

THE PRESENT POSITION OF NURSING LEGISLATION.

In accordance with our custom we are publishing as full a report as possible of the debate which took place on May 27th in the House of Lords on the motion to give a Second Reading to the College of Nursing, Ltd., Bill, so that our readers will have those proceedings on record for future reference. We gladly take this opportunity to tender to Lord Amptill, the Earl of Mayo, the Marquess of Dufferin, and Earl Russell the most grateful thanks of independent trained nurses all over the United Kingdom for their strong and statesmanlike speeches against the Bill, and for the earnest sympathy which they displayed for the welfare of nurses.

The present position is very curious. A Bill for the Registration of Nurses, which the House of Lords debated at length in 1908, and passed without one division, is now, in substantially the same form, before the House of Commons; has been read a second time by that House; has passed through a Standing Committee, with various amendments moved by the Government; and now only awaits its Report Stage and Third Reading before it goes to the House of Lords. Another Bill, also ostensibly for the Registration of Nurses, promoted by the College of Nursing—a body which only came into existence three years ago, and most of the Directors of which have for many years strenuously opposed the Registration movement—was not introduced into the House of Commons, as it should have been, and where it could have been discussed with the first-named Bill, but has been introduced into the House of Lords. Despite the fact their Lordships' original Bill will soon be before them, they have given the entirely new measure a Second Reading. It must now face criticism and discussion of its details in Committee of that House. The great outstanding fact which nurses must realise is that every speaker in the House of Lords, whether for or against this Bill, with the solitary exception of Lord Knutsford, expressed himself as warmly in favour of the principle of Registration of Nurses, and there is no doubt that most of the noble lords who voted in its favour believed that the Bill before them was designed for that object; while those who voted against the Bill had studied it and clearly perceived its real design. The one, but very great, advantage of the discussion in the House of Lords is therefore that it strongly emphasized and corroborated the views expressed two

months ago in the House of Commons—that all political parties are strongly in favour of the State Registration of Nurses, and determined to pass it into law as soon as possible. And so the arduous work of this JOURNAL for many years has, in promoting the State Registration of Nurses, nearly reached its end, and its full fruition in an Act of Parliament is at last definitely within sight.

NURSES' REGISTRATION IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

VISCOUNT GOSCHEN MOVES THE SECOND READING OF THE COLLEGE OF NURSING REGISTRATION BILL, MAY 27TH.

The Order of the Day for the Second Reading having been read, Viscount Goschen moved the Second Reading of the College Bill. The following are the salient points of his speech:—

"My Lords, in moving the Second Reading of this Bill for the registration and training of nurses, I do not think I need say much with regard to the general principle of registration, because that was accepted by your Lordships in this House on the passing of the Registration Bill brought forward by Lord Amptill, and passed without a division. There is also a Bill before another place which has passed its Second Reading and has gone to a Standing Committee.

"Among the great schemes of reconstruction at the present moment there is none, I suppose, more important than that dealing with the health of the people, a Bill for which has lately been passed by your Lordships' House. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board in another place said that the success of the new Ministry of Health set up under that Bill would depend very largely upon the instruments by which it was carried out. One of the instruments for carrying out that Bill is the nursing profession. I venture to think that the fact that they are doing so much public work is another argument in favour of their registration, but such a step, I think, ought to be part of the big scheme which is being set up by the Government at the present moment to deal with the health of the country. There are two methods by which a system of registration can be set up. Firstly, there is the method by which sanction for registration can be asked for and an assurance given that when once registration is promoted the work will be carried on. There is a second method, which is, in the first place, to consider the problem of registration, to have some experience of the difficulties, to carry on some experimental work with regard to registration, and then to obtain the sanction of Parliament for a Registration Bill. It is in accordance with the second of those methods that this Bill is introduced.

"The College of Nursing, which is promoting this Bill, has already compiled a Register of some

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