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A DOMINION EXPLOSIVES ACT.

The urgent need of stringent Government control of the manufacture of explosives was never more apparent. Although the whole matter has been exhaustively investigated by the Mines Branch of the Department of Mines, Ottawa, and although a bill was drafted more than a year ago, yet no further action has been taken. Dominion and Provincial officials are of one mind as to the pressing necessity of immediately enacting suitable laws, yet, for some inexplicable reason, nothing is being done.

Let us glance for a moment over the fatalities that have occurred within the last 18 months. On April 27th, 1911, in an explosion in the drying house of the Dominion Explosives Company at Sand Point, Ontario, four lives were lost. On September 24th, of the same year, in a packing house of the Canadian Explosives Company, at Beloeil, Quebec, one man was killed and four injured. Three of the injured died a short time after the explosion. Four more lives were lost, on October 19th, in an explosion in the mining house of Curtis & Harvey, Limited, at Rigaud, Quebec. Three men were killed and three injured on December 19th, 1911, in the gelignite mixing house of the Canadian Explosives Company, Limited, near Nanaimo, British Columbia.

This gives the shocking total of 15 lives lost and four men injured in the manufacture of explosives in Canada in 1911, surely too large a toll to be easily explained away.

During the current year a very serious accident occurred at the factory of the Energite Explosives Company at Haileybury, Ontario, which resulted in the death of six persons, and the injury of three.

Thus within 18 months there has been a total loss of life of 21 persons with the serious injury of seven others.

These casualties are directly attributable to lack of proper control of the manufacture of explosives. But the matter does not end here. The same causes that bring about these accidents are responsible for many other fatalities and minor accidents. The users of inferior explosives are in constant danger. While it is impossible to determine and unfair to guess how many mining and railway construction fatalities may be set down to poor explosives, yet no one at all acquainted with Canadian conditions can deny that rigid inspection and adequate legislation would materially reduce the number of accidents.

In addition to recorded accidents in the metalliferous mines of Canada, there are numerous unrecorded casualties in railway construction and other public works. Many of these arise through ignorant handling; but