

The Challenge of These Times

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WHAT exciting days these are in which to be alive. All around us in every part of India change is taking place with great speed. Some of these changes are good and thrill us with national pride, others distress us and fill us with regret. Our own special field of nursing is influenced like all the rest, by changes taking place around it, and within it. Upon the nurses of India, especially upon the members of TNAI, our great national Nursing Association, rests the responsibility to guard and carry forward the best traditions of the past, and to guide and direct the professional development of today. Every nurse in India contributes to the standard of nursing which exists, and the image of a nurse the public holds. It is always easy to break down and destroy, but difficult to create and build up professional standards. Wise leadership and loyal thoughtful followers are essential. We need every nurse in the country as an active member of our professional association if we are to fully meet the challenge of today, and we need every member to be a nurse who observes carefully and thinks clearly.

One day in discussing a difficult situation with a fellow nurse, the possibility of getting help from other nurses was being considered. Three nurses were suggested. Each represented a different group. They were sized up in this way. No. 1 thinks with facts, No. 2 thinks with feelings and No. 3 does not think at all. How well we all know these groups, although most nurses move around and are in one group part

of the time and part of the time in another. Group 3 is given to lapses into thoughtless chatter, some of it is true and some of it mis-informed or mis-construed. They act without consideration of consequences and often are their own worst enemies, as well as a menace to the staff to which they belong, and the profession as a whole. Still they are never aware that they are to blame for many problems.

Then the group of nurses who think with feelings. They live on the principle that "Nothing is either true or false but thinking makes it so." They believe in intuition and are most positive in their statements but can back nothing up with facts. The door is wide open for prejudice and false judgements. This group has many good nurses in it, but they would be much better nurses if they would develop that healthy balance of, an active mind, a skilful healthy body, and spirit of loving service, so essential to a professional nurse.

The nurses who think using facts are the ones on which the profession must depend. No mature sound judgements can be made without facts. If the facts are not correct, or if only part of the facts are considered, or if the purpose for

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collecting the facts was to prove a point, not to get at the basic truth, the resulting judgements will not be sound. Accurate observation, the ability to think and reason, the habit of critical appraisal, have been part of our nursing education. Every nurse who is eager to do her part to help build up our profession must help improve nursing in the place where she is working, on her own ward, or in her own department. She must have her eyes open for problems that need to be solved. She must have a questioning mind that has led to look for factual findings in a scientific way, and tackle the problems she meets. She must be a nurse that leads on to better nursing, not one who "lets well enough alone". She must be one who creates, not just a routine follower of routine, where the routine is not satisfactory. She must be a good nurse of tomorrow, not the nurse of yesterday letting the complicated problems of today pass without adjusting to the changes time has brought.

Research belongs to those especially prepared to do it. The training ground is usually in the University and the first projects are undertaken on the Masters' or Doctorate level. But approaching the Study of our problems in a scientific method is an opportunity open to all of us. "ACTION RESEARCH", or the study by a group of its own situation in order to improve its own work, is a challenge to all. It is to help nurses throughout the country to study their own problems and to improve nursing service and nursing education that the Research Committee has asked the Editor of the *Journal* to print some of the addresses that have been given in the workshops on nursing research which have been held at the College of Nursing, New Delhi. We believe these will be of interest to our readers. We hope that they will stimulate your understanding of nursing studies others are doing, and encourage you to take part in such studies.

May I remind you in closing of the seven elements of scientific thinking and sixteen safe-guards, quoted by Dr. Amy Francis Brown
(Contd. on page 139)