

Specialists for the staffing of an air base will be hired as employees offering their knowledge and skills solely on a competitive basis. The air detachments will pay for their labour by debiting their own accounts, thereby ensuring that the work will be necessary and competently done. Such a system of operations will prevent unnecessary inflation of staffs and give a "financial boost" to the creative thinking of managers and specialists.

The system employed in aerial protection of the forests relies mainly on manual firefighting procedures. But "hand ploughing" can only be done successfully when the fire is detected early. To this end, new aircraft are needed: continually hovering light aircraft equipped with instruments for detecting any fires that may be present and fast airships for deliveries of personnel, machinery and water.

What do we have just now in the way of useful, ground-based equipment? The machinery currently available for the equipping of mechanised detachments and chemical fire control stations - the LKhT-55 and "Kazakhstanets" tractors, the ATs-66 fire truck and the VPL-149 cross-country vehicle are barely capable of extinguishing fires, even along the peripheries where they are close to inhabited places. Virgin forest is inaccessible to them. It was not without reason that the Urals Air Base gave up maintaining unprofitable mechanised detachments and during the past strained season with respect to danger of fire, even "got by" with the forces of the parachute and smoke-jumping services, by attracting trained groups from the forestry enterprises.

But mechanised detachments and machinery are highly necessary in combatting a forest fire. In my opinion, the units going into action in the disaster areas must be sufficiently large and effective. They should be made responsible for entire regions, as for example, those