

Pension Appeal Court.—This Court was not fully constituted until the middle of January, 1931, so that sittings were not commenced until the first week in February. Between that date and Mar. 31, the Court dealt with 241 appeals.

Veterans' Bureau.—Pursuant to legislation passed in 1930, a Veterans' Bureau was organized as a branch of the Department and came into active operation on Oct. 1, 1930. A Chief Pensions Advocate was appointed with headquarters at Ottawa, and District Pensions Advocates were appointed in principal centres throughout the country. First and foremost the duty of the Bureau is to act as soldiers' friend, particularly with regard to claims for pension. Its functions in detail are:—

1. To receive from the Board of Pension Commissioners, from individual applicants, from soldiers' organizations, legal representatives or any other source, claims for pension and to conduct correspondence and maintain records pertaining thereto.

2. To direct the work of District Pensions Advocates in the district offices of the Department throughout the country; to provide adequate service to applicants wherever they may live.

3. Through the Pensions Advocates to approach each case from the point of view of the claimant and to prepare it as a lawyer prepares a case for his client. This involves obtaining a complete statement of claim from the applicant; study of the record; advice to the applicant as to further proceedings; collection of evidence, including medical testimony, industrial records and information from other sources relating to the claim.

4. To prepare a written statement of claim and an argument, for inclusion in the record.

5. To consult with Commission Counsel prior to formal hearing of the case with a view to admitting points which may properly be admitted by both parties, thus facilitating judicial proceedings.

6. To represent the applicant and to plead the case before the Board of Pension Commissioners, the Pension Tribunal and the Pension Appeal Court, including examination of expert medical witnesses and others.

7. To appear before the Pension Appeal Court at all hearings for consideration of any application which may be brought before the court either on behalf of an individual applicant or generally, including applications relating to the interpretation of the Pension Act or regulations and to be responsible for proper representation of the soldiers' interests.

8. The standardization of preparatory work to provide for the same standard of service to the soldiers in all parts of the Dominion.

9. To collate general medical and legal information relating to pensions for distribution to District Pensions Advocates.

To sum up, it is the function of the Veterans' Bureau to organize, train and direct a corps of specialists in pension law so equipped as to give authoritative and skilful counsel to soldiers and their dependants seeking to establish claims and to bring forward the soldiers' viewpoint in all matters of interpretation and policy pertaining to the general administration of the Pension Act.

During the period Oct. 1, 1930, to Mar. 31, 1931, 14,333 applications were referred to the Veterans' Bureau, of which 2,107 were referred to the Pension Tribunal for hearing. This enabled the Pension Tribunal to arrange sittings in all principal centres within a few months of its organization.