

From an address by drilling Master V. Lyapin at the All-Union Conference of Representatives of the Working Class, the Peasantry, and Engineering-Technical Workers (January, 1990):

"For many years now people everywhere have praised us to the skies, calling us the oil kings and guardians of the working class. But they trained us to work patiently, humbly and modestly, constantly assuring us that the State is mindful of us and taking care of us. And indeed we cannot complain about a lack of attention on the part of the CPSU Central Committee and the government of the USSR. But what the actual payoff on this concern has been you, Mikhail Sergeevich, can judge for yourself since you have visited our city.

But today, I must sadly confirm that even the standard of living that we had is getting worse.

After M.S. Gorbachev's visit to our city, a beautiful program was drawn up, confirmed by decree no. 797 which outlined the prospects for supplying oil field workers with modern equipment, vehicles and machinery. I can only say one thing: these glowing prospects have remained a ghostly mirage in the polar wasteland..."

The story goes that representative from oil companies in Kuwait recently came to visit the city on the Ob. Publicly the businessmen said that they liked it in Nizhnevartovsk. In private, however, the guests expressed their sincere astonishment to their hosts: excuse me, but how can it be that you produce so much oil and there are so many poor people?"