

Today, nature is doing this for us: it is selecting the species and determining the spacing of the seeds at the most suitable and fertile site for growth. In this way, strong, healthy and well-proportioned trees are rising beneath the canopy...

From V. Novikov, our
special correspondent in
the Tatar ASSR

Lesnaya gazeta
25 August 1990
Page 2 (full text)

Tomorrow Will Be Too Late - Minister of Forestry
Discusses the Situation in Belorussia

Forestry in our republic has not escaped the reverses being experienced across the Union. Intensive fellings during the post-war years and "years of stagnation", together with unlawful overfellings of the allowable cut which continued until very recently, have led to a dangerous imbalance in the age structure of the Belorussian forests. The share of mature and overmature forests has declined to 2.4 percent of the total area. Furthermore, a substantial part of the territory is in the zone of radioactive contamination caused by the Chernobyl catastrophe. Meanwhile, the administrative-command system, compounded with a spurious official enthusiasm, has given rise to a false notion in the minds of people in contact with production that we have access to enormous forest resources. Such notions were further strengthened by the incorrect calculations of economists. So what is the end result of all this? The following figures give some idea of where we stand. Whereas for the