

One might accuse our own railway bureaucracy of a lack of clout, a lack of skill or will to "arrange" this type of governmental document. And this reproach would be well-founded. After all, this isn't just a matter of Vorkuta or even of the Northern Railroad alone. The problem of housing construction for veteran workers is also urgent for the October Line as well as for the even more northerly Sverdlovsk Line. Nor would it be an exaggeration to mention the Baikal-Amur Line either... But first, let's take stock of where we are now.

One has to admit that during these past years the problem has become more acute. Secondly, let's consider whether we can solve it without going "to the top" - solve it with our own so-called "local" resources.

The Northern Line, after all, does not lie entirely beyond the Arctic Circle. The Ivanovo, Kostroma, Yaroslavl and Vologda oblasts are also part of the Northern. The "southern" sectors of the rail line have their own construction branches, micro-regions and towns with service lines. Wouldn't "tagging on" housing here for northerners and putting up even one house every three years substantially ease the present situation?

"This is a sensitive issue," replies V. Yakimenko, "but our southern neighbors have never been eager to let us onto their building sites. And one can understand them. They need their heat and water reserves themselves - plans have been developed for the long term. They begrudge the money and effort invested in construction of service lines. What's more, we mustn't forget that construction capacity is in short supply everywhere. Every building project, even if it is built with State capital, is in fact a form of pay-your-own-way: you have to provide the workers, you have to provide the building materials... Under these circumstances, who wants to build for anyone other than his own?"