

Section 5.—Pensions Advocates

Veterans Bureau.—The Veterans Bureau, which has completed its twenty-seventh year of operation, is a branch of the Department of Veterans Affairs and has an office under the direction of a District Pensions Advocate in all districts in Canada in which offices of the Department are situated.

During the year ended Mar. 31, 1958, 6,076 claims were submitted to the Pension Commission, with 8,378 in preparation at the end of the year. These figures represent a slight increase over the 5,861 claims submitted during the previous fiscal year and 8,103 in preparation at the end of the year.

The duties of Pensions Advocates, most of whom are lawyers, are to assist former members of the Armed Forces and their dependants and former members of the various auxiliary organizations, such as merchant seamen, firefighters and others, in preparing and submitting claims to the Canadian Pension Commission. They also appear as counsel for applicants before the Appeal Boards of the Commission. No charge is made for the services of the Bureau.

Section 6.—Veterans Pensions

Previous issues of the Year Book contain information on the development of Canadian pension legislation, together with yearly statistics of numbers and liabilities.

The Pension Act was amended by 6 Eliz. II, c. 19, which received Royal Assent on Dec. 20, 1957. The amendments incorporated into the Act the increase in pensions and attendance allowances which had been authorized effective July 1, 1957, by Vote 670 of the Supplementary Estimates for the fiscal year ended Mar. 31, 1958. The major amendments which resulted in increased benefits are as follows:—

- (1) Provision was made for the continuation of pension until the end of the month in which death occurs on the death of a disability pensioner who was in receipt of additional pension for a wife, child, or parent, or a widow who was in receipt of pension for herself and a child.
- (2) The Commission is given discretion to award housekeeper's allowance for the children of a widower who had maintained a home for his dependent children during his lifetime and whose children had been awarded pension as a result of his death if a home continues to be maintained for them.
- (3) Clothing allowance for leg amputations is increased from \$72 to \$96 per annum, for arm amputations from \$30 to \$42 per annum, and the maximum clothing allowance for pensioners who wear appliances that cause excessive wear and tear of clothing is increased from \$72 to \$96 per annum.
- (4) Allowances are increased for funeral and burial expenses which may be paid when a disability pensioner has died and his estate is not sufficient to pay the expenses of his last illness and burial. Now, \$150 may be paid for funeral services, \$50 for cemetery charges and \$50 for last illness expenses. Previously, the rates were \$110, \$25 and \$50 respectively.
- (5) The prohibition against the award of pension on behalf of widows of World War I veterans who had been married on or after May 1, 1954, is removed.
- (6) The prohibition against payment of additional pension for wives of World War I pensioners married on or after May 1, 1954, is removed and additional pension with respect to such marriages can therefore be paid effective Oct. 1, 1957, or from the date of marriage, whichever is the later date. Additional pension on behalf of the children of such marriages may also be paid with effect from Oct. 1, 1957, if the birth took place prior to that date, or from date of birth.

The annual pension rates for a 100-p.c. disability for all ranks up to and including that of Lieutenant-Colonel and equivalent ranks* are:—

Pensioner.....	\$1,800
Wife.....	600
First child.....	240
Second child.....	180
Each subsequent child.....	144

* Rates are slightly higher if the pensioner or the deceased veteran held the rank of Colonel or higher rank.
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