

## The Economy must be placed at the Service of Mankind

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This results in:

- *a problem of professional selection*: The most talented young men go towards the mechanical trades. The recruiting for the traditional trades is therefore insufficient in quantity and also in quality.
- *a social problem*: This results in a serious falling off of competence in the traditional trades which is made up more and more of former labourers and candidates who did not feel capable of passing the examinations of the mechanical trades. Because of this there is a rapid decline in competence which leads to a « poor conscience » in the younger members of these professions who do not feel themselves « capable ».
- *an economic problem*: The increase in the cost price of labour in the traditional trades and the possibility of future unemployment in the mechanical trades.

c) Among the contractors and journeymen, the present tendencies are in the same directions as among the young men. The contractors and journeymen of the mechanical trades accept easily

the quota 1/1. The contractors and journeymen of the traditional trades cling as narrowly as possible to the quota 1/5. This results in:

- *a social problem*: the attitude of the syndicates;
- *an economic problem*: the attitude of the contractors.

\* \* \*

The realization of these facts constitutes the first step of any effort to correct them. There is no doubt that the increase in numbers in the mechanical trades corresponds to a necessity. But the rate of this increase, may it not constitute, from now on, a danger? It is up to the profession to study this. And, on the reverse side, the abandonment of the traditional trades, must be, and urgently, stopped. The effort of the pre-apprenticeship centres, represents a measure of great economic import and no doubt the most efficient solution to the problem. One must, therefore, hope that their number may increase and that, more and more, the preference be given to the young men conscientious enough to accept, for a period of from six months to a year, a formation which gives the right aspect to their life, because it gives them that which they need the most: the joy of working, privilege of competence.

## THE ECONOMY MUST BE PLACED AT THE SERVICE OF MANKIND \*

PAUL-H. PLAMONDON

The importance of these meetings appears in a clearer light if one stops to meditate on the theme of which they are the object. You have come together, gentlemen, with the intention of examining the conditions of a free world economy, in the service of the consumer, in a peaceful world. The choice of such a programme is a far-reaching testimony. It establishes, at the same time, your anxiety for economic realism, your desire for the moral promotion of mankind, and finally your will, both lucid and confident, in the destiny of a world finally reconciled in true peace.

Gentlemen, you no doubt know how much this North American continent remains attached to freedom that has never ceased to furnish a

framework sufficiently supple for the scope of the biggest production that history has ever known. Freedom of enterprise, of which the totalitarian experiences, make us understand better the advantages for the common good and the value for an enriched personality.

Is it not, in effect, a challenge to the very nature of mankind, to limit the role of leader of enterprise to the disciplinary limits of a state control that always finishes by breaking the inner springs of the spirit of enterprise, of the spirit of risk and by discouraging the best-armed fighters from creating prosperity?

At the time when modern technique renders the universe more and more conscious of its unity, where the progress of science puts within our reach always more exact and richer information, how can we imagine the return to a closed economic nationalism of which the egoism, in other respects not understood, turns regularly against

\* Here is the text of a speech made by Mr. Paul-H. Plamondon, president of the Chamber of Commerce of Quebec City, at the Convention of the International Chambers of Commerce at Quebec City, June 16th, 1949.

itself? However, gentlemen, the hour is too serious for us to hide certain truths from you. The economy has not always been in the service of the consumer and the consumer, sometimes, has only been considered as an instrument or means; not as an objective, not as the ultimate end of the economic act. We must never forget, in effect, that the total of the consumers of a country are not other men than those who make up the total of the workers, and that, in consequence, as well as the nature of the production, the amount of wages and prices must be studied, but not in view of a brutal and immediate profit but rather in view of a profit which takes into account the conditions of general economic equilibrium, that is, of the purchasing power of the worker-consumer.

It does not help to fool ourselves, if certain countries have utterly destroyed liberty and private initiative at the same time, it is by the pressure brought to bear by those who have been the victims of economic disorder or social injustice. And if we do not wish to see the State invade the domain of the most legitimate economic liberty, it is on condition that we renew audaciously, the conception of an obsolete liberalism and give ourselves rules, because we are at the same time, the most interested in a stable economic prosperity and also the best placed to distinguish the possible from the utopian and the imaginary from the real.

These rules, indispensable if we wish to build a man-sized economy, can best be furnished by the ideal of service to the consumer. Consumer of economic goods worthy of mankind and sold at a price which takes into account the equilibrium of family budgets.

It is undoubtedly a great step forward in the organization of a peaceful world, to see the leaders of the private economy of thirty-three nations come here to Quebec to agree among themselves on such a line of conduct and to work together to realize it.

It is the unhappiness and misery which shocks mankind and incites it to submit to the State's compulsion in order to control its fellow-men. Economic liberty will contribute towards peace if enough men of good will understand how to use this liberty to keep misery and unhappiness away. A pessimistic philosopher, observing his fellow-men concluded at one time that man was like a wolf to other men: the problem which now presents itself, is to know, if, in justice and love, we can build a world where man will be a brother to other men.

We can, we must, God aiding, try it, and your presence and your studies; here, gentlemen, will have greatly contributed in spreading amongst us more confidence in a world finally living in economic prosperity, social justice and international peace.

## FUTURE AIMS OF THE COLLECTIVE LABOUR AGREEMENT

JACQUES ARCHAMBAULT

« The collective agreement alone, if one realizes well its implications, may, in the end, suppress the fundamental conflict of the modern world: the divorce or separation between the social and the economic. »<sup>1</sup> This realistic opinion of Mr. Andre Roy, editor of the *Action Catholique* of Quebec, touches an extremely big and complex problem. How can a legal institution, so simple in itself, fill the constantly widening gap?

Labour relations, it must be noted, are based on common interests and divergent interests. The collective labour agreement, as we might say, canalizes the interests involved, on one hand, in taking for granted the common interests as the

final end of its existence and, on the other hand, in transforming the divergent interests into common interests by the appeal of the good of the enterprise, of the profession and of society.

In our days, the practical difficulty lies in the fact that the differences of opinion come from the social not being integrated in the economic. The collective labour agreement will act as a method of integration if it evolves slowly, in its various clauses, towards a conception adapted from social service inside the enterprise.

In effect, it can be noticed that the divergent interests centre around the question of working hours, salaries, holidays, paid vacations, etc., in a word around the items in which the economic is most important. (Union security clauses, because of their special character, are situated quite apart,

(1) Extract from the article of André Roy, "Le Congrès des relations industrielles", *L'Action Catholique*, Quebec, Monday, April 25th, 1949.