

"All of this speechifying is only taking up time. What we should be doing is creating a working group which would quietly and in a businesslike manner draw up documents and get them ready. After that we should hold discussion in the regions and submit our ideas to the Soviet government", said Captain-Instructor S. Kudryashov, of the Korsakov Ocean Fishing Base. "If you think about how much money was spent in conducting this conference, how many people were forced to give up almost a week of work..."

Of course, action is needed. But we need other methods whereby the main thing is not the measure itself but its result. After all, there has been, in a formal sense, constant attention on the North on the part of party leaders and the government of the country. A curious document was prepared by the press service of the RSFSR Federation of Independent Trade Unions for the conference participants. We learned from it that in the period 1980-1990 alone there were 15 resolutions passed by the Central Committee of the CPSU, the USSR Council of Ministers and the RSFSR Council of Ministers regarding northern regions as well as 18 resolutions of the USSR Council of Ministers and three of the RSFSR Council of Ministers. All of them began with the words: "On measures for further comprehensive development...", "On urgent measures...", "On measures to provide..." and so forth. Trite, stale phrases which no one ever acted on or even thought about. And so it is appropriate to ask: Why has the recently created Federation of Independent Trade Unions gotten involved in problems which state organs are unable to resolve?

"By the end of last year," said V. Romanov, deputy chairman of FNPR, "the trade union councils of the twelve northern regions had come up with the idea to take on themselves the pressing social problems without waiting any longer for the government of the USSR. Numerous appeals to the government had received little attention. And when the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia was