

Repeated appeals by the USSR Ministry of the Timber Industry (Minlesprom SSSR) concerning the need to reduce the number of forest protection categories and resolve the question of doing stripped-coupe fellings where forest management and ecological requirements make this advisable are finding no support on the part of Goskomles SSSR.

Today, while disputing the idea of leasing out forest resources to forest users Goskomles is simultaneously coming forward with proposals about making it solely responsible for State monitoring of the condition and regeneration of the forests, and at the same time divesting itself of productive functions, namely reforestation and forest tending operations. Surely in the present economic climate it is hardly justifiable to talk about relegating an entire economic sector to the position of a dependant.

What has happened to the 25.7 million hectares of forests in the European Urals zone (and other zones also), excluded from the economic turnover through the implementation of this "single forest policy"? They are not being used. No wonder! Who would take out a lease on a forest without being granted the right to use it?

Even though, according to the new legislation the local soviets have the right to dispose of natural resources, no one is interested in taking possession of such forest resources. The new economic relations which are taking shape in our country clearly demonstrate the absurdity of such a policy.

Beginning in 1991, overfelling of allowable cuts is to be prohibited everywhere. At first glance this is to be welcomed. But there are enterprises in the sector in which up to 55 per cent of the forest resources (remember, the norm is 20 per cent) consist of mature and overmature forests. These forests urgently need to be felled. In them, nine out of every ten trees cut down have heart rot, and debris left on the felling area is as much as 30 cubic metres per hectare. Instead of providing for equalization