

ther your government desire that a notification of their adhesion should be made under article 3 of the convention.

Another despatch was sent in August of this last year stating that the British government were anxious to know as soon as possible whether the Dominion government proposed to give its adhesion to the convention.

Before sending any reply, the government deemed it desirable to get the fullest information possible as to the necessity for any such legislation in this country. The first step taken was to communicate with the authorities in every province in order to ascertain whether any legislation for the purpose of protecting their workers in match factories existed therein and also what was the extent of the industry, and whether there was any need for further legislation on this matter. Mr. Ackland, Deputy Minister of the Department of Labour, communicated with the various provincial secretaries, and the replies he received indicated that in none of the provinces was there any legislation protecting workers against the particular disease, phosphorus necrosis. Having obtained these replies, the department directed two of its officers, Mr. Dubreuil and Mr. McNiven, to investigate and find out whether there were any instances of phosphorus necrosis in the Dominion; and later on I shall submit the substance of their report to the House.

I have given a short account of the various stages so that the House may see clearly the genesis of this measure. It had its beginning in the request of the British government to be informed as to whether Canada would become party to the convention. But the British government did not ask the Canadian government or parliament to consider a measure of this kind until it had itself passed an Act dealing with the evil. The Act of the British parliament is intitled: An Act to prohibit the manufacture and sale of matches made with white phosphorus, and was passed December 21, 1908.

And the Bill I have introduced, is, as nearly as possible, a reproduction of the British Act, which is the source from which this proposed legislation has been inspired.

Mr. CROCKET. Was there any demand from any of the health associations of Canada respecting this matter?

Mr. KING. Not that I am aware of, and the surprising feature of the whole business is the lack of knowledge which there seems to have been as to the extent of this evil in this country. Had the attention of the federal government not been drawn to it, this disease might have continued to spread in this country. Certainly one might have expected some of

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the provincial inspectors to have come across and reported upon cases of this kind, but not one seems to have done so.

Mr. CROCKET. Has the hon. minister any evidence that the disease does exist?

Mr. KING. I have; and as I said a moment ago, I shall give it to the House in a few minutes. The reason I have spoken at some length of the genesis of this measure, is because an entirely erroneous impression has been spread throughout this country as to its origin. No doubt hon. gentlemen opposite have seen in many of our daily papers the statement that this legislation, in some indirect way, was inspired by the Match Trust in the United States. As this seems to be the impression, and as something may be said to the same effect later, I want to refer for a moment to legislation in the United States and the alleged connection of the Match Trust in that country with this measure. I have here the article to which I have referred and which has been copied into the newspapers throughout Canada. It reads as follows:—

HON. MACKENZIE KING AND THE MATCH TRUST.

The Bill he introduced in Parliament looks suspicious.

The Minister has placed the Government in an Embarrassing Position—The Bill would Prohibit Manufacture of White Phosphorus Matches.

Hon. Mackenzie King, Minister of Labour, has, through inexperience, it is alleged, placed the government and himself in a most embarrassing position, from which they will have the greatest difficulty in extricating themselves. It is asserted that the Bill he has introduced into parliament to prohibit the manufacture and importation of matches made with white phosphorus is simply part of a scheme which had its origin in the United States to promote and aid the Match Trust. The Match Trust controls the patents governing the process of making matches with materials other than with white phosphorus.

Misplaced Zeal.

It seems that Mr. King, while looking around for legislation, stumbled across a Bill which has been introduced into the United States Congress, and which aims at putting out of business all firms that manufacture matches with white phosphorus. Of course, the real design of the United States Bill is to corner the market for the Match Trust. The Canadian Minister of Labour, without knowing all the facts of the case, clutched at the statement that white phosphorus was poisonous, and, thinking to gain eclat by similar legislation designed to save the workers from the cruel manufacturers, immediately introduced the measure mentioned into parliament.

Objects of Attack.

But in addition to charges from Washington that he is in league with the Match Trust, Mr. King and the government find themselves