

PART IV.—VETERANS SERVICES*

The Department of Veterans Affairs administers the legislation making up the Veterans Charter, except for the Pension Act which is the responsibility of the Canadian Pension Commission. The work of the Department now consists, in the main, of: the provision of medical treatment to veterans eligible to receive it; the rehabilitation of veterans including allowances, other financial assistance, education of veterans and educational assistance for children of war dead, and general welfare services; land settlement and home construction assistance; and veterans insurance. These functions are dealt with in Sections 1 to 5 of this Chapter. Pensions payable under the Pension Act are covered in Section 6, the payment of allowances under the War Veterans Allowance Act will be found in Section 7 and Veterans Commissions and Boards are in Section 8.

The work of the Department, except as regards the Veterans' Land Act, is carried out through 17 district and five sub-district offices located across Canada and one district office in London, England. The Veterans' Land Act is administered through eight district and 32 regional offices.

Section 1.—Medical, Dental and Prosthetic Services

Medical Services.—The Department of Veterans Affairs provides medical services to entitled veterans across Canada. A chain of 11 active-treatment hospitals is maintained together with two convalescent centres and two homes for provision of domiciliary care. These institutions had a total operating capacity of 9,285 beds at Mar. 31, 1957. Special centres exist in active-treatment hospitals for the investigation and treatment of arthritis, paraplegia, tuberculosis, mental and other conditions. An additional 588 beds are available in veterans' pavilions at Ottawa, Regina and Edmonton. These pavilions are owned by the Department but are operated by the parent hospitals and partially administered by the Department. Where Departmental facilities are not available, entitled veterans may be treated at Departmental expense by their own doctor in the hospital of their choice.

Professional staffs in Departmental institutions are employed on a part-time basis and the majority are members of medical faculties, nominated for staff positions by the dean of medicine. Close co-operation is maintained with medical schools, and the hospitals in the proximity of universities are actively engaged in medical teaching. The active-treatment hospitals have received approval of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada for postgraduate training in internal medicine and surgery, and the majority have been approved for advanced postgraduate teaching in the various specialties.

A program of Medical Research and Education was established in 1950 and has been gradually expanded. During the fiscal year 1956-57 some 95 projects were in progress, employing 105 persons. The program is varied and deals mostly with conditions affecting the older veteran, which the Department is in a unique position to investigate. Among the problems under study may be mentioned arthritis, hypertension and allied cardiac conditions, chronic respiratory diseases and mental conditions. Five of the larger hospitals operate clinical investigation units for provision of basic facilities such as detailed metabolic studies. Radioisotope laboratories are maintained at Toronto and Montreal.

During 1956-57, 30 persons received financial assistance from a research and educational grant for attendance at various courses. Schools for the training of nursing assistants were operated at Halifax, Montreal and Toronto with a potential of 180 graduates per year. These schools provide a reservoir of trained personnel for employment in Departmental hospitals. At Mar. 31, 1957, 135 nursing assistants were in the employ of the Department.

* Prepared by the Department of Veterans Affairs, Ottawa.