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CAREERS FOR GIRLS

WOMAN PROPERTY MANAGERS

From a Correspondent

The centenary of Octavia Hill has just been celebrated and the Society of Women Housing Managers, the central organization for persons engaged in or connected with work following the principles of Octavia Hill, is a flourishing body. It supplies woman housing managers to trusts and municipal housing estates, arranges for training students, and keeps those interested informed in all that is happening in the great and important field of housing management.

Housing and rehousing are major problems of to-day. Whatever changes arise in social conditions, estate management will remain a necessity. Big blocks of flats and cottage estates, whether owned by municipal authorities or housing trusts, are gradually taking the place of other forms of residence in subdivided houses and the like. The social aspect of estate management, therefore, becomes of great importance.

The principle underlying the Octavia Hill system is that social work and business methods can and should be combined in everything that concerns housing matters. Rent collecting is an important part of the work. The collection of rent gives the woman manager a right of regular entry into each dwelling. Once this right is established, all other sides of the work follow automatically.

SOCIAL SERVICE

The good tenant has problems as well as the bad. Questions of repairs, removals, undesirable neighbours, nuisances, legal difficulties, domestic troubles—these

happen to everybody and often in the most unexpected ways. The answer lies in the sound sympathetic consideration of each individual question, according to individual circumstances, by the woman housing manager, trained through observation and experience to give such answers. And the tenant knows that with such a person in close and constant touch there is always someone to whom to turn for advice, without risking the intervention of the curious or the patronage of the would-be charitable.

There is scope in this housing work for the right type of girl. She can use in it the most valuable of her talents, a sense of social service, interest in humanity, neighbourliness, ready sympathy, and, above all, sheer common sense. It is a fine career, with varied interests and good prospects. There is room for many more trainees and certainty of employment for the fully qualified, efficient manager.

A junior assistant should earn from £180 to £210 per annum. Other assistants can earn from £200 to £300. A manager's minimum salary is £250 per annum, rising to £350-£500, according to qualifications, experience, and extent of responsibility.

MUNICIPAL APPOINTMENTS

Managers employed by municipal authorities would participate in such allowances, pensions, and superannuation schemes as are in force in their service.

A great feature about this career is the very small initial outlay needed for training; £50 roughly covers the cost of training organized by the Society of Women

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Housing Managers. Of course, trainees must make their own living arrangements. Some municipal authorities have their own schemes, run by the municipality but in touch with the society. The cost is much the same. Such municipal schemes are particularly useful to girls from the district who do not wish to come to London or to go farther afield during training.

Though there is no very definite age rule, it is advisable that a candidate be 20 before applying. She is first interviewed by the secretary and members of the training committee. There is no compulsory medical examination. The importance of a sound constitution is impressed on the candidate. In any doubt a medical certificate will be required. She must have a good general education.

REQUISITE EXAMINATIONS

To be qualified the trainee must study for and pass the examination set by the Chartered Surveyors' Institution giving right to the Woman House Property Managers' Certificate. This examination is held only once yearly, in March. And the Chartered Surveyors' Institution insists that before sitting for it the trainee shall have done at least one year's practical training. The society insists on three months' probation (which if successfully carried through can count in the year's training), and as the work is very hard, both on the practical and theoretical side, it will be seen that trainees must endeavour to begin their work at the latest in January if they hope to be eligible for the examination in the March of the following year. In many cases longer training may be required, but this depends very much on

individual capabilities, previous experience, education, &c.

The practical training takes place from the offices of experienced housing managers. Generally an interchange of trainees is arranged, to ensure that all branches of the work are covered. One of the offices from which a trainee will work will be that which manages a municipal estate.

While the practical training is in progress the trainee will study for the qualifying examinations, generally through the medium of a correspondence course. She is usually advised not to begin this until her three months' probation period is over. The subjects necessary comprise the outline of local and central government, taxing, rating, construction and dilapidation of buildings, elements of economics, estate accounts, law of landlord and tenant, sanitation as regards housing, &c. She will also be required to attend lectures on social work. If in London, these lectures will probably be those given at Morley College.

Trainees holding university degrees will certainly start at an advantage. Those who have passed the Professional Examination of the Chartered Surveyors' Institution, or who hold a B.Sc. in Estate Management (London University), will be exempt from sitting for the Woman House Property Managers' Certificate, but they will have to go through the practical training as recognized by the society.

The secretary of the Society of Women Housing Managers (Incorporated), 13, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, London, S.W.1 (telephone, Whitehall 7451), will supply all further information.

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