

ENVIRONMENT

Strong Words About Pollution

An interview with E.A. Sizov, Head of the Environmental Protection and Water Usage Division of the USSR Ministry for the Timber Industry.

Q. "Mr. Sizov, ecological problems have become so acute today that they are rightly ranked in importance with peace and the prevention of nuclear war. How do you see the relationship between our industry and nature?"

A. "A great deal has already been said and written on this subject by the Soviet public and the mass media. Their opinions have been very negative, and there is really no need to add to them. I should quote some statistics, however. The Soviet pulp-and-paper industry annually uses 3.1 billion cubic metres of fresh water or 3.4% of the country's total water reserves. The volume of polluted effluents stands at 16.5%. In itself this gives us a good idea of the enormous volume of harmful effluents discharged into our rivers and other bodies of water by the pulp-and-paper mills. Our industry occupies first place among the various branches of Soviet industry for certain types of pollution. We are also major offenders in atmospheric pollution."

"The situation in the timber-cutting industry is equally serious. The press has been sounding the alarm about systematic harvesting beyond the allowable cut and the stripping of once-forested land, as a result of which the ecological balance is being disturbed."