

WASC 2106

Correspondence on  
Appointment of  
Lady Superintendent  
1916



CORRESPONDENCE REGARDING APPOINTMENT NA MUN 7/554  
AND RESIGNATION OF FIRST LADY SUPERINTENDENT  
AND APPOINTMENT OF SECOND 1916

WASC 2106

Register No.

RPF  
1/2

Minute Sheet No. 1

D. P. S.,

As, I take it, there is no question that women will be employed, before long, at the R. G. P. F., it becomes necessary to consider the appointment of a Lady Superintendent.

I am now interviewing candidates for a similar position at the R. S. A. F. and I should be glad of authority to select one of them for the Waltham appointment, for your approval.

The salary at R. S. A. F. is to be £350 per annum, and I recommend a similar salary at R. G. P. F.

1916.

I am anxious to get the appointment at R. G. P. F. made and confirmed as early as possible, because the selected person should have some little time to study the methods employed at Woolwich and elsewhere, to ensure the welfare of the women, and because there are a great many details to be thrashed out on the spot, which should be all cut and dried before women commence work.

I understand also that there is some competition for Lady Superintendents of a desirable type in Munitions Factories, and it is desirable to secure such suitable women while they are to be got.

Those who are being seen by me have been selected and recommended by Mr. Rowntree, and Miss Durham (of the Board of Trade).

*F. F. Fisher*

FEB 23 1916  
R/CT.

2

Colonel,  
S. W. E.

*P.W.C. (through his stenographer)*

*Appointment approved*

*S.P.*

*3* *M. Durham*

*4 J.M.B.*

*As this is a very important appointment I hope it is for your consideration*  
*Phil. F. Fisher*

MENT.

Number of Enclosures in each.

Ref. No.

COPY

University Club for Ladies,  
4, George Street,  
Hanover Square, W.

25th May, 1916.

Dear Colonel Fisher,

I write to place my resignation as Lady Superintendent of the women at the Royal Gunpowder Factory in your hands,

I have now held the post for two months ; and the actual number of women working is only 40, and I understand that there is no possibility of any large increase in numbers.

As you are aware, there is in the Factory no accommodation suitable for the work which I understand that I am expected to carry out, and I feel that I can no longer agree to continue under the present unsatisfactory conditions, also that I am serving no useful purpose by remaining in the Factory.

I assume that my notice will take effect one month from the date of your reception of this letter, but I should like to add I should be glad to be set free at the earliest moment that will suit your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Hilda Walton.



COPY.

University Club for Ladies,  
4, George Street,  
Hanover Square, W.  
27th May, 1916.

Dear Colonel Fisher,

I must ask you kindly to accept my letter of 25th May as containing my final decision, I should not have ~~sent~~<sup>sent</sup> it had it not been a considered decision. I much regret that you should regard it as a bolt from the blue, I choose this time for making my resignation as less inconvenient from the point of view of the Factory. I understand that the present situation was unforeseen, but I should like to point out that on the occasion of my appointment I was given to understand that it was urgently necessary I should take up my duties as soon as possible.

May I more particularly emphasise the fact that I referred to in my letter of the 25th that there is no suitable accommodation for the work I am expected to undertake? It does not seem to me satisfactory that I should have been asked to take up the work before any accommodation at all in the Factory was ready or, even when, as now, the best that offers is the Women's Shifting Room. For me to undertake more work under these conditions would be difficult even if it offered itself, and cannot agree to continue to hold the appointment.

Yours sincerely,  
Hilda Walton.



D.D.G.(E).

23rd June, 1916.

Seebohm Rowntree Esq.,  
6, Whitehall Gardens.

Dear Sir,

You will recollect that in February of this year you were good enough to select Miss Hilda Walton of Somerville College, Oxford to fill the post of Lady Superintendent at the Royal Gunpowder Factory, Waltham Abbey. This lady has now tendered her resignation, and Colonel Fisher, after once suggesting that she should withdraw her notice, has accepted it.

Miss Walton's reasons for resigning seem to be based on the fact that she had more or less taken up the position not knowing the real facts of the case. She complains that there are only 40 women at present working. The increase in the number of women employed at Waltham Abbey has been unexpectedly checked by unforeseen circumstances, but the coming out of eligible men, and the probable resumption of full output together with the starting up of the last ordered extension will involve the engagement of a considerable number of women.

Mr. McDougall Duckham would be much obliged if you could let him hear whether you know of any lady who would be suitable to fill this post.

Yours faithfully,

  
Private Secretary  
to D.D.G.(E).



Register No.

Minute Sheet No.

D.D.G. (E). Through E.P.S.,

Miss Hilda Walton, Lady Superintendent, Royal Gunpowder Factory, has tendered her resignation of her appointment, and as I have no option in the matter, I have, after once suggesting that she should withdraw her notice, accepted it.

The alleged reasons for her action are given in the two letters attached. I do not think that they are in any way convincing, as Miss Walton was fully conversant with the facts of the case when she took up her duties.

I am of opinion that she has not given the actual cause for wishing to leave, and I think that in the event of her attempting to secure any other employment under the Ministry, a close investigation should be made.

Meanwhile, I shall be glad if another Lady Superintendent can be selected to commence her work not later than the 26th June next.

As you are aware the increase in the number of women employed at Waltham Abbey has been unexpectedly checked, by unforeseen circumstances, but the coming out of eligible men, and the probable resumption of full output together with the starting up of the last ordered extension will involve the engagement of a considerable number.

*F. J. Fisher*

31 MAY 1916

R/H

Colonel,  
S.W.E.

S.W.E.

Miss Jessie O'Brien has been recommended to me by Mr. Seaborn Rowntree. She would appear to be eminently fitted for the position of Lady Superintendent at Waltham Abbey; she held the post of Lady Superintendent at the University College Hospital Trained Nurses Institute for 3 years, and has been Organising Secretary to the Halmesbury Division, British Red Cross Society, for the last

*See SMF's  
minutes of 20/1/16  
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MINISTERIAL OFFICE  
WALTHAM & ENFIELD  
20 JUNE 1916  
Reg. No.

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(T. T. Owen)



two years. She is experienced in financial work (accountancy), Social work (working girls clubs), lecturing (nursing, first aid, health subjects) and clerical work.

The Countess of Suffolk and several West End practitioners speak very highly of this lady's capabilities, and I think that she would be a very suitable candidate for the position.

Would you please get into touch with Mr. Rowntree, 6, Whitehall Gardens, with a view to fixing up an appointment for Miss O'Brien to come and see you.

*Wood Duckham*

28/6/16.

D.D.G.(E).

D.D.G.E.,

Miss O'Brien took up her duties as Lady Superintendent Waltham on the 1st ultimo.

*F. F. Fisher*

20 SEP 1916

Colonel,  
S.W.E.

D.D.G. S(E).

*To please note.*

22.9.16.

*V. Jimenez  
for D.D.G.(E)*

*DDG (E)*

*What thanks*

*Am...*



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*F. F. Fisher*

Colonel,

S. W. E.

FEB 23 1916

R/CT.

2

*S.W.E. (through his Menagerie)*

*Appointment approved*

*S.P.S.  
28/2/16*

*3 [Signature]*

*4 J.M. 7*

*as this is a may be a permanent appoin  
I refer it for your consideration [P.T. Over]  
28/2/16 Philip Menagerie*

MENT.

Number of Enclosures in each.

Form No.

1916.



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*David Duckham*

28/6/16.

D.D.G.(E).

D.D.G.E.,

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*F. F. Fisher*

30 SEP 1916

Colonel,  
S.W.S.

D.D.G. S(E).

To please note.

22.9.16.

*V. Jimenez*  
for D.D.G.(E)

D.D.G. (E)

What thanks

*David Duckham*



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*See SWF's  
minutes of 20/10/16  
R*

CENTRAL OFFICE  
WALTHAM & ENFIELD  
REC'D 29 JUN 1916  
Ref. No.

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Secretary to the Director,  
The Royal Gunpowder Factory,  
Waltham Abbey,  
Essex.

D.D.G.(E).

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