

A third strategic issue is the creation of an economic mechanism which would make the squandering and spoiling of natural resources an unprofitable activity. The principal elements of this kind of mechanism are set out in the well-known decree issued by the USSR Central Committee and the USSR Council of Ministers. The State Committee for Nature, the State Planning Commission, the State Pricing Committee and the USSR Ministry of Finance, with the assistance of the Academy of Sciences, should have developed and approved within a period of six months a payment procedure (both the amount and collection of payments) for the use of natural resources and for polluting, as well as the amounts of fines for exceeding permitted waste levels. A year has passed and what has been done?

Another vital area will be to radically improve technology. We know that prototypes of ecologically sound technology often come about during the process of fundamental research. Scientists, of course, should aim for them to be put into production as soon as possible. It was in this way that technological innovations of various sorts were first produced within the walls of the Siberian Branch of the Academy of Sciences: an ecologically friendly product which keeps down agricultural pests, based on a sprayer with adjustable dispersion, which means fewer toxic chemicals are needed. Other technology offers the possibility of gathering information about underground water reserves without having to drill. A third provides a catalytic process which can neutralise the waste gas produced by enterprises. There are many more, too.

However, making industry ecology-conscious is too important a matter to be left to chance. What is needed is a single-minded effort to evolve new,