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Editorial.

OUR PRESENT DUTY.

The second reading of the Nurses' Registration Bill in the House of Lords last week without a division, demonstrated unmistakably that the Upper House accepts the principle, which trained nurses have urged for so many years, that persons requiring nursing assistance should be enabled to distinguish qualified from unqualified nurses.

The Bill has thus been placed in the arena of practical politics, and no more striking proof could be afforded of this than the lively interest aroused as to its details. The officials of the State Registration Society have been kept busy explaining points as to its provisions, and answering the questions of many persons interested in nursing matters who have suddenly become aware that we are within measurable distance of nursing legislation, and who desire to be informed how their own special interests will be affected.

At all points expert knowledge is required, and those who have framed the Bill realise that the careful consideration given to its provisions, with the object of being prepared with a really comprehensive measure was time well spent, as they are now able to give good reasons for the principles incorporated in the Bill.

As our readers are aware the House of Lords in committing themselves to the principle of the State Registration of Nurses on July 6th were unable at the late hour at which it came on for consideration to discuss its provisions. It was agreed to reserve this for the Committee Stage, and on the afternoon of Tuesday, July 21st, the House of Lords will once more consider the Bill. We must therefore not relax our

efforts, but endeavour to secure the inclusion in the Bill of those principles which we believe to be necessary in the best interests of the sick. Our attitude now must be one both of conciliation and of courage. Conciliation where essential principles are not at stake, and courage to stand firm on those points which we believe to be of vital importance.

The question before the country at present is not whether the State Registration of Trained Nurses is desirable. Decisive replies have been given on that score by the unanimous recommendation of the Select Committee of the House of Commons in favour of such Registration, and the recent acceptance of the principle by the House of Lords without a division.

The important thing now is to secure the best Bill possible, and we urge all matrons and nurses who have hitherto withheld their active support from the movement to come forward at the present crisis and concentrate their energies on securing a really useful measure.

On this generation of nurses is placed the responsibility of influencing legislation for those who come after them. We must accept the trust, realising that to the sick, and to the nurses of the future who will be affected by the Act, the provisions now adopted are of supreme importance.

Next summer the International Council of Nurses meets in London. By that time our Bill will we hope have made good progress, we are even hopeful that it may have safely escaped the many pitfalls that beset a Bill in its passage through Parliament, and that we shall be able to meet our colleagues from Germany, the United States, New Zealand, and other countries sharing with them the honourable title of Registered Nurse.

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