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## Editorial.

### LEGISLATIVE ENACTMENT.

Last week we had the pleasure of announcing that the Executive Committee of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses had been authorised to draft a Bill with this object. It now behoves all members of this Society—and, indeed, all nurses—to consider the points which they believe should be incorporated in such a Bill. "In the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom," and so the resolution authorising the drafting of the Bill provides that it is to be submitted to hospital committees, medical and nursing bodies and political societies, "after approval by the members of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses."

The principle that, before any Bill is sent out for criticism by bodies interested in the training and employment of nurses, it should be endorsed by graduate nurses themselves is the right one. They are the persons whom such a Bill will affect, and they should, therefore, have a primary voice in framing the constitution under which they will have to work. True, there are other interests to be considered. There are, for instance, those of the sick, who, as the helpless wards of the State, are entitled to its protection. The promoters of the Registration movement claim that by its means the sick will be afforded this protection, for then, for the first time, they will be provided with a list of persons who are guaranteed by the State as competent as trained nurses. Thus the public will not be at the mercy of quack nurses, as they largely are at present. If they employ them they will do so with their eyes open.

Besides the graduate nurses, it has been rightly considered desirable to consult hospital committees, medical and nursing bodies, and political societies in regard to the Bill to be introduced into the House of Commons.

Hospital committees have a stake in the question, not because they employ a large

number of graduate nurses—for the great proportion of their nursing staffs are pupils in training, who would not come under the jurisdiction of the Act—but because the hospitals which they control afford opportunities for the practical education of nurses. It has, therefore, been considered courteous to invite their consideration of the Bill.

Again, the medical profession is concerned in the Bill, not—to be strictly accurate—because medical practitioners are, as is frequently alleged, the employers of nurses, but because they prescribe the professional treatment carried out by nurses, and it is of the highest importance to them that the women who carry out their directions should be competent and trustworthy. The employer of the nurse, however, is the person who pays for her services. In the case of the medical attendant and of the nurse alike, the employer is the public.

Nursing bodies can, of course, bring practical experience to bear upon the details of the Bill which cannot be afforded in any other way.

Lastly, the advice of political bodies is of importance, as they can give important assistance in regard to avoiding the pitfalls which beset a Bill when once it is launched on its course.

Our advice, therefore, to the members of the State Registration Society is to give the draft Bill, when it is submitted to them, their most careful consideration. It is no light task to which they have set their hands. In the Bill will be incorporated the principles governing their profession, and we must regard it as a sacred duty both to our contemporaries and to our successors to see that those principles which we hold essential are duly safeguarded. In conclusion, we commend to consideration the dictum of Miss Lavinia Dock, "There is no greater tactical mistake than timidity," and the pronouncement of the International Congress of Nurses at Buffalo, "It is the DUTY of the nursing profession of every country to work for suitable legislative enactment regulating the education of nurses, and protecting the interests of the public."

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