News and notes

REDUCED TRAINING PERIOD FOR MENTAL NURSES IN SCOTLAND

Since February 18th in Scotland the period of training for State Registration in mental nursing has been reduced to eighteen months instead of two years for those who are already Registered General Nurses. After reviewing the 18-month experimental schemes, the General Nursing Council for Scotland decided that if the training is efficiently organised it is possible for general trained nurses to receive an adequate training and fulfil the Council's requirements for registration in this shortened period.

W.H.O. EXAMINES SUICIDE LEVELS

In April the World Health Organisation published a statistical study called Epidemiological and Vital Statistics Report, Vol. 15, No. 1, 1962, which showed that from 1954 to 1959 in the most industrialised countries of the world, suicide emerged as the tenth leading cause of death in 1958 and 1959 in Canada, the U.S.A., Norway and Australia. In Denmark, Sweden and Switzerland it is consistently listed as the sixth leading cause of death from 1954 to 1959. In Germany and Finland it has remained at seventh place and in France at eighth. It was the tenth leading cause of death in England and Wales from 1954 to 1959 but was not among the first ten causes of fatality in the Netherlands, Scotland or Northern Ireland.

WORLD SHORTAGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS

The World Health Organisation reports that there is a world shortage of psychiatrists, with no immediate solution in sight. The WHO points out that even the countries best provided with physicians (approximately 1,000 doctors including 50 psychiatrists per 1,000,000 inhabitants) require five to ten times as many psychiatrists in order to devote only one hour per month to each person in need of psychiatric treatment. These figures are based on the generally accepted assumption that 5% to 10% of the population in economically developed countries requires psychiatric aid.

Mental Health in Public Health Planning was the theme of technical discussions held simultaneously with the 15th World Health Assembly which took place in Geneva during May.

CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

A Report published by the Canadian Mental Health Association in February spotlights the close consideration given by psychiatrists during a four-day meeting in Ottawa to the Canadian Mental Health Association's report on Mental Health Services. The meeting was sponsored by the Canadian Psychiatric Association.

The recommendations discussed were that nursing services should be unified; that all activities programmes should be under the occupational therapist; the integration of therapeutic services in the community; that mental health services should be administratively and financially decentralised; and the functions and meaning of psychotherapy.

The report of the CMHA Committee on Health Services is the result of a six-year study by a group of psychiatrists from all parts of Canada, under the chairmanship of Dr. James D. Tyhurst, University of British Columbia. This treatise is the first study in depth in Canada on the underlying principles of organization and administration of psychiatric services across the nation.