

It appears to us that every locality has its own particular problems, and we can do some useful work in clearing up misunderstandings of people, particularly at this time when they are endeavouring to get away from burning American anthracite. During the last season a great deal of misrepresentation, or misunderstanding, has existed, particularly in regard to any Welsh coal that has been sold. People have thought that they were getting the best Welsh coal when they were really getting dry steam coal. It was good steam coal, but it was not as suitable for domestic purposes as the real Welsh domestic fuel. There is one other thing that they have had some difficulty with, and in which we think we can give some help by giving out information, and that is the question of oil. There have been innumerable oil burners sold, and some people have put them in when their conditions were not suitable for burning oil at all. Others have not realized just what oil-burning means, and they have probably gained an impression which would have been avoided if they had known beforehand what type of oil-burner to put in, or whether their conditions and size and installation were proper for oil, or whether oil could be considered. Fundamentally, we have really in mind a service to the public, the consumers—to encourage and educate the public in the better utilization of the different fuels which will be available. We are not concerning ourselves so much with how to get them; there are others more qualified to do so than we are; but when we find the fuels that are available in Montreal, we will do our best to encourage their use in the best way.

Q. What progress have you made along those lines?—A. Well, up to the present we have not done very much more than to collect data, for the reason that this Committee was only formed during February, and we did not think that it was advisable at that time to put out anything in the way of snap rules which we might make up in a hurry so close to the end of the heating season. What we have in mind now and the near future is that the consumers will be wanting to know something about the different fuels that are available to put in their bins.

Q. Those are at present, in Montreal, what?—A. We have the American anthracite, and we have a number of available substitutes such as coke or Welsh anthracite. We have been interesting ourselves in finding out, as far as possible, what are the chances of getting Welsh anthracite, and what are the chances for the future in getting a supply of coke for domestic furnaces. We consider that coke and Welsh coal are the logical substitutes for American coal, for domestic use. We look upon straight bituminous coal as something which can be used as an emergency, but something to be avoided if possible, for the furnaces are not adapted to burning bituminous coal, but are designed particularly for burning American anthracite. The combustion chambers are not big enough, and while bituminous coal can be burned, it cannot be efficiently burned, and it cannot be taken up like anthracite, unless we build our furnaces to do it.

Q. It is not the most desirable way of utilizing that coal?—A. No.

Q. What about gas?—A. Gas, of course, is an admirable fuel if it can compare at all in price with coal, but the present indications are that we cannot see that it will be so. You cannot get more heat out of a fuel than there is in it, and you cannot beat coal, if you can get a supply of coal, by gas. Of course if we could get natural gas, or if we could get gas supplied at a price, the people would use it.

Q. But that would be distinctly lower than the current prices, to make it much of a success?—A. Yes; you would have to cut it in half.

Q. To get a really wide market for it?—A. Yes, to get one that is going to make people take it up, comparable with the cost of heating with coal.

[Mr. F. A. Combe.]