

of our water and to use it in a rational manner. It is precisely the loss of water's life-supporting properties - the increase in its salt content and biogenetic elements and the eutrification of our lakes - that has resulted in them ceasing to be useful sources of water.

Although water is the most widely distributed mineral in nature, this doesn't mean that it should be squandered. Air and water must be used sparingly. Any other approach will entail serious consequences in many regions. If the discharge of pollutants isn't stopped, our rivers and lakes will contain nothing but effluents."

Q. "Isn't that already the case?"

A. "Yes, especially on Lake Ladoga in the Priozersk region. But the situation is extremely critical in other areas, too. Think of the Amur River and the Baltic coast."

Q. "What should the pulp-and-paper industry be doing to respond to current ecological thinking?"

A. "There has been some progress in the industry in recent years. A whole series of mills, especially the paperboard ones, have changed over to circulating water systems. Specific water consumption has sharply decreased, which is very important. Radical changes in technology have been made. Improvements in the basic technological process will lead to significant reductions in pollution levels. A transition must be made to new, more advanced methods of pulp production. One such is the oxygen-alkaline delignification process. Another very promising approach is that of the dry methods."