

consequence of the 'metre index' system, yet the ministries continue this system, which they find easy. For them, the important thing is to drill the necessary number of metres, write their reports, and receive the allotted funds and material resources in return.

Today the drive is towards stricter requirements and overcoming the wastefulness of the past. This should be applied to oil-drilling practices, as well. It is time to face the reality that raising oil output by increasing wastage is disastrous. Yet this is what is being done today in Western Siberia. The industrial price of oil is rising constantly. A system of criteria and incentives must be established so as to encourage oil and gas extraction without raising their price. Only then will the Ministries for the Oil and the Gas Industries, as well as the Ministry of Geology, finally begin to look at costs. Each and every well will produce at full capacity. There will be no more discarded mechanical equipment or extra pipes. The ministries and the State Planning Commission will stop trying to get as much drilling equipment as possible out of Uralmash. Then the ministries will see the point in exploring the Eastern Siberian deposits.

The initiation of drilling in these fields with their high well-yield will reduce the cost of oil and gas throughout the industry. A very favourable situation exists at present: for the first time in almost 70 years the opportunity exists to intelligently exploit a new oil region and make it a model of well-planned production and social infrastructure. If we begin now, we have enough time to do this. If we delay, we shall be forced to rush things later, to perform a 'heroic feat' against the