

To further assist the public in lodging their applications, Social Security district offices remained open until 9 p.m. each week-night for some weeks until the bulk of the applications had been received.

(2) REHABILITATION ALLOWANCES

By arrangement with the Rehabilitation Department, the Social Security Commission continued to make available, where necessary, to demobilized ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen rehabilitation allowances for periods up to thirteen weeks following the cessation of Service pay, to facilitate their reabsorption into civilian occupations.

As the majority of ex-service personnel have been quickly reabsorbed into industry, the number of cases handled during the year showed a considerable reduction compared with the previous year, and in all 2,762 cases were reviewed, representing 2,710 in respect of ex-servicemen and 52 in respect of ex-servicewomen.

Grants were made in 1,516 cases—1,480 to ex-servicemen and 36 to ex-servicewomen. Included in these grants were allowances in respect of 956 children. From 1st April, 1946, rehabilitation allowances will no longer be payable in respect of children; who will from that date receive family benefits.

During the period 1st April, 1945, to 31st March, 1946, the total amount paid out by way of rehabilitation allowances was £65,129, as compared with £131,733 for the year ended 31st March, 1945. At 31st March, 1946, there were 49 allowances current.

(3) DEMOBILIZATION ALLOWANCES

In the past it was the practice of the Army, Navy, and Air Departments to retain on Service pay and allowances personnel unfit for further military service but still requiring approved medical treatment.

From 1st August, 1945, the period Service personnel could be retained on pay was limited to twelve months from the date of arrival in New Zealand in the case of overseas servicemen undergoing treatment, and six months from the date of commencement of treatment in the case of home servicemen.

At the conclusion of the respective periods, if an incapacitated serviceman requires further treatment, he is discharged from the Forces and placed under the control of War Pensions for the continuation of treatment and for the determination of his pension and other rights by the approved authorities.

To provide for the maintenance of unfit personnel so discharged who require a continuation of treatment or medical after care and who are unable to resume civilian employment by reason of their incapacity, payment of a temporary allowance known as a "demobilization allowance" was authorized. This allowance is paid in accordance with the following scale:—

					Per Week.		
					£	s.	d.
Ex-serviceman	..	..	..	..	3	10	0
Wife	..	..	..	..	1	0	0

From 1st August, 1945 (when the scheme came into operation), until 31st March, 1946, the Commission received 111 applications for allowances—106 from ex-servicemen and 5 from ex-servicewomen. Allowances were granted to 52 ex-servicemen and 2 ex-servicewomen. The amount paid out by way of demobilization allowances was £1,913. As at 31st March, 1946, there were 30 allowances current.

(4) WAR SERVICE GRATUITIES

The War Service Gratuities Emergency Regulations 1945, which came into operation during the year, although not directly the concern of this Department, nevertheless created a considerable amount of extra work.