

But in the first quarter of this year the railway workers received far fewer cross-ties and sets of square-sawn timber than during the same period of last year, notwithstanding the fact that the latter was unfavourable from the standpoint of deliveries of raw materials. At this moment, at the height of the work being done on repairs to the tracks, not one of the 32 railways has a sufficient quantity of cross-ties, and railways such as the Western Kazakhstan, Alma Ata, Azerbaidzhan and Southwestern have still not received a single cross-tie.

Constant disruptions in the deliveries of materials for cross-ties have led to a situation in which there are currently more than 50 million rotted cross-ties on the nation's railway lines, which is four times the level at which dependable operation of the railways is assured. A quarter of the squared timber lying beneath the switch points is urgently in need of replacement. The situation with the bridges is no better. Resulting from the condition of the cross-ties, during the past two years alone there have been nine crashes, 12 breakdowns and more than 3,000 derailments of wagons and locomotives.

Under these conditions it is extremely difficult for the railway workers to guarantee the present rhythm of transportation of passengers and freight. Our sectors of the economy are some of the most important in the country and they have always functioned cohesively. It is because we realize that we depend on each other for successes in our work that we appeal to you, esteemed workers in enterprises of the USSR Ministry of the Timber Industry, with the following request:

- prior to April 25th, terminate work on the conclusion of contracts with the railways with respect to work orders already issued;