

Another example is the Ashi wood chemistry plant, where there are only 10 purification units for 150 sources of harmful emissions. The effluents entering the Sim River present an even more depressing picture. The concentration of copper and phenols in them is many times higher than the permissible norms.

In the past year the wood chemists have been very hard on the public, so much so that the prospect of closing down the chemical and retort production loomed large. But even though a contract was drawn up with the Southern Urals Metallurgical Construction Trust for the building of a return cycle water supply system, not a rouble has been appropriated in the eight months that have elapsed.

So what in fact is being done at Ashi to improve the disastrous ecological situation? As we are seeing, precious little. For even though an "Ecology Programme" has been developed at certain of the plants, neither the manpower nor the funds, and what is most important, the desire, are equal to the task.

It has now become clear to everyone that without heavy investments in nature and environmental conservation projects, we shall get nothing back. We need a realistic programme of investment, with control over disbursements vested in the local Soviets.

The scientists have a duty to face up to the problem and provide assistance to the practical workers. But what do we see today? The district does not have a single laboratory capable of investigating the composition of the atmospheric air. There are of course, specialists taking