MEMORIAL SERVICE

for

MARTIN LUTHER KING

will be held under the combined sponsorship of

the City of Toronto, religious, labour and

community organizations

on

TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 1968 - 12:30 P.M.

NATHAN PHILLIPS SQUARE

All staff members of the Department of Labour

are urged to attend.
STATEMENT GIVEN
AT
MEMORIAL SERVICE
FOR
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

APRIL 9, 1968
NATHAN PHILLIPS SQUARE

DANIEL G. HILL
DIRECTOR
ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
TORONTO, ONTARIO
It is with a sense of deep inadequacy that I stand
with you today to pay final tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King--
what more can be added to the numerous statements which have
already been made about this apostle of peace, of love and
justice who gave up his life, and in so doing, has caused
all of us to re-examine our own lives and the relationships
which we have to our fellow man--black; white and Asian; the
immigrant and native-born Canadian; the poor and the rich.

His death is a direct and serious challenge to all
Canadians who are actively engaged in securing human rights
for the many members of our multi-ethnic, multi-racial and
multi-lingual nation.

Those of us across this land who are entrusted with
administering federal and provincial human rights legislation
will forever be haunted by the memory of Martin Luther King,
if we compromise in Canada--in the human rights struggle--
and if we fail to see the overwhelming significance of his
life for Canadian Indians, black men and Asians who still
SUFFER DISCRIMINATION AND WHO HAVE NOT YET BEEN ACCORDED
THE FULL BENEFITS OF OUR SOCIETY.

FOR THE FUTURE, LET US REMEMBER THAT DR. KING, A
DISTINGUISHED ORATOR AND PHILOSOPHER, WAS PRINCIPALLY A MAN
OF ACTION. FAR TOO MANY OF US ENJOY AND ENGAGE IN THE
RHETORIC OF HUMAN RIGHTS--THE DIALOGUES, THE SPEECHES, THE
RITUALS--SHYING AWAY FROM DIRECTLY PROTESTING SOCIAL
INJUSTICES. BUT DR. KING'S FINEST HOURS WERE SPENT IN ACTIVE
NON-VIOLENT PROTEST: IN MONTGOMERY, IN SELMA, IN BIRMINGHAM,
AND YES, IN MEMPHIS, TRAGIC AS IT WAS.

IN THIS CHAOTIC PERIOD OF THE NEW BLACK RACISM WITH ITS
CRY TO BURN, TO HATE, TO SEPARATE; WE SHOULD RECALL DR. KING'S
WARNING THAT RACIAL FIRES--BLACK OR WHITE--ULTIMATELY CONSUME
AND DESTROY THE TORCH SETTER.

DR. KING'S LIFE WAS INFLUENCED BY THE WRITINGS AND WORK
OF PAUL TILlich--THE RENOWNED THEOLOGIAN--AND HE RETURNED,
OVER AND OVER AGAIN, TO THE GUIDING PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES
OF SPIRITUAL LOVE--AGAPE--FOR ONE'S FELLOW MAN AS AN ANSWER
TO MORAL RELATIVISM, TO SHIFTING SOCIAL VALUES, TO CHANGING ETHICS IN TODAY'S WORLD. THIS PROPHETIC SPIRIT, THIS MODERN PRINCE OF PEACE WAS GUIDED THROUGHOUT HIS SHORT LIFE BY THESE WORDS FROM TILLICH: "LOVE ALONE CAN TRANSFORM ITSELF ACCORDING TO THE CONCRETE DEMANDS OF EVERY INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL SITUATION WITHOUT LOSING ITS ETERNITY AND DIGNITY AND UNCONDITIONAL VALIDITY. LOVE CAN ADAPT ITSELF TO EVERY PHASE OF A CHANGING WORLD."

MARTIN LUTHER KING'S DEATH WILL SERVE TO REMIND US THAT IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR FELLOW MEN WE MUST ALWAYS BE MOTIVATED BY THE HIGHEST IDEALS, THE FINEST HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES AND AN UNDERLYING LOVE FOR ALL MANKIND.