

hectare of tundra or forest tundra "costs" not more than 10-100 roubles. But what is to be found there? Snout beetle nests, reindeer pastures, puny little trees. Maybe some cranberries. There is no production to speak of. By comparison, a hectare of Kursk chernozem costs 15-20 thousand roubles. Hence, penalties for destroying the nature of the North are very small. This noticeably lowers development costs. However, no one considers the damage being done to the biogeochemical equilibrium. The North, together with the tropical forests, acts as a pair of lungs for this planet. I am convinced that the system for determining the value of high-latitude regions must undergo a radical change in order that the value of these regions correspond to their role in sustaining life on Earth.

V. Kotlyakov: In the non-Soviet North there are some clear-cut laws: during the summer, heavy all-terrain vehicles can only use certain, well-defined routes; during seasonal migrations of reindeer and nesting periods of birds, specific districts are completely closed to traffic including that of low-flying planes; when laying down pipelines, the harm done to the environment of the North is taken into account, and right of way is determined to be two times narrower than it would be in a temperate zone. In 1984, we also had quite a good order issued by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, dealing with intensifying nature conservation in the Far North. It unfortunately got lost in the bureaucratic maze.

I believe that what we need is a territorial, that is, geographical, basis for action, proceeding from a knowledge of the economics, people and nature of the North. For example, very large