

to sell it at a profit in competition with other fuels in this province and in the province of Quebec. These provinces are both in the acute fuel area. In this city and in Montreal between 15,000 and 20,000 tons of this fuel have been burned in domestic furnaces and it has proved successful. While therefore one cannot say that it is entirely beyond the experimental stage, nevertheless the experiment has been carried far enough to demonstrate that peat fuel can be produced by the process upon which these expenditures have been made.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: I know something personally about this matter because forty years ago I spent a good deal of money trying to develop peat fuel commercially. There is no trouble about selling it; it is a very fine fuel. If we could discover a method by which it could be made satisfactorily from a commercial point of view it would be worth a great deal of money to this country because we have peat bogs in every part of Canada. And it would help to solve our fuel problem. There is, I repeat, no trouble about either selling it or burning it; indeed, I burned it in my own house forty years ago. The problem is to complete successfully such a process as will turn out the fuel commercially at prices which the people can afford to pay. I understood from the minister that when he handed the property over to the company they had a completed process. It seems now that it is not entirely successful.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): I am sorry my hon. friend got that impression. Certain drawings were made for the improvement of the machinery, so that this part of the machinery at least could not be said to have been tested. The major portion of the machinery was all tested and proved efficient and to that extent the process has gone past the experimental stage. Unfortunately, however, as in the case of many new enterprises, they could not finance the project and carry it on, so that they were unable to operate.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: I doubt whether it was a lack of funds that made it difficult for them to carry on. I am not sure whether as a matter of fact it was found that the process had not been sufficiently completed to enable the fuel to be made commercially. That is the question. I doubt very much whether the process has reached the point where peat can be turned out in large quantities at a reasonable price. I cannot understand why the government should have handed the plant over to a private company unless the process was completed. Now the plant must

[Mr. C. A. Stewart.]

be taken back. The simplest thing to do, in my judgment, is to continue the experiment in a small way. I am willing that a reasonable sum should be spent in an endeavour if possible to discover some means of making use of this natural product.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): We are confident that we can sell the fuel if we can move the machinery and set up the plant, which is all there with the exception of some of the machinery which the company has bought.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: Does the minister suggest that he can sell the fuel at cost?

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): We can sell it and make a profit; we have demonstrated that with machinery not entirely completed. We have to sell the fuel at about \$7 or \$8. You can manufacture it and put it on the cars for less than \$5, and it has already been proved that we can cut that \$5 cost considerably. It will be remembered also that we had to haul the fuel a considerable distance to Alfred station. We propose now to lay a track to the fuel bed itself, thus effecting a saving.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: When this matter comes up in the main estimates the minister might bring down a statement covering a period of months, giving the expenditures and the receipts, to show that the fuel can be profitably disposed of.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): I shall be glad to bring down a statement of costs when the general estimate is up.

Mr. ADSHEAD: After the manufacture of this fuel has been proved a commercial success is it the intention of the Minister of the Interior to continue operating the plant as a government concern or to sell it again to some company?

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): It is not the intention of the government to continue operating it as a commercial enterprise once it has proved commercially practicable, but to sell it to those who can operate it.

Mr. RYERSON: May I ask the minister if he has any figures showing the amount expended by this government during the last ten or twenty years in connection with these experiments?

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): I can get those figures for my hon. friend. This particular experiment was carried on jointly with the Ontario government.

Mr. RYERSON: I might back up the words of some other hon. members by saying that a great deal of money has been expended during the last twenty-five years on