



For Better Homes



Advisability of Burning Oil In Home System Is Discussed

Various makes of oil heaters have been installed in private dwellings. Many more are being installed every day. Thousands of men and women are wondering as to its wisdom. The following article has been prepared for the purpose of suggesting helpful considerations. It was written by one who has tried a number of burners and closely studied many others from the standpoint of the user. He is now using one in his own home, and would not think of returning to coal.—Christian Science Monitor.

heating engineers, entered the field. These concerns have done much valuable and constructive work, and have evolved oil burning devices that are efficient and safe.

Water is brought to the various rooms in our homes by concealed pipes, gas for cooking is piped to our kitchen, and electricity is carried over fine wires ready to use at the turn of a switch. The ideal way to warm our homes would be to pipe the heat from some central heating station. This method is being used in large buildings in certain cities already, but at the present time is not practical for heating homes. The use of oil for heating homes has, however, proved satisfactory.

Used by Ships.

Oil heating is by no means new. It has been used by large industrial concerns, by merchant vessels, and by navies for some time. A number of years ago the physical laws that govern the combustion of oil for heating purposes were worked out and laid down by eminent engineers, and are contained in well known engineering handbooks.

When the cost of coal was low and we were always sure of a plentiful supply, it did not pay to develop methods and devices for heating our homes with oil. But when coal prices soared, and the supply became uncertain there arose a demand for another method of heating houses. Heating engineers took the ideas already evolved, and modified them in devising destr-

able oil burners for domestic use.

Many people who are dissatisfied with coal hesitate to install oil burners in their homes because they have heard that they are unsafe. Our parents were just as timid about using electricity, because at first electricians were uninformed and careless in installing electric wires. Today we realize that electricity is far safer than a kerosene lamp.

Some states require that all such devices as oil burners, gas appliances and similar devices shall pass an inspection test before they are allowed to be sold; and all such installations are thoroughly inspected; also the insurance companies have formed an organization called the Underwriters' Laboratories, to test all such devices. Manufacturers send samples of their product to the headquarters of this concern to have them tested by its experts. When an oil burner or other device has passed these tests, the manufacturers are permitted to state this in their advertising literature and to place a seal on their product attesting the fact. Supervision of this sort is approved by reputable manufacturers as a safeguard to the public and an easy method for the public to distinguish their output from that of irresponsible concerns.

Will it cost less or more to burn oil than coal in your heating system? There are a multitude of conditions affecting this point. If you live near a coal-producing center, where coal prices are fairly low, you may not be able to save money by installing an oil burner. If, however, coal has to be transported for a long distance to your home, the possibility is that oil burning may save you some money. The local cost of the oil you use in your oil burner and the grade of oil which it can consume is another factor that has to be taken into consideration.

When you burn coal you are obliged to bank your fire at night to prevent its going out before morning. As a result, you save on coal bills, but have a cool and often a cold house in the morning. Some people who install oil burners in their homes, finding that they require little attention, forget about turning off the burner somewhat upon retiring. Others are so delighted at having summer temperature and equable heat in their homes all the time that they prefer to spend a little more money because of the increased comfort.

These factors must all be taken into consideration when discussing the relative cost of burning coal or oil.

A Purring Sound.

Some people are afraid to install oil burners in their homes because they have heard that they are noisy. This was true of some of the first burners, but today practically all of them make little sound even when burning briskly in the coldest weather. There are only two sources of noise from an oil burner. During very cold weather, when the burner is being pushed, the burning oil makes a noise similar to that of an open fire. This never seems to bother anyone. Some motors also make a sort of purring sound which you may notice when the burner is first installed.

As a matter of fact, you will not notice the noise made by your oil burner after a few days any more than you do the ticking of the clock in your sitting room, although a stranger may be conscious of it. Moreover, the noise of an oil burner is an extremely satisfactory sound at 6 o'clock of a frosty morning, when it makes you realize that you will find every room in your house warm and comfortable.

The average house is often too cool or too warm, because it is difficult to regulate a coal fire so that it will produce a steady heat. With an oil burner you can regulate the heat automatically to any degree you desire. If you have a little instrument called a thermostat attached to your burner, you can automatically regulate the temperature of your home so that it will not vary more than two degrees.

A Rainy Day Playroom

An incidental benefit in having an oil burner—one appealing particularly to women—is that you are able to transform your cellar into a light, pleasant spot, thus practically adding another floor to your residence. With coal, the cellar is necessarily dirty because of the ashes. An oil burner takes up little space outside the heating system, and with small expense the rest of the basement can easily be made into a playroom for children on rainy days, or be used for other purposes. Many people having oil burners use their cellars as billiard rooms.

Another feature that appeals to women is that with a properly installed, efficient oil burner, the wallpaper and draperies, no matter how light in color, will remain clean longer.

During the chilly mornings and evenings of spring and fall, when a fire is not needed during the day, an oil burner is particularly convenient. You can turn it on for an hour or two in the morning and again at night, taking only a moment to do so, and have comfort; whereas you often prefer the discomfort rather than bother to clean out and light your coal fire and tend it carefully during these periods. At such times you will regard the convenience of an oil

burner as worth all it costs.

Investigation and Investment

If you intend to build a home of your own, or to install an oil burner in your present abode, there are several points you should first consider. When building a new house one of the first things is to decide on a heating system. If you have a house in which you have been burning coal, your problem lies in finding an oil burner that is reliable and that furnishes enough heat to keep all your rooms at a comfortable temperature even in the coldest weather.

Any good heating specialist can go over your house and tell you how many feet of radiation you will need to take care of it. Then you will have to find a reliable oil burner and get the size of burner that fits your needs.

If you live in a city or large town there are probably factory agencies of oil burner companies near you. You will find advertisements of the leading oil burners in many of the current magazines. Look them over carefully, and send for their literature. Find out if they have been in business long enough for their product to have been thoroughly tested by several years of actual use. Make inquiries from them as to users of their machines in your

vicinity. Ask these people what their experiences have been, and be somewhat guided in your final choice by information gleaned from these actual users. They may tell you the fuel cost has been excessive, or that they have had to replace certain parts frequently, or that their machines needed constant cleaning to be effective. Such makes should be rejected. When you buy an oil burner you buy a device from which you hope and have a right to expect efficient service for a number of years.

Therefore, investigate before you invest. When you have found a burner which has a record of several years of reliable service, get in touch with the nearest agent. Again use circumspection. Find out if he is a reliable man, one who has had experience in installing that particular burner. Make sure that he is not only familiar with the machine he is selling, but that he has the reputation of giving good service to his customers.

Don't let the recital of these precautions lead you to think that an oil burner is a ticklish thing to install and deal with. It is far simpler to install and to handle than your automobile, and, unlike your automobile, when once it has been

properly installed it is absolutely automatic in all its functions. But, as you must learn how to run your motor car, you must learn how to operate and regulate your oil burner. It is very simple, particularly if also install a thermostat or automatic heat controlling device. Then it needs little care, simply adjustment now and then, according to the season of the year.

It is a fact that once a family has installed an oil burner, even if it has not been entirely satisfactory, the comfort, cleanliness, and the absence of all laborious work, have impelled them to keep on using this system of heating, even if they found it necessary to throw out their first burner and buy a good one.—L. E.

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