April 4, 1932.

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
120 East 19 Street,
New York City.

Dear Miss Tarbell:

A touch of the "flu" interrupted my orderly habits and accounts for my delay in responding more promptly to your letter.

If you still think it will be helpful in your article to include the reference you suggested, perhaps the following may furnish the fact basis for whatever you may wish to say.

In my intensive study of the American labor movement as an editor of the ten volume Documentary History of American Industrial Society, completed in 1909, I became deeply interested in proposed methods for the improvement of working conditions. Almost immediately thereafter I arranged to make a study of occupational phosphorus poisoning in match factories. This dread disease of the workers dramatized for me the cruel and often needless suffering of those who are required to work under conditions over which they have no control. In this instance the occupational disease could be abolished only if all match manufacturers would agree simultaneously to stop using the deadly poison for which there were harmless but more expensive substitutes. Manufacturers representing 5 per cent of the product insisted on using the slightly cheaper poisonous yellow phosphorus. The remainder thereupon declared themselves helpless owing to competitive conditions although anxious to stop using the poison.

When my match report had been published by the Federal Government I followed it up and got a bill introduced and (after two years of effort) passed through Congress in 1911 in my first national campaign as Secretary of the American Association for Labor Legislation. This law caused all match manufacturers to abandon the poison on a given date and by this means abolished our

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first widely-known and most loathsome occupational disease.

That initial campaign is merely illustrative of the desirability and necessity in many instances of uniform protection through labor legislation - not only to safeguard the workers but to protect conscientious employers against the undercutting of less scrupulous competitors, and at the same time protect the community from a charity burden often thrust upon it as a result of needless personal injuries inflicted in the course of employment.

The workmen's compensation legislation, promoted most consistently and energetically by the American Association for Labor Legislation during the past twenty years, has been developed with this same scientific or general-welfare viewpoint and this modern principle is now almost universally approved by both employers and wage earners. A compensation law is regarded today as evidence of the social status of a state. (The four laggards now are Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi and South Carolina.) But the promotion of this beneficent legislation required unremitting effort in state after state to overcome narrow prejudices.

Perhaps one of the most striking illustrations of the scientific method in this field in recent years is the campaign for the rock dusting of coal mines to prevent the needless coal dust explosions which are the cause of our greatest mine disasters. The rock dust stops the spread of the explosion. Hundreds of lives are now saved yearly by this simple inexpensive safeguard, but constant work has to be done, state by state, in securing the adoption of the Association's "standard bill" requiring that the blanket of rock dust be thoroughly applied and adequately maintained. Mining engineer authorities urge the rock dust safeguard. But recently when the Governor of Virginia, with 38 killed miners entombed by the coal dust explosion at Pocahontas, sent a special message to his legislature urging adoption of the standard bill, it was peremptorily killed in the Mines committee through the influence of mine owners.

Prevention of the evil condition is the note stressed in all our work. This applies to the whole constructive program against unemployment as

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well as against occupational accidents and diseases. It is never lost sight of in the shaping of laws for the various forms of social insurance. And it is from the public or general-welfare viewpoint always.

Problems of modern industry are fascinating to me, but I am deeply impressed by the vast number of points at which there is needless suffering and friction with consequent lowered efficiency of the workers, decreased production and profits for the employers, and social waste unending for the ultimate consumers who finally pay the costs of production.

As soon as business revives, following a depression, the managers of industry as quickly as possible forget about the problems of unemployment. It is vastly important that some device be applied which will keep them thinking. At the moment the most important and most promising device is the compulsory unemployment reserve to be set up through regular periodic payments at the expense of each employer on behalf of his own workers who may thus receive a proportion of wages when involuntarily unemployed. Our Association maintains that it is socially bad for an employer to use his workers only when business is profitable to him and then turn them on the street for the tax payers to care for until he wants them again. Moreover, in maintaining purchasing power, it is more important to have a wage reserve than a dividend reserve. Both are desirable. Finally, if employers get unemployment into their regular bookkeeping as an overhead cost, they can in good times work out within limits certain methods of employment stabilization just as under similar continuous economic stimulus and organization they were resourceful in preventing many accidents with the coming of compulsory workmen's compensation laws. {Our Association helped organize, and worked through the State Committee in Wisconsin, which promoted the adoption of America's first law of this kind, in January,

The chief difficulties in carrying on the program of scientific labor legislation year after year are (1) public apathy, (2) legislative inertia, and (3) the constant grind of raising from the comparatively few people who appreciate the need those limited funds for even a modest budget to carry on the fundamental research, publication, legislative drafting and public education. The nameless

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few thousand who out of the 120,000,000 of our people have kept the work going thus far through their membership fees are owed a debt of public gratitude for their loyal if meager support.

If any of the above is remotely suggestive or helpful, you are welcome to use it in any way you wish. I am sorry it has been delayed.

Sincerely yours,

John B. Andrews

Secretary.

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# Standard Rock-Dusting Bill to Prevent Coal Mine Catastrophes

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This standard draft of a bill for uniform state legislation, providing rock dusting to prevent needless coal dust explosions, is based on the "standard practices" recommendations of the American Engineering Standards Committee. These recommendations were thus formulated after the most careful consideration by representatives of the following organizations; American Association for Labor Legislation, American Institute of Electrical Engineers, American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers, American Mining Congress, Associated Companies, Coal Mining Institute of America, Mine Inspectors' Institute, National Coal Association, National Safety Council, United States Bureau of Mines, United States Department of Labor. The standard bill itself is being introduced in legislatures throughout the coal-mining states, and the American Association for Labor Legislation is especially calling attention to this draft as forming the basis for well-considered legislative action.)

AN ACT TO AMEND, ETC. * * * BY REQUIRING THAT CERTAIN MINES BE ROCK DUSTED.

*Be it Enacted etc.* * * *:

SECTION 1. **Definitions of Terms Used.**

(1) The term "mine" shall include all underground excavations from which coal is hoisted or transported to the surface, through one or more openings.

(2) The term "main haulage" shall include all underground slopes and planes, all rock tunnels, and all entries excepting those from which rooms or chambers are turned.

(3) The term "entry" shall include all underground haulageways, travelingways and airways, excepting working places as defined below.

(4) The term "working places" shall include:

(*a*) Rooms or chambers; from the entry or gangway rib to the face of the room.

(*b*) Entries; from the outside of the last crosscut turned to the face of entry.

(c) Crosscuts or break-throughs, which are being driven between entries or rooms.

(*d*) All pillar work.

(5) The "return air" is the ventilating current, or split of same, from the point of passing the last regular working place in the section of the mine which it has been ventilating since leaving the intake to the point of union with the main return.

(6) "Exposed electric circuits" means any conductor or conductors of the electric circuit in the mine, other than trailing cables of permissible machines, which by virtue of their location are liable to be damaged by falls of roof, wrecks, etc., which may cause sparks or arcs in the mine atmosphere.

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# Unemployment Reserves

Questions ? ? ?
Answered ! ! !

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(This illustrates)

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*President, Treasurer, and Secretary*


March 9, 1932.

TO OUR VIRGINIA MEMBERS: (Progress Report)

On November 5, 1931, we wrote Governor Pollard at Richmond, expressing the hope that he would in his message to the legislature request the adoption of the standard bill for the rock dusting of certain coal mines to prevent disasterous explosions. We then said:

> "Will it not be especially regrettable if your legislature adjourns, and you have failed to make this practical provision for prevention of coal mine catastrophes, and if then the country were to be shocked by additional tragic explosions in Virginia coal mines? Upon whom will the social responsibility rest for the continuance of these needless catastrophes due to coal dust explosions?"

On February 29 - following the sacrifice of 38 human lives in the coal dust explosion at Pocahontas, Virginia - we wrote to you suggesting that you communicate immediately with Governor Pollard, urging the enactment at this legislative session at Richmond of the standard bill for rock dusting.

On March 5, Governor Pollard sent a special message to the Virginia House of Delegates noting the loss of the lives of 38 Virginia citizens from the mine explosion at Pocahontas on February 27 and conveying the information that the mine inspectors' reports show that "the accident was caused by coal dust explosion which might have been prevented, if proper laws had been in force requiring the adoption of well known preventive measures. *** The catastrophe emphasizes the solemn duty of the state to pass such laws as will reduce to the minimum the hazard to life and limb of our workmen engaged in mining and other dangerous pursuits."




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Upon the Governor's request the standard bill was introduced by Hon. W. W. Vellines under special rule. The bill was referred to the Committee on Agriculture and Mining which met and promptly killed the bill in committee after a quick hearing.

The Governor in his message said "The sympathy of all Virginia goes out to the bereaved families of the deceased." Is that enough? Should not the Governor be backed up vigorously in the laudable position he has taken for the prevention of further needless sacrifice of human life? Perhaps you will feel inclined to express yourself to members of the Virginia House Committee on Agriculture and Mining (list enclosed for your convenience). Possibly the attention of editors might also be called to this unfortunate situation.

Faithfully yours,

John B. Andrews

Secretary.

JBA:GH

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