

All of the 400,000 ex-service men and women discharged within a few short months after hostilities ceased were eligible for some type of individual service from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Many wanted training or continuation of education: most were eligible for war-service gratuities and re-establishment credits. The number of pension rulings increased sharply, while demands on treatment services became much greater than they had ever been.

The number of veterans taking vocational training, for instance, increased from 5,165 at the end of September, 1945, to almost 25,000 by the end of December. Those taking university education increased from 2,434 in September to approximately 23,000 at the end of the year. In the twelve months of 1945 the Canadian Pension Commission made awards of pensions in 23,258 cases, as compared with 21,955 cases for the whole period of the War up to the end of 1944.

This necessarily imposed a great deal of additional work on the staff of the Department, which designedly had been kept short of requirements until the end of the War in order that key positions might be made available for men still on the fighting fronts. When War broke out in September, 1939, the staff of the Pensions Branch of the Department of Pensions and National Health (later absorbed into the Department of Veterans Affairs) numbered 2,061. On V-E Day it had been increased to 7,719, with a large number of positions still unfilled. By December, 1945, the staff numbered over 11,000, all the male members having served in the Armed Forces.

While the Department of Veterans Affairs deals exclusively with matters of interest to veterans, certain legislation concerning them is, of necessity, dealt with by other Departments. For instance, Part I of the War Service Grants Act relating to the payment of gratuities is administered by the Paymaster General of the Appropriate Branch of the Department of National Defence. The Department of Labour administers the Reinstatement in Civil Employment Act, and is responsible, in co-operation with Provincial Departments of Education, for the provision of training facilities, although training is authorized and paid for by the Department of Veterans Affairs. With these exceptions, the rehabilitation legislation is entirely administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

In the following sections the work of the Department is discussed from a subject standpoint.

Basis of Administration.—The Department of Veterans Affairs has attempted so far as possible to decentralize its administration. Canada, for this purpose, has been divided into 16 districts and 3 sub-districts, with a district or sub-district office for each area.

It has been the objective—an objective largely achieved during 1945—of the Department to concentrate the district offices in one building. These rehabilitation centres, as they are called, are the points of contact for veterans desiring advice and assistance to help them re-establish themselves in civil life. Except in very extraordinary circumstances, where matters of policy are involved, the District Administrator or his assistant has the authority to take executive action on applications for most of the benefits making up the rehabilitation program.

The Veterans' Land Act organization, besides having offices in the rehabilitation centres, has additional regional offices strategically located throughout the Dominion in order to be as readily accessible as possible to veterans. The district repre-