

THE UNWARRANTED STATE ORDER

In 1990 the mills of the sector must produce 1,834,000 tonnes of newsprint, or an estimated 6.3 kilogrammes per head of the population. Frankly, that's not much when you consider that production of newsprint in the leading western countries in 1988 (in thousands of tonnes) was as follows: Canada, 9,969; USA, 5,427; Japan (all types of printing paper), 7,762; Sweden, 2,064; Finland, 1,811.

The State order for newsprint has now been set, for the first time ever, at 95 per cent of the volume produced, which is 1,740,000 tonnes (36,108,000,000 square metres).

Last year a State order in the amount of 100 per cent was thrust upon the combines, but it remained underfulfilled by 14,000 tonnes. A trifle? It depends on which side of the fence you are on, for there is such a thing as the straw which breaks the camel's back.

At Gosplan they are again itching to saddle the papermakers with a 100 per cent State order, to shut off even their small safety valve so as to sell the output on the market, including the export market! So far it hasn't happened.

The burden of the present ministerial apportionment of paper also seemed relentless to the Balakhna and Solikamsk pulp and paper combines and they refused to accept the State order to the extent of 27 tonnes in all. Which means that one of the consumers whose funds had been set aside for these enterprises is again partly out of luck.