

extinguished. But a hundred hectares had been destroyed. What is the reason for this slackness, you may ask. Well, until now we didn't know ourselves. But later, Ockhatii replied that he hadn't heard a thing until 1737 hours. However, the entries in the log and the witnesses to our conversation with him tell a different story. He had gone off watch and left. The Civil Defence support unit has a new Chief, with whom we all have an excellent working relationship. But who will answer for the burnt out forest and the failure to act promptly?

Or, consider another problem: in the spring of 1987 a barrier was erected across Braginka stream (coordinates 50°14'N, 30°25'E--Tr.). Actually, this was necessary at the time. But now it is overflowing its banks. At this very moment, three thousand hectares of coniferous and broad-leaved forest are inundated and have withered away. The plantings have been killed. Water continues to spoil the forest and the problem remains unresolved. Our letters are going unanswered even though this is dangerous from the point of view of crown fires and forest diseases. We have appealed to the Ministry of Land Improvement and Water Management of the Ukrainian SSR, but there has been no change in the situation.

The problems are numerous. But we have a common goal: to protect the forest from fires, diseases and drying out, and to preserve it for posterity. For this is a priceless gift of nature. It is therefore not only within the 30-kilometre zone but also beyond it that there is a need to supply the foresters with "Dnepr"-type motor vehicles, increase the number of radio stations, and equip the fire-spotting posts with PTU-59 television sets. In this respect we can envy the Baltic region, which has progressed much further in supplying the foresters. Once again, we are appealing to the aircrews to be more conscientious in discharging their contractual obligations: to take off promptly in response to a call from us. For to delay is exceeding costly."

The smoke-jumpers, who had come from Syktyvkar' to help, are in full readiness.