

TRANSPORT RAIL

Great Expectations at Usinsk

A sign hangs from the two-storey train station under construction in Usinsk: "Our city - a leader in the struggle for oil." To be more precise, Usinsk is the leader in the Timan-Pechorsk oil and gas bearing province, the third most important region after the Tyumen' territory and the Prikaspiisk lowland with its famous Tengiz. Otherwise the sign is accurate - the Usinsk station, which is located exactly on the Arctic border, 250 kilometers from the Arctic coast, is the furthestmost point attained by the railway on the Vorkutin section of the Severnaya Zemlya (Northern Land). This part of the railway services the oilmen of the Komi ASSR developing new sites in the Bol'shezemel'skaya Tundra.

Out of the window in the station-master's, N. Uleshov's office, one can see the low-hanging, cloudy sky, a shunting engine and a construction worker wearing a hooded raincoat.

"Yes, the weather here has the disposition of a spoiled woman", jokes Nikolai Ivanovich. "A light rain today, frost tomorrow. Even in springtime."

The oilmen's city of Usinsk, which has sprung up in the tundra at the junction of the Usa and Kolva Rivers, is growing and developing. The station is growing right along with it. This is a remarkable fact, since this is not a common occurrence when a new building goes up. According to N. Uleshov and his assistant L. Yakovleva, the workers are making the building even more solid than