

The widows who were entitled to allowances were limited to the widows of veterans who would themselves have been eligible for War Veterans' Allowance, and the economic conditions were also identical with those applicable to War Veterans' Allowance.

The adoption of this important new measure for the veterans of the former war in the very midst of the new war is, I think, highly creditable to parliament, in that the problems of the elderly veterans and their dependents were still able to receive sympathetic consideration despite the stress and strain and responsibilities of the great conflict in which we were then engaged.

In this connection I should add that numbers of other major and minor improvements in pension, treatment and allowance regulations for the aging generation of veterans of the war 1914-18 were adopted during the period of the war which has just ended.

1944

The year 1944 was a culminating year in our efforts to plan and legislate for the demobilization and reconstruction period.

The work of our advisory committees, both those set up by parliament and by the administration, had reached an advanced point during 1943, resulting in the presentation and publication of numbers of the many reports and recommendations to which I have already referred. In 1944 these reports bore fruit in a substantial body of legislation which was brought before parliament and enacted in the session of that year. These measures dealt with all three closely inter-related aspects of the post-war problem:

1. Veterans rehabilitation,
2. Economic reconstruction,
3. Social security.

With direct bearing on the rehabilitation of members of the armed forces there were three acts and two major orders in council.

The Department of Veterans Affairs was constituted by chapter 19 of 1944, a copy of which is to be found in the reference manual (Appendix 1) at page 299. This act was timely in two respects. With the increased attention given to health insurance and social services it was appropriate that there should be a special Department of National Health and Welfare. Accordingly the health services, formerly administered by the Department of Pensions and National Health were transferred to the new Department of National Health and Welfare.

Similarly with the heavy responsibility of the coming few years with respect to the re-establishment of the former members of the services it was appropriate that the minister responsible for that activity should be freed of other duties. At the same time effect was given to a long-standing point of view expressed by ex-servicemen's organizations that all veteran legislation, as far as possible, should be under one minister. Accordingly, the administration of the Veterans' Land Act was transferred from the Minister of Mines and Resources to the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

In the same session, parliament enacted the Veterans Insurance Act as Chapter 49. A copy of the Act appears in the reference manual at Page 505.

I file as Appendix 39 three orders in council, P.C. 8051, October 17, 1944, P.C. 3856, May 29, 1945, and P.C. 5604, August 16, 1945, containing regulations passed under authority of the Act. The first mentioned transfers the administration from the Minister of Finance to the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

As Appendix 40, I file the recommendation of the general advisory committee on this subject, together with the minutes of the sub-committee which made the preliminary studies of the principles to be incorporated in this legislation.