

Should we increase industrial felling in the European part of the country?

There is no simple answer to this question. Forest utilization in the European part of the country is one of our most complicated problems, and not just as far as the economics of the forestry sector is concerned. The problem centres on the need for a scientifically based evaluation of the state of the forest resources in various groups of forests in this zone and on the development and realization of advanced methods of forest cultivation and of forest exploitation, which would allow for the preservation of the environment and of the many various natural functions of the forest.

Judging by the average annual increase, which amounts to more than 300 million cubic metres, there are definite possibilities for increasing the volumes of main-use and intermediate felling in this zone. However, this important problems requires more than just a formal solution, if the ecological connections with the surrounding environment are to remain undisturbed. It is appropriate to note here that at present almost one third of the stands of the main forest-forming species in the European zone have been designated first-group forests with all the protective forest utilization rules and regulations this entails. Nevertheless, we cannot fully support the proposal to do away with any increases in logging volumes in first-group forests. I believe that it might be possible to find a partial solution to the problem of increasing logging in the European part of the country. But in order to do this it would be necessary to provide for additional capital investment in the development of our forest resources. It would be equally necessary to ensure that the plans for forest exploitation and

*See, "Extracts from the Soviet Press on Forestry and Forest-Based Industries," December, 1987.