

Overview of Crisis Confronting
The Soviet Timber Industry

Even our best known economists seem to have quietened down recently. They are not refusing to be interviewed by the press of course, but their prescriptions for pulling the country out of its crisis have somehow become muted. Nevertheless, one can understand them - just try to offer a specific remedy in a situation like this. It's like jumping into the water from a great height without knowing what's waiting for you down below....

Meanwhile it is absolutely necessary "to jump", for there is no time left to waste. The national debt has reached astronomical proportions. The growth in expenditures has exceeded revenues, labor productivity is falling and the production of commodities is on the decline even by comparison with last years' figures. All these trends are, in particular, characteristic of the forestry complex as well. We are already four and a half months into 1990, but there is still virtually nothing to rejoice about. Delivery contracts are, as usual, being breached, and the industry's debt to its consumers has surpassed 240 million rubles in monetary terms.

Frankly, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find appropriate alternative methods to stabilize the situation even within the industry itself. Long-term solutions no longer work. We must hurry: the forestry complex is rumbling like an awakened volcano.

Yes, the administrative and command system is falling apart. Nowadays nobody has any confidence in its ability to run the forestry complex and plan the work ahead with due competence. And this applies first and foremost to Gosplan (the USSR State Planning Commission) and Gossnab