

"All of our troubles stem from bad roads", complained N. Mikheev, the First Secretary of the District Committee [of the Communist Party]. I won't say that we've sat on our hands. We opened a quarry and built a crushed-stone plant on the outskirts of the district centre. We did a few things with our own resources. But all of this is depressingly slow. Sometimes you think, that at this rate, we'd need a whole century to build a road to an outlying state farm. But we can't wait: the time limit has run out. So we supported the Timan Cooperative, which was organized last spring and attached to Komi Motor Road Corporation, which sent one of its teams to the district. From the outset the members of the Cooperative gave us good lessons in management.

Here was one such lesson. We had to close down both the crushed-stone plant and the asphalt concrete [paving asphalt] factory, since they were both losing money. Our production here was 4,500 tons of crushed stone a year. Officials gave some equipment to the members of the cooperative. The latter took a look at it, dismantled everything and carted it off to the quarry. Why, they thought, drive stone transport forty kilometers back and forth when we can deliver the raw material in the quarry over a distance of only a hundred meters?

In an open area at the entrance to the quarry, Cooperative members quickly assembled and started up two plants. In little more than half a year, they got over a hundred thousand tons of end product, many times more than the State enterprise had produced in a year. The installations operated round the clock.