

SOCIOLOGICAL ISSUES

Karelia Dreams On

Why Solutions to the Region's Problems are Slow in Coming

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I must confess that I am still strongly affected by my impressions from a trip to my home country - the towns and villages of the Loukhi, Kem, Belomorsk, Segezha, and Pudozh districts of Karelia. As a native of these parts I knew that life here is not easy. But the reality turned out to be even more unpleasant. The residual approach to the essential needs of the people has resulted in the standard of living of a large fraction of the republic's population being approximately one and a half to two times below what it is in the other relatively prosperous regions of the RSFSR.

A popular song contains the words: "Long shall Karelia dream..." and goes on to speak of "eyelashes of the sharp-pointed spruces over the blue eyes of the lakes". But everything spoken of in this song may soon disappear forever.