

*Supply—Labour*

is sitting throughout the province at the present time. Today we have many reports in the newspapers and on the radio because of an address given to the Canadian Medical Association manpower conference, which is being held in Montreal, by Doctor Helen K. Mussallem, executive director of the Canadian Nurses Association. Doctor Mussallem, in her comments before the Canadian Medical Association, emphasized that unless substandard salaries and working conditions in nursing are corrected there will be a much greater shortage of nurses in the immediate future than we have at the present time. Just now the shortage of nurses is such that hospital wards are being closed because no one can be found to staff them. I am thinking, in particular, of a large ward at the General and Marine Hospital in Owen Sound, Ontario. The announcement has been made that it will be closed completely because the Board of Governors cannot staff the institution to the point that all the beds in the institution can be handled.

This is not an isolated instance. There are many other centres where a lack of nurses has forced hospitals to close wings. Sometimes they have been unable to open new additions because of lack of nursing staff.

I maintain that if the pay being offered to the nurses was satisfactory, girls would come forward to take up nursing, as their mothers and grandmothers did before them.

Doctor Mussallem, in her remarks before the Canadian Medical Association yesterday, produced some figures that could do nothing but disturb anyone who turns them over in his mind. She pointed out, for instance, that recruitment to nursing schools has dropped steadily:

In 1940 about a quarter of all female high school graduates entered nursing. In 1966 this had declined from 25 per cent to 8 per cent. Unless drastic changes are made Canada can look forward to fewer than 5 per cent of high school girls entering nursing, Dr. Mussallem said—

Poor salaries and working conditions were tolerated when professional opportunities for women were limited but that era is past, she said. Teachers, for example, have jumped far ahead of nurses and in many areas where nursing recruitment has dropped teaching has gone up.

Anyone must realize that young girls in secondary school are intelligent; they survey the possibilities of a profitable career in the various avenues open to them in their teens. Certainly, anyone can witness the situation in nursing.

[Mr. Cowan.]

I have an instance in mind of a young girl I know well. She is a married woman, a member of the church I attend, a graduate in nursing of a hospital in Alberta. She nursed in Alberta for many years, married an R.C.A.F. man when they were both at Cold Lake, Alberta, and came east. For several years she nursed in Toronto; today she is working in a factory—working in a factory because of the regular hours of employment, eight to twelve, and one to five, with no work on Saturdays, Sundays or holidays, and no night work whatsoever. That girl is a professional; she is a graduate of a well qualified hospital school in Alberta.

I can think of another young girl who right now is working in the parliament buildings in the stenographer's pool for the Senate. Her people were born in Ottawa, moved to Vancouver and have been there for ten years. The girl thought she would like to be a nursing student here, in Ottawa, where her grandparents live. She came east to Ottawa and applied to enter a hospital training school for nurses. She was advised that she lacked one subject in her grade 13 paper and considered, for a while, taking one year's study to pick up that one subject in order to satisfy the demands of the hospital school. Friends of hers said: "You can make more money as a stenographer working for the government, in the parliament buildings, and you do not have to work Saturdays, Sundays, nights or holidays; you will work as a regular human being works and you will make as much money as a nurse makes as soon as you have taken a six months business training course."

The girl took the six months business training course in the city of Ottawa and she is now working in the secretaries' pool of the Senate—a would-be nurse lost to the profession because of the attractions that other occupations open to a girl had for her, and because she was told that she lacked one of her grade 13 subjects.

I know of another girl, but this one used to work in the florist business. Because weddings are numerous on Saturdays, florist shops are open on Saturdays. That is the busiest day of their week. No employee of a florist shop may have Saturday off because of the heavy volume of business that day. Girls who are qualified to work in florist shops are hard to find. Most girls want to work a five day week, from Monday to Friday; they want regular working hours from eight to twelve and one to five. The young girl to whom I refer now works for the Ontario government. She has no Saturday work. I merely cite the