

would mean cutting back on heat to avoid paying huge penalties, and reducing temperatures in apartments. After all, 60% of all of the gas produced in the country supplies the needs of the residential sector. Are we really going to start issuing rationing coupons for heat?

This is my response to those readers who are already seething with anger: for the government has scarcely finished saying that the consumer sector has the priority and gas industry workers are already hogging the pie. It has been announced, after all, that group "A" should only grow by 0.8% this year.

So then, are we going to ask our women who are busy preparing dinner on a gas range: what do you think of natural gas - is it only an industrial resource? Or is it also a consumer commodity? Let's ask ourselves, too, as we switch on our television sets, vacuum cleaners, and the lamps in our apartments and warm our hands over the radiator: is the gas used in the furnaces of state regional electric power stations and heat and electric power stations a consumer product or is it the bread of industry? Or is it perhaps both? Could it be that we have become carried away with formalistic reasoning in a practical production situation? First, we needlessly capitalise the first letter of the alphabet, and then we downgrade it, even when such exercises with the alphabet of our economy contradict basic common sense. In the dead of winter there won't be any question which is more important - a television set or a heater. And is it worth waiting until the answer comes in the form of teeth chattering from the cold?

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