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Editorial.

THE PRINCIPLE OF REGISTRATION.

On Monday, July 6th, the second reading of the Nurses' Registration Bill, moved by Lord Ampthill in the House of Lords, was carried unanimously, the principle of registration being accepted without a division, and the details of the Bill left for discussion in Committee. The House of Lords has thus decidedly, and unmistakably, shown that it realises that the public are entitled to be able to discriminate between trained and untrained nurses, and that those nurses who have thoroughly qualified themselves for their work are entitled to ask that they, as skilled workers, should be distinguished from the unskilled.

It is now twenty years since a few Matrons, animated by a sense of the responsibilities which they owed to the public, and to the members of the Nursing Profession, began the campaign for the establishment of standards of nursing education, followed by the subsequent registration by the State of those who had attained them. Like all pioneer workers they have passed through periods of discouragement as well as encouragement, but throughout these years they have seen the support accorded to the movement steadily gather in force; they have seen their suggestion adopted, and Registration laws placed on the Statute Books of various British Colonies, of other European countries, and of sixteen of the United States of America. On Monday, however, they had the intense gratification—for many of these pioneers were in the House of Lords—of seeing the first definite steps towards legislation for trained nurses taken by Parliament in this country, by the second reading of the Nurses' Registration Bill. And the fact that the principle was accepted,

both on the Government side and by the Opposition without any question, proves that when the case for the registration of nurses is considered by a tribunal accustomed to weigh arguments dispassionately and to sift them thoroughly, it passes triumphantly through this searching test.

In Committee, the details of the Bill will be discussed. The main points on which Lord Ampthill laid emphasis in his masterly presentation of the case were that, as stated in the Preamble to the Bill, "it is expedient that persons requiring nursing assistance should be enabled to distinguish qualified from unqualified nurses," and that to this end the Bill provided for the establishment of a General Council of Nursing Education and Registration of the United Kingdom, which will stand in the same relation to the nursing profession as the General Medical Council at present stands to the medical profession.

Lord Ampthill also showed that the public, under the legislation proposed in the Bill, would have perfect liberty of contract to employ any person they chose in a nursing capacity, but that the title of "Registered Nurse" would be limited to those who had attained a definite status.

At the late hour at which the Bill came on it was impossible that it should be considered in greater detail, but the fact remains that it has passed its second reading in the House of Lords and that it has now stepped into the arena of practical politics. A real step has been taken towards the legislation which nurses so earnestly desire. To Lord Ampthill the sincere thanks of trained nurses are due both for espousing their cause, which is the cause of the public, and for the able way in which he presented the case. They could wish for no better advocate.

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