

## CHAPTER X.

## REPATRIATION.

## § 1. General.

An outline of the activities leading up to the formation of the Commonwealth Repatriation Commission was given in Official Year Book No. 15, p. 931. Some account was given also in the Official Year Book referred to, and in subsequent issues, of the policy and general activities of the Department, while detailed information was incorporated in regard to such matters as sustenance rates and pensions to soldiers and dependants. (See Official Year Book No. 17, pp. 598–601.) In 1943 the Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Act was amended by the incorporation of the recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee appointed to inquire into pensions and repatriation benefits. A general increase was made of approximately 20 per cent. in the rates of war pensions and increases were also made in other repatriation benefits.

The main activities of the Repatriation Commission at 30th June, 1944, were confined to the grant, review and assessment of war and service pensions, the provision of medical treatment, employment, vocational training, the renewal and repair of artificial replacements and surgical appliances, the grant and review of sustenance and living allowances, and the administration of the Soldiers' Children Education Scheme.

## § 2. War Pensions.

1. *General.*—Provision for the payment of war pensions to soldiers and their dependants was made by the Commonwealth Parliament in the War Pensions Act 1914 which came into operation on 21st December, 1914. This Act was repealed in 1920 by the Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Act. Particulars regarding pensions payable under both these Acts as amended are given on page 210 of the Official Year Book No. 34. Owing to limitations of space only some of the main features relating to war pensions under the Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Act 1920–1943 are shown in the following paragraphs :—

(i) *Eligibility for Pension.* There has been a considerable widening of the provision in this respect, to the benefit, mainly, of Members of the Citizen Military Forces who have not served outside Australia. These provisions are summarized as follows :—

- (a) A member of the Forces who served : (1) outside Australia ; (2) in the Territories of Australia, such as Papua and New Guinea ; or (3) within Australia in circumstances which can be regarded as actual combat against the enemy ; is covered for war pension purposes in respect of incapacity or death which may result from any occurrence happening during the whole period of service.
- (b) In other cases where a member served only in Australia, incapacity or death to be pensionable must have been attributable to service.
- (c) There is a third ground applicable to all in (a) and (b) who have had at least six months' camp service. This provides that, where a condition pre-existed enlistment, a pension may accrue if it is considered that such condition was aggravated by service.

(ii) *Ordinary Rates.* Where the daily rate of service pay was not in excess of 19s. the ordinary rate of pension for total incapacity is £5 per fortnight. Where the daily service pay exceeds 19s., the ordinary rate of pension for total incapacity increases to a maximum rate of £6 16s. per fortnight according to the rate of pay. The wife of a totally incapacitated member of the Forces receives £2 4s. and each child under 16 years of age 18s. per fortnight.

(iii) *Supplementation of Pension.* Where a member in receipt of a pension at the maximum rate is, because of his war disability, temporarily (for at least three months) precluded from earning, an additional pension, not exceeding £2 8s. per fortnight in the case of a married member and 30s. in the case of a single member, may be granted.

(iv) *Women's Nursing and Auxiliary Services.* Members of Women's Services are now entitled to pensions and other benefits as prescribed in the Act. Pension scales are those applicable to male members of the Forces in receipt of similar rates of pay.

(v) *Tuberculosis Cases.* In the case of a member of the Forces who served in a theatre of war and, at any time after discharge became or becomes incapacitated, or died or dies, from pulmonary tuberculosis, war pension is payable, and medical treatment is provided on application as if the incapacity or death resulted from an occurrence on service. (*See also* Service Pension.)

(vi) *Special Rates.* Those who have been totally blinded as the result of war service and those who are permanently totally incapacitated receive special pensions of £9 12s. per fortnight. In addition an attendant's allowance of £2 8s. per fortnight is payable to the war-blinded and to certain others who are deemed to be in need of an attendant. The wife and any children receive the same rates as shown in para. (ii).

(vii) *Specific Disabilities.* In cases where the disability is amputation of a limb or total loss of vision in one eye, amounts ranging from 9s. to £4 12s. per fortnight are payable in addition to the statutory rate of pension and, in certain double amputation cases, allowances are payable for an attendant.

(viii) *Time Limit for Wives.* The time limit has been extended from seven years to fifteen years within which women must marry in order to be eligible as wives for pension in respect of the 1939-45 War. The children of any such marriage, whenever born, are also eligible. With regard to the 1914-19 War the time limit for wives, i.e., 30th June, 1938, remains, but in certain cases where a member of the Forces has married since that date an allowance not exceeding £2 4s. per fortnight may be granted to him in respect of his wife provided she performs duties essential to his welfare by reason of his war disability.

(ix) *Rates of Pensions in respect of Death.* (a) *Widows.* Where a member, whose daily rate of service pay was not in excess of 27s. 6d., dies as a result of war service, the rate of pension payable to his widow is £5 per fortnight. Where the service pay exceeds 27s. 6d. the rate of pension is higher, ranging from £5 9s. to £6 16s. per fortnight.

(b) *Children of Member.* The first child (under sixteen years) receives a pension of 35s. and each subsequent child 25s. per fortnight. In the case of children whose parents are both dead the rates payable are—each child up to 14 years of age 35s. and each child over 14 years and up to 16 years of age, 40s. per fortnight.

(x) *Widowed Mother on Death of Member.* A pension varying from £2 10s. to £6 16s. per fortnight according to the rate of pay of the member may be granted to a widowed mother, provided widowhood occurred either prior to or within three years after the death of the member.

2. *Appeal Tribunals.*—The principal Act was amended as from 1st June, 1929, to create tribunals to hear appeals in regard to war pensions. The War Pensions Entitlement Appeal Tribunal is empowered to hear and decide any appeal by or on behalf of ex-members of the Forces or their dependants against a decision of the Repatriation Commission that an incapacity or the death of an ex-member did not arise out of war service. Assessment Appeal Tribunals were created to hear and decide any appeal against a current assessment or a "Nil" assessment of war pension made by the Repatriation Commission in respect of an incapacity of an ex-member of the Forces which had been accepted as arising out of war service. Provision was made by subsequent legislation to enable the Tribunals to hear appeals by certain applicants for service pensions.

3. *War Pensions in Force.*—At 30th June, 1944, the number of war pensions was 244,462 and the amount paid in pensions £10,348,609. The outstanding features for 1943-44 were as follows:—

New claims granted	..	..	..	..	..	31,555
Claims rejected (gross)	..	..	..	..	..	35,616
Pensions reviewed	..	..	..	..	..	19,977
Pensions cancelled or discontinued	..	..	..	..	..	11,005
Deaths of pensioners	..	..	..	..	..	3,351
Number of pensions in force at 30th June, 1944	..	..	..	..	..	244,462
Annual pension liability at 30th June, 1944	..	..	..	..	..	£10,651,850
Amount paid in pensions during the year 1943-44	..	..	..	..	..	£10,348,609

At 30th June, 1944, special rate pensions of £9 12s. per fortnight were being paid to—

Blinded soldiers .. .. .	180
Tubercular soldiers .. .. .	1,134
Totally and permanently incapacitated soldiers .. .. .	2,468

An analysis of the total number of new grants during the year reveals the following:—

Members (i.e., ex-soldier pensioners) .. .. .	10,992
Wives of members .. .. .	6,486
Children .. .. .	10,010
Other dependants .. .. .	4,067
	<u>31,555</u>

In the following table the number receiving pensions at 30th June, 1944, is shown for each class of pensioner:—

#### WAR PENSIONS IN FORCE AT 30th JUNE, 1944.

Class.	Number of Pensioners.
Orphan children .. .. .	7,934
War widows .. .. .	15,730
Soldiers .. .. .	90,358
Children .. .. .	48,941
Wives .. .. .	68,436
Parents .. .. .	12,568
Brothers and sisters .. .. .	240
Others .. .. .	249
Total .. .. .	244,462

4. Number of Pensioners and Expenditure.—The following table shows the number of pensioners at 30th June, 1944, and the places where payments were made during 1943-44:—

#### WAR PENSIONS : NUMBER OF PENSIONERS AND EXPENDITURE, 1943-44.

Where Paid.	Incapacitated Members of the Forces.	Dependants of—		Total.	Expenditure.
		Deceased Members.	Incapacitated Members.		
	No.	No.	No.	No.	£
New South Wales .. .. .	32,596	12,072	42,515	87,183	3,661,182
Victoria .. .. .	27,552	10,114	35,802	73,468	3,022,522
Queensland .. .. .	10,398	3,592	13,467	27,457	1,177,089
South Australia .. .. .	6,180	3,136	7,902	17,218	763,350
Western Australia .. .. .	8,089	3,273	11,149	22,511	941,924
Tasmania .. .. .	3,780	1,253	5,822	10,855	523,675
Total, Australia .. .. .	88,595	33,440	116,657	238,692	10,089,742
London .. .. .	1,471	1,597	1,981	5,049	227,821
Union of South Africa .. .. .	292	120	309	721	31,046
New Zealand .. .. .					
Other Overseas .. .. .					
Total .. .. .	90,358	35,157	118,947	244,462	10,348,609 (a)

(a) Includes £1,730,471 in respect of 1930-45 War.

The following table shows the numbers of pensions granted, claims rejected, pensions in force, and the amount paid in pensions for each of the years ended 30th June, 1931 and 1937 to 1944 :—

**WAR PENSIONS : SUMMARY, AUSTRALIA.**

Year ended 30th June—	Pensions Granted.	Claims Rejected.	Pensions in Force.				Amount paid in Pensions.
			Incapaci- tated Members of the Forces.	Depend- ants of Deceased Members.	Depend- ants of Incapaci- tated Members.	Total.	
							£
1931 ..	11,553	920	75,316	35,617	172,389	283,322	7,996,180
1937 ..	5,098	7,508	77,076	29,422	145,308	251,806	7,683,086
1938 ..	19,993	8,357	77,315	28,562	151,337	257,214	7,761,207
1939 ..	6,794	7,511	77,151	27,571	144,571	249,293	7,819,286
1940 ..	2,169	1,846	76,462	26,388	134,027	236,877	7,682,240
1941 ..	2,851	5,193	75,767	25,937	123,787	225,491	7,488,531
1942 ..	8,907	9,448	76,641	27,679	116,019	220,339	7,501,911
1943 ..	19,771	17,337	81,240	31,333	114,280	226,853	8,366,996
1944 ..	31,555	35,616	90,358	35,157	118,947	244,462	10,348,609

5. **Cost of Administration.**—The administrative cost of the Repatriation Commission in 1943-44 was £437,882 representing 3.47 per cent. of the total cost of benefits disbursed. The administrative costs of the War Pensions Appeal Tribunals are included in the foregoing figure and totalled £23,180.

### § 3. Service Pensions.

1. **General.**—The payment of service pensions was provided for in the Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Act 1935, and the scheme has operated since 1st January, 1936.

Originally fixed on a lower scale, the rate of service pension for a member of the Forces now conforms to the rate of the invalid or old-age pension which at the end of December, 1945, was £3 5s. per fortnight. The maximum rate for the wife of a member is 44s. per fortnight, whilst 10s. per fortnight is payable for the eldest child under 16 years of age and 5s. per fortnight for each of the younger children up to three in number. The actual rate payable in any case is determined after taking into consideration all other income received and property (apart from the home) owned by the pensioner, and no service pension can be paid in any case where such other income and/or property exceeds certain specified limits. The allowed income at the end of December, 1945 was £117 per annum for a single man and £234 per annum in the case of a member and his wife. The allowed property maximum is £400 for each person.

If the income from all other sources is less than the annual amounts shown above, service pension becomes payable at such rate as will, with that other income, bring the total income of the pensioner (including service pension) up to the allowed maximum, provided, of course, that the pension cannot exceed the maximum rate specified for the particular case.

A female member of the forces was made eligible in 1936 for consideration of a service pension if she embarked for service abroad; previously she must have served in a theatre of war. In the same year an institutional rate of service pension not exceeding 12s. per fortnight was made available. This pension rate since 5th July, 1945 has been 23s. per fortnight, and benefits particularly inmates of mental asylums, who were previously excluded from the scheme.

Eligibility for service pensions may be established on the following grounds :—

- (a) Sixty years of age or more, provided the applicant served in a theatre of war, but eligibility on this ground applies only to the ex-soldier and not to his wife or children. In the case of a female member of the forces, the qualifying age is 55 years, and service abroad, not necessarily in a theatre of war, is sufficient.

(b) Permanently unemployable, provided the applicant served in a theatre of war (or, in the case of a female member, served abroad). Under this class pensions may be paid to the ex-soldier, his wife and children—up to four in number.

(c) Pulmonary tuberculosis, whether the applicant served in a theatre of war or not. Under this class also pensions are payable to the wife and children—up to four in number.

Only those applicants who qualify under Class (c) are entitled to receive both service and invalid pensions at the same time.

During the year 1941-42 the scheme was extended to veterans of the South African War 1899-1902, and by amending legislation in 1943 was further extended to members of the Forces of the 1939-45 War.

2. Operations during Year.—The following figures give the important details relating to the service pension scheme during 1943-44 :—

Claims granted during the year—

Members of the Forces	..	..	..	..	868
Wives	..	..	..	..	359
Children	..	..	..	..	177
					1,404

Claims rejected during the year—

Members of the Forces	..	..	..	..	482
Wives	..	..	..	..	272
Children	..	..	..	..	146
					900

Pensions cancelled or discontinued during the year .. .. 2,132

Deaths of pensioners during year .. .. 617

Pensions in force at 30th June, 1944 .. .. 12,584

Annual pension liability on 30th June, 1944 .. .. £656,856

Amount paid in pensions during the year 1943-44 .. .. £652,534

3. Number of Service Pensioners and Expenditure.—The following table shows the number of service pensioners in force and the expenditure since 18th January, 1936, when the scheme came into operation :—

#### SERVICE PENSIONS: SUMMARY, AUSTRALIA.

Year ended 30th June—	Pensions in Force—					Total.	Amount Paid in Pension.
	Old-age Members of Forces.	Permanently Unemployable.		Suffering from Pulmonary Tuberculosis.			
		Members of Forces.	Dependants.	Members of Forces.	Dependants.		
No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	£	
1936 ..	1,257	679	1,095	332	485	3,848	31,135
1937 ..	2,256	1,990	3,028	462	753	8,489	221,714
1938 ..	2,805	2,712	3,918	544	872	10,851	329,871
1939 ..	3,397	3,393	4,667	619	1,032	13,108	407,127
1940 ..	3,858	3,706	4,814	623	999	14,000	472,263
1941 ..	4,008	3,705	4,734	655	979	14,081	511,103
1942 ..	4,294	3,772	4,591	650	939	14,246	579,656
1943 ..	4,270	3,695	4,221	452	646	13,284	660,109
1944 ..	4,235	3,628	4,025	290	406	12,584	652,534

(a) Includes £6,403 in respect of 1939-45 War.

#### § 4. Medical Treatment of Returned Soldiers Suffering from War Service Disabilities.

At 30th June, 1944, there were 2,242 in-patients, including a number whose care was undertaken by the Repatriation Commission on behalf of other countries or Commonwealth Departments. There were 167,185 out-patient attendances for treatment during the year, excluding treatments by the 792 Local Medical Officers resident in country towns. The expenditure to 30th June, 1944 was £12,175,969.

#### § 5. Miscellaneous.

1. *Summary of Other Departmental Activities.*—The following is a summary of the work of the Repatriation Commission from 8th April, 1918 to 30th June, 1944 :—

(i) *Employment.* Number of applications, 269,724; number of positions filled, 144,101.

(ii) *Vocational Training.* Number of men completed training, 27,766; number in training, 324.

(iii) *Soldiers' Children Education Scheme.* From the inauguration of the scheme in February, 1921, up to 30th June, 1944, 28,721 applications for assistance had been received. Of these, 26,997 had been approved, of which 19,600 recipients of benefits had completed their training and 3,588 were undergoing training, while 82 applications were pending and the remainder had been refused or withdrawn.

Up to 30th June, 1944, the expenditure was £2,505,395.

(iv) *Assistance Granted.* The total expenditure incurred, apart from war and service pensions, during the period from 8th April, 1918 to 30th June, 1944, was £26,156,781, of which £1,693,718 represented loan and £24,463,063 general expenditure. Of the total, the largest amounts were absorbed by medical treatment with £12 million, vocational training with £5 million, and expenses of providing employment, £2½ million.

By amending legislation passed during the 1939-45 War, the provisions relating to existing general benefits were applied in respect of soldiers engaged in that war, and new benefits designed for their re-establishment after discharge from the Forces were made available. The new benefits are placement in employment; payment of sustenance while awaiting employment; provision of tools of trade to those for whom such tools are deemed necessary in the exercise of their calling; supplementation of wages of apprentices whose apprenticeships have been interrupted by war service; and provision of free passage to Australia for the wives and children of soldiers who, during the war, have married abroad.

2. *Expenditure of Repatriation Commission.*—The expenditure of the Commission for the year ended 30th June, 1944 was £12,406,401, distributed as follows :—

Repatriation benefits—	£
Loans to soldiers .. .. .	17,207
Grants to soldiers and general expenditure (including maintenance of training schools, medical institutions, etc.) ..	842,032
Assistance to soldiers in necessitous circumstances .. ..	1,953
Allowances to dependants of soldiers not provided for under the Act .. .. .	1,463
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	862,655
Soldiers' Children Education Scheme .. .. .	101,467
War and Service Pensions(a) .. .. .	11,004,397
Administrative costs—	£
Salaries .. .. .	365,520
Contingencies .. .. .	81,362
	<hr/>
	437,882
Total .. .. .	<hr/> <u>12,406,401</u>

(a) Includes net payments on behalf of other countries.

3. *Losses on Soldier Settlement.*—Reference to losses incurred in connexion with settlement of returned soldiers and sailors will be found in Chapter IV., "Land Tenure and Settlement."