

As for the Baikal-Amur Railway, we have to admit that, at the start of the work, nobody could tell exactly how much it would cost, when it could be put into operation, and what resources would have to be utilized. The designers sometimes set about their work without adequate preparation and often without sufficient information about the surrounding conditions. Decisions were often made on intuition; scientific recommendations always came late because of the rapid tempo of the designing and construction work. Naturally, this had its consequences. Take, for example, the Urgal station. It was designed by the "Kievgiprotrans" team. The designers showed little faith in the scientific recommendations that were submitted. The result? A large part of the station was sited on the spot of the former Urgal river bed, while the river itself was sidetracked. To accomplish this, the workers had to build a by-pass canal about seven kilometres in length, and destroy approximately 60 hectares of forest which could have been a natural park for the adjacent settlement. The amount of excavation and earth moving increased significantly. Since the station was moved away from the town, the length of the communication lines also increased. Naturally, this upped construction costs, and much more time was needed to complete the work.

Q: BAM is now in operation, but still there is no through train traffic. We know the reason for this. The key to the mainline, the Northern Muya tunnel, has not been built yet. The unresolved technical problems of its construction have been discussed many times, but are there any unsolved ecological problems here?

A: The more complex the project, the greater the destruction to nature, and the more extensive and profound the ecological problems caused