

"Not who, what. That's what we call it when we have to raise or lower pipes. In a shift you can "nurse" up to 200 pipes. If you add up the weight it's twenty, sometimes forty tons in all. But they feed us badly - 17 grams of meat per person per day.

Other workers confirmed what Farit had said. There are vegetables only on occasion. There's a shortage of vitamins, and in the spring many people's gums begin to bleed. Vegetable warehouses seem to have some reserves, but there is no way to store them to have them later.

People often catch cold in the wind. Hats and winter jackets cannot be bought. There is a chronic shortage. How can this be? They earn hard currency for the country but they cannot obtain decent clothing. In the city, for 400 rubles speculators offer commercially manufactured boots - there aren't near enough of the northern kind to be had. And how much does food cost? The shelves in the stores are empty. You have to go to the public market, but there beef is 10-12 rubles per kilo, pork 8-10, lard 10-15, and apples 6. Butter has simply vanished. And milk cannot be had either, unless you buy it in the morning. And most people have children.

The housing situation is bad. People are on waiting lists for years, sometimes for decades, and there's scarcely any movement on the lists. Married people live in shacks and dormitories or rent small private rooms. So what can their morale be like?