

have been made yesterday! It would seem necessary to form temporary work groups with strict time limits on their work schedule.

I may be reproached for concentrating on questions of organisation in the solution of which the USSR Academy of Sciences cannot and should not be a major player, rather than concentrating on global problems of biospheric research. However, in the last few years the number of messages and appeals to the Siberian Branch (and, I think, to the Academy as a whole) has increased to avalanche proportions: "Help us solve our ecological problems"; "Perform ecological analysis". If we do not channel this work into a clear system as soon as possible, then we will suffocate under the pile of queries and requests and we will hardly be in position to deal with the truly fundamental problems of ecology.

Of course, the future lessening of damage to the natural world will demand a huge effort, considerable means and an extended time-scale: a problem of these proportions cannot be solved with a wave of the hand. It is important that all efforts at nature conservation rely on a comprehensive knowledge of the actual situation and a thorough analysis of it. A grasp of the aims, a clear idea of the tasks of the most immediate importance, the optimum distribution of resources - only that sort of systematic approach will make it possible to achieve, so to speak - the formula for clean air.

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