

Women urged to put emphasis on learning

A dean at Douglas College labelled it a 'sexist organization' Wednesday while speaking to 130 women attending a workshop on the changing roles of women.

The college's dean of continuing education, W.L. Day, backed up his statement by pointing out that Dr. Sheila Thompson, a keynote speaker at the workshop, is the only woman in upper-level administration at the college.

The one-day workshop was co-sponsored by Douglas College and the New Westminster YM-YWCA in an effort to provide discussion and practical information about opportunities for self-fulfillment in three areas of interest to women.

Chairman was Yvonne Cocke from the YWCA.

Mr. Day was guest speaker on the topic Education As Enrichment, Ken Crisp from Canada Manpower spoke on Women And Work and Foreen Kenmuir from the Canadian Mental Health Association discussed New Vistas For Volunteers.

Mr. Day put the emphasis on learning and education other than as a prelude to work for women.

"Learning produces enormous changes in a person's outlook," he explained, "Getting back into education makes a different person of those who do."

"Many marriages are under a lot of stress when one of the partners is learning."

Work seldom provides the self-satisfaction people assume it will, said Mr. Day.

As an example: "The difference between a burnt-out teacher and someone going like gangbusters at 65 is learning."

At Douglas College, 50 per cent of the students are part-time adult, and anyone over 19 can go back to school at Douglas even if they have not completed high school.

In the work force, Ken Crisp admitted, women are discriminated against. He noted women's wages average half those for men.

"Employers assume women work more as a luxury than as

breadwinners," he added.

Another part of the woman's problem in the working world was that they often did not present themselves in the best light when applying for a job.

"Go ahead and fight for the job," he advised. "You are as good as the man applying."

Employers are biased against women because they expect a higher rate of absenteeism and a larger turnover with them, said Mr. Crisp.

For women wishing to re-enter the workforce, he suggested that further education and volunteer work are two excellent ways.

Doreen Kenmuir substantiated this, and put out a plea for volunteers in many fields.

She said volunteer workers are needed in senior citizens' homes helping the elderly; in hospitals; at crisis centres; to set up recreation programs for kids living in apartments; and in the field of mental health.

Riverview Hospital alone uses 260 volunteers, she noted.