

HEATING & PIPING CONTRACTORS NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, May 29, 1940

"PUTTING STEAM HEAT IN THE SMALL HOME"

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Mr. President, Members of the Heating & Piping Contractors,
National Association, and Guests:-

In view of the popularity of other forms of heat, I appreciate this opportunity - or perhaps I should say this challenge - to say a few words on behalf of my one and only friend, steam heat.

Of course, in calling steam heat my one and only friend, I realize that it takes more than my perfectly natural friendship for steam heat, and your equally natural friendship, to put it over in the small home the way you and I think it should be put over.

Perhaps it's the old story of the contrite salesman. He had been making so many wild-eyed claims for his wares that he felt it was about time he attended church. He picked out a church at random in the small town where he spent his Sundays, and it happened to be one of those old time churches where the minister hung the congregation over fire and brimstone every Sunday morning. As the sermon dragged on, the salesman, not used to so much inactivity, fell asleep. Suddenly the

preacher reached his final exhortations:

"Everybody that wants to go to heaven stand up!" he shouted.

With the exception of the sleeping salesman the congregation rose as one man. When the preacher spied the lone dozer he turned white with rage.

"All right!", he reprimanded, "Anyone who wants to go to hell stand up!"

The salesman slept through the first part of the sentence, but when the preacher banged out the last two words - "stand up" - he awakened, jumped to his feet, looked first at the preacher and then at the seated congregation.

"Preacher", said the salesman in a bewildered voice, "I don't know what we're voting on, but you and I seem to be the only two guys on that side!"

I hope steam heat for the small home won't come to the place where you and I are the only ones on this side - and, gentlemen, it won't, if you refuse to be out-generalled in presenting the merits of the case.

Now, I am not going to try to tell you what those merits are. You could tell them to me, out of your wide experience, far better than I could tell them to you. Just in passing, however, I would like to inject this thought that consists of three "IF's" and a "THEN":-

IF some other forms of heating plants are offered
as air conditioning, and

IF, as all authorities say, heating is approximately
85% of all air conditioning, and

IF, as you and I know, steam heat will cause many
air changes in a house,

THEN, surely I'm on as safe ground as the other
fellow if I choose to call a steam heating
plant conditioned air or air conditioning.

After all, neither party to this controversy can be more than
15% wrong! (And probably neither is more than 85% right, for
that matter.)

But, as I said, I want to get away from talking the virtues
of steam heat. I want to present it to you as what I earnestly
believe it to be if properly presented. I want to present it
as an OPPORTUNITY.

For a long time I have been thinking about a simple, merchan-
dising way of presenting steam heat to the home owner. My idea
was to get completely away from your way or my way of thinking
about heating plants, and, tell the story in terms in which
the home owner or builder thinks.

I have often reflected on the fact that all of us in the
heating business could learn a lot about selling the rank
and file of people by watching the tactics of the fellows

who write the ads, trim the windows, and decide on the price tags along what might be called America's Main Street. These fellows have learned the value of what they call a leader. They don't necessarily want to sell the leader - they often try to avoid selling it. They simply use it to bring in the crowd. They get the crowd to gasp at the attractively priced "leader" and then shove a real bill of goods down the customer's throat while his mouth is wide open.

With this thought running through my mind, I asked myself, "What is the leader in selling my kind (and your kind) of heating?"

The plan of a 5-room bungalow that was used last year by the Chicago Master Steamfitter's Association in a worthy campaign (or should I say "counter-attack"?) helped to give my thought concrete form.

I went to a consulting engineer in Chicago and asked him to take that 5-room plan and work up three very simple heating systems from it:

One for a simple one-pipe gravity steam system.

Another for the least expensive hot water system
for the same house.

Still another for a simple gravity warm air system.

Then I sent these three plans out and got three separate bids on each one of them. I have asked that a form showing these

drawings be given to each of you.

Here's the way the bids came in. Remember these are all from Chicago concerns, and in accepting this information, keep in mind that the prices might vary or be different in other cities.

Steam	Low bid -- \$264.00
	2nd bid -- 270.00
	3rd bid -- 280.00
Hot Water	Low bid -- \$330.00
	2nd bid -- 341.50
	3rd bid -- 366.00

On a gravity warm air furnace, two bids at \$175.00 each, and one bid at \$210.00. And all three bidders said they could not put the job in and guarantee it the way it was laid out, as the runs were not properly equalized; and they all three suggested the use of forced air, on which the bids were \$335.00, \$350.00, and \$360.00

Now, if you would like to check these figures, the working drawings are shown underneath the isometric drawings.

You will see that there is no doubt in the world that our old friend, one-pipe steam heat, is the lowest cost boiler and radiator job you can sell. It packs the price wallop. It is the foot-in-the-door -- the entering wedge -- the thing you need -- the "LEADER".

Don't smile. Don't disparage this fact because it is so well known to you. Remember that it's the thing right at our feet - the obvious thing - that we often overlook because our eyes are searching far horizons. Putting a blower on a furnace was a good idea, but it was also an old idea - an obvious

idea. Just the same, some smart fellows came along and romanced it, and the crowd fell for it like a ton of bricks.

And don't assume too quickly that there are many people who are thumbs down on steam heat. Just the reverse is true. They want it in most cases, but somehow they seem to have the misconception that it's high priced. The price tag on a one-pipe system will make them revise their ideas about that. They shouldn't be left in the dark a day longer!

It isn't my primary idea to sell this one-pipe system exclusively, although no one can deny that it is a good heating plant that has been doing its job faithfully for many years - a plant that the man who wants the most for his money is perfectly sound in installing.

My real idea, however, is that a price leader is the first principle of all merchandising, and that the best leader in the heating business is the time-tested one-pipe steam system.

In the mechanical refrigeration field, it's the \$114.75 box that brings them in. When you try to buy it, you are told about the convenience and economy of a bigger box, and you come out with a big box all dressed up in shiny gadgets, and a pleased and aloof smirk on your face.

In the automobile field, it's the word "from" that gets you under way. You know what I mean - "From \$875.00", with the "f.o.b. factory" in type so small you don't see it. But by

the time you leave the dealer's you have moved up a long way "from" the starting point - and you're "so glad you made such a wise decision".

As a matter of fact, we've been "from'ed" a good deal around the fair grounds, but we're a good natured lot, we Americans, and far from being mad about it, we get a kick out of it.

We're all like Sinclair Lewis' "Babbitt". We want luxuries, but we know it isn't good business to over-indulge ourselves in them. If someone gives us just a few crumbs of business-like justification for buying the thing we actually want - thoughts like "longer life" - "greater fuel economy" - "less doctor bills" - "greater ultimate economy" - and so on - we let our luxury-tastes go hog wild and kid ourselves that we made a wise, businesslike decision.

So let's go at this steam heating business the modern way. Let's shout from the housetops that a steam heating plant can be had for a real attractive price. That will get a lot of folks thinking: "Well, my heavens! At such a small difference, I'd rather have a boiler and radiator job any time." And then, while they are still gasping, let's show them the finer things about the finest type of heat.

Mr. Masoner, of the Inland Heating Company of Chicago, following up the campaign of the Chicago Master Fitters for a \$240.00 vapor system which they inaugurated last year, con-

verted one builder back to a boiler and radiator job on the \$240.00 plea, and as a result of this initial installation, he got 17 additional jobs for boilers and radiators. Unfortunately, they didn't all go steam, but the majority of these other jobs were at higher prices, proving definitely the advantage of the price leader. That shows it can happen.

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In closing I want to make the concrete suggestion that you do what I have done. Make a layout for a 5-room bungalow and see just how economically that system can be put in, and then tell everybody in your community about it. Send a copy of the isometric drawing to them so they'll know what the system looks like.

Urge them to put in the system that will last as long as the house - the system that will have a remarkably low over-all operating cost - the system that will give comfortable room temperatures every day, not just the days the wind and weather happen to fit the system.

- The system that "throws in" domestic hot water at practically no extra charge.

- The system that can heat the garage with no extra effort and little extra cost.

- The system that has mechanical gadgets down to an absolute minimum of smoothly working devices.

- The system that provides a swell place on an icy morning to back up against.

- The system that offers that much-desired opportunity for mama to dry the niceties out over the bathroom radiator after her daily laundering in the bathroom.

- The system that has held its head high through years of use, abuse, prosperity, depression, war, and peace.

- The only system using boilers and radiators that has a low initial cost and low operating cost, and that can be used as a price leader to bring back and keep prospective builders in the good old boiler and radiator field.

Gentlemen, I urge you not to let your old friend Steam Heat down!

Thanks, and good luck!