

(2) FAMILY BENEFITS

(a) Previously children adopted subsequent to an application for a family benefit were excluded from benefit. The Act has now been amended to provide for the inclusion of all adopted children.

(b) The previous restrictive residential qualifications of the parents have been removed, and now a family benefit is payable in respect of all children born in New Zealand or who have been permanently resident in New Zealand for not less than one year.

(c) For the purpose of further assisting in the education of children provision was made for the extension of the period for which benefit in respect of children over sixteen years may be paid to the end of the year in which the child attains the age of eighteen years.

QUARTERLY BENEFITS

SUPERANNUATION BENEFITS

Superannuation benefits came into operation on 1st April, 1940, at the rate of £10 a year. This rate of benefit increases by £2 10s. a year until 1978, when the full rate of £104 a year will be in operation. For the year ended 31st March, 1947, the rate was £25 a year, and the sum of £1,349,689 was paid out during the year. There were 57,992 benefits in force at the end of the financial year, an increase of 1,811 over the number for the previous year.

MONTHLY BENEFITS

(1) AGE BENEFITS

During the year under review 12,835 new benefits were granted and 1,302 applications were declined, also 102,535 existing benefits were, after individual investigation, renewed for a further year. At the 31st March, 1947, there were 115,287 benefits in force, an increase of 5,227 over the figure for the previous year.

The expenditure increased from £9,817,615 for the year ended 31st March, 1946, to £11,881,119 for year ended 31st March, 1947.

(2) WIDOWS' BENEFITS

The number of women receiving widows' benefit increased from 11,507 as at 31st March, 1946, to 13,133 as at the 31st March, 1947. During the year, 10,888 existing benefits were, after investigation, renewed for a further year. New grants during the year totalled 2,407, and 608 applications were declined.

Included in above figures are benefits paid as widows' benefits in respect of women who have been deserted by their husbands. A "deserted wife," in order to qualify for a benefit, must satisfy the main provisions of the Act applicable to widows whose husbands have died and, in addition, satisfy the Social Security Commission that they have been deserted by their husbands, and have taken proceedings against the deserting husbands for maintenance orders under the Destitute Persons Act, 1910.

At 31st March, 1947, there were 1,102 benefits of this nature in force, and there were maintenance orders in operation against 959 defaulting husbands representing an annual amount of £109,842. On the granting of a benefit to a deserted wife the Department undertakes the enforcement of maintenance orders and the collection of maintenance. During the year £44,554 was collected by way of maintenance, representing 40.5 per cent. of the amount of the orders in force.