

bureaucratic procedures have been observed can the reserves be officially assigned to the Ministry for the Oil and Gas Industry. In its turn, it will develop a project over several years, and then carry out the exploitation of this enormous field.

It is more profitable for the Ministries today to devote their attention to the less rich deposits in Western Siberia.

The system of indices makes things easy for the Ministries. One such index refers to the number of metres drilled. I remember how several years ago a crew led by F. Salmanov overfulfilled the plan for increasing reserves, but was several thousand metres short of their drilling plan. They only received their allotted bonuses with the help of the Party, yet no changes were made in the index system as a result.

Of course it is easier to drill in the upper soil strata of a field already under exploitation. The 'metre index' is a serious obstacle to the all-round exploitation of a given region. All regions with gas reserves have several 'levels'. Western Siberia, for instance, has four levels, but it is mainly the uppermost level which is being drilled. The attitude is 'As soon as we finish here, we'll just go on to the next one'. It would seem that there is a certain logic here, but it is only a formal logic without any scientific basis. Any large output always depends on the full exploitation of a given field. The large fields in Western Siberia are Samotlon, Fyodorvka, and Sovetskoe. These are the fields which significantly increased the over-all output, but these giants are now drying up. Now is the time to drill deeper into the lower 'levels', yet they have not yet been explored. This is a