

Perhaps our foreign trade policy is to blame. After all, timber, sawlogs and pulp and paper products figure high on the list of Soviet exports. Exports of roundwood in 1986, however, amounted to just 6.2% of the total volume of production, with 9% and 11.7% of sawlog and pulp and paper production exported, respectively. Furthermore, although 717,500 tonnes of paper were sold abroad, we did import 511,700 tonnes of paper ourselves.

Obviously, we can't put the blame on the world market. The main cause for our poor showing over many years, is in our wasteful approach to our forest riches. How much wood is lost during logging operations, primitive transport arrangements and in further processing! The timber consumption structure is not effective. How can it be considered normal when wood is used to manufacture items that all over the world have long been made out of other materials? Wooden crates and other packaging materials, window transoms, office furniture and equipment, even fences, all these and many other products made from wood could easily be replaced by synthetic materials. This is just one side of the issue.

The other, no less important question, is the utilization of secondary raw materials. One would think that it would no longer have to be necessary to point out the importance of collecting and reprocessing waste paper to anyone. In practice however, the interesting experiment of exchanging new books for a set amount of returned waste paper, is fading out before our very eyes. It is quite obvious that given current conditions, the cooperatives must take a more active role in collecting and reprocessing this material. They could also easily