

early eighties, had to be halted because funding was cut off by the ministries."

O. Rebristaya, Researcher at the Academy of Sciences' Botanical Institute: "Each of the Yamal problems requires not only a serious approach, but also patience. Oil and gas-field managers in Yamburg already requested our help in restoring the damaged tundra cover, but a couple of years later they lost interest in our work because it would have taken too long to wait for the results. Yet a minimum of 5-7 years is needed to produce serious, well-founded recommendations here in the sub-arctic zones..."

The Yamal problems cannot be 'stormed' in the usual fashion - even if 10 scientists are assigned to work on them instead of one. It takes time to make up for time lost in the past - for which science is less to blame than bureaucratic short-sightedness.

Nevertheless, at the height of the closing plenary session a banner bearing huge letters was raised over the hall: "Pure science - go out into the Yamal expanses!" Another eye-catching banner was simultaneously raised in the glare of flashing camera bulbs set off by Soviet and foreign news photographers attending the conference: "Drivers support developing the Yamal right away!"

These are the sort of tricks that are used on television game shows and team quiz shows.

The conference which served to stimulate these reflections was not a T.V. quiz show, however, on which all questions must be answered as quickly as possible. We need enough time to find the right