

In analysing the results for the past year, the specialists have identified the causes of the low standard of protection of the forests against fires, namely the general neglect of the subject by directors of forestry agencies and enterprises, the chronic shortage of funds and of material and technical resources needed by the aviation and ground services, the scantiness of these services and the fact that we are extremely underequipped technically.

Aerial protection has proved to be in a critical state. In 1989 it was removed from the list of indices qualifying for the State order of the USSR Council of Ministers and its budgetary appropriations were cut. Funds available to the "Avialesookhrana" (Aerial Protection of the Forests) Association for the leasing of airships amounted to less than 62 per cent of what was needed, and the numbers of skilled parachutists and smoke-jumpers came to only 43 per cent of the normative requirements. This resulted in a diminished frequency of aerial patrols during periods of increased fire danger, an increase in the number of fires that were not spotted promptly and a lowering of operational efficiency.

In the vast majority of the Siberian and Far Eastern districts the unfavourable weather conditions were aggravated by the almost one third reduction in the numbers of workers at forest protection and chemical fire-control stations, the delayed transfer of forestry enterprises to the USSR Ministry of the Timber Industry, and also the continuing practice of diverting foresters to tasks pertaining to the industrial and other activities of the enterprises.

In the prikaz from Goskomles reference is made to such factors as the indecisiveness and at times, incompetence of individual employees of forestry and integrated timber and woodworking enterprises, the lack of a clear cut interaction with the executive committees of local Councils of People's Deputies and agencies of the militia,