

THIRD READINGS.

The following Bills were severally read the third time and passed :—

Bill (No. 123) to amend The Customs Act, 1883.—(Mr. *Bowell*.)

Bill (No. 124) respecting fortifications and military buildings and their maintenance and repair.—(Sir *Hector Langevin*.) On a division.

INSPECTION OF GAS AMENDMENT.

Mr. *COSTIGAN* moved that the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider Bill (No. 108) to amend the Acts respecting the Inspection of Gas and Gas Meters.

Motion agreed to; and the House resolved itself into Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Mr. *MACKENZIE*. Having received some communications from parties interested in this Bill, I asked the hon. gentleman, privately, if there was any change made in it since the time that some arrangement was made with the gas companies, and I understood him to say that no material change was made since that time. I simply ask the question now, publicly, in order that there may be no mistake about it.

Mr. *COSTIGAN*. I thought the hon. gentleman understood me to say that I had received letters and telegrams from parties interested in the gas companies, and that I supposed the complaint was the same in the letters addressed to him. The complaint, I now find, is as to clause 10, in the Bill; and I thought I explained to the hon. gentleman that that clause should not be in the Bill, that it was there by mistake, and that I intended to have it struck out. I know that is the only objection urged outside against the Bill. I think it should not be in the Bill, because it was not discussed with the persons who came to discuss the provisions of the Bill.

On section 2,

Mr. *BLAKE*. This clause relates to the quality of gas, and the hon. gentleman stated that endeavours had been made to render the standard such as would be reasonable, having regard to the quality of coal available in different parts of the Dominion. The hon. gentleman, however, made no observation with reference to other raw material from which gas is manufactured, at any rate, in some cities. I rather fancy that the gas in the city of Toronto is not made from coal at all, or the great bulk of it, and I do not know how far the hon. gentleman has considered what modifications are required in the law to make provision for that kind of gas. I do not know whether it is water gas or petroleum gas; but there can be no doubt that there are great defects resulting from that manufacture. There is no doubt that the gas has not as great an illuminating power as gas produced in other places where coal is procured, and there is no doubt also that a great difficulty arises from the apparent formation of some viscid substance in the pipes, which diminishes the supply and gives great inconvenience to the consumer. These are difficulties which we have painful experience of in Toronto; and while this Bill for regulating this particular trade, and making provision for the protection of the public, is being considered, I should like to know whether the attention of the hon. gentleman and that of his officers has been given to the difficulties that grow out of this kind of gas, and whether some precautions might not be taken to protect the public against the evils to which I have referred.

Mr. *COSTIGAN*. As I stated before, one of the objects was to secure the public against poisonous gas, or gas containing substances injurious to health. For the presence of these substances, except through accident or through inevi-

table circumstances, a penalty is provided. With regard to the power of gas, we propose to fix the standard at 16-candle light. The different kinds of gas we dealt with in this way: By an Order in Council a certain amount of ammonia and a certain amount of sulphur were allowed in gas; but it has been found that some of the gas manufactured in the eastern section of the country contained a larger percentage of sulphur and of ammonia than was permitted under the Order in Council. This was represented by the gentleman who came to discuss the provisions of this Bill, and I conferred upon the subject with the chief officer in that branch of the Department. The object of the Bill is to secure greater purity of gas and to fix the standard of illuminating power at 16-candle light; and, on the other hand, to relax a little the restriction of the previous Order in Council, as to the presence of sulphur and ammonia, so as to allow a larger percentage of these substances in the gas produced in the eastern section of the country. The other gases to which my hon. friend referred, I do not think are liable to the presence of these poisonous substances.

Mr. *BLAKE*. What I was inviting the attention of the hon. gentleman to was the question whether, as in the former Act, the intention of the Government and the Legislature is confined to gas manufactured from coal, or whether they have considered the fact that gas is not now manufactured only from coal, but also from other substances, producing different results, and requiring, possibly, different precautions for the protection of the public. I do not know whether precautions would be required as to poisonous ingredients or not, although it is alleged they are, but certainly they are required in reference to other points dealt with by this clause. By this clause the following proviso in the old Act is repealed: "On account of the difficulty of procuring coal of a particular quality, twelve sperm candles shall be substituted for fourteen." I am not objecting to the repeal of that proviso, but simply say that this Act deals with the question as if it were simply a question of illuminating gas produced from coal. While the attention of Parliament is directed, rightly or wrongly, to the obtaining of pure and satisfactory gas, it is important we should know whether they have considered this other process of manufacturing from other ingredients. What I stated to the hon. gentlemen was that there was very considerable dissatisfaction amongst the consumers—certainly on the part of one consumer, the humble individual who is now addressing you—with reference to the character of the supply in Toronto. I presume it is now too late in the Session to make legislative provisions dealing with this subject, but the hon. gentleman may, during recess, see if it is not possible to make his law so extensive as to provide the necessary protection for consumers who have to submit to being supplied with these other descriptions of gas.

Mr. *COSTIGAN*. The hon. gentleman raises a question of very great importance, and I do not think I can acquire such information this Session as will enable us to legislate on the subject in such a way that the legislation might be permanent. I think it preferable to allow that to stand over till next year, and during recess I will give this matter every attention, and obtain all the information possible, in order that we may devise means of protecting the interests of consumers.

On section 8,

Mr. *COSTIGAN*. I propose to substitute the following for section 8 :—

"Every Gas Company shall keep the public informed of the illuminating power of the gas supplied by them, and of its purity as affected by the absence or presence of sulphuretted hydrogen, by procuring a certificate from the Inspector and posting it up in the chief office of the company, from time to time as follows :—