

Building Materials in South Africa

Limited Building at Cape Town.

Owing to excessive overbuilding during the boom immediately succeeding the Boer war, as well as on account of unusual public and private improvements necessitated in the Transvaal by the fixing of the administrative capital in Pretoria, the demand at Cape Town for building materials has been relatively small for several years. This will more fully appear from the following from the Cape "Times":

There is, however, a gradual recovery of normal conditions in the building trade in this district.

Style of Construction.

The great majority of private houses put up here are of brick. Most of them are plastered on the outside and inside. In the better class of these buildings a large percentage of cement is used. Where much cement is used, it is difficult to drive in nails. Where too little is used, the nails will not hold. This is overcome in many cases by fixing picture moulding before the plastering is put on.

In the majority of the buildings here, both public and private, the partitions are of brick, so that wall boarding or laths are not needed. Where needed, various supports for the plastering are employed. A considerable amount of expanded metal lathing (principally of English make) is used. The Germans have a wall boarding on the market here made of asbestos and cement, which is landed at about 19s. (\$4.62) per square (10 by 10 feet). They also sell roofing tiling of the same material, landed at 32s. 6d. (7.79) per square. This is slightly harder and heavier than the wall boarding. The boarding is three-sixteenths of an inch thick and comes in sheets 4 by 8 feet. The tiles are one-eighth of an inch thick and 16 x 16 inches square.

How to Introduce New Articles.

There is nothing manufactured here to compete with American wall board or the German asbestos-cement board. Clay tiles, however, are locally made. For this market it is suggested that the trade is not large enough to justify the effort of general distribution of American products of this character. It would appear advisable to arrange with one manufacturer's agent for the exclusive sale, who would be free to get in touch with the architects, on whose specifications the builder would have to buy any particular material designated. Probably the best way to introduce such an article would be to select a manufacturer's agent and get him to submit samples to the architects and then supply him free with enough of the board to put up in at least one room in some new house under the architect's direction. It will be necessary to introduce building novelties before any large orders may be expected. Material men here will not stock any article heavily until it has been demonstrated that there will be a reasonable demand.

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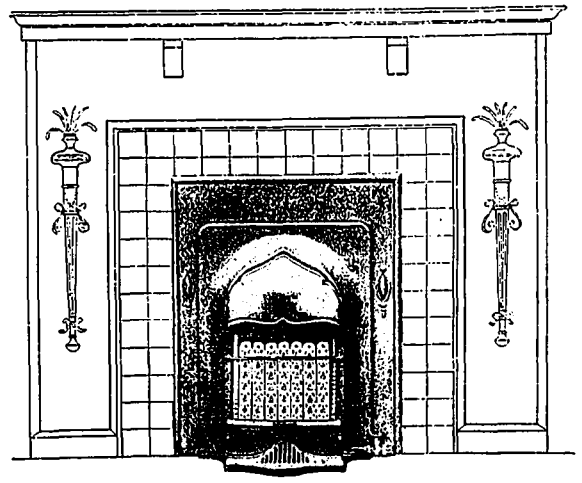
DEVELOPMENT IN GAS APPLIANCES

As in many other lines progress in gas appliances has been slow until late years, and the many interesting and wonderful appliances that are now being shown are indeed worthy of investigation. Gas in America has now been in use a full century, but it is only of late that the many benefits to be obtained from its use have been given the publicity that has been deserved. In the abatement of the smoke nuisance gas has played no inconspicuous part. The hygienic value of gas as an illuminant, and the health value of gas when properly used for heat, has lately been aptly dwelt upon by a number of eminent medical authorities. Gas can truly be called "The Silent Servant," and the user of the modern gas appliance can minimize life's little worries. Perhaps the most striking example of the development in modern

appliances is the radiant gas fire. In appearance these fires are equal to anything that can be purchased, and with the economy of operation that is possible and the absolute control of the heat are well worth investigating. The heat that is radiated is odorless. Prof. Leonard Hill, M.B., F.R.S., etc., has emphasized the health value of radiant heat. There are two distinct forms of heat—radiated and convected. Convection is the warming of the air by contact with a warm body. Radiation is the warming of the walls, floors and objects in the room by the direct issue of heat rays from the source of heat. Radiant heat does not noticeably warm the air, but passes through it, warming any material surfaces which intercept the rays. These surfaces gradually warm the air by convection to a comfortable degree. Heat and light radiations are given out by these heaters, and they correspond more closely in appearance to a coal grate than any other gas operated heater. The radiating power is speedily developed, and with freedom from dirt and noise accomplish a great deal in satisfactorily solving the domestic heating question. The designs and finishes of the panel and inset fires are adaptable to almost any surroundings, and consequently they rather lend attraction to the furnishings of a room.



RADIANT GAS FIRE INSTALLED IN HOUSE ON HUNTLEY ST., TORONTO, ONT.



INSET FIRE RADIANT GAS APPLIANCE.