

Participating were G. Korovin, the Deputy Chairman of the USSR State Committee for Forestry (Goskomles); P. Barsukov, Deputy Minister of Forestry for the RSFSR; N. Pavlinov, Head of the Department of Forest Protection and Conservation, RSFSR Ministry of Forestry; M. Afrin, Chief Forester of the USSR Ministry of the Timber Industry (Minlesprom SSSR); I. Shelkan, Deputy Head of the Main Control and Inspection Directorate of the State Committee for the Environment (Goskompriroda); N. Andreev, General Director of the Association for Aerial Protection of Forests (Avialesokhrana); A. Spiridonov, a smoke-jumper of the Suoyarvskii Air Detachment; Yu. Golubev, Senior Air Observer of the Ukhta Air Detachment; I. Plaksin, Senior Instructor of the Syktyvkar' Air Base; and G. Shchedrin, Chief of the Northwestern Air Base.

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Korovin. "Today, as never before, forest fires are giving cause for anxiety among specialists and the general public alike. This stems from the fact that the ecological and socioeconomic requirements for the conservation of all kinds of natural resources are becoming increasingly urgent. At best, the most that we have been able to do is to stabilize the danger of forest fires. We are not in a position to lessen it.

"What is the principal cause of this situation? I would single out two main factors. Firstly, the shortage of trained specialists, financial and material resources. Secondly, imperfections in the organizational structure and operational machinery of the protection system. This is a consequence of the prevailing notion that natural resource use is cost-free and that, arising