

TIMBER AND WOODWORKING

First Results and Projections in the Restructuring of the Timber Industry

(An interview with M.I. Busygin, USSR Minister of the Timber Industry)

Q: "Mikhail Ivanovich, forestry enterprises have been operating under the conditions of economic reform for ten months now, so I presume we can already tell to what extent the hopes set on the new methods of management have been justified?"

A: "Compared with the corresponding period of 1987, industrial production has increased by almost 5%. I am happy to say that this was achieved as a result of an increase in the productivity of labour (7.5% instead of the planned 3.6%). The average monthly wage of the workers in this industry has increased by 6.6%. The production plan for roundwood, marketable pulp, paper (including newsprint), cardboard, wood fibreboard and consumer goods other than foodstuffs has been fulfilled. We cannot help but rejoice in this, but there are serious shortcomings as well. In the report of the USSR State Statistics Committee on the country's social and economic development for the first nine months of 1988, it is stated that unsatisfactory work of forestry enterprises during the third quarter prevented us from consolidating the positive results achieved in the first half of the year. The indebtedness of the enterprises within the system of the USSR Ministry of the Timber Industry in timber production since the beginning of the year amounts to 2,600,000 m³ (300,000 m³ of lumber). The "Dal'lesprom", "Irkutsklesprom" and "Krasnoyarsklesprom" associations only just failed to achieve their timber production targets.

"The list of shortcomings goes on, but it would be futile to dwell on this. It would be more useful to examine why it occurred, where we fell