

The same thing applies to the yield of oil. Those 14% mentioned by Budnikov certainly include the oil extracted by natural methods. Taking this into account, the difference last year amounted to a mere 2%. Moreover, the author of the reply delicately glosses over the fact that the rate at which extraction decreases in the experimental sector is almost twice what has been recorded in normal practice, where cold water is pumped in to maintain the stratum pressure.

The "sagacity" of the decisions made is illustrated well by the fact that even though it has been impossible so far to feed steam to the stratum, the Ministry of the Oil Industry has given the go ahead for the industrial exploitation of the unique Usa deposit by applying steam heating. The inflated figures have blinded people to such an extent that this decision was made essentially without a study of the geological characteristics of the deposit and without the indispensable thermo-technical calculations. As far as the economic justification of the unique and expensive project is concerned, this is a separate question.

As recently as two years ago, by arrangement with the management of Komitermneft', scientists at the department of oil and gas geology of the Ukhta Industrial Institute, led by Assistant Professor E. Kreinin, reached the conclusion that in two forced oil wells alone the losses due to use of the heat effect would amount to 4.5 million rubles. When multiplied by the number of oil wells, expenditures would exceed revenue by one and half billion rubles. Moreover, to provide for the planned extraction of "hot" oil, it would be necessary to burn about 44 billion cubic meters of natural gas at the steam compressing stations. Expressed in terms of oil,