

## PETROLEUM INSPECTION LAW AMENDMENT BILL—[BILL 4.]

*(Mr. Colby.)*

## SECOND READING POSTPONED.

Order for second reading read.

MR. COLBY, in moving the second reading of the Petroleum Inspection Bill, said : The Act passed at the last Session regulating the inspection of petroleum, fixed the standard fire test on Canadian oils at 105° Fahrenheit, and the standard fire test on imported oils at 130° Fahrenheit. The present Bill proposes to substitute a uniform fire test of 115° on all oils, whether Canadian or foreign. I introduced this Bill at a very early stage of the Session, but I purposely allowed it to remain on the Orders until now, because, for one reason, it affected a large interest engaged in the production and manufacture of petroleum ; and I felt it to be due to those so interested to have a full opportunity of considering to what extent the proposed change might affect their interests, and of placing their views on this subject before the House : and I am happy to know that they have availed themselves of the services of a very intelligent and active gentleman, who has resided at the capital during the Session, and who has endeavoured to impress their views on the members privately. I permitted it to stand in order, also, that, as it is a matter affecting life and property, I might make no error in judgment. In the meantime, I have spared no reasonable effort to obtain the opinions of men supposed to have a knowledge of the subject—both those interested on one side and the other of the question, and those entirely disinterested—and I desired the members of the House and the Government to fully consider the matter. But I would say further, that the delay has been allowed to take place with the understanding that an ample opportunity should be afforded me to present and to push this measure. The Bill proposes to deal with the fire test only. There are other matters relating to the inspection of these oils, well worthy the attention of the Government, and which fall more immediately within their Province. The first, indeed the paramount, consideration, in regard to the fire test, is that of safety. The numerous heartrending accidents

of which we have had accounts through the newspapers during the past year, and which have resulted from the use of dangerous oils, are something startling. It is of the greatest importance to provide, by law, for the proper inspection of these oils, and to prescribe such tests and regulations as will ensure safety, and prevent the recurrence of those accidents. Nothing is more fraught with danger than dangerous coal-oil. It is an unseen and subtle danger, more to be dreaded than the careless use of gunpowder. We are aware of the presence of gunpowder, but we cannot detect the presence of the inflammable vapours which arise from petroleum, and which are concealed in a lamp in which the oil is partly consumed. The flame of a burning lamp is conveniently near to these explosive vapours, so that, by the carelessness of servants, or children, or by accidents, we are constantly exposed to such conflagrations as unhappily raged across the river here to-day, and too often to the most horrible sufferings and death. We cannot be too careful—to keep in view the question of safety as a paramount consideration—in determining the test to which all petroleum burning oils should be subjected. If by lowering the test I should incur the risk of trenching upon safety, I should most deeply regret it, but I shall endeavour to avoid that ; and my proposition, I think, has avoided it. As every hon. member is probably aware crude petroleum contains gases and volatile liquids giving off, at ordinary temperatures, vapours which are explosive when mixed with air. It also contains heavy oils which injure its burning properties, but are useful as lubricators and paraffine. By proper distillation the volatile constituents, such as gasoline, naphtha and benzine, are eliminated on the one hand, and paraffine, tar, and the heavier ingredients of weak illuminating power, are removed on the other, leaving the intermediate hydro-carbons, freed from their lighter and heavier associations, a good and safe burning oil. By the fire test we ascertain whether the volatile constituents are present in a dangerous degree, and by the gravity test we ascertain whether the heavier ingredients are present in such quantity as to impair the illuminating properties of the oil. A correct fire test and a correct gravity test, properly ap-