

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