

currently being received for furniture production is sent directly to the dump. Rejects! This situation, unfortunately, is by no means original: a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. The campaign to achieve a higher quality of output has not become the daily concern of the captains of industry, or of the Party and trade union organizations of the supplying enterprises.

Our readers have come up with a fair number of sensible suggestions about how to lessen the ruinous consequences of the furniture shortage. Take, for example, those rumours about price increases. We loudly proclaim our devotion to "glasnost", but what it comes down to is that, like babes in the wood, we are giving in to shady characters from the world of business and trade, and to old age pensioners selling places in the queue. It was recently announced on Moscow Radio that there would be no increase in subway fares until 1991. This put an end to the rumours. Why couldn't representatives of the USSR Goskomtsen (State Commission on Prices) or the Ministry of the Timber Industry inject precisely the same degree of clarity into the furniture question?

A fuller knowledge of the market requirements would open up more room for manoeuvre under the conditions posed by the shortage, if only within the republic, region or Oblast, initially. For this, however, studies of the demand would be needed, rather than guessing as to when a special governmental service was likely to be formed.

In the end, even such an ugly phenomenon the queue is also fully controllable.