The role of the government in the organization of water transport routes (ID 166)

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The development of the vast northern part of Russia was done through waterways, which were already laid in ancient times: portage ways were laid between river upstreams, base points were created, many of which later became towns. These transport ways had transit functions (the basis of international trade between the southern Nordic) as well as served as a basis for the formation of the ancient Russian state.

A new stage in the development of waterways is associated with the transfer of the capital to St. Petersburg by Peter I. There was a great need for different building materials, products, etc. Peter I, who understood the importance of these waterways for the economic development of the northern regions and the construction of new and development of old cities, decided that it is necessary to create on their basis new developed transport ways. A few waterways were created: Northern Dvinsky, Mariinsky, Tikhvinsky and Vyshnevolotsky waterways – lake-river systems connected by man-made channels, with in-built wharves and gateways, with purified fairways of the rivers [2, 3, 4].

The first waterway developed under Peter I was Vyshnevolotsky waterway that connected the Volga river with the Baltic Sea – it has 6 small wharves and 8 water reservoirs. The North Dvina water system connects the basins of the Volga river and the Northern Dvina river and consists of seven lakes, four rivers and five channels. In the ancient period there were a number of portages in this area – these were the most important elements of communication in that period that determined the direction of settlement and development of this region.

During the 11 years of the reign of Paul I and his son, Alexander I, Mariinsk water system was developed that connected the Volga basin with the Baltic Sea and intended for supply of St. Petersburg with bread, forest and industrial goods. Through the Mariinsk water system wheat was delivered to Europe [5].

Peter I visited several times the construction of the Tikhvin water system that connected through the channel the mouth of the Volkhov river and the Syas river under the project approved by Paul I in 1811.

Now these historic waterways with preserved monuments of hydraulic engineering function in part, and are in part exhibits, sometimes half-ruined, are unique monuments of cultural-historical and natural heritage not only for the Russian North, but the whole Russia [1].

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Keywords: Ancient Russian state, Peter I, St. Petersburg, Northern Dvinsky, Mariinsky, Tikhvinsky, Vyshnevolotsky, Waterways, Paul I, Alexander I

References:
The role of the government in the organization of scientific research on natural resources in the XVIII – early XX centuries (using the example of the Smolensk province) (ID 167)

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Both in the tsarist and in modern Russia with well-constructed vertical of power, all the undertakings as a rule come from the "top". A striking example of this is scientific activity in the geographical area. For example, starting from the election of the Defense Minister S.K. Shoigu as the president of the Russian Geographical Society (RGS) and the President of Russia V.V. Putin as the chairman of its board of trustees various activities of RGS have increased significantly.

Large-scale studies of nature, natural resources, population and economy of Russia were undertaken in the XVIII century. Their initiators were the first persons of the state. Peter I by his order established the Department of Geography and the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences. Later, Emperor Nicholay I ordered to establish RGS in 1845. Geographical studies were deployed both throughout the country and in its separate regions.

Particular attention of the authorities to the Smolensk province was due to its special geographical location: on the one hand it is close to the border, and on the other hand, due to its position at the crossroads of trade routes connecting different states and regions of the Russian Empire.

Starting from the XVIII century natural scientific and economic studies were deployed in the Smolensk province that may be divided into three periods [1].

During the first stage of the first period (XVIII cent. to 1745) under the influence of the reforms of Peter I researches were conducted in the military-administrative and trade areas. Descriptions of the territory and maps were made: military, hydrographic to improve navigation between the northern capital and southern provinces. During the second stage (1745–1765) the Department of Geography, headed by M.V. Lomonosov organized academic expeditions. During the third stage general surveying was conducted at the command of the Empress Ekaterina II, which was accompanied by mapping of the territory and the creation of unique maps.

During the second period (beginning of the XIX century – beginning of the XX century) large-scale field studies were carried out by V.V. Dokuchaev, A.A. Tillo, D.N. Anuchin, performing the state tasks of studying natural resources. Under the project approved by Emperor Nicholay II in 1897 the first population census of the Russian Empire was conducted.

The third period (beginning of XX century) was a period of complex geographical studies of all components of the nature of the Smolensk province, carried out by local naturalists A.N. Engelgardt, K.D. Glinka, A.V. Kostyukevich, Y.Y. Alekseev.