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Chancery Office
428 NORTH SECOND STREET
Rockford, Illinois

From Bishop Muldoon's Rockford File

1704 National Ave.

Dec. 14 1918

Rev. John J. Burke, C.S.P.
National Catholic War Council,
932 14th St.
Washington, D.C.

My Dear Father Burke:-

I have read, very attentively, "Social Reconstruction" several times. As far as I am able to judge the document is very good. I have just sent you a telegram asking you whether you sent this document to the other Bishops, as that was promised at our meeting in New York. Of course I will have to wait until I hear from them before I can give you any final decision in this matter or tell you to go ahead and print. I am writing at present, so that if they give me their views in the affirmative I can send you a telegram to go ahead.

As this is a most important and far-reaching document, and will be very closely viewed by the hierarchy and by non-Catholics, and will be subject to the closest scrutiny, you must have every important statement carefully passed on by the very best authorities that we have in the church. I personally cannot see any objection, but of course I do not presume to be in a position of technical education to pass on all statements that have been made. I would call your attention on page #8 to the word "morally" in the phrase "and a great number of other activities for which they are morally and physically unfitted". I think some other word should be used to express the idea.

Again on page #10 "on grounds, both of justice and sound economics etc. to resist wage reduction". Is not this too sweeping? Would it not be better to say "to resist any general wage reduction"? as wage reductions may be absolutely necessary in some cases.

As a pronouncement I personally think it is very good indeed, but as a program it seems to me indefinite. Perhaps it is only intended as a pronouncement, but as soon as our people get this, they will necessarily ask

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the question - "What can we do and how are we to do it?" There is not in this a single line of direction to a pastor, to a social worker, or to a society as to how they could take part in this important work. In other words it is not made practical or applied. Even if we sent this document to every priest in the United States, it would not accomplish very much, unless some direction as to how to act would also be given. Perhaps the second, and to me more important, feature of our work has been fully elaborated by the committee, but if so, there is no word indicating it in this document, and if priests or societies take up the suggestions without direction, instead of a uniform method of procedure we will, I am afraid, have a variety that will be confusing. All that is said is hardly a social program, but only a pronouncement on social problems. We must, it seems to me, send out precise directions to our workers. They are all asking "What can we do and how do you wish us to do it?" - and these questions are not answered. We will be weak and our work will amount to nothing worth while until these questions are answered in a definite, precise and directive form. Just as soon as I hear from the other Bishops I will telegraph you.

I am very truly yours,

Chairman.