

American Association for Labour Legislation.  
Metropolitan Tower, New York City,

Jan. 10, 1911.

Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King,  
Minister of Labour,

Ottawa, Canada.

My dear Mr. King,—You will be interested to know that the bugaboo of monopoly raised by some disingenuous persons with reference to our national campaign to secure the prohibition of the use of poisonous phosphorus in the manufacture of matches in the United States has been squelched for all time in this connection. The Diamond Match Co. has assigned its patent for the sesquisulphide substitute to three trustees: Prof. E. R. A. Seligman, of Columbia University, Commissioner Charles P. Neill, of the United States Bureau of Labour, and Attorney Jackson Ralston, attorney for the American Federation of Labour, Washington, D.C., with full power to deal with future applicants for the patented formula on any basis they may think proper.

These three gentlemen have been given power to fix the terms according to what they think proper, they being trustees. I think that answers the question my hon. friend asked.

In the United States we believe we have now overcome every objection that can be honestly raised and we hope every suspicion, no matter how unjustified. We are holding a conference in Chicago to-morrow on this subject, and within the next week we hope to see the Esch Phosphorus Bill reported out of the committee and well on its way toward early enactment into law at this present short session of Congress.

With best wishes for the progress of similar legislation in Canada, I am,

Yours very sincerely,

JOHN B. ANDREWS,

Secretary.

What I would like to make plain to the House is that in all the countries of Europe where this legislation has been enacted, this substitute has taken the place of white phosphorus. As I understand it, it is a chemical mixture which contains phosphorus and sulphur, the two being mixed in retorts away from where the people are working, so that there is no danger, after the combination has been effected, from the effects of the substance. And that is another important feature—that there is no danger to children of poisoning by sucking the heads of matches. That danger is done away with as well as the danger of phosphorus poisoning while the match manufacture is going on.

As I have stated, the countries of Europe have adopted this substitute. They have been face to face with the same condition that the match manufacturers here will have to meet. They have acquiesced in the legislation that has been passed; in fact, the British match manufacturers, when the matter was up for consideration

there, petitioned the Home Office to adopt this very legislation. It may seem extraordinary that they should have done so, but the explanation is, I understand that they found that the regulations under which the British government was placing them with a view to preventing this disease caused them more expense than the use of the substitute would cause, and they felt that if they were all put on an equal footing it would be in their own interests to acquiesce in the enactment of a law of this kind. On Tuesday, the 24th of March, 1908, Mr. Gilbert Bartholomew, chairman and managing director of Bryant & May, Limited, the largest manufacturers of matches in England, headed a deputation to the Home Secretary. I will not quote the whole of his remarks, but will read two paragraphs. Mr. Bartholomew said:

I have the honour to represent here the match manufacturers of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland who use poisonous phosphorus. There are at present only nine of such manufacturers of matches, and they are Bryant & May, Limited, London and Liverpool; R. Bell & Co., Limited, London; J. Palmer & Son, London; S. J. Moreland & Sons, Gloucester; Maguire, Miller & Co., Liverpool; Paterson & Co., Limited, Dublin; W. J. Morgan & Co., Limited, Manchester; Hargreaves & Clegg, Limited, Manchester; The Hulme Patent Advertising Match Co., Limited, Manchester. The nine manufacturers are unanimous in appealing to you, sir, to take such steps as may be necessary to prohibit, at the earliest possible date, the use of poisonous phosphorus in the manufacture of matches.

And after giving a number of reasons in support of this request, the chairman said:

I want to emphasize another feature which is very important, and that is, that so long as phosphorus matches remain in use, so long there will be occasional deaths among children poisoned by sucking the heads of such matches. These considerations alone should be sufficient to win a ready response to our proposal. Another grave feature which I need not particularize: it is doubtless familiar to the Home Office, has brought about the present condition of things in Sweden, and yet, while phosphorus matches are not allowed to be sold or consumed in that country, their manufacture in the country is still allowed for export to this and other countries where such matches are not yet prohibited.

In conclusion, our case may be briefly stated to be:—

1. The manufacturers are unanimous in favour of prohibition.
2. The employees will heartily welcome prohibition.
3. Quite a number of other countries have already adopted it, and we believe the rest will gladly do so when led in that direction by Great Britain.
4. Efficient substitutes for poisonous phosphorus are available. The efficiency cannot be better testified to than by mentioning the fact that for the last eight years all Bryant &