

Q: "The question of improving working conditions stands at par with social, everyday problems. Our editorial office often receives letters from people who are not merely complaining, but expressing their indignation at the condition of the machinery in the forestry industry. They write that the machines and mechanisms are unwieldy, inconvenient, unreliable, and lacking in the most elementary comforts for those who operate them. How long will this go on? When will our scientists and designers of forest machinery put their shoulder to the wheel?"

A: "These claims are fully justified. Forestry science is in great debt to the workers of the industry. We at the Ministry are fully aware of this. A number of measures have been taken to improve scientific work in this field, i.e. scientific organizations have gone over to full profit-and-loss accounting and self-financing, the management structure in this field of science has been improved, and temporary design collectives have begun working on the solution of these problems. The activities of the scientific organizations are based on management principles that treat the results of scientific research as a commodity, and the preamble to a contract - as the sole document governing the inter-relationships between the scientific organizations and the client in the new conditions. However, I have to say that these measures have yet to result in any radical changes. Furthermore, in the work contracted with our enterprises there is a tendency for a greater emphasis to be placed on topics of local interest which are largely irrelevant to our sector. We are also observing an increase in the volume of work contracted with organizations of other ministries and departments, usually at the expense of promising fundamental research projects. A weak spot