

In the Archangel Oblast, free floating is done on 36 rivers and three lakes with the total length of the waterways being 4,300 kilometres. The resulting losses of valuable fish species exceed 400,000 roubles annually.

Noone has made a full count of the other losses. How much timber floats past the log booms and traps, and how much is escaping due to poorly lashed bundles? How much is slipping off rafts damaged in accidents or stranded on shoals, and how much is sinking in the roadsteads of sawmills in Archangel? Fairly accurate data ought to be obtainable by using electronic equipment designed to investigate the river bottom. Such apparatus, as reported at a scientific and practical conference on the Northern Dvina, is available in Japan. It is true that the General Director of "Arkhangel'sklesprom", V.S. Lykhov, cast doubt on the validity of this report when we met with him, saying that he had not found such information in the advertising literature available to him.

Certainly, instruments for investigating the river bottom are needed. Even they, however, would not give a final picture of the losses, since special teams from "Dvina Floating" (Dvinosplay) are discovering accumulations of logs along the shores of the White Sea far from the Northern Dvina. Wave-driven logs can be sighted in the Solovetskii Islands and, reportedly, even in Norway.

Given the impossibility of turning back the clock, by 1990 free floating should be restricted to a maximum of 15 rivers. For the moment, however, it is necessary to deal strictly with violators of technological discipline, and with irresponsible workers who, in the pursuit of cheapness, are prepared to ruin forest, land and water.