

*Supply—Health and Welfare*

day premium rates of pay for those who are forced to work on Saturdays, Sundays, or statutory holidays. I produced many figures to show that the payment of day premium rates of pay is in practical operation in the printing trades in Canada, the one business about which I know most. If they can pay day premium rates for working Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, surely the governments of the ten provinces and the dominion can do the same thing.

I hold in my hand a contract between the Canadian union of operating engineers and one of the Toronto hospitals. This contract is up for renegotiation, as it expires next month, but the interesting thing about this contract is that it provides for day premium rates of pay to the engineer staff for holiday work. The particular clause dealing with it reads this way:

*Paid Holidays*

The following holidays are recognized by the employer: New Year's day, Dominion day, Thanksgiving day, Good Friday, Civic holiday, Christmas day, Victoria day, Labour day.

All employees in this bargaining unit shall be given the above holidays off, with pay at their normal rates. However, should they be required to work on one of the above holidays, they shall be paid a day's pay plus time and one half their normal rate of pay.

I read this one contract between a labour union and a Canadian hospital simply as an example of what prevails in a fair number of hospitals today, that is, a day premium rate of pay for holidays; and the federal government is paying one third of that cost. Of course I believe that when the federal government is willing to pay one third of the cost of the day premium rates of pay for holidays, Sundays and Saturdays, it should pay a day premium rate to employees under its direct control and paid directly by cheques of the government of Canada.

In connection with this contract I have in my hand it is interesting to note that since the engineers are now paid a day premium rate of pay for national holidays, one of the items on which they wish to negotiate is a change in article 10:

All hours worked on Saturday or Sunday shall be paid at the rate of time and one half.

I am not in a position to state whether this request of the union of operating engineers will be granted by the employing hospital whose contract I hold in my hand at this time, but it is going to be difficult to tell employees of the hospital that they should not be paid time and one half for Saturday and Sunday work when you are already

paying them at two and a half times the rate of pay for statutory holidays.

The reason I emphasize day premium rates of pay so seriously is because I believe if they were being paid in all hospitals of the country at the present time we would be able to attract into the nursing stream a tremendous number of married women who are qualified nurses, but who will not leave their homes on week ends for the present rates of pay. It is pretty universal across the country that nurses working on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays draw only the regular rates of pay that people get for working on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or any other day of the week.

While many of these rates of pay today are almost munificent, it is a different matter when you ask a married woman to desert her home on the week end, perhaps for the only three days of the week her husband is there, and when the children are home from school and require a little more attention than when they are at classes. In that case, when a married woman thinks of the regular rate of pay for Saturdays and Sundays she is going to weigh it against the disadvantage of leaving her home. But if married nurses were paid a day premium rate of pay on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays I am certain there would be a great influx of married nurses back to the hospitals.

I have emphasized in the two previous comments I made on this situation—and I wish to say there was not a doctor in the house on either side of the aisle who did not come to me and say I was putting my finger on a matter of paramount importance to the nation—that if we paid day premium rates of pay over week ends and national holidays, I am confident we could increase the care rendered by the hospitals by 25 per cent, and we would not have to lay out any extra capital money in grants.

I stress the figure of 25 per cent on this basis, that many, many hospitals practically close on Friday at noon and do not get back into full operation until Monday morning. Doctors, particularly surgeons, do not want to operate over week ends when they know the staff is going to be considerably reduced. As I said before, and I repeat, somebody will immediately rise and point out that all the beds are occupied over week ends so how would you increase the production of a hospital—if I may use that word—by 25 per cent when all the beds are occupied over the week ends?

[Mr. Cowan.]