

N. Pogodin (Head of the Primorskaya Forest Protection Air Base). "Practical experience on Sakhalin has demonstrated that actively combatting forest fires, especially major fires, is only possible when there are well trained specialists. Even though a large quantity of machinery was assembled on the island, it was used inefficiently. It wasn't until the groups of smoke jumpers/parachutists arrived that success was achieved in dealing with the fires. Today, however, the training of aerial firefighters usually takes place right at the fire. We need well equipped classrooms in which a specific situation and possible variants in the development of a fire can be shown on display panels. All this, however, is contingent on the availability of financing. If we had had computers it may be that the disaster which befell one of the finest firefighting parachutist groups in the country, when it descended into a canopy fire and lives were lost, would not have happened. I earnestly appeal to our scientists and designers to help us."

M. Bushui (Head of the Forest Conservation and Protection Sector of Minlesprom SSSR). "Even though the Ministry and production associations had made serious preparations for the forest fire season, we were faced with a difficult situation. The cuts in forest protection expenditures have had a disastrous effect. About 400 specialists were transferred to forest inspection duties."

"I maintain that, given our underequipping, a definite role will be played by the conversion (of surplus military hardware - Tr.). Minlesprom has already purchased six tank-based caterpillar fire trucks and for the coming year they have submitted a requisition for 30 of them. They are not cheap, being priced at 56,000 roubles."

E. Filimonov (Head of the Laboratory for the Mechanization of Forest Fire Control Operations, VNIIPOMleskhoz - All-Union Research Institute for the Organization and Mechanization of Forestry). "Why not take a look at who is in charge in our forests just now and who