

Ecological Awareness and More Efficient Resource Use
Hampered by Administrative Duplication

There are many causes of negative manifestations in natural resource utilisation. Take the forests. In the RSFSR they cover an area of 766,600,000 hectares. This is 95 per cent of the entire forested region of the country. However, the absolute boss and manager of this wealth is not the people nor the Soviets, but Union-wide departments, namely the USSR Ministry of the Timber Industry, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) and the State Committee for Forestry (Goskomles), which latter organization is also responsible to the State for monitoring the conduct of forestry and the efficient use of the forests.

The results of heedless departmental management are lamentable. In a number of oblasts and krais the forest deteriorated due to the fellings exceeding the allowable cut. The coniferous forests, especially Pinus sibiricus, are becoming exhausted. Losses of timber are enormous. The forest plots and areas administered by the woodworking enterprises are littered with waste products. A great deal of timber is floating or has sunk to the bottom in rivers and enclosed water basins.

Inasmuch as 95 per cent of the forest-covered area of the country is in the RSFSR, the question regularly arises: why do we need a USSR State Committee for Forestry when there is already a Ministry of Forestry for the Republic? Another surplus link in the administration of natural resource use is the RSFSR Chief Directorate of Hunting (Glavokhota). It seems to me that we would be better off without these bodies.

The separateness of views with respect to natural resource use and above all else, departmental ambitions, are standing in the way of the emergence of nature conservation bodies. The time has come for everyone to be