

for the aged and other institutions. Indian recipients of such benefits as old age security or the guaranteed income supplement may get additional assistance from the department.

With departmental support, a number of bands administer their own day care centres, senior citizens homes, and community based social services. The department also operates a rehabilitation program to avert social problems and reduce the effects of physical disabilities and emotional difficulties.

A work opportunity program gives jobs to people on welfare who are physically able to work. Funds are used to provide native communities with facilities, for example, roads and services such as day care, instead of for direct financial aid. Each project is financed by a reallocation of social assistance funds plus money from other sources (regional appropriations, provincial revenues, band revenues).

The program is an example of the transfer of social service administration from the government to the native people. Approval is granted only to projects that are planned, designed and operated by band councils or their delegated groups.

6.2.5 Veterans of the Canadian forces

Legislation for veterans and their dependents is administered by the veterans affairs department (DVA) and four affiliated independent agencies: Canadian Pension Commission, Pension Review Board, War Veterans Allowance Board and the Bureau of Pensions Advocates. Changes in legislation through the years have been made in relation to changing economic and social circumstances of veterans, particularly regarding pensions and allowances. Programs administered by the department include medical treatment, housing, educational assistance, counselling and other services. Departmental work is carried out through regional and district offices across Canada.

Pensions for death and disability. The Canadian Pension Commission administers most of the Pension Act, the Compensation for Former Prisoners of War Act and parts of the Civilian War Pensions and Allowances Act.

The Pension Act provides for payment of pensions in respect of disability or death related to military service. These could result from injury or disease incurred during or attributable to service with the Canadian forces in war or arising from or directly connected with peacetime service. Pensions may also be paid to dependents of a disabled former member of the forces or to the surviving dependents of a deceased veteran. The amount of disability pension payable is set out in the Pension Act based on a rate established in 1978 and pensions are indexed in accordance with the consumer price index.

The Compensation for Former Prisoners of War Act provides for compensation to former prisoners of war and their dependents, in addition to any disability pension they may be receiving.

In 1980 the Pension Act was amended to allow for payment of proportionate pensions to dependents of deceased pensioners who at the time of death received disability pensions, compensation for former prisoners of war, or a combination of both, at a rate between 5% and 47% of the former payments.

The Pension Review Board is an independent appeal tribunal. It deals with appeals from decisions of the Canadian Pension Commission in matters of entitlement and the amount of awards under the Pension Act. The board is also the final authority on the interpretation of the act.

The Bureau of Pensions Advocates provides an independent professional legal aid service to applicants for awards under the Pension Act. The chief pensions advocate is the chief executive officer and is assisted by pensions advocates, all of whom are lawyers, at head office in Ottawa and in district offices in major centres across Canada. Pensions advocates prepare applications to the Canadian Pension Commission and represent applicants as counsel at entitlement board and pension review board hearings. No charge is made for these services.

War veterans allowances. The War Veterans Allowance Act provides for allowances to war veterans who, because of age or incapacity, can no longer maintain their employment income at a specified level. Widows, widowers and orphans of qualified veterans are eligible for benefits.

Civilian war allowances. Similar benefits are available to certain groups of civilians and their widows, widowers and orphans, under the Civilian War Pensions and Allowances Act. These include: Canadian merchant seamen who performed meritorious service during World War I or World War II; non-Canadians who served in Canadian merchant ships in either war; Canadian voluntary aid detachments of World War I; Canadian firefighters, welfare workers and transatlantic crew and the Newfoundland Forestry Unit of World War II.

The War Veterans Allowance Board acts as a court of appeal for aggrieved applicants and recipients, and reviews decisions of district authorities to ensure that adjudication is consistent with the intent and purview of the War Veterans Allowance Act or the Civilian War Pensions and Allowances Act and that the legislation is applied uniformly throughout Canada. The board may at any time review and alter its own former decisions.

Social and health services for veterans were integrated in a veterans services branch of the department in 1978. Medical and dental services are provided for eligible veterans throughout Canada. Prosthetic services provided to eligible veterans by the health and welfare department are paid for by DVA.

The veterans services branch provides examination and treatment for pensionable disabilities of recipients of war veterans allowance (but not their