

Breakthrough on the Chulym - How the Loggers Are
Battling the Government's Monopoly

A normal person would have difficulty understanding how he could go into the forest, cut down a tree, drag it home, and not profit from it. The woodsman neither planted the tree nor raised it. He simply went into the taiga and took it, at no cost. And yet, he's in debt? It isn't possible!

It is possible if the wood rots at home without being used. This is just what is happening in the "Tomlesprom" (Tomsk Timber Industry) Association where at felling sites, along rivers and roads, in lumber yards and at trans-shipping points every sixth tree felled is lost out of a total of 6 to 7 million cubic metres. A third of those not lost leave the the oblast as bare timber. Anybody who wants to can trade in roundwood - the union of consumers' societies, local industrial enterprises, and state farms.

Of course, the prices are laughably small: ten 'tacks' per cubic meter. The proceeds from the wood are lower than the cost of harvesting it. But we haven't sunk "Tomlesprom" yet: the State is keeping it afloat with subsidies. It is also being supported by funds in exchange for a 100-percent State production order, thereby stripping 'lespromkhozes' (logging and timber establishments) to the bone. While others engaged in felling timber contrive to exchange it for scarce goods, sometimes abroad, the association is like a shoemaker without shoes - it is in a forest without trees. General Director, V. Shutov complains about a tunnel with no light at the end: the loggers have nothing with which to build housing for themselves.

In order to obtain even a 'smidgin' of board timber for their own needs, management closes its eyes to over-cutting, thereby contributing to a ruinous destruction of the forests. The reserves of raw materials are dwindling - in their pursuit of timber, crews have cut the