

The position regarding applications for reciprocal benefits and benefits in force as at 31st March, 1949, under the Age and Invalids' Benefits (Reciprocity with Australia) Act, 1943, is shown in the following table :—

	1947-48.			1948-49.		
	Age.	Invalids.	Total.	Age.	Invalids.	Total.
Applications received and those outstanding at the beginning of the year	172	22	194	149	13	162
Applications granted	134	15	149	104	6	110
Applications rejected	15	4	19	22	4	26
Applications outstanding as at 31st March	23	3	26	23	3	26
Benefits in force as at 31st March ..	216	55	271	219	51	270

RECIPROCITY WITH GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

Reciprocity between British countries has been considered for many years, particularly at various Imperial Conferences, but it was considered that the varying nature of benefits and qualifying conditions in the different countries prevented the framing of a standard scheme. It was left to the Governments of the different countries to negotiate separately with one another if they wished.

A proposal by the Hon. the Minister of Finance while in England in 1946 that a British Commonwealth conference be held to work out principles and administrative details for reciprocal arrangements was agreed to by the British Government.

At this Commonwealth Conference on National Insurance held in London during May, 1947, it was felt that, while multilateral agreements within the Empire were not practicable, bilateral agreements between any two countries might be arranged.

Negotiations carried on between Great Britain, Northern Ireland, and New Zealand following this Conference finally resulted in separate agreements providing for reciprocity in the field of family benefits and family allowances being concluded by New Zealand with Great Britain and Northern Ireland. New Zealand legislation giving effect to these agreements came into force on 1st December, 1948.

Negotiations for reciprocity in age and widows' benefits with Great Britain and Northern Ireland are still proceeding.

From 1st December, 1948, to 31st March, 1949, 713 reciprocal family benefits were granted, of which 561 were still current at the latter date.

WEEKLY BENEFITS

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

The following figures show the number of applications for unemployment benefits dealt with during the years ended 31st March, 1948, and 31st March, 1949, respectively :—

	1947-48.			1948-49.		
	Males.	Females.	Totals.	Males.	Females.	Totals.
Persons granted benefit	368	12	380	330	14	344
Number of applications declined	296	851	1,147	383	25	408
Totals	664	863	1,527	713	39	752

As at 31st March, 1949, there were 30 persons in receipt of unemployment benefit, as against 16 as at 31st March, 1948.

The total expenditure for the year amounted to £8,948, as against £8,358 for the previous year, an increase of £590.