the commission is intended to provide for the welfare of children who may be solely dependent upon the mother and is designed to prevent cases of hardship.

As has already been mentioned, there is a general provision in the Pension Act that, when a new application comes forward years after the war and an award is made with respect to a disability incurred many years previously, the commission is not authorized to make the award retroactive by more than twelve months, or, under very special circumstances, eighteen months. This provision was not enacted until many years after the war of 1914-18 and is a sound principle with respect to a war long since ended.

It has been found, however, in the course of the recent war, that, for a variety of reasons, applications are not presented, or decisions are not made within the ordinary time limits, due to delays in securing records, or to administrative difficulties beyond the control of the applicant. Having regard to this difficulty, the commission on April 9, 1945, by P.C. 2395, was given power to extend the retroactive period by an additional eighteen months ,or a maximum of three years in all, where the circumstances seem to justify such action. The same order-in-council authorizes an additional eighteen months' pension to dependents in respect of the death of a member of the forces where similar circumstances arise.

The next amendment coming before the committee arises basically out of the same difficulty—that of getting speedy access to documents and records while a war is in progress and prior to the assembly in central files of the multitude of records now scattered all over the world. The amendment to which I refer wipes out certain time limits within which applications and appeals must be entered.

The procedure for handling claims arising out of the old war as laid down in the Act was the product of many years of trial and error. In my judgment it meets with the approval of a majority of the organized bodies of ex-service men, who appeared before parliamentary committees year after year, trying to help solve this vexed problem. It is a procedure well adapted to dealing with claims that arise with respect to a war that ended many years ago. There is no restriction against new applications, but there is a three months limit on giving notice of request for a second hearing, and there is a six months limit on notice of appeal. These are the three stages provided for in the Act.

This procedure was found to be cumbersome in dealing with the entirely new demands placed upon it by claims arising out of the present war. It was never designed for that purpose. One of the facts brought out very clearly by the Ralston Commission in 1922 was that many latent disabilities do not become manifest until several years subsequent to the inducing cause. And, as has just been mentioned, it is not always possible while our military establishments and their records are scattered all over the world, to be sure that the last bit of evidence has been procured.

Accordingly, in dealing with applications arising out of the recent war these time limits have been abolished. Every person discharged as medically unfit receives an automatic review of his file by the commission and a ruling. If that ruling is adverse the veteran now has unlimited time in which to apply for a second, third, or fourth hearing, whenever some new bit of evidence turns up. He is not obliged by time limits to put himself to the hazard of final decision by proceeding to an appeal board, nor does he lose his rights through the lapse of time.

These rules have been devised for veterans of the recent war and are working extremely well. We have seen no reason to change the well established procedure with respect to second hearings and appeals on cases arising out of the former war.

Mr. BELZILE: On page A-7 you mention that: