

VOTE 36. - DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

39. Compensation for Hearing Impairment

The charge to the vote includes settlements made to soldiers who claimed to have suffered hearing impairments after they had been exposed to excessive noise while engaged on military duties. In recent years a very significant increase in the number of soldiers making such compensation claims has arisen.

By 31 August 1997, 8,956 claims for compensation had been received. Settlements had been reached in 702 cases, 30 cases had been determined by Court hearing and 17 cases were withdrawn. Compensation of £19,355,777 and plaintiff costs of £3,107,979 had been paid in respect of the 732 cases finalised at that date.

On the basis of the settlements and court awards to date there is an unquantifiable but significant contingent liability on the State in respect of these claims.