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BELORUSSIAN SSR AIMS AT BETTER UTILIZATION OF TREMENDOUS PEAT RESERVES

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During the postwar Five-Year Plan period, a large, mechanized peat industry was created in the Belorussian SSR and became an independent branch of the national economy serving as the main power and fuel base of the republic. The volume of industrial peat extraction in 1951 was 270 times the 1913 output.

Plants for peat briquetting are being constructed in the republic, and peat is being gasified for technological needs in a number of glass plants. However, the peat reserves of the republic are still being utilized unsatisfactorily. Extracted peat is used mostly as fuel for electric power stations and industrial enterprises. Other types of use for peat are still inadequately developed in the republic.

The Ministry of Local Fuel Industry Belorussian SSR, the Academy of Sciences Belorussian SSR, and a number of other organizations have as yet taken only a slight interest in solving practical problems for a widespread, all-around utilization of peat in the national economy.

Up to the present, Belorussian peat reserves have been investigated inadequately. There is no special organization for estimating peat reserves and, consequently, exploration of deposits proceeds slowly. Many deposits in Brest, Pinsk, Baranovichi, and Grodno oblasts have not been estimated, and even in Minsk, Gomel', Vitebsk, and Mogilevsk oblasts not more than 30 percent of the peat reserves have been explored.

Peat extraction in the Belorussian SSR ought to double in the next 2-3 years and completely supply the republic's requirements for local fuel. Therefore, maximum mechanization of the industrial processes of extracting, drying, and

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gathering peat is necessary. The production of milled peat, which is completely mechanized, should be increased. Milled peat should be introduced as fuel for small and medium-sized boilers, and economical fireboxes should be designed for this purpose.

In the field of mechanizing extraction processes, the method of producing cylindrical peat deserves attention. This year, more than 20,000 tons of this type of peat have been produced by the Tug ...a and Bol'shevik peat enterprises.

In 1951, a new machine for mechanizing the first operations in drying lump peat was tested under industrial conditions at an experimental peat station. A government commission has approved the construction of this machine, and a small consignment of the machines must be constructed in the near future to be tested in different types of deposits and by different extraction methods.

Utilization of peat for power and chemical purposes consists in subjecting the peat to thermal processing before burning it. Fuel gas or semicoke, peat tar, ammonia, and acetic acid are products resulting from the thermal processing of peat; peat tar serves as the raw material for valuable chemical products. However, the organization of the utilization of peat for power and chemical purposes is still unsatisfactory in the Belorussian SSR. A good example of this is the gas generator station of the Gomel' Glass Plant imeni Stalin under the Ministry of Construction Materials USSR. Here, tens of thousands of tons of peat are gasified in a year, with several thousand tons of peat tar obtained as by-products. Yet the processing of the peat tar has not been organized, and the quality of the tar itself has been impaired because of the poor condition of the refining system of the gas generator station.

During 1951, the construction of a tar-distilling plant in Kosyukovka is planned by the Peat Institute of the Academy of Sciences Belorussian SSR and the Belorussian Industrial Council with the aim of distilling peat tar. Products of the distillation will be widely adopted in industry and agriculture of the republic.

Industrial centers of the republic, primarily Minsk, need inexpensive gas generator fuel to satisfy the domestic requirements of the population. The production of such high-calorie domestic gas can be completely assured by gasifying peat by already developed methods. It is only necessary to clear up organizational problems in designing a gas plant to obtain high-calorie gas. The question of gasifying peat should be considered in close link with the possibility of creating in the republic a chemical industry on the basis of the peat-tar by-products of gasification.

There are some peat-briquetting plants in the Belorussian SSR, but the production of briquettes lags far behind requirements. Small briquetting plants, constructed in the republic according to a design of Giprominestop (State Institute for the Planning of Local Fuel Enterprises) RSFSR, have proved extremely uneconomical. For this reason peat briquettes have not yet been adopted extensively in the republic. Recently, the Peat Institute of the Academy of Sciences Belorussian SSR and Belgorpproyekt (Belorussian Peat Enterprise Planning) have worked out a new, efficient technological plan for briquetting peat for plants of average capacity. It is necessary to set quickly about constructing a plant which will assure the obtaining of inexpensive briquettes for communal and domestic needs of the population.

The question of using peat as a raw material for insulation materials for the construction and refrigeration industries also deserves consideration. This field should be considerably expanded in the system of the Ministry of Local Fuel Industry Belorussian SSR.

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Peat is particularly important to Belorussian SSR agriculture For the podzolic soils of the republic it is a good fertilizer, a valuable substance for improving the agrobiological properties of the soils. However, work organization in extracting peat for fertilizing purposes is still very primitive. Up to now, in the majority of kolkhozes peat extraction has been carried out by manual labor, by low-production methods, and mainly in winter. In the meantime, proper work organization in extracting peat with the use of agricultural machinery and mechanisms of the MTS can assure the Kolkhozes an adequate peat supply for their fertilizer requirements with a minimum expenditure of labor. The Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of State Farms Belorussian SSR, and the institutes of the Academy of Sciences Belorussian SSR should take the necessary measures to introduce into agriculture already developed methods of mechanizing peat extraction for fertilizing purposes, making use of the experience of the peat extracting industry and the equipment of the MTS.

The Peat Institute of the Academy of Sciences Belorussian SSR is the only scientific research institution for all phases of peat research in the system of the academies of science of the USSR, a fact which emphasizes the importance of peat in the Belorussian economy

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