

Not long ago in Lesosibirsk, the heads of the "KrasnoyarskGESstroi" directorate held a meeting with local activists. They appealed for accelerated preparation for construction of the next - Sredne-Yeniseiskaya - hydroelectric power plant. In former times such an agenda would provoke only universal enthusiasm. I recall the rejoicing when the Yenisei was dammed in the Divnye and Sayan Mountains. And what a holiday it was when, almost a quarter of a century ago, the first impellers of the future unique turbines were delivered to Divnogorsk from Leningrad. Orchestras thundered, flags blazed, ceremonial speeches were heard. But today?

Siberians at the meeting flatly declared that, in their opinion, it would be criminal to construct a new hydroelectric power plant on the Yenisei. And they appealed to government bodies. Is this merely a chance event? The Sredne-Yeniseiskaya hydroelectric power plant means the flooding of hundreds of thousands of hectares of the richest Siberian chernozem, the territory's granary, and the destruction of immense Northern coniferous forest lands. Such a prospect fails to sink in; it is difficult to imagine that in place of taiga and plowed land, water will spread out and ruin all forest animal refuges, small rivers...

Yes, the new cannot be had without losses. But the losses must be justified. And what is there to justify to our grandsons and great-grandsons when we leave them half-ruined Yenisei, from which it is already unwise to drink water and eat fish along its entire length because there was no sanitary preparation of flooding areas. Are such losses justified?