

"And what people! They are now working on their new farms, sitting in assemblies and on presidiums, as a silent reproach to us. The ploughmen and milkmaids we did not manage to keep!" - laments the first secretary. "On one such farm, a whole street is named after Sladkovsk, because it is populated with emigrants from these parts."

Difficult to believe and yet it is a fact: booming regional development, unprecedented in scale, about which we have been writing for so many years now, a southern zone, a bread-basket, and not far from the region's centre at that.

And yet attempts are being made to build here. The Nikul'skii sovkhos has put up a new granary, farm-houses are being patched up, a few new cow-sheds are being built, and mechanization facilities are on their way.

Listening to the district's woes, we kept thinking: "And suppose the villages were given both labour and materials. Would the district leaders not just use them first for production, like now, and only whatever is left over for meeting people's needs?"

4. Growing roots in Siberian soil

"So who does most of the work? Travelling brigades, which used to be called "sabbathers", - said A. Fomin, Chairman of the Sladkovsk District Executive Committee. - "And they are prepared to build production facilities only. We have no say in the matter. If the ministries and departments were to help in earnest, things would be different."