

Finnish Proposals for Restructuring the Soviet  
Timber Industry

Rational, sustained forest use in neighbouring Finland has aroused considerable interest among Soviet forest workers. The Finnish scientists and specialists are finding it painful to observe how thoughtlessly we manage our own green storehouse, at times savagely destroying the lavish natural riches. Not only are they willing to share with us their wealth of experience. They are even proposing to radically restructure our timber industry. This formed the subject of a discussion between M. Pekkanen, Managing Director of the Central Union of the Finnish Timber industry, and P. Volpanskii, a special correspondent of the newspaper "Trud" in Helsinki.

It was not by accident that the topic of ecology was raised. "Even though more trees have been cut down in Finland during the post-war period than the total number currently on hand in the nation's forests, up to now they have remained healthy. And if they become sick, it won't be the fellings that are to blame, but the poisoners of the natural environment - our own and those of our neighbours. Moreover, there is a surplus of timber in the country, but..."

"What I am referring to are the overmature hectares to which we have no access - their managers are demonstrating a "concern for Nature". This means that additional purchases are necessary, mainly in the Soviet Union, which makes sense, for we are neighbours with a common border and 22 transportation arteries straddling it. You have 900 million hectares while we have only 20 million. It is unfortunate that in your country the legend has developed that the Finns are concerned about their own forests but not about anyone's else's. This is not the case. Of the 45 million cubic metres of timber being used by our industry, Soviet exports are giving us four to five million.