

The rate of benefit for the miner is 30s. a week, and this may be increased by 10s. a week in respect of his wife. There is provision for the payment of a grant of 10s. a week for each dependent child under the age of sixteen years, with a maximum grant in any particular case of £4 10s. weekly, but the benefit in respect of the children is reducible by all income of the family, other than the miner's benefit, in excess of £2 a week. During the past year the benefit was supplemented by a grant of cost-of-living bonus of 5 per cent. as from the 1st May, 1942, and since that date the rates of payment, inclusive of the cost-of-living bonus, have been 31s. 6d. a week in respect of the miner, increased by 10s. 6d. in respect of his wife and, where applicable, 10s. 6d. a week on account of each dependent child. The maximum amount of £4 10s. a week referred to has been correspondingly increased by the amount of the cost-of-living bonus.

The widow of a miner who died while in receipt of a benefit may be granted a benefit of 17s. 6d. a week during widowhood, and supplementation by way of cost-of-living bonus at the rate of 5 per cent. applies also in this case.

This scheme, which originated in the Miners' Phthisis Act, 1915, is administered by the Social Security Commission, and the following summary of the operations for the year ended 31st March, 1943, has been supplied by the Social Security Department :—

							£
Payments from 1st November, 1915 to 31st March, 1942	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,343,420
Payments, 1942-43	..	..	..	..	..	..	80,228
							<u>£1,423,648</u>
Number of new grants for year 1942-43—							
Male	..	..	..	..	..	..	12
Female	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
							—
							14
Number of benefits in force; 31st March, 1943 (including one emergency)—							
Male	..	..	..	..	..	..	720
Female	..	..	..	..	..	..	118
							—
							838
Annual value of benefits in force at 31st March, 1943	..	..	..	..	..	..	£76,284
Average benefit per annum	..	..	..	..	..	..	£90 16s. 7d.
Dissection of benefits							
Single miners	..	..	..	..	..	..	223
Married miners	..	..	..	..	..	..	497
Miners' widows	..	..	..	..	..	..	118
							—
							838

ASSISTANCE TO MINING

During the financial year ended 31st March, 1943, assistance has been extended to the mining industry on a basis similar to past years. A sum of £22,069 was advanced to promote and maintain coal-production, £3,659 to scheelite-mining, £3,630 to gold-mining, £856 towards the production of manganese, and £4,168 for the production of mercury. In addition, assistance to individual prospectors seeking gold and scheelite absorbed £2,689, and the Department itself expended £4,562 in prospecting and development work on strategic minerals.

The subsidized gold-mining scheme was terminated on the 30th June, 1942.