

DEMOBILIZATION ALLOWANCES

During the year applications were received from 15 ex-servicemen and 2 ex-servicewomen for these allowances, which are intended to provide for the maintenance of discharged Service personnel who require continuation of medical treatment, or medical after-care, and who are unable to resume civilian employment by reason of their incapacity. Grants were made to 11 ex-servicemen and 2 ex-servicewomen. There were 11 allowances current at the 31st March, 1948, compared with 18 at the end of the previous year, and the expenditure for the year ended 31st March, 1948, was £2,908 compared with £5,209 for the previous year.

IMPERIAL AND OTHER OVERSEAS PENSIONS

War and other pensions paid on behalf of the Governments of Great Britain, Australia, Canada, South Africa, India, and Crown Colonies numbered 3,619 at 31st March, 1948, and represented an annual value of £323,329.

Payments for the year totalled £393,459, a reduction of £20,895 from the figure for the previous year.

Altogether fifty different classes of payments, such as war pensions, civil pension, retiring pay, release leave, and other privilege payments were handled by the Department on behalf of the United Kingdom and other Governments. In addition, numerous gratuities and other temporary grants were paid.

The varying rates and nature of the payments and allowances, which involve conversion of currencies and exchange, necessitated considerable accounting work and correspondence with overseas authorities.

COMFORTS ALLOWANCES

In the past the Department has continued payment of some monthly benefits to inmates of mental hospitals by way of comforts allowance. As from 1st November, 1947, the Mental Hospitals Department vote has included an item to cover the cost of comforts for all patients, and comforts allowances formerly paid by this Department have ceased.

STAFF

Although the effective strength of the Department decreased from 1,427 as at 31st March, 1947, to 1,360 as at 31st March, 1948, it is pleasing to be able to record that the work of the Department was carried out expeditiously and efficiently throughout the year in spite of shortages of staff, particularly in Wellington.

The intensive staff-training programme which has been carried out in all offices of the Department during the past two years has enabled the large number of ex-servicemen on the staff to attain an excellent degree of efficiency in their work, and in most cases they have recovered the ground unavoidably lost during their service in the Armed Forces.

At 31st March, 1948, there were still 22 officers absent on military service, 34 on sick-leave or special leave without pay, and 4 officers on loan to other Departments.

In submitting this report we would like to record our appreciation of the loyal and efficient service rendered by the officers of the Department throughout the year.

C. DUNN, Acting-Chairman
E. PEARCE, Acting-Commissioner } Social Security Commission.

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