

"We can easily reduce the drilling footage in the region by 30%", agreed G. Gurevich, the head of a large seismic prospecting expedition.

It is not difficult to estimate the funds that could be freed if one considers that the industrial association "Arkhangel'skgeologiya" alone has been given funds in the area of more than a billion roubles for prospecting during the present Five-Year Plan. We must spare our geologists a wholesale evaluation of their work, while at the same time critically reexamining the practice of exploiting Arctic deposits on what is definitely a "broad front".

Incidentally, this problem is not new. Two years ago the USSR Council of Ministers commissioned the Ministry of Geology, together with the mining ministries, to develop a program for the integrated development of the raw material sources of the Nenetskii autonomous region, which would wisely combine their industrial activity with the traditional way of life of the indigenous population. Time goes by but there is still no program. Surely the ministries aren't doubting the economic benefits which they would derive from the program?

When six years ago the regional authorities prohibited all-terrain vehicles from going on the tundra during the summer, the hotheads predicted massive losses for geologists. The opposite proved to be the case. The tundra regenerated itself a little and at the same time the drillers profited.

Izvestiya

August 29, 1989

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