

Let us settle this at the outset: constructing a hydro-electric power plant solves problems involving the flow regulation of rivers, frees people from constant floods, allows the development of irrigational agriculture and -- with the right approach -- of the fishing industry.

Entire regions are set in motion due to hydro-electric power plants. The power they produce is the cheapest. If they are compared with thermal power plants, the following picture emerges. Eleven times fewer people are required, there is no need to develop transportation and fuel resources or to pay for their exploitation. If we were to actualize the entire one hundred per cent of the country's hydro-energy potential, we would save annually 250-300 million tonnes of oil alone. The following fact also speaks for the profitability of hydro-electric power plants: while they produce a little over 14 per cent of all electric power, they bring in almost half of the profits for the Ministry of Power Engineering and Electrification of the USSR. Their profitability has long been recognized in developed capitalist countries. For example, Canada utilizes 40 per cent of its hydro-energy potential, the USA -- 45, Japan -- 60, France -- 90, and Switzerland -- even 99 percent. And what about us? Only one fifth.

It also cannot be ignored that water hydro-electric power plant systems are ideal satellites for nuclear power plants. The latter require constant operating conditions, while the need for electric power varies with the time of the day. So, hydro-electric power plants instantly take the peak loads upon themselves. For example, the aggregate of the Sayano-Shushenskaya Hydro-Electric Power Plant needs only 1 minute 40 seconds to go from