

The "Tropics" of the North

A conference of northern countries on coordinating scientific research in the Arctic was held in Leningrad.

Discussing the problems of opening up the North are the general secretary of the organizational committee of the conference, associate member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, V. Kotlyakov and an expert on problems of the non-Soviet North, vice-president of the Canada-USSR Association Society, doctor of geography, G. Agranat.

V. Kotlyakov: It seems to me that decades of a semi-official apathy have eroded our sense of geographic reality. We are indeed "living without feeling the country beneath our feet", without realizing how rich it is ... in cold. The North occupies half of the Soviet Union's territory - 11 million square kilometres, whereas the total area of the entire non-Soviet North, including Alaska, Iceland, Greenland, etc. amounts to only 9.5 million square kilometres. Two and a half million people live in the non-Soviet North while we have almost 11 million living in ours.

Where scientific knowledge is concerned, until recently we were acknowledged as being the leader in matters concerning the North. We had Canadians and Americans coming here to learn from us. But now they have taken the initiative in many areas and foreign interest in opening up the Northern expanses is growing rapidly.

G. Agranat: From an economic point of view the North presents two different faces. At first glance, it is very inexpensive. By universal national standards a