

The total number of World War I disability and dependant pensions in force at Dec. 31, 1959 was 63,240, and for World War II, 122,296. Thus during 1960 the decrease in World War I pensions numbered 2,505 and in World War II pensions 314. The Commission still receives claims from World War I veterans and their dependants. In 1960, 149 new disability pensions and 546 dependant pensions were authorized in respect of World War I veterans and 1,774 new disability pensions and 586 dependant pensions in respect of World War II veterans.

In addition to its other duties, the Commission authorizes and pays the monetary grants which accompany certain awards for gallantry granted by the Sovereign to members of the Canadian Forces during World War II. Payments in respect of such awards earned by members of the Canadian Forces during World War I or earlier are paid by the United Kingdom Government. Advice was received from that Government that the annuity accompanying the award of the Victoria Cross had been increased to £100, payable regardless of rank or means. As a result, the Canadian Government cancelled the annuities in payment to holders of the Victoria Cross and granted annuities of \$300, payable monthly, commencing Apr. 1, 1960, to each surviving member of the Canadian Forces who had been awarded the Victoria Cross during World War II, regardless of rank or means. Previously, only those below commissioned rank received an annuity—\$50 paid semi-annually—except in cases of need due to age or infirmity, when an annuity up to \$375 could be paid regardless of rank. In addition to the annuity, holders of the award below commissioned rank who were disability pensioners or War Veterans Allowance recipients were also entitled to receive a per diem allowance of 12½ cents a day. This allowance was not affected by the increased annuity.

Section 7.—War Veterans Allowances

War Veterans Allowance Board.—The War Veterans Allowance Board is a statutory body responsible to the Minister of Veterans Affairs for the administration of the War Veterans Allowance Act. Members are appointed by the Governor in Council and at present number seven, one of whom is the Chairman; two Members serve without remuneration. The Board is located in Ottawa. Its functions include the responsibility of ensuring that all 18 district authorities interpret the legislation in a fair, reasonable and equitable manner. It standardizes administrative procedures and reviews the decisions of the district authorities and its own former decisions.

The Board adjudicates all applications from widows of veterans who were not residing with or being maintained by their veteran-husband at the time of his demise. There were 103 such cases received during 1960, of which 80 were approved.

One of the important functions of the Board is to consider all appeals from veterans, widows or orphans against any decision of the WVA district authorities. These emanate from applicants, recipients or their relatives or agents on their behalf. Agents include representatives of veterans organizations, principally the Canadian Legion. Appeals are also initiated by the Board itself and thus may be taken against district authorities' decisions or former Board decisions. Such appeal decisions may approve, set aside, alter or amend any former decision of the Board or any decision of the district authorities. The subject matter of such appeals may include the effective date of awards, rate of allowances to be granted, service eligibility, marital or dependent status, resident classification, exemptions and assessment of income, classification and evaluation of real or personal property.

War Veterans Allowance Act.—The Government in the late 1920's became aware that many war veterans were experiencing difficulties in providing for their own maintenance because of age or physical or mental incapacities. Following study the consensus of medical opinion indicated that service in the trenches had pre-aged a veteran by ten years. Accordingly, the War Veterans Allowance Act was passed in 1930 to provide a maintenance allowance to war veterans who, by reason of age or physical or mental disability, were no longer capable of maintaining themselves.