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Notes, News & Comments [continued from page 80]

Plight of the Forests of Europe

The Council of Europe, which actively promotes quality of life in Europe, recognizes the seriousness of the problems facing forest managers and the urgent need for international solutions. It is for this reason that the Council hosted a Pan-European Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests which was held on 18 and 19 December 1990 at the initiative of the French and Finnish Ministers of Agriculture. That Conference was attended by, among many others, most of the European Ministers responsible for forests.

Their task is not an easy one. The threats facing forests in Europe are many and varied: acidic precipitation and air pollution, deforestation in new industrial zones and regions with poor rural structures, damage caused by forest fires — especially in Southern Europe — or by grazing cattle or game animals as well as natural disasters,

such as the storms which caused widespread devastation early in 1990. One might add *inter alia* poor management or even total neglect in some cases for which there cannot be any adequate excuse.

As a prelude to the Pan-European Conference, the Centre Naturopa invited Professor Vassili Soukhikh, Vice-Chairman of the Soviet State Committee on Forest Resources, to report on forests in the European USSR. This he graciously did.*

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* In a paper which we hope to publish soon. — Ed.