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February 16, 1931

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed February 9, 1931

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

"DEGREE-DAYS"

About six years ago the American Gas Association introduced a unit known as the "degree-day" for measuring the heating requirements of buildings, as determined by weather. The use of this unit assumes that the minimum temperature for bodily comfort is reached on any day when the mean daily temperature falls below 65 degrees Fahrenheit. With lower temperatures artificial heat is required.

If the mean temperature of a day is 60, the heating requirements for that day are said to be 5 degree-days. The heating requirements of any locality for the entire heating season during a given year can be calculated on the same basis from the records of weather for the corresponding year, and average heating requirements for a locality can be similarly computed from the temperature "normals" of the locality. The latter plan has been followed by the Heating and Ventilating Magazine, which has published an "iso-degree-day" chart of the United States, supposed to show the heating requirements for all parts of the United States during a normal year.

The adoption of this unit has led to a good deal of discussion and engineering studies have lately been undertaken to determine its real value. Perhaps something better will be evolved from these studies. One apparent defect is that it ignores the important effects of wind and humidity in relation to human comfort.

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