

Even if we accept the Soviet economy as it is, not as we would like it to be, even if indeed we cannot live without producing one trillion cubic metres of gas in the near future, there are alternative ways to achieve this output. Scientists tasked by the USSR State Planning Committee with carrying out a study of the preparatory work needed to open up the Yamal Fields have advised not to hasten development of the peninsula, and have recommended that the targeted gas output be achieved by developing the adjacent fields around the developed Medvezh'ye, Urengoi, and Yamburg fields.

Unfortunately, the scientists' opinion did not prevail.

The major conclusions of the State Planning Committee experts did, however, have an impact. The feasibility studies submitted for the Yamal gas-fields were rejected, mainly due to the obvious oversights of the designers in the section on "Environmental Protection".

In some matters we have to behave like stubborn bureaucrats. If the feasibility studies were rejected, then it is pointless to conduct discussions as if they had been accepted. That is not just our point of view, but one expressed repeatedly by I. Mazur, Deputy Minister for Construction for the Oil and Gas Industry, at the Nadym conference. Isn't it paradoxical, though, that without any feasibility studies, that is, without looking before leaping, the Ministry has nonetheless sent several hundred of its construction workers to a number of sites on the Yamal Peninsula?

Not so many, you say? I. Shapovalov, Director of the Arktneftegazstroi Association, made the following observation on this point: "The first