

During these years specialists of the plant supplying the locomotives also contributed a great deal. The design of the locomotive was modernized, and the manufacture of a number of parts and components was improved. As an example of this one can point to the latest engines arriving at the depot. In thirteen months of operation they each travelled 206,000 kilometres. In addition, construction was completed at the depot on the so-called fifth section - a shop specially designed for repair work and the servicing of equipment. Nearly a million rubles were spent on its construction, and additional hundreds of thousands on acquiring equipment and various other materials as well as repair and diagnostic test benches. The new locomotives have already demonstrated that they are easier to repair and operate.

At the same time, we are in a state of total indecision: are we going to change over to the new technology in the future or will everything stay as in the past? The workers' collective wants to work on these locomotives, but management does not. So why do we have this unnecessary muddle? What happens is that we master and test the engines, and then (as before) they are given to other depots! And why is it that the sector and the administration of the railroad are making such a determined effort to rid themselves of the new locomotives?"

The letter is signed by drivers and maintenance workers. They have no reason to fabricate glowing accounts of the merits of the new equipment, all the less so since it was precisely because of them that the machine builders' repeated efforts to prematurely announce creation of the new engines and to begin their series production were each time foiled. The Pechora locomotive workers pointed out that the equipment needed further refinements, that the "121's" were still not ready for operation in northern conditions.

On a number of occasions an expert commission was assembled in Pechora to go over these disputes. The members of the commission included deputy ministers of concerned ministries and representatives of USSR Gosplan (State Planning Commission). Not infrequently, the smooth