

The War Pensions Amendment extended the rights of wives of disabled soldiers married in New Zealand to those married outside of New Zealand during the soldier's service, and to others married in New Zealand who, in the opinion of the War Pensions Board, should be regarded as deserving cases. The restriction in regard to further pension rights on the death of the soldier appearing in the 1917 Act, however, applies to these.

The civil widows' pension was increased to 7s. 6d. a week for the widow with children with an additional 7s. 6d. a week for each child. A limitation, however, was imposed that the income (including pension) of the pensioner must not exceed £1 5s. a week with 10s. a week added for each child. This had the immediate effect of increasing the annual appropriations under this particular head by approximately £70,000 per annum. The ten years' residence in New Zealand required in respect of children born out of New Zealand was reduced to three years, with the proviso that the father had died in New Zealand.

The pension payable under the Miner's Phthisis Act, 1915, was increased in the case of the married man from £1 a week to £1 10s. a week, and in the case of the single man from 15s. a week to £1 a week. Further, the provision limiting the period of payment for widows' pension to two years was repealed and a pension during widowhood was established. The effect of these increases was an immediate addition to the annual appropriations of, in round figures, £8,000 per annum.

In regard to the pensions payable in respect of the death and disablement of police officers, the total number of applications lodged under this head to date is nine. Of these four have been granted and five rejected, the annual charge being £331.

WAR PENSIONS.

TOTAL CLAIMS LODGED TO DATE.

					From Soldiers.	From Dependants.
From 1st September, 1915, to 31st March, 1916	..	..	..	..	798	681
Year 1916-17	..	..	..	..	3,958	2,017
Year 1917-18	..	..	..	..	8,148	3,754
Year 1918-19	..	..	..	..	14,749	5,292
Year 1919-20	..	..	..	..	11,493	3,990
Totals	..	..	..	..	39,146	15,734

			Officers.	Men.	Total.
Total casualties by death (including missing) to 31st March, 1920	..	..	..	..	16,781
Total discharges from Forces to 31st March, 1920	..	..	4,354	76,448	80,802

GROSS ANNUAL VALUE OF ALL PENSIONS GRANTED TO DATE.

	No.	Annual Value. £	Average Pension. £
From 1st September, 1915, to 31st March, 1916..	1,214	56,488	46
Year 1916-17	5,316	285,707	53
Year 1917-18	10,587	780,057	73
Year 1918-19	16,954	1,167,081	68
Year 1919-20	15,183	872,627	57
	49,254	£3,161,960	£64

NOTE.—The number of pensions granted as shown herein does not include children's pensions, the values of which, however, form part of the pensions payable to parents (or guardians), and are included in the annual values total.

SUMMARY OF ANNUAL LIABILITY AT 31ST MARCH, 1920.

Class of Pension.	Number.	Annual Value.	Average Pension.
		£	£
Soldiers (permanent)	2,130	126,510	59
Soldiers (temporary)	23,144	1,223,342	53
Dependants (temporary)	1,517	88,473*	58
Widows of soldiers	2,075	238,693†	115
Other dependants of deceased soldiers	5,705	192,347	34
Totals	34,571	1,869,366	54

* Including the pensions of 1,452 children.

† Including the pensions of 2,313 children.

Including the 3,765 children, the average of the grand total 38,336 pensions in force on the 31st March, 1920, is £49 per annum.