

The procedure at present to be followed in dealing with applications for pension, arising out of the First World War is laid down in Sect. 52 of the Act. Briefly, it consists of three stages for applicants whose claims are not initially granted. On first application, the evidence presented is considered at what is known as a first hearing. If the Commission's decision is adverse to the applicant, he is entitled to a second hearing, provided he applies within 90 days of the first hearing. When presenting his claim for second hearing, he is required to include all disabilities which he claims to be due to his military service. Prior to second hearing, the applicant is furnished with a complete and detailed summary of all evidence, available in the departmental records pertaining to his case. He is given every opportunity to review this evidence to include any additional evidence he can secure and is allowed six months from the date of mailing the summary of evidence in which to prepare his claim. When notified by the applicant or his representative that the claim is ready for hearing, the Pensions Commission then gives a decision on second hearing. If this decision is adverse to the applicant, he then has the right to appear before an Appeal Board of the Commission sitting in his district and to call witnesses if he so desires. The judgment of the Appeal Board is final and the application cannot be considered again, except by special permission of an Appeal Board when it is shown, to the satisfaction of such a Board, that an error has been made by reason of evidence not having been presented or otherwise.

This procedure has proved eminently satisfactory for claims arising out of the First World War. Not only is the applicant made fully aware of the reasons which preclude entitlement to a pension, but he is given adequate expert assistance by the Veterans' Bureau or by the service bureaus of ex-service men's organizations in the preparation of his claim. It has resulted in bringing to a finality many claims in which applicants have realized that the evidence of continuity with service of the condition causing disability or death was insufficient.

The procedure affecting cases arising out of the Second World War was revised, however, and, effective Dec. 27, 1944, all-time limits for preparation and presentation of applications in such cases were suspended by Order in Council, the main provisions of which were subsequently incorporated in amendments to the Pension Act passed during the 1946 session of Parliament. When a claim has not been wholly granted, the applicant is advised of his right, under the new legislation, to renew his application without the imposition of any time limits and, when he is ready, he may inform the Commission of his intentions relating to the further prosecution of his claim, either by renewed application or by appeal. The procedure followed is very much in line with that followed in cases of the First World War, other than that there is no time limit imposed and an applicant may by-pass the "renewal hearing" and take his case before an Appeal Board sitting in his District.

In 1945-46, a thorough revision of all legislation passed since the commencement of the War, affecting veterans of the Second World War, was carried out by a select committee of the House of Commons which was appointed to:—

- (1) Consider all legislation passed since the commencement of the War with the German Reich relating to the pensions, treatment, and re-establishment of former members of His Majesty's Armed Forces and other persons who have otherwise engaged in pursuits closely related to war;
- (2) Prepare and bring in one or more Bills to clarify, amend or supplement the above legislation.