

The European countries where peat fuel is used to a considerable extent are: Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Russia, Germany, Austria, Holland and Ireland. In most of these countries large industries for the manufacture of moss litter and peat mull are also established, and the consumption of these articles for bedding and packing purposes is rapidly increasing. The manufacture of peat coke is, especially in Germany, receiving much attention, and in Sweden several power plants with peat gas producers are in successful operation.

The methods at present used for peat fuel manufacture depend on air drying, which has been found, notwithstanding its uncertainty, to be the cheapest and most practical method of drying. The question of economically removing the water from the peat substance is the main problem, and a great number of more or less impracticable methods have been tried in Europe and much money lost, but the question of successfully utilizing the peat bog is being steadily carried forward by means of new inventions and labour saving appliances. The interest displayed by the various governments and assistance given in some form or other has also had a stimulating influence on the peat industries in these countries. In the countries mentioned, with the exception of Russia, Holland and Ireland, societies receiving yearly grants from their respective governments have been organized for the purpose of giving information and advice regarding the manufacture of peat products and the cultivation and drainage of peat bogs. These societies, through publications, lectures and experimentation, do a very valuable educational work, assist manufacturers and farmers with investigations and advice and also do a great amount of good by criticising the processes and methods invented from time to time, which in many cases prevents the useless spending of money.

On account of the large population in Europe, land is naturally more expensive than in Canada at the present time, and the question of cultivating peat bogs in Canada will probably for some time to come be of minor importance, although in certain instances such cultivation would even now undoubtedly be a paying proposition. In the United States the reclamation of bog and swamp lands for agricultural purposes and reforestation is receiving much attention and several large drainage projects are at present under consideration. The increased value of such drained land, which in its original state is practically valueless, would in more populated sections of Canada probably pay the cost of such undertaking just as well as the irrigation projects carried on in sections where water is lacking. Furthermore, the beneficial results in climatic conditions due to proper drainage are points worthy of attention.

The European governments are generally assisting in such drainage works when large areas are affected, and thereby also assist incidentally the peat industry in those localities, as the drainage of a bog in many cases involves a heavy expenditure for which no immediate returns can be expected.