INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

To the Honorable E. J. DAVIS,

Commissioner of Crown Lands:

SIR,—The possibility of producing a good and economical fuel from the peat bogs of Ontario is one that engaged the attention of the Bureau of Mines almost immediately after its establishment in 1891, and in the Report for that year will be found a pretty full review of the progress made by the industry up to that time both in Europe and America, including Canada. In subsequent Reports, particularly those for 1892, 1893, 1894, 1896 and 1897, the subject was reverted to, and additional information furnished. In view of the recent and still continuing scarcity of fuel consequent on the strike of the anthracite miners in Pennsylvania, the present seems an opportune time to submit a summary of the existing condition of the peat fuel manufacture in Ontario, and the prospect which it holds out of affording relief from a well-nigh intolerable situation.

The data contained in the report are drawn from many sources, but in the main have been collected by Mr. W. E. H. Carter, Secretary of the Bureau of Mines, who for this purpose has visited almost all the peat factories of the Province, and investigated the efficiency and cost of the methods and machinery made use of; and the report is largely Mr. Carter's work.

Determinations and analyses of peat and peat gas were made by Mr. J. Walter Wells, who also reports on practical experience with peat fuel burned at the Provincial Assay Office, Belleville. Thanks are due to Mr. J. G. Thaulow, engineer to the Norwegian Government, for permission to make use of his valuable report on peat fuel in Europe and Canada, to Peat Industries, Limited, the Peat Machinery Supply Company, Limited, and to others connected with the industry, for assistance rendered.

Discussion is restricted solely to the value and use of peat for fuel and the processes employed for manufacturing it for that purpose, this being the aspect of the subject which confers upon it pressing, if not vital, importance. There are many other economic uses for peat, but they are not dealt with in this report.

I have the honor to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

THOS. W. GIBSON,

BUREAU OF MINES,

Department of Crown Lands, 25th February, 1903.

Director.