

Q. "But you know, a quarter of a century ago two enormous plants were constructed in our country for the express purpose of producing machinery for papermakers. I assume it would be impossible for them to tool up for the production of spare parts for foreign-made machines?"

A. "Yes, that is true. But the fact is that both factories - located at Petrozavodsk and Izhevsk - are subordinate to the USSR Ministry for Building Heavy Machinery. These plants are burdened with orders which bear no relation to papermaking. In the next few years the picture will apparently change in our favour. A preliminary decision has been made that these factories will produce equipment and spare parts for us valued at more than a billion roubles. Even so, this is not a solution. It would be more appropriate for both enterprises to be made subordinate to the pulp and paper industry. Only in that event will their reequipping be sharply accelerated."

Q. "Why don't you take these plants under your own wing?"

A. "Our proposal has been before the government for more than a year. All the same, no decision has as yet been taken."

Q. "What do you see as the way out of the situation that has arisen? What would you say to the President of the USSR if he were to burden the sector with the task of saturating the domestic market within the shortest possible time with all kinds of paper?"

A. "I would ask him, firstly, to authorise the sector's enterprises to establish free market prices for paper, depending on the demand, as determined by the market. Secondly, to enable us to sell our products freely, not only within the country but on foreign markets as well. Thirdly, for 85 percent of the currency earned from the sale of our products to be left at the disposal of the enterprises and the sector, and 15 percent to be credited to the local soviets and the State budget. It is only through approaches such as these that it will be possible to rescue the sector with two or three years from the serious crisis now confronting it."