

We sincerely hope that merchant seamen who are prisoners or internees will all shortly be released, but until this is quite certain it would be unjust that the legislation should be allowed to lapse. There is, for instance, the distinct possibility that some seamen will turn up as prisoners about whose capture we have hitherto never been informed, especially on the Pacific.

Before turning from this subject of merchant seamen—about which one occasionally reads or hears very misinformed comments, I should like to emphasize that our merchant navy, as we like to call it, has been covered by the Pension Act since 1939.

The number of awards in payment is as follows:

Mariners	396
Fishermen	22

Auxiliary service supervisors and helpers are entitled to the protection of the Pension Act from the date of their embarkation for service outside Canada until their services are terminated by the navy, army or air force, providing their appointments were approved by the appropriate senior officer of the force to which they were attached. Helpers are pensionable at the basic rates applicable to all ranks up to and including army lieutenant. Supervisors are pensionable at the same rates as a naval lieutenant, an army captain or an air force flight lieutenant. Overseas headquarters staffs of the four auxiliary services, namely, Canadian Legion war services, the national council of the Y.M.C.A., the Knights of Columbus army huts, and the Salvation Army war services, are pensionable at rates appropriate to their ranks only with respect to death or injury suffered as a result of enemy action or counter-action.

Members of the corps of (civilian) Canadian firefighters are pensionable on the same basis as members of the armed forces, with a special provision relating ranks to equivalent status in the forces.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act contains its own pension provisions, but in 1941 it was considered desirable that adjudication upon all questions relating to claims for compensation for personal injury by accident and assessing the degree of disability incurred by members of that force should be dealt with by the Canadian Pension Commission, which in its long career has acquired a unique and valuable experience. There is a very strong case for making this provision permanent.

Special constable guards employed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police during the war were made eligible for pension in 1940, with respect to death or injury suffered during the war as a result of the performance of their duties. Only widows and children are pensionable as dependents and all claims must be made within one year of death or termination of employment with the RCMP.

The rates for death are those laid down in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and for disability are those laid down in a special order-in-council of 1934.

Provision was also made for the protection of that great volunteer army of more than 250,000 men and women who enrolled under the banner of civil defence, trained themselves in the discharge of a variety of important duties that would have been required in the event of an air raid, bombardment or enemy landing, and maintained throughout the long years of the war an efficient emergency organization.

Three distinct groups were brought under the Pension Act: registered voluntary air raid precaution workers, employees of essential services assisting in air raid precaution work, and voluntary evacuation workers.

Pension was made payable at two-thirds of the rates applicable to members of the armed forces with respect to death or injury that might occur in the performance of duties in a designated area during a black-out, during an