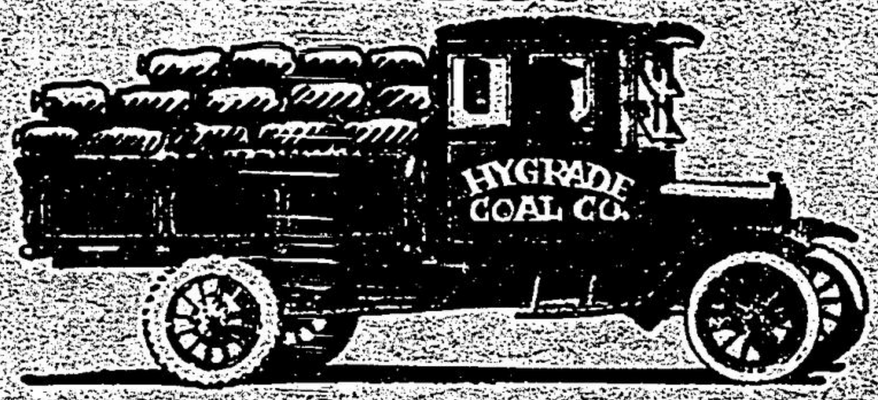
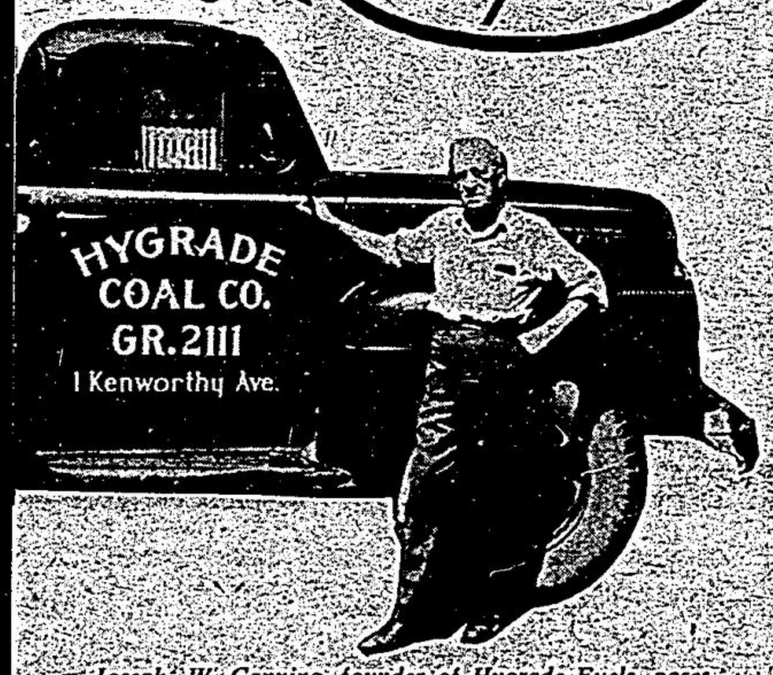
HYGRADE HOME COMFORT NEWS



Published on the occasion of our 50 years in home comfort.

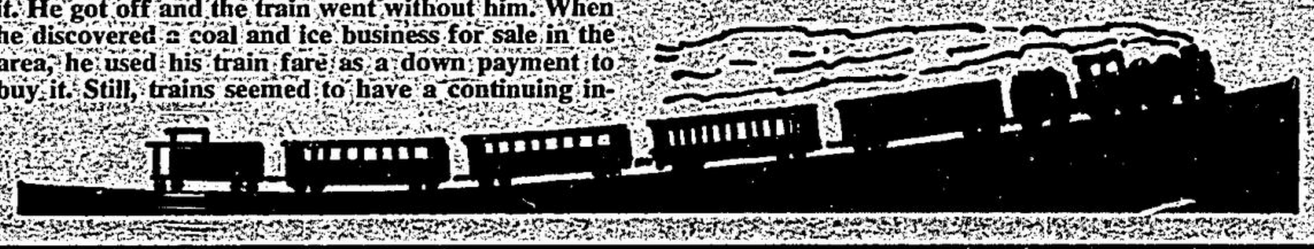
1924 HYGRADE FUELS LIMITED 1974



Joseph W. Canning, founder of Hygrade Fuels, poses with the company's first fuel oil tank truck in 1951.

HYGRADE WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The founder of Hygrade Fuels Ltd., the late Joseph W. Canning, got into his own business the way many people do, largely by chance. In his case, the chance came when a 1924 harvest train on which he was a passenger stopped at the Victoria Park Station. Mr. Canning was heading for the Prairies on the annual harvest excursion but obviously his heart wasn't in it. He got off and the train went without him. When he discovered a coal and ice business for sale in the area, he used his train fare as a down payment to buy it. Still, trains seemed to have a continuing influence on Mr. Canning. When he wanted a name for his new company, he turned to a railwayman's term for the long uphill haul from downtown to Scarborough Junction — Hygrade. With his intention of providing quality products and service, the name Hygrade seemed an apt choice. And it still is 50 years later.



Home comfort sure has changed in 50 years!

When Ron Cheron, who's been with the company almost 50 years, set out to deliver Hygrade coal in the 20's, sometimes he didn't make it. "I remember some winters the snow was so deep we couldn't get the coal to the customers' homes even with horses. So we had to unload as near as possible and carry it from there. Lots of times the customer helped us with a toboggan," he recalls. Furnaces, in those days, were mostly hot water or steam with big cast iron radiators located around the house. An occasional heating system used gravity feed by which hot air rose through ducts to grates in the floor. Many people reading this will recall the clanking noise of steam or hot water systems as the rads warmed up. At night people banked their furnaces by piling coal on one side of the fire box so it would burn slowly but stay lighted through the night. Cleaning out ashes was a big job and when these had accumulated, they would be put out for collection. Between shoveling coal into the furnace and hauling ashes, men tended to get a lot more exercise in those days than now. But then the Iron Fireman came on the scene. This automatic coal stoker was filled once a day and it then fed the coal into the furnace on a controlled basis depending on how much heat was wanted. The Iron Fireman and similar mechanical coal stokers were the latest thing in heating in the '30's and were still in use after the Second War. But, following the war, the increased development of efficient forced air oil-fired furnaces began to spell the end for coal, although Hygrade didn't get out of the coal business until 1964. With the great housing expansion in Toronto after the war, the demand for home fuel oil began to rise at a dramatic rate because more and more new houses were being equipped with forced air oil furnaces. Hygrade got into the home fuel oil delivery business in 1951. At about the same time, the company started furnace service and installation. During the early fifties, the trend to oil became pronounced and many older homes were having their coal furnaces converted to oil. Such conversions became an important source of business for Hygrade. The forced air oil-fired furnace brought many advantages over the old coal furnace. It was obviously much cleaner both in terms of fuel delivery and operation. The furnace itself required less space and did not need to be kept in a separate room in the basement because of its clean, compact appearance. But perhaps the most important feature of this new heating system was something we take for granted today, the central thermostat control that came with it. And some attempt was made to introduce moisture into the heated air with a humidifier built into the main heat chamber. Maybe you still have one of those in your furnace. You'll be lucky if it works very well. In the late sixties, Hygrade and other home comfort companies began to think about environment in the home, so central air conditioning units began to appear. These are designed to use the existing blower and ductwork of oil and gas hot air furnaces. And other equipment came on the scene . . . automatic humidifiers and electronic air cleaners, for example.

So, today there really is no place like home.