

WAR PENSIONS.

The outstanding incident of the period covered by this report was the placing of the administration of the War Pensions Act, which received the Governor's consent on the 4th August, 1915, under the control of the Department. The adjudication of claims thereunder is in the hands of a Board of three members, whose secretary is the chief administrative officer of the Department. The various Registrars of Pensions throughout the Dominion are the medium through which claims for pension are lodged, and any investigation necessary is conducted at Head Office, the records of the Defence Department being largely used in connection therewith. The Board's meetings are mostly held in Wellington, four and often five evening sittings being held weekly. It is recognized, however, that in a large number of soldiers' claims a true appraisalment of the permanent disability suffered by the applicant can only be determined by personal interview, and periodical visits are accordingly paid to different parts of the Dominion with the view to obtaining first-hand information before the permanency or otherwise of the pension is determined.

The following summary relates to the total claims lodged :—

—	To 31st March, 1916.		To 31st March, 1917.	
	Soldiers.	Dependants.	Soldiers.	Dependants.
Pensions granted (permanent and upwards of twelve months)	274	578	1,003	2,075
Temporary pensions granted	352	10	3,194	258
Claims declined	84	46	437	250
Claims on hand	88	47	122	115
Total claims	798	681	4,756	2,698

	Officers.	Men.	Total.
Total casualties by death to 31st March, 1917 ..	296	6,081	6,377
Total discharges from Forces to 31st March, 1917	190	7,353	7,543

GROSS ANNUAL VALUES OF ALL PENSIONS GRANTED.

—	Totals to 31st March, 1916.			Totals to 31st March, 1917.		
	Number.	Annual Value.	Average Pension.	Number.	Annual Value.	Average Pension.
Soldiers (permanent and upwards of twelve months)	274	£ 14,314	£ 52	1,003	£ 53,087	£ 52
Widows	118	10,563*	89	434	42,916†	98
Other dependants	460	13,813	30	1,641	47,872	29
Soldiers (temporary)	362	17,798	49	3,194	185,420	58
Dependants (temporary)	..	..	..	258	12,900‡	50
Totals	1,214	56,488	46	6,530	342,195	52

* Including the pensions of 186 children.

† Including the pensions of 686 children.

‡ Including the

pensions of 332 children.

Including the 1,018 children, the average of the grand total of 7,548 pensions granted to the 31st March, 1917, is £45 per annum.

SUMMARY OF ANNUAL LIABILITY AT 31ST MARCH, 1917.

	Number.	Annual Value.	Average Pension.
		£	£
Soldiers (permanent and upwards of twelve months) ..	845	43,992	52
Soldiers (temporary)	2,083	115,030	55
Widows (including pensions of children)	400	39,143	97
Parents and other dependants of deceased soldiers ..	1,667	50,872	30
Dependants (temporary on account of disablement of soldier)	174	8,734	50
	5,169	£257,771	£49