

DECEASED PERSONNEL AND MEN POSTED MISSING

When the Division went into action the question arose as to the manner in which the Board should treat those casualties where the dependants were in receipt of assistance. It was decided, with the Minister's concurrence, that in cases where a serviceman was killed in action the Board should act in a manner similar to that adopted by the Army authorities in regard to pay and allowances - namely, that assistance should continue for a period of three months after the date upon which notification of the casualty was issued to the next-of-kin. In the case of men reported sick or wounded or prisoners of war pay and allowances continued, and, similarly, any assistance granted by the Board went on without variation other than the normal review of the circumstances of the dependants. However, quite large numbers were reported missing, believed killed, or believed prisoner of war. In some cases this was followed a few weeks later by a more definite notification, but in others the position remained indefinite for a long period. In these cases, too, the Board continued its assistance so long as the Army pay continued. Where assistance had been discontinued by reason of the cessation of Army pay and it was subsequently reported that the soldier was a prisoner of war, assistance was resumed from the date of cessation. An exception to this rule was made in the case of payments in respect of insurance premiums, but in these cases it was arranged with the Life Offices Association that the Board would meet any premium which had accrued during the period the notification was indefinite.

GENERAL ALTERATIONS IN SCALES OF PAY AND ALLOWANCES

During the course of hostilities various changes were made in the rates of pay and allowances to dependants, and the Board, when reviewing grants, had before it the increased income thus available, and some adjustments were made to grants as a result. The Board, however, adopted the practice that portion of the increase should be made available to the dependants, and in some cases, in view of the particular circumstances, no change in the *quantum* of the grant was made.

The general increases in pay and allowances had the effect of placing the average married serviceman with, say, two children in a financial position which compared favourably with that existing in civil life. For example, a private with a wife and two children received 8s. 6d. per day pay of rank, 4s. per day wife's allowance, 3s. per day for two children, and 2s. 6d. per day domestic allowance—a total of 18s. per day, or £328 10s. per annum, which was entirely free of tax, while, in addition, the soldier was provided with food and clothing. Consequently, from the time these rates became effective, the number of applications being received by the Board fell off rapidly.

STATISTICS

The number of applications dealt with by the Board and the amount of assistance authorized year by year during its period of operation are set out briefly in the following tables :—

Applications received—

*Period ended 31st March, 1941	..	..	..	3,464
Year ended 31st March, 1942	..	..	..	4,222
Year ended 31st March, 1943	..	..	..	12,022
Year ended 31st March, 1944	..	..	..	2,911
Year ended 31st March, 1945	..	..	..	1,270
Year ended 31st March, 1946	..	..	..	417
Total to 31st March, 1946	..	..	..	24,306

* This covers a period of fifteen months from the inauguration of the Board.