

Envoys from a Harsh Land

Yesterday and today the foyer of the Great Palace in the Kremlin has looked more like a museum of applied arts. Indeed, this exhibition - artefacts of northern peoples - would be the pride of any gallery in any country.

In the hall are gathered hunters, reindeer breeders, and representatives of the intelligentsia of northern regions, Siberia and the Far East. The delegates are representing 184,000 native inhabitants of harsh areas of our country, and their geographic representation is much greater - almost half of the area of the country.

Taking part in the work of the congress are M.S. Gorbachev, Yu.D. Maslyukov, V.A. Medvedev, N.I. Ryzhkov, A.V. Vlasov, A.I. Lukyanov, A.N. Girenko, Yu.A. Manaenko, G.I. Usmanov, and R.N. Nishanov.

The congress is slated to create an Association of Northern Peoples. This was mentioned at the opening by V.I. Vorotnikov, member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee and chairman of the Presidium of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet. The same idea was heard in the report by the chairman of the congress organizing committee, Doctor of Historical Sciences Ch.M. Taksami, and in many of the delegates' speeches.

"It's very a good thing that the congress has met," said N.I. Sleptsov, director of the Evenk sovkhos "Iskra" of Yakutiya during a pause between sessions. "We must save our environment, our land and our people. Potatoes, of course, do not grow on our land, they're brought in. And if we don't improve the situation, tomorrow they're going to start bringing fish to us as well. We must have some changes. Everyone understands this today."