

technical knowledge of the oil business. I know a great deal of dissatisfaction existed last year in relation to this matter, and I presume the Government intends to allow this Bill to pass, as they have expressed no opinion in opposition. If we are to have, for the next three years, to submit to the infliction of a Protectionist Government, it would be fitting that when the hon. member for Stanstead next has to make explanations on a Government Bill he should be provided with a position, which he is quite qualified to occupy, on the Treasury Benches.

MR. PLUMB: It is always pleasant to hear a speech from the hon. member for Stanstead. Everyone knows he brings to the discussion of any subject which he takes up in this House a remarkable degree of research. I am afraid, however, that my hon. friend who has taken up as a specialty the question of duties on petroleum, in this House, has allowed his enthusiasm and his zeal to outrun that calm judicial spirit with which he usually approaches those subjects. He might have explained that there is a vast and important difference between American and Canadian oil in their crude state, and in the conditions under which they are found in the depths of the earth. Canadian oil is reached at a depth of 500 feet below the surface, and is very much unlike the product of that of Pennsylvania wells, different in colour, quality and component parts. The crude oil of Canada is brown in colour and possesses a very small quantity of gasoline, or naphtha or benzole, and but say five per cent. of benzine. The latter is the only explosive substance it contains. The crude oil of Pennsylvania, which is dark green in colour, is found at a depth of 1,500 or 2,000 feet. Pressure is supposed to alter the character of the crude material, if it is the same in origin, which is not certain. It contains about 20 per cent. of four volatile and explosive products, gasoline, naphtha, benzine, and benzole, which are always present in greater or less relative proportions in American oil. These are not entirely dispelled by distillation. They are the dangerous elements in oil, and I think it would be hazardous to the people at large not to extend to them that protection, in requiring close inspection, and a fire-test which will ensure absolute safety, which experi-

ence has proved to be desirable; and in this it is well to try experiments, and far better to err on the side of requiring too much than too little. It is impossible for the ordinary consumer, who buys from the retail shops this article of prime necessity, to ascertain with accuracy whether it is of the proper fire test, and, consequently, whether it is explosive or not. It is well-known, also, that in the poorer houses inferior glass lamps are used, which are constantly carried about, thus enhancing the risk of breakage, and the danger of explosion is increased in proportion to the vicinity of the lamps to the overheated stoves which are found in most houses in winter. There is a constantly increasing heat in the lamp chimney while the oil is burning, the volatile elements are given out in increasing quantities, the surroundings are charged with them, and the least cause may precipitate a fatal explosion. If the fire test is a low one, there is a larger quantity of volatile material constantly escaping. It is the greatest and most culpable possible error for us blindly to deal with a question of the kind proposed; and when we have what we consider a safe standard, it is most hazardous to reduce that standard. On the part of Canadian refiners, it is proposed to raise the fire test of their oil from its present point of 105° to 120° Fahrenheit. That will compel the manufacture of a superior quality, and much of the objection now urged against Canadian oil will be obviated. I am not at all afraid that, by keeping up the standard of American oil and raising that of ours, American oil will be excluded from the Dominion, but it will place the Canadian refiner under the necessity of preparing a purer and more deodorised fluid. His material is, in many respects, superior to the American, and especially its rich illuminating power and lasting qualities. Canadian oil should be protected in the way which is indicated by the refiners themselves. It will thus compel all of them to produce a satisfactory quality, the additional cost of which is too trifling to warrant an increase of price to the consumer. If there is an increase, it will be owing to the retail dealers, and it should be understood that the present price of crude oil is but \$1.25 a barrel at the Canadian wells, and that the best refined is selling at wholesale or by the barrel at