Professional Development in the U.K.

*By Miss M. Blakeley*

I HAVE chosen the theme of professional developments, because it seems to me that the changes that are taking place in the nursing profession, need to be reviewed continually in the line of developments in other allied professions. These developments affect all spheres of nursing, whether in hospital or in the community. As the methods in the general education of young people change, as more opportunities for further education become available, as medical skill advances, as work study improve the organisation of work, so must traditional attitudes to nursing education, nursing techniques and the nursing administration and management change.

One of the problems in assessing the value of developments, however, is that it is very difficult to get a clear definition of "nursing" though we have come a long way from the first half of the 19th century when people thought that it only required a "loving heart, the want of an object, a general disgust or incapacity for other things, to turn a woman into a good nurse."

The 1953 report "The Work of Nurses in Hospital Wards" (2) described two categories of nursing:—

Basic nursing is "the care required in the interest of the comfort and well being of the patient, for the maintenance of health, and prevention of infection, respective to the disease from which he is suffering."

Technical Nursing

Includes "all nursing tasks that are concerned with the treatment of the disease, from which the patient is suffering, and varying according to the type of ward and treatment prescribed."

Virginia Henderson in her "Basic Principles of Nursing Care, (3) has included in her range of basic nursing, the components "helping the patient with respiration", "helping the patient to communicate". So nursing is perhaps exercising certain technical skills, teaching, communicating and reorganising, and the development, separately and together in all these spheres in nursing has been considerable.

Nursing Education

The future of nursing and the services which its practitioners will give to patients and the community, depends on the professional education through which nurses are prepared. The developments in nursing education in the United Kingdom have been very rapid indeed in the last 10 to 15 years. I know you will be aware that in the United Kingdom there are different training for the separate parts of the Register, namely for general, sick children's mental and mental subnormality nursing, and that there are now different syllabuses for the two-year training in general and psychiatric nursing leading to enrollment.

The training for the Roll, is now as comprehensive as that for the Register, and every State-enrolled Nurse who has followed the 1964 syllabus will have covered the same basic material as the Registered Nurse, though she will not have learned in so much detail, nor will she be expected to take the same responsibility as the Registered Nurse. However, the standard of her nursing should be in no way inferior, she would, for example, be expected to exercise the same care in bathing and feeding the patient as the Registered Nurse.

Basic nursing education has been linked with university education for some time, but it is important to remember that in the United Kingdom that are only two or three courses for nurses which lead to degrees, and only one course leading to a Degree in Nursing. Most of the university-linked courses offer diplomas usually in one of the social science in community nursing. The development of university or in community nursing is a natural extension of the view held by many people, that basic nursing should include instruction and experience in the care of the patient in the community as well as in hospital. We believe community linked courses will help develop the nurse's understanding of the effect of the patient's environment on his illness; and, with the development of the concept of the district general hospital in the United Kingdom, will help with what would seem to be a natural corollary to the health services—the interchange of nursing staff between hospital and community."

The course at Manchester University leading to a Degree in Nursing, has evolved from a diploma course run by the University in community nursing. The Ren of the United Kingdom has not, however, decided, as has the American Nursing Association, on a policy of educating Registered Nurses by means of university courses, because it believes that the traditional concept, of training the nurses in hospitals and in the community—that is in the place where the patient is—is still the best way of preparing those who will care for the sick, at home or in hospital, and who will advise on health care in the community including the place of work.

In addition to preparing nurses on a basic level it is also necessary to prepare qualified nurses for further responsibilities in nursing administration and management, in teaching, and in specialized therapeutic work. The teachers of students and pupil nurses, of health visitors and home nurses, have themselves to learn how to teach, and courses of preparation for these tutors are available in conjunction with universities and colleges of further education on both

*Miss Mary Blakeley who is the Principal Nursing Advisor of Unilever Limited is also the President of the Royal College of Nursing.*

NOVEMBER 1970, VOL. LXI, NO. 11

339