

"Simplistic" is what a state commission of experts from the USSR State Planning Committee termed such an approach to the solution of this difficult problem. In the commission's opinion, the measures advanced by the local government bodies to guarantee the necessary economic and social standard of living of the native population - "on its historic homeland, having furthermore the status of a constitutional, political and administrative unit of the country" - are obviously inadequate.

But Yuri Iosifovich is not prepared to accept this criticism only at the expense of the district leadership.

"Science is letting us down", he complains. "Each year, expeditions from various institutes of our country roam Yamal, studying everything there is to know about our environment. But where are the practical results? In any case, we have no precise recommendations on how to recultivate the tundra cover, renew areas grown over with reindeer moss, and replenish fish reserves.

Complaints were voiced against scientists in the Yamal-Nenets Area Party committee as well. Criticism was first of all directed against an academic institute appropriately called the Institute of Problems in the Development of the North, which was formed two years ago in Tyumen. And understandably so: it's from here that answers to the serious questions posed by Yamal are anxiously awaited.

Grasping the topic of our interest, V. Mel'nikov, the institute's director and corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, immediately took the lead in the conversation: