ITEM No. 7640/52

AH
10 June
V/1175/E

BULGARIA

AGRICULTURE
Forests

INDUSTRY
Building
Raw Materials

The "Georgi Damvanov Zavod"
Woodshops

SOURCE ISTANBUL: A Bulgarian escapee, former deputy, one-time secretary general of the Ministry of the Interior; an editor.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: 1951.

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The beech forests near DILGI DEL village in county Berkovitsa constituted the richest virgin forests in Bulgaria prior to 1944. Most of the 3,000 decare area had not been penetrated and the forests, which were under the administration of the GOVEJDA village forestry department were exploited according to a fixed plan by the inhabitants of DILGI DEL, GOVEJDA, POMEJDIN, KAPLOVTSI, DIVA SLATINA, GLAVNOVTSI and LOPZSHNA villages. The timber and wood products collected by the villagers along the banks of the "Ogosta" river were transported to the lowlands near the Danube and there sold for constructional purposes. The inhabitants of the above-listed villages were making a good profit on their sales and the forest was carefully tended to provide raw material for many more years.

After 9 September 1944 when the Bulgarian Communist Government introduced the Soviet-system exploitation of natural reserves, the DILGI DEL forest area was included into the first list of virgin areas yet to be exploited. In the spring of 1947, the construction of a large "zavod" for the manufacture of timber and wooden products, such as barrels, cages, boces, and industrial wooden parts was started near the small "Dilgi Del" tributary of the "Ogosta" river, between the villages of DILGI DEL and GOVEJDA. The construction period lasted for more than a year and was completed in late 1948. Machinery was imported from Czechoslovakia and, by 1949, the factory had almost reached full production capacity.

The necessary electric power is being furnished by a large power generator. A Soviet-built steam engine provides steam and hot water for the two large tubs used in the process of curving and shaping wood. The factory consists of three buildings, two of which have two stories each. The buildings cover roughly an area of 4,000 square meters. Besides the actual workshops, the "zavod" has a great number of administrative buildings, warehouses, workers' barracks and re-

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pairshops. The following machinery had been installed at the factory by mid-1949: six electric saws to cut up unhewn, large trunks, two saws for trimming rough tree-trunks (gater bansig,) more than 20 ordinary two-man automatic hand-saws, six circular saws, four polishing machines, four grates, and a number of various size and model presses. The sorkshops turn out 200-liter barrels, ammunition boxes, fruit cases, all sizes of crates, small boxes for the export of fruit pulp, barrels for salted meat and fish, and railroad sleepers. Sometimes the "zavod" produces industrial wooden articles, such as warp-beams for textile looms.

It was planned to add a celluloid and paper factory near the wood plant, but in 1951 the project was abandoned, for it was found out that with the irrational exploitation timber reserves were fast dwindling.

The "zavod" is situated 15 kilometers from the actual forest site, which produced the raw material, and an aerial cable was set up to transport the timber from the Balkan slopes to the factory. The elevated line, which passes over DILGI DEL village, cost six lives in 16 months of operation.

Although strictly forbidden, many of the tired workers take the risk and ride home in the evening on the timber-filled elevated cars. The first accident occurred in the first month of the operation of the cable line, and two workers were capsized from an over-loaded wagon. The two workers crashed in the yard of a house in DILGI DEL. Both workers were killed instantaneously and a peasant who had been working in the yard at the time of the accident was maimed. Six months later an empty cable car crashed into the preceding car, which was carrying four lumberjacks. As a result of the crash, the loaded car was derailed and the four men plunged to death on the rocky slopes of the Balkans. After these accidents special measures were taken to keep away workers from using the elevated line.

The "zavod" employs about 40 lumberjacks, 80 timberyard hands, 40 skilled carpenters and 20 truck-drivers, who transport the raw material from the base of the elevated line to the workshops.

The factory was named after DAMYANOV Georgi, the president of the presidum of the National Assembly and a native of LOPUSHNA village, who first proposed the project of a timber "zavod." The project was carried out with the aim of ensuring a higher standard of living to the local population and increasing Bulgarian exports. However, instead of profiting by the establishment the inhabitants of the surrounding villages have suffered heavy losses. The peasa

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peasants, who are no longer permitted to exploit the forest and sell the products at their will, must either work at the "zavod" as lumberjacks or factory hands, or must leave the mountains and migrate to the lowlands in quest of employment. While previously the forest yielded enough timber to support as many as eight villages, today only a few trusted Communists profit by the "Georgi Damyanov" zavod.

The uncontrolled exploitation has shown its first signs within two years of the foundation of the zavod. Already it has been calculated that the DILGI DEL area forests will be exhausted by 1960 and the zavod will loose its importance. The Communists began immediately to look for a scapegoat to be blamed for miscalculating the natural resources of the area. PETKOV Dimitir, a former forest warden (lesnichey) of BERKOVITSA and MIHAILOVGRAD, who had been appointed overseer of the entire "Georgi Damyanov" project, was found guilty of incompetence and brought to trial. He was dismissed from his job and it was later rumored that he was serving a prison sentence.

The zavod is under the administration of STAMBOLIEV Vlado, a native of MIHAILOVGRAD and trustworthy Communist Party member.

EVAL. COMMENT: Matters correspond with similar information.

Names evaluate! probably abd.