

prices in the Eastern Townships, that by some means or other oil of a lower grade is admitted there than is allowed to pass through our Custom house. I took trouble to make inquiries in Boston, from which the Maritime Provinces are chiefly supplied, and I learned that the price of oil which would pass the Canadian test was 17½ cents per wine gallon. It was oil of a lower grade, but it was in common use and was considered perfectly safe for domestic purposes there, and was selling for about 11 cents, I think. I have reason to believe that, in some cases, the owners of vessels trading between some ports in the Maritime Provinces and Boston have brought back cheap oil as a return cargo, and smuggled it into some outports of Nova Scotia or New Brunswick, having a premium, partly from the Minister of Finance, and partly from the Minister of Inland Revenue, of something over 100 per cent. for so doing. My opinion—and I believe I speak the opinion of the great mass of the consumers in the Maritime Provinces, as well perhaps, as that of the people of that part of the country which my hon. friend from Stanstead represents—is that the test is now too high. I believe the test in England is only 105, and that the oil, under that test, is used with perfect safety. I believe the law will not be right until the specific gravity test is taken away; until the fire test is reduced to something like 105, and until the oil producers and refiners of the west are satisfied with the too high duty of six cents per gallon, which is nearly 100 per cent.

Mr. COLBY. I think the change in the fire test from 120 to 115 will be sufficient to meet the views of my hon. friend (Mr. Killam). Last year there were experts here from the United States, among others a gentleman who is the inspector of nearly all the oil that goes from New York to Liverpool, and they were under the impression that a fire test of 120 would admit the standard oils, which were not too expensive. But it has been found by experience that many oils would not come up to that standard, but, perhaps, as far as 118, and could not be admitted. I have no doubt, therefore, that a test of 115 will admit that class of oil which my hon. friend desires to admit.

Mr. KILLAM. I do not pretend to have that knowledge of the subject which the hon. gentleman has, but I believe every time an oil bill has been brought before this House, it has been for the purpose of giving underhand a protection to the refiners of the west above the six cents of duty which we are willing to allow to them openly and honestly.

Mr. MOUSSEAU. The hon. leader of the Opposition tried to make the House believe that the Government had concealed the fact that they wanted to place a high duty on American oils, and give greater protection to Canadian oils. I want to say to the House and the country that the policy of the Government from the beginning of this matter has been fair and above board. When in 1879 we made the flash test 105 on Canadian oil, and 130 on American oil, it was obviously protection for Canadian oil. So that we have resorted to no crooked ways in bringing our policy before the country. This year, when we say that the flash test shall be uniform on American and Canadian oils, we cannot be accused of anything of that kind. The hon. gentleman regarded the gravity test as another means of giving protection. In establishing the gravity test, the Government have been inspired by a very simple motive. As I have said, this is a new trade. It attracted the attention of the House first in 1868. In 1871 we applied the flash test. Then it was discovered that a new test was necessary. Everybody knows that before 1868, the daily papers constantly recorded accidents from the explosion of coal oil lamps. After the introduction of the flash test, the number of accidents decreased. I may mention that some three years ago, the attention of the department was directed to the effect of the change of temperature on the quality of petroleum, and some experi-

Mr. KILLAM.

ments were made in relation thereto. Among others, a quantity of petroleum of known gravity and flash test was placed in a tall sample bottle, at a temperature of about 65 degrees. It was then, by means of a freezing mixture, reduced to a temperature somewhat below zero. A sample taken from the top of the vessel would not stand as high a flash test by about 10 degrees as it stood before it was exposed to the cold, and its specific gravity had been reduced. A sample taken from the bottom of the vessel stood a higher flash test than before, and its specific gravity had been increased. The causes of explosions are found to be quite as often from lamps in bad condition, and wicks in bad condition, as from low test oil. The highest test oil that can be made will explode if sufficient care is not taken to secure free circulation through the wick and free combustion in the burner. Various experiments have been made during the last twelve months, and their results decided the Government to retain the test. As the hon. member for Stanstead has well explained, the refiners do not want the gravity test applied, as it is not in their interest to apply it. The Canadian oil being much lighter than the American oil, the former averaging seventy gallons to a hundred gallons of crude, and the latter only forty gallons, no protective policy would be sufficient to counteract the difference in quality. By applying, therefore, the flash test and the gravity test equally to both oils, you will get the best oil at the cheapest rate.

Bill read the second time.

House resolved itself into Committee on said Bill.

(In the Committee.)

Mr. BLAKE. I am always disposed, when I cannot get all I want, to take what I can get. I move that in the first clause, two be struck out and five substituted.

Mr. MOUSSEAU. That is my proposition.

Bill, as amended, reported.

#### TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION BETWEEN BRITISH COLUMBIA AND ASIA.

House resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. Langevin: That the House go into Committee of the Whole to consider certain resolutions respecting telegraphic communication between the Pacific coast of the Dominion and Asia.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Since the adjournment of this debate the other day, the Government have considered this resolution, and come to the conclusion to ask the House to pass it with this modification—striking out the exclusive privilege. The other modification I stated the other day—that instead of the date, 1st October, we should put 1st January next, giving the promoters twelve months for preparations, on account of the great distance to be travelled. We think twelve months is not, under these circumstances, an unreasonable delay.

Mr. BLAKE. I am sure the House will receive with every gratification this announcement, because it will remove serious difficulties in the prosecution of this measure. I suppose that this announcement involves the announcement of the policy that this Parliament will not be asked to consider this privilege an exclusive power, or to reject another proposal for the incorporation of cable companies for the same purpose.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Of course.

House resolved itself into Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Mr. BLAKE. There is just this question which I would like the Minister of Public Works to answer: what is the