

Questions are being asked: When will we stop exploiting our forests so irresponsibly? Is the need for these fellings so great? The Soviet public is sufficiently concerned to wonder why our country, with one-quarter of the world's forests and occupying first place in both forested areas and volumes of wood harvested, is trailing far behind most of the industrially developed countries in the production and consumption of wood products? Why does our country export mainly logs and semi-finished wood products, rather than high grade, finished commodities made of wood?

Soviet loggers are currently losing up to 40% of the raw wood in waste products left at the harvesting sites and lost during removal from the forests. If these losses could be reduced even by half, as was done by Ivano-Frankovsk loggers it would be possible to decrease felling by millions of cubic metres and save thousands of forested hectares.

However, the development of chemical and mechanical wood-processing technology, like the organization of logging operations requiring constant forest exploitation, is being held back by the lack of mechanical engineering resources for the timber industry, the slow introduction of advanced resource-saving technology, and an acute lag in introducing new logging capacities in the timber-surplus areas of the country. The practice of allocating funds to housing and community service centres has led to the everyday needs of the loggers and timber-processors being neglected.

Three years have passed since the resolutions were adopted at the 27th CPSU Party Congress, yet no positive steps have been taken to systematize the use of Soviet forests. As I listened to the bold statements made by delegates to the 19th Party Congress, criticizing defects in Soviet industry and agriculture, I thought about the unsolved problems in our industry and the irresponsible use of our forests.