

"What's more, to make the picture still clearer, I'd like to cite some glaring figures. Nearly 130 billion in capital investment was spent to expand oil and gas production. And a little more than 10 billion roubles were directed at construction of housing and institutions, the so-called 'social and cultural amenities'. Notice the difference? From 1976 to 1989, there were 642 square metres of housing built per 100 capita increase in population on average in the republic, only 147 square metres were built in the northern part of the Western Siberia. Quite a difference!

"It's been estimated that one out of five residents of the Tyumen North lives in a dormitory, a hut or temporary housing. People ask what incentive can be offered to attract people to come live in the North? How do we keep them there? It's very simple: this has always been done by paying high salaries. But what's happening today? Of what use is high pay if there's nothing to buy with it? Only 34 kopeks of every rouble earned goes for goods and services in the North. This is why 80, and sometimes 90, out of every 100 people who move to the Tyumen region move out again. The region is a kind of gigantic turnstile. You can easily imagine what kind of results, what kind of consequences this sort of turnover represents."

"Is there a way out of this situation?"

"The way I look at it today, I think the biggest blows can be cushioned. And to do so, I feel it's absolutely essential that enterprises of the oil and gas industry not be excluded, but included in the market sphere. Fuel prices will go up, you say? But the government can regulate the prices by use of economic levers.

"Only in this way is it possible to introduce a competitive mechanism, which will also regulate the price of fuel and help keep price increases down. In this way the crisis could be overcome, and maybe the problem with aviation fuel could be solved as well. But this requires time, of course."

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SOCIOLOGICAL ISSUES

The Saami: Native Traditions Revived

"Saamio," a word that almost sings. The Saami, or as they used to be called, 'Lopari' or Lapps, have long inhabited the Kola Peninsula, northern Finland, Sweden and Norway. There was a time when they were