

In the late summer of 1919 the establishment of the Dental Branch was authorized and in October, 1919, the Director of Dental Services was appointed and the formation of the Dental Branch was undertaken. This involved the setting-up of dental clinics in the various hospitals and sanatoria then operated by the Department, also independent dental clinics in strategic centres of population throughout Canada. In some instances, fully or partially equipped clinics were taken over from the Department of Militia and Defence and for others the necessary equipment had to be obtained and installed, and personnel for the operation of all clinics selected and appointed. In July, 1920, the Department had in operation approximately thirty clinics where dental treatment was available for ex-members of the C.E.F. eligible under the various qualifying classifications. In addition to these clinics the services of civilian dentists in the towns, villages and rural areas were utilized, providing authorized treatment on a fee basis. Until Mar. 31, 1921, the services supplied by the Branch were limited to vocational students, pensioners for direct dental injury or diseases incurred during service, and those undergoing courses of authorized treatment as in- or out-patients who were certified to require dental attention for the efficacy of such treatment. On that date responsibility for the completion of post-discharge dental treatment, for which all ex-members of the C.E.F. were eligible, was transferred from the Department of Militia and Defence to the Department of Soldiers Civil Re-establishment. Within the next two years this latter treatment and that for vocational students was practically completed and there was a gradual lessening in the demand for dental treatment; many of the dental clinics were closed and the personnel, to a large extent, released.

Between the years 1923 and 1938 the demand for services fluctuated very little; however, during this period at the request of the Department of Justice the responsibility of the administration and supply of dental treatment for all members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police was undertaken, which arrangement is still in effect.

With the declaration of war in September, 1939, the demands made on the Dental Division of the then Department of Pensions and National Health again increased and in the winter of 1939, following new legislation, many ex-members of the C.E.F. became eligible for dental treatment with the result that it was again necessary to expand facilities for adequate treatment. To-day, besides dental treatment for ex-members of the C.E.F. of the War of 1914-18, and the R.C.M.P., treatment is provided for all ex-members of the Active Force following discharge or retirement, and for members of the Canadian Armed Forces engaged in the present war who, at the request of the Department of National Defence or the government of any other Allied country, are hospitalized for medical or surgical treatment by this Department. These include members of the armies, air forces and navies of the United States, Poland, Norway, the Netherlands, also Imperials, New Zealanders and Australians of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan who are training or stationed in Canada. Treatment is also supplied to the Merchant Marine, Alternative Service Workers, Prisoners of War, Forestry Project Personnel and numerous other cases when requested.