

EMERGENCY BENEFITS

Under the provisions of section 58 of the Social Security Act, 1938, the Social Security Commission may, in its discretion, grant a special benefit on grounds of hardship to any person who is not qualified for any other benefit under the Act, but who, by reason of age or of physical or mental disability, or for any other reason, is unable to earn a sufficient livelihood for himself and his dependants. Full and sympathetic use is made of this section, and emergency benefits granted during the year totalled 1,554.

OTHER MONETARY BENEFITS

Details with regard to other monetary benefits under the Act are included in the table on page 4.

RECIPROCAL AGE AND INVALIDS' BENEFITS

On 25th August, 1943, another milestone was reached in the progress of social legislation in this Dominion with the passing of Age-benefits and Invalids' Benefits (Reciprocity with Australia) Act, 1943. The Act is designed to provide for reciprocity in relation to age-benefits and invalids' benefits between this Dominion and the Commonwealth of Australia. The Act came into force by Proclamation on 1st September, 1943. A similar Act was passed in Australia and came into force on the same date.

The legislation provides that, for the purpose of New Zealand age-benefits and invalids' benefits, residence in Australia shall be counted as the equivalent of residence in New Zealand, while in respect of Australian old-age pensions and invalids' pensions, residence in New Zealand shall count as the equivalent of residence in the Commonwealth. Similarly, total blindness or permanent incapacity arising in Australia shall be treated as though it had arisen in the Dominion, or if the applicant is resident in Australia, then total blindness or permanent incapacity which arose in New Zealand shall be treated as though it had arisen in the Commonwealth.

To qualify for a reciprocal benefit an applicant is required to comply with the more restrictive conditions of the laws, whether as to residence or otherwise, of New Zealand or of Australia, and the rate of benefit must not exceed the maximum of the country which provides the lower maximum rate.

It is interesting to note that the genesis of the scheme had its beginning in 1913 when the Old-age Pension Reciprocity Act, 1913, was placed in the statute-book of the Dominion.

The number of applications received and dealt with since 1st September, 1943, are as follows :—

Number of applications received		1990		1991		1992	
Age-benefits							
Applications received	..	..	..	..	..	..	64
Applications granted	..	..	..	..	..	..	34
Applications rejected	..	..	..	..	..	..	21
Invalids' benefits -							
Applications received	..	..	..	..	..	..	17
Applications granted	..	..	..	..	..	..	9
Applications rejected	..	..	..	..	..	..	2

The total reciprocal benefits in force as at 31st March, 1944, including certain emergency benefits transferred to reciprocal benefits, were : Age-benefits, 51 ; invalids' benefits, 20.

FINANCE

STATEMENT SHOWING THE RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY FUND FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31ST MARCH, 1944

<i>Receipts</i>		<i>Payments</i>	
	£		£
Balance	3,086,801	Monetary benefits—	
	£	Universal superannuation	778,758
Social security registration fees ..	551,064	Age	8,101,668
Social security charge on wages and other income	12,796,108	Widows	949,099
Penalties, fines, interest, and miscellaneous ..	44,912	Orphans	22,442
	13,392,084	Family	876,858
Grants from Consolidated Fund, vote "Social Security" (Social Security Act, 1938, section 105 (c))	4,100,000	Invalids	1,067,499
		Miners	76,652
		Maori War	119
		Unemployment	32,316
		Sickness	376,878
		Emergency	115,574
			12,397,773
		Medical benefits, &c.—	
		Medical benefits	1,179,331
		Hospital benefits	2,133,389
		Maternity benefits	513,939
		Pharmaceutical benefits	762,198
		Supplementary benefits	137,823
			4,726,680
		Administration expenses—	
		Land and Income Tax Department ..	120,000
		Health Department	80,000
		Social Security Department	309,293
			509,293
		Balance	2,945,139
	£20,578,885		£20,578,885

WAR PENSIONS

The general administration of the enactments providing for pensions and allowances in respect of service in the present and former wars and the carrying-out of decisions of the War Pensions Board and the War Pensions Appeal Board are functions of the Secretary for War Pensions.

NEW LEGISLATION

A comprehensive review of the whole of the war-pensions legislation was undertaken during the year. The War Pensions Act, 1943, became operative from 1st July, 1943, incorporating therein and extending the provisions of the former legislation affecting war pensions, war veterans' allowances, and pensions to members of the Emergency Reserve Corps. The new Act provided for the general rates of disablement pensions being increased by 50 per cent. as well as increases in dependants and economic pensions, and certain provisions of the former legislation were liberalized, especially in so far as attributability was concerned.