

Unemployment and our Responsibilities as Christians

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Dans un régime démocratique, chacun a un rôle authentique à jouer, tantôt par son vote ou son influence, tantôt par son action et ses oeuvres.

Soyons donc, Bien Chers Frères, d'authentiques disciples du Christ; que par *une politique de présence et d'action*, nous soyons en tout temps et partout les témoins et les apôtres de la doctrine sociale de l'Eglise.

Sous l'éclairage de la justice, de la charité et de la vérité, elle nous fait si bien découvrir toutes les exigences actuelles du bien commun en face du chômage.

En souhaitant que la noblesse de l'entreprise vous attire et son urgence vous stimule, en priant Dieu d'inspirer vos efforts et d'adoucir les souffrances matérielles et spirituelles, Nous vous accordons affectueusement Notre paternelle bénédiction.

Donné à Montréal, le quatorze janvier, en la fête de Saint-Hilaire, en l'an du Seigneur mil neuf cent cinquante-neuf.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS CHRISTIANS

CARDINAL PAUL-EMILE LÉGER

1st PART

The Actual Situation and the Elements of a Just and Lasting Solution

— I —

The Gravity of the Actual Situation

During the past few years, the plague of unemployment has affected our society with persistence and in a steadily increasing degree. This evil afflicts a very large number of workers, brings misery to their families and seriously jeopardizes social order.

We have been told that there are more than 80,000 unemployed in Montreal; if we consider that each unemployed worker is responsible for the sustenance of an average of two other persons, we must conclude that there are about 240,000 persons who are victims of unemployment.

We have a more precise idea of the gravity of the situation when we realize that 10 to 15,000 of the unemployed are young. These young men come to society with all their vigour, their legitimate hopes and their will to work, and unfortunately find that no employment is offered to them.

Who would dare to say, in the face of this situation, that all types of unemployment are normal and, at the most, constitute a "necessary evil"? Such a statement would be as little in agreement with the natural law as it is with

present-day science. A Christian cannot remain indifferent in a situation which creates such great suffering. Behind the statistics and figures, we must discern the men and women, the children and the aged who are reduced to poverty and exposed to the terrible temptations of despair.

FRIGHTENING CONSEQUENCES

The consequences of unemployment are indeed serious and numerous. The many unemployed, "who ask for nothing but the opportunity of earning their daily bread for which Our Lord taught them to pray to the Heavenly Father", are unable to earn their living and that of their family (Pius XI, Oct. 2, 1931).

Deprived of the moral advantages which result from employment, the unemployed have the impression that they are no longer useful to Society. This situation upsets family life and endangers the peace and harmony that should reign in the home. The head of the family is humiliated because of his inability to fulfill his family responsibilities; he feels that he is a failure. Discouragement can take hold of him, and his enforced idleness can expose him to all sorts of temptation. The increase of criminal offenses in times of acute unemployment is a further indication of the gravity of the situation.

"If a man suffers unemployment for an extended period of time, an economist has said, morbid reactions will almost certainly affect his quality as a man and a workman. It is not only his technical ability that will diminish through lack of practice. He will lose the habit of work; his self-respect, his self-confidence may be annihilated and, when the occasion to work present itself anew, the man who was formerly "unemployed" will have become "unemployable". During this time, his private life may have fallen to pieces, and the atmosphere of the home where his children are educated may have become poisoned."

Even though the theories of full employment are still subjects of discussion among economists, unemployment is no longer considered by them as intrinsically necessary.

Unemployment seriously jeopardizes the social order because it is apt to produce in its victims feelings of discontent and bitterness towards a Society which is unable to utilize living energies which seek nothing but employment. Experience has shown, in other countries, that agitators and demagogues thrive on unemployment and find it easy to foment class hatred in such circumstances. Because of the instability which it produces, unemployment is one of the worst enemies of humanity.

By reducing its victims to poverty, unemployment decreases consumer demand, provokes economic stagnation in other fields of business and industry and paralyzes all progress. Not only does society fail to utilize its resources in manpower but it is also obliged to provide sustenance for the unemployed.

A SAD PARADOX

How can we reconcile the vision of thousands of citizens without work with the picture of a country which is immensely rich and in full development?

A recent report on the Royal Commission for Canada's Economic Prospects states that our country "is one of the rare countries which can find, within its boundaries, the greater part of the primary materials which are necessary to any great industrial power, and since 1945, a great number of discoveries and developments have come up to make Canada still more self-sufficient... Canada can consider itself particularly privileged and blessed among the other nations of the world" (Royal Commission for Canada's Economic Prospects, pp. 17 and 34).

The wealth of a country is measured by the just distribution of material goods rather than by the abundance of these goods. A people which does not enjoy a just distribution of material riches, no matter how abundant these riches are, must be considered a poor people in a rich country.

We cannot but say how concerned we were over the acute unemployment of last winter and how anxious we are in the face of the current lack of employment which affects so many working-class homes.

Workers who no longer received payments of unemployment insurance find themselves in intolerable circumstances. Those who have started to work again, and who will not be able to work long enough to become eligible for further payments, will find themselves in the same deplorable situation when they will lose their present employment.

Moreover, a good number of those who are working, live a daily fear of losing their job.

A situation which brings misery to a too great number of families and which causes such widespread insecurity calls for a serious examination, on our part, of the economic system under which we live.

— II —

The Intervention of the Church

Do you believe, Dear Brethren, that a Shepherd of Souls can remain silent in the presence of such a situation, when he sees thousands and thousands of his children who suffer, materially and morally, and who find themselves in social conditions which make it very difficult for them to live in conformity with Christian precepts?

Evidently it is not for Us to propose technical solutions to the problem of unemployment. And We shall be careful not to attempt to analyse such a complex problem. It is not the role of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, moreover, to take the place of employers, economists, labour leaders or members of the Government. They alone are competent to choose from among the diverse means that could be imagined, those which are the most urgent and the most apt to succeed from the human point of view.

MOTIVES FOR INTERVENING

The right and the duty which the Church has to intervene in the social-economic realm is based, first, in its very nature, since its purpose is to save souls,

and secondly, on the nature of the social and economic structure itself whose purpose it is "to procure for its members all the benefits which the resources of nature and industry, coupled with a sound organization of economic life, can provide" (Pius XII, 7-5-52) all this so that citizens may more easily achieve their destiny and assure their salvation.

Since the Church's mission is to direct men to their ultimate and true end, since it is concerned with providing men with the means to attain that end, you will agree that the Church cannot remain indifferent to the concrete circumstances in which men live. This is especially true when these circumstances threaten to prevent them from pursuing their destiny.

"The Church, Pius XII declared to the members of the College of Cardinals (2-20-46), cannot shut it self up, inactive, in the silence of its temples, and abandon its providential mission of forming the complete man and in this manner, of cooperating ceaselessly in the laying of a solid foundation for society. This mission is essential to it."

NATURE OF INTERVENTION

This is why the Church as official Guardian and Interpreter of the natural order, and of the moral law written in the heart of man and completed by Revelation, never ceases to recall the principles which will assure a true orientation of Society and of its members towards their proper ends. This is the Church's teaching mission.

But in the economic and social realm where, according to the expression of Benedict XV (3-11-20), "the eternal salvation of souls is very often in peril", the Church does not limit its intervention to teaching; it goes further by urging all its members, laymen and priests, to fulfill their responsibilities through action, to translate their belief into facts. This call is directed in a particular manner to laymen, who are personally involved in the temporal structures of Society, so that they may direct these structures towards their proper ends and infuse in them a Christian spirit.

The Church has a duty to intervene in the delicate problem of unemployment, not only because of the grave consequences which it brings about, but also because it is necessary to find a just and lasting solution to the problem.

— III —

The Principles of a Just Solution

Now what are the conditions which must be verified beforehand, if we are to hope for a just and lasting solution? In Our opinion, such a solution will be based only on respect for the natural right of a man to work and on an effort to give to our economic structure a sound orientation.

A) THE RIGHT TO WORK

A NATURAL RIGHT

Every man has the duty of self-preservation and of providing for the needs of his family. These duties are imposed upon him by nature and consequently by

the Creator. He therefore has the right to find in his work the means whereby he may satisfy his own needs and those of his family. This right is in a certain way indented with the right to live.

The unemployment of healthy men who are willing to work and who are deprived of work is not normal and is contrary to natural law.

The social and economic structure, moreover, inasmuch as it is the product of reason, must facilitate the exercise of the right to work. Society is not sound if it does not procure for each of its members the possibility of living as befits a human being, from the fruits of his labour.

THOSE WHO ARE PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE

Social justice requires of all those who are responsible for the national economy that they create a general economic situation which will make possible and facilitate the exercise of the natural right to work. Initiative and responsibility in the economic order is shared by individuals, their professional associations and the State. Each must act in its proper field and according to the function fulfilled in the economy.

In the economic structure which is ours, it is the particular responsibility of employers and of their professional associations to retain existing employment and to create new opportunities for employment.

THE ACTION OF THE STATE

The common good, now more than ever, calls for the intervention of the Government "in the division and distribution of work". It must therefore take new and audacious steps towards a solution of the problem, remembering, however, what Pius XI called "the suppletory function of the State". The State must encourage intermediate organisms to take the necessary measures, it must facilitate their action and also make up for their deficiencies.

It is only through such common efforts that we shall gradually attain a high and stable level of employment. According to the responsibilities which are proper to each, let private enterprise, public powers, and men of study and research map out plans and bring into existence projects which will provide new and wider opportunities for employment.

"...The duty and the right to organize the work of the people, Pius XII stated, belong above all to those who are immediately concerned: employers and workers. If these do not accomplish their task, or cannot do so because of special and extraordinary circumstances, then it belongs to the State to intervene, in this realm, in the division and distribution of work, in the manner and in the measure required by the common good rightly understood" (Pius XII, June 1, 1941).

A POLICY OF GUARANTEED EMPLOYMENT

A policy of guaranteed employment should lead us to an economy which would provide work for everyone and which would favor, in the greatest possible measure, the stability of employment.

Even if this stability of employment is difficult to arrive at, and even impossible, at times, in an expanding economy, it nonetheless constitutes a very legitimate aspiration of the working man.

“The solidarity of mankind demands, not only in the name of a feeling of brotherhood but also in the name of mutual advantage, that all possible means be utilized to preserve existing employment and to create new possibilities of work” (Pius XII, 1952).

B) A SOUND ECONOMY

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MORAL ORDER AND WITH THE PURPOSES OF ECONOMY

A true concept of the Economy implies a close relationship with the moral order.

On the one hand, man, as a subject acting within the economy, must regulate his actions according to the demands of moral law; on the other hand, the very ends of economic life must be in conformity with the order established by the Creator.

A human economic order is at the service of man before all else; it is subordinate to the spiritual and material values which make up the basis of human nature and of man's personal dignity.

“The great misfortune of the social order is that it is neither profoundly Christian, nor truly human, but only technical and economic” (Pius XII, Jan. 31, 1952).

An economy which is human is one that regulates itself according to the primordial needs of man.

The end of an economy, as Pius XII pointed out, is “to assure the permanent fulfillment of the needs, by material goods and services, which are in turn ordered to the elevation of the moral, cultural and religious level” (Pius XII, Christmas 1952).

The true hierarchy of needs cannot be established without reference to the moral law. Economic activity has, therefore, as its purpose, the arrangement of the riches of creation in such a way that all members of society will derive benefit from them.

In other words, the economy must exist for man and not man for the economy. Productivity, in spite of its great importance, cannot be an end in itself.

AN ECONOMY DIVERTED FROM ITS PURPOSE

As long as we find ourselves in an economy which is in some way diverted from its purpose, we shall always regret the presence of economic-social disorders such as unemployment. As long as our economy will seek, as is often the case, unfortunately, to satisfy artificial needs created by advertizing instead of the primordial needs of man; as long as profit remains the only preoccupation of economic life; as long as profit remains the exclusive determinant of the needs

that are to be satisfied, the solutions which we shall try to apply to evils such as unemployment will always remain incomplete and unsatisfactory.

It is not without reason, then, that Pius XII expressed a severe judgment in his Address to Italian Agricultural Landowners, in 1956. "It happens all too frequently, he said, that it is no longer human needs that regulate, according to their natural and objective importance, the use of capital and economic life, but rather it is capital and its motives of profit that determine which needs will be satisfied and in what measure they will be satisfied. Thus it is not human work at the service of the common good which attracts and uses capital but rather it is capital which disposes of work, and of the workman himself, and which moves them about at will, as marbles in the hand of a player" (Pius XII, Address to Italian Agricultural Landowners, November 15, 1956).

A true economy must "place within the reach of all members of society, in a permanent way, the material conditions which are required for the development of their cultural and spiritual life". (Pius XII, March 7, 1948).

If we do not want the producer to be sacrificed any longer to production, then production must be constantly ordered to the good of humanity.

REFORM OF THE ECONOMY

A reform of the economy is necessary and it is possible. It is false to state that the economic order is affected only by certain mechanical influences, as it were, and that it follows certain inescapable laws which man is incapable of influencing. Economic life is the work of reason. It is certain that it has its own laws and its own exigencies, but by his free behaviour and the activity of his reason, man has the power to modify the operation of the economic structure and to direct it, with due regard for the particular circumstances of the times and for the common good of all.

When we speak of political economy, we mean precisely the constructive action of the parties who are concerned with economic life.

— IV —

The Parties in the Struggle Against Unemployment

But such a program of action, Dear Brethren, will not check the centrifugal force of individualism, make things go smoothly and eliminate all opposition unless it is the fruit of magnificent and constant collaboration between all those who have a role in the economic life of the country and particularly between those who are inspired by the same human and Christian values.

A) THE EMPLOYER

The employer must see to it that the moral aspects of thrift are respected and that his business or industrial establishment be adapted to changing circumstances.

THRIFT IN TIMES OF ECONOMIC PROGRESS

Since man must provide for his future needs, he must practice thrift as soon as it becomes possible for him to do so. In an economy of progress which must constantly renew and develop itself since this is necessary for the common good, we must admit that there is generally a duty of social justice which requires that savings be invested.

“Those who are in a position to invest capital must ask themselves, in considering the common good, whether or not their conscience allows them to refrain from making such investments, within the limits of economic possibilities, in the appropriate proportions and at the opportune time, and to withdraw from the scene in false prudence” (Pie XII, Christmas 1952).

A DYNAMIC AND ADAPTED INDUSTRY OR BUSINESS

Employers must also be audacious, clever and efficacious, in order to do their part in the struggle against economic stagnation and unemployment.

They must always seek to adapt their business or firm to present-day conditions and they must have exceptional foresight. It is only in this way that the much-to-be-desired collective action of management will be able to make production rational and avoid the necessity of periodic lay-offs which are much too numerous and frequent.

B) THE EMPLOYEE

ACTIVE ROLE OF LABOUR ORGANIZATIONS

In the presence of unemployment, the workers who are its first victims, very often find themselves powerless to remedy the situation. However, if we examine the problem closely, we shall find that they too have a role to play.

Isolated, they are powerless. But if they unite in worthy labour organizations they can make their contribution to the efficacious solution of the problem of unemployment. In fact they can, through their labour organizations, work out positive suggestions and seek to have these suggestions adopted by those who are responsible, with them, for the organization of economic life. The collective action of labour organizations can help to bring before public opinion the just claims of workers provided always that it be done with due respect for truth, justice and charity. Labour organizations should always avoid demagoguery which inevitably makes it more difficult to reach true solutions, which favours an unhealthy climate of class hatred, and which uselessly and dangerously increases bitterness and resentment. Labour organizations should make it their aim to enlighten minds and to stimulate wills along the path of concrete realizations. It is only in such an atmosphere that an authentic spirit of cooperation will be created without which there can be no true solution to the problem.

THE WORKER AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL ECONOMY

In order that this cooperation be possible, workers must first be able to assume, through labour organizations, their part of responsibility in the development of the national economy. Pius XII often expressed regret that workers did not have a part to play in the economic life of their country; on many occasions, he claimed for labour "accession to the full exercise of its responsibilities" "with rights equal to those of the other members".

The participation of labour in the development of the national economy must be based in the solidarity, and the common interests and responsibilities of all those who participate in the economic life of the country.

C) THE EMPLOYER AND THE EMPLOYEE

CO-OPERATION NECESSARY

The reform of our economy requires, moreover, a frank and efficacious cooperation between management and labour. In his Address of May 7, 1949, Pius XII denounced as "erroneous and fatal in its consequences the mistaken idea that there must necessarily be unyielding opposition of divergent interests (in the preoccupations of labour and management). The opposition is only an apparent one. In the economic realm, there are common interests and common activity... Employers and employees are not irreconcilable enemies. They are collaborators in a common effort. They eat, as it were, from the same table, since their livelihood, in the last analysis, depends upon the net total profit of the national economy".

The members of the Commission which drew up the report on the Economic Prospects of Canada themselves insisted upon the need of cooperation between economic groups. After having stated that "the economic future which is in store for Canada is certainly such as to create enthusiasm", they warn us of the fatal consequences of any lack of understanding which might exist between management and labour.

CONCRETE SUGGESTIONS — MIXED COMMISSIONS

Dear Brethren, We sincerely hope that the problem of unemployment, and so many other problems which are still very much with us, may provide us with an opportunity to prove, through concrete realizations, the existence of these superior common interests. It would indeed be good to see this solidarity which must unite all parties in the economic life of the country, translated into reality by the creation of mixed commissions of leaders from management and labour, for the purpose of common study and concerted action. Such commissions could then seek efficacious ways to attenuate the actual crisis, present concrete plans and obtain from the State the support and the services which may be judged necessary. Only such labour-management cooperation, in a spirit of co-responsibility with the State, will be able to preserve our economic life from the abuses of uncontrolled economic liberalism which leads to anarchy, and from oppressive State Socialism.

D) THE ROLE OF THE STATE

Finally, Dear Brethren, it would be superfluous to insist upon the fact that the reform of our economic system and the struggle against unemployment require not only the united efforts of both management and labour, but also the cooperation of all the intermediate organizations with the State.

In fact, the State has a positive part to play in this matter if it is to fulfill its mission.

First of all, individuals and intermediate organizations must accept all their responsibilities. But, since it is evident that, in spite of all their ingenuity, they will never be able to solve the problem of unemployment by themselves, the State must intervene to stimulate their initiative and to supply what is lacking to their efforts. When there is no private initiative, or insufficient individual effort, Pius XII says: "the State is obliged, in as great a measure as possible, to provide employment through public works which are useful to the community, and to facilitate, through advice and in other ways, the hiring of those who seek work".

A few months before he made this statement, Pius XII had pointed out clearly the role of the State in the realm of economic production in the following terms: "First of all, the duty of increasing production and of adapting it wisely to the needs and dignity of man places in the forefront the question of ordering the economy with relation to production. Therefore, without substituting oppressive omnipotence to the legitimate autonomy of private enterprise, the State has an undeniable role of coordination in this matter, and this role is all the more important today when conditions, especially in the social sphere, are so tangled.

In particular, the assistance of the public powers of the State is necessary if a political economy is to be constituted which will favour the active cooperation of all, and an increase in the productivity of enterprises, which is a direct source of national revenue". (Pius XII, Letter to Mr. Charles Flory, for the "Semaine Sociale de Dijon", 1952.)

2nd PART

Our Responsibilities as Christians

Dear Brethren, We have laid down for you the indispensable principles for a solution to this problem considered from a moral and social viewpoint and We have indicated the grave responsibility that rests on those who play a part in economic life.

In the second part of this Letter, We shall examine what action each one of us must take here and now, if he wishes to prove his Christian social sense. In Our opinion, we have four obligations to fulfill: we must pray, we must examine our conscience, we must give charity and we must take some action no matter how small.

— I —

Our First Duty: Prayer

We ask you first of all, Dear People, to pray hard for the cessation of this wave of unemployment, now causing such intense physical and moral suffering. In a vast movement of Christian brotherhood, let us ask God to grant courage and foresight to all those who can help in any way to ease the present situation. Let us pray also that He may grant to all our brethren now out of work, and to their families, the material and spiritual assistance of which they have such need. Perhaps people have less inclination to pray during hard times, but really, should they not pray harder when in distress? Fervour is often lacking in the midst of trials. But fervour is not essential to prayer and we should learn to pray even when we do not experience its consolations. Let us beseech God to remove this great trial.

— II —

A Serious Examination of Conscience Necessary

We have already stated at the beginning of this Letter, that the Church's role is not to propose technical solutions in economic and social matters. Her mission, above all else, is to enlighten men's hearts.

With this in mind, we have sought, in this Pastoral Letter, to arouse in your hearts a salutary concern by recalling the requirements of the Social Doctrine of the Church. We now suggest that each of you ask himself the following question: "To live up to the requirements of my Faith, what duty have I, here and now, in the face of this grave problem?"

If I am a leader of enterprise, of industry, commerce, finance or services :

- Have I exerted every possible effort to avoid lay-offs?
- Am I now capable of rehiring some of my old employees who are not working?
- Am I sufficiently convinced that social justice obliges me to invest capital to foster the renovation and the development of our economy?
- As a member of some management association, have I demanded that the delegates get busy and stimulate a collective effort on the part of management? Only such concerted action will allow the study and the realization of those changes and improvements which are necessary for the production and the distribution of goods.
- Am I sufficiently convinced that co-operation should exist between me and labour leaders?
- What effort have I made to promote such encounters?

If I am a worker or an employee :

- Do I realize that it is my duty to lend every possible effort to the expansion of the economy?

- Am I sincerely convinced that the working man or employee is duty bound “to do integrally and faithfully all the work that he agreed to do by a free and equitable contract?” (Leo XIII, in *Rerum Novarum*).
- In a spirit of fraternity with my unemployed fellow-comrades, am I convinced that I ought not, in certain cases, to take on several jobs during this period of unemployment?
- As a Union member, have I demanded that the delegates be in the forefront of this common effort?
- Do I desire that management and labour should meet to study the causes and the remedies of unemployment?

If I am a representative of the people, a city councillor, a member of the Provincial or Federal Government :

- Do I realize the grave responsibility of my mandate in the face of present unemployment?
- Am I convinced that “the State has the important mission to prevent any disturbance of the equilibrium of economy resulting from the conflicting interests of selfish individuals or groups?” (Pius XII, June 1st, 1941).
- Am I convinced that “the State is obliged to protect the right to work of its citizens, (not in the sense that outside of a collectivist society it should itself furnish employment) but it must take care to diminish the risk of unemployment or at least to palliate its consequences by exerting influence on economic and professional organizations whose autonomy, however, it must take care to respect?” (The Archbishops and Bishops of France, *Directoire* No. 116).
- As a servant of the common good, have I always done everything possible to prevent, to delay or to ease this human suffering?

Finally, Dear Brethren, when making our examination of conscience in this period of financial depression, we cannot but deplore the intolerable increase of luxury spending, of superfluous and unreasonable spending which is in sharp contrast with the want of the many who lack this world's goods. We are well aware that in terms of economy, this spending allows some people to earn their living. But we wonder if these fabulous sums could not be invested and these people employed to better social and moral purpose. It is well known, for instance, that the immoderate use of certain consumer goods of which it is easy to abuse, allow the president of a company to spend millions of dollars each winter on the French Riviera.

Pius XII regretted that “much wealth is dormant or is lost through waste. If put into circulation it would go far, by judicious and profitable use, in providing for the welfare of many families” (Pius XII, July 5, 1952).

— III —

Duty of Charity

Stone is not the only thing to suffer the erosion of time. Language also undergoes a slow process of degradation which nothing can resist. By constant

use, words become worn out. The expression "to do charity" has not escaped the law of wear and tear. It has gradually been emptied of its primitive richness, so much so, that it takes a great effort today to grasp its essential meaning. The gratuity of Christian charity has been the first victim of this degradation. From being a gesture of generous offering, alms-giving has frequently become a means of self protection. We give to the poor as we would to an insurance or to a bank.

Dear Brethren, We exhort you to turn back to the authentic meaning of alms-giving.

Alms-giving is an act of religion, an act of penance and mortification. But it is also much more than that. It is an expression of charity, of good-will. Its purpose is not only to honour God, to make amends for one's deeds, but also to provide for the needs of our neighbour.

We urge you then, Dear Brethren, in the words of the Prophet Isais, "to deal your bread to the hungry" (Isais, 58, 7).

Let all consider the unemployed as brethren who are suffering. Let all avoid any unkind or unjust judgment about them and let all do their utmost to assist those who are deprived of means of living.

Close to you, among your relatives and friends in districts with which you are acquainted, there are families who are suffering. Go out towards them.

Even though there is some official organization of social insurance, no one is dispensed from the Christian duty of personal alms-giving. Unemployment allowance insurance payments represent a strict minimum and, in many cases, are clearly insufficient. Many victims of unemployment, for various technical reasons, receive no allowance whatever.

"When one member suffers, says Saint Paul, the whole body suffers." (I, Cor. 12-26).

Each of us, therefore, has a strict duty to give loyal and generous support to every organization, official or private, which proposes to assist the victims of unemployment.

— IV —

A Symbolic Action: Organization of "Labour Projects"

To this pastoral exhortation, we wish to unite the eloquence of example and We have decided, Dear Brethren, after consulting the parish priests of the diocese, to launch immediately some construction projects. By this gesture, We desire to provide bread to our brethren who have none. But more than that, We wish to place an act that will induce other citizens to initiate similar work.

We have no illusion: these projects are not an adequate remedy for present-day unemployment. Our only intention is to make a modest but symbolic gesture.

For this purpose, We are, so to speak, drawing a cheque on Divine Providence and We count on your customary generosity. *Special collections will be taken up*

monthly in the parishes. They will be announced by the Reverend Pastors who may organize them in the way they deem best.

The money thus collected shall be sent to Us personally each month. We shall publish the results obtained and will inform you of the projects that have been launched.

You are most generous when missionaries come to beg for assistance. The work which We recommend to you today also deserves the support of your goodwill.

We make a special appeal to those who have funds that are not invested and not subject to income tax. By making an offering for Our projects, you will restore the social balance that was upset by greed. Any sum that you wish to offer for this work should be addressed to Us personally.

Alms-giving provides a treasure in heaven for the one who deprives himself on earth. In the Gospel of St. Luke, Chapter XII, we read the following counsel: "Sell what you have and give alms. Make for yourselves purses that do not grow old, a treasure unfailling in Heaven, where neither thief draws near nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be" (Luke, XII, 33-34).

Dear Brethren, all funds thus collected will immediately be put into circulation in the form of salaries and the purchase of materials. In this way, We will help some of our fellow-citizens to enjoy soon a little more security.

How encouraging it would be to see industrial or commercial enterprises, parish fabriques, religious communities and various civil organizations hasten to start work on projects of long-standing. No doubt, this will be done at the cost of some sacrifices, but what hope it will bring to us all.

C O N C L U S I O N

And now to conclude this Letter.

Our last appeals is for well-considered and effective action on the part of all the faithful of the Diocese.

Too many Christians have, sad to say, a tendency to imagine that their conscience may be at rest as long as they have not positively done any evil act; they think that they have done all they should do if they abstain from evil.

Dear Brethren, it is for us to be truly active citizens in the Kingdom of God. We have a strict obligation to do good. It may sometimes be a grave sin to make no effort to establish a Christian social order.

It is regrettable that many worthy people are so selfcentered that they deprive groups and activities of their presence, of their support and of the spirit of justice and charity which they could so easily give.

In a democratic system, each one has a role to play either by vote of by influence or else by action.

Let us all be true disciples of Christ, Dear Brethren. Let us, at all times and in all places, by our presence and our activity, be the witnesses and the apostles of the social doctrine of the Church.

The teacher of justice, charity and truth which is the Church shows us clearly all the requirements of the common good in the face of unemployment.

Trusting that you will be attracted by this noble cause and aroused by its pressing nature, as We pray God to inspire your efforts, and to ease all material and spiritual suffering, We impart to you, affectionately, Our paternal blessing.

Given at Montreal, this Fourteenth day of January, on the Feast of St. Hilary, in the year of Our Lord, one thousand nine hundred and fifty-nine.

Syndicalisme ouvrier et action politique

Au cours de 1958, les positions du syndicalisme ouvrier canadien à l'égard de l'action politique se sont maintes fois exprimées et considérablement précisées. Ce fut d'abord la résolution du Congrès du Travail du Canada, adoptée lors du deuxième Congrès tenu à Winnipeg (21-25 avril 1958). Suit, le 2 mai 1958, la déclaration du président du CTC, M. Claude Jodoin. Puis ce fut la résolution adoptée au dernier congrès de la CTCC (14-21 septembre 1958), bientôt suivie de celle du congrès de la Fédération des travailleurs du Québec (20-22 novembre 1958). Enfin, une toute récente déclaration de M. Roger Mathieu, président de la CTCC, parue dans l'hebdomadaire LE TRAVAIL (12 décembre 1958), s'inscrit dans cet ordre de préoccupations.

1) RÉSOLUTION DU CONGRÈS DU TRAVAIL DU CANADA

Le présent congrès croit qu'il existe aujourd'hui sur la scène politique canadienne un besoin impérieux qui commande la création d'une nouvelle force politique efficace, fondée sur les besoins des travailleurs, des agriculteurs et de groupes semblables, financée et contrôlée par le peuple et ses organisations.

Au cours du dernier quart de siècle, le PSD a contribué de façon prodigieuse au bien-être du peuple canadien, à l'intérieur comme à l'extérieur du Parlement. Le mouvement syndical reconnaît pleinement cette contribution et sait que, avec ses ressources limitées, ce parti continue de lutter pour la justice sociale, la sécurité et la liberté, qui sont également les objectifs de ce congrès.

Le temps est venu d'effectuer en profondeur un réalignement des forces politiques au Canada. On sent le besoin d'un vaste mouvement politique populaire qui grouperait le PSD, le mouvement syndical, les organisations d'agriculteurs, les membres de professions libérales et toute autre personne d'esprit libéral intéressée à une réforme et à une reconstruction sociale en profondeur, effectuées dans les cadres de notre régime parlementaire. Ce vaste instrument politique devrait voir