

dealing with forest fires were described as cosmetic. The recent experience in the Tomsk region clearly demonstrated that the methods, arrangements and firefighting equipment currently employed were totally inadequate when fires were destroying tens and even hundreds of thousands of forest hectares. The forest protection army could be doubled or even tripled and the thousands of volunteer firefighters reinforced by the same number again without the desired effect being achieved. Immediate and drastic action was needed. The losses from forest fires were so great that even the most unusual and costly solutions would be justified and paid for many times over. If no such solutions were found within the country it would be necessary to seek them abroad. The USSR should copy, study and eventually purchase them for equivalent value in timber. It is common knowledge that in countries like Canada, the USA and Finland, no more than a dozen people are needed to put out a forest fire, since the lion's share of the work is done mechanically from the air.

"We have no comparable fire-fighting aircraft", ruefully admitted A. Chekerenda, the Commander of an air detachment. "Even though the USSR State Committee for Forestry has more than once concluded that we need a tanker aircraft, nothing has been done about it. The designers are proposing to build a special 15-seater light aircraft surpassing the role of the AN-2 currently used for fighting forest fires. How many months or years will have been spent on working up a fire-fighting version of the AN-26 with a cargo capacity of five tonnes?"

The situation on the ground was no better, either with respect to the forest protection service or the volunteer fire-fighters. It was sad to see the residents of Strezhevoi passing pails of water