

It is with this critical assessment that he opened the small meeting called at our request, which was attended by representatives of the various services of the enterprise and the local units responsible for fuel distribution.

It was a heated discussion, but strangely enough, we soon got the feeling that we had become witnesses to an intricate game. According to its unwritten rules, some of the participants of the meeting were supposed to demonstrate an intolerance to the squanderers of gas and vigilant zeal for state property, while others were supposed to repent of their mistakes and tell how they plan to correct them. All this so that nothing would have to change.

Our conjecture were borne out by the following episode. As proof that the workers of Gorky are on an economy drive, we were told about the plans to convert an entire complex of machines from gas to electricity in the nearest future. But how much fuel is needed to produce the additional electrical energy? This innocent question caused a commotion. Simple calculations showed that the plant's thermal power station will in the long run consume far more gas than is used up by these shops at the present time. Now that's "economy"!

"There's no need for irony," burst out one of the participants of the discussion. "If only you knew how dearly this economy cost at times."

These same words were spoken again and again by many of the economic managers. Some light was finally shed on the problem by specialists of the Novotrubnyi (New Pipe) Plant of Novouralsk in the Sverdlovsk Region.