

People are tired of empty talk and promises made by factory and departmental heads. They are tired of the irresponsible juggling of technical terms and concepts. That is why they did not believe either the director of the Research Institute or the Chief Engineer of the new viscose pulp plant, A. Slautin, who tried to prove to the deputies and the audience that the plant, which, as everyone knows, is being built in exchange for capacities formerly existing at the Priozersk cellulose plant, is beneficial to the environment around Bratsk. The simplest questions posed by non-specialists, such as whether the capacity of the thermal electric power station would need to be increased as a result of the building of the new plant, met with evasive answers from the project head and the executives of the timber complex. It is clear that the introduction of new capacities, even if they replace old ones, is being carried out without a full ecological study of the consequences. Nothing has changed over the past 20-30 years: leaders of the industry still do not know what they are doing.

It is therefore only natural that the Municipal Council took what is frankly, an unprecedented decision calling for " a halt to the building of facilities for the production of viscose pulp at the Bratsk timber industry complex until all measures have been implemented to decrease the level of pollutants in the atmosphere and water supply. The Central Division of the Industrial Construction Bank in Bratsk will suspend all financial operations connected with the building of this facility as of August 1, 1988".

This decision was hard-won by the people of Bratsk. It should be pointed out that at the session which took place in June, the deputies did not accept the vague resolution proposed by the executive committee and cut short their first meeting, instructing the commission to formulate new, more definite proposals. The month-long break between meetings was useful. Both the deputies' commission and the executive committee decided to face the facts, even though it was unpleasant. It was impossible to continue pretending that the surrounding forests were dying for some inexplicable reason unconnected to human activity. Siberians can no longer accept this explanation.