

The laboratory became interested in this problem and took it on primarily because the pumping station had been erected on a loose slope, on weak clayey soil which over time had undergone deformation. "In short, we decided to help out the city and not pass up the chance to prove ourselves." And so the studies began. Despite winter, snow, cold weather, darkness, and virtually unpopulated tundra, Budin "and associates" started taking samples with the fervour of people panning for gold. The staff for the laboratory had not yet been confirmed, and so they worked on pure enthusiasm, conducting dozens of experiments and tests and making predictions.

And the results were rather interesting. They indicated that the station could be expected to collapse as early as 1987 since its stability margin had been virtually exhausted. The researchers were thanked for their work, but no one put much credence in their prediction. Then, they decided to send the calculations to the Leningrad branch of the State Planning, Design and Research Institute of Maritime Transport "Lenmorniiproekt" for verification.

Just imagine the researchers' joy when they received word that their prediction was one hundred percent reliable. At the same time it became clear that carrying out the plan which the "official" designers from Norilsk had drawn up could lead to the station collapsing immediately following completion of restoration work! At this point, all of the laboratory's recommendations were carried out and up to now there's been no further problem. Geodetic surveys show that the structure is standing firm. When the economists computed the annual savings, they gasped: as much as a million rubles! With this good beginning they set about studying the port's docks.

But there is a reason for the saying: "Evil tongues are worse than a gun." For a long time one could hear it said at the port: "So just what does Kizim need this laboratory for?" Let's try to answer that.