

give advice or to instruct women workers. They just carried on in the day nursery such work as came to their door.

There is a gap in the direction of women working in war industry. There is not proper information with regard to facilities that are available, and there is also a lack of coordination among the trustees and municipalities and the war working women. Something constructive might even at this late date emerge from this discussion, and I suggest that the minister might confer with his colleague, the Minister of National War Services, and with the women's voluntary organization under his direction to see if they cannot coordinate their efforts so that the maximum use may be made of the facilities and the personnel available.

I am amazed at the statistics. There is room for far more of this work to be done, even with the present facilities, without more capital expenditure, if there could be some coordination among the many bodies affected—the municipality, the province, the dominion, the women war workers. The women war workers themselves lack information, and the personnel are perhaps too timid even to approach those charged with authority with regard to the conduct of these institutions. There does not seem to be coordination in that particular set of circumstances. In the last few years, even since the war, the trustees of these institutions and those who took an interest in them were men who were able to provide facilities, but they seem to have faded out and to have lost interest. It has not been emphasized that they are doing a real community service in looking after this capital asset.

I make these few observations in order to help the minister generally, because I am convinced that expansion is essential at this particular time and this is a move in the right direction. But what we have done so far really amounts to a failure. I am anxious that the department should give some direction to the set-up, so that women war workers will know that their children will be well taken care of. For this purpose I think some leadership should be put into the hands of those who are carrying on the day nurseries, so that they in turn can make their institutions something which is so necessary during this time of war.

Mr. ADAMSON: As one of those members of the house who have seen the nursery schools in England in operation, I would say that this is a step, a short and halting step, but nevertheless a step in the right direction. I congratulate the hon. member for North Battleford, who has obviously made quite a study of this problem. I agree with what she has said.

[Mr. J. H. Harris.]

Under the English system new nursery schools were built not only where there was an absolute necessity for it, but in areas where there was no necessity. First of all, it was done for the bombed-out victims for whom new schools had to be found, and it was done for children of all ages. I see no reason why we could not have done the same thing instead of putting up with basements of churches and other improvised accommodation. Under the English system, just as under our proposed system, there is cooperation with the local authorities, which I think is essential.

It is essential that these services should not be considered on the basis of a free hand-out by the state. That is not so in England, except where the parents of the children have been either killed or crippled by enemy action.

The immediate effect of these nurseries in England has been a tremendous improvement in the whole standards of the children, and not only of the children but of the adult population as well. It seems extraordinary that even with the terrific bombing and the terrible devastation that was caused in 1941 and part of 1942, the health of the English people has actually improved over pre-war days. The number of cases of illness and sickness has gone down, and the nursery schools and the public nurseries have been one of the contributing factors to that improvement.

It is quite true that the nurseries in England charge sevenpence, threepence of which is paid by the state. We ask for thirty-five cents. While I do not quarrel with the sum of thirty-five cents, I think we could get a good deal more service for that sum, especially when one considers that the cost of feeding a soldier in Canada with the excellent food he now gets is thirty-eight cents a day.

It was impressed upon me in talking to a number of social workers in England that these nursery schools and supervised schools have had a great effect in improving family morale. One of the great problems with which we are faced in Canada is the demoralization of the family. It may sound paradoxical for me to advocate nursery schools and institutional care for practically all the children in the state. But I believe that it is one of the surest ways to restore the high morale of the Canadian family, which, according to most authorities, has suffered a serious decline in the past few years. It is infinitely better to have all children properly looked after and properly supervised during the working hours of the day than to allow them to play on the streets. They have discovered in England that taking the children off the streets has