

"And does anybody else have such information?"

"No. We are monopolists, who have the rarest specific statistical data about the activity of one or another unit of the drilling equipment and about the appearance of pre-breakdown situations. but nobody is interested in this, which is a pity..."

Nevertheless the fellow-countrymen exchanged Moscow news with the boss of the Kola ultra-deep drilling expedition, David Guberman. I pondered at length on where I had met him before, but apparently we had not met. However, on entering one of the rooms, I saw a familiar photograph dating from March of 1966. There on white, boundless tundra, near one of the pegs driven into the snow, stood a short, sturdily built man with a kind face. Guberman "and colleagues" were beginning this ultra-deep borehole in the harsh polar tundra.

"At first we drilled with a standard rig," said David Mironovich, "rated for up to five kilometers. We did seven. Then we exchanged it for a new, more sophisticated unit, but take note, this was also Soviet-made. It was not possible to work with steel tubes - one meter weighs 37 kilograms. Multiply this by 10 thousand plus fifty percent of the weight for resistance during lifting. Lightweight alloys were employed - 16 kilograms per meter. But the tubes could not be rotated, so a turbo-drill which turns from below was set in place. The USSR is the father of this method. After nine thousand sinkings the shaft deviated from the vertical by 25 degrees. Again we managed to outwit the Earth - we lowered the casing string to 8.770 meters, and then redrilled 3.5 thousand. Now we can go farther along a new vertical shaft.