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*IMPORTANT NOTICE.*—Those of our subscribers who wish to notify change of address must send such notification in order that it may reach the publishers NOT LATER than the Monday morning before publishing, otherwise the change cannot be made.

### EDITORIAL.

#### THE LICENCE OF THE BOARD OF TRADE.

WE showed, last week, in consequence of the desire expressed by many correspondents, what was the present position of the Royal British Nurses' Association, why it had applied to the Board of Trade for a licence, and how it had been refused. We learn from our contemporary, the *Lancet*, whose remarks we reproduce—as we are always glad to do—in another column, that the Board of Trade has at last consented to hear the case of the Association. It is a strange and unconstitutional innovation thus to hear a petitioner after judgment has been given against him, without his case having been heard at all. And we

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imagine that it is a new departure which Sir Michael Hicks-Beach will have some considerable difficulty in persuading his fellow-countrymen to accept either as just or justifiable.

No details have yet transpired as to when this deputation is to be received, but we presume it is a courteous attempt upon the part of the Association to show the President of the Board of Trade what an utterly untenable position he has been led to assume. Perhaps also political considerations may have had some weight in the adoption of this course. With all respect to the judgment of the Association, we venture to express our own opinions as to the attitude which should be adopted at this crisis, because we, on the one hand, have again and again proved our loyal support to the Association; and, on the other hand, we enjoy the proverbial advantages of independent onlookers at the present game. We are led to believe, from various items of information, that the Board of Trade has made its decision on the question at issue simply and solely in consequence of private and personal and probably political pressure put upon its President. We are the more strongly inclined to this conviction, because upon no other ground can the injustice of the decision be explained. Let us explain our meaning. The 23rd section of the Companies' Act of 1867 is as follows:—

"Where any Association is about to be formed under the Principal Act (1862), as a Limited Company, if it proves to the Board of Trade that it is formed for the purpose of promoting Commerce, Art, Science, Religion, Charity, or any other useful object, and that it is the intention of

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