

A special session of the Collegium of the Ministry of the Timber Industry was held on February 19 to discuss the increasingly tense situation. Participating in the talks were directors of associated industries and of the USSR Council of Ministers' bureau for the wood-chemical complex. The Collegium endorsed an appeal by the workers of the timber and paper industry to the Soviet government which was published in "Pravda" and our newspaper under the heading "We Will Lead the Sector Out of the Crisis".

The feelings of bitterness remained after this collegium. Unremitting pressure from "above" and counter-arguments from "below" reminded one of a conversation between the deaf. The measures that were planned and recorded in the resolution failed to dispel the sense of despair. The consensus was that the ministry had responded to the criticism but was virtually powerless to end the crisis on its own.

Well, they "chopped up" Deputy Minister V.A. Chuiko and the directors of the Solikamsk, Balakhna and Kondopoga pulp and paper combines. They reminded them of their earlier statement that they would "develop the operation so as to achieve the maximum possible output of paper", and of what happened recently. All of the juice was squeezed out of the machines and the workers.

Perhaps it had escaped their attention that there are more shortcomings in the sector than there are capabilities within the ministry and the labour collectives to patch them up.