

to spread, we'll do this, this and this"... For the country as a whole, ten or twenty of these systems are needed. But we have nothing of the kind at present.

"Today, all that we have in the way of fire fighting equipment is a handful of fire trucks and some shovel-type implements valued at 25 roubles a piece. There is no first strike equipment. Here is just one example of what happened this year. A fire was spotted near Komsomol'sk-on-Amur. We were in the air with a dozen parachutists on board, and quickly flew to the site. The area of the fire was less than a hectare. But by the time we had encircled it, calculated the wind velocity and after several passes completed the air drop, the fire had spread to 15 hectares. We had to monitor it for three weeks before putting it out.

"In addition to the driver, a fire truck carries only one man. We approached the factory and asked if a truck for five or six men could be allocated to us, at prices to be agreed. They replied saying "We won't give you any such thing", and they haven't. During the current year we have not received a single fire truck. I am asking you to verify this, not because we are not giving you something, which is not what we want anyway, but because we are tied hand and foot."

N. Pogodin (Head of the Primorskaya Forest Protection Air Base). "Until we have the equipment, we will extinguish fires by whatever methods, including shovels, that are available. Unquestionably, this means that there will be injuries and fatalities. This is why I am once again asking our scientists to devise easy and reliable individual protective facilities. Also, there is a need for medical personnel supplied with powerful anaesthetics to be on hand at large fires. My own children were caught in a fire this year and endured excruciating pain for several hours. The first aid kits are of very poor quality."