

natural depressions in the terrain (this portion of the line has about a third fewer such structures than it needs). In addition, a number of rivers and streams have been diverted and covered over with embankments, and bridges have been placed out of alignment with natural watercourses. All of this has led to deep thawing of the permafrost and to sagging. A similar situation has arisen on the adjoining track section, which will be put into operation later.

Employees of the Track Service and of the BAM construction management have to some extent contributed to the gravel/soil filling operations that have undermined track stability. The commission representing these people ordered that low spots be filled in with "non-draining" soil, which, as we have already said, the builders took to include even the fine earth and clay that they used. We would point out that peat could have been found anywhere within five hundred metres of the railroad. While we are on the subject, it would only have made sense to use the peat from the ditches that were dug, to bring it to the site in dump cars from other areas, and so on. All this, however, would require a departure from established, stereotyped technologies, to which the general contractor would be unaccustomed.

Specialists have long and insistently refused to pour gravel/soil on road shoulders in permafrost areas: the disturbed zone, they say, must be as narrow as possible. The Chief Track Directorate has now agreed to this requirement, but the building of shoulders, which increase the cost of the roadbed by about 20 percent, is continuing on the Amur-Yakutsk Main Line. Authorities have prohibited the felling of trees and bushes near the rail route,