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Educational Purchase.

WASHINGTON, D. C.,

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To intending Bidders on Coal and Others Interested:

The Government purchases the greater part of its fuel supply on specifications, that is, the bidder guarantees that his coal will give, by test, a certain number of heat units in the coal at time of delivery and a certain per cent of ash, and if the coal delivered varies from the values which the bidder establishes, the coal is paid for at a premium or deduction, according as the quality is above or below the standards established by the contractor.

This method of purchasing coal having given such satisfactory results with the Government, as well as many commercial firms, this office has decided to adopt it for the purchase of the fuel supply for the Service. Accordingly, the proposals which it will soon issue, inviting bids on coal for the fiscal year 1910-1911, will call for statements of the quality of the coal which the bidder proposes to furnish, expressed in terms of British thermal units "as received" (the condition of coal at time of delivery with respect to the per cent of water carried) and ash "dry coal" (free from moisture).

The values which the bidders submit with the price per ton on their bids will be considered in determining the award of the contract, and these values if successful will become a part of the contract, being the standards upon which the price to be paid for coal delivered will be determined. Analysis of samples of coal taken from every delivery will show the quality of the coal being furnished, and from which, with the values guaranteed by the contractor, the price to be paid for the coal is determined.

If any prospective bidder does not know the quality of the coal which he proposes to furnish, he will be permitted to forward samples of this coal to the laboratory of the United States Geological Survey, Washington, D. C., for analysis, the analysis determining the values to accompany the bid. It is preferred, however, that the bidder establish his own values. It is important that the standards determined by the analysis of submitted samples, or the values furnished with bids, do not establish a higher quality than can be actually maintained under the terms of the contract.

In this connection it should be recog-