

A right, not a privilege

numbers of females, the turnover rate is often as high as 80 per cent. Yet a day care centre established at Skyland Textile Co. in North Carolina reduced the turnover rate to almost zero. Since the cost of training a new employee often ran as high as \$1,000 the company actually saved money by absorbing the loss of operating the centre. In addition, the rate of absenteeism decreased and productivity increased.

As yet, few Canadian employers feel the need to contribute to the solution of daycare problems. The Selig Division of Simmins Ltd., in Elora, Ontario, operates a daycare centre for twenty children, and Riverdale Hospital in Toronto, faced with a nursing shortage, has had a successful day nursery for a few years. But these employers are the exception. Far more typical is this response from an official of Maclean-Hunter Ltd.: "We assume that if the woman wants to work, she has someone taking care of her children." Ironically, Maclean-Hunter Ltd. publishes *Chatelaine* magazine, one of the major proponents of more and better daycare. Bell Canada, employing a large number of female workers, say it is "watching" daycare ventures of their American counterparts but suggests that the high cost of daycare makes it a community responsibility. A spokesman for Electrohome Ltd. is more blunt: "We're not providing it until we can't get female labour without it."

Chances are good that the man from Electrohome will be able to get female labour without daycare for quite some time to come. Sixty per cent of female workers are in clerical, sales or service occupations which are traditionally difficult to unionize. Without some union or association, these women are finding it difficult to get decent wages, let alone daycare. Unfortunately, those women who are organized within unions don't fare much better. Few unions have been involved in providing daycare. In the United States, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America and the International Ladies Garment Workers have pushed through legislation to establish joint management-labour trust funds for the provision of daycare, and some child health care centres were established under their auspices. In Victoria, B.C., a local of the Public Service Alliance has opened a daycare centre for its employees. In its model agreement issued as a guide to negotiators, the Canadian Union of Public Employees includes a clause demanding employer-sponsored daycare for its workers. But that clause is always last on the list of demands and the first to be dropped in collective bargaining.

A survey, conducted for the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, on the attitudes of union workers to women in industry revealed that the question of providing daycare services to female workers was never con-

sidered by union executives or workers. In fact, an overwhelming majority of workers surveyed chose to have married women with young children remain in the home. Even those workers whose wives were employed would have preferred to have them stay home. Although many unions have large female memberships, few women get to positions of leadership. Thus a predominantly male executive which is either indifferent or hostile to working mothers, is quick to drop daycare provisions in favour of what it feels are more important "bread and butter" issues.

The failure of working mothers to achieve a good daycare system can to some degree be blamed on themselves. They have not requested, or have requested too gently, that their needs be met by the employers, the unions and the communities that benefit from their work. Too many mothers still feel guilty leaving their child in a situation that may be "bad" for the child. Early studies of institutionalized children showed disastrous results from maternal deprivation and although these studies were of children starved from infancy of any consistent love and affection, the stigma persists. More recent studies show that, far from being harmful, good daycare can produce a more independent and self-confident child.

Compounding their failure to demand on-site nurseries for their employees, labour unions have yet

to take up the challenge of operating their own daycare centres or financially supporting those groups in the community who wish to start centres.

Many spokesmen of both labour and industry feel that it is the responsibility of government to make daycare services available. The Royal Commission on the Status of Women recommended a programme of daycare services to be established by the federal and provincial governments that would cost an estimated 500 million dollars. However, governments have not been helpful in Canada. Ontario, thought to have the most progressive daycare legislation, will pay 80 per cent of the costs of centres but has been unsuccessful in convincing many municipalities to pick up the tab for the other 20 per cent. Federal legislation on daycare has been abysmal. As a sop to working mothers, new legislation allows a deduction of up to \$500 per child under fourteen upon proof that payment was made for child care. The actual cost of daycare often exceeds this \$500 maximum. In addition, this apparent relief has actually made more problems than it solved. Many children are cared for in private homes by women who do not report payment as income. If the mother insists upon a receipt for tax purposes, she may be forced to look elsewhere for daycare.

Aside from token tax proposals, the federal government has not encouraged daycare. In fact, anyone

wishing to read the two studies on daycare prepared for the Royal Commission on the Status of Women will find that these files have been closed by the government until 1981. But the crisis in daycare will not disappear during the decade that these studies sit on the shelf.

As mothers begin to realize that daycare is not only necessary but good for their children, they are beginning to demand daycare as a right. The Royal Commission on the Status of Women stated: "Equal opportunity for women means little in reality without supporting community services, including daycare centres." Women must now demand from their employers, from their unions, and from their governments a comprehensive daycare programme at reasonable cost. They must also demand that all facets of society recognize not only the necessity of daycare but also its benefits. For good daycare is more than just care. It means children learning their own worth and respecting the worth of others. It means children expanding their community from one mother, one house, one family to that of an extended "family" made up of many different places, children and adults. It is not something to be given to women as a privilege but rather to be demanded by them as a right.

GRACE HARTMAN is the National Secretary-Treasurer of the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

Cut budget dashes hopes for new York centre

By PAUL THOMSON

Daycare at York has been surrounded by considerable controversy, but has expanded its enrolment from 15 children in 1969 to 65 today.

Its origins at York go back to the fall of 1969 when three women's liberation people got together to start a centre in space donated by Winters college. Joan Roth, a parent and student was the most active of the three in getting the centre going.

Capacity at Winters was limited to 15 children at one time although by January 1970 there were 32 children enrolled, not all of whom attended full time.

At the time the centre was operating outside the Day Nurseries Act which governs all such operations in the province. This was because the department concerned, Social and Family Services, refused to grant a licence unless the centre had paid staff who were "qualified". Apart from the volunteer staff, there were two paid co-ordinators of the centre during its time at Winters but they did not have the required nursery school diplomas.

In a letter March 12, 1970 to York vice-president Bill Small, the Deputy Minister of University Affairs, E.E. Stewart stressed that the university had a social responsibility "to assist its students in nurturing healthy, capable children" with adequately supervised and properly licensed daycare.

After a great deal of talk about the university's responsibilities concerning daycare, in the fall of 1970 the ad-

ministration agreed to provide space in grad residence three to replace the inadequate facilities in Winters. York agreed to make the necessary alterations to the lounge and three first floor apartments of the building as well as paying rent to housing services for the space in order to accommodate daycare.

In January 1972, a York administration task force released their report calling for Metro to set up any new daycare facilities at York.

However, the following month the three member daycare planning committee, called in their report for the university to make daycare a number one priority. This should be done, the report said, by diverting university money into construction of a new daycare resource facility on campus.

The planning committee report stressed that there was a demand for daycare service and unilateral support at York for a new centre. This view was supported by the daycare long range planning survey of April 1971 which found parents of 203 eligible children interested in on-campus daycare.

Last September daycare expanded into additional quarters in grad residence four. This made possible the segregation of children into three age groups: infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers.

York daycare is co-operative, — run and staffed by parents as much as possible. Each week either of the parents of a child in the centre must spend four hours in the centre helping out. At present there are seven full time staff. Fees

are \$60 per month when the mother or father participates. Fee subsidies are available from Metro Toronto if family income is inadequate to take care of all or part of the fee.

The centre itself is child oriented. It is well supplied with toys and playing aids, but more importantly the child has a greater opportunity to socialize with other children than he/she would have at home.

According to daycare director Maria de Wit, the prospects for a needed new building "don't look too hopeful now" in light of current budget cutbacks.

In the meantime the daycare policy committee is working on a proposal to let the centre expand and still receive subsidization from the university. Present financial difficulties involve an outstanding debt to the university for staff salaries. A subsidy arrangement is essential, Maria de Wit said, because the minimum cost per child is from \$1200 to \$1500 a year and the centre only receives \$750 per child annually.

There is already a waiting list for next September. But there will be few openings unless the centre can expand to accommodate at least 80 children.

Because daycare operates year-round there are openings available in the summer. Anyone interested is urged to contact Maria de Wit immediately (667-3227). In addition there is one opening now in the infants section (six weeks to eighteen months).

Now Appearing

LUNCHEON NEWS
from under \$1.00
Unique quick self-service snack bar... hot and cold specialties



Ronnie Hawkins
A favorite drop in place for celebrity visitors. Gordon Lightfoot, Kris Kristofferson, Rita Coolidge, Ian and Sylvia, etc.

- Always exciting entertainment
- Biggest Club Dance Floor in Toronto
- No Cover Charge

NICKELODEON

279 Yonge at Dundas Square

PAT MURPHY

on

WOMEN'S LIBERATION

and

HUMAN LIBERATION

Wed. Mar. 14 8:00 p.m.

Grad Common Room
7th floor Ross
sponsored by the
York University Homophile
Assoc.

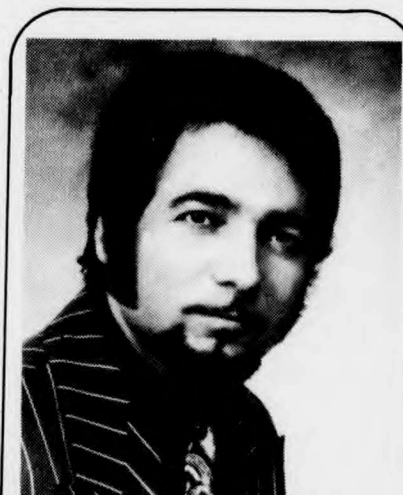
Halcyon™

WATERBEDS

7 STYLES ON
DISPLAY TO SUIT
ANY DECOR OR BUDGET

Freeform Interiors

2110 YONGE 489-7600



NICK DEROSE
invites you to his
UNISEX HAIR SALON
for the latest in
hairstyles and shapes.

THE ROUND TABLE

3197 Bathurst Street
(just north of Lawrence)
Telephone 781-4792

10% Discount, mention
that you are from York.



EXPORTA

CANADA'S FINEST CIGARETTE

WARNING: The Department of National Health and Welfare advises that danger to health increases with amount smoked

MBA/LLB

Innovation. Serendipity . . . and a unique opportunity emerges.

The Faculty of Administrative Studies and Osgoode Hall Law School at York University announce a joint programme leading to the MBA and LLB degrees. This is a four year graduate programme with a number of specializations available. It begins in September 1973 with a limited enrollment.

To discuss the programme and answer questions there will be a bag lunch information meeting at

12:00 noon Thursday, March 15
in Room 402 Administrative
Studies Building.

All invited — for further information, call
Professor D.N. Thompson at 667-2533.

