

PENSIONS.

CONDITIONS AND ANOMALIES.

ACT NEEDS AMENDMENT.

("Quick March").

Unlike the gratuity a pension can be claimed as a right by those eligible, and all such claims are decided by the War Pensions Board and by no one else.

Those eligible for pensions are:—

- 1.—A soldier suffering from the effects of wounds or injuries received on service.
- 2.—A soldier suffering from a disease contracted or aggravated on active service.
- 3.—A soldier suffering from injuries received or disease contracted in camp. (Either in New Zealand or abroad).
- 4.—The wife and children of a deceased soldier.
- 5.—The deceased soldiers. A dependant is a member of a soldier's family who is wholly or partly dependent upon his earnings at any time within twelve months prior to his joining the N.Z.E.F. and the members of the family (in addition to wife and child) are father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, stepfather, stepmother, grandson, granddaughter, brother, sister, half brother, half-sister and mother-in-law. A dependant also includes a father or mother who was not actually dependent during the said twelve months but is without adequate means of support.
- 6.—The wife and children of a disabled soldier if the Pensions Board considers that his disablement prevents the soldier from maintaining them in reasonable comfort. The law also stipulates that, before a wife can obtain a pension, she must prove that she was married before disablement, or, she must marry the soldier in New Zealand two years after his discharge, or she must have been engaged to the soldier before his departure.

TO MEET SPECIAL CASES.

The last Conference decided to send the following resolution to the Minister of War Pensions for consideration:—

"Where a discharged soldier dies as the result of disability incurred on service and leaves a widow, such widow shall be entitled to a pension for herself and any children of the marriage, irrespective of whether the soldier was engaged or married to such person prior to enlistment."

Explanation.—To carry this proposal into effect the N.Z.R.S.A. suggests the following clause as a substitute for paragraph (c) of the 1917-1919 Acts, including the deletion of the proviso in the 1917 amendment:—

"Any other woman who becomes by marriage in New Zealand the wife of a member of the forces at any time after his discharge provided that in the event of the death of such member within one year of his marriage as aforesaid without leaving issue, whether born or en ventre sa mere, his wife shall thereupon cease to be a dependant within the meaning of this section, but in any such case, there may be paid to her a gratuity of an amount not exceeding twice the annual value of her pension."

The N.Z.R.S.A. presses this principle strongly, as under the present regulations a young soldier, who was not married or engaged to be married at the time of his departure from New Zealand with the N.Z.E.F., is at an unfair disadvantage compared with the soldier who was so married or engaged to be married at the time of his departure. There is, however, no just reason for such discrimination. On a supposition that every claim is genuine the wife of one soldier has every whit as much right to the benefit of a dependant's pension as the wife of the other. The above clause only seeks to provide tests of a genuine marriage, so as to ensure that a soldier knowing that he was dying, could not simply marry a woman with the object of leaving her a pension for life. These tests are either:—

- 1.—The husband must live for one year after the marriage; or
- 2.—If he die within one year he must leave children.

Note.—If these conditions are not complied with the board has discretion to grant a gratuity of two years' pension as under the present law.

SYSTEM AND SCHEDULE.

Military pensions are of two kinds:—
1.—Pension proper for war disabilities.
2.—Supplementary pension for economic disability.

The first hardly needs explanation, as the maximum pension for all soldiers with out a commission is at present £2 per week for total disablement, with a pro

rata scale for the lesser injuries. Here is the schedule upon which the pensions depends:—

WAR PENSIONS ACT, 1917.

Pensions Payable for Specific Injuries.

Nature of Injury.	Ratio of Pension payable in Cases of Total Disablement.	Per Cent.
Loss of two limbs	100	100
Loss of limb and eye	100	100
Loss of both hands	100	100
Loss of all fingers and thumbs	100	100
Loss of both feet	100	100
Loss of hand and foot	100	100
Loss of sight	100	100
Total paralysis	100	100
Lunacy	100	100
Permanently bedridden	100	100
Wounds or injuries to head or other organ involving total permanent disabling effects	100	100
Advanced incurable disease	100	100
Very serious facial disfigurement	100	100
Amputation of right arm through shoulder-joint	85	85
Amputation of leg through hip-joint	85	85
Loss of speech	80	80
Severe facial disfigurement	80	80
Amputation of left arm through shoulder-joint	80	80
Amputation of right arm at or above the elbow	80	80
Amputation of leg through knee-joint or thigh	80	80
Amputation of left arm at or below elbow	75	75
Amputation of right arm below elbow	75	75
Amputation of leg below knee	75	75
Total deafness	70	70
Amputation of left arm below elbow	70	70
Amputation of right hand	65	65
Amputation of left hand	60	60
Loss of one eye	50	50
Loss of four fingers of right hand	50	50
Loss of four fingers left hand	50	50
Loss of three fingers of right hand	40	40
Loss of thumb of right hand	40	40
Loss of three fingers of left hand	30	30
Loss of thumb of left hand	30	30
Loss of two fingers of right hand or left hand	25	25
Loss of index finger of right hand left hand	20	20

Notes.—(a.) In cases of left-handed men, certified to as such to the satisfaction of the Board, pensions in respect of injury to the left arm or hand will be at the rate prescribed as for injury to the right arm or hand, and compensation in respect of injury to the right arm or hand will be at the rate prescribed as for injury to the left arm or hand. (b.) For the purposes of this schedule the expression "loss of" includes permanent loss of the use of. (c.) Where a member of the forces suffers or has suffered more than one of the injuries mentioned in this schedule he shall not in any case be entitled to receive more than the maximum pension payable as for total disablement.

The pensions payable (a.) to the dependants of deceased soldiers, (b.) to totally disabled soldiers, and (c.) to partially disabled soldiers, are set out in full below:—

A.—PENSIONS RELATING TO DECEASED SOLDIERS.

1.—A widow. The permanent pension of a widow varies according to the rank of her deceased husband thus:—

Rank.	Including.	Weekly Pay.
(a.) Private	Trooper, Driver, Sapper, Gunner, or	£1 10 0
(b.) Corporal	Farrier, Shoe-Smith, Saddler, or Fitter	£1 11 0
(c.) Sergeant	Farrier-Sergeant, Farrier-Corporal, Shoe-Smith Corporal, Saddler-Corporal, Armourer-Sergeant, Sergeant and Corporal-fitter	£1 12 0
C.S.M.	Squadron and Battery S.M.'s	£1 14 0
R.S.M.	Q.M.S., Staff Sergeant, and Pay Clerks	£1 15 0
Lieutenants.	R.Q.M.S.	£2 5 0
Captain	Warrant Officers	£2 10 0
Major		£2 17 0

Including. Weekly Pay.
Lieut.-Colonel £3 6 0
Colonel £3 8 0
Brig.-General £3 10 0

A pension to the wife of a deceased member of the N.Z.E.F. shall cease on her re-marriage provided that there may be paid to her a gratuity not exceeding two years' pension.

2.—A child. The sum of 10s a week is

allowed for each child under 16, but in the case of a female child the pension may, if the Board thinks fit, be paid until she reaches the age of 17. Any child suffering from any mental or bodily infirmity may receive a pension as long as the Board thinks fit. In the case of orphan children, the maximum pension for each child is 15s per week. If the Pensions Board is satisfied that the total amount received by a widow and children (if any) of a deceased soldier is insufficient to maintain them in their pre-war standard of comfort, it may increase the widow's pension by 15s per week, but the total amount payable to the widow and children shall not exceed £4 a week.

3.—A widowed mother. The Government has provided the widowed mother, whose deceased or disabled son was her sole support, the same pension as the widow of a deceased soldier without children.

4.—Dependants of a deceased soldier. In regard to claims by dependants, the Pensions Board inquires into all the sources of property and income of the applicant. Power is given to the Board to grant a pension to any person (not necessarily a relative) who satisfies the Board that material loss has been sustained by the death or disablement of a soldier, and who has not adequate means of support.

B.—TOTALLY DISABLED SOLDIER.

1.—The soldier. All soldiers under commissioned rank receive £2 per week. But in the case of officers the weekly pension varies with the rank, thus:—

Lieutenant	£2 2 6
Captain	£2 5 0
Major	£2 12 0
Lieutenant-Colonel	£3 1 0
Brig.-Gen. & Maj.-Gen.	£3 5 0

A totally disabled soldier who requires an attendant may be granted £1 per week over and above his pension and supplementary.

2.—His wife. The wife of all totally disabled soldiers (under commissioned rank) receive £1 weekly. But as in the case of the officer so with his wife; the wife of a lieutenant receives £1 1s 3d a week; the wife of a captain receives £1 2s 6d; the wife of a major £1 6s; the wife of a lieutenant-colonel £1 10s 6d; the wife of a brigadier-general £1 12 6d.

3.—His children. As in the case of children of a deceased father the pension allowed is 10s a week under 16.

4.—Dependants. Any dependant of a disabled soldier is entitled to apply for a pension if the soldier is unable to provide the same support as rendered before the war, and the amount will be decided by the Pensions Board. The pension of a soldier and his dependants must not, with the supplementary pension added, exceed £5 per week.

(c.) A partially-disabled soldier.

The pension of a man suffering, say, from a minor war disability, e.g., shell-shock, neuritis, gas, rheumatism, Bright's disease, etc., is assessed by the board after careful and thorough consideration. If a soldier in regular employment has to lose wages to enable him to undergo medical treatment for a war injury (or disease) he is intitled to a grant, but not exceeding £1 per week. An application accompanied by his employer's certificate showing the loss of wages must be forwarded to the Commissioner of Pensions. The question of a man's financial position is not taken into consideration when assessing his pension; the law specifies a certain payment for a certain injury, and there is no departing from this.

Now, consider the supplementary pension. This pension, the maximum for which is £1 per week, cannot be claimed as a right, but is granted as an economic compensation between his standard of living before the war and what it now is. Anyone who is affected thus may apply for this supplementary pension. The granting of this pension lies entirely in the hands of the Pensions Board, and both financial position and economic loss are taken into consideration while dealing with each application. A supplementary pension is paid from the date of application. Retrospective payment for this pension is not valid.

Owing to the unheard of heights to which the cost of living has soared, the pension is now rightly considered as being totally inadequate to pensioners; consequently, at the last Dominion Conference the following resolution was unanimously carried:—

"That it be an instruction to the incoming Dominion Executive to take the necessary steps to have the schedule of pensions for specific injuries of the War Pensions Act, 1917, and the second and third schedule thereto regarded by the addition of plus percentages up to 175 per centum (that is, £3 10 per week) and the total

percentage to be the minimum pension for total permanent disablement, supplementary pensions and attendant's pension to be over and above such rate, and that the dependant's pension be increased pro rata, and that the third schedule of the War Pensions Act, 1917, be regraded on account of certain anomalies existing therein."

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES REGARDING PENSIONS.

1.—Discipline. As thousands of men are receiving pensions involving over one million pounds annually, some disciplinary action is provided for if required, thus, if a soldier refuses medical treatment which is both necessary and beneficial, his pension may be reduced by the Pensions Board. Section 6 of the War Pensions Amendment Act states: "If the board has reason to believe, on the advice of a medical board consisting of not less than two registered medical practitioners, to be appointed by the Minister of Defence, that any member of the Forces in receipt of (or entitled to) a pension should, in his own interests, undergo medical or curative treatment, whether in hospital or elsewhere, it may reduce by one-half the amount of the pension to which the member would otherwise be entitled, if and so long as the member without good and sufficient cause refuses or wilfully fails to undergo such treatment."

Then again, a man may have his pension withdrawn or reduced for misconduct, for example, if he is convicted of any offence punishable by imprisonment for three months or upwards and dishonouring him in public estimation.

2.—Missing soldiers. If a soldier is officially reported as missing, a pension is payable to his dependants in the same manner as if he had died of wounds or injuries; but, if he is subsequently reported as living and not disabled, the pension, of course will be withdrawn and any money paid as pension may be deducted from the accumulated pay of that soldier.

Nurses' pensions. (a.) In case of death. The dependants of a deceased nurse receives £2 5s per week, and those of a deceased sister or matron £2 10s per week.

(b.) In the case of disablement. A nurse receives £2 2s 6d a week and a dependant £1 1s 3d, a sister or matron receives £2 5s per week and a dependant 2s 6d per week.

4.—Penalties. To prevent any sharp practice among soldiers the Government had to frame the following regulations:—

Every person is liable to a fine of £100 or to 12 months' imprisonment, who:—

- (a.) Obtains any pension or instalment which is not payable.
- (b.) Being a claimant for a pension does not faithfully disclose particulars of his property or income.
- (c.) Obtains payment of any pension or instalment by means of any false or misleading statement.
- (d.) Makes or presents any false document.

BLINDED SOLDIERS.

Delegates to the recent conference of patriotic societies held in Wellington were by no means unanimous in support of the scheme put forward by Mr Clutha Mackenzie for the benefit of blinded soldiers in the Dominion. Mr Clutha Mackenzie explained his proposal, which, he said, really emanated from Sir Arthur Pearson. The money was not wanted to make grants to the blinded soldiers, but was for personal needs to carry out good work done at St. Dunstan's. In regard to the £600 a year interest on the £10,000, it was proposed to raise, some money would be necessary to purchase material for the men to work with. Unfortunately, most of the men had been trained in trades that were economically unsound—such as basket-work, string-work, and poultry-farming. Money was needed for tools, literature, etc. He admitted the Government's treatment of the blind was generous. Married men's pensions had been raised to £5, and single men's to £4, and their escorts travelled on the railways on the same ticket. Mr Williams moved in support of the scheme, but Messrs Dougall (Christchurch), Larner (Auckland), and Wright (Dunedin), spoke strongly against it. The chairman (Mr L. O. H. Tripp) said that all four centres and Invercargill and Wanganui had turned the scheme down. Eventually the motion was carried by 11 votes to 7. It was decided that the fund should be formed by pro rata demands on the societies. Mr Dougall said they would get nothing from Canterbury.

NIBBLES.

"Whit's up the night?" inquired Tam. "A walk," said Maggie. "Who wi'?" "I'm no shair." "Mebbe!" "It's nane o' your business, onyway." "Is that the way o't?" "Aye."

"A' richt! Gie me back ma ring an' stamp photy." "There ye are!" said Maggie, putting them down. "Ye can get thae ring an' photys at sixpence a dozen. Guld nicht!" And she banged the door. (Tam col-lapsed).

"That's done ye, ma lad," mumbled Puddin'; "ye've lost yer lass." "What dae I care? There's plenty mair," Tam uttered, grandly; but his looks belied him.—"Snooker Tam of the Cathcart Railway," by R. W. Campbell.

There cannot be anything more tedious than a routine of artificially stimulated excitement.

Taste is the way of truth, because it has the good on the one side and the beautiful on the other. It is more damning to say to a man that he acted in bad taste than that he was immoral.

All the arts are but different ways of saying God.

In the mass, literature and the arts mean about as much to society as Sunkist or an official document. If all the arts were abolished to-day by an Order in Council what difference would it make to the people as a whole? None.—"People and Things," by H. J. Massingham.

I once lived myself in Clement's Inn, and heard the chimes go, too, and I remember one day, as I sat in my little room very near the sky, a knock came at the door and the head of the porter of Clement's Inn presented itself to me. It was the first of January, and he gravely gave me an orange and a lemon. As I had a basketful on his arm, and I asked for some explanation. The only information forthcoming was that from time immemorial every tenant on New Year's Day was presented with an orange and a lemon, and that every tenant was expected to give half a crown to the porter.—"Whys and Wherefores," by Violet M. Methley.

When Tommy comes marching, Marching down the street, There's a little drum inside us That goes "beat," "beat," "beat," There's a little drum inside us Sings the things we cannot say, As dumb we stand to see him pass, Tommy toujours gai. —Verse for patriots. Compiled by Jean Broadhurst and Clara L. Rhodes.

Mr Bertrand Russell will prove to you that the very hypotheses on which science is supposed to be based, such as the hypotheses of causation, mean nothing at all. He is for ever facing barely the truth that there is no meaning in anything.—"What is the Kingdom of Heaven?" by A. Clutton-Brock.

"Monica, darling, one can't help loving, and one should never try to. Loving is much finer than being loved. It's being more generous. I don't know what you mean, but if indeed you love someone you can't marry, never mind, be happy that you can love. Being in love is being alive."—"Blind Alley," by W. L. George.

I can remember going to my little bedroom, after hearing the neighbours talk of an evening with my father, and spending no small part of the night walking up and down, trying to make out what was the exact meaning of some of their—me—dark sayings. . . . I am never easy now, when I am handling a thought, till I have bounded it north and bounded it south, and bounded it east and bounded it west.—"Lincoln as a Man of Letters," by L. E. Robinson.

Do you please yourself with the fancy that you are doing good? You are mistaken (wrote Franklin to Dr. Fothergill). Half the lives you save are not worth saving, as being useless, and almost the other half ought not to be saved, as being mischievous. Does your conscience never hint to you the impiety of being in constant warfare against the plans of Providence? Disease was intended as a punishment of intemperance, sloth, and other vices; and the example of that punishment was intended to promote and strengthen the opposite virtues.—"Dr. Fothergill and His Friends," by R. Hingston Fox.

The caribou, the reindeer of America, which was quite common in Northern Alaska thirty years ago, is now, like the buffalo, almost extinct.