

From the Sanitary Commission Bulletin.

Directions for Securing Pensions.

Under the act of Congress approved July 14, 1862, pensions are granted to the following class of persons:

I. **INVALIDS**, disabled since March 4, 1861, in the military or naval service of the United States, in the line of duty.

II. **WIDOWS** of officers, or seamen dying of wounds received, or of disease contracted in the military or naval service, as above.

III. **CHILDREN**, under sixteen years of age, of such deceased persons, if there is no widow's remarriage.

IV. **MOTHERS** (who have no husband living) of officers, soldiers or seamen, deceased as aforesaid, provided the latter have left neither widow nor children under sixteen years of age; and provided also, that the mother was dependent, wholly, or in part, upon the deceased for support.

V. **SISTERS**, under sixteen years of age of such deceased persons, dependent on the latter, wholly or in part, for support, provided there are no rightful claimants of either of the three last preceding classes.

The rates of pensions to the several classes and grades are distinctly set forth in the first section of the act, viz:

Lieutenant Colonel, and all officers of a high-rank, thirty dollars per month; Major, twenty-five dollars per month; Captain, twenty dollars per month; First Lieutenant seventeen dollars per month; Second Lieutenant fifteen dollars per month; and non-commissioned officers, musicians and privates, eight dollars per month. Only one full pension in any case will be allowed to the relatives of a deceased officer, soldier or seaman, and in order of precedence as set forth above. When more than one minor child or orphan sister thus becomes entitled to pension, the same must be divided equally between them.

Invalid pensions, under this law, will commence from the date of the pensioner's discharge from services, provided application is made within one year thereafter. If the claim is not made until a later date, the pension will commence from the time of the application, and will continue for life, or until he is re-examined.

Pensions of widows and minors will commence from the death of the officer, soldier, or seaman on whose service the claim is based, and continue for widows and dependent mothers until re-marriage, and for children until they arrive at the age of sixteen years.

Declarations are required to be made before a court of record, or before some officer of such court duly authorized to administer oaths, and having custody of its seal. *Testimony* may be taken before the justice of the peace, or other officer having like authority to administer oaths, but in no case will any evidence be received that is verified before an officer who is concerned in prosecuting the claim, or has a manifest interest therein.

In support of the allegations made in the claimant's declaration, testimony will be required in accordance with the following rules:

1. The claimant's identity must be proved by two witnesses, certified by a judicial officer to be respectable and credible, who are present and witness the signature of the declarant, and who state, upon oath or affirmation, their belief, either from personal acquaintance, or for other reasons given, that he or she is the identical person he or she represents himself or herself to be.

2. Every applicant for an invalid pension must, if in his power, produce the certificate of the

captain, or of some other commissioned officer under whom he served, distinctly stating the time and place of the said applicant's having been wounded, or otherwise disabled, and the nature of the disability; and that the said disability arose while he was in the service of the United States, and in the line of his duty.

3. If it be impracticable to obtain such certificate, by reason of the death or removal of the officers, it must be so stated under oath by the applicant, and his averment of the fact proved by persons of known respectability, who must state particularly all the knowledge they may possess in relation to such death or removal: then secondary evidence can be received. In such case the applicant must produce the testimony of at least two credible witnesses, (who were in a condition to know the facts about which they testify,) whose good character must be vouched for by a judicial officer, or by some one known to the department. The witnesses must give a minute narrative of the facts in relation to the matter, and must show how they obtained a knowledge of the facts to which they testify.

4. The surgeon's certificate for discharge should show the character and degree of the claimant's disability; but when that is wanting, and when the certificate of an army surgeon is not attainable, the certificate of two respectable civil surgeons will be received. These surgeons must give in their certificate a particular description of the wound, injury or disease, and specify how and in what manner his present condition and disability are connected therewith. The degree of disability for obtaining subsistence by manual labor must also be stated.

5. The habits of the applicant, and his occupation since he left the service, must be shown by at least two credible witnesses.

If the applicant claims a pension as the widow of a deceased officer or soldier, she must prove the legality of her marriage, the death of her husband, and that she is still a widow. She must also furnish the names and ages of her children under sixteen years of age at her husband's decease, and the place of their residence. On a subsequent marriage her pension will cease, and the minor child or children of the deceased officer or soldier, if any be living under the age of sixteen years, will be entitled to the same in her stead, from the date of said marriage.

Proof of the marriage of the parents and of the age of claimants will, in like manner, be required in all applications in behalf of minor children.

The legality of the marriage may be ascertained by the certificate of the clergyman who joined them in wedlock, or by the testimony of respectable persons having knowledge of the fact, in default of record evidence. The ages and number of children may be ascertained by the testimony of respectable persons having knowledge of them, or from the transcripts from the parish or town records duly authenticated.

Similar proof will be required of the marriage of the claimant, if the mother of a deceased officer or soldier, and that she remains a widow.

If the claimant be a dependent sister like proof will be required of the marriage of her parents, and of her relationship to the deceased.

Guardians of minor claimants must in all cases produce evidence of their authority as such, under the seal of the court from which their appointment is obtained.

Applicants of the last four classes above given, who have in any manner aided or abetted the rebellion against the United States government, are not entitled to the benefits of this act.

Attorneys for claimants must have proper authority from those in whose behalf they appear. Power of attorney must be signed in the presence of two witnesses, and acknowledged before a duly qualified officer, whose official character must be certified under seal.

In all cases the post-office address of the claimant must be distinctly stated.

Applications under this act will be numbered and acknowledged, to be acted on in their turn. In filing additional evidence, correspondents should always give the number of the claim as well as the name of the claimant.

Applications for pensions are made to *Hon. Joseph H. Burnett*, Commissioner of Pensions, Washington, D. C., and any claimant addressing him in person or by letter, will receive the necessary printed forms and instructions. Applications are commonly made through attorneys, or the agencies of the Sanitary Commission in Washington and Philadelphia, or other local agencies. The agency in Washington at 389 H street, is intended for applicants of every class, and from all parts of the country, and does all the business necessary to secure a claim in as prompt a manner as is possible, *without any charge* to the claimants. Persons wishing their claims to be prosecuted by this office, should address Pensions Agency of Sanitary Commission, Washington, D. C., and everything will be done for them in the promptest manner which the nature of their evidence permits.

Claimants who have recourse to local attorneys ought to be sure that they are dealing with men of known fidelity and honor. The fees of agents and attorneys are fixed by law, and are as follows:

"For making out and causing to be duly executed a declaration by the applicant, with the necessary affidavits, and forwarding the same to the pension office with the requisite correspondence, five dollars. In case whenever additional testimony is required by the Commissioner of Pensions, for each affidavit so required and executed and forwarded, (except the affidavit of Surgeons, for which such agents and attorneys shall not be entitled to any fees,) one dollar and fifty cents," (see Sec. 6, Oct. to Gen'l Pensions of July 14, 1862.) The 7th Section of said act prescribes a penalty for illegal fees, and in these words, viz: "That any agent or attorney who shall, directly or indirectly, demand or receive any greater compensation for his services under this act than is prescribed in the preceding section of this act, or who shall contract or agree to other allowance under this act, on condition that he shall receive a per centum upon, or any portion of the amount of such claim, or who shall wrongfully withhold from a pensioner or other claimant the whole or any part of the pension or claim allowed and due to each pensioner or claimant, shall be deemed guilty of a high misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof shall for every such offence be fined not exceeding three hundred dollars, or imprisoned at hard labor not exceeding two years, or both, according to the circumstances and aggravations of the offence." The requirements of the law are often evaded, notwithstanding the heavy penalties, and will probably continue to be evaded so long as invalids and other claimants are simple enough to put their trust in total strangers, of whose integrity and competency they have no knowledge.

THE Michigan Legislature proposes to appropriate \$3,500, towards laying out and beautifying that part of the Gettysburg Cemetery allotted to that State.