THE COURIER

Published Every Saturday

Entered in the Postoffice at Lincoln as second class matter.

OFFICE, ... , ... 900-910 P STREET

TELEPHONE { Business Office, ... 214
{ Editorial Rooms, ... 90

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

Per annum, in advance, ... $1.00
Single Copy, ...05

Hard Coal

Watch It Climb

Outlined for hard coal during the coming months is a program of acrobatics. The performance has already begun. In Lincoln the price has leaped one hundred cents in a brief time and with a hop skip and jump it may break all records long ere cold weather sets in.

A few short weeks ago the price was $9.50 a ton. That was the price all the past winter. To see it sustained during hot weather was a sight to dream about, but to see it take an upward turn to $10.50 right in the midst of increasing hot weather was a nightmare. But it has done this and there is where it stands at the present moment unless it has rocketed again since the last breath. No telling what it may do any time.

So much for Lincoln. In Omaha the price remains at $10 where it was quoted some time ago. But a very few weeks will mark a rise. It will not take a downward shoot for many months. One reason why it is higher in Lincoln than in Omaha now is that it costs fifteen cents extra to bring a ton of it on to Lincoln. Philadelphia papers are predicting that the price there will wing its way to $25 before the cold weather is much advanced. Heretofore it has not been much if any over $5. Think of $25 practically in the heart of the anthracite region! And if it reaches that price there what will it be in Lincoln?

An immense amount of coal is consumed annually in Lincoln. Best estimates in round numbers are that 1,000 cars of hard coal, or 20,000 tons, are burned in a year, with 5,000 cars of soft coal, or 100,000 tons. It all passes through the hands of twenty-three coal firms. These figures are exclusive of the railroad consumption and that of the Traction company, which burns thirty tons a day to keep its cars in motion.

Of all this yearly amount of hard coal it is figured that not over a hundred carloads are now in town. And that is the supply which must fight back the Klondike drafts which will approach at the close of the ice man's season.

It is a great chance for the dealers here to swell their bank accounts. Not all of them are well stocked with the coal, however, and the chances are that they will be unable to ship in any for many months. One dealer says there would not be an available supply before January if the strike were to end today. He says for the Lincoln fraternity, however, that there exists no disposition to loot, even with a legitimate chance. What coal they have on hand they received at ordinary wholesale rates and they will not seek to make 100 per cent. It is a foregone conclusion that only among the very well-to-do will hard coal be used here this winter. A great many people intend to be stubborn about it. Though they could afford hard coal at most any price they say they will not allow themselves to be pillaged even lightly on the strength of labor troubles. Instead they will feed their furnaces with soft coal. A great many of those who have base burners will leave them in storage and invest in soft coal heaters.

Soft coal conditions warrant no alarm. Prices have remained steady and are not threatened. Dealers do not expect them to rise and thus the way to this refuge from freezing will not be blocked with stupendous figures. The stock on hand is plentiful and enough more is available.

Western hard coal can be depended on to but a very little extent. This product is not sufficient materially to affect prices. From Pennsylvania the major part of the country's consumption originates. The anthracite coal fields are comprised in eight counties in the eastern part of the state and here is mined the anthracite burned not only in Pennsylvania, but in practically the whole of the United States. Commercially these fields are divided into three general divisions known as the Wyoming, Lehigh and Schuylkill regions. The product, though in many respects identical, varies considerably in character and quality, ranging from the heavy and hard coals of the Lehigh region to the lighter and more free burning varieties of the Shamokin and Lykins Valley district, all having special merits and economic values for the different uses to which they are assigned. As a rule the coals of the different regions are harder and of greater specific gravity at or near their eastern limits, and gradually decrease in density and specific gravity as they approach the western outcrop of the fields.

It was in 1820 that the Pennsylvania anthracite industry began. The first year's shipments totaled 365 tons. Now the amount is over 40,000,000, figuring the tons at 2240 pounds each. In 1842 the shipments first touched the million mark, the figures being 1,108,412. In 1864 the second figure in millions was reached with shipments of 10,177,475 tons. The thirty million mark was touched and exceeded in 1882, when the shipments were 31,793,027. In 1891 the figures were 40,448,336. In 1901 they were 53,568,601. The total since the beginning in 1820 up to the present year has been 1,225,581,249. Of the product of 1901 the percentage consumed in Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey was 65.25; in the New England states 15; in the western states 11.96; in the southern states 4.0 on the Pacific coast .04; in the Dominion of Canada 3:61; at foreign ports .14, completing the 100 per cent. The number of tons burned in the western states was 6,408,232, representing 11.96 per cent of the year's total shipments of 53,568,601 tons, all from Pennsylvania.

During the year 1901 the roll of the mines in the Pennsylvania anthracite fields numbered 150,437 men. The average price per ton of 2,000 pounds at the mines was $1.83.