

Shall We Be Put on Coal Rations?

THE FUEL PROBLEM EXPLAINED

A Crisis is Not Altogether Impossible---Strict Fuel Economy Essential
as a Preventative Measure

By MRS. E. H. REYNOLDS



WHEN numbers of busy pedestrians congregate on a city street, when a crowd forms hurriedly, one naturally expects a melee, the display of war trophies or something equally as entertaining. But a hurried mass formation recently that proved a disappointment from the standpoint of entertainment was that in front of a coal dealer's window. The centre of attraction was a Government poster, with the headlines—"Notice to All Consumers of Coal."

The thermometer at that time had not even a bowing acquaintance with 32° above, yet that bulletin seemed to cause an involuntary shiver, as the possibility of a cold winter on cold rations was thereby visualized. It aroused interest—everything that affects one's comfort does. More—it aroused mild consternation.

"Just what IS the fuel situation?" was the question implied in every glance.

Well—what is it?

What is the normal supply of coal? How have war conditions affected it?

SIR GEORGE FOSTER'S STATEMENT

WHEN questioned on the subject Sir George Foster, Minister of Trade and Commerce, made a comprehensive statement as to the whole coal situation. Last year 13,800,000 tons of bituminous coal was produced in Canada. This was not sufficient for the needs of Canada. From the United States 13,000,000 tons of bituminous coal was imported. Canada exported 1,800,000 tons.

For anthracite, Sir George said, Canada is dependent upon the United States. Last year 4,500,000 tons was imported. The total importation of both bituminous and anthracite was, therefore, about 17,500,000 tons.

The anthracite stocks were lowered last year, and probably an extra million tons will have to be imported to make up that deficiency. Canada will, therefore, be dependent upon the United States for about 18,000,000 tons.

WHERE IT ALL GOES

TO the man on the street, and to the woman in the home statistics are but vague. They offer no solution of the immediate needs and are generally regarded as the refuge of politicians and the despair of the private citizen.

"Why all this fuss then?" they ask. "If they have more coal than last year, wherefore all the talk, the consternation?"

There's the rub.

The question of supply and demand again plays its part. There is to-day, a vastly increased demand for coal for war purposes.

The situation in the United States necessarily affects Canada. There, the normal output of anthracite is 68,000,000 tons, and of bituminous 509,000,000 tons. The stock supplies at the beginning of the year were not very large, but there has been an increase since April in production, and the quantities now are considerably in excess of what were mined last year.

The steel industries alone call for an extra 40,000,000 tons. The railways have to do the haulage and they require thirty per cent. more than last year. It is not probable that the demand for coal in the United States will be decreased.

The question of coal supply is intimately connected with the transportation question. There is a shortage of railway transport for coal purposes, and vessels which formerly transported coal by water, have secured more lucrative freight, while some have been transferred to war purposes.

In most of the mines in the United States there are no storage facilities, and it is the practice of the miners to

stop work when there is a good supply above ground not taken away.

WHAT IS BEING DONE

OUR Canadian Fuel Controller has been trying to overcome this difficulty by an effort to co-ordinate dealers, jobbers and the transportation system with a view to quick distribution of the coal when it arrives at the border.

In the United States President Wilson has taken a firm stand in a fight to obtain cheaper anthracite coal for the consuming public. He fixed

dollars a ton for it and feel very comfortable now when they think that, come what may, they will be warm this winter. But for most of us the problem of our winter's supply of fuel is yet unsolved and we want to know how we can make a little go a long way.

IS YOUR CHIMNEY RIGHT?

"I BURNED twelve tons of coal two years ago in this house and that didn't keep us warm," said my neighbor. "I was beginning to think that my furnace was no good. I even told

money for a new chimney. It proved to be money well spent, for last winter I burned four tons less coal and kept the house comfortably warm, which I had never been able to do before, regardless of how much coal I burned."

Another man on our street, after hearing of this incident, decided that he should have a new chimney. His wife suggested that instead of tearing down the old one they have a man investigate the chimney and clean it out if necessary. If that failed to improve conditions they could then have a new chimney built. The workmen swept the chimney and removed a brick that had fallen in. Since then the furnace has heated the house perfectly.

From a home in one of the Maritime Provinces comes this story. "Our furnace had been used for fifteen years and was in far from good condition. The damper in the smoke pipe was rusted and would not work right and the whole system was rather antiquated. There was not enough cold air for the number of hot air registers. Each winter we burned more coal than we did the preceding winter and yet the house was never warm. Two years ago we had the old furnace thrown on the scrap heap and bought the most up-to-date one on the market. We saved two and one-half tons of coal that first winter and at that rate it will not take long to pay for the new furnace with the price of coal saved."

ARE YOU YOUR OWN STOKER?

"WE used to hire a man to run our furnace," proclaims another housekeeper. "At first he followed the line of least resistance and did not use any more coal than conveniently to keep the fire going. It takes effort to lift coal to the height of the furnace door. We complained, and complained most emphatically on the coldest days. At length he learned that he must regulate the dampers just so and furnish coal at a certain rate to avoid complaints, such regulation being adapted to the coldest weather. He then automatically made about the same adjustments every day, warm or cold. Naturally, most of the time, too much heat was delivered. We did not mind that, however, because we could always open a window and reduce the temperature."

"One day, on going into the cellar, I was horrified to see how the coal was disappearing. It dawned on me then that we were practically throwing coal out of the window when we opened the window to cool off the house. Of course fresh air is a good thing and we always open the windows every morning and air the whole house, and the bedroom windows are always wide open at night. But to make a practice of opening the windows to cool the house is, to say the least, a most extravagant habit."

"I decided to be my own stoker, at least for a time. I first made a careful study of the basic principles of combustion and found that to get the best heat from a definite amount of coal a definite amount of air was necessary. I regulated my drafts carefully and watched for results. With a little experience I was soon able to run the furnace and be comfortable on a smaller amount of coal than we had used, even on the warmest days before."

HOW IT IS DONE

"I FOUND that, instead of opening the air-door in the smoke pipe to regulate the draft and reduce the heat given off, I could conserve heat by adjusting the damper in the smoke pipe and the ash-pit opening."

"I found, too, that it is rarely necessary to operate the furnace under full draft. The opening in most furnace doors is larger than necessary. I found that the opening should vary with the thickness of the fuel bed; the heavier the fire the more air needed for it and the stronger the draft to force the air through."

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NOTICE TO ALL CONSUMERS OF COAL

THE Government of Ontario, at the request of the Dominion Fuel Controller, draws Public attention to the fuel situation in the Province.

War conditions have affected the normal supply of coal, and rendered imperative that every consumer practise the utmost thrift.

Co-operation may be effected by the adoption of the following precautions, viz.:

1. Refrain from using fuel of any kind, including gas, until it becomes absolutely necessary.
2. Practise rigid economy in the use of fuel.
3. Wherever possible use substitutes for coal to the fullest possible extent.
4. Guard constantly against waste of fuel when making or cleaning fires, and when using gas.
5. Thoroughly sift all coal ash, and burn the residue. The result will be surprising. ONE-TENTH of the fuel originally fed to the fire has been recovered and utilized in this way.

The faithful observation of the foregoing by all consumers will have a marked effect in conserving the coal supply and may avert a serious crisis.

W. H. HEARST,

Prime Minister.

the price of anthracite coal at the mouths of the mines and the conditions under which jobbers will be permitted to operate. This, it is expected, will lower the price of coal in the United States.

But, with all that Fuel Controllers and coal administrators can do the situation looks serious and "those who know" in Canada feel that there should be a saving in fuel, and particularly in coal, just as there is an effort on the part of all right thinking people to affect a saving in food.

A few forehanded householders in Toronto laid in a supply of coal in May for this winter. They paid nine

some of my friends, who were buying new furnaces, not to get this make because it was not satisfactory. An acquaintance of mine, who was in the furnace business, and who handled this particular make of furnace, protested. "Why, you're hurting my business," he complained.

He asked if he might come over some day and look around. Of course I gave him permission. The minute he had looked the place over he said, "Your furnace is all right, but you'll never have any satisfaction until you build a new chimney. That chimney is not in the right place."

"Very unwillingly I parted with the

Tell Us What You Do

WHAT economy are YOU practising in YOUR home to offset the fuel crisis?

How did it work out last year?

Some one less fortunate than yourself—some one who has not been able to secure an ample supply of coal for this winter will appreciate the very ideas you have carried out to your own financial gain.

Won't you tell us your pet scheme? Write us a few friendly lines. They will help solve this national problem.

—THE EDITORS.