

is not the first time I have bored this House upon the oil question. I have bored here for oil before now, and struck it once or twice. We protectionists believe that competition regulates prices, no matter whether it be foreign or domestic competition. We do not propose to give protection to any article where the element of competition will not come in, sooner or later, and regulate the price and bring it down to a fair point. That is our general belief. That is applicable to most of the industries of this country; to the manufacture of agricultural implements, for instance, where a man can go to the forest and get his timber and buy his own iron and steel in the open market. But this oil industry is about the only industry in the Dominion that is susceptible of being brought under the control of rings and monopolists. We know that such is the case; we know that rings, at one time, controlled the entire source of production in Lambton, controlled all the refineries in London, and dominated the market all over Canada. In that way this competition, which ordinarily reduces prices, cannot be depended upon in respect to oil, because the moment it falls within the scope of a ring there ceases to be the possibility of domestic competition. The only competition then that can be depended upon to regulate the price is foreign competition. What I want to see is that that foreign competition is not placed under too great a disability. I would take the liberty of suggesting to the hon. Minister, that I do not believe any of these accidents and explosions have been the result of the fire test. I believe they have been owing to some defect in the inspection of the oil, which should be more thorough. I wish to call the attention of the hon. Minister to another thing. The act as it is now reads almost relieves vendor and refiner from responsibility. I think the man who refines the oil, and knows its constituents, should be responsible to the public. He should verify the test of the Inspector, so that when it goes out of his refinery it goes out with his endorsement, and he should be responsible for the consequences. I think, in these particulars, this Act requires amendment. I would say, that it is very important that the gravity of the oil should be readily determined, so that the purchaser should not be compelled to

buy a lubricating oil, when they require an oil that will burn. The wording of the clause, in relation to the gravity test, should be simplified so that every one could understand it. It should define the gravity by pounds and ounces, so that every man who has scales can weigh it. At present it is defined by the number of degrees of Baumé; and but few persons understand the signification of the terms, or have the proper instrument. I would also suggest the appointment of a special officer to oversee the Inspectors of Oil, and see that they do their work properly, and who should move about from place to place, dropping in upon refiners and vendors unawares, and confiscating such oil, foreign or domestic, as did not stand the legal test.

MR. FLYNN: I was pleased to see the hon. member for Stanstead, early in the Session, introduce the Bill now about being read a second time. He very correctly states that the present law is one that we ought to be ashamed of. I was aware this Act was introduced last Session, but I had no idea that any discrimination was made between the fire test of American oil and that of Canadian oil. In the Maritime Provinces this law is felt as a great injustice. The hon. member for Stanstead has correctly stated that the present Act is a virtual exclusion of American oil from the Maritime Provinces and other parts of the Dominion. Still, I believe that a large quantity of oil was smuggled into the country, because the people will use American oil. We have always found that the American oil is less offensive in its smell, and that it is more free from explosive qualities. It is very desirable that we should have a uniform test for American and Canadian oils. I wish to call the attention of the hon. the Minister of Inland Revenue to the fact that there is another discrimination made between American and Canadian oils which should not be made. For instance, the cost of inspection of a 50-gallon cask of Canadian oil is only 10 cents, while the cost of inspecting a similar cask of American oil is 30 cents, or a difference of 20 cents. I do not see why the law in this respect should remain on the Statute-book any more than the legislation in regard to the test referred to, and I hope the hon. the Minister of Inland