

minority, suggestions are made regarding a congress of peoples of the North. According to preliminary data, the congress will take place next year. Within the framework of the congress the issue of the long-term economic and cultural development of these nations will be discussed. The issue of creating an association of national minorities of the North will be resolved as well.

The growing interest in problems pertaining to the socio-economic development of the North, Siberia and the Soviet Far East is understandable, for these regions comprise more than 60% of the territory of the RSFSR. These minority peoples are in fact living under exceptionally complex, difficult and at times extreme conditions. However, when, in addition to natural conditions there are difficulties stemming from industrial development, all this naturally gives to a number of major problems.

There is no doubt that during the years of Soviet rule, the 26 nationalities of the North, Siberia and the Soviet Far East developed at an unprecedented pace. Each of them experienced growth in its economic, social, cultural and occupational potential. Their demographic situation improved. According to the census of 1970-79, the indigenous peoples experienced an annual growth rate of approximately 3% whereas in recent years it has risen to 12.3%. Coincidentally, the number of individuals studying their native language has doubled, 96% of the indigenous population is able to watch television, major radio centers have been built and there has been an improvement in the provision of transportation.

In the last ten years alone capital investments in the regions where these nationalities live have totalled more than 70 billion roubles. Can