

CHAPTER XXIX.

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. Also in the Official Year Book referred to, and in subsequent issues, some account was given 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 members of the Forces 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.

Under the Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Act 1950, rates of pension and medical sustenance were increased, and pensions and benefits under the Act were extended to those members of the Forces (and their dependants) engaged in operations in Korea and Malaya. Provision was also made for payment to a war widow, on re-marriage, of a gratuity equal to one year's war pension. In addition, an important amendment was a change in the basis of war pensioning. Previously, the basis was the daily rate of service pay, but under this legislation the rank, not the pay, of the service man or woman became the basis. This change was brought about as the result of the increased rates of pay of members of the Forces under the new pay code from 1st July, 1947, and the further increases since then. The constantly rising rates of pay made it evident that the basis of pensioning on the daily rate of pay would be unworkable; for example, the rates of pay of more or less senior officers of the 1914–18 War, and of the 1939–45 War discharged before 1st July, 1947, were less than the new rates of pay for present day lower ranks, with a consequent disparity in the rates of pension. To avoid this disparity, the daily rate of pay basis—which had been in operation since the original war pension legislation of 1914—was abandoned in favour of the basis of pensioning according to the rank of the member, the basis adopted by other countries.

Amendments to the Act in 1951–52, 1953–54 and 1954–55 made provision for general increases in the rate of certain types of war pension. Other payments were accordingly affected, and additional benefits were provided.

The main activities of the Repatriation Commission at 30th June, 1956, were the grant, review and assessment of war and service pensions, the provision of medical treatment, 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.**—The first provision for the payment of war pensions to members of the Forces 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 (amended from 31st December, 1950 to the Repatriation Act). Owing to limitations of space, only some of the main features relating to war pensions under the Repatriation Act 1920–1955 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 that happened during the period from the date of his enlistment to the date of the termination of his service in respect of that enlistment.
- (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 existed at enlistment, a pension may accrue if it is considered that such condition was aggravated by service.

(ii) *Pensions for Incapacity.* From 7th October, 1954, the 100 per cent. pension rate for a member's incapacity was increased from £8 5s. to £9 per fortnight (higher rates were payable in respect of certain commissioned ranks). The rates for wives and children of such members are £3 11s. and £1 7s. 6d. per fortnight respectively. From 20th October, 1955, the member's 100 per cent. incapacity rate was increased from £9 to £9 10s. 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 may be granted to bring the total pension to the member up to £19 10s. per fortnight from 20th October, 1955.

(iv) *Women's Nursing and Auxiliary Services.* Members of Women's Services are entitled to pensions and other benefits as prescribed in the Act on the same basis as male members of the Forces.

(v) *Tuberculosis.* 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* § 3. Service Pensions.)

(vi) *Special Rates.* Those who have been totally blinded as the result of war service and those who are permanently and totally incapacitated receive as from 5th November, 1953, special pensions of £18 10s. per fortnight. The rate for Tuberculars, Class "B" (fit for light employment) was increased from £12 to £13 per fortnight. The rates were further increased to £19 10s. and to £14 per fortnight respectively from 20th October, 1955. In addition to the special pension, an attendant's allowance of £3 10s. per fortnight is granted to the war-blinded and to certain others who are deemed to be in need of an attendant. A war-blinded member who is also affected with total loss of speech or total deafness was entitled from 2nd October, 1952, to an attendant's allowance of £7 per fortnight in lieu of that referred to above. Attendant's allowance rates were further increased from 20th October, 1955, to £5 10s. and to £9 per fortnight respectively. The wife and any children under 16 years of age receive the same rates as shown in sub-para. (ii).

(vii) *Specified Disabilities.* Where the disability is amputation of a limb or limbs or total loss of vision in one eye, amounts ranging from 17s. to £10 per fortnight in addition to the statutory rate of pension are payable as from 20th October, 1955. In addition, allowances of either £5 10s. or £9 per fortnight are payable in certain double amputation cases.

(viii) *Time Limit for Wives and Children Removed.* Prior to the 1950 amending Act wives who were married and children who were born after 1st July, 1938, were ineligible to receive a war pension. This time limit was removed as from 2nd November, 1950.

(ix) *Rates of Pensions for Death. (a) Widows.* As already indicated, rates of pension, which were previously based on the daily rate of pay of the member, are now based on the rank of the member. From 20th October, 1955, the rates were increased by £1 per fortnight, the minimum rate being increased from £8 to £9 per fortnight. In addition to the pension, the widow, if she has dependent children, receives an allowance if she is permanently unemployable, or if she is over 50 years of age; this allowance is £3 9s. per fortnight. The allowance may also be paid to a widow under 50 years of age, in certain cases, so long as the child (or one of the children if more than one child) over the age of sixteen, is undergoing education or training but has not qualified for (or is not receiving) the adult wage in the trade, occupation or calling for which the child is training.

(b) *Children.* From 2nd October, 1952, the rate of pension for the eldest child (under 16 years of age) was increased to £2 13s. per fortnight, and that of each younger child to £1 17s. Additional pension of 12s. per fortnight may be paid in certain circumstances. Where both parents are dead each child is pensioned at the rate of £4 16s. per fortnight.

(x) *Widowed Mother on Death of Member.* A pension ranging from £4 10s. to £8 6s. per fortnight, according to the rank of the member, may be granted to a widowed mother of a deceased unmarried son, provided widowhood occurred either prior to or within three years after the death of the member. The pension may be supplemented by payment to a prescribed person of an additional amount not exceeding £8 per fortnight according to the extent of other income of the pensioner; this operated from 20th October, 1955. The value of property possessed does not affect the issue.

2. *Appeals 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 members for service pensions.

3. *Summary of War Pensions, 1955–56.*—At 30th June, 1956, the number of war pensions for the 1914–18 War was 136,113, for the 1939–45 War 460,854, and for the Korea and Malaya Operations 2,647, making a total of 599,614 with a liability of £43,644,987 per annum. The amount paid in war and service pensions during the year 1954–55 was £47,307,315. The outstanding features for 1955–56 for each war are listed in the following table:—

WAR PENSIONS : SUMMARY, AUSTRALIA, 1955–56.

Particulars.	1914–18 War.	1939–45 War.	Korea and Malaya Operations.	Total.
New claims granted	2,337	30,098	676	33,111
Restorations	434	1,453	4	1,891
Claims rejected (gross)	1,488	13,756	305	15,549
Pensions reviewed	12,713	58,798	437	71,948
Pensions cancelled or discontinued	1,282	11,591	58	12,931
Deaths of pensioners	4,017	1,968	9	5,994
Number of pensions in force at 30th June, 1956	136,113	460,854	2,647	599,614
Annual pension liability at 30th June, 1956 £	18,939,411	24,548,421	157,155	43,644,987
Amount paid in pensions during the year 1955–56	£ (a)	(a)	(a)	43,165,677

(a) Not available.

4. Classes of War Pensions, Australia, 1955-56.—(a) *New Claims Granted.* The following is an analysis of the total number of new claims granted during 1955-56:—

WAR PENSIONS : NEW CLAIMS GRANTED, AUSTRALIA, 1955-56.

Class.	1914-18 War.	1939-45 War.	Korea and Malaya Operations.	Total.
Members	795	5,815	203	6,813
Wives of Members	1,085	6,014	185	7,284
Children	337	17,610	277	18,224
Other dependants	120	659	11	790
Total	2,337	30,098	676	33,111

(b) *Pensions in Force.* The following table shows the number of pensions in force at 30th June, 1956 for each war and for each class of pensioner:—

WAR PENSIONS IN FORCE, AUSTRALIA, 30th JUNE, 1956.

Class.	Number of Pensioners at 30th June, 1956.			
	1914-18 War.	1939-45 War.	Korea and Malaya Operations.	Total.
Children of deceased members	587	8,522	81	9,190
Orphans	47	133	..	180
War widows	18,893	10,409	52	29,354
Members	58,984	139,249	1,057	199,290
Children	4,379	181,826	784	186,989
Wives	50,879	113,769	595	165,243
Parents	2,055	6,738	73	8,866
Brothers and sisters	81	108	5	194
Others	208	100	..	308
Total	136,113	460,854	2,647	599,614

(c) *Special Rate Pensions.* At 30th June, 1956, special rate pensions of £19 10s. per fortnight were being paid to the following classes of members of the Forces:—

WAR PENSIONS: MEMBERS ON SPECIAL RATES, AUSTRALIA, 30th JUNE, 1956.

Class.	1914-18 War.	1939-45 War.	Korea and Malaya Operations.	Total.
Blinded members	212	203	4	419
Tubercular members	759	997	10	1,766
Totally and permanently incapacitated members	10,316	3,547	8	13,871
Tuberculars, Class " B " (a)	156	323	1	480

(a) Rate £14 per fortnight.

5. *Number of War Pensioners and Annual Liability, States, etc., 30th June, 1956.*—The following table shows the number of pensions in force and annual liability for each war at 30th June, 1956, according to place of payment. (The amount paid is shown on p. 1039.)

WAR PENSIONS : NUMBER OF PENSIONERS AND ANNUAL LIABILITY, 30th JUNE, 1956.

Where Paid.	Number of War Pensions in Force at 30th June, 1956.				Annual Pension Liability. (£.)
	Incapacitated Members of the Forces.	Dependants of Incapacitated Members.	Dependants of Deceased Members.	Total.	
1914-18 WAR.					
New South Wales(a)	19,029	17,908	7,296	44,233	6,226,813
Victoria	19,900	18,182	7,128	45,210	6,218,070
Queensland	7,015	6,525	1,922	15,462	2,241,893
South Australia(b)	4,384	4,319	1,735	10,438	1,550,954
Western Australia	4,781	4,802	1,542	11,125	1,328,827
Tasmania	2,620	2,676	855	6,151	941,009
<i>Total, Australia</i>	<i>57,729</i>	<i>54,412</i>	<i>20,478</i>	<i>132,619</i>	<i>18,507,566</i>
Overseas	1,255	1,308	931	3,494	431,845
Total	58,984	55,720	21,409	136,113	18,939,411
1939-45 WAR.					
New South Wales(a)	48,971	97,882	9,618	156,471	8,462,387
Victoria	37,279	78,877	6,801	122,957	6,551,336
Queensland	18,636	41,904	3,279	63,819	3,513,017
South Australia(b)	15,187	35,202	2,283	52,672	2,662,809
Western Australia	13,109	27,700	2,250	43,059	2,148,006
Tasmania	5,559	13,878	784	20,221	1,073,049
<i>Total, Australia</i>	<i>138,741</i>	<i>295,443</i>	<i>25,015</i>	<i>459,199</i>	<i>24,410,604</i>
Overseas	508	771	376	1,655	137,817
Total	139,249	296,214	25,391	460,854	24,548,421
KOREA AND MALAYA OPERATIONS.					
New South Wales(a)	403	523	81	1,007	57,547
Victoria	273	343	45	661	35,354
Queensland	161	204	28	393	25,560
South Australia(b)	68	112	4	184	12,719
Western Australia	96	128	19	243	14,844
Tasmania	40	60	11	111	5,923
<i>Total, Australia</i>	<i>1,041</i>	<i>1,370</i>	<i>188</i>	<i>2,599</i>	<i>151,947</i>
Overseas	16	12	20	48	5,208
Total	1,057	1,382	208	2,647	157,155

(a) Includes Australian Capital Territory.

(b) Includes Northern Territory.

6. **Summary of War Pensions.**—(i) *Number.* The following table shows, for each war, the number of pensions granted, claims rejected, pensions in force, and the annual liability for pensions in each of the years ended 30th June, 1947 to 1956 and the total for all war pensions for each of the years ended 30th June, 1931, 1939 and 1947 to 1956:—

WAR PENSIONS : SUMMARY, AUSTRALIA.

Year ended 30th June—	Pensions Granted.	Claims Rejected.	Number of War Pensions in Force at 30th June.				Annual Pension Liability at 30th June. (£.)
			Incapaci- tated Members of the Forces.	Depend- ants of Incapaci- tated Members.	Depend- ants of Deceased Members.	Total.	
1914-18 WAR.							
1947	811	572	68,375	73,825	19,759	161,959	8,163,025
1948	1,378	717	67,116	68,323	19,863	155,302	8,475,915
1949	1,902	768	66,264	63,937	20,137	150,338	9,654,011
1950	2,547	1,201	65,622	60,141	20,509	146,272	10,103,752
1951	8,567	1,480	64,889	62,918	20,709	148,516	13,271,144
1952	4,090	1,386	63,800	61,775	20,684	146,259	14,447,983
1953	3,090	1,136	62,703	60,000	20,793	143,496	15,674,373
1954	3,063	1,559	61,634	58,390	20,980	141,004	16,574,412
1955	2,758	2,031	60,398	57,045	21,198	138,641	17,673,142
1956	2,337	1,488	58,984	55,720	21,409	136,113	18,939,411

1939-45 WAR.

1947	51,019	31,266	83,995	122,205	26,478	232,678	6,841,567
1948	39,188	13,614	91,657	142,112	26,530	260,299	7,759,793
1949	39,016	8,192	99,852	163,504	26,421	289,777	9,522,250
1950	44,392	7,312	108,922	189,413	26,649	324,984	10,638,011
1951	39,866	8,387	115,942	211,735	26,434	354,111	14,483,436
1952	36,259	8,864	120,889	231,068	26,232	378,189	15,862,473
1953	33,944	8,034	125,366	248,483	25,885	399,734	18,502,675
1954	33,370	13,733	129,926	265,552	25,773	421,251	20,211,273
1955	33,748	18,380	134,979	282,367	25,516	442,862	22,424,840
1956	30,098	13,756	139,249	296,214	25,391	460,854	24,548,421

KOREA AND MALAYA OPERATIONS.

1951	48	..	5	1	42	48	6,265
1952	312	153	159	109	99	367	30,873
1953	399	241	326	274	144	744	53,519
1954	698	450	643	572	196	1,411	92,652
1955	642	507	878	949	207	2,034	125,738
1956	676	305	1,057	1,382	208	2,647	157,155

TOTAL.

1931	11,555	920	75,316	172,389	35,617	283,322	7,774,806
1939	6,794	7,541	77,151	144,571	27,571	249,293	7,681,095
1947	51,830	31,838	152,370	196,030	46,237	394,637	15,004,592
1948	40,566	14,331	158,773	210,435	46,393	415,601	16,235,708
1949	40,918	8,960	166,116	227,441	46,558	440,115	19,176,261
1950	46,939	8,513	174,544	249,554	47,158	471,256	20,741,763
1951	48,481	9,867	180,836	274,654	47,185	502,675	27,760,845
1952	40,661	10,403	184,848	292,952	47,015	524,815	30,341,329
1953	37,433	9,411	188,395	308,757	46,822	543,974	34,230,567
1954	37,131	15,742	192,203	324,514	46,949	563,666	36,878,337
1955	37,148	20,918	196,255	340,361	46,921	583,537	40,223,720
1956	33,111	15,549	199,290	353,316	47,008	599,614	43,644,987

(ii) *Amount Paid and Place of Payment.* The following table shows for the years 1950-51 to 1955-56 the amounts paid in pensions and place where paid:—

WAR PENSIONS: AMOUNT PAID.

(£.)

Place of Payment.	1950-51.	1951-52.	1952-53.	1953-54.	1954-55.	1955-56.
New South Wales(a)	9,446,734	11,046,938	11,769,571	12,578,067	14,100,305	14,501,426
Victoria	7,303,282	9,184,196	9,918,742	10,600,721	11,975,025	12,718,047
Queensland	3,016,499	3,777,019	4,109,763	4,591,219	5,385,216	5,763,319
South Australia(b)	2,452,245	3,046,575	3,349,467	3,583,510	4,101,624	4,135,874
Western Australia	2,272,533	2,714,606	2,921,367	3,086,783	3,438,517	3,450,830
Tasmania	1,297,490	1,560,560	1,714,609	1,820,440	1,933,349	2,017,289
Overseas	402,935	515,119	572,276	536,304	514,575	578,892
Total	26,191,718	31,845,013	34,355,795	36,797,044	41,448,611	43,165,677

(a) Includes Australian Capital Territory.

(b) Includes Northern Territory.

§ 3. Service Pensions.

1. *General.*—The payment of service pensions is provided for in the Repatriation Act 1920-1955 and has operated since 1st January, 1936.

Originally fixed on a lower scale, the maximum rate of service pension for a member of the Forces now conforms to the rate of the age or invalid pension, which was increased from £7 to £8 per fortnight from 20th October, 1955. Since the 18th October, 1956, a member service pensioner with two or more children under the age of 16 years can receive a further £1 per fortnight in respect of each child (except the first) providing the member is permanently incapacitated for work and has the custody, care and control of the children. The maximum rate for the wife of a member is £3 10s. per fortnight; the rate for the first child under 16 years of age is 23s. per fortnight and 5s. per fortnight is payable 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, except income derived from property, and property (apart from the home and certain other exemptions) owned by the pensioner, and no service pension can be paid where the other income and/or property exceeds certain specified limits. From 7th October, 1954 the allowed income was £364 per annum for a single man and £728 per annum in the case of a member and wife. The amounts were raised to £390 and £780 operative from 20th October, 1955 in conformity with the member's rate increase. If a member has property (apart from the home and certain other exemptions) exceeding in value £1,750 (£3,500 for a member and wife), that alone precludes payment of a pension. Pension is assessed according to the amount of income; if the income is less than the amount shown above, service pension is assessed at such rate as will, with that other income, bring the total income (including service pension) of the pensioner up to the allowed income provided that the pension cannot exceed the maximum rate specified for the particular class of case. If assessable property is held, then a deduction is made from the pension assessed according to income only, the deductions being made at 9d. per fortnight for each complete £10 of property in excess of £200 (or £400 in the case of member and wife). Half the combined income received and property possessed by man and wife is deemed to be income received and property possessed by each for Service pension purposes.

In 1936, female members of the Forces were made eligible for consideration for service pensions if they embarked for service abroad; previously they 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, which benefits particularly inmates of mental hospitals, was £2 9s. per fortnight from 5th November, 1953, but was increased to £2 16s. per fortnight from 20th October, 1955.

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

- (a) Sixty years of age or more, provided the member served in a theatre of war, but eligibility on this ground applies only to the member 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 member 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 member, his wife and children up to four in number.
- (c) Pulmonary tuberculosis, whether the member 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 members who qualify under Class (c) are entitled to receive both service and invalid pensions at the same time.

From 1st November, 1941, service pensions were extended to veterans of the South African War 1899–1902, and in 1943 to members of the Forces of the 1939–45 War, and now also apply to members who served in the Korea and Malaya operations.

2. Operations, 1955–56.—The following table gives a summary relating to service pensions during 1955–56:—

Claims granted during year—						
Members of the Forces	..	..	..	..	..	7,414
Wives	..	..	..	..	..	5,072
Children	..	..	..	..	..	1,748
Total	..	..	..	..	..	14,234
Claims rejected during year—						
Members of the Forces	..	..	..	..	..	1,362
Wives	..	..	..	..	..	824
Children	..	..	..	..	..	486
Total	..	..	..	..	..	2,672
Service pensions cancelled or discontinued during year	..	..	..	..	..	2,268
Deaths of pensioners during year	..	..	..	..	..	1,402
Pensions in force at 30th June, 1956	..	..	..	..	..	34,775
Annual pension liability on 30th June, 1956	..	..	..	..	..	£4,694,822

3. Number of Service Pensioners and Amount Paid.—(i) *Summary, Australia.* The following table shows the number of service pensions in force and the amount paid in pensions for the ten years 1946–47 to 1955–56.

SERVICE PENSIONS: SUMMARY, AUSTRALIA.

Year.	Number of Service Pensions in Force at 30th June—						Total.	Amount Paid in Pensions during year ended 30th June.	
	Age.	Permanently Unemployable.			Suffering from Pulmonary Tuberculosis.				
	Members of Forces.	Members of Forces.	Dependants.	Members of Forces.	Dependants.				
1947	5,894	4,312	3,657	254	358	14,475	£ 904,120
1948	6,610	4,660	3,791	271	358	15,690	1,238,112
1949	7,070	4,613	3,699	271	365	16,018	1,328,955
1950	7,448	4,608	3,598	299	385	16,338	1,431,687
1951	7,456	4,492	3,911	279	374	16,512	1,507,258
1952	7,587	4,561	4,270	269	389	17,076	1,778,380
1953	8,703	4,971	4,780	291	432	19,177	2,225,044
1954	9,648	5,294	5,092	321	451	20,806	2,694,522
1955	10,566	5,555	5,286	379	530	22,316	3,011,861
1956	11,881	9,733	10,001	1,266	1,894	34,775	4,140,488

(ii) *Amount Paid and State where Paid.* The following table shows for the years 1951–52 to 1955–56 the amounts paid in pensions and the State where paid:—

SERVICE PENSIONS : AMOUNT PAID.

(£.)

State where Paid.	1951–52.	1952–53.	1953–54.	1954–55.	1955–56.
New South Wales(a)	609,432	764,803	977,815	1,050,593	1,472,949
Victoria	382,584	503,946	601,579	684,636	958,825
Queensland	325,546	396,090	467,038	528,571	679,181
South Australia(b)	174,303	215,626	259,438	287,624	401,159
Western Australia	224,558	278,115	302,617	361,294	482,021
Tasmania	61,957	66,464	86,035	99,143	146,353
Australia	1,778,380	2,225,044	2,694,522	3,011,861	4,140,488

(a) Includes Australian Capital Territory.

(b) Includes Northern Territory.

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

At 30th June, 1956, there were 4,586 in-patients in Repatriation medical institutions and State mental hospitals, including a number whose care was undertaken by the Repatriation Commission on behalf of other countries or Commonwealth Departments. There were 377,641 out-patient attendances for treatment during the year, excluding approximately 964,000 treatments by the 3,805 local medical officers resident in metropolitan and country areas and New Guinea. The expenditure for the year ended 30th June, 1956 was £9,559,880.

§ 5. General Benefits and Miscellaneous.

1. *Other Departmental Activities.*—(i) *General.* During the 1939–45 War, the ordinary activities of the Department in the way of general benefits for the welfare of members and dependants were carried on without interruption. They were mainly education and training of children under the Soldiers' Children Education Scheme, medical benefits for widows and children of deceased members and for widowed mothers of deceased unmarried members, funeral expenses for certain classes of members and dependants, and allowances to certain classes of dependants in lieu of pension.

By legislation passed in June, 1940, these benefits were extended to members engaged in the 1939–45 War and in November, 1950, to those engaged in the Korea and Malaya Operations and new benefits designed for the re-establishment of members after discharge from the Forces were made available. The re-establishment benefits administered by the Repatriation Commission are:—payment of re-employment allowance while awaiting employment; provision of tools of trade and equipment where such are necessary to the member's employment; transportation expenses to meet the cost of fares and removal of household belongings, where a member, or member and family, takes up training, employment, or a business, or settles on the land; supplementation of wages of apprentices whose apprenticeships were interrupted by war service; re-establishment loans to enable members and widows to establish themselves in business, practices or other occupations,

including (until the Division of War Service Land Settlement began operations early in 1946) agricultural occupations; payment of re-establishment allowance during the early stages of establishment in business; gifts up to £75 for furniture to members who are blind or totally and permanently incapacitated, also to widows with children under 16 years of age; and free passages to Australia for wives, widows and children of members who married abroad (and passages outward from Australia in certain cases of members and dependants).

In 1949, the Commission took over the functions of the Re-establishment Division of the former Department of Post-war Reconstruction, and is responsible for the co-ordination of all matters relating to training under the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme. Re-establishment of the more seriously disabled, where ordinary training is not sufficient, continues to be a function of the Commission, and special means have to be found to overcome each problem.

(ii) *General Repatriation Benefits.* The following table gives a summary of expenditure during 1955–56 on the more important general repatriation benefits for all wars.

GENERAL REPATRIATION BENEFITS, 1955–56.

Benefit.	Expenditure, 1955–56.	
	£	£
<i>Medical Treatment of Members—</i>		
Maintenance of Institutions	5,516,934	
Dispensing of Prescriptions	925,855	
Fees to Consultants, etc.	793,239	
“ Diagnosis and Report ” Cases Investigated	431,980	
Maintenance of Patients in other than Repatriation Institutions	555,644	
Sustenance Allowance	600,245	
Other Treatment (Surgical Aids, Dental Treatment, etc.) ..	359,065	
		9,182,962
<i>Medical Treatment of Dependants</i> .. .. .	..	376,918
<i>Employment and Vocational Training—</i>		
Re-employment Allowance	34	
Tools of Trade (gift)	3,132	
Tools of Trade (loan)	1,192	
Members in Training (a)	213,188	
Supplementation of Apprentices’ Wages	101	
Fares and Removal Expenses	4,064	
		221,711
<i>Business Loans</i> .. .. .	..	145,149
<i>Furniture Grants—</i>		
Widows	238	
Members	66	
		304
<i>Soldiers’ Children Education Scheme</i> .. .. .	..	348,282
<i>Living Allowances</i> .. .. .	..	2,357,660
<i>Other Benefits</i> .. .. .	..	206,615
Total .. .. .	..	12,839,601

(a) Expenditure by the Department of Labour and National Service and the Universities Commission.

The following table gives a summary of expenditure during the ten years 1946–47 to 1955–56 on the more important general repatriation benefits for all wars.

EXPENDITURE ON GENERAL REPATRIATION BENEFITS, SUMMARY
1946-47 TO 1955-56.

Year ended 30th June.	Medical Treatment.	Employment and Vocational Training.	Business Loans and Furniture.	Living Allowances.	Soldiers' Children Education Scheme.	Other Benefits.	Total.
1947 ..	2,829,807	12,089,063	2,031,099	12,584	130,872	258,938	17,352,363
1948 ..	4,215,895	14,607,238	1,589,975	71,341	152,952	169,967	20,807,368
1949 ..	4,718,517	11,212,507	1,107,330	110,823	160,400	187,447	17,497,024
1950 ..	5,232,826	7,152,451	803,646	105,803	192,734	201,218	13,688,678
1951 ..	6,644,382	4,095,684	596,420	283,228	184,226	210,159	12,014,099
1952 ..	7,849,876	1,778,679	283,087	1,399,057	208,789	193,001	11,712,489
1953 ..	8,444,886	967,473	270,755	1,863,490	287,283	225,261	12,059,148
1954 ..	8,906,189	505,944	227,679	2,128,052	340,496	223,781	12,332,141
1955 ..	8,969,116	313,242	178,060	2,334,047	368,876	229,591	12,392,932
1956 ..	9,559,880	221,711	145,453	2,357,660	348,282	206,615	12,839,601

2. *Expenditure by the Repatriation Commission, 1955-56.*—The total net expenditure by the Repatriation Commission for the year ended 30th June, 1956, was £64,099,557, distributed as follows:—

<i>Repatriation Benefits—</i>		£	£
War and Service Pensions .. .. .	.. .. .	47,307,315	
Maintenance of Medical Institutions, Medical Treatment, etc. .. .. .	.. .. .	12,388,527	
Soldiers' Children Education Scheme .. .. .	.. .. .	348,282	
		<hr/>	60,044,124
<i>Administration .. .. .</i>	.. .. .		3,157,799
<i>Capital Works and Services .. .. .</i>	.. .. .		897,634
			<hr/>
			64,099,557

3. *Settlement of Returned Service Personnel on the Land.*—Reference to the settlement on the land of returned service personnel will be found in Chapter IV.—*Land Tenure and Settlement.*

4. *The Services Canteens Trust Fund.*—(i) *Introduction.* The Services Canteens Trust Fund was established under the Services Trust Funds Act 1947. This act transferred to the fund the profits and assets of the Army, Navy and Air Force canteens, the mess and regimental funds of disbanded wartime units, money derived from the sale of amenities supplied to the defence forces between the 3rd September, 1939, and the 30th June, 1947, and funds held by the A.M.F. Special Benefits Committee, the trustees of the R.A.N. Relief Fund and the trustees of the R.A.A.F. Welfare Fund.

(ii) *Establishment and Administration of the Fund.* The total amount transferred to the fund to the 31st December, 1956, was £5,505,775. The act prescribed that of this, £2,500,000, and such further amounts as the trustees of the fund may from time to time decide, should be devoted to the provision of education facilities for the children of eligible ex-servicemen and women, and that the balance of the fund should be used to provide relief for ex-servicemen and women and their dependants who are in necessitous circumstances.

The fund is administered by ten trustees, consisting of a chairman, a businessman selected by the government, and nominees of the Navy, Army, Air Force, Women's services, the Disabled Soldiers' Council, the Ex-naval Men's Association, the Air Force Association and the Returned Sailors', Soldiers' and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia. These

trustees all serve in an honorary capacity. They have power to determine the persons or groups of persons to benefit from the fund and the extent of benefits to be granted within the provisions of the act, and to appoint regional committees to assist with the administration.

Regional committees have been established in all Australian States, the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory, New Zealand and London. All Australian diplomatic and consular posts also act as local representatives of the trustees. They have delegated to them by the trustees specific powers to deal with applications for assistance from the fund.

Members of regional committees are all persons who served in the 1939–45 War or are widows of men who served during the war, and, with the exception of regional chairmen and deputy chairmen, have been selected by the trustees from nominees of the major ex-service organizations. They also serve in an honorary capacity.

(iii) *Assistance from the Fund.* Persons eligible for assistance from the fund are those who between the 30th September, 1939 and the 30th June, 1947 served in the Australian Naval, Military or Air Forces (including members of the Canteens Staff of any ship of the Royal Australian Navy), persons duly accredited to any part of the Defence Force who served in an official capacity on full-time paid duty, and their dependants.

The trustees are charged under the Services Trust Funds Act with:—

- (a) providing educational assistance including professional and trade training—
 - (i) for the children of deceased or incapacitated eligible servicemen or of eligible servicemen who are in needy circumstances; and
 - (ii) for the children of other eligible servicemen which children are in the opinion of the trustees particularly deserving of assistance by reason of exceptional circumstances;
- (b) providing benefits for—
 - (i) eligible servicemen in necessitous or deserving circumstances;
 - (ii) the dependants of deceased or totally or partially incapacitated eligible servicemen or of eligible servicemen in necessitous or deserving circumstances;
 - (iii) the dependants of eligible servicemen other than those mentioned in paragraph (ii) above, which dependants are, in the opinion of the trustees, in necessitous circumstances or particularly deserving of assistance;
 - (iv) the provision of relief or benefit for eligible servicemen and their dependants in such other cases as the trustees think fit.

The trustees have introduced schemes for providing—

- (a) welfare relief for ex-service men and women who are eligible for benefits and their dependants;
- (b) benefits for children of eligible ex-service men and women who are suffering from serious and incapacitating afflictions; and
- (c) education benefits for the children of eligible ex-service men and women.

Because over 1,000,000 men and women and all their dependants are eligible for benefits, the assistance that can be provided in individual cases is limited and the trustees have prescribed a policy for welfare relief which makes assistance available only to those who are in genuine distress from which they cannot with their own efforts extricate themselves. In determining the nature or amount of relief to be granted, care is taken wherever possible to use the fund constructively with the object of assisting the applicant to achieve independence, and of discouraging any tendency towards increasing dependence on social welfare organizations. For example, the regular supplementation of pension or low income for an indefinite period is contrary to the policy of the trustees, as it is quite impossible for the fund to assume a general responsibility of that nature. Instead every effort is made to assist the applicant to adjust his mode of living or to increase his income himself so that he may live within it. Either the applicant, or his dependants, should be deserving of assistance. Though the fund is not used in such a way as to encourage improvidence, even the complete worthlessness of the eligible person will not debar deserving dependants.

The fund is to be available for 40 years from its inauguration in 1947 for welfare relief, and for 30 years for education.

Applications are carefully investigated to determine the bona fides of the applicant and the case presented, and to help regional committees in deciding the kind of assistance, if any, to be given. Where possible, investigations are made by trained social workers either on the staff of the fund or of recognized agencies.

The following amounts of welfare relief have been granted from the fund:—

—	For the Year 1956.	Total to 31st December, 1956.
	£	£
To ex-service men and women	52,436	542,445
To widows and orphans	30,265	239,147
Total	82,701	781,592

A total of 20,498 ex-service men and women and 7,299 widows and orphans were granted welfare assistance from the Fund to the 31st December, 1956.

Of all persons eligible for assistance from the fund, widows and orphans are likely to be in greatest need, especially in the period immediately following the death of an ex-serviceman. Consequently a special effort is made to locate these widows and orphans and their degree of need is interpreted more leniently than is that of ex-servicemen.

Also particularly deserving of assistance are dependant children suffering from afflictions which permanently disable or seriously retard their progress or prevent the enjoyment of normal health and strength and present a prospect of complete or partial dependence on others for all or part of their lives. The trustees introduced a plan to ensure that any eligible child suffering from a serious affliction may be assisted as necessary and may have access to whatever treatment or facilities are available to help the child be as normal, self-reliant, self-supporting, socially acceptable, mobile, and happy as possible, despite his or her handicap. The extent to which assistance will be granted in a particular case depends largely on the nature of the child's affliction, the facilities available, the family circumstances, and the funds that can be made available.

Up to 31st December, 1956, 1,236 afflicted children had been assisted under the Afflicted Children's Scheme involving an expenditure of £53,849.

Educational assistance is restricted to children who are 14 years of age and over, except in the case of orphans, when assistance commences at the age of 12 years, or in the case of orphans eligible for education allowances from the Repatriation Department, where education assistance is granted from the age of 13. The object of the trustees is to assist eligible children to obtain the highest education within their capacity.

Educational assistance from the fund is in the form of education awards ranging from £5 to £200 a year depending on the cost of the course undertaken and the family circumstances.

These awards are granted for practically every type of course of education including secondary and tertiary education and business courses. They are designed to cover, or contribute towards, the cost of essential books, fees in cases where government school courses are not available, fares between the child's home and school, essential equipment and material, a uniform allowance in certain years and a maintenance allowance for the child whilst at school.

The education scheme also provides for post-graduate courses. Two post-graduate scholarships are awarded each year. One scholarship valued at £800 per annum for three years is provided for study overseas and one scholarship valued at £600 per annum for three years is available for post-graduate study in Australia.

Two post-graduate nursing awards are tenable in Australia each year. They cover fees, fares, books and a maintenance allowance at the rate of £6 per week for the duration of the course. In addition, post-graduate nursing awards are granted for post-graduate nursing training overseas in courses which are not available in Australia.

The number of children assisted under the education scheme to 31st December, 1956 was 19,996, and the expenditure on education awards, post-graduate scholarships and post-graduate nursing awards to 31st December, 1956 was £815,288.