

10 minutes in every hour. For the remainder of the time the crew is either making preparations for that ten minute period of drilling or simply standing around doing nothing. But things should be different. Even with today's fairly primitive equipment and technology, the drill should be in use 35% of the time. In drilling test wells, when conditions are close to ideal, drillers reach speeds which, if recalculated in terms of the whole year, would be equivalent to drilling 200 thousand metres. But here some thirty crews can barely manage 100,000 metres. The average is much lower.

The drillers of the Nizhnevartovsk directorate are lagging behind their neighbours as regards retooling. Well construction is being held up by the weaknesses of others. The drillers have many grievances against science and the mechanical engineering industry.

But for the time being all these problems are secondary. The greatest problem right now is the switch to self-financing. Drillers are making thorough preparations for the change. However, by no means all workers are sold on the idea of cost accounting (khozraschet). In the words of crew boss V. Kazakov, the whole thing is up in the air right now and there is no point in getting worked up about it. Some of the difficulties have already become apparent. For example, when representatives of the directorate approached the corporation to defend their annual plan - with facts and figures - they couldn't get a hearing. The plan was drawn up as before, in terms of production quotas.

The cost mechanism is still very much alive and well. The directorate has been set the task of