

"Conclusions have unquestionably been drawn and they appear to have been well thought out. The USSR Ministry of the Timber Industry has just allocated 5,300,000 roubles for aerial protection of the forests. This is 1.8 million roubles more than last year. Two additional air units have been formed at the Tyumen base for aerial protection of the forests. The strength of the parachutist and smoke jumper service has been increased by 100 men.

"Aerial fire brigades have been formed at all of the composite timber enterprises. By decisions of the local soviets of the Khanty-Mansiisk Autonomous Okrug three million hectares of highly combustible tracts of forest have been assigned to enterprises of the oil and gas complex.

"Nevertheless, for 53 million hectares of taiga it is clear that not enough has been done. Operational expenditures on forestry in the "Tyumenlesprom" Association remain at about 13 kopecks per hectare, which continues to be the lowest in the country and the sector."

In the second ten days of July the weather became hot and there were many thunderstorms, which resulted in a sharp increase in the number of fires. On July 17 alone, 26 of them originated. Emerging as "leaders" in the incidence of forest fires are the Berekhovo, Nizhnevartovsk, Konda and Khanty-Mansiisk districts. The Tyumen base for aerial protection of the forests had plenty of work to do. Every day, up to 170 men from neighbouring enterprises were recruited for firefighting. Also supporting the Tyumen people were sub-units of the Urals and Western Urals air bases. At the time of writing, 40 fires are still burning. The situation is becoming ever more complex in that very soon, the taiga will be invaded by a horde of unorganized berry pickers from our own and the neighbouring Sverdlovsk oblasts.