

"This year, we are working with a set small amount of above-plan profit but it is still too early to speak of a radical change to the better. Nor can we fully settle our accounts with our customers. The flow of complaints and returns because of poor quality has not ceased and we are paying heavy fines..."

The Director gave the Combine a C grade.

The meeting participants, however, were more interested in the future plan of action than in an account of past results.

"Every year we talk about building a finished products warehouse. When will construction begin?" asked a voice from the hall.

"Not this year", the Director replied, "we don't have the money."

When will we stop dumping paper and paperboard?"

"That problem will be solved..."

"What department will our Combine be subordinate to?"

"That's still unclear."

No one was trying to put the Director, who had just recently taken command, in a difficult position: everyone still clearly remembered the hard times in the previous year when they had had three directors. Nevertheless, it was clear that the Combine's communists expected Saka to be more precise as to the enterprise's future prospects.