

the ligneous mossy cover which serves to hold the soil in place. However, the major threat to the environment is posed by global and regional warming. A rise in temperature of 2-3 degrees is being predicted. This, however, is only an average figure. At the Equator this increase will amount to an insignificant 0.5 degrees but, the closer one gets to the Pole, the greater the amplitude will be. As one approaches the Yamal Peninsula, there may very well be a more dangerous increase of 4 degrees in the mean annual temperature. This will lead, in some places, to a complete loss of supporting properties of solidified rock. The considerable iciness of up 50-80% of the upper layers will lead to the melting of ice in certain regions and the sinking of land by 20-50 centimeters or maybe even more. The melting of Arctic and Antarctic ice and continental glaciers will inevitably lead to a rise in the level of the Pacific Ocean, causing it to advance onto low-lying areas of land.

Having soberly evaluated the technical aspects of the possible course of events, the following scenario must be postulated: in order to preserve the supporting properties of the tundra, it will be necessary either to build huge surface freezers, switch to "floating", platform methods of oil and gas production, or alternatively, construct dams which would protect the northern part of the Tyumen' lands, or even those of the Yamal Peninsula as a whole. We are now, however, into the realm of construction engineering fantasy because it would increase the cost of development to 4-10 times the original cost, and there would simply not be enough potential in it. The development would become a losing proposition - it could not be sustained and the colossal plans would turn into a tragic farce.