

WOMEN'S WAR WORK IN FRANCE

POSTS TO BE FILLED BEHIND THE LINES.

It is now officially announced that women are to be employed to a greater extent with the Armies in France, and the following summary of terms and conditions of service has been issued:—

PERIOD OF ENGAGEMENT.

For 12 months, subject to termination earlier at the discretion of the Army Council upon one month's notice, except for misconduct or incompetence, when one week's notice will be given. The engagement may be renewed by mutual consent at the termination of the first period.

A bonus of £3 will be paid to each woman, irrespective of grade, on renewal of the agreement for a second period.

CLASSES OF EMPLOYMENT.

There are five main categories of employment, viz:—

- (a) Clerical, typist, shorthand-typist.
- (b) Cooks, waitresses, and domestic staff.
- (c) Motor transport service.
- (d) Storehouse women, checkers, and unskilled labour.
- (e) Telephone and postal services, and
- (f) Certain other miscellaneous services.

RATES OF PAY.

- (a) Ordinary clerical work and typists:—25s. to 77s. per week, according to efficiency.

Clerks employed on higher clerical and supervisory duties:—25s. to 32s. per week, according to efficiency.

Shorthand-typists:—25s. to 32s. per week, according to efficiency.

The above rates of pay cover 47 working hours per week, after which overtime will be paid at the rate of 7d. per hour for ordinary clerks and 8d. per hour for clerks employed on higher work and shorthand-typists.

- (b) Head cooks and waitresses:—£40 per annum.

Cooks, waitresses, and housemaids:—£28 per annum, with free board and lodging, together with 6d. per week for personal washing.

- (c) Superintendents, 1st class:—52s. 6d. per week.

Superintendents, 2nd class:—46s. per week.

Head drivers:—40s. per week.

Qualified driver mechanics:—38s. per week.

Washers:—20s. per week.

The above weekly rates include Sunday work when necessary, but if employed on Sunday a day's rest in lieu will be given.

In addition, overtime will be allowed, except to superintendents, at the rate of 5d. per hour after 8½ working hours per day.

- (d) Storehouse women and unskilled labour:—

25s. per week. Extra pay up to 2s. per week where special aptitude is required.

Leading hands:—25s. per week.

Checkers:—22s. to 24s. per week.

Assistant forewomen:—24s. per week.

Forewomen:—24s. to 30s. per week, according to number of staff supervised.

The above rates cover 48 working hours per week. Overtime, at time and a quarter for the first two hours per day; thereafter, and on Sundays, time and a half.

- (e) Telephone and postal services:—

Rates of pay are under consideration by the Postmaster-General and will be announced later.

- (f) Miscellaneous services:—

Special rates of pay according to nature of employment, with a minimum of 20s. per week.

GENERAL CONDITIONS.

No woman under 20 or over 40 years of age will be eligible for employment.

A short form of agreement will be entered into.

A medical examination by a woman doctor will be necessary.

The period of preparation in England will include elementary instruction in hygiene and discipline.

Free conveyance to and from France on appointment and termination of engagement will be provided.

A fortnight's leave will be given during each year's service.

An allowance of £4 will be paid to provide uniform at the beginning of service, with a further grant of £1 at the end of six months. Similar grants will be made for the second year's service. Slightly different grants will be made in the case of the Motor Transport Section.

In all cases other than (b)—cooks, waitresses, and domestic staff; (d) storehouse women and unskilled labour; and (f) miscellaneous services—a deduction not exceeding 14s. per week will be made to cover cost of board and lodging, and washing on a regulated scale, which will be provided by the military authorities. In the case of (d) storehouse women and unskilled labour, and (f) miscellaneous services, when the pay is less than 27s. per week, the deduction will not in any case exceed 15s. a week.

The women will be accommodated, whilst in France, in hostels under the care and supervision of lady superintendents.

The above applies to France only. It must be understood that enrolment for service includes service at home as well as in France. Those who have a preference should declare it. Where preference for France is declared it will be satisfied if possible, and service in France may ultimately follow service begun at home. The conditions of service of the various classes of women workers at home will remain as at present.

CIVILIANS IN KHAKI.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE NEW CORPS.

The above terms and conditions of service were stated yesterday by Mrs. Tennant and Miss Markham, the director and assistant director of Women's Service, not to be an appeal for workers, as until the return of the Commission—Colonel Leigh-Wood, Mrs. Chalmers-Watson, M.D., and Mrs. Gwynn Vaughan—who have gone to France, the arrangements will not be finally settled. All such arrangements will have to be carefully made, and as hutting is not possible hostels with their more elaborate internal organization are being provided. Social and welfare conditions form a large part of the proposals under consideration. "In a few days the Commission will return and we will know the probable numbers of the first drafts," said Mrs. Tennant. "A preliminary offer of service can be made on a form which can be had at St. Ermin's Hotel. This is not a final enrolment and applications will be sifted by a selection committee. All recruiting will be done through the women's department with the help of the existing machinery of the employment exchanges. A uniform will be provided, and it is probable that it will be of khaki."

Mrs. Leach, of the Women's Legion, will be in charge of cooks and waitresses, and Miss Christobel Ellis, of the Women's Legion, in charge of the motor-transport section. The scheme is an expansion of the employment of women by the Army Council, which has proved so successful in most of the commands. As the women are civilians, they will not, as far as is known at present, be given rank.

Nothing has yet been arranged for Ireland, and no woman commissioner has been appointed, but it is explained that this does not mean that Irishwomen are excluded. Already one lady has arrived from Ireland to offer her services, but these journeys are not encouraged. The preliminary form which is being issued contains questions as to nationality, education, training, and previous experience. "Are you willing to serve anywhere you may be required?" is one of the questions asked, and also whether, if it is not possible to use the applicant's services for the auxiliary services of the Army, she is willing to do other work of national importance. Women engaged on munitions or in essential occupations are not asked to enrol.