

limited demand, command a special and excessive price not at all commensurate with the actual cost of raising the oil to the higher test. In the section of country in which I live, we have had, in consequence of the legislation of last year, to pay a much higher price for petroleum than ever before, and the consequence is that a great deal has been smuggled. I would call the attention of the House to the history of legislation upon this subject. The first test that we prescribed was in 1868, when we adopted the very test I propose now, that is, 115°. That was afterwards reduced, in 1871, to 105° at the instance of the very gentlemen who are now asking us to change it to 120° or 130°. After having led us to adopt the 105° test for eight years, they have suddenly changed all their views upon the subject, and have been inspired, in some way, with a new illumination. Now I am sure they do not care how high they get it, because, like all persons engaged in trade, they wish to make as much money out of their business as they can. I can quite understand why these gentlemen, after having brought it from 115° to 105°, and kept it there for eight years, now take this sudden tack and endeavour to bring it up beyond 115° to 120°. It is because they would then have to compete with an oil higher in price, and inferior in quality to that which would be brought into competition with them under a lower test. If they must have competition, they prefer it in the form of a high-priced and poor article, rather than a low-priced and good article. I have reason to believe that the legislation of last Session was wholly inspired by them. It came before the Government at a time when it could not receive that consideration which its importance deserved, and their opinions were accepted as those of experts. It was supposed they knew more about this matter than any one else, and their representations were received by the Government and the House without suspicion. The consequence has been that we have had legislation during, the past year, of which I, as a member of this Parliament, am totally ashamed. To declare a difference of twenty-five degrees in the fire test of American and Canadian oil when,

as a matter of fact, there is no difference whatever, is a position which I am not very proud to have been one in taking. If the result of this legislation had been to give us a better oil, there might have been some compensation; but I appeal to every member of this House if he has ever known, in Canada, such a great number of accidents from explosions, as have taken place during the past year. With regard to the other qualities of the oil, I have no doubt the experience of my county is like that of the country generally. I have in my mind the case of a merchant who tried in December last to buy in the ordinary market American oil that would stand our fire test, and not being able to find it, he introduced Canadian oil as a substitute. He obtained the best quality he could find in Montreal. He purchased it by the carload, and arranged with several retail dealers to take a barrel each and to assist him in introducing it. Every barrel, every gallon, came back upon him, and he was obliged to gather it in and send it into the back country and exchange it for oats. People would not buy it, it was so offensive in its character. It only stood the test of 96°, although it bore the standard mark of 105° and upwards. It was an ill-burning oil, had an offensive odour, charred the wick and smoked the chimney, and people who had been accustomed to and wanted a better oil would not buy it at any price. You may lead a horse to the water, but you cannot make him drink. The fact is legislation cannot compel the people on the frontier to do what is against their interest and pleasure in this matter. They say this: We are quite prepared to pay a high duty on oil; but if the Government prohibit it by the adoption of an impracticable test, and leave people no alternative but to smuggle American oil, or use such offensive Canadian oil as has been sent to us, they may expect that people will smuggle. And that course has been taken. I do not believe the legislation of last Session—while it has injured the consumer, while it has caused more annoyance than any other measure that was passed—has been of any benefit to those gentlemen who inspired it. The oil has come into the country surreptitiously; it has been found impossible to keep it out. I think—and my Free-trade friends will applaud me here—that