

## Book Reviews / Comptes Rendus

Helen M. Carpenter. *A Divine Discontent*, Edith Kathleen Russell: Reforming Educator. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982.

Edith Kathleen Russell, the subject of this biographical monograph, was a woman whose life and work held enormous significance for Canadian society by virtue of the influence it had on the character and substance of university-based education for the practice of nursing. The dearth of published work to date on nursing leaders has been recognized by the profession and was underscored by Professor Symons in the Report of the Commission on Canadian Studies: "There have been almost no biographical studies about outstanding members of the profession. It is regrettable that some of the leaders in Canadian nursing seem to have received more recognition in the United States, and in Britain and Western Europe, than in their own country."<sup>1</sup> The historical relevance of *A Divine Discontent* cannot be underestimated as it fills a void in our knowledge and understanding of the contributions of this important nursing leader.

The unique qualifications of the author, Dr. Helen Carpenter, to undertake this work can be found in the fact that she was first a student under Miss Russell's tutelage, then a faculty member working under her purview. Some years later following Miss Russell's retirement, Dr. Carpenter became the third Director of the School of Nursing at the University of Toronto, the School where Miss Russell had been the founding director and guiding spirit for more than 30 years.

The manuscript is written in an intensely interesting and informative style and represents an important historical contribution to knowledge of this remarkable Canadian educator, in part because the author spared no effort in her search for primary and secondary sources of information relevant to the subject including many and varied print materials found in archives in geographically dispersed areas of the country. The search for individuals who were relatives, friends and associates of Miss Russell who could provide information was exhaustive. There can be little doubt that the meticulous documentation of content will serve as important referents for scholars in years to come.

To capture the spirit of the subject of a biography is no mean feat at the best of times. To be able to do so when one has been part of the life and work of the individual may perhaps be more difficult. Carpenter's development of her subject, beginning with Miss Russell's childhood and family life, focusing on the forces within the sphere of her family and schooling which shaped her character is absorbing. Against this background, Miss Russell's rather radical ideas for the time emerge and become comprehensible. The story of the experimentation in basic nursing education conceived and presided over by Miss Russell, together

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<sup>1</sup> T.H.B. Symons, *To Know Ourselves*, The Report of the Commission on Canadian Studies, Vols. 1 & 2 (Ottawa: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 1975), page 212.

with detailed documentation of her struggle for support and financing, has received insufficient attention to date. The analysis of this fascinating woman's will to achieve the professional goals she envisioned is powerful. One begins to appreciate the political acumen she exercised in her written communications with the then Premier of Ontario, the President of the University of Toronto, and the administrators of the Rockefeller Foundation. Her success in securing a large developmental grant from the Rockefeller Foundation in 1938 at the time of the world-wide economic crisis in order to initiate the study of basic nursing education is impressive as is the even larger financial support received from that Foundation in the post-war year of 1945 for further consolidation of these efforts. Carpenter's narrative gives a detailed account of these matters and draws a picture full of realism. This is a fascinating report of the campaign for a unique form of university preparation for nursing hitherto unseen in Canada, the integrated basic degree program, a campaign carried on by this courageous, determined and inspired woman.

The setting of the stage for discussion of the initial part of Miss Russell's professional career covers the range of the social, economic and health issues of the period very well. This serves to underscore how unique for the times were the ideas that Kathleen Russell put forward and set out to implement. There are a number of references to the relationship between the nursing enterprise at the University of Toronto and the Faculty of Medicine in the early years. The development of that relationship and its strength over the years is an important matter and undoubtedly was influential and supportive in terms of the unique educational endeavour spearheaded by Miss Russell. The description of Miss Russell's beliefs concerning the quality of faculty members appointed to universities comes through clearly and these ideas are skillfully woven throughout the document. The description of residence life serves to enhance appreciation of the basis for Miss Russell's strong convictions about the responsibility of the nursing school for development of the total individual. It also serves to develop one's admiration for a university administrator with the courage to oppose the plans of senior administrators which stood in the way of the achievement of objectives believed to be important. The discussion of Miss Russell's struggle to situate the school with suitable facilities for teaching and living space is absorbing, appears to be objectively presented and reveals yet another dimension of Miss Russell's nature. The inclusion of a range of issues and situations which shed light on Miss Russell's character and personality is a strength of this monograph and the honesty and objectivity of the approach taken are commendable.

The subject of this manuscript and its content are of vital concern and importance for the nursing profession in general. The treatment is superior and the document represents an important contribution to the nursing literature. This monograph is a must for nurses who seek to learn about people and events which provide the framework for understanding the current context of professional practice and education. It will also be very meaningful to students and analysts of

higher education in Canada, in which enterprise nursing as an emerging discipline is a vital and important partner.

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James B. Davies and Glenn M. MacDonald. *Information in the Labour Market: Job-Worker Matching and Its Implications for Education in Ontario*. Toronto: for the Ontario Economic Council by the University of Toronto Press, 1984.

For some potential readers the book's title may suggest a practical handbook on matching jobs and workers, combined with a guidebook for school guidance counsellors. These readers would be disappointed. Instead, this is a book for academic economists and for bureaucrats who design education and training programs. Davies and MacDonald have developed a new theoretical model of investment in education, based on personal information accumulation rather than skill acquisition. They compare this model with the human capital and the screening models, then proceed to a concise outline of the rationale for government intervention in individual markets and an examination of education and training policies in Canada.

After a short introductory chapter, the authors devote the second chapter to an outline of the human capital and the screening/signalling models that have been used to analyze investment in education for the past several years. There is a greater emphasis on the screening model (that is, use of educational credentials to differentiate new entrants to the labour force) because the authors' objective is to show their new informational model provides an alternative explanation to signalling for the "non-human capital element of education", namely, the effects of schooling other than skill acquisition. But in order to enhance the contribution of their informational model, the authors overstate the economic sterility of signalling by concentrating on its extreme form. Indeed, they treat all of the screening, sorting, credentialling, and signalling literature under the "signalling" rubric, without further differentiation.

The third chapter is the core of the book, where the informational model is presented fully. This model assumes that workers differ in their abilities to perform various tasks or job functions, and that neither workers nor employers have good information about these abilities prior to employment. The abilities in question are not the skills that are learned through formal schooling, but rather the inherent skills and abilities that later complement acquired skills. School taught skills are measured by tests and examinations, while the latter apparently are identified