

We had to listen to people who are far removed from the problems of our sector. What good is a punched card anyway except to drive in nails? Who needs it? We do not deny that in the computer age punched cards and card readers are already of an earlier day. However, the USSR State Bureau of Statistics continues to be acutely in need of this product, which is delivered to most regions of the country. Incidentally, the output of it has already been reduced from 29,000 to 20,000 tonnes.

The Sloka pulp and paper mill is the only enterprise in the country producing paper cups for ice cream and juices, salt and sugar packaging, and poster and ticket paper. Since January 1st of this year, at the request of the Latvian public pulp production has been cut back by 25%, and four paper-making machines have been shut down. As a result, the output of paper has decreased by 23,600 tonnes. Among the items which have been dropped are the same cups and salt packages, which greatly disturbed the food producers and may soon be felt by the consumer as well.

Yes, Riga is seething. Demonstrators and picketers, fighters "for political and ecological purification" are demanding that the Sloka pulp and paper mill be shut down, perceiving it as the "main enemy" of Yurmala. Notwithstanding the fact that I have often heard such "outpourings" by local residents as "It makes no difference, this mill does not provide anything for Latvia, everything is being exported", let us say frankly: this is far from the truth. The republic's requirement for paper products is 107,000 tonnes. One third of this is covered by Latvian enterprises themselves, with the remainder, amounting to 47 types of products, being imported. This includes all the newsprint and printing paper.