

CHRISTIAN CORPORATION
OF
VAL-DES-BOIS



STATUTES



IMPRIMERIE COOPÉRATIVE DE REIMS
(N. MONCE, DÉL.)
24, RUE PLUCHE, 24

1885

THIS EDITION

This is an English translation of the original French text, made for the website leonharmel.com in 2026. It follows the original sentence by sentence, without cuts or additions.

The text is given in full, translated from the 1885 edition. It has been typeset in the spirit of the original: title pages and headings follow the layout of the book; the illustrations have been cut out of the digitised document and restored.

Léon Harmel, le Bon Père du Val-des-Bois

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Version of 4 October 2026.



CHRISTIAN CORPORATION
OF
VAL-DES-BOIS



PASSBOOK-DIPLOMA

as Member of the Corporation

issued to Mr

on 18....

SIGNATURE OF THE SECRETARY,

SIGNATURE OF THE HOLDER,



PROFESSIONAL UNION
OF THE EMPLOYERS & WORKERS
OF THE
Christian Corporation of Val-des-Bois

S T A T U T E S

Title I
Foundation. — Purpose.

ARTICLE ONE

Foundation.

A Professional Union is established in the Val-des-Bois mill, between the Employers and their families, on the one hand, and the workers and their families, on the other, under the name of *Christian Corporation of Val-des-Bois*. (The family is understood to mean: the father, the mother and the children.)

ARTICLE TWO

Purpose. — Duration.

The Union or Corporation, formed under the law of 21 March 1884, has as its purpose to secure union between the employers and the workers, whose efforts contribute, in various forms and by different means, to the industrial working of the mill.

Its duration is unlimited.

ARTICLE THREE

Institutions.

The Corporation shall endeavour to create all the institutions that tend towards the moral, intellectual and professional development of its members, as well as towards the improvement of their material situation, in particular:

A. — Fundamental associations for the various members of the family, with their organisation and their meeting places;

B. — Various institutions, namely:

1st Division. — Mutual aid society, funeral society, accident insurance, health service, baths and wash-houses, healthiness and sufficiency of housing;

2nd Division. — Approved suppliers; schools, absences, examination on leaving the infant school to enter the school, and on leaving the school to enter the workshop; school competitions, libraries;

3rd Division. — Low-cost bakery, company store;

4th Division. — Direct purchasing, exhibitions of clothing; hostel for workers without a family;

5th Division. — Consumer society;

6th Division. — Savings bank, provident and pension funds, life insurance; legal advice for all the circumstances of civil life; care of widows and orphans;

C. — Fire Brigade; choral, instrumental, gymnastic and rifle societies;

D. — Hygiene and sanitary measures in the workshops; precautions against accidents; training of apprentices and development of vocational training; competitions for apprentices and young workers; protection of apprentices and newcomers; examination of the observations gathered among the workers on the kind and length of work, on the equipment, on disciplinary measures; study towards an organisation of work that brings about justice and peace; measures to be taken in case of unemployment.

ARTICLE FOUR

Internal Regulations.

The regulations of the fundamental associations, and the institutions established by the Union or Corporation, constitute the internal regulations, to which all members are bound to adhere. These regulations, after being studied by the Union or Corporative Council, are submitted to the General Assembly of the Corporation and, as far as possible, posted up in the meeting rooms.

ARTICLE FIVE

The Association, finding in the religious and moral habits of its members the surest guarantees for attaining the purpose it sets itself, makes them a condition of admission. The Corporation is therefore Christian in its spirit; it places itself under the protection of the Archbishop of the diocese, who is represented to it by a priest entrusted with the spiritual functions of chaplain. It celebrates with religious services the feasts of its patron saints, and every year has a service said for its departed Brethren.

Title II.

**Composition of the Union or Corporation. —
Registered office.**

ARTICLE SIX

Composition of the Union.

The Union or Corporation is composed: 1. of the employers of the mill and their families, of the managers and senior staff and their families; 2. of the workers and foremen or clerks of the mill, accepted by the Corporative Council, and consenting to observe the regulations mentioned in Article Four. Every family, one of whose members is admitted, belongs to the Corporation and enjoys its advantages.

ARTICLE SEVEN

Exclusion.

Every member of the Corporation is free to withdraw whenever he wishes, but on paying the subscription for the current year.

Whoever leaves the mill for any reason whatsoever ceases to belong to the Union or Corporation.

The grounds for exclusion are:

A. — Three successive absences from the general assemblies, under the terms of Article Eighteen;

B. — Notorious misconduct or irreligion;

C. — Any judicial conviction whatsoever;

D. — Serious and habitual infringement of the Statutes of the Corporation or of the Internal Regulations.

Exclusion is pronounced by the Corporative Council, by an absolute majority of the members present.

ARTICLE EIGHT

Whoever ceases to belong to the Union or Corporation, whether he has been excluded or has withdrawn of his own accord, forfeits all his rights to the Corporative Patrimony and to the institutions established by the Corporation, subject to the reservation stipulated in Articles Twenty-One and Twenty-Two.

ARTICLE NINE

Corporative passbook.

A corporative passbook is handed to the head of the family one or more of whose members belong to the Corporation. This passbook, marked with his name and his serial number, and containing the present Statutes and an extract from the most important internal regulations, remains the exclusive property of the Society and must be returned to it in case of departure or exclusion.

This passbook, signed with the name of the holder and that of the Secretary, serves as a diploma. To remain valid, it must bear each year the renewed signature of the Secretary.

ARTICLE TEN

The seat of the Corporation is established in the building known as the Circle, situated in the yard of the Mill. The archives are kept in the council room.

Title III.

Administration.

ARTICLE ELEVEN

The Corporation, with all the institutions that derive from it, is administered by a Corporative Council.

ARTICLE TWELVE

Corporative Council.

The Corporative Council is formed of twelve to twenty-four members and is composed:

A. — For one half, of the employers' group, formed of the employers and of the assistants chosen by them. In the event of the departure of one or more of its members, the group is completed by the Employer;

B. — For the other half, of the workers' group, formed of the staff of the mill, workers, foremen and clerks. The councillors of this group are elected by the general assembly, by a relative majority of the votes.

The term of office of a councillor is unlimited. No other elections are held except to replace councillors of the workers' group who have resigned or left the Society. These by-elections take place in General Assembly, by a relative majority of the votes, from a list presented by the Corporative Council and containing twice as many names as the number of councillors to be elected.

ARTICLE THIRTEEN

Officers.

The officers of the Corporative Council are:

A. — The President, who is always an Employer;

B. — Two Vice-Presidents;

C. — A Secretary and a Vice-Secretary;

D. — A Treasurer and an Assistant Treasurer.

These last six, elected every two years by the Union or Corporative Council, must be chosen half from the employers' group and half from the workers' group.

ARTICLE FOURTEEN

Duties of the Officers.

The officers meet before each session to fix the agenda. They receive the requests or questions put forward by any councillor or by any member of the Corporation, in order to encourage personal initiative as much as possible, and decide on the questions that will be submitted to the Corporative Council.

The President watches over and ensures the observance of the statutes and customs of the Corporation. He presides over the general and special assemblies, signs all minutes, deeds, orders or resolutions, and represents the Corporation in all its official dealings. He is charged with taking legal action in the name of the Corporation. In the deliberations of the Council, he has the casting vote in the event of a tie.

The Vice-Presidents stand in for the President, who may delegate all his powers to them.

The Secretaries are charged with drawing up the minutes, with the registration of members, the correspondence and the archives.

The Treasurer, assisted by the Assistant Treasurer, collects the voluntary subscriptions and the membership subscriptions and manages the corporative patrimony under the supervision of the Union Council.

Purchases of real estate, contracts with third parties, investments of funds and loans shall bind the Society in due form only by the signatures of three of the officers, that of the President or of a Vice-President, and those of a Secretary and of a Treasurer, on the express condition that one of the signatories shall belong to the employers' group and another to the workers' group.

ARTICLE FIFTEEN

Responsibility.

All the members of the council are jointly and severally responsible for the funds of the Society and for any faults committed in its management. They must show, at the general assemblies, that the expenditure made by the Society on movable and immovable property does not exceed the amount of the subscriptions and gifts made by the employers, so that, in the event of the dissolution of the Corporation, the said movable and immovable property may revert by right to the employers, in accordance with Article Twenty-Five.

As long as the Corporation exists, this movable and immovable property nonetheless remains the common property, with full freedom to dispose of it and transform it. This freedom ceases only at the moment when liquidation is requested under the terms of Article Twenty-Five. It is clearly understood that the upkeep of the furniture and buildings remains the responsibility of the Corporation.

The Treasurers must have their receipts and expenditure signed every quarter (31 March, 30 June, 30 September, 31 December) by all the officers. Every six months (on 31 March and 30 September) they shall draw up a detailed statement, which they shall have signed at the session of the following month by the members of the council who are present.

ARTICLE SIXTEEN

Powers of the Syndics or Councillors.

The principal powers of the syndics or councillors are:

1. The admission and exclusion of the members of the Corporation;

2. The organisation and general supervision of the various institutions established for the benefit of the members of the Corporation. To achieve this end, the council appoints two of its members, a syndic from the employers' group and a syndic from the workers' group, to sit on the Managing Council of each institution, and it chooses, from among the members of the Corporation, the administrators of the said institution. The names of the members of these various Councils are posted up in the meeting rooms;

3. The adoption of all measures concerning the observance of all the statutes and customs of the Corporation;

4. The practical study of all questions relating to the end pursued by the Corporation;

5. The voting and control of receipts and expenditure.

The subscription may not be fixed or changed without the approval of the general assembly, after the vote of the Council.

ARTICLE SEVENTEEN

Sessions.

The Council meets regularly every month, and more often if the officers request it. It may deal only with the questions on the agenda. Every important new measure is studied by a committee, appointed by the Council and composed of four syndics, two from each group. At the following session, on the oral or written report of the committee, the Council takes its final decision.

The chaplain is convened to the sessions by right.

ARTICLE EIGHTEEN

General Assemblies.

The members of the Corporation are convened every six months, around Easter and All Saints' Day, to General Assemblies announced by notices posted at the seat of the Corporation at least ten days in advance.

The session shall begin with the roll call. Those who cannot be present must inform, or have someone inform, a member of the Council before the session, failing which they will be marked as absent. Anyone who has three successive absences from the half-yearly Assemblies may for that reason be excluded from the Society by the Union or Corporative Council. Other General Assemblies may take place, without penalty for absences. The agenda of the general assemblies is as follows : working of the Corporation and of the institutions; — situation of the fundamental associations; — changes in the staff; — presentation of the officers when appropriate; — financial situation; studies and measures adopted by the Council; — various proposals.

For the deliberations of the General Assemblies to be valid, at least one quarter of the members must be present.

Title IV

Resources. — Corporative Bonus. — Corporative Patrimony.

ARTICLE NINETEEN

Receipts.

The resources of the Corporation consist of:

- A. — The payments of the members;

- B.* — The subsidies of the mill;
- C.* — The profits made by the economic institutions;
- D.* — Disciplinary fines.

ARTICLE TWENTY

Use.

The receipts of the Corporation are allocated by the Council in the following manner:

- A.* — To the payment of general expenses, upkeep of furniture and buildings, rents and all costs required by the Corporation, whether for the meeting rooms or for the institutions founded;
- B.* — To the various provident funds or other institutions, according to the decision taken each year by the Corporative Council;
- C.* — To the Corporative Bonus;
- D.* — To the Corporative Patrimony.

ARTICLE TWENTY-ONE

Corporative Bonus.

The Corporative Bonus consists of a sum, proportional to the purchases made through the economic institutions, which falls to each of the members' families. This sum, fixed each half-year by the Council, is entered by the Treasurer in the corporative passbook and paid into the Fund of the Corporation. It may be handed over to the family only in the following three cases:

- A.* — To the head of the family when he has reached the age of fifty;
- B.* — To the widow, in the event of the death of the head of the family;
- C.* — In the event of serious infirmity of the one who feeds the family with his wages.

However, the Corporative Council reserves the right, after consulting the General Assembly, to change, for all the members of the Corporation, the use of the Corporative Bonus, and to pay it every half-year into the account of the person entitled, either at the State Pension Fund or with a life insurance company.

ARTICLE TWENTY-TWO

In the event of a member leaving the mill, or being excluded, or withdrawing, his Corporative Bonus held in the funds of the Corporation is paid for his benefit into the State Pension Fund, with reserved capital.

ARTICLE TWENTY-THREE

The Corporative Bonus, being a pure gift of the Corporation to the families of its members, is non-transferable and inalienable, and can be neither sold nor bought.

ARTICLE TWENTY-FOUR

Corporative Patrimony.

The Corporative Patrimony is a common, inalienable property, accumulated to ensure the perpetuity and independence of the Corporation. It is used, to attain this end, in the manner judged best by the Union or Corporative Council.

ARTICLE TWENTY-FIVE

Liquidation.

Liquidation may be decided only if one of the two groups composing the Union or Corporative Council requests it unanimously and in writing, or else if two thirds of the syndics of each of the two groups sign the same request. In either of these cases, the General Assembly is convened immediately and appoints two commissioners to follow and supervise the liquidation.

The furniture and the building revert by right to the Employers, under the terms of Article Fifteen. On the other hand, the Employers give up their rights to the remainder of the assets. These assets are placed in their entirety in the State Pension Fund, in as many shares as there are families belonging to the Corporation on the day of the request for dissolution.

ARTICLE TWENTY-SIX

Feasts of the Patron Saints.

The patrons of the union or Corporation are:

Our Lady of the Factory, whose feast is celebrated on 8 September or on the Sunday following that date;

And St Joseph, whose feast is celebrated on the third Sunday after Easter.

In addition, every year on 2 August, the feast of Our Lady of the Angels, the Corporation celebrates the anniversary of its foundation.



UNION OR CORPORATIVE COUNCIL
OF THE
Christian Corporation of Val-des-Bois

EMPLOYERS' GROUP

Syndics:

Messrs Léon Harmel.
Félix Harmel.
François Champion.
Florentin Terneaux.
Emile Pilardeau.
Alexandre Godfroy.
Léon Aulner.

WORKERS' GROUP

Syndics:

Messrs François Varlet.
François Gentilhomme.
Emile Esqui.
Louis Gouverneur.
Alfred Jolivet.
Jules Charlier.
Nicolas Schaffhauser.

THE OFFICERS

Messrs Léon Harmel, *President*.

Félix Harmel, *Vice-President*.

François Varlet, *id.*

François Champion, *Secretary*.

François Gentilhomme, *Vice-Secr.*

Florentin Terneaux, *Treasurer*.

Emile Esqui, *Assistant Treasurer*.

These Statutes were adopted at the General Assembly of Sunday 2 August, and deposited the same day at the Town Hall of Warmeriville, which gave a receipt for them.