

The mode of testing oils in the United States is different from that in Canada. The oil there is brought up to a certain temperature, and then the fire is applied directly to it. By this method American oil, say of 130, would stand here from 115 to 117, which is a safe and good merchantable article.

If you therefore desire to remedy, or remove, the existing complaints here against the operation of the Petroleum Act of 1879, I would most respectfully suggest that the Order in Council of the 15th January, 1875, prescribing the use of Potter's pyrometer be cancelled, and in lieu thereof, Departmental regulations be passed ordering such instruments to be used as will correspond to those adopted by the American authorities. This could be done, as the Act of 1879 does not require a flash test, but simply a fire-test, without prescribing the mode. It would remove the whole difficulty in a great measure, while the specific gravity fixed by law could be also strictly required. Indeed I am of opinion, which I humbly submit for your consideration, that the Act of 1879 itself directly annuls or cancels the Order in Council of 1875.

This act says that the standard fire-test shall be ascertained by such instruments as may be ordered by *Departmental* regulations. The Order in Council is not a Departmental regulation, and in the absence of such a regulation, it is questionable whether there is any legal provision for determining the fire-test at all at present.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,  
(Signed) J. R. RUELL, *Collector*.

ABERCORN, Sept. 16th, 1879.

To the Commissioner of Customs, Ottawa.

SIR,—Referring to the inspection of petroleum, I find that I have a pyrometer that was furnished some years since to Mr. Seaton, my predecessor. There is no instrument in the office necessary to carry out the law, while for the strict carrying out of the law several others are necessary. If only the fire-test is required, would it be required of us to enforce the collection of the fee for the benefit of the revenue? I should feel obliged for a letter of instructions, that I would know what would be required of me, and if the law can in any way be modified, that importation of a good article can be managed; it would, in my opinion, be an advantage to the revenue, as well as an accommodation to the consumers on the frontier.

I am, Sir, most respectfully yours,  
ANDREW VARY, *Collector*.

30th Sept., 1879.

A. C. MACDONALD, Esq., M.P., Montague, P.E.I.

SIR,—Adverting to your letter of the 3rd instant, respecting importation of oil not standing the fire-test required by law, I am desired by the Hon. the Minister of Customs to inform you that this Department has no power to make any order in reference to petroleum not standing the requisite fire-test other than to carry out the requirements of the law.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient servant,  
(Signed) J. JOHNSON,  
*Commissioner of Customs*.

30th September, 1879.

The Collector of Customs, Port of Sutton, Abercorn, P.Q.

SIR,—In reply to your letter of the 16th instant, regarding the inspection of petroleum, I beg leave to state that the essential part of the law is the fire-test, as upon that depends entirely whether the oil can be allowed to go into consumption or not.