

DOC  
CAI  
EA79  
E82  
ENG  
Sept-Oct  
1990

BMS. Doc. Section

Dept. of External Affairs  
Min. des Affaires extérieures  
OTTAWA

INI F2/91

DATE 4 March 1991

MAR 19 1991

COPY

49

RETURN TO DEPARTMENTAL LIBRARY  
RETOURNER A LA BIBLIOTHEQUE DU MINISTERE

External Affairs and  
International Trade Canada

# EXTRACTS FROM THE SOVIET PRESS ON USSR FORESTRY AND FOREST-BASED INDUSTRIES

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 1990

Canada



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Note to reader:

	<u>PAGE</u>
<u>TIMBER</u> The paucity of newsworthy items in the September issues of <u>Lesnaya gazeta</u> and other Soviet newspapers made it necessary to publish a combined summary for the months of September and October.	1
Cooperation of Railways.....	3
Railway Halted by Lack of Cross-Ties.....	6
Company.....	6

### PULP AND PAPER

Paper Shortage Discussed in Interview with Deputy Minister.....	6
Kondopoga Papermakers Form New Commercial Association.....	13
Joint Venture with American Company Aims to Rectify Soviet Paper Shortage.....	14

### FORESTRY

Expedition to Do Forest and Environmental Assessment Work in Soviet Central Asia Karakum.....	16
Finnish Experiment in Draining Swamps Criticized in Soviet Timber Press.....	17
State of the Forests in the RSFSR Discussed at Meeting of Supreme Soviet.....	19

### ENVIRONMENT

Geochemical Map of Eravan to be Compiled.....	25
---	----



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

### TIMBER AND WOODWORKING

Only Half of the Cross-Ties Produced Annually Go to Ministry of Railways.....	1
Pre-Winter Track Repairs on Transbaikal Railway Halted by Lack of Cross-Ties.....	3
Exportties Becomes a Joint-Stock Company.....	6

### PULP AND PAPER

Paper Shortage Discussed in Interview with Deputy Minister.....	6
Kondopoga Papermakers Form New Commercial Association.....	12
Joint Venture With American Company Aims to Rectify Soviet Paper Shortage.....	14

### FORESTRY

Expedition to Do Forest and Environmental Assessment Work in Soviet Central Asia Kazakstan.....	16
Finnish Experiment in Draining Swamps Criticised in Soviet Timber Press.....	17
State of the Forests in the RSFSR Discussed at Meeting of Supreme Soviet.....	19

### ENVIRONMENT

Geochemical Map of Erevan to be Compiled.....	25
---	----



## TIMBER AND WOODWORKING

### Only Half of the Cross-Ties Produced Annually Go to Ministry of Railways

I was recently on detached duty in Krasnoyarsk. The purpose of my visit was to obtain as many cross-ties as possible for track maintenance work. I have no hesitation in saying that it proved impossible to cope with the task in full. Here is why.

It turns out that of the 40,000,000 cross-ties which the Ministry of the Timber Industry manufactures, only 40 to 50 per cent go to the railway workers. The rest are sent to dozens or even hundreds of other consumers drawn from virtually every sector of the economy.

At first glance such a sharing of cross-ties of which there is currently an acute shortage is justified, for many establishments and enterprises have spur lines requiring constant upkeep. But it has also become apparent that many of these latter consumers are not using the ties for the intended purpose. Quite often, after sawing them into planks they let them go for housing construction and the like. Meanwhile, our track maintenance personnel on the Tselinnaya Railway alone have fallen behind on capital repairs to the extent of 120 kilometres of main line. Numerous mechanised track repair stations are left without work for weeks on end. And all of this because of a deficit of cross-ties.

In the past year, for example, our railway should have received 700,000 ties. We only managed to obtain 400,000. How can we continue to exist in this fashion? If this is to be the supply situation in the future, we shall fall hopelessly behind. No one needs to be reminded that this could ultimately render the overall condition of the tracks in such a state that even emergency measures would be to no avail and the railway would simply grind to a halt.

In my view, all of this is occurring because, at the time of distributing the State production order, which is drawn up by the State Planning Commission (Gosplan), there is no elementary procedure whereby whatever the Ministry of the Timber Industry is currently in a position to produce can be utilised thriftily. Consumption of wooden cross-ties could be substantially reduced if a larger proportion of the spur lines, sidings and lightly used sections of a main line were to be laid on reinforced concrete and a serious effort made to use old cross-ties that have been discarded, for many of them could serve a second time around.

It is necessary for the entire volume of cross-ties being manufactured today to be in the same hands: they should be placed at the disposal of the Ministry of Railways. Even though this may conflict with the already rapid growth in market relations, for the time being there seems to be no other way out. A controlled monopoly for cross-ties, on the one hand, will make it possible to substantially improve track maintenance arrangements on the railway network. On the other - it will arouse the interest and compel the railway workers and all the other consumers to make more efficient use of old, discarded materials.

We need to introduce order in the planning of new tracks. Not infrequently the planners, for no good reason whatsoever, make a point of stockpiling specifically wooden cross-ties for the building of new spur lines, even though in a number of instances it would be fully possible to use concrete ties or discarded wooden ones. For example, on our 25-kilometre sector Zharyk - Kairakty which is currently under construction, wooden ties have been installed in accordance with the plan. But traffic on this segment amounts to one train every 24 hours. The picture is the same on the Kzyl-Kzhar-Shubarkul' sector. This is happening because the plans, as a rule, are not subjected to expert examination by the railway workers. The end result is that new wooden ties, which are worth their weight in gold today, are being laid in places where it would have been possible to manage without them.



There can be no question that the idea put forward about the redistribution of resources needs to be examined in detail and analysed from all sides. Obviously it will not be a cure-all. But to put it into effect with possible variants is simply a necessity. There is nothing to indicate that over the next two or three years the situation with respect to the supplying of the railway network with wooden cross-ties will undergo any radical changes.

(Signed) B. Zhunusov  
Deputy Head of the Track  
Service, Tselinnaya  
Railway

Gudok  
7 October 1990  
Page 2 (full text)

Pre-Winter Track Repairs on Transbaikal  
Railway Halted by Lack of Cross-Ties

At the height of the summer track repair season the Belogorsk mechanized track repair station No. 46 was inactive for a period of one and a half months. Its workers received a mere pittance in wages and were on the verge of strike action. Also experiencing wage losses were the machinists of the Blagoveshchensk station's locomotive turnaround depot. This was because the dilapidated state of the cross-ties had made it impossible to keep to the timetable and ensure normal speeds on the line. Speeds were restricted over 22 kilometres of the Belogorsk - Blagoveshchensk branch line. The reason for all of these misfortunes was the same: in the entire Svobodnyi Division of the Transbaikal Railway there are practically no new or disused ties with which to make the tracks ready for winter.

The Chief of the Tracks Department of the Svobodnyi Division explains the situation as follows: "Altogether we need 40,000 ties for repairs to the tracks. But we have received only 2,600 new ties and about a quarter of the requisite number of old, discarded ones. A particularly alarming situation has developed on the Blagoveshchensk branch line, where 80,000 defective ties are lying on 108 kilometres of line.

The administration of the Transbaikal Railway has declared frankly that there is no point in expecting centralised deliveries of ties, as the forest-based industrial enterprises (lespromkhozy) are not fulfilling the terms of the contracts. For example, the Zeya enterprise in the Amur Oblast has delivered only 20,000 of the 85,000 ties specified in the contract. Other suppliers are in a similar situation and there is little time remaining before the end of the track repair season.

(Signed) E. Yasineva,  
Svobodnyi

Comment by our correspondent Anatolii Durov

It is being stated in some quarters that not only do we not have a market in the Soviet Union, but there won't be one in the near future. The distorted state of our economy is particularly noticeable in the price structure. Compare for yourselves: a cubic metre of first-grade, type one cross-ties costs 60 roubles, while a cubic metre of square sawn timber costs 200 roubles, even though it is twice as easy to saw. Given this situation, just try to get the lespromkhozy to fill the State production order for cross-ties, even under conditions of cost-accountability (khozraschet). The Transbaikal Railway has begun to pay for cross-ties at contracted prices that are three times higher but it turns out that even this is not enough.

Telegrams were then sent to all of the suppliers under the signature of the Chief of the Railway: "On the Transbaikal Railway, for the first time in many years capital repairs to the tracks have been halted due to the lack of cross-ties. The collectives of the mechanized track repair stations and track maintenance sections - and these amount to thousands and thousands of people - are sustaining enormous losses. Freight traffic is being delayed and the safe movement of trains is in jeopardy. Only two months remain during which it will still be possible to rectify the situation and make the tracks ready for winter. On behalf of the railway workers of the main line I am appealing to your collective to increase to the maximum deliveries of cross-ties. For its part, the railway will guarantee the prompt provision of rolling stock. On the basis of the number of ties shipped I am allotting for the encouragement of your workers... roubles."

While the amount of the material encouragement promised is very substantial, it would be unwise to indicate it, for with the approach of winter the price of cross-ties is rising rapidly. Only the lespromkhozy of the Chita oblast, who depend on the Transbaikal Railway, have gone to meet the latter half-way and have recently increased their shipments. In the Khabarovsk and Primorskii kraia they are not in a hurry to do so.

Recently, at a joint conference of railway workers and loggers an astonishing fact came out: the new local soviets in the Chita Oblast have placed restrictions on logging in certain districts which are precisely those from which they have been supplying timber suitable for cross-ties. The situation even reached the point where special local protective detachments prevented the loggers from entering the forest. What will be the outcome?

Perhaps it is still not too late to meet one another half-way over cross ties?

Gudok

3 October 1990

Page 3 (slightly abridged)

Exportles Becomes a Joint-Stock Company

The USSR Ministry of the Timber Industry has transformed the All-Union Association known as Exportles into a joint-stock company under the same name.

The founding members of the joint-stock company Exportles will be the workers' collective of the association, as well as enterprises and associations of the sector which have expressed a wish to become shareholders of the reorganized firm and will have an outlet to the foreign market.

Lesnaya gazeta  
29 September 1990  
Page 1 (full text)

PULP AND PAPER

Paper Shortage Discussed in Interview  
with Deputy Minister

When we search for the origins of the paper shortage, the critics point straight to the USSR Ministry of the Timber Industry: "Where has the Ministry been during the last ten years? Why did it remain silent in the knowledge that for twenty-four hours a day, on a three-shift basis, the sector has been mercilessly exploiting paper factories purchased abroad thereby permitting a 60 percent deterioration of the production plant? Why has our railway rolling stock been chugging along day and night loaded with logs and sawtimber, while at the same time there has been an acute shortage of raw material and unfinished wood products? We are selling timber for a song and purchasing paper at top prices. When is all this extravagance going to end?"

I put all these and many other questions to V.A. Chuiko, the Deputy Minister responsible for the operations of 153 pulp and paper enterprises. Here is the gist of Vladimir Alekseevich's unexpected response:

A. "Aren't you journalists getting tired of writing the same old thing? Wouldn't it be better after all this time to look for the root of the problem? For the subscribers themselves are all experiencing a paper shortage. They are currently paying out of their own pockets a dual price for each edition. We too are fed up with the acute shortage of paper. In the last 25 years our country has hardly built a single paper mill and has done nothing to arrange for the manufacture of modern, sophisticated papermaking equipment. Consequently, it has had to purchase it abroad."

Q. "But even so, Vladimir Alekseevich, how was the management of the sector able to keep quiet about this? For if you don't speak out, no one knows what you are thinking..."

A. "If you were to heap together all of our "plaintive" memoranda to USSR Gosplan and the government, you would find there was a pile of correspondence. Their replies said "The country doesn't have the funds for this. Virtually all the currency earned from timber sales has been spent on other more urgent needs: purchases of grain, meat, clothing and footwear." And what a lot of currency this is! Moreover, during each Five Year Plan the sector has been receiving from Treasury in the form of ordinary "timber" rubles only half of the amount the USA has been spending in dollars on the development of its pulp and paper industry in a single year. Compare the figures: during the period from 1981 through 1986 our country allocated to the sector less than three billion roubles, but during those same years the U.S. invested more than 34 billion dollars, or eleven times as much."

Q. "Does this mean that Gosplan and the government are guilty of an oversight?"

A. "They have had to cut their coat according to the cloth. Our scientists pointed out to them that an increase in the output of paper and an increase in national income are on the same curve. Since there has been almost no growth in national income during the last three Five Year Plans, from where would they have been able to get the funds for an accelerated development of the paper industry?"

Q. "New printing houses have been springing up like mushrooms after the rain. Where are they getting their stocks of paper? Is it not true that the burgeoning demand for the sector's products has persuaded the papermakers and communicators to sharply increase the price of paper? And here yet another tendency has become manifest: our enterprises, Vladimir Alekseevich, have begun to battle for a lower State production order, so that an ever increasing proportion of paper will be sold on foreign markets. How do you explain this tendency?"

A. "Quite simply. It is more advantageous to the enterprises to sell paper abroad than to fulfill the orders of domestic consumers. Judge for yourself: our publishing houses are paying 245 roubles for a ton of newsprint from the Kondopoga pulp and paper combine, but the foreign are houses willingly paying 420 dollars for every ton. Clearly, something has to be done about prices.

Again I say: the whole world knows that the forest is the nation's currency workshop. It stands to reason that if our forest resources are used thriftily, in contrast to oil and gas they will be self-sustaining and hence inexhaustible. Statistics show that our country leads the world in growing stocks of coniferous timber species (the most valuable for secondary conversion). Of 128 billion cubic metres, 67.3 billion, or more than half of the global stocks, fall to the share of the USSR. It is therefore all the more annoying that we have been unable for many decades to organize the secondary conversion of timber and that we are selling at relatively low prices logs, boards and cross-ties. But if there had been secondary conversion of this timber - if pulp and paper had been produced - the country would have been wealthy after these 70 years."

Q. "In a situation characterised by market relations, how is the sector's raw materials emphasis going to be dismantled?"

A. "Today, when elected representatives of the people, operating by the knife-switch method, are striving to close down almost all of the pulp and paper enterprises in the interests of solving ecological problems, it is necessary for everyone - from the deputy of a village council to the leaders of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR - to understand that without paper the country will not achieve a balance between money and goods. Our papermakers are producing about 2,000 types of paper. It is serving mankind all through life and is at work on the ground, in the atmosphere, under water and in space. I am no longer saying, however that the development of information science and glasnost is inconceivable without paper."

Q. "What is the attitude towards wood chemistry in the West?"

A. "In recent decades, advances in many sectors of the economy in developed countries of the West have been largely dictated by the fact that they attach priority to the development of wood chemistry. Yet our press has made it a nation-wide enemy. What has happened is that it has brought down the bough on which it has been sitting. And here is the sad result. Whereas in the USA and Canada 53 percent and 62 percent respectively of the total volume of timber extracted undergo secondary conversion, in our country the figure is 14 percent. In the United States, about 56 million tons of pulp are produced; with us, the figure is only 8.5 millions. Even if a woodworking shop satisfies all the international ecological norms with respect to ecology, our "greens" will insist that construction be shut down."

Q. "Vladimir Alekseevich, I would like to come back to the economic results of trading in newsprint on foreign markets. In the last year, according to information from USSR Goskomstat (State Committee for Statistics), our country sold 320,000 tons of paper and earned about

120,000,000 roubles worth of foreign currency. It is easy to calculate that a ton of our paper was sold at a price of approximately 370 roubles. In the same year the country purchased 95,600 tons of newsprint in foreign currency. It is easy to calculate that a ton of our paper was sold at a price of approximately 370 roubles. In the same year the country purchased 95,600 tons of newsprint in foreign countries, for which was paid 43,000,000 rubles worth of foreign currency. On the average, each ton cost 430 roubles in foreign currency. Why are we selling cheaply and purchasing similar products at much higher prices? When are we going to learn to trade?"

A. "This is a question that ought to be put to Exportles. I will say only that foreign paper is whiter than ours and packaged better..."

Q. "What is preventing us from raising the quality and improving the packaging?"

A. "Much depends on the inadequate level of technology and equipment. We are slowly introducing scientists' innovations..."

Q. "The transition to market relations will result in the price of domestically produced paper almost doubling for our consumers also, won't it? Perhaps this will discourage the mills from sending out damaged rolls?"

A. "The papermakers will have little to gain from such a rise in domestic prices. For there will be simultaneous increases in the cost of the raw material and chemicals, and tariffs for shipment of raw materials and products will also be increased. Then again, our enterprises may be able to use paper for barter deals resulting in the acquisition abroad of foodstuffs and industrial goods which cost plenty within the country. We also have another need: in exchange for paper, to purchase for foreign firms the spare parts for our papermaking machines. This is because the machines themselves were bought from foreign firms".



Q. "But you know, a quarter of a century ago two enormous plants were constructed in our country for the express purpose of producing machinery for papermakers. I assume it would be impossible for them to tool up for the production of spare parts for foreign-made machines?"

A. "Yes, that is true. But the fact is that both factories - located at Petrozavodsk and Izhevsk - are subordinate to the USSR Ministry for Building Heavy Machinery. These plants are burdened with orders which bear no relation to papermaking. In the next few years the picture will apparently change in our favour. A preliminary decision has been made that these factories will produce equipment and spare parts for us valued at more than a billion roubles. Even so, this is not a solution. It would be more appropriate for both enterprises to be made subordinate to the pulp and paper industry. Only in that event will their reequipping be sharply accelerated."

Q. "Why don't you take these plants under your own wing?"

A. "Our proposal has been before the government for more than a year. All the same, no decision has as yet been taken."

Q. "What do you see as the way out of the situation that has arisen? What would you say to the President of the USSR if he were to burden the sector with the task of saturating the domestic market within the shortest possible time with all kinds of paper?"

A. "I would ask him, firstly, to authorise the sector's enterprises to establish free market prices for paper, depending on the demand, as determined by the market. Secondly, to enable us to sell our products freely, not only within the country but on foreign markets as well. Thirdly, for 85 percent of the currency earned from the sale of our products to be left at the disposal of the enterprises and the sector, and 15 percent to be credited to the local soviets and the State budget. It is only through approaches such as these that it will be possible to rescue the sector with two or three years from the serious crisis now confronting it."

Q. "But what if the sector were to receive this authorisation right now, during the period of transition to a market? Would it mean that all newspapers and books would cease being published? Even the apparatchiki of various government departments would be unable to write letters to one another, wouldn't they?"

A. "A market presupposes a rapid growth in the output of all types of products. This includes paper. Provided that currency is in the hands of the enterprises, it will be possible within two or three years to reconstruct the decrepit mills and to install powerful modern machines in the old buildings, which will make possible a severalfold increase in the output of pulp and paper products. The point is that at present our government, Gosplan and USSR Gossnab are concerned only with dividing up the paper, but not with a growth in production".

In my view, the primary purpose of going over to marketing arrangements is to make the enterprises become economically interested in manufacturing more and more of the products in short supply and rapidly satisfy the demand for them. It is precisely this that will ultimately make it possible to lower the prices. Which means that the health of a civilised paper market will be in our hands.

(Interviewer V. Parfenov)

Lesnaya gazeta

9 October 1990

Page 2 (slightly abridged)

### Kondopoga Papermakers Form New Commercial Association

An association to be known as "Lesbumizdat" has been formed in Karelia at the headquarters of the existing concern "Kondopogabumprom" (Kondopoga Paper Industry). It will encompass, inter alia, the forest-based industrial

establishments (lespromkhozy) and woodworking enterprises of the autonomous republic, and publishing houses in Moscow and Leningrad. In all, there are 46 full members. Life itself forced them to merge into an association. In view of the transition to an allowable cut and market relations, deliveries of raw materials to the timber processors have been curtailed and the threat of a shut-down of the papermaking capacities at Kondopoga has increased.

The Kondopoga papermakers decided to forestall the negative phenomena and suggested joining forces, in order that together they could sidestep a difficult situation. Their initiative found warm support.

The association has already drawn up an action plan. Its participants organized an economic assistance fund based on the contributions of papermakers and publishers and decided right away to spend it on the development of timber extraction enterprises. To this end, machinery and equipment, as well as building materials, are being purchased and assistance is foreseen for improving the social conditions in the logging settlements, which will help to preserve and integrate the workers' collectives of the lespromkhozy. In return, the loggers must increase the felling volume, accelerate the utilization and conversion of the timber, and arrange for the production of pulp chips, so as to provide the papermakers with the raw material they are lacking.

The publishing houses stand to benefit from this, for they will be guaranteed a supply of newsprint.

The Karelian members of the association will continue to belong to the "Kondopogabumprom" concern. But the management of "Kondopogabumprom" will be situated in Kondopoga, Petrozavodsk and Moscow.

The Chairman of the Board of Directors of the association is V.A. Federmesser, General Director of "Kondopogabumprom" and an enthusiastic supporter of its formation.

Joint Venture With American Company Aims to  
to Rectify Soviet Paper Shortage

As reported in the weekly publication "Kommersant" (Merchant), the American firm ABB USSR Business Development Inc., has begun on the implementation of its programme to rectify the paper shortage on the Soviet market.

To this end ABB has made available to Soviet pulp and paper combines credits totalling 22.5 million dollars.

So as to obtain a precise understanding of the combined actions of ABB and the joint venture "PRIS", with whose assistance the programme will be carried out, a group of American specialists has arrived in Moscow.

According to their estimates, when implementing the measures foreseen in the programme, the Soviet side must invest between 20 and 40 million dollars in technology for the pulp and paper combines. Settlement of accounts with the American firm for delivery and installation of plant will be accomplished from funds derived from the sale of output over and above the plan.

In all, ABB's programme foresees the installation at pulp and paper combines of 20 to 30 automated controlled systems for technological processes. This will make it possible to increase productivity by 5 to 20 percent and raise the quality to world standards. It is intended that financing will be achieved through the sale on world markets of part of the production that is over and above the plan. After two or three years the combines will have repaid their indebtedness to ABB and "PRIS" and all of the above-plan output will belong to them.

The combines only received the opportunity to engage in transactions of this kind after an agreement was signed on August 28 between ABB and the USSR Ministry of the Timber Industry. Previously, the monopolistic right to import and export paper was vested the All-Union Association "Exportles". By prior arrangement, the Burda Moden Company will participate in the sale of the above-plan production and receive a certain percentage of the profit.

The agreement stipulates that for financing the deliveries of equipment, ABB will make credit available to the pulp and paper combines in the amount of 22.5 million dollars, to be repaid within three years.

Arrangements for repaying the credit and the percentage charges will be made when signing the contracts with the combines and will depend on the volume of deliveries and the quality, assortment and price of what is being produced.

According to the ABB programme, during the period 1990-1991, which marks the first stage, ten combines will be fitted out. Three of these (Kondopoga, Balakhna and Solikamsk) will be equipped for the production of newsprint.

It has become known from informed sources that the USSR Minister of the Timber Industry, Vladimir Mel'nikov, has proposed to representatives of ABB that talks begin on the question of the joint building of a pulp and paper combine. It is possible that this matter will be discussed in the near future and will become one of the main items in the American firm's programme.

The joint venture "PRIS" can be reached by telephone at 971-62-22 and 284-89-20; by telex at 41-3590; and by fax at 288-29-95.

Lesnaya gazeta  
18 September 1990  
Page 1 (full text)

FORESTRY

Expedition to Do Forest and Environmental Assessment  
Work In Soviet Central Asia and Kazakstan

On Monday an expedition from the USSR State Committee for Forestry (Goskomles SSSR) will begin its work in Central Asia and Kazakhstan.

The goal is to assess the condition of the forests and the ecological situation in the forest biocoenoses of the Uzbek, Kirgiz, Tadzhik, Turkmenian and Kazakh union republics, make recommendations on the conservation, use and regeneration of forest resources, and draw up proposals for effecting improvements in forest management.

The expedition is divided into two groups: a southern (Central Asian) and a northern (Kazakhstanian). Participating in its work will be scientists from several institutes, managers of sub-units of Goskomles SSSR, general directors and other officials of republican and territorial forestry associations, representatives of the USSR State Committee on the Environment concerned with problems of ecology and the rational use of natural resources within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, other departments and organizations, and also of local soviets and the general public. The scientific director is the Deputy Chairman of Goskomles SSSR, Doctor of Agricultural Sciences V.I. Sukhikh. The expedition will complete its work by the end of October.

Lesnaya gazeta  
15 September 1990  
Page 4 (full text)

Finnish Experiment in Draining Swamps  
Criticised in Soviet Timber Press

Finnish foresters have achieved some major successes during the last 30 years, and Deputy Minister N. Medved'ev wrote in glowing terms about them in an article published in the April 19, 1990 edition of "Lesnaya promyshlennost". Nevertheless, the positive picture which he sketched overall does have a negative side to it. For with a view to the intensification of forestry, in the USSR also some major errors have been permitted, the consequences of which are as yet unknown to the Suomi public and to foreign specialists. I have in mind the sharp reduction of the area occupied by swamps.

It is true that the increase in the productivity of the forests, above all in the growing stock, is chiefly on account of the draining of swamp-ridden forest lands on a vast scale. At present, the network of drainage canals covers almost 6,000,000 hectares, or more than 15 percent of the area of the country. Of the total annual increment of the Finnish forests (More than 60 million cubic metres), the proportion of timber derived from drained swamps amounts to 12 million cubic metres, which is almost a fifth of the total. Unfortunately, there is a negative side to these drainage operations, namely the destruction of the natural wetlands, a worsening of the water quality in low-lying water bodies, and an increased frequency of spring flooding. Latterly there have even been fears expressed that draining the swamps could aggravate the greenhouse effect, however this theory has not been scientifically proven.

In the opinion of forestry specialists drainage of swamps denotes an irrational squandering of resources, which might have been used to better advantage in the form of measures to increase forest productivity.

An interesting feature of the Finnish drainage campaign was the powerful support it enjoyed in wide circles of the public. Swamplands occupy almost a third of the country's territory. The Finnish peasant always regarded the swamp as his enemy. As late as the sixties,

when the mass drainage campaign began, the majority of the forests belonged to peasants. It was therefore easy for the organizers of the campaign to enlist the support of the interested parties: the peasantry, the country's forest complex, the Ministry of Agriculture and the forest science community, and then to "hammer out" of the government some major investments for drainage. The fact that in the early seventies even an international bank gave Finland a loan for these purposes was an important boost to the organizers' morale.

Since there was little control over the rational use of public funds, the assault on the swamps was widely ineffective. Some economists and protectors of nature raised their voices in protest, however the improvers and individual scientists refuted the criticisms and the assault was continued.

What was the end result of the campaign? Officials representing forestry and science acknowledge that 5 percent of the drained areas do not meet economic criteria and that in the overwhelming majority of cases, improvements works are justified by the need to ensure full employment. But all those who have even a very superficial idea of the problem have difficulty accepting this line of reasoning. Studies conducted by geographers and botanists give an entirely different picture. For instance, data for Pokhymaa Province indicate that 35 percent of all the drainages gave no yield at all. Botanists from the university are determining the usefulness of such marginal amelioration work.

Of course, clearing the swamps in Finland will be conducive to an increase in forest resources and eventually, in the amount of timber extracted. But even successful drainage is still no guarantee of an increase in the amount of timber hauled, because the numerous technical and economic problems associated with maintaining and exploiting forests grown at the sites of the swamps have not yet been resolved.



The draining of the Finnish swamps for forestry purposes is not only a famous epic in the struggle to improve a renewable natural resource, as was recently recounted with pride by the Chairman of the Finnish Society of Forest Science. It is also the irresponsible, thoughtless destruction of natural wealth and the uncontrolled expenditure of public funds yielding nothing in return. The sad truth is that this was evidently done with the silent consent of logging organizations which are not only responsible for verifying the desirability of financial outlays, but also for acting as custodian of the natural environment.

Perhaps all that can be hoped for is that other countries possessing extensive areas of swamps will adopt a critical attitude to the Finnish experiment.

(Signed) Yarmo Eronen  
Docent  
Helsinki

Lesnaya gazeta  
18 September 1990  
Page 3 (full text)

State of the Forests in the RSFSR Discussed  
at Meeting of Supreme Soviet

(Speaker) Valerii Aleksandrovich Shubin, People's Deputy and candidate for the post of Minister of Forestry for the RSFSR. "My position with respect to the development and strengthening of forestry is based on the fact that Russia on her own is determining the functions of forest administration and is vesting the Ministry of Forestry with powers to implement them.

The forest has served the people for centuries and it continues to serve them. In my view the forest is not merely a source of timber. It is first and foremost a complex ecological organism with environmental protective and water regulating functions. Since it is a habitat for wildlife it is without question important for recreational purposes. These are the considerations that have given rise to the Ministry's principal fields of activity. Foremost among them is protecting the forest from natural disasters, preeminently from forest fires. As a rule, as much forest is destroyed by fire annually as the area being cut over, which is of the order of one and a half million hectares. Reports indicate that as of yesterday, 878,000 hectares had been engulfed by fires.

The second area of concentration is protecting the forests against infestation by pests.

What we need is regeneration and protective afforestation, along with the planning of an integrated forest management programme, so as to derive full value and extract all of the forest products. By this I mean the procurement of medicinal raw materials, berries, mushrooms, nuts and other bounties of nature. The possibilities here are immense, since the forests of Russia occupy more than a billion hectares, amounting to more than 95 percent of the nation's forest resources. But in Russia there is a one-sided and I would say, predatory approach to forest resource utilization. Up to now, the calculating of felling areas in the Archangel, Vologda, Perm and Irkutsk oblasts, the Komi Republic Karelia and the Krasnoyarsk Krai has been done in Moscow by logging departments of Union subordination. In this connection, to provide for the creation of integrated logging enterprises a transfer of lands administered by the USSR Ministry of the Timber Industry took place four years ago. Today, these account for about 200 million hectares of forest-covered areas. What is known as the "take and rule" principle came into being. At long last, the senseless felling of cedar forests is being painfully brought to an end. In the past thirty years alone, the area occupied by cedars has shrunk

by 40 percent in the Amur Oblast and 15 percent in the Khabarovsk Krai. Burnt over areas and felling sites that have failed to regenerate themselves account for hundreds of thousands of hectares. Nor should we take pride in the fact that only a third of the trees being felled are used for production: the remainder are going to waste.

In short, the forest complex is beset by numerous and profoundly serious ills and they need to be comprehensively treated. With this in mind, it is proposed to prohibit second fellings of scientifically validated allowable cuts throughout the entire territory of the RSFSR beginning in 1991 and to make sure that this doesn't occur in the future. It is true that ten years ago the USSR Council of Ministers announced just such a decision, but every year it has authorized by way of an exception the overfelling of allowable cuts and this is still taking place today.

The sensible thing to do would be to restore to the General Forest Lands Administered by the State (Goslesfond) the territories which were ceded to provide for integrated timber enterprises and also to introduce a State forestry service. Beginning next year and continuing thereafter all the logging departments and other organizations will only be permitted to cut trees on conditions that they regenerate the areas being felled. As regards the non-reforested areas of past years, and these amount to hundreds of thousands of hectares, concrete measures must be worked out jointly with the logging departments for their regeneration.

Many criticisms have been voiced in the Committee on Ecological Matters and the Rational Use of Natural Resources over the fact that the forestry bodies are themselves engaging in activities to do with logging. In my view, the forest district, as the main link in the structure of forestry, must be freed from activities pertaining to the timber industry which are not characteristic of it. Its main field of activity is ecological. A forest resources inventory must be conducted annually with the participation of People's Deputies, the public and the Committee for Nature Conservation.

It is felt that we lack the necessary scientific potential for perfecting a policy on technology and managing the forests competently. Despite the fact that 95 percent of the forests are concentrated in RSFSR territory, we do not have a single scientific research institute. On the other hand, in the All-Union Ministry there are about ten of them. With your help, arrangements must be made for some of these institutes to be transferred to the RSFSR Ministry of Forestry, so as to provide for the successful devising of a policy on technology. Moreover, it is essential to introduce changes in the planning and financing of forestry activity, to alter the norms pertaining to all types of forest revenue, including stumpage fees and fines levied for violations of forest regulations, and on the basis of this, draw up a budget providing for the qualitative conduct of forestry."

(Question from an unidentified People's Deputy).  
"Valerii Aleksandrovich. At the present time, more than twenty departments and logging agencies of Union and Other jurisdiction are engaged in economic activity in the forests of Russia. I am referring to the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the railway workers, the southerners and so on and so forth. Are you prepared to become the absolute boss of the forests?"

V.A. Shubin, "Logging is indeed being done by dozens of ministries and departments of both Union and republic subordination. The fact that this is in accordance with quotas allocated to them from the allowable cut is nonetheless, not paralleled by a mandatory requirement to build logging roads and regenerate the areas that have been cut over. That is why I perceive the proposed Law on the Forests of Russia, for which I shall be responsible if appointed, to be concerned first and foremost with the systematization of this work in such a way that the logging departments must be held responsible for the recreational and ecological consequences in the felling areas, carry out mandatory reafforestation activities and build road networks. But in any event, for control to

be achieved the assignation of lands under leasing regulations or the transfer of a quota from the allowable cut must be more rigorously enforced that at present, and remain outside the responsibilities of the forestry agencies."

A.V. Petukhov, Vologda National-Territorial Electoral District, Member of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR. "Valerii Aleksandrovich, you understand very well that forests are divided into coniferous and non-coniferous, valuable and non-valuable. What is your attitude to the fact that included among the spruce forests and coniferous species are forests containing only 35 percent of coniferous trees? Also, what is your attitude to the felling of 80-year old forests? For the forests are actually being destroyed at present, by being incorporated in the State felling programme. If you become the Minister, will it be your intention to radically change this situation, restore the true yield of our forests and change the felling age?"

V.A. Shubin. "There are two questions here. First is the true yields. The thought that comes to me is that by using the full resources of the Ministry of Forestry, taking into account the forest planning enterprises, in some of the territories it would be possible, should the need arise, to verify the condition of the forests with a minimum of delay and restore the true state of affairs. Secondly, as regards changing the felling age, this is of course, the lever by which you control the volume of felling. On the question of the categorization of the forests, drawing them into the green belts of towns and settlements and linking them with sources of water supply, my position will be unambiguous: raise the felling age and thereby curtail the volume of logging operations. The felling age should not be 80 years, but 100. In that event, a portion of the stands would be exempt from felling. This applies precisely to those territories which I mented earlier. Currently, however, every effort is being made to lower the felling age. That is why a review of felling ages should be undertaken as soon as possible. It is a requirement which is keenly felt when working at the site. These matters are of fundamental importance, since the fate of the forests is of concern to every person in our country".

V.V. Mashkov, Kirovograd Territorial Electoral District, Sverdlovsk Oblast. "Valerii Aleksandrovich, I am astonished that you did not name the Sverdlovsk Oblast as one of the areas of Russia where the forests are being catastrophically destroyed, for it is common knowledge that due to the actions of the timber ministry there, we are soon going to be transformed into bedouins. I have made a personal appeal to the President on this matter, and also to the former Minister, asking that they immediately put a stop to the cutting of forests in the territory of the Sverdlovsk Oblast. But they have even formed some cooperatives there."

M.A. Mityukhov, Abakan Territorial Electoral District, Khakassian Autonomous Oblast, Member of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR. "May I, upon returning to my constituents, reassure them by saying that measures will be taken to put an end to the cutting of the forests in the Urals"?

V.A. Shubin. "As regards the Sverdlovsk Oblast, my information indicates that with the existing felling volume, there will only be enough mature and overmature forests for the next thirteen years. This is very little. Accordingly, this region is deserving of very serious attention with respect to a revision of the allowable cut."

M.A. Mityukhov, "Here in Moscow, until now, Siberia has been regarded as a region with a timber surplus. Unfortunately, as a result of the injurious exploitation of our forests, in Khakassia in the southern part of the Krasnoyarsk Krai almost all of the cedars have been cut down, and this is affecting the climate. What action is the Ministry proposing to take for the preservation of the remaining pockets of valuable species such as cedar"?

V.A. Shubin. "I have already presented data on the shrinkage of the areas covered by cedar. But we must also keep in mind that cedar is a material which we need in order to produce pencils. Although a pencil would seem to be a trivial object, 250,000 cubic metres are required for it."

In round timber this translates to 600,000 cubic metres, which means about 1,000,000 cubic metres of standing timber. Even under this pretext they are cutting less than a million every year. The problem is alleviated by the fact that in November of 1989 the union government adopted a resolution to discontinue the industrial felling of cedar beginning in the present year. This also is my position: except for improvement fellings in the most direct sense of the word, i.e. sanitary fellings, there must be no others".

Sovetskaya Rossiya  
16 September 1990  
Page 2 (abridged)

#### ENVIRONMENT

##### Geochemical Map of Erevan to be Compiled

A specially organized laboratory of the Institute of Geological Sciences, of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, has begun compiling a geochemical map of Erevan. The map will depict areas with differing degrees of pollution and define sectors with the greatest concentration of environmentally harmful chemicals. Thus, a start has been made on the realization of an integrated programme of ecological research in the republic.

Lesnaya gazeta  
18 September 1990  
Page 3 (full text)

In round timber this translates to 600,000 cubic meters, which means that 1,000,000 cubic meters of wood are produced every year. The problem is that the production of round timber is not increasing. The fact that the production of round timber is not increasing is due to the fact that the production of round timber is not increasing. The production of round timber is not increasing because of the fact that the production of round timber is not increasing.

District, Khakasskaya A.S.S.R.  
18 September 1950

Page 2 (continued)  
M.A. Shubin  
 District, Khakasskaya A.S.S.R.  
 Supreme Soviet of MFSR. May 1, 1951  
 The following are the results of the work done in the territory of the Republic of Khakassia in the field of environmental protection and the development of natural resources.

Geochemical Map of Evran to be Completed  
 The following are the results of the work done in the territory of the Republic of Khakassia in the field of environmental protection and the development of natural resources. The work done in the territory of the Republic of Khakassia in the field of environmental protection and the development of natural resources is of great importance for the development of the Republic of Khakassia.

The following are the results of the work done in the territory of the Republic of Khakassia in the field of environmental protection and the development of natural resources. The work done in the territory of the Republic of Khakassia in the field of environmental protection and the development of natural resources is of great importance for the development of the Republic of Khakassia.

V.A. Shubin  
 The following are the results of the work done in the territory of the Republic of Khakassia in the field of environmental protection and the development of natural resources. The work done in the territory of the Republic of Khakassia in the field of environmental protection and the development of natural resources is of great importance for the development of the Republic of Khakassia.





LIBRARY E A / BIBLIOTHÈQUE A E



3 5036 01029262 4

