

forming a cone, the top of which should be level with the middle of the firing door. This allows the larger lumps to fall to the sides, and the fines to remain in the center and be coked. The poking should be limited to breaking down the coke without stirring. Grates should be rocked gently. It is recommended that the slides in the firing door be kept closed, as the thinner fuel bed around the sides admits the required air.

FIRING METHODS FOR COKE

Coke ignites less readily than bituminous coal and more readily than anthracite, and burns rapidly with little draft. In order to control the air admitted to the fuel it is very important that all openings or leaks into the ashpit be closed tightly. A coke fire responds rapidly to the opening of the dampers. This is an advantage in warming up the system, but it also makes it necessary to watch the dampers more closely in order to prevent the fire from burning too rapidly. In order to obtain the same interval of attention as with other fuels, a deep fuel bed always should be

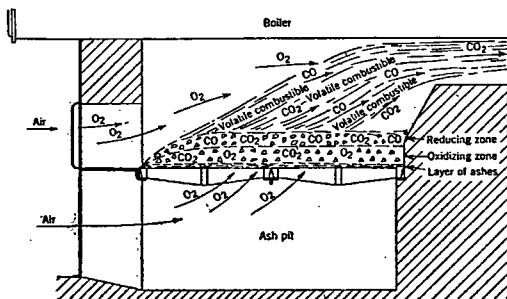


FIG. 3. COMBUSTION OF FUEL IN A HAND-FIRED FURNACE

maintained when burning coke. The grates should be shaken only slightly in mild weather, and should be shaken only until the first red particles drop from the grates in cold weather. The best size of coke for general use, for small fire-pots where the fuel depth is not over 20 in., is that which passes over a 1 in. screen and through a 1½ in. screen. For large fire-pots where the fuel can be fired over 20 in. deep, coke which passes over a 1 in. screen and through a 3 in. screen can be used, but a coke of uniform size is always more satisfactory. Large sizes of coke should be either mixed with fine sizes or broken up before using.

SECONDARY AIR

When bituminous coal is hand-fired in a furnace, the volatile matter in the fuel distills off leaving coke on the grate. The product of combustion of the coke is CO_2 and under certain conditions some CO may arise from the bed. The combustion of the volatile matter and the CO may amount to the liberation of from 40 to 60 percent of the heat in the fuel in the combustion space over the fuel bed.

The air that passes through the fuel bed is called *primary air*, and the

air that is admitted over the fuel bed in order to burn the volatile matter and CO is called *secondary air*.

This process of combustion is illustrated in Fig. 3.⁵ The free oxygen of the air passes through the grate and the ash above it, and burns the carbon in the lower 3 or 4 in. of the fuel bed forming carbon dioxide. This layer noted as the oxidizing zone, is indicated by the symbols CO_2 and O_2 . Some of the carbon dioxide of the oxidizing zone is reduced to carbon monoxide in the upper layer of the fuel bed, noted as the reducing zone and indicated by the symbols CO_2 and CO . The gases leaving the fuel bed are mainly carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, nitrogen, and a small amount of free oxygen. Free oxygen is admitted through the firing door in an attempt to burn carbon monoxide, as well as the volatile combustible distilled from the freshly fired fuel.

The division of the total into primary and secondary air necessary to produce the same rate of burning and the same excess air, depends on a number of factors which include size and type of fuel, depth of fuel bed, and size of fire-pot.

Size of the fuel is a very important factor in fixing the quantity of secondary air required for non-caking coals. With caking coals it is not so important, because small pieces fuse together and form large lumps. Fortunately, a smaller size fuel gives more resistance to air flow through the fuel bed, and thus automatically causes a larger draft above the fuel bed. More secondary air is drawn through the same slot openings, but, nevertheless, the smallest size of fuel will require the largest secondary air openings. For certain sizes of fuel, no secondary air openings are required, and for large sizes, too much excess air may pass through the fuel bed.

In general, the efficiency of domestic hand-fired furnaces and boilers burning either anthracite or bituminous coal, can be increased for an hour or two after firing, if some secondary air is admitted through the slots of the fire door. However, unless the slots are closed when secondary air is no longer beneficial, the decrease in efficiency during the remainder of the firing cycle, because of excess air, may more than offset the gain resulting from the secondary air at the beginning of the firing period. Unless the secondary air can be readjusted between firings, it is probable that a greater average efficiency will be obtained for domestic hand-fired devices by leaving the secondary air slots closed at all times. There is usually an appreciable amount of air leakage around the firing door and secondary air slots of domestic furnaces and boilers.

When attention is given between firings, the efficiency of combustion can be appreciably raised by admitting secondary air over a bituminous coal fire, to burn the gases and reduce the smoke. The smoke produced is a good indicator, and that opening is best which reduces the smoke to a minimum. Too much secondary air will cool the gases below the ignition point, and prove harmful instead of beneficial.

Secondary air that enters the combustion chamber too far removed from the zone of combustion, will also be harmful, because the oxygen in the secondary air will not react with any unburned gases, unless the mixture is subjected to high temperatures.

The air requirements of oil and gas burners are discussed in Chapter 14, Automatic Fuel Burning Equipment.