steamship Agency dispatches ships to Anadyr in bunches: either a whole group arrives or none at all. In this instance, however, the Steamship Agency managers' inflexibility has turned into heavy outlay.

Let us cite one example: when freight shipping to Anadyr is changed over to a system of delivery by lighter carriers in the future, presupposing regular handling on the docks, the number of dockers can be cut by half, yet it turns out that, at present, the port has to retain double the number of workers it needs to compensate for poor management. Is the price too high?

Discussions about the problem with a number of people have pointed to a surplus of managers, as well as a dock-workers, yet no one advocates cutting the workforce. Moreover, some are convinced that maintaining current numbers is in the State's interest.

"Can you imagine what would happen in the winter," I was asked, "if food were not delivered to Anadyr on time?" Naturally, this would be unacceptable, but it is also unacceptable to conceal managerial inefficiency by 'concern' about the State's interest.

"We shouldn't be regarded as a revenue-losing enterprise", objected V. Matveyev. "It's true, though, that our revenue only just covers our expenses. We cannot develop without the help of the Steamship Agency."

Verbally, everyone is in favour in perestroika, but in fact nobody wants to be economically independent. For the time being, we must admit that the old system continues to function because full cost recovery and self-financing are only now beginning in industry. Administrative, rather than economic, methods of management are still in force. In the port of Anadyr, preference is still given to carrying out orders from above, as in the past.

Vodnyi Transport
12 November 1988
Page 2 (Full text)

Salary Scales Not Streamlined in Shipping Industry

Vessels which sail both on the sea and on rivers have existed for more than two decades, yet a single salary scale has still not been established for their personnel, and this has hindered the growth and retention of personnel on vessels of this class. Whereas crews on ships which sail to foreign seas are compensated for the lack of a clear-cut salary scale by foreign currency payments, salary policy on boats sailing in the Siberian river basins is such that one salary scale is applied when a boat is on a river, and another salary scale is in force when it sails out to sea. It is not difficult to imagine what confusion this causes in accounting offices when salaries are being calculated.

Why should marine personnel qualified to sail at sea want to serve on a river vessel where the salary will be lower? Why should a river crewman study and qualify all over again to serve on an

ocean-going boat, and get his working certificate, only to receive a lower salary again? Nor does the position of the USSR Ministry of the Maritime Fleet facilitate the growth and retention of personnel on mixed-category vessels.

In accordance with the Ministry's instructions, when processing documents for ships preparing to sail, port captains do not accept certificates issued by the Ministry of the River Fleet to mechanics, radio-operators, and electricians. This policy is referred to in the fleet as "the war between uniforms". Vessels from the Siberian basins do not go beyond Soviet domestic waters, their engines do not switch into reverse when they go out into the sea or back to the rivers, alternating current does not become direct current, and the operating frequencies on transmitters do not change. Crews service the ships regardless of where they may be. Everyone involved in the operation of vessels in mixed zones understands that, yet they continue to follow the old instructions. What can you do? There is simply no fixed salary scale for mixed-category vessels sailing on both rivers and the sea.

I would be interested to learn the opinions of other involved in the operation of such mixed-category vessels in the fleet concerning the above questions, as well as of those in high positions with the authority to resolve them.

Vodnyi Transport
17 November 1988
Page 1 (Full text)

Northern Navigation Season Ends

The last cargo ship for this year has passed through the White/Baltic Sea Canal, the principal water route of the North. Navigation has ended.

For the first time in the history of the canal, a powerful icebreaker and two ocean-going tugs were dispatched here to provide sure escort for the fleet. This assistance made it possible to over fulfill the navigation plan by allowing several hundred more ships to pass through.

Pravda

24 November 1988

Page 2 (Full text)

Wasteful Use of Containers

The Academician Fedorov Polar Hydrometeorological Observatory is situated on the northernmost point of our country, Cape Chelyuskin. Approximately 150 persons live and work here with their families. For many, Cape Chelyuskin is becoming their usual home since the majority of these polar residents spend ten winters or more here. But the time has now come to return to the "mainland", and problems arise with the shipping of personal belongings, household appliances, books, etc. Sending them as parcels is costly and inconvenient, and taking them along is simply impossible since the only form of transport we have is helicopters and airplanes.

In August-September of each year, a supply ship from Arkhangelsk brings us equipment and provisions for the observatory's normal operations.

Most of the freight arrives in containers which are then reloaded onto the ship and sent back empty. Many of us would like to send our belongings to Arkhangelsk in these containers, but we, unlike residents of the town of Dikson, are unable to do so.

We request assistance in resolving this problem so that we, too, can send our belongings in containers on ships. We feel that a positive response should be advantageous to the Ministry of the Merchant Fleet as well, since containers often return to Arkhangelsk empty.

Vodnyi Transport

30 November 1988

Page 5 (Full text)

1988 Shipping Season Closes

Having sent the last "river-sea" ship southward, dock workers of Kandalaksha have closed the 1988 shipping season.

The season brought the workers a lot of headaches but also some satisfaction: the dockers surpassed their profitability objective by a factor of one-and-a-half. And under the new economic management conditions, this is particularly important: the Material Incentive and Social Development Funds for the collective will grow significantly.

Over the short polar winter, the dock workers of Kandalaksha sent off over 1.2 million tonnes of iron ore concentrate to the blast furnaces of the Cherepovets Metallurgical Combine; hundreds of

MISCELLANEOUS

FILMING IN THE ARCTIC

At the initiative of NHK, the largest Japanese television company, filming of a documentary series entitled "The Arctic" is taking place on Soviet territory.

B. Semyonov, deputy head of the Main Foreign Relations Administration, explains: "This film is about the rigorous climate in the Arctic. The Japanese film-makers have set themselves the task of studying how men can live a normal life and work beyond the Arctic Circle.

The film crew is now completing filming in two locations in our country - in Krasnoyarsk Krai and in the Arkhangelsk area. Footage about Chukotka and the Kolyma Highway is now ready. Permission to film in the Soviet North, an area previously inaccessible to foreign television and feature film crews, was a big help to the Japanese. Work on this film is being carried out simultaneously in Alaska, Norway, Greenland, and Canada.

Izvestiya
19 November 1988
Page 9 (Full text)

OPERATION 'BREAK-THROUGH' -- SAVE THE GREY WHALES

Probably the two most popular California grey whales today among the 20,000 such whales in existence (this is the world's total grey whale population recorded in the international Red Book) are Crossbeak and Bonnet, saved by the Soviet icebreakers, "Admiral Makarov" and "Vladimir Arsenev". It is more than a matter of the two million dollars the operation is estimated to have cost.

Unfortunately, experts in both the United States and the Soviet Union have objected to what they regard as money wasted on rescuing the whales. One day of work in the ice by the two Soviet icebreakers costs 30,000 roubles. The Institute of the Arctic and Antarctic, which leases these two icebreakers, hastened to inform the steamship agency before the operation began that it would not foot the bill. Consequently, the Institute did not pay and the steamship agency had to absorb the cost, but the moral significance of the operation followed by hundreds of millions of people around the world is much more important than the cost in cold cash. That is why the Soviet icebreaker fleet has now been termed "the most humane fleet in the world" by Western reporters. Ships encountered in the open sea on the return voyage by the "Admiral Makarov" and "Vladimir Arsenev" hoisted their flags to them in greeting.

The U.S. News and World Report termed the joint whale rescue operation "heroic". The magazine also reported that this was not the first such expedition to rescue marine mammals.

The "Admiral Makarov" is currently sailing back to Vladivostok from Cape Barrow, while the "Vladimir Arsenev" is bound for a port in Canada. A group of pilots led by A. Shkirya, commander of an aviation sub-division from Chaun, has also recently returned to Pevek from the shores of Alaska where they had taken an active part in Operation 'Break-Through'.

Vozdushnyi Transport
12 November 1988
Pages 4-5 (Full text)

The "Vladimir Arsenyev" is bound for a port in Canada. A group of pilots led by A. Zhukov, commander of an aviation division from Cherdyn, has also recently returned to have the shores of Alaska where they had taken an active part in Operation "Breakthrough". The icebreakers "Vladimir Arsenyev" and "Vostok" are Crossak and Donet, saved by the Soviet icebreakers "Admiral Makarov" and "Vladimir Arsenyev".

15 November 1988
 Pages 4-5 (Full text)

Unfortunately, experts in both the United States and the Soviet Union have objected to what they regard as money wasted on rescuing the whales. One day of work in the ice by the two Soviet icebreakers costs 30,000 roubles. The Institute of the Arctic and Antarctic, which leases these two icebreakers, hastened to inform the steamship agency before the operation began that it would not foot the bill. Consequently, the Institute did not pay and the steamship agency had to absorb the cost, but the moral significance of the operation followed by hundreds of millions of people around the world is much more important than the cost in cold cash. That is why the Soviet icebreaker fleet has now been termed "the most powerful fleet in the world" by Western reporters. The "Vladimir Arsenyev" and "Vostok" returned to the open sea on the return voyage of the "Admiral Makarov" and "Vladimir Arsenyev" and their flags to them in greeting.

The U.S. News and World Report termed the joint whale rescue operation "barbaric". The magazine also reported that this was not the first such expedition to rescue marine mammals.



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