

### Bad Attitude Towards Permafrost

The long-existing strategy of man conquering nature has resulted in an extremely acute ecological situation in our country. It suffices to mention but a few places of unrelenting interference in nature such as the Aral Sea, Kara-Bogaz-Gol, the Volga, the Yenisei, Lake Baikal... The public is worried about the situation on the Baikal-Amur Mainline Railway, and about new projects like the Caucasian Railway Pass (Kavkazskaya pereval'naya zheleznaya doroga). Our correspondent, V. Zenkov, interviewed A. Tsernant, Assistant Scientific Director of the All-Union Scientific Research Institute of Transport Construction and Laureate of the State Prize, about the scientific principles of efficient environmental exploitation and adherence to these principles during the construction of transport mainlines.

Q: Alexander Alfredovich, you have spent two and a half decades doing research at the road and railway construction sites of Siberia. How do you assess the present ecological situation at the Siberian construction sites, including the Baikal-Amur Mainline Railway?

A: The ecological situation in the North is cause for concern. Each building site brings irreversible destruction of the soil and plant cover, contamination of the soil, noise, thermal and chemical contamination of the atmosphere and bodies of water, subterranean and surface waters. This so-called "anthropogenic" load on nature is caused, on the one hand, by the inadequacy of the machinery and technology used, and also by the low level of the ecological awareness and professional expertise of the people that come to work here.