

Kirov Oblast: Financing and Production Problems at
the Moloma Wood Chemicals Plant

By V. Tsybin, Director

Approximately once every six months representatives from the sanitary and epidemiological station come to the Moloma Wood Chemicals Plant and threaten to close us down. They have every right to do this - we have contributed quite enough to harming the environment.

Construction of the plant began in 1956. No-one worked very hard on the project and at times little progress was made at all. This is why the first phase, consisting of two retorts for manufacturing charcoal and a boiler for the production works, was finally ready for use fifteen years later. Immediately after that we were given the order to set the plant into operation. Our attempts to demonstrate that operating without purification facilities could cause unwarranted damage to the environment resulted in nothing. The higher authorities were adamant: "It took you long enough to build the plant and the country is in great need of charcoal. You had better get down to making up for this loss of production." The fact that it was not the plant that was responsible for the extended construction phase, but rather the higher authorities themselves, did not, of course, enter into it.

Thus, we began operations without any protective facilities. We attempted to burn the waste products but, given that they consisted of more than 80% water, this entire operation was of little use. We poisoned the Kichug river that runs