

SECTION II.—WAR PENSIONS

The general administration of the enactments providing for pensions and allowances in respect of war service and the carrying-out of the decisions of the War Pensions and the War Pensions Appeal Boards are the function of the Secretary for War Pensions.

NEW LEGISLATION

The War Pensions Amendment Act, 1947, and the War Pensions Allowances (Mercantile Marine) Amendment Act, 1947, came into force on 1st October, 1947, and provided for the following :—

An increase of 5s. a week in the basic rate of pension to widows of deceased members of the Forces or of the mercantile marine.

An increase of £13 a year in the basic rate of War Veterans' allowance.

The maximum rate for economic pensions was increased as follows :—

- (a) Member of the Forces, 35s. to 45s. a week.
- (b) Widows with children and widows forty years of age and over with or without children, 20s. to 25s. a week.
- (c) Wholly dependent widowed mother of a deceased member 20s. to 25s. a week.

The maximum rate of attendant's allowance which the War Pensions Board may grant where a pensioner requires the services of an attendant was increased from £5 to £5 10s. a week. Clothing-allowances were increased by £2 a year, and are now as follows :—

- (a) Whole or partial loss of both legs, £18 a year.
- (b) Whole or partial loss of one leg, £16 a year.
- (c) In respect of the use of any mechanical or other appliance, other than an artificial leg, £10 a year.

Provision was also made that the pension of a partially-dependent widowed mother of a deceased member of the Forces should not be less than 25s. a week. Previously such pensions were to be not less than one-half the rate that would be paid to a wholly-dependent widowed mother.

The Amendment Act also provided that the widow of a pensioner who died while in receipt of a permanent war pension of not less than 70 per cent. may be granted a widow's pension, irrespective of the date of marriage. Previously such pensions were not granted where the marriage took place after the date on which the permanent disablement pension was granted.

Where an applicant for war pension dies before completion by the War Pensions Board of its investigations, authority was given for the Board to proceed with the investigation of the claim and to grant a pension up to the date of death.

WAR PENSIONS

During the year the Department received 7,331 applications for pensions, including 2,406 lodged by ex-servicemen in respect of their own disabilities. Of these, 185 were in respect of the 1914–18 war and 2,221 in respect of the 1939–45 war. Claims by dependants, applications for economic pensions, and war veterans' allowances totalled 4,925. The number of applications in respect of both wars lodged for the previous year was, 14,619, which included 9,531 in respect of an applicant's own disability.