hillocks, moss and sometimes marsh. The ground under the peat is interlarded with ice. The thicker the peat layer, lying in individual medallions in low-lying areas, the more clay the underlying soil contains, and the more pronounced the "stuffed" look that distinguishes it. Sometimes, pure ice extends for several meters into the ground. On a mar', each blade of grass stands guard, like a soldier, over the permafrost, shading it and, in the summer, evaporating water. The surface does not overheat.

And so they made an embankment for the railway. On the surface the heat exchange conditions were altered. More heat began to move down, and an area of thawed ground, which did not freeze in the winter, formed under the embankment. Practical experience has shown that a foundation will warm up regardless of how thick a layer of earth/gravel is poured on top. Nor does it matter whether engineers strew earth, or cut away the native peat, or leave it undisturbed, winter or summer.

Since the ice is distributed unevenly in the ground, the track will settle more in one place and less in another when the foundation thaws. The experience of the Izvestkovaya-Urgal Line, which in many places looks like a roller coaster, indicates that sagging continues for many long years even after the ice has thawed out. As investigators have established, this results from the extrusion of liquified thawed soil from under the embankment.

To build a road while taking measures to preserve the permafrost over its entire extent, would be uneconomical, and the existing standards contain no such requirement. For this reason, designers have specified that railroad tracks should be elevated on