However, the loggers agreed to sign a contract for only 24,000 tonnes, and even this is being put off until the final days of the navigation season.

Despite the loss of raw materials and pollution of the water, the loggers regard the traditional method of transportation as better than delivering the wood by ship. At first glance this would seem to be true: it costs only 40 kopecks per cubic metre when wood is hauled in rafts, while it costs about 2 roubles per cubic metre when it is transported in barges. However, these costs do not take into consideration the following factors: when wood is transported in ships this frees a large number of workers from servicing the rafts and there is a reduction of expenses for maintenance of the cradles and for repairs and adjustments to the rigging. If the reduction in manual labour and increase in modern labour methods is added to this, it becomes clear that the alternative transportation method is very worthwhile.

Unfortunately, in their short-sighted quest to reduce costs per cubic metre, the Lake Baikal loggers continue to pollute the lake with wood, even though it is possible - especially on the Irkutsk shoreline - to begin transporting it in ships right away.

According to the loggers, only minor reconstruction of the crane equipment and moorage walls serving the Upper Lena Logging enterprise Irkutsklesprom would be required in order that all of the timber could be loaded onto barges with a modest outlay of labour. Even now the conditions are good enough for this, but the Irkuts like the Baikalians, rejected our offer and agreed to transport only 50,000 tons of wood in ships this year.

Nonetheless, the volume of timber transported by water from the Upper Lena Logging Enterprise to the Baikal timber loading site operated by Zabaikalles is relatively large - 168,000 tonnes, or 200,000 cubic metres in the units of measurementconventionally used by the timber industry. Are the river workers prepared to deal with transshipments of this magnitude? The answer is yes. The