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OBTAINING OF SUPPLIES BY WIVES AND FAMILIES OF  
NAVAL OFFICERS AND MEN.

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Admiralty Memorandum for the War Cabinet.

The Board of Admiralty have had under consideration the question of affording facilities to the wives and families of Naval Officers and men similar to those enjoyed by the wives and families of Officers and men of the Army and the Royal Marines, for the purchase of provisions from the Navy and Army Canteen Board.

Such facilities have not hitherto been extended to the wives and families of Naval Officers and Men. It would obviously be impossible to give any such facilities for dealing with the Canteens on board ship, and it has always been considered that, in view of the fact that the organisation and arrangements at Naval Barracks on shore differ essentially from those at Military Barracks, it would be undesirable to permit the wives and families of Naval Officers and Men resident in the Port to deal at the Canteens in the Naval Barracks.

During the War the privilege was withdrawn from soldiers' wives in receipt of Separation or Dependents' Allowances, but by a recent Army Order this limitation has been removed, thus restoring the differentiation in treatment of the two Services.

Some grievance has been felt in the Navy that the wives of Naval Officers and men should be debarred from the advantages of buying their groceries, etc. from the Navy and Army Canteen Board while the wives of Army Officers and men are permitted to do so, and from time to time complaint of this differential treatment has been made.

It is desirable that this grievance should be removed, but in view of the objection to permitting the wives to deal at the Canteens within the Naval Barracks, it has been proposed that the Canteen Board should establish a shop outside the Barracks at each of the Home Ports at which the wives and families of Naval Officers and Men should be permitted to deal.

It is anticipated that complaints may be raised in regard to the establishment of such shops in the interests of tradespeople with whom the shops would compete. This competition would of course be no greater than if the women concerned were permitted to enter the Barracks and deal at the Barrack Canteens in accordance with the existing Army system, and the objection will in reality be to the establishment of such competition where it has not previously existed.

In view of this possibility of complaint by private traders, the approval of the War Cabinet is sought to the principle involved before arrangements are made with the Navy and Army Canteen Board for opening the shops.

(Signed) W.H. LONG.

20th June 1919.