

At 31st March, 1947, there were 5,006 widows receiving the mother's allowance of £65 a year authorized by the Social Security Amendment Act, 1946.

The expenditure for the year for all widows' benefits amounted to £1,529,010, an increase for the year of £485,417.

(3) ORPHANS' BENEFITS

During the year 63 new benefits were granted, and as at 31st March, 1947, there were 397 orphans' benefits in force, representing payments in respect of 595 children. The expenditure during the year amounted to £22,905.

(4) FAMILY BENEFITS

With the abolition of the means test on 1st April, 1946, the year under review witnessed a large influx of applications for family benefit, and grants were made in 194,313 cases, and 1,560 applications were declined. During the year 37,608 benefits current at the 31st March, 1946, were reviewed and brought within the new provisions of the Act.

The number of benefits in force as at 31st March, 1947, totalled 230,021, representing payments in respect of 490,260 children. The actual expenditure for the year amounted to £12,680,778.

As a special concession to mothers, arrangements were made for monthly instalments of benefit to be credited to Post Office Savings-bank accounts, if desired, as it was realized that this would be of great convenience, especially to mothers with very young children, who might find difficulty in collecting instalments through the normal channels each month. By the end of the year 58,960 mothers had taken advantage of this method of payment, and instalments are lodged direct to the credit of their individual Post Office Savings-bank accounts, the amount involved being £3,073,406 a year.

Also by the special authority of the mother, the Department may divert the whole or part of any family benefit to the Commissioner of Taxes for the purpose of meeting the income-tax payments of the husband; 6,602 benefits were diverted in this manner, representing a sum of £248,072.

The provision in the legislation for family benefits to be continued beyond the age of sixteen years to the end of the calendar year in which a child attains eighteen years for the purpose of assisting in its further education was availed of in respect of 10,359 children who are continuing as full-time day pupils at schools.

Numbers according to Size of Families

Number of Children in Family	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10 or more.
Number of families	94,163	68,292	36,171	17,722	7,252	3,430	1,576	797	401	217

(5) INVALIDS' BENEFITS

During the year 3,608 persons applied for benefit on the grounds of permanent incapacity for work or total blindness, and 10,457 existing benefits were reviewed and renewed for a further year. Grants were made in 2,103 cases, and 1,178 applications were declined, mainly for the reason that the medical evidence revealed that they were not permanently incapacitated. As at 31st March, 1947, there were 12,466 benefits in force, an increase of only 302 for the year. The expenditure for the year amounted to £1,328,485.