

importance of this factor, forget about it completely when the talk turns to cubic metres. Again, the main conclusion is that we have many forests and that they can be cut down at random and in whatever quantity is deemed desirable.

First of all, let's take a look at whether our forest resources are really so limitless? In fact, if one goes by the official statistics then the area of the general forest lands administered by the State (Goslesfond) comprises 1,259.4 million hectares; this includes 810.9 million of forest-covered lands. The total timber stock in the forests is 85.9 billion cubic metres. The Goslesfond lands occupy 56% of the area of the country. They occur in all of the natural zones, including the deserts, tundra regions, mountain ranges, and other ecologically complex territories. Not all forests are important as sources of raw material. Over large areas, the role of the forest is mainly ecological and in them, large-scale commercial logging is prohibited.

The country's timber industry manages upwards of 792 million hectares of forest-covered lands, of which 385.1 million hectares are commercially exploited. The standing volume of timber is 47.1 billion cubic metres and consists mainly (74%) of conifers. The other lands are occupied by bushes and low-productivity stands with a standing volume of timber per hectare of less than 50 cubic metres. Some of the forests are given over to pastures. Forests which fulfill important ecological functions occupy about 100 million hectares. Principal fellings are prohibited in these by law.

So what is the actual industrial potential? The planned coupe has been set at 636.2 million cubic metres, 400.1 million of which are coniferous stands. In addition, timber can be procured in these forests in improvement fellings and in sanitary, rehabilitation and other types of fellings. So, the total volume of potential timber procurement, with all norms and regulations observed, is more than 700 million cubic metres. A further 30 million approximately can be obtained in forests administered by collective and state farms. Nevertheless, the fact is that in 1987 only 339 million cubic metres were procured at principal fellings, which is little