

Some indication of the workings of the commission may be given if I refer to the number of hearings that have taken place.

Since early in 1944, there has been a revised procedure for hearing claims arising out of the recent war. It is the practice that the files of all persons discharged on medical grounds shall be reviewed and, where there is any indication of pensionability, the matter is brought before the commission on what is technically known as a first hearing. In these cases, the initial decision is given whether or not there is an application from the member of the forces.

The number of initial decisions rendered in this way in connection with overseas personnel who have experienced injury or disease is 69,503:—

Claims fully granted number.....	13,697
Claims partially granted number.....	7,255
Pensions not granted number.....	48,551
	69,503

Of those not granted, the majority took no further action, but, of those who proceeded further in their claims, the following figures reveal that the commission is open to revise its earlier decisions on second hearing or appeal when additional evidence or argument sheds a new light on the case:—

Pensions granted or partially granted.....	1,500
Pensions granted by appeal boards.....	760

The commission has also rendered decisions on an additional 25,000 cases with service in Canada only, of which 2,242 resulted in pension awards.

The number of awards granted under the new Section 11-3 introduced in 1941 is 1,923, and it is estimated that, in the event of economic hardship arising in the future, no fewer than 12,313 additional cases would be entitled to consideration under this section as a result of rulings that the injury or disease resulting in disability was incurred or aggravated during service.

The work of the commission is well in hand and claims for wounds and serious disability are usually dealt with by the commission within a week or so of the receipt of the proceedings of the medical board on discharge.

The work of the appeal boards, which is necessarily much more deliberate since great care is expended in the preparation of the claims, is also well up to date. On August 31, there were 750 cases listed as ready for hearing and approximately 200 were disposed of during the month of September.

A small number of pensions from the First Great War were suspended as the result of enemy occupation of the countries in which the pensioners resided. Through the co-operation of the Department of External Affairs, the commission has taken energetic action towards the reinstatement of such pensions at the earliest possible moment after liberation.

One of the responsibilities entrusted to the commission during the war has been the administration of detention allowances for seamen of Canadian nationality captured by the enemy or interned by neutrals. As these seamen were liberated, arrangements were made through the good offices of the High Commissioner for Great Britain and the overseas representative of the Department of Veterans Affairs for making substantial advances of credit to these seamen on their arrival in Great Britain. On arrival at a Canadian port, they were again met and issued with further cash credits pending final adjustment of their accounts.

I have said little about the expansion of our hospital services but this has been one of the most important and taxing responsibilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs during the past six years.

When war broke out the department was operating 8 hospitals.