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EDITORIAL.

A NATIONAL DUTY.

"Then none were for a Party
But all were for the State."

In a time of National emergency such as that which we have just experienced—are experiencing—it is the duty and the instinct of patriotic persons to sink political and personal differences in the pursuit of their public duty. Thus it was that when faced by the present financial crisis, and with the splendid lead given by His Majesty the King, the Conservative and Liberal Leaders in the House of Commons resolved to support the Prime Minister in forming a National Government, and the Prime Minister himself, while admitting that he had no Labour credentials for what he was doing, proclaimed "My credentials are those of National Duty as I conceive it, and I obey it irrespective of consequences."

The National Call at the present time is one to economy and retrenchment as surely as that in 1914 was a National Call to Arms, and it behoves each one of us to support the Government which has taken office for the one difficult object of balancing the Budget in whatever economies they may see necessary to effect, and in what fresh obligations they may see fit to impose.

As members of a great Profession numbering some 70,000 Registered Nurses, it is our responsibility both by precept and example to play our part with courage.

There is probably no section of the community, except the sacred ministry in whom the public repose greater confidence, and if those with whom they come in contact are impressed by a certain soberness of their demeanour that they realize the gravity of their country's position, and yet maintain a resolute and confident outlook, the distressed may be steadied and comforted, and the heedless and reckless may pause awhile to ponder on the necessity for sacrifice.

There is no cause for panic. The best brains in all political parties are hard at work devising means to enable us to balance our national income and expenditure, but there is need for courage, for facing the crisis gallantly, for regulating expenditure carefully, and for sternly curtailing extravagance, as both in bad taste and unpatriotic.

And this should lead us, as nurses, to heart-searchings as to our own particular departments, the administration and economical use of public and private property, in regard to which few of us if we are honest with ourselves can wholly exempt ourselves from blame. Let us set our own house in order, and strive to decrease

expenditure, whether in hospitals, institutions or private families in which we are employed, where the expenses of illness, necessarily heavy, often impose acute financial anxiety on the heads of families, in addition to that caused by the illnesses of those dear to them.

So we will strive to take up our share of our country's burden, grateful that public confidence has been steadied, the leaders of the different political parties brought to act together, and a policy defined, largely owing to the prompt initiative of His Majesty the King, who realizing that his presence in London would be of service to the State, took the long journey south from Balmoral where he had just arrived, and after days of anxious consultation with the heads of the various political parties, individually and collectively, returned, as he came, to his Scottish home, with simple Royal dignity, with the knowledge that this action has been a beneficent influence for good on the course of public events, and we venture to hope also with the consciousness that nothing could more greatly strengthen the bonds of affection between him and his people than this latest example of His Majesty's high sense of devotion to duty, and his interpretation of his Coronation Oath. Well may the Nation thank God for it and acclaim "God Save the King."

As a sequence to the political crisis, when the National Government has performed its duty, is the probability of a General Election in the near future. Here again Registered Nurses have a great responsibility. It is only recently that this has been placed upon them; to record a vote may seem at first sight a simple matter, but great issues will be involved, and history influenced by the result of the forthcoming Election. It is a duty we owe to the State to understand what those issues are and then record our votes with a deep sense of responsibility. To do so lightly or thoughtlessly would be to prove ourselves unworthy of the privilege won for us at the price of suffering, imprisonment, and even death by those who have gone before. To endeavour to shirk responsibility by abstaining from voting would be the act of a coward. Therefore in the weeks or months which may elapse before the Election let us inform ourselves as best we may, and then in the light of the knowledge we acquire vote as conscience dictates.

THE BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES.

The History of Nursing Dinner.

Owing to the political situation the Council of the British College of Nurses, which meets on September 19th, will consider the advisability of holding a Public Dinner, as arranged, on October 26th. It may be that it will decide to defer the date of this function.

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