

Regulations for the Staff of Nursing Sisters in the Royal Naval Hospitals.

As new Regulations are under consideration for the Nursing Sisters in the Navy, it will be of interest to compare them with those now in force, and also with the recommendations embodied in the Memorandum presented to the Admiralty by the Matrons' Council.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT.

Under the old Regulations candidates were required to produce "certificates, or other satisfactory evidence, of training at a large Civil Hospital in the United Kingdom." They must now produce "certificates of training for at least three years at a large Civil Hospital in the United Kingdom." On this point the recommendation made by the Matrons' Council was that "all female nursing officers should be certificated graduates of nursing schools of hospitals which have a three years' term of training.

LIMIT OF AGE.

A Head Sister now must not continue in the Service after the age of fifty-five, nor a Nursing Sister after fifty. Formerly the limit of age was sixty. The opinion expressed by the Matrons' Council was that "the retiring age of Sisters should not be more than fifty-five.

SALARIES.

The salaries of Head and Nursing Sisters are as under: Those of Head Sisters range from £40 to £160, and of Nursing Sisters from £30 to £50. The Matrons' Council suggested that there should be two grades of Nursing Sisters, Senior and Junior, and that "in order to obtain the services of the most efficient nurses, the salaries of Senior Sisters should be considerably raised."

ELIGIBILITY FOR PENSION.

Originally, the clause with regard to pensions was, "The ladies shall be eligible for pensions." Under present regulations a Head Sister or Nursing Sister is eligible to retire on pension after ten years' service, if rendered unfit for hospital duty through disease or injury. The pension is calculated upon the salary of the Sister, the rate being 30 per cent. of her salary for the preceding year after ten years' service, rising 2 per cent. of the salary for each additional year's service to a maximum of 70 per cent. of her salary for the year preceding the grant of the pension. The Matrons' Council recommendation on this point was that "more liberal pensions than at present should be given."

QUARTERS.

The Matrons' Council also suggested that "comfortable board and lodging should be provided for

the Sisters when off duty, and suitable arrangements be made for their comfort."

Under present regulations:

Furnished apartments will be provided for the staff. These will include a mess room, reading room, kitchen, and offices; a sitting-room and bedroom for the Head Sister; and a separate bedroom for each Nursing Sister.

Fuel and lights are provided.

The mess, which it is obligatory on all members of the staff to join, is furnished with the necessary requisites of plate, linen, glass, etc., and the mess accounts are audited quarterly.

The Head Sister is President of the mess, and is charged with the duty of maintaining due order and regularity, as also with the general duty of causing the rules and regulations of the Hospital to be strictly adhered to in the quarters.

GENERAL DUTIES OF HEAD SISTER.

The duties of the Head Sister under the original regulations were not defined. Under those at present in force, in addition to the nursing of her own cases and charge of her own wards, she is to exercise general control and supervision over the Nursing Sisters, visiting the wards where they are employed at any time she may think proper. She is also to allot the duties of the Nursing Sisters as may be considered necessary by the Medical Officers in charge, and to see that medical directions for the treatment of patients are carried out by the Nursing Sisters. She is also under the direction of the Medical Officers in charge of wards to arrange the detail of night duties for the Nursing Sisters and for the Sick-Berth Staff under instruction.

In the opinion of the Matrons' Council, the Head Sister should have full authority over the Female Nursing Staff, and should be directly responsible to a Nursing Department at the Admiralty for their discipline and efficiency. The duties of the Head Sister in each Hospital should be to act as Matron and Superintendent of Nursing to supervise the Domestic Department, to maintain discipline, and to instruct the Sick Berths Attendants in the theory of practical nursing.

It is to be regretted that the Head Sister is required to have charge of wards and personally to nurse cases in these. She cannot combine this duty with efficient general superintendence.

GENERAL DUTIES OF NURSING SISTERS.

Nursing Sisters receive their instructions from the Medical Officer in charge of the wards to which they are attached. The Medical Officer also determines as he may judge fit the hours on and off duty of the Nursing Sisters. When possible they are allowed two hours daily for recreation.

The Medical Officers should, of course, be supreme with regard to the treatment of the sick, but it is a

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