

In 1961, products of plant and animal origin (food products, textiles, leather, wood, paper) comprised around 27% of the value of general world production. From 1950 to 1960 the value of the production of coal, metal, non-metallic minerals, electricity, and gas increased 6 to 9.5% annually, while the value of products of plant and animal origin increased in the range of 4.7 to 5.7%. There can be no doubt that, as the world's population continues to grow, the demand for products of organic biogenous (plant and animal) origin will be ever greater.

In this respect, data about wood consumption are characteristic. If consumption in 1951 is taken to be 100%, consumption in Europe in 1963 had risen to 129%; in the USSR, to 177% and in the whole world, to 133%. Since there is a tendency to use less wood for heating, it is expected that the amount consumed for heating in 1975, as compared to 1961, will be 69% in Europe, 74% in North America and 79% in the USSR. On the other hand, general consumption of wood during the same period will increase to 111% in Europe and the USSR, to 114% in North America, and to 123% in the world as a whole (on account of the sharp increase in the use of wood on other continents, for instance, an increase to 199%, compared with 1961, in Latin America).

It is a mistake to think that, because of successful physico-chemical synthesis, synthetic materials can completely replace textiles such as wool. The production of most synthetic materials requires raw materials of organic origin, and already in a number of cases these are insufficient.

As the population increases and more industries, cities, and roads are built, encroachment on the natural plant cover which is an important source of raw materials for many branches of industry is inevitable. In the USSR, the area of deforestation and that of reforestation are more or less in balance, but during the 25 years from 1940 to 1965 about 5 million hectares of forest were lost because of the construction of large dams, cities, industrial sites, power lines and so forth.

At the present time, 31% of the area of Europe is under cultivation, 11% in the USA, 10% in the USSR, 9% in Africa and only 4% in South America, but 70% in Indonesia (Java), the average for the world being around 10%. Certain experts think that the land under cultivation can be increased to a world average of 16% or 17% which would add around 45% to agricultural production.

Others, however, estimate that almost all land available for agriculture is presently under cultivation in every country in