

WAR PENSIONS BOARDS

During the year the War Pensions Boards visited many centres in New Zealand and interviewed 1,429 pensioners. In each centre visited, the local ex-servicemen's organizations were given an opportunity to present special cases and to have discussions with the Boards. By this means close contact has been kept with the organizations outside Wellington, with benefit to the ex-servicemen and to the Department in its administration of the War Pensions Act as it relates to disabled ex-servicemen.

The War Pensions Boards dealt with 57,285 cases during the year ended 31st March, 1949, under the following categories:—

(1) Claims for pension on account of disablement	..	..	..	1,931
(2) Claims for economic pension	..	..	..	2,164
(3) Claims for dependant's pension	..	..	..	1,806
(4) Cases submitted for renewal and review	..	..	..	35,945
(5) Cases submitted for reconsideration	..	..	..	6,256
(6) Cases where the question of entitlement was considered in respect of personnel discharged from the Forces on medical grounds, but who did not apply for pension	..	..	..	505
(7) Claims for war veterans' allowances	..	..	..	1,177
(8) Sundry claims and reviews and cases adjourned for further consideration and decision	..	..	..	7,501
				57,285

MEDICAL TREATMENT

The provision of treatment for disabled ex-servicemen through the Pensions Medical Officers has continued to give satisfaction.

The number of disabled ex-servicemen in hospital as a result of war disabilities has decreased, but there were as at 31st March, 1949, still 174 pensioners of the 1914-18 war receiving in-patient treatment and 302 of the 1939-45 war. Numbers vary from time to time, however, as many admissions to hospitals are for short periods only.

The Medical Officer in Charge of Treatment has noted a definite decline in the number of new applications by ex-servicemen suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis. In approximately 25 per cent. of these cases it has not been possible to associate the condition with war service.

The Medical Officer in Charge of Treatment has drawn attention to the number of new dysentery cases dealt with by the War Pensions Boards. During the last two years some 120 cases of chronic amoebiasis have been diagnosed, none of the cases having previously, either overseas or within New Zealand, been suspected of suffering from this disease. Attention was drawn to the incidence of this disease through the Director-General of Health and through the columns of the *New Zealand Medical Journal*.

During the year the Medical Officer in Charge of Treatment has published in the *New Zealand Medical Journal* two reviews following his research into the statistics and results of treatment of the disabilities suffered by ex-servicemen. One related to "Prolapsed Intervertebral Discs" and the other to "Fractures of the Carpal Scaphoid Bone." These two reviews have been of much importance and interest to the medical profession.

It is hoped during the next year to carry out further reviews and to publish the results relating to other diseases and battle casualties. With the large numbers in different classes of diseases and casualties which occur among servicemen and with the follow-up of war pensioners after treatment, it has been possible to make available useful information to assist in the treatment not only of war disabled, but also of civilian, patients.