

Coal and Wood Association article

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“We depart somewhat in this issue from our usual custom, and give place to an article on the coal question that is somewhat personal in its character; but it is a question of so much importance at this time that while the spirit manifested by the writer, does not in some respects meet with one endorsement, we are unwilling to suppress it. There is probably no our [*sic – likely meant other*] question of so much importance to all settlers, as this same fuel question; none that deters and discourages so many from settling in Dakota. There is no need of fears on this subject. Coal can and will be delivered here at rates that are not exorbitant, and in quantities sufficient for all. Fuel is a necessity. People need it as much as bread; they cannot survive without it. Now as it is a matter of so much interest to all, let all give their attention to this question.

We will suggest a plan that commends itself to our judgment. In as much as no one individual laborer, or farmer, or mechanic, or merchant, or business man, not in the fuel business, can undertake to supply his neighbors or himself by shipping coal from the east, let the many who are to be supplied with coal, and must have it, adopt the means by which all great undertakings are accomplished in these day[s].

Form a coal and wood association, and each member continue to raise a fund that shall be a sufficient capital to keep a good supply of coal and wood constantly on hand. Then employ a man who is already in some business that will permit him for a small compensation per ton to attend to the sale of it, and sell the coal for a sufficient price to cover cost of handling and waste.

The capital invested will never be lost, not a cent of it, and for the small amount thus safely invested each member of the association will save at least \$1.50 to \$2.50 per ton. Such an association stepping up into the market in July or August, a time in every year when coal is the

cheapest, could purchase coal so as to deliver it here very much below what it could be bought for at this season of the year.

Some will say as they have said, that certain persons have an advantage in rates on this railroad, and that the Northwestern Company, will stand by them to any extent necessary to frustrate and defeat any movement that may be made for cheaper fuel. Any such statement is a gross slander of the managers of the road. President Keep, and General Manager Hughitt are two as charitable and kind-hearted Christian gentlemen as can be found in the Northwest, and either we will guarantee will lend a cheerful and liberal cooperation to any reliable and substantial movement made in the interest of cheap fuel to this community and the surrounding country.

One hundred men advancing ten dollars each would raise a fund sufficient to lay down here and pay freight on one hundred thirty tons of coal or its equivalent in wood and coal. Even half the amount, \$500 in cash is sufficient to run the business with, and fifty men at \$10 would furnish that amount or one hundred men at \$5 each. All that is necessary is for some one to start in this matter and an association would be the result, and the association could authorize their agent to sell to other parties at just sufficient advance to pay a fair interest to the stock holders on the money invested.

Such arrangements we think have been now made by the two firms now selling coal as will probably secure a supply sufficient to prevent further fear of a coal or wood famine after the supply now on the road reaches us. It is our deliberate judgment that there is no one thing which would contribute so much to settling up this country as cheap fuel.

The fuel question is the scare-er of this country and keeps thousands away. In a short time our projected railroads will be connected with the coal fields 200 miles northwest of us and fuel will be cheap as at the East, meantime it would pay our business man to join in some movement to place fuel within reach of the people at as near cost as possible.”