

timber industry complex tried to smooth over obvious problems and defend their own narrow interests. Emotions were at boiling point when K. Mazminov, Director of the Pulp and Paperboard Research Institute, a part of the logging and timber complex, rose to speak.

"The condition of our air is entirely normal," he told the meeting. "Emissions from the Bratsk timber industry complex are not affecting the health of the people of Bratsk, it's all in the mind. These emotional outburst are due to ignorance."

This was clearly not a productive way to discuss the question. The speaker was literally chased off the platform and prevented from speaking again, even though he made several attempts to explain his point of view. As Director of the Institute, he maintains that his is the only correct view, based as it is on precise data. However, the municipal deputies' Commission on Environmental Protection, also composed of specialists, has collected data leading to the opposite conclusion.

The Commission Chairman, O. Budilov, said at the meeting: "A powerful concentration of industrial production has created a very difficult ecological situation in the city. On average, 170,000 tonnes of harmful substances are discharged into the atmosphere annually. The concentration of methylmercaptan in the residential area is 50 times higher than the maximum permissible concentration, the level of hydrogen fluoride is 3.5 times higher, that of carbon disulfide 13 times higher, and of hydrogen sulfide 4.5 times higher.

Thus, the maximum permissible concentrations are being exceeded all the time. And yet this index signifies none other than the maximum allowable level for the emission of harmful substances, the threshold beyond which damage to the environment and people's health is inevitable. One doesn't have to be a specialist to realize that these indices have been worked out with a view to their being observed rather than violated, with the violations later treated as figments of the imagination.