

dying forests. They are being affected within a ten-kilometre radius of Bratsk and in some areas of the Urals, Georgia, Lithuania and other regions.

But of course, the committee members and the representatives of the other trade union organizations who attended the meeting were not there solely to regale each other with these facts and figures. They were there to determine, if at all possible, what could be done on the one hand, to improve the ecological situation and on the other, to protect people from the harmful effects.

There was considerable questioning, back and forth, as to how often medical examinations were conducted in the various countries, whether protective gear was issued and whether there were any compensatory bonuses. Although annual medicals are given in the USSR to employees in high risk occupations, these are of a general nature and take place in clinics. There is a need for other kinds of examinations, aimed at early diagnosis and treatment of specific occupational diseases.

It was clear from the discussion that it is not only in the forests contaminated by radioactivity following Chernobyl and those in the aforementioned ecologically threatened areas that human health can be affected, directly or indirectly, now or later, by unfavourable environmental conditions.

Although scientists understand in principle how fluorine, for example, affects humans at specific concentrations, there is currently no way of estimating its concentration in a forest. For it may be present in the air, the soil and the trees, have a tendency to accumulate and perhaps even to mutate. Indeed, it has recently come to light that sulphurous