

9. UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF MEASURES.

We re-affirm our concurrence with the policy by which municipal and provincial authorities assume responsibility for the initial action necessary to relieve existing human needs within their jurisdiction to the full extent of their financial ability. If they are unable to cope with current demands for relief, we express the hope that your Government will continue the policy of assisting those municipal and provincial authorities by every practical means, including that of furnishing the necessary financial assistance. Those persons who, because of varied circumstances, have been driven away from the path of self-reliance must be fed, clothed and sheltered. To ensure that no citizen shall want for those necessities is a matter of national concern and the ultimate responsibility of the Dominion Government. The efforts made by your Government during the past year, both in financial assistance and through measures so efficiently administered under the Labour Department are worthy of commendation. To continue a programme of necessary public works, no doubt would create additional opportunities for many thousands of willing workers to re-establish some measure of their former economic independence. Any such programme should be carried out under supervision which would make impossible the exploitation of those unfortunate persons who are obliged to accept public aid as a mere human existence.

However, all measures of this character, worthy as they may be, cannot be regarded as more than temporary expedients. They are not calculated to effectively remedy the fundamental causes underlying our unemployment problem and attendant inhuman conditions. For these reasons, we strongly urged, in our last annual submission, that some scientific machinery be set in motion in an effort to discover the primary causes and related factors responsible for prevailing economic insecurity; and also that the legislation providing for an Economic Council might be effectively utilized as a fact-finding body, having definitely in view the relation of the human factor in industry to the capital investment and machinery employed, in order to obtain as near as possible a true estimate of their respective values to the community and to the state. However, Parliament in its wisdom repealed that legislation, notwithstanding the opposition to the repeal bill registered by our Joint Legislative Committee. But it should be conceded that with the present and anticipated results of science and invention in productive machinery substituting for man-power, together with other technological changes, increasing unemployment is inevitable unless and until some effective remedy is found. Therefore, we submit that provision for creating and maintaining a national fact-finding body is of vital importance and very essential if our social and economic sciences are to keep pace with physical and technical sciences which are ever advancing.

That this problem of unemployment from technological and other causes is not only a national but an international one and

W.L.M. King Papers, Memoranda and Notes, 1933-1939
(M.G. 26, J 4, volume 204, pages C140880-C141315)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES
ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES
CANADA

