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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
<u>AGRICULTURE</u>	
Extending the Summer for Northerners.....	1
<u>CONSTRUCTION</u>	
A Colony for Veterans.....	4
Pros and Cons of Building a Railroad on the Yamal Peninsula.....	5
<u>MINERAL RESOURCES AND MINING</u>	
Charges of Window Dressing in Promoting the Steam Heat Crude Oil Extraction Technique in Komi Republic.....	10
Kola Peninsula to be the Scene of Joint Ventures..	15
Strike by Yukspor Miners.....	16
<u>OIL AND GAS</u>	
Urengoi Pipeline Construction Project in Jeopardy.....	18
<u>SOCIOLOGICAL ISSUES</u>	
A Plea for Help for the Chukotka Native Peoples...	26
<u>TRANSPORT - AIR</u>	
New Air Link Murmansk - Tromso.....	28
<u>TRANSPORT - RAIL</u>	
Railroad Construction Project in the Tyumen' North Called a Five Hundred Million Rouble Folly...	29

Extending the Summer for Northerners

Page No.

TRANSPORT - WATER

Yachts on the North Sea Route (1).....	35
Yachts on the Northern Sea Route (2).....	36
Heading for the Arctic.....	37
From Osetrovo on the Lena to Zelenyi Mys on the Kolyma Without Reloading.....	37

MISCELLANEOUS

Noril'sk Gets Medical Syringes and Consumer Goods in Exchange for Waster Paper.....	39
Scrap Metal Recovery Program at Tiksi.....	39
Toyota Minibuses at Noril'sk.....	40
Scientist Discusses Possible UFO Landing Near Surgut.....	41
Purchases of Foreign Equipment for Seamen's Hospital at Archangel.....	42

The result? Highly perishable loads would arrive at the airport and "languish" under the hot sun for two days or even longer. Naturally, the quality of the produce would deteriorate considerably. The senders would get nervous and we would make hundreds of calls to find out where the long overdue aircraft was. . . . Then the answer would come: it will not arrive because of engine trouble. The cucumbers and tomatoes that no longer appeared marketable would then be sent by us to a commercial network. The people there, of course, would refuse to accept the rotting merchandise. An absolute disgrace, that's all you can say.

AGRICULTURE

Extending the Summer for Northerners

So far, 3373.7 tons of vegetables and fruit have been shipped from Dushanbe and Leninabad airports in Tadzhikistan to the Far North and Far East. These are the so-called planned transports. Added to them are over 540 tons of vitamin rich produce that were shipped to Moscow and other cities by scheduled air liners. The result is equal to last year's, even though this year's deliveries of vegetables and fruit were less regular. The reasons are both objective and subjective. I asked S. Chuchelov, Deputy Chief of Operations at the airport, to comment on the situation.

The unpredictable spring weather severely affected the shipments of vitamin-rich produce. The late frost caused serious damage to blossoming apricot orchards and vineyards. All this had a delaying effect on the schedules for transportation of vegetables and fruit, a fact that we reported on time to the airline owners (East Siberian and Yakut administrations). In spite of this, the corrected schedule for the arrival of aircraft was frequently not adhered to.

The result? Highly perishable loads would arrive at the airport and "languish" under the hot sun for two days or even longer. Naturally, the quality of the produce would deteriorate considerably. The senders would get nervous and we would make hundreds of calls to find out where the long overdue aircraft was ... Then the answer would come: it will not arrive because of engine trouble. The cucumbers and tomatoes that no longer appeared marketable would then be sent by us to a commercial network. The people there, of course, would refuse to accept the rotting merchandise. An absolute disgrace, that's all you can say.

Sometimes we would receive a telegram as follows: "... at 11:00 p.m. dispatch aircraft No. so and so". But as to where that aircraft is and when it will arrive, nobody knows. We call the central office of the airline. They tell us to call the owners of the aircraft. While we are on the phone, the plane is on the approach to Dushanbe.

Realizing what was going on, the farmers stopped bringing their produce to the airport on schedule and, instead, would call us to find out when the aircraft was arriving. This, of course, was not the ideal solution either, because not all the State and collective farms supplying vegetables and fruit are located nearby. And, remember, the crop must be harvested, loaded onto trucks and delivered to the airport. Time is passing, and the airplanes stand idle.

There also was the following unusual case. The Yakut administration cancelled four trips (and this is over 120 tons of perishable produce) allegedly at the request of the agro-industrial complex of the republic. It turned out that the agro-industrial complex had never made such a request. It was the cargo supervisor of one of the farms who blurted out that we would not be able to fully load four airplanes, so it would be better not to send them ... Instead of asking us for confirmation, the Yakut administration followed the lead of an irresponsible person.

I would like to mention something else: the scandalous mismanagement. The powerful Il-76 airplanes would come to us from miles and miles away empty!

I remember that just at the start of the massive airlift one plane arrived carrying badly needed lumber. How come that the owners of the plane have been unable for years to solve this problem and with a clear conscience permit gigantic aircraft to fly with no cargo on board?

Very disturbing also is the fact that the planes would invariably arrive with unprepared mooring nets for securing the load. Moreover, quite often they were damaged or had no hooks.

... On September 12th, an Il-76 with 30 tons of grapes left the capital of Tadzhikistan for Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii. This flight was supposed to crown the planned deliveries of vegetables and fruit from the 1989 crop. However, there still remains a lot of vitamin-rich produce in the fields and orchards (especially tomatoes, cucumbers and grapes). The farmers are asking for extended deliveries of the sunny gifts of Tadzhikistan to the cities of the Far North and Far East. Requests for six Il-76s have already been received. We feel that the deliveries of fruit and vegetables should be extended. By the same token, the administration will honour the plan for the delivery of vitamin-rich produce and the precious summer will be lengthened a little for the northerners.

Vozdushnyi transport

21 September 1989

Page 1 (full text)

CONSTRUCTION

A Colony for Veterans

I happened to visit the small town of Tentyukovo, not far from Syktyvkar, for the first time when the colony was just being built.

And now the first social services center for pensioners, not only in the Komi Autonomous Republic but in our entire North, is in operation. Its buildings were constructed by the workers of the Syktyvkarstroi trust and the planning and construction association Syktyvkargorstroi.

"Main block", "administrative and household buildings" - these words, like the name of the colony itself, have a rather cold ring to them if they are taken in their usual meaning. But in this case, the spiritual warmth that is exuded by everything that both the builders and those who care for the veterans did has filled their lives with joy - if joy is possible in an advanced age - with family comfort, and a sensation of fullness of life.

But let us take a walk through the colony, let us see how the veterans - 330 people in all - live. Those who because of various illnesses cannot walk by themselves, who need constant care and prolonged treatment live in hospital rooms equipped with signalling devices for calling the medical personnel. The others have flats with a kitchen and bathroom in a beautiful five-storey building. Visiting relatives can stay right here in hotel rooms.

Stroitel'naya gazeta
10 September 1989
Page 3 (full text)

Pros and Cons of Building a Railroad on the Yamal Peninsula

Some time ago a decision was made concerning the integrated development of an oil and gas industry in Western Siberia in 1986-1990, but those involved in the decision cared little for economic calculations, gave barely a thought to the ecological consequences and did not consult at all with the local inhabitants, in particular with the region's native people. The decision, by way of an exception, authorized the Construction Bank of the USSR and the interested departments to finance the construction of a railroad to the Bovanenkovskii gas condensate deposits without a plan, and also to build industrial and civil structures without setting aside the land, as required by the law.

So the work got underway in full force. Powerful machinery was turned loose in Yamal. The Nenets and the Khanty become nervous:

"What are you doing here?"

"We are doing what were told to do", came the reply.

In the good old days of the period of stagnation the dialogue might have ended right there. Not now. The public intervened, and so did the scientists. The ecological submissions resulted in the technical and economic justifications for the construction of a railroad being rejected. The financing of the project was stopped following a decision by the Executive Committee of the Yamal-Nenets district.

This, of course, was a serious blow to the Ministry of Transport Construction and resulted in the sending of a letter requesting permission for work to be done in the head sector extending 189 kilometers to the station of Payuta.

It must be said that it was not just the railroad that "set the forest on fire". The real problem is the development of the Bovanenkovo gas condensate deposit. Is it or is it not necessary? The scientists have doubts about it.

What is the reason for their doubts? V. Ryabitsev, laboratory supervisor at the Institute of Plant and Animal Ecology of the Ural division of the USSR Academy of Sciences, warns: "Yamal is a very young territory geologically. Hence, the natural complexes are also very young, immature, and more vulnerable than in other regions of the Arctic. The most likely scenario is as follows: as a result of large-scale denudation of the tundra, flooding, and a direct heating effect, Yamal's flat land composed of earth materials with a high ice content will literally melt and be converted into an archipelago of small islands. Western Siberia will then lose a gigantic climatic buffer mitigating the arctic cold, the taiga will be displaced southward for hundreds of kilometers, displacing in turn more southerly zones, including agricultural areas".

How close or far from the truth this forecast is, nobody knows as yet. An enormous amount of work must be done to permit us to see the contours of this disquieting future scenario and take the necessary measures before it is too late.

Specialists have also raised serious objections to development of the Yamal from the

standpoint of economics. V. Tsarev, Doctor of Geological and Mineralogical Sciences, and R. Povileiko, Candidate of Technical Sciences, writing in the Economic Gazette, stated unequivocally: "According to our calculations, the gas from Yamal will always be a losing enterprise... A sober assessment of the engineering aspects of the possible development forces one to conclude as follows: to preserve the supporting properties of the tundra surface, one would either have to build freezers with a gigantic area, use "floating" platform methods of drilling for oil and gas, or even build dikes that would surround the northern part of Tyumen' territory or conceivably even the entire Yamal. Now, this would be in the realm of engineering and construction fiction, because there would be a 4-fold to 10-fold increase in the cost of such a development and we simply don't have the potential. Development would mean the loss of the invested capital and could not be continued, in consequence of which the gigantic projects would turn out to be a tragic farce."

These scientists are not alone in their opinions. So, as you see, the problem goes far beyond the question of whether we should or shouldn't build a railroad to Yamal.

There is yet another side to the question: the ethnic one. Even if the remainder of the country views the suggested ecological disaster in Yamal with sympathy, albeit somewhat obliquely, for the Nenets it could mean literally the loss of their homeland. It is immoral even to discuss this topic, let alone theorize whether it would or would not be advantageous.

But the departments do not give up. The Yamaltransstroï trust has sent a telegram to the USSR

Council of Ministers: "This project had been declared to be of national significance and an exemplary project for Communist youth. We have here a stable, skilled, multicultural, cohesive group of people - amounting to thirteen thousand along with family members. Already, some 450 million rubles in investments have been appropriated. We request permission for continued preferential financing for the construction of this railroad line ..."

But who gave the permission to invite people to come here, and who authorized the opening of financing before the project has been approved in terms of its technical and economic soundness?

We have followed with great interest the work of the Congress of People's Deputies, and then of the first session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. It turned out that there were numerous financial flaws in our economy. And it is hard to find an extra rouble for many more important, high priority programs. Various charities open accounts in our banks in uninterrupted succession. What can we do? In difficult moments for our Fatherland we have always counted on the patriotism, good citizenship, and goodwill of our fellow countrymen. Against this background, what must we think of multimillion rouble preferential financing of illegally developed projects?

I don't know whether the Bovanenkovo deposits should be exploited and whether a railroad should be built to Yamal. But I am profoundly convinced that the decisions concerning such large projects should be made in the open after a detailed discussion by experts of their technical and economic feasibility. Moreover, the opinion and the interests of the native population must be taken into account in all cases.

And the taxpayers' money must be treated with respect, so that we would not have to ask later all kinds of rhetorical questions, such as "What in the world have we built?", "What should we do?", "Whose fault is it?"

(Editorial)

Gudok

21 September 1989

Page 2 (full text)

MINERAL RESOURCES AND MINING

Charges of Window Dressing in Promoting the Steam Heat Crude Oil Extraction Technique in Komi Republic

A brief report by an oil industry engineer from Ukhta, V. Timofeev, published in our paper a year ago under the title Window Dressing, provoked such a voluminous official correspondence that it could fill an entire type page. And the longer the replies of the leaders of the former Ministry of the Oil Industry, the interdepartmental scientific and technical committee "Nefteotdacha" and the scientific and production association "Soyuztermneft'", the further away we are from the truth. Their apologetic verbosity barely disguises their desire to present the situation in more attractive colors. Let us compare the essence of their replies with reality.

Many years ago, the then general director of the "Komineft'" Association, Anatolii Stepanovich Gumenyuk, told me about plans to transfer to the Usinsk heavy oil deposits the experience gained in heating the petroliferous stratum at Yarega. According to him, the enormous area of the deposit ought to be covered with a network of powerful steam generator stations. It was suggested that under the influence of high-temperature steam, the oil would lose its viscosity and, as they say, flow as a river.

But, as you know, there is a long way between an idea and its realization. Moreover, nowhere in the world was steam ever fed to a depth of one and half kilometers. Therefore, an experimental sector to test the steam heat effect was established at the Usa river under the sponsorship of the scientific and production association

"Soyuztermneft'". With the formation of the interdisciplinary scientific and technical group "Nefteotdacha", the supervision of the project was entrusted to it. The importance of the experiment was confirmed by its being included in the "Unified plan for the introduction of new equipment and new production processes developed by the USSR Ministry of Oil Industry".

The solid scientific foundation, one would think, should have been an assurance of the high standards and correctness of the research. However, right from the start, everything was overshadowed by the chase for tons of "hot" oil. The reliability of the information on the effectiveness of the research was sacrificed at the altar of impressive reports.

In his reply to the editor, the chairman of the scientific and technical council of "Soyuztermneft'", V. Budnikov, writes: "The effectiveness of the steam heating technique is evaluated by reference to a methodology approved by the Ministry of the Oil Industry. The question has been resolved definitively. There is a real increase in oil output." A table is appended as proof of the above statement. It shows that the yield of oil is 14% instead of 4% when natural methods are used.

But let us mentally construct another table. In one column we shall place the figures for the output of oil by years in the experimental sector, and in another we shall enter figures showing how the notorious "coefficient of efficiency" was raised until it eventually reached one, which contradicts the well-known laws of physics. In this way it becomes clear by means of what simple manipulation one can, sitting thousands of kilometers away in Krasnodar, the headquarters of Soyuztermneft', make the figures impressive.

The same thing applies to the yield of oil. Those 14% mentioned by Budnikov certainly include the oil extracted by natural methods. Taking this into account, the difference last year amounted to a mere 2%. Moreover, the author of the reply delicately glosses over the fact that the rate at which extraction decreases in the experimental sector is almost twice what has been recorded in normal practice, where cold water is pumped in to maintain the stratum pressure.

The "sagacity" of the decisions made is illustrated well by the fact that even though it has been impossible so far to feed steam to the stratum, the Ministry of the Oil Industry has given the go ahead for the industrial exploitation of the unique Usa deposit by applying steam heating. The inflated figures have blinded people to such an extent that this decision was made essentially without a study of the geological characteristics of the deposit and without the indispensable thermo-technical calculations. As far as the economic justification of the unique and expensive project is concerned, this is a separate question.

As recently as two years ago, by arrangement with the management of Komitermneft', scientists at the department of oil and gas geology of the Ukhta Industrial Institute, led by Assistant Professor E. Kreinin, reached the conclusion that in two forced oil wells alone the losses due to use of the heat effect would amount to 4.5 million rubles. When multiplied by the number of oil wells, expenditures would exceed revenue by one and half billion rubles. Moreover, to provide for the planned extraction of "hot" oil, it would be necessary to burn about 44 billion cubic meters of natural gas at the steam compressing stations. Expressed in terms of oil,

this is almost three quarters of the planned extraction. What does the general director of the Interdepartmental Scientific-Technical Committee "Nefteotdacha", M. Surguchev, think of this method of self-immolation?

To my direct question, Mikhail Leont'evich replied: "Yes, we know that thermal methods are costly. But there is no other way ..."

Is there not? I have in front of me the fourth issue of the review Oil Industry for the past year, and in it M. Surguchev's article in which he reports on the 12th World Oil Congress which was held in Houston, U.S.A. The congress showed, he said, that the optimistic forecasts on the application of thermal methods were not borne out in many countries. Among the reasons for this, several were virtually identical to the situation in Usa, including, of course, the cost of these methods.

But we, with a stubbornness worthy of a better cause, persist in creating the appearance of success. Here is what A. Kayun, a geologist from Krasnodar, writes in response to the article "Window Dressing". 'In all "thermal" oil fields the thickest oil-saturated strata producing good yields are selected for pumping in the heat-carrier. The All-Union Scientific Research and Planning Institute of the Oil Processing Industry (Krasnodar) publishes process flow diagrams and introduces "unit coefficients". Thus ordinary raw material, by a wave of the wand, is converted into "thermal"....'

What the Interdepartmental Scientific and Technical Committee "Nefteotdacha" persists in imposing on the oil industry workers of the north and on the entire sector, is in flagrant contradiction

with our own experience and with the experience of the rest of the world. How, then, are we to explain this dual morality: we know something but we do something completely different. For the sake of what are billions earmarked for projects unsupported by convincing research? Are we motivated by prestige, the desire to claim another first? Many specialists believe that egoistic group interests are at work here. Shielded by the thickness of the Usa strata, it is easy to claim impressive achievements for the new technology, to become famous as innovators or to hide any failure.

The same conclusion is suggested by the manipulation of the Interdepartmental Committee with regard to the Yarega oil, which has been extracted for many years exclusively by thermal methods and without the participation of scientists. It is still claimed to be a great accomplishment without any foundation whatsoever. Disregarding the facts, the officials at the Ministry give them their full support.

Nowadays we openly say and write that departmental state monopoly is one of the main reasons for the crisis in our economy.

However, experience teaches us that monopoly develops into a scientific technological dictate, which serves not the general interests of the State, but the interests of a group or a corporation. This is why so many departmental programs bear the imprint of window dressing and the desire to make a good impression on higher authorities.

True, those above may see it better. But when those above are painting radiant pictures and

those below are counting their losses, everyone is led into a blind alley.

Sotsialisticheskaya
industriya

30 September 1989

Page 3 (Abridged)

Kola Peninsula to be the Scene of Joint Ventures

Murmansk, September 7 (TASS correspondent). The Kola peninsula, known throughout the world as a storehouse of natural wealth and until recently, completely closed to foreigners, is becoming the scene of wide ranging international cooperation. This fact was pointed out with particular satisfaction by P. Yaukho, chairman of the Finnish section of the Soviet-Finnish Commission on Scientific and Technical Cooperation. Together with other scientists and representatives of business circles of his country, he began today his familiarization visit to the enterprises and scientific organizations of the Murmansk Oblast.

The center of attention of the guests is the large-scale Kola project, well known in the West, which includes the participation of foreign firms in the joint work on integrated exploitation of mineral raw materials, above all apatites. Equally important are the possibilities for cooperation in developing the oil and gas fields.

Also mutually beneficial is cooperation in the fisheries field, in which the Murmansk fishermen work in partnership with companies from Norway,

Finland, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, Peru, Angola, Iceland and a number of other countries.

Izvestiya

7 September 1989

Page 4 (full text)

Strike by Yukspor Miners

For three days the workers at the Yuksporskii mine of the "Apatit" production group were on a spontaneous sit-in strike. The reason was the paybooks that the miners had received. You probably won't believe it, but the miners here in the North receive for their heavy work underground just about 350 rubles after deductions. Yet in the North, as you know, prices in the stores and the marketplace are quite different from those in the capital or even in the Urals. However, the strike was precipitated not only by the question of wages but also by the working and living conditions.

Problems had been piling up for decades and no matter whom we approached, they could not be solved. General directors would be appointed and leave their posts - some in glory, others in obscurity. But the problems remained unchanged. New production plans are decided upon by recognizing "past accomplishments" with a mandatory increase. How, then, are these plans fulfilled? In order to get their wages and the bonuses, the workers are forced to disregard the elementary safety rules and work, to the detriment of their health, in unventilated pits. After ten years of work under such conditions, many would become invalids after contracting occupational diseases...

The workers at Yukspor presented two basic demands: firstly, work loads and wage rates must be established not on the basis of bureaucratic calculations but after a detailed study of the workplace. Secondly, the norms governing the output of ore must be corrected, so that they would be within the limits of feasibility and the miners could work without idle time and rush jobs. In all, fifty-one proposals were made for improving the working conditions of our miners.

Trud

28 September 1989

Page 4 (full text)

OIL AND GAS

Urengoi Pipeline Construction Project in Jeopardy

This past summer, the Novourengoi regional committee of the trade union representing workers in the oil and gas industry received a warning from the employees of four integrated production lines of the Urengoitruboprovodstroi trust of their intention to strike. The reason? The trust had not paid any wages for three months. Work at the pipelines was in full swing, but the wickets of the payroll office were shut tight.

* * *

Summer in the circumpolar region is the time of mass vacations. When the said warning was received, only one member of the district committee's presidium - its secretary - the young trade union official L. Semenov was in town. He kept his head: he called a meeting of trade union activists for the next day and asked the invited leaders of the Industrial Construction Bank and of the trust for an explanation. It turned out that beginning in the spring, clients of the trust (organizations of the former Ministry of the Gas Industry) stopped paying for the work completed by the pipeline workers on several projects. The debt grew to more than 20 million rubles. So that no money remained, not only to pay the wages but also the suppliers, make credit payments, pay for insurance, etc.

It was found that in ten or so other groups people suffer because of frequent, albeit less protracted delays in payment of wages. So that if a strike started in one group, it is quite possible

that other groups might join them, because the patience of workers in the circumpolar regions was strained to the limit ...

The very same day, L. Semenov sent a telegram to Moscow and transmitted to the local newspaper the text of the appeal adopted by the meeting, calling on the government authorities and the central committee of the trade union to untie the financial knot. The municipal authorities and the economic sector were urged by the trade union officials to act immediately in order to restore some normality to the situation.

The conflict was quickly resolved. The Tyumen' territorial administration of the Industrial Construction Bank of the USSR appropriated to the Urengoitrubprovodstroi trust 3.5 million rubles in the form of a short-term loan guaranteed by the Zapsibtruboprovodstroi association. Three days later, the Urengoi pipeline workers received their pay. The question of a strike no longer arose.

Thus sounded the first "bell" announcing the emergence in the Tyumen's North of a new and alarming problem pregnant with unpredictable social consequences. Just think that in the Zapsibtruboprovodstroi association the total arrears accumulated by clients amount to 155 million rubles. Moreover, the gas industry has not settled its accounts with Tsentrtruboprovodstroi and Yuzhtruboprovodstroi, whose subdivisions, together with the Tyumen' gas industry developers, are building the main gas pipelines Yamburg - Volga region, northern districts of the Tyumen' province - Urals, and Yamal - Torzhok. Besides, these are now abandoned projects with rusting, expensive imported pipes. The equipment has been removed from them and

the workers sent on vacation. But soon they will return and in what can they be employed (we are talking about tens of thousands of highly qualified builders)? There is no other work for them in the north...

"If the clients do not find a solution, emotions will run high," says V. Kurgaev, interim chairman of the trades committee of the Urengoi trust.

But the problem is that the official clients - the gas industry people - have nothing to do with it either. They are merely an intermediate link. In actual fact, the construction of the oil and gas extraction complex was financed centrally by the State budget.

"The root of the evil is the deficit in the State budget," maintains L. Rafikov, chief of the territorial production administration of the Tyumen' gazprom trust. This is why the government, as early as last April, cut the volume of centralized investments for us by half a billion rubles. We have asked for a loan in the amount of a billion rubles but so far we have been unable to obtain it. We have no means to repay it.

The Tyumen' oil industry is in a similar situation. At the beginning of the year, the government curtailed the financing of drilling operations. In all, 130 tunnelling crews had to be eliminated. They were followed, naturally, by the subcontractors: derrick assemblers, developers of the deposits to commercial level, geophysicists, oil well cementers, and transport workers all had to stop working. When rumors of this kind began to seep through to the gang level, they provoked unrest and talk about a strike. True, things are quieter now.

Following the letter addressed to the Council of Ministers of the USSR and signed by the deputy minister, the director of the Glavtyumen'neftegaz trust, V. Graifer, the chairman of the provincial committee of the trade union, N. Trifonov, and the chairman of the council of labor groups at the main administration, V. Sidoreiko, financing has been found for the planned volume of drilling. But this is just a temporary reprieve ...

As is well-known, in his report to the Supreme Soviet concerning the State plan for the coming year, the First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Yu. Maslyukov, informed the members that the production investments in the country's fuel and energy sector would be cut by 40%.

"If the appropriations for Tyumen' are cut by that amount", says the chairman of the provincial committee of the trade union, N. Trifonov, "then, according to preliminary calculations, some 150,000 people will lose their jobs at once. That means that most of them will have to leave. But on the "big land", from where they came here, many people don't have housing. What can they do there?"

Certainly, we all understand - especially after the discussions at the Congress of People's Deputies and the session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR - that without a substantial cut in the State's investments in industrial development it will be impossible to achieve a more healthy state for our economy, to reduce the deficit and, consequently, to improve the situation in the social sphere. In other words, we finally abide by the rule that one should build according to one's means. It was exactly this solution that we voted for, together with the deputies.

But how many people gave a thought to the complexity and difficulty of the intended measure? To make cuts in construction does not simply mean to cross out certain projects in a list of titles. There are people behind all that. Their fate, their personal plans and hopes. Of course, builders will always find work in large cities. But in our enormous country there are also special regions the industrial sphere of which is narrowly specialized. Development in the Tyumen' North only began because of its natural wealth - oil and gas. At the present time, almost 500,000 builders are working in the province of Tyumen'. A freeze in the gas and oil industry will lead to unemployment: as you well know, there is no other industry here.

Another question must be asked: by whom and how will it be decided that we can do without such and such a project already started or planned for the near future? Cuts in the construction sector have begun, but without an open public discussion. As before, everything is decided in the lobbies which, as experience has shown, often leads to errors and conflicts ...

Even so, there is no doubt that the wave of cuts in the State's investments, whatever the outcome, will roll throughout the Tyumen' North. Don't forget that in recent times it was absorbing a significant part of the State budget: up to 15-16 billion rubles a year. Moreover, as numerous audits have shown, this money was not used judiciously, often being wasted because of mismanagement. No economy can afford such luxury.

But what must be done on behalf of the trade unions, so that these cuts will not hurt the tens of thousands of workers who are declared

"supernumerary"? It will be impossible to stifle discontent for ever by emergency measures. The problem calls for a fundamental, thoughtful solution. What is the position of the State Committee on Labor and Wages and of the Central Committee of the Trade Union representing workers in the oil and gas industry? So far the people of Tyumen' have received no answer to these questions. Insecurity makes people nervous. Discontent is growing in many collectives ...

Comment by the Newspaper's Department of Social Problems

What should they be prepared for, what can they count on, these conquerors of the Tyumen' North?

V. Makeev, secretary of the All-Union Council of Trade Unions, leader of a working group of this organization and of the State Committee on Labor and Wages, whose task it is to coordinate the activity of the agencies responsible for the application of labor laws aimed at ensuring efficient employment of the work force, was not aware of the particular Tyumen' problem during our interview.

"This is not quite my problem. In principle, the position of the trade unions is clear: people should not suffer. When cuts occur or the enterprise is shut down, the ministries must care for their employees: find jobs for them or, if necessary, retrain ..."

The chairman of the Central Committee of the trade union representing the workers of the oil and gas industry, V. Sedenko, was quite determined:

"The freeze should bear on other, less important projects which we can do without at the present time. The Tyumen' complex is not in that category. The Central Committee of the Trade Union and the Ministry of Oil and Gas Industry sounded the alarm. As a result, the government entrusted the Ministry of Finance and the State Planning Commission of the USSR to study the question and possibly, find other sources of financing such as credits. We are now listening to public opinion and familiarizing our deputies ... And we hope for a favorable solution to this problem."

The deputy chairman of the State Committee on Labor and Wages - he is also the leader of the above-mentioned working group of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions and the State Commission on Labor and Wages, V. Buinovskii, had a different view:

"It is improbable that fundamental changes will be introduced in the government's list of projects to be affected by the freeze when it is studied at the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. In my opinion, many people simply do not believe that any projects or enterprises will be shut down. They hope that, as on previous occasions, it will remain just talk.

"Well, so far we have no experience in closing down projects", continued Buinovskii. "You remember how it was done before. When one project was finished, another would be started, and the entire collective would move to it with practically no changes. Now the situation is different - we are striving for economy, for rational and efficient employment. The time has come to create a State program for using human resources which would take

into account the prospects for the economic development of the regions, and establish by law a system of professional orientation, training and retraining of personnel. Our committee has started work in this direction. We also intend to ask the government to establish a special fund for financing the centers of retraining and for payment of unemployment benefits."

... So the question of the future of the Tyumen North is left hanging. And it may happen that, toward the end of the year, the builders, in spite of Comrade Sedenko's hopes, will face substantial cuts. Why not then develop a more definite plan of action to face this unpleasant scenario, to minimize or, perhaps, completely avoid social losses and unnecessary tensions? The same thing should obviously be done with respect to other projects appearing in the "freezing" list. Plans are being drawn up for the centralized "freezing" of large projects. In short, there will be a large-scale release of labor. What, then, can the working group, the State Commission for Labor and Wages, the All-Union Council of Trade Unions and, ultimately the government itself suggest in this situation?

This is not the time for indecision. To avoid further social conflicts, a clear-cut program of action must be worked out, so that all of the workers who lose their jobs will enjoy a constitutionally guaranteed right to work.

Trud

12 September 1989

Page 2 (slightly abridged)

SOCIOLOGICAL ISSUES

A Plea for Help for the Chukotka Native Peoples

For the first time in many decades, in the draft platform of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union serious concern is expressed over the plight of the indigenous peoples of the North. The time has come for extraordinary measures in order to save what can still be saved.

Frankly, the native people of the Chukotka district are on the verge of extinction. It is not uncommon for the young people to be ignorant of their native language, customs, and traditions. A heavy blow to the integrity of the local native population was the division of villages into promising and unpromising. People were resettled to regional centers, torn from their traditional way of life, their favored work, the burial grounds of their ancestors. In reality, they were deprived of their immediate homeland, of their history.

The native population of Chukotka is essentially rural dwelling, so that, in my opinion, the solution to the nationalities problem must take into account this specific circumstance by starting with the social policy in the village. Housing is a particularly urgent problem. On the average, each person in Chukotka has 3.2 square meters at his or her disposal. Quite often two or three families belonging to several generations live in one house. Moreover, these houses were built in the 1950's and most of them are in total disrepair.

In this connection, I think, the statement in the draft platform to the effect that the North

needs special protection and assistance from the State was just and timely. I am raising this point because quite often we are denied all civil rights. I will quote a concrete example. The agroindustrial enterprises of Chukotka receive material and technical resources that are in disproportion with their actual needs. Therefore, we are trying to conclude direct agreements with Soviet industrial enterprises. In exchange for their above-plan production we pledge to deliver to them what we produce over and above the plan. However, toward the end of last year, the Magadan provincial executive committee prevented us from selling outside of the province the fish that had been caught over and above the plan, i.e. selling to the enterprises with which we have special agreements. It seems that in our land we cannot take a step without permission from above. How, then, do you want us to strengthen our economy?

The problems I am discussing here are directly related to the nationalities policy. One simply cannot ignore them.

Sotsialisticheskaya
industriya

12 September 1989

Page 1 (slightly abridged)

TRANSPORT - AIR

New Air Link Murmansk - Tromsø

A new international line of Aeroflot has opened. It links the city of Murmansk with the city of Tromsø in northern Norway.

This air link, which has reduced the travelling time more than tenfold, will favor the strengthening of economic ties between the northern regions of the USSR and Norway. Moreover, the new line opens up great possibilities for expanding the exchange of tourists. In particular, the international tourist route Tromsø-Murmansk-Spitsbergen-Tromsø which has been under discussion with the Norwegians for some time now becomes feasible.

Among those making the inaugural flight were members of an official delegation from the provincial council of Tromsø, who came to Murmansk to discuss the program of joint action within the framework of border cooperation between Norway's northern regions and the USSR, and also a group of Norwegian businessmen.

Vozdushnyi transport

12 September 1989

Page 3 (full text)

TRANSPORT - RAIL

Railroad Construction Project in the Tyumen' North
Called a Five Hundred Million Rouble Folly

The cold wind was like a wall, and the heavy wet sand stuck to our feet. I looked back and watched the moving sand mass slowly obliterate my footprints. Not a single person could be seen. Just the indistinct silhouettes of buildings were looming in the distance. The unfinished chimney led one to guess that this was the boiler house and, in front of it, half submerged in ground water, the framework of a locomotive depot.

We came closer. Suddenly the massive hinge of the depot gate swung open with an abominable grinding sound and a prolonged echo reverberated over the smooth green surface of the water filling the inspection ditches. This is how Korotchaevo greeted us.

The construction of this station is at present caught up in a network of problems and contradictions. One thing is clear: it cannot be made operative in its full capacity. The builders do not have sufficient production capacities at their disposal. But no agreement has been reached so far on how to prioritize the starting complex in order to retain the installations already built. You remember the classical saying: "An agreement is the product of the absence of conflict between the parties." In other words, if there is no agreement, then somebody is opposed and not amenable to compromise. We shall return to this excessively principled aspect. In the meantime, let us have a look at the panorama of a gigantic transport construction project in the Tyumen' North.

Hundreds of kilometers of railroad line stretch from Tyumen' to Nizhnevartovsk, Nadym and Yamburg together with dozens of stations and bridges, thousands of industrial, residential and service structures, and hundreds of thousands of people. Nowadays there is not even a trace of the past euphoria felt by the entire country at the mere mention of Tyumen's mineral wealth. And the worm of doubt is gnawing at the heart of all those who happen to find themselves in the field of gravitation of this railroad line. Now everybody is keeping count of the debits and credits and willy-nilly asking themselves: why do we need a deficit railroad? Don't we have other things to spend our money on? There isn't anything we can haul from the North. Was it, then, worth the trouble to pile up fifteen hundred kilometers of line?

This seems reasonable. But after mature reflection you begin to notice a flaw in these calculations. Excuse me for asking, but whom does it inconvenience, the Ministry of Railways? Yes, it is an expensive toy for that Ministry. But what if we make our calculations having in mind the interests of the country? The delivery of cargoes to the gas and oil industry personnel along impassable roads, rivers, or by air would be incomparably more costly. So, no matter what, the railroad is cheaper. Why, then, not assign a part of these substantial savings to cover the deficit of the railroad. But the Council of Ministers and the State Planning Commission apparently do not subscribe to this approach.

... It took years for the railroad to reach the North. Now the time has come to complete the construction of the 82-kilometer section between Pur and Korotchaevo. But here is where the confusion

started. The Korotchaevo station is not ready for use. A decision was made to open the section without that station. But there are already residential homes in Korotchaevo, the communications center and the post for electrical centralization of switches and signals are filled with equipment, the communications cable has been laid and, with proper effort, the locomotive depot, the boiler house and the kindergarten could also be completed. What should be done with these structures? Should they just be given up?

The builders would be happy to hand over everything that is ready. The Ministry of Railways also supports this idea, the more so since the decision concerns not just a simple sector of the project to be put into operation - say bare rails without housing - but to the contrary, housing units, a kindergarten plus several industrial objects. But for some reason the people at the Central Committee of the Trade Union cannot understand it, and they are precisely the party that is hindering the reaching of an agreement.

For instance, the chief technical inspector of labor at the Central Committee of the Trade Union, O. Filippov, refuses to take over the sector because there are no rest facilities for the locomotive teams, no shelters where the railroad track and traffic workers and those employed in car maintenance could warm up and take their meals, no base for servicing and repair of the rolling stock, and so on.

True, all of that is missing, but we are talking about a totally different thing. For instance, here is what is said in a telegram signed by the Deputy Minister of Railway, N. Isingarín: "The railroad is not faced with the problem of accepting

the line for permanent service, nor are you the only supporters of the idea of accepting it for permanent service as a complex together with all the social services and living facilities.

It was precisely the Ministry of Railways that actively supported delaying the date for putting in operation the sectors Pur-Korotchaevo and Korotchaevo-Yagel'naya from 1987 to the following years of the Five-Year plan and then to the 13th Five-Year plan, on the understanding that the "Tyumen'stroiput'" trust did not dispose of sufficient production capacities to hand over the project as a complex ...

But another problem arises in this connection. What to do now with those houses, communal residences, the communications center, the electrical signaling post, the cable communications line, the boiler house, the locomotive stock and other objects that have been completed or are being completed?

Suggest to the builders that they should not occupy or use them until the service sector decides to take them over? You are not talking now about a year or two but about five or six years ...

We are in favor of looking for variants and decisions that would permit us to keep this housing for the benefit of our railroad personnel, after deciding on a further course of action, and we do not support the previous method of accepting unfinished installations for permanent service.

This is an unequivocal stance that takes into account the existing reality and, in our opinion, it calls for no further comment. But it

does not satisfy Oleg Vasil'evich Filippov. He continues to defend his position saying that there would be an infringement of decree No. 105 issued by the USSR Council of Ministers on January 23, 1981 concerning the "Acceptance for service of projects completed by building trusts". He is willing to make concessions only if the State Construction Committee makes corrections to the regulations now in force governing the acceptance of projects for temporary service.

The desire to do everything in conformity with the law is praiseworthy. However, by following blindly the letter of the paragraphs one may commit a serious crime: destroy the results of people's labor and waste millions of rubles. And this is unavoidable if the objects built in Korotchaev are not placed in service at once.

And Korotchaev, after all, is just a trifle - some ninety million rubles worth of unfinished work. The "Tyumen'stroiput'" trust has five hundred million worth in unfinished work scattered across the North. However, one dare not accuse the builders of squandering the State's resources. After all, we must not try to pin responsibility on anybody, but rather we must speak again about our rough-and-tumble economy (governed by considerations of total output), which in its senselessness resembles a supersonic air liner drawn by oxen and which transforms into folly the noble effort of creation.

The whole secret is that our builders nowadays cannot live without unfinished work. Excavation work, zero cycles, assembly work - all this is convenient for them, because it gives a good total output. To put it bluntly, one excavator operator and a couple of drivers are capable of

feeding an entire construction assembly train. But as soon as it comes to finishing, where the price of materials used is low, as also is the wage scale, but many hands are needed, the construction site is seized with fever. Therefore, so as not to be left unprotected, the builders try to pack into their plan as many new projects as they can. And they dig, and they dig ...

Thus the total output principle which governs our economy, instead of forcing people to maneuver efficiently and find the best solutions, converts them into wooden marionettes, and they - as if at the devil's instigation - sink millions in the infinite wonderland. Obviously, we can say goodbye to the funds which are so badly needed for expanding the social programs.

It is good to be an idealist dreaming about happiness for all and at once. But it is only good when you have put your house in order. But when your house is far from that, when you don't see right away the direction from which to approach all the obstacles, you have to be realistic, do some strict accounting and display an ability to compromise, so that the millions will not lie buried in the ground but will finally begin to bear fruit.

Gudok

8 September 1989

Page 2 (full text)

TRANSPORT - WATER

Yachts on the North Sea Route (1)

The expedition along the Northern Sea Route of the yachts "Yakutsk" and "Aivengo" is continuing. The Izvestiya correspondent participating in the expedition, Captain Borodin of the "Aivengo", reported before sailing:

"This is the second voyage of the Yakutsk yachtmen in the eastern sector of the Arctic. Last year, also under the sponsorship of Izvestiya, we - traveling on the yacht "Yakutsk" - visited the Novosibirskie Islands, reaching the 76th parallel of latitude. The participants of the expedition want to accomplish several tasks. First of all, they want to study the problems facing the population of the Yakut Republic in connection with the intensive industrial development going on in the region's northern districts. We are also trying to shed light on the secret of the food caches established in the Novosibirskie Islands in the past century by the Russian polar explorer E. Toll for the expedition of the Norwegian scientist and explorer F. Nansen, and also of those caches that were already in place at the beginning of the century for E. Toll, also on the islands of this archipelago.

Then we shall continue our voyage eastward to the shores of Chukotka and on to the Bering Strait.

Izvestiya
13 September 1989
Page 3 (full text)

Yachts on the Northern Sea Route (2)

Having left the ice for the clear water of the Bering Strait, the yachts "Aivengo" and "Yakutsk" headed for the port of Providenie. Having reached it, their crews left for the port of registration - Tiksi - at which this lengthy voyage began.

The expedition along the eastern sector of the Northern Sea Route was organized by the Yakutskstroi trust, the "Yakutskgeologiya" association, the "Poisk" club and other sponsors.

Originally, the sailors' navigation charts indicated the Novosibirskie Islands as their final destination, where the intention was to continue the search for traces of the lost polar expedition of Eduard Toll. However, the dangerous ice in the eastern sector of the Arctic prevented the realization of this plan.

"So as not to interrupt the planned voyage" - explained the leader of the excursion, Egidius Lozoraitis, "we have decided to use the alternate variant - complete the passage from the Bering Strait to the Bay of Providenie."

In itself, a polar voyage by yacht can be considered unique. However, the participants are not merely guided by sporting considerations. The yachtsmen are planning to do some filming for future television films highlighting the working days of polar station crews.

Stroitel'naya gazeta

24 September 1989

Page 3 (full text)

Heading for the Arctic

The motor ship "Pioneer of Russia" departed for the arctic coast today. It is the last cruise to polar latitudes from the port of Vanino by ships of the Sakhalin steamship line during the present navigation season.

The crew will deliver to the northerners a consignment of lumber, construction kits for assembling prefabricated houses, as well as various other materials and equipment. On its return voyage to the mainland the ship will carry large-dimensional loads and empty containers.

Sovetskaya Rossiya

13 September 1989

Page 1 (Full text)

From Osetrovo on the Lena to Zelenyi Mys on the Kolyma Without Reloading

The shallow-draught vessels of the "Yakutsk" type are scheduled to undertake, during the present navigation season, experimental voyages from the port of Osetrovo to the port of Zelenyi Mys on the Kolyma river without supplementary transshipment of their load.

For the first time in the history of the Northern Sea Route, the shallow-draught river vessel "Kurgan" delivered, on September 1s, a 2,000-ton load from Osetrovo to Zelenyi Mys without reloading to seagoing steamships, as was previously done. This meant a saving of three days in time plus thousands of rubles in State resources. Captain Viktor

Vladimirovich Kanaev, first-class specialist at the RSFSR Ministry of River Shipping, was in command of the vessel during the experimental voyage.

After consultations with the shipping line, the voyage continued. Previously, shallow-draught seagoing vessels would take on cargo from large-capacity river ships at the estuary of the Kolyma river and deliver it to the port of Zelenyi Mys, where it was again reloaded onto river vessels for eventual delivery to the population in the upper course of the Kolyma. After unloading at Zelenyi Mys, the "Kurgan" filled its holds with some fifteen hundred tons of fresh vegetables that it had received at sea from the "Kapitan Danilkin" of the Murmansk shipping line, and already on September 9th it delivered a load to Srednekolymsk. A few days later, the "Kurgan" delivered the remainder of the vegetables to Zyryanka.

Vodnyi transport

19 September 1989

Page 1 (full text)

MISCELLANEOUS

Noril'sk Gets Medical Syringes and Consumer Goods in Exchange for Waste Paper

Disposable medical syringes and consumer goods - such will be the "payment" for waste paper supplied by Noril'sk. The fair exchange is guaranteed by a joint venture established by the "Stalker" cooperative of the "Noril'skremontazh" Trust and the Yugoslav firm "Kemikalia".

In addition, the Yugoslav partners will receive for processing the tailings from the main reduction unit of the Noril'sk mining and metallurgical combine, a part of whose output will go to Taimyr.

Sotsialisticheskaya
industriya

28 September 1989

Page 2 (full text)

Scrap Metal Recovery Program at Tiksi

The arctic coast of the Yakut Republic is sometimes called a second Magnitogorsk on account of the countless thousands of tons of metal rusting in the dumps around settlements, cities, polar stations, and drill holes.

Fortunately, there are now good reasons to believe that the tundra will be cleaned up. In the settlement of Tiksi, a team of the Yakut Republic's industrial enterprise "Vtorchermet" has started work.

"For eight years we had been trying to start work in Tiksi", says S.A. Markin who is heading this team, "but the project had not progressed beyond the stage of discussion. Only three years ago the standstill was overcome. Now we have received a budget, the technical equipment, and we are starting to work."

The Yakut "Vtorchermet" has concluded an agreement with the Yakut sea transport trust on the subject of a joint undertaking for collecting and shipping scrap metal. The quantities of metal stipulated by the plan of "Vtorchermet" will be shipped to the smeltery of the "Amurstal" trust.

Sovetskaya Rossiya

17 September 1989

Page 2 (full text)

Toyota Minibuses at Noril'sk

Twenty Japanese minibuses were recently delivered to the transpolar region. They were paid for with the money saved by the people of Noril'sk in concluding their foreign contracts. Previously, such savings had to be surrendered to the State budget whereas now, according to the new rules, the enterprises may count on receiving a part of it. This makes it necessary for them to search for the most convenient partners on the world market.

By the way, the Japanese Toyotas purchased by the people of Noril'sk cost half the amount they would have spent had they bought minibuses built in Riga.

Sotsialisticheskaya
industriya

15 September 1989

Page 2 (full text)

Scientist Discusses Possible UFO Landing Near Surgut

At the present time, newspapers quite often publish reports about unidentified flying objects (UFOs). However, reports of this kind are met with considerable mistrust by serious readers having some connection with science.

The main objection of the skeptics is that those who are lucky enough to meet the "aliens" for some reason are mostly casual individuals, simple dilettantes. Can one take their accounts seriously?

No such objection can be made to El'vir Ivanovich Kucherenko. He is a serious scientist, a Candidate of Physical and Mathematical Sciences, who for many years has been interested in beings from other planets.

"Toward the end of August this year", reports Kucherenko "I happened to be at a drill hole situated one hour by helicopter to the north of Surgut. And one of the workers there, A. Lelin, told me that he just returned from the landing site of a UFO.

"Accompanied by one of the workers, I headed for the bank of a taiga creek two or two and a half kilometers from the drill hole. We recognized the spot immediately because of a circular clearing in the forest 60-70 meters in diameter. The trees in the clearing were uprooted, lying one on top of the other. The roots were projecting upwards, in some places three to four meters. There were badly singed, and some were even carbonized. One could even see occasional branches with profile burns similar to those encountered after a nuclear explosion.

"In brief, what we saw were not just vestiges of an ordinary forest fire. Could it have been a meteorite? With considerable difficulty, forcing our way through upturned roots, we examined conscientiously the entire clearing. We were looking for the crater which should have been formed if a meteorite had fallen. There wasn't any.

"Sometime in the past, I had a chance to study the methods of biolocation at the Institute of Mineralogy, Geochemistry and Crystallochemistry of Rare Elements, of the USSR Ministry of Geology. Equipped with a couple of metal frames, my companion and I found that some sort of radiation was emanating from the ground at that particular spot. Of course, on the basis of this alone I cannot state positively that an interplanetary ship from an unknown civilization had made a landing on the bank of a taiga creek."

Stroitel'naya gazeta
16 September 1989
Page 4 (full text)

Purchases of Foreign Equipment for Seamen's Hospital at Archangel

The Northern Steamship Line has appropriated more than 400,000 rubles in hard currency for its clinic. The money has been used to purchase the latest diagnostic equipment in England, Japan, West Germany and Switzerland. This has made possible the opening and equipping of a diagnostic department and of two dental offices at the hospital. A large quantity of disposable syringes have also been

Spetsialisticheskaya
Industriya
13 September 1989
Page 2 (full text)

bought. The new equipment will improve the medical services to the 75,000 sailors and their families.

Sotsialisticheskaya
industriya

16 September 1989

Page 3 (full text)

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