

## TIMBER AND WOODWORKING

### Typical Problems on the Road to Independence

Already two years have elapsed since the sector went over to profit-and-loss accounting and self-financing. Every month we are steering it along a difficult economic path and are left wondering. The path that has been chosen is undoubtedly correct, but the successes are more and more isolated. When you analyse them, what comes to mind is the classic example of "the swan, the pike and the crab". The swan, of course, stands for radical reform: the intentions are good but the load is heavy and it has difficulty in getting airborne. The pike is perceived as a neutral force. But who is the crab? Who is it that is dragging us backwards? That is the question.

The image, of course, is not new. But its relevance to the present situation is obvious. In recent years both the economic reform and the ecological threat have dictated a shift in emphasis, away from overfellings in favour of waste-free processing of timber. Alas! contrary to scientifically validated methods, forest use norms are steadily increasing and no action is being taken to curb overfellings. In the current year, for example, the RSFSR Council of Ministers has authorized boosting them to 17.4 million cubic metres.. The objections expressed by the State Committee for Forests (Goskomles) were shoved aside. Moreover, USSR Gosplan (State Planning Commission) is proposing that the norms that were set in sluggish 1980 be retained until 1995.

It is because of this kind of economic "policy" on the part of USSR Gosplan (State Planning Commission) that all of our forests are languishing. In the Irkutsk Oblast, for instance, the annual allowable cut exceeds 66 million cubic metres. Specialists have estimated that at felling

Dept. of External Affairs  
Min. des Affaires extérieures  
OTTAWA

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