

## MEMO FOR CABINET BY THE MINISTER OF HEALTH

## Upgrading of Laundresses to Group 111

As part of the reorganisation of the hospital staffs a new class of hospital servant (Group 111) was created and the approved definition of duties was the following:-

Performs all cleaning duties and heavy work in the Wards, Operating Theatres, Laundries and Laboratories of the Hospitals.

In addition he may be required

- (i) to act as stretcher bearer including carrying of patients from residence to ambulance;
- (ii) to clean simple instruments and appliances after use;
- (iii) to do the periodical washing of bedside and overbed tables, bedside commodes and other ward furniture;
- (iv) to carry corpses to the mortuary room;
- (v) to help in the cleaning of the mortuary room.

2. It will be noted that the definition includes duties in the hospital laundries. Laundresses have actually a greater share in the handling of soiled linen and clothing and they come in contact with linen in a wet state (the greater part of such linen is in a such state either because of incontinence due to mental illnesses or senility or grave illnesses) or containing considerable amounts of faeces, pus and excreta, when counting and sorting soiled clothing and linen before such articles are loaded into the washing machines.

3. The duties of servants in the laundries consist in carrying the soiled linen in bundles from the Wards to the laundries, help the laundresses in sorting it out and when laundered they take the clothing and linen to the drying grounds, spread it for drying and when dry deliver it to the laundry store. They also help the fitters in moving heavy machine parts when the laundry machines are being overhauled or repaired. They also carry water in pails to help to expedite the filling up of the rinsing machines with water.

4. There are 86 laundresses in all the Hospitals of the Department and only four hospital servants (Group 3) at the St. Luke's Hospital Laundry and one hospital servant (Group 3) at the St. Vincent de Paul Hospital laundry.

In view of the analogy of the duties performed by laundresses and hospital servants (Group 3) doing duties in the hospital laundries, the upgrading of laundresses to group 3 as from the 1st April, 1966, has been recommended (in August 1968) for implementation. However according to a letter received on the 17th January, 1969, the Administrative Secretary considers that "approval of the upgrading recommended would cause serious embarrassment to Government", although the reorganisation above referred to had started a long time before the Salary Anomalies Commission had been appointed.

The General Workers Union have verbally stated that they will resort to Industrial action - not limited to Hospital Staff only - if their request for upgrading, is not accepted.

Hon. Ministers are therefore asked to consider the matter in the light of the above and to arrive at an early decision.

28th February, 1969.

(MH 716/66 Part 11).

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