

MISCELLANEOUS

Perestroika in the Komi ASSR: A Cooperative Store in the Taiga

Candy canes, sugared nuts, men's jackets, cut-rate pants, and at worst, overdone shish-kebab for nearly a king's ransom.... This is how we sometimes look at our cooperatives' contribution. Here, however, is something quite different - the "Timan" Cooperative has taken paths hitherto untouched.

First of all, it transferred a plant for producing crushed stone, which had stood dozens of kilometers away, to a quarry, and built a settlement nearby. Briefly, in preparing to tackle the absence of roads, they concentrated all their forces.

The distance from the capital of the Komi Republic to Ust'-Kulom was two hundred-odd versts [about 215-plus kilometers] through the taiga. A recently-paved asphalt road cut through the forests and ended at the District Centre. After that? After that, problems began.

The District, which has highly abundant forest resources, cannot produce anything from them because it has no industrial plants. The agricultural sector is also weak, and furthermore, the losses of everything that is collected on the fields, are substantial. Some villages have neither radio nor electricity. One is not surprised that people, especially the youth, have tried to leave this primordial Komi land.