War Veterans Allowances and Civilian War Allowances   6.10.1.2

War Veterans Allowance Board. The War Veterans Allowance Board is a quasi-judicial body consisting of eight members appointed by the Governor in Council. It acts as an appeal court for an applicant or recipient aggrieved by a decision of a district authority and may, on its own motion, review and alter or reverse any adjudication of a district authority. The board is responsible for advising the minister with respect to regulations concerning the acts.

War Veterans Allowance District Authorities. In 1950, 18 district authorities were established in the regional districts of the Department of Veterans Affairs and granted full power to adjudicate on all matters arising under the War Veterans Allowance Act. In 1960, a separate authority — the Foreign Countries District Authority — was established to look after recipients living outside Canada. The members of a district authority are employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs appointed by the minister with the approval of the Governor in Council.

War Veterans Allowances. The War Veterans Allowance Act provides an allowance to otherwise qualified war veterans who, because of age or incapacity, are no longer able to derive their maintenance from employment and to ensure that their income does not fall below a specified level. Widows, widowers and orphans of qualified veterans are eligible for benefits. Since its inception in 1930, the act has been amended on numerous occasions to meet additional needs of veterans and their dependents.

With effect from October 1, 1973, the WVA/CWA income levels were escalated by 5.3% and the rates by similar dollar amounts. The income levels are increased quarterly thereafter in accordance with the increase in the cost-of-living, except that orphans' income levels will continue to be adjusted annually.

As of April 1974, the rates for orphans were increased to $125 a month for each orphan, less any amount payable under the Family Allowances Act, 1973, for that orphan. The income level was increased to $135.95. Effective January 1, 1976, and on January 1 of each succeeding year, the income level would be increased in accordance with the rise in the cost-of-living.

Since April 1, 1974, the allowance paid on behalf of a child of a widow, widower or unmarried veteran ("married" rate) or an allowance paid to an orphan is continued to age 25 as long as the child or orphan continues his education. The former legislation required payment of the "married" rate of orphan's allowance to cease at age 21; otherwise, the allowance paid on behalf of the child is discontinued at age 17.

With effect from October 1, 1974, the legislation provides for the payment of an additional $50 a month ($58.56 as of July 1, 1976), less family allowances in pay under the Family Allowances Act, 1973, for each dependent child of a widow, widower or unmarried veteran after the first one and for each dependent child of all other recipients.

As of June 30, 1976 a total of 85,132 persons were receiving War Veterans Allowances: 48,702 veterans, 35,753 widows or widowers and 677 orphans. The monthly liability as of June 30, 1976 was estimated at $14.2 million.

Civilian War Pensions and Allowances. Part XI of the Civilian War Pensions and Allowances Act makes available to certain groups of civilians and their widows, widowers and orphans, benefits similar to those available to veterans under the War Veterans Allowance Act. These groups, which performed meritorious service in World War I and World War II, include: Canadian merchant seamen of both wars; non-Canadians who served in Canadian merchant ships in either war; Canadian voluntary aid detachments of World War I; and Canadian firefighters, Canadian welfare workers, Canadian transatlantic aircrew and the Newfoundland Overseas Forestry Unit of World War II.

As of June 30, 1976 a total of 4,048 civilians, including 995 widows or widowers and 14 orphans, were receiving these allowances. Total monthly cost was estimated at $800,000.