

The Department maintains special liaison with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, which extends training and after-care service to blinded veterans, the National Institute for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing on matters relating to veterans with loss of hearing, and the War Amputations of Canada on veteran amputation cases.

The Branch conducts its own prosthetic research and development program and also keeps abreast of developments in Great Britain, the United States and other countries.

Section 4.—Pensions and Allowances

Subsection 1.—The Pension System

Pensions Legislation.—The Pension Act of 1919 established a Board consisting of three members vested with exclusive power and authority to adjudicate upon pension claims and to award pensions for disability or death related to military service in the First World War. The Canadian pensions legislation as it developed following the First World War is outlined at pp. 759-760 of the 1943-44 Year Book. The machinery which then took form has been adapted and applied to present circumstances, and the Commission now consists of 14 members.

Following the outbreak of the Second World War, the provisions of the Pension Act, with certain modifications, were tentatively made applicable to members of the Armed Services serving in that War and, in 1941, Parliament appointed a Select Committee to consider the provisions of the Pension Act, including ex-service men's problems generally, and to make suitable recommendations in regard thereto. After consideration of the Committee's report, which was framed to meet prevailing conditions and based on experience gathered in the administration of the Pension Act since the First World War, Parliament decided to make the provisions of that statute, with appropriate amendments, applicable to claims arising out of the Second World War.

The provisions of the Pension Act, as originally enacted in 1919, although wide and generous in their scope as compared with pension legislation in other countries, have been considerably broadened and extended by various amendments enacted from time to time during the past 29 years. Amendments to the statute since 1919 have:—

- (1) substantially increased the actual amounts of pension payable;
- (2) widened the grounds on which pension might be awarded;
- (3) authorized certain additional benefits, such as clothing allowances for pensioners compelled to wear artificial appliances, allowances for parents, and special provisions for disability due to tuberculosis;
- (4) introduced the principle of personal appearance and public hearings for applicants;
- (5) with respect to the War of 1939-45 provided that service anywhere outside of Canada should be regarded as service in a theatre of actual war.

Application Procedure.—The procedure followed in dealing with applications for pension, arising out of the First World War, is laid down in Sect. 52 of the Act. Briefly, it consists of three stages for applicants whose claims are not initially granted. On first application the evidence presented is considered at what is known as a first hearing. If the Commission's decision is adverse to the applicant, he is entitled to a second hearing, provided he applies within 90 days of the first hearing. When presenting his claim for second hearing, he is required to include