

DEMOBILIZATION ALLOWANCES

During the year no applications were received from ex-servicemen or ex-service-women 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. There were 6 allowances current at the 31st March, 1949, representing grants made during the previous year, compared with 11 at the 31st March, 1948. Expenditure for the year ended 31st March, 1949, was £1,290, compared with £2,908 for the previous year.

IMPERIAL AND OTHER OVERSEAS PENSIONS

The Department has been called on to provide increased services during the past year on behalf of the Governments of Great Britain, Australia, Canada, South Africa, Pakistan, India, and Crown colonies in respect of payment of pensions and allowances in New Zealand. The number of cases in payment in New Zealand on behalf of these Governments is now 4,004, compared with 3,619 at the 31st March, 1948. There were, however, a large number of cases paid during the year for short periods.

The total amount paid during the year on behalf of other Governments was £463,345, an increase of £69,886 over the previous year.

Whereas supplementary payments were previously made in respect of exchange on amounts authorized by Great Britain and other Governments affected by difference of exchange, these have now ceased on account of New Zealand currency being appreciated to parity with sterling.

In November last the Department was privileged to have a visit from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Ministry of Pensions of the Government of Great Britain, Mr. A. Blenkinsop, who was accompanied by Miss M. Cox, C.B.E., Deputy Secretary to the Ministry of Pensions.

Discussions were held with departmental officers, and as a result it has been possible to delegate some additional powers to the Department and so dispose locally of many matters which formerly had to be referred to the Ministry in London.

Opportunity was taken to have as many Imperial pensioners as possible seen by Mr. Blenkinsop and Miss Cox in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin, where meetings were addressed and many items of interest discussed.

Representations made to the personal representatives of the Ministry during their visit to New Zealand have resulted in increases of pensions and new awards in several cases.

STAFF

At 31st March, 1949, the effective strength of the staff of the Department was 1,277, compared with 1,360 as at 31st March, 1948, a reduction of 83. Although it is pleasing to report that the work of the Department has not suffered through persistent staff shortages, the rate of loss of trained staff is disturbing. Many of the offices of the Department continue to be undermanned.

The staff-training programme has been maintained, with beneficial results. It is due to keenness and co-operation of the staff, combined with intensive staff training, that the Department has been able to function efficiently despite the staff shortage.

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.

B. F. WATERS, Chairman	} Social Security Commission.
C. DUNN, Commissioner	
A. E. T. WILLIAMS, Commissioner	