

Peat as a Source of Fuel

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ON former occasions, when I addressed the American Peat Society, the Canadian Club at Toronto, and the members of this Commission, on the subject of the utilization of our Canadian peat bogs, the conditions prevailing throughout the country were totally different from what they are now. Then the country enjoyed peace and prosperity, and the spirit of *laissez faire* rendered efforts to arouse an abiding interest in the development of the peat resources of the country unavailing.

Now we are in the throes of a gigantic war, entailing colossal destruction of resources, and our minds are agitated with the question: "How can failing resources be replaced by others?" and, perhaps for the first time, compelled by the exigencies of the times, are we prepared to realize that the natural resources upon which the very foundations of our present civilization rest, and upon which future civilization must continue to build, are not inexhaustible, but limited, and that for some, it is feared, exhaustion is in sight. This is the case with fuel, of which class coal is the most important. How to conserve it by utilizing a maximum of its potential energy is a problem of the utmost importance wherever coal is the principal fuel.

A Possible
Fuel Famine

But in countries where artificial heat must be provided for eight months annually for the sole purpose of maintaining life, the question of an adequate fuel supply is overwhelmingly important. This is brought home to us as never before, and the appointment of a Fuel Controller for Canada and a similar officer for the United States demonstrates that conditions may arise when, in spite of still abundant coal resources, a fuel famine may occur. The possibility of a shortage of fuel to meet the demand of the central provinces of Canada, which depend upon the United States for some 17,500,000 tons of coal, annually, and the probable suffering which may be entailed by such shortage have produced a profound change in the mental attitude of the people, rendering them more willing to consider, soberly and seriously, the fuel problem of the central provinces of Canada.