

# **WAR PENSIONS: PAST AND PRESENT**

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War pensions: past and present by Edward Abbott Parry & Sir Alfred Edward Codrington

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**EDWARD ABBOTT PARRY & SIR ALFRED EDWARD CODRINGTON**

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# WAR PENSIONS:

PAST AND PRESENT

BY

HIS HONOUR JUDGE

EDWARD ABBOTT PARRY

AND

LIEUT.-GENERAL

SIR ALFRED EDWARD CODRINGTON

K.C.V.O., C.B.



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TO  
OUR FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE  
ALBERT BELLAMY



## PREFACE

**I**N the summer of 1917 we were invited to become members of a Pensions Appeal Tribunal, an independent body formed to hear and determine certain specified appeals from decisions made by the Officers of the Ministry of Pensions.

When we took up these duties we had no special knowledge or experience of our system of War Pensions, nor had we studied the principles by which it was governed or the machinery by which it was carried out.

We discovered that there was not in existence any one book dealing with the subject; and that, in order to understand the system of War Pensions which obtains to-day, it was necessary to make a very considerable historical research. We found that the modern Statutes did not define the powers and duties of the Ministry or the rights of applicants. Army Pensions were dealt with under a Royal Warrant, Navy Pensions were dependent upon a Statute, whilst the affairs of widows and orphans were in the hands of a Statutory Committee.

To appreciate the position of these various bodies necessitated research into the history of the Royal Commissioners at Chelsea, the Pension Authorities at Greenwich Hospital, and the study of the evolution of

the Royal Patriotic Fund from its beginning as a Commission to its final merger in the Ministry of Pensions.

To understand the obscure and confused history of War Pensions in this country, we found that we had to consult many old and forgotten Statutes, reports of Commissions, and lengthy volumes of evidence, some of which are now only accessible in libraries. From these we extracted a history of War Pensions which we found of considerable value to ourselves in considering questions of principle in Pension administration.

At the end of our year's work we felt that in the trial of Appeals that had come before us, we had not only gained considerable insight into the working of Pensions administration, but that the cases actually decided, and the reasons for the decisions, were worthy of publication, not only in the interests of future Applicants, but as a guide to members of Local War Pension Committees and other citizens interested in the right administration of War Pensions.

When we consider that over forty millions a year are being spent by the Ministry of Pensions, and that the right distribution of this money affects the lives of thousands of the men who have fought for us, and of the widows and orphans of those who have died in the service of their country, it seems reasonable to suppose that other citizens besides ourselves will desire to understand the constitution and powers of the Ministry appointed to carry out these duties on behalf of the nation.

To have set out at length all the official documents relating to War Pensions would be to have

compiled and edited a cumbersome law-book. We preferred to tell the story of War Pensions in a short and readable form; but at the same time we have noted all necessary references, so that any reader who desires to consult original documents may readily find them.

To many it may seem a somewhat simple matter to decide whether or not in fact an Applicant is entitled to a Pension: in the majority of cases no doubt this is so; but where a man alleges that his condition of unfitness has been aggravated by Military Service, questions of great delicacy and difficulty are bound to arise. In every Appeal that was heard the two Medical Members of the Tribunal made a careful examination of the Applicant, and thus in arriving at their decisions the Tribunal had the advantage of medical and surgical opinions of the highest authority.

In America, Appeal decisions on Pension matters are reported formally in the same manner as Law cases are in England. The decisions that we have printed in Chapter VI. are a selection from the actual decisions given in open Court; and although some of them have been reported in the Press, and a few were printed for official use, no authoritative collection of them has been published. We think that there can be no doubt that the considered decisions of the Appeal Tribunal arrived at under the conditions we have described must be of great practical value to every one concerned in the right decision of Pension Claims.

It would be foolish to assume that the country has yet achieved a perfect system of Pension administration, and in printing a short account of the American