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Editorial.

THE BOARD OF TRADE DECISION.

Long expected, and eagerly awaited, the decision of the Board of Trade in relation to the proposed "Incorporated Society for Promoting the Higher Education and Training of Nurses" has now, as we announced last week, been given, and the nurses of the United Kingdom, and the signatories to the Memorandum, are both to be congratulated on the verdict. The former because their strong and united action has resulted in the recognition of the justice of their views, and the latter because, realising the depth and extent of the opposition expressed, they have withdrawn from an untenable position. The lesson of the episode, now presumably closed, has been the supreme importance of the united action of a class, when they wish to oppose or enforce legislation. Another lesson has been that a few isolated members of the nursing profession cannot impose upon the rank and file of the profession any scheme which vitally affects them without being in touch with them and enjoying their entire confidence. No one rules by divine right in these spacious times.

The fact that the scheme proposed should have been drawn up behind closed doors, only rumours in regard to it having been allowed to reach the outer world, was, in itself, sufficient to arouse doubt in an unprejudiced mind as to the nature of the proposals which it embodied, when the carefully-guarded secret at length leaked out. And, as everyone now knows, the perusal of the document which, cut and dried, was launched upon an astonished public, amply justified the doubt, for its provisions were found to be so dangerous to the personal liberties of nurses that with one accord they rose in revolt.

That the signatories evoked this pernicious scheme themselves we do not believe; indeed, Mr. Cosmo Bonsor, speaking in its defence at the Board of Trade hearing, made pathetic reference to the trained ladies by whom they

had been approached and asked to undertake the formation of a company. At the same time, he chivalrously refused to divulge who formed the will-of-the-wisp which had led them into the morass, holding, no doubt, that when the signatories put their names to this document they accepted full responsibility for its contents.

In congratulating trained nurses on the danger which, by their determined resistance, they have escaped, we must not omit to mention the invaluable support they received from the medical profession, honoured members of which attended in force before the Board of Trade to protest against the suggested scheme, and to prove its futility. By so doing, they have placed nurses under an obligation which they are not slow to recognise, and which, when the history of the struggle for nursing organisation in this country comes to be written, must be recorded to their credit.

Referring to the application of the "Incorporated Society for Promoting the Higher Education and Training of Nurses" to be registered as a company, the *Midland Medical Journal*, the organ of the Birmingham and District General Medical Practitioners' Union, says "few subjects have aroused more indignation and organised opposition," and again, referring to the hearing by the Board of Trade, we read: "The various speakers made out a very strong case. It was proved conclusively that the proposed scheme was utterly unsound and objectionable, and the Board of Trade was given clearly to understand that even if they should be satisfied with the Registration of Nurses by a private co-operation managed by a few private gentlemen who in the first instance nominated themselves, the nurses themselves would not be satisfied. Further, the present scheme would never be accepted by Scotland, Ireland, or Wales, and therefore a plurality of Registers would have to be conceded, which would only serve to produce confusion worse confounded in the mind of a bewildered public."

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