

that could be given of the utter recklessness and impropriety of the legislation of last Session. I believe that with the exception of one man who professes to speak for the trade, no man engaged in the trade knew the intentions of the Government with reference to the gravity test which they imposed last Session; and that if the Government had acted upon the wise and proper course which should precede all legislation of ascertaining the views of the people with regard to it, the change would not have taken place. On the evening the Bill passed through the House, I received a telegram from one of those who are engaged most largely in both producing and refining, stating that the Canadian trade would be ruined if the change was made. I received this telegram at eight or nine o'clock in the evening; I went for the purpose of showing it to the Minister, but he was not in his place; I went again at ten or eleven o'clock, but I found that with that expedition which sometimes characterizes the other branch of the Legislature in some matters of legislation, the Bill had passed beyond its reach. I can understand that those who are engaged in the business in a very large way and have worked up to the exigencies of this test, should desire to retain an advantage which they have acquired, but I say that this test operates injuriously in two ways: First, by requiring a much larger quantity of raw material to make the same number of gallons of refined oil, and, secondly, by requiring a tedious and somewhat uncertain process to be gone through with in order to produce the result; for it not unfrequently happens that the process has to be repeated at considerable expense to give the oil—after it has attained the required fire test—the specific gravity which is prescribed. Those who have the best instruments, those who have their business in such a shape, that they can with the greatest certainty work up to a high and difficult test, would have a considerable advantage over others, under the operation of a law which insisted on such a high test, and I can conceive that they too should also be anxious to keep it up to a needlessly high point. Upon the evidence which I have at present, though I hope we shall have more before the Bill goes through, my belief is that the general view of the refiners is, that there should be a considerable reduction in this test, even in their own interest. I wish to say further, that while I have compared the general price of oil in New-York with its price in that country, I do not contend that that is the only test. It is well known that the price of oil is regulated in many cities, for instance in Cleveland, as I believe, and in some other places as I know, partly by their tests, but largely, not by any operation of the laws of trade, but by the will and power of the Standard Oil Company. That great monopoly, by reason of the power it has attained, and by means of the arrangements it had made with railway companies, does keep up in some places much more than in New York, but, as I believe, in New York itself, also, much beyond the level which it would otherwise attain, the price of oil in the United States. Therefore we are making a comparison, not with the price at which the people of this country might obtain their oil under natural circumstances, but a comparison with the very disadvantageous circumstances existing in the States; and still, disadvantageous as they are, and however great the odium which has been created by the existence of the Standard Oil Company monopoly, they are so much better off than we are that they are paying now in New York about half what we are paying here. My desire is that we should not, in legislating upon the subject of gravity, legislate upon the same line as animated the legislation upon the fire test; but that we should legislate with regard to the public safety alone; that we should not interpose in this matter what the hon. Minister thinks is a good thing, the question of indirect Protection; that, whatever we are willing to do to protect the producer of crude, whatever we are willing to do to protect the manufacturers of refined, we should do honestly, openly, and above board, by a duty levied on the

imported article, and that we should, as far as all other regulations go, make them just as free as the public safety will permit. We have come down to that now, as we are told, in the fire test, though that is still a question. We find, it is said, that 802 is the lowest to which the hon. gentleman can go as to the gravity test. I do not intend to discuss that point just now; it will come better in the discussion upon the reception of the report; but I wish to say for myself that I think it wholly indefensible to legislate in the way of prohibiting the people of this country from what they shall eat, drink, or wear, or consume, in any shape or way, except with regard to the public safety. My hon. friend (Mr. Anglin) does not extend that to alcohol. I think the public safety is concerned in the alcoholic question, therefore I am quite consistent. I look with well grounded suspicion on the representations which induced the Government to bring in a gravity test of 807, to alter it by making it 802, and which have now induced the Government, in obedience to a very strong pressure, which was due, I suppose, to the enormous prices which oil has attained, to say that they are willing to make the reduction to 805. I say I believe their sources of information are largely tainted sources, that they are tainted in this sense: that their informants are animated by a desire to make as high a gravity test as possible with the view to a greater consumption of the raw material, and not with exclusive reference to the public safety.

Mr. ORTON. The leader of the Opposition has treated the House to a very elaborate statement on this subject, but I think he has furnished us with very little information. I think the hon. member for Stanstead (Mr. Colby) has treated the subject very clearly. The flash test is now the same on Canadian oil that it is on American oil. The fire test, which my hon. friend has referred to, has nothing to do with the public safety. With reference to the gravity test, it does not aid in any way to increase the protection against American oil. American oil, as a rule, is much lighter than Canadian oil, and it is much lower than 802. I believe there is one kind of American oil imported into some parts of this country that is of the same heavy character as the great part of our oil. I must congratulate the Government that they have seen their way clear to increase the specific gravity, because it will enable our coal oil refiners to produce an oil at a much cheaper rate, and the public will be the gainers. I am glad to notice in a paper I received the other day that there have been new oil discoveries at Oil Spring; new wells have been struck, and the oil obtained is of much better quality than that at Petrolia. Consequently the Canadian public will receive a better oil in the future and at a cheaper rate. That paper states:

"We are bound to light up Canada with a pure, clear, non-combination burning oil; there are already other companies forming; one expects to commence operations next week, and so confident are our citizens of success, they are willing to stake their last dollar in the enterprise. With the C. S. Railway station at Oil City within two miles of us, and the superior quality of our oil, we will guarantee Dr. Orton, M.P., and his friends who are crying out against the Petrolia monopoly, that we will give them as fine and much safer burning oil than the Americans at reasonable rates.

I think there will not be much interference with the duty, and if the Government next year can see their way clear to still further increase the specific gravity it will be a still greater advantage to the public.

Mr. KILLAM. There are persons who believe that all the legislation upon the subject of oil has been entirely in the interest of the oil producers of Western Canada and against the interests of the public generally. I do not object to the oil legislation we have had as a Free Trader only, but in the interest of the revenue and the interest of morality. The hon. member for Stanstead and myself can scarcely agree upon the prices in the United States. I am inclined to think, from the low figures he has given of the