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EDITORIAL.

THE ROYAL NAVAL NURSING SERVICE.

On March 6th, 1900, a deputation from the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland was received at the Admiralty by Mr. Austen Chamberlain on behalf of the First Lord, and it is interesting to compare the views then expressed in a memorandum presented by its President, the late Miss Isla Stewart, with the recommendations of the committee appointed to enquire into the Naval Medical Service, which have been approved by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, which we publish in another column.

The Matrons' Council recommended that, in addition to the Head Sisters, there should be two grades of Nursing Sisters, Senior and Junior; that the Senior Sisters should not have charge of more than 50 beds; that reports of the work of the Junior Sisters should be forwarded by the Head Sister to the Nursing Department of the Admiralty, and that promotion to vacancies as Senior Sisters should rest on the recommendation of the Inspector-General and the Head Sister.

The new regulations provide for the establishment of an intermediate rank between Head Sister and Nursing Sister, with the title of "Superintending Sister." The Superintending Sisters are to hold the appointments of Senior Sisters in certain Naval Hospitals. Promotion is to be by selection from the list of Nursing Sisters, and Head Sisters to be promoted from the lists of Superintending Sisters and Nursing Sisters. The Staff of Nursing Sisters at the Home Hospitals is to be augmented.

The Matrons' Council suggested that in order to obtain the services of the most

efficient nurses the salaries of Senior Sisters should be considerably raised, and that more liberal pensions should be given.

The salaries of Nursing Sisters at that time began at £30 and rose to £50. Under the new regulations their salaries on entry will be £40, rising to £65. The salaries of the Superintending Sisters will begin at £70 and rise to £100, and those of Head Sisters are also increased. We note also that pensions are included in the details in which improvements have been made.

With regard to the Sick Berth Attendants the Matrons' Council expressed the opinion that the training of the men should last for not less than three years, during which time they should receive systematic instruction, and that upon satisfactorily passing their final examination they should be certificated as qualified male nurses, when they would be eligible for posts of greater responsibility.

The new regulations provide that the course of training for Probationary Sick Berth Attendants shall be extended from six to twelve months, that the examinations for all grades shall be standardized, and carried out at the three Home Hospitals, with the exception that the examination for second Sick Berth Steward may also be held at Malta Hospital, and a certificate is to be given at the end of the first three years' service.

It will therefore be seen that many of the reforms suggested by the Matrons' Council have been adopted. We regret, however, that there is no suggestion of the establishment of a Nursing Department at the Admiralty, in affiliation with the Medical Department, and superintended by a fully-trained and experienced administrative nursing officer. This was proposed by the Matrons' Council.

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