

Rehabilitation of Older Veterans.—The welfare of the older veteran has become firmly established as an important function of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Continuous educational work conducted in co-operation with the Department of Labour and National Organizations has created a general awareness of the importance of maintaining the mature, middle-aged worker in gainful productive employment until he reaches an acknowledged retirement age.

The Department's responsibilities in this regard are not lessening with the advancing age of veterans of the First World War. Many veterans of the Second World War have now reached mature age and thousands more will reach this state every succeeding year.

The workers' need for basic economic security upon retirement, generally at an earlier age than presently prescribed for old age pension, has activated great growth of contributory private pension retirement plans. These laudable plans usually contracted through insurance companies or the Canadian Government Annuities Branch are based on group coverage and stress the minimum number of future employment years required to earn the basic retirement pension. Such actuarial arrangement has the effect of closing the employment door to workers above the age at which they may enter and complete the years of service required for full entitlement under these various pension plans.

The War Veterans Allowance provides in effect a retirement pension for entitled veterans not otherwise basically provided for. This benefit is of very great assistance in countering the reluctance of employers to engage older veteran workers because of the terms of pension plans. It is proving a valuable instrument in the placement of veterans in this category.

By enlisting support of veterans' organizations and other groups a national chain of voluntary committees is being developed, each accepting local responsibility in co-operation with the Department and the National Employment Service toward their own unemployed older veterans.

The need for intensification of effort in this field is borne out by an increase of registered unemployed veterans of the First World War and of dual service from 8,586 at Mar. 31, 1949, to 12,284 at Mar. 31, 1950.

During the twelve months of the 1949-50 fiscal year, 44,385 older veteran employment registrations were made at National Employment Service offices. By mutual arrangement all such registrants are individually considered and their placement assisted by staffs of the two Departments. In the course of assessment of work potential and economic position, War Veterans Allowance, treatment, or social welfare service is often indicated and the veteran assisted accordingly.

Employment and Allowances.—The return to civil life and gainful employment of veterans has been greatly assisted by the National Employment Service of the Department of Labour, which, through the policy of veterans preference and by untiring effort, has kept the numbers of unemployed veterans at a minimum. Unemployment among veterans follows the normal seasonal trend and, during the fiscal year ended Mar. 31, 1950, an average of approximately 8,100 placements per month were made by the National Employment Service for veterans of the Second World War. Peak and low unemployment figures for veterans of the Second World War in the fiscal year ended Mar. 31, 1950, were 57,633 and 17,664, respectively. Corresponding figures for the previous fiscal year were 44,811 and 12,344 and for 1947-48 they were 45,833 and 17,749, respectively.