

In September, 1943, a survey was made with a view to extending the facilities for treatment and, as a result, arrangements were partly completed by December, 1943, for the use of 31 additional hospitals, so located as to minimize the extent of the veteran's journey.

Many Departmental hospitals and districts are now receiving professional aid by the posting of medical officers from the Armed Services for duty in the institutions, the staffs of which have been heavily burdened as a result of shortage of medical personnel. In some districts, sections of the Departmental hospitals are staffed by service medical officers, nursing sisters, and other ranks, with resulting economy and efficiency. In other districts, the Department of Pensions and National Health has carried the bulk of Active Service medical work where the Army and the Navy have been without hospital accommodation and X-ray facilities.

During 1943 there were heavy admissions to the Departmental hospitals; extended use was made of out-patient clinics and civilian sanatoria in the provinces for the increased number of tuberculosis cases. Closer contact was maintained between the Department, the universities, and the civilian hospitals throughout the country. The growing need of specialists in the various branches of medicine has encouraged this and the development of occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and the greater use of laboratory facilities in Departmental institutions has placed a heavy demand for these trained technicians on available sources of supply. The Department has utilized the services of such specialists for consultant work in Departmental hospitals, the out-patient clinics, and for the care of service personnel in civilian contract hospitals.

Prostheses and Surgical Appliances.—The Orthopædic and Surgical Appliances Division of the Department of Pensions and National Health, set up in August of 1916, has, as its first responsibility, the provision of all prostheses, or artificial aids. It operates a main manufacturing centre at Toronto and eleven district depots from coast to coast. Here the measuring, fitting, alterations and repairs to artificial limbs, orthopædic boots, splints and braces, and artificial eyes are carried out. In addition, minor orthopædic appliances such as trusses, glasses, elastic hosiery, etc., are supplied through purchase from private manufacturers.

Under P.C. 91, the Orthopædic and Surgical Appliances Division supplies all these prostheses free of charge to veterans who are eligible and, under P.C. 2311, Provincial Workmen's Compensation Boards are supplied on repayment. Other Government branches, such as that of Indian Affairs, and the Canadian National Railways are supplied.

The Division also carries out considerable research and development work on prostheses. One of the major problems since the outbreak of the War has been the supply of glass for artificial eyes. Prior to the War, this glass had been almost a German monopoly.

Before the outbreak of the present war the Division was responsible for the care of 2,411 leg amputations and 967 arm amputations. Approximately 300 new cases have since developed. Since September, 1939, 23 cases of mercantile marine personnel suffering from immersion foot (a condition which follows prolonged exposure to cold sea water) have been dealt with. All these cases were the results of enemy action at sea.

The Division is also the liaison office between the National Institute for the Blind, which gives care to blinded veterans, and the National Institute for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing. Seventeen cases have been reported on to date from the present war.