

MONTHLY BENEFITS

AGE-BENEFITS

During the year, 9,351 new benefits were granted and 953 applications were declined, also 110,246 existing benefits were renewed for a further year after individual investigation. At the 31st March, 1949, there were 116,254 benefits in force, a decrease of 907 from the figure for the previous year.

The expenditure increased from £12,976,286 for the year ended 31st March, 1948, to £13,790,971 for the year ended 31st March, 1949, an increase of £814,685.

WIDOWS' BENEFITS

During the year 2,067 new benefits were granted, 516 applications were declined and 13,092 existing benefits were renewed for a further year. The number of benefits increased from 14,145 at 31st March, 1948, to 14,883 at the 31st March, 1949, an increase of 738.

Included in the above figures are benefits paid in respect of women who have been deserted by their husbands and who have taken proceedings for maintenance orders under the Destitute Persons Act, 1910. These women must satisfy the other provisions of the Social Security Act, 1938, applicable to widows. At the 31st March, 1949, there were 1,140 such benefits in force, an increase of 44 over the figure for last year, and there were maintenance orders in operation against 926 defaulting husbands, representing an annual amount of £118,020. On the granting of benefits the Department undertakes the enforcement of maintenance orders. During the year £64,104 was collected by way of maintenance, representing 54 per cent. of the amount of the orders in force.

The number of widows receiving mother's allowance of £65 decreased from 4,863 as at the 31st March, 1948, to 4,683 as at the 31st March, 1949.

The expenditure for the year for all widows' benefits amounted to £1,911,134, an increase for the year of £140,512. This expenditure included £180,758 in respect of women deserted by their husbands.

The Department throughout the year has continued to take the initiative in assisting women whose husbands have just died, and where necessary, emergency benefits have been granted pending finalization of applications for widows' benefits.

ORPHANS' BENEFITS

During the year 80 new benefits were granted. The number of benefits in force increased from 370 (in respect of 557 children) as at 31st March, 1948, to 371 (in respect of 518 children) as at 31st March, 1949. The expenditure increased from £24,187 for the year ended 31st March, 1948, to £27,623 for the year ended 31st March, 1949.

FAMILY BENEFITS

During the year under review 19,979 new benefits were granted and 223 applications were declined. The number of benefits in force increased by 5,589 from 243,137 at 31st March, 1948, to 248,726 at 31st March, 1949. These benefits represented payments in respect of 548,330 children, as against 521,394 children for the previous year.

The expenditure increased from £13,798,648 for the year ended 31st March, 1948, to £14,242,202 for the year ended 31st March, 1949, an increase of £443,554.

The special concession granted to mothers whereby the monthly instalments of family benefit may be credited to Post Office Savings-bank accounts continued in popularity, and the number of benefits dealt with in this manner increased from 65,975 last year to 74,534 at the 31st March, 1949. The total amounts lodged to Post Office Savings-bank accounts through this medium totalled £3,705,398 for the year, as against £3,379,675 for the previous year.