

The estimated cost of exploiting the gas and oil reserves of the Yamal Peninsula is 40 billion roubles. It is felt that circumstances will reduce this amount to 30 billion. Actual expenditures, however, according to our calculations, will be 3 to 4 times greater - somewhere around 120 billion roubles. This is because the unique physicogeographical and geological engineering peculiarities of the Yamal Peninsula require new and unique technological solutions which have never before been attempted. All engineering installations and structures will be erected here by the new methods.

Many of the proposals are brilliant, yet not one of them has been approved for large installations over an extended period. The BAM (Baykal-Amur Trunk Line) comes to mind. There, too, were new solutions admired by all. However, poor planning and construction resulted in the doubling and tripling of the initial "standard" cost. The risk is much greater in the Yamal. For this reason, a non labour-intensive operation will result in much more costly decisions, repairs and consequences of accidents. A very small portion of the salaries is built into the operating costs. Also needed is a manifold increase in the reliability of these non labour-intensive systems, at a time when the technology is not yet equal to the task.

Other reasons for anxiety are the predictable and non-predictable natural processes which have an adverse effect on the development and utilization of tundra regions.

For example, there are the complete thinning of the soil over vast territories, landslides involving large tracts of land, and the stripping of