

Notes and Brief Reports

Family Benefits in Current-Payment Status, June 30, 1951

The number of families receiving monthly benefits under old-age and survivors insurance increased by four-fifths of a million in the year ending June 30, 1951; at the end of the fiscal year monthly benefits were being paid to at least one member of almost 2.9 million families (table 1). Retired worker families made up 73 percent of the total; they numbered 2,091,000—about 700,000 more than a year earlier. Chiefly because of the liberalization in the insured-status requirements provided by the 1950 amendments to the Social Security Act, monthly benefits were being paid on June 30, 1951, to nearly 450,000 retired worker families who otherwise would have been ineligible to receive benefits. The number of survivor families totaled 776,000, an increase of 109,000 for the year;

as a proportion of all beneficiary families, however, survivor families declined from 33 percent on June 30, 1950, to 27 percent on June 30, 1951.

Average family benefits at the end of June 1951 showed substantial increases over the corresponding averages a year earlier because of the higher benefit rates provided by the 1950 amendments. Payments to retired workers with no dependents receiving benefits averaged \$43.50 for men and \$33.60 for women, increases of 62 percent. The average for a retired worker and his aged wife was \$70.40—68 percent more than a year earlier. Since the newly eligible workers have, on the whole, lower average monthly wages and fewer credited increment years than do persons insured under the 1939 amendments, their average benefits were considerably lower (table 2). For newly eligible retired workers in one-beneficiary families, the average benefits were \$26.10 for men and \$22.10 for women;

for families composed of a newly eligible worker and his aged wife, the average was \$39.00. The low benefits generally payable to the newly eligible group caused significant reductions in the over-all average family benefits for retired workers.

For survivor families, the average benefits ranged from \$35.10 for a family in which only one child was receiving benefits to \$91.50 for a family consisting of a widowed mother and two children. The average benefit for aged widow families was \$36.20 and for one-parent families, \$36.70.

The percentage increases in benefit amounts for parent and for child families were exceptionally large, reflecting not only the higher benefit rates under the 1950 amendments but also the provisions that increased the amount of parent's benefits from one-half of the primary insurance amount to three-fourths and that increased the benefit amount for one or more surviving children by one-fourth of the primary insurance amount, divided equally among the children.

The average family payment as of

Table 1.—Estimated number of families and beneficiaries in receipt of benefits and average monthly benefit in current-payment status, by family group, end of June 1951 and 1950

[In thousands, except for average benefit; data corrected to Oct. 31, 1951]

| Family classification of beneficiaries in current-payment status | June 30, 1951 | | | June 30, 1950 | | | Percentage increase in average monthly amount per family, 1951 from 1950 |
|--|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| | Number of families | Number of beneficiaries | Average monthly amount per family | Number of families | Number of beneficiaries | Average monthly amount per family | |
| Total..... | 2,866.5 | 4,033.6 | ----- | 2,051.7 | 2,930.4 | ----- | ----- |
| Retired worker families..... | 2,090.7 | 2,748.2 | ----- | 1,384.8 | 1,839.2 | ----- | ----- |
| Worker only..... | 1,478.8 | 1,478.8 | \$40.90 | 940.0 | 940.0 | \$25.50 | 60 |
| Male..... | 1,091.1 | 1,091.1 | 43.50 | 739.7 | 739.7 | 26.80 | 62 |
| Female..... | 387.7 | 387.7 | 33.60 | 200.3 | 200.3 | 20.80 | 62 |
| Worker and wife aged 65 or over..... | 568.5 | 1,137.0 | 70.40 | 418.8 | 837.6 | 41.90 | 68 |
| Worker and wife under age 65 ¹ | .8 | 1.6 | 63.20 | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Worker and aged dependent husband ¹ | 2.4 | 4.8 | 59.50 | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Worker and 1 child..... | 10.2 | 20.4 | 65.80 | 17.0 | 34.0 | 41.40 | 59 |
| Worker and 2 or more children..... | 5.6 | 17.8 | 74.80 | 8.7 | 26.7 | 51.40 | 46 |
| Worker, wife aged 65 or over, and 1 or more children..... | .4 | 1.3 | 93.40 | .3 | .9 | 57.30 | 63 |
| Worker, wife under age 65, and 1 or more children ¹ | 24.0 | 86.5 | 73.10 | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Survivor families..... | 775.8 | 1,285.4 | ----- | 666.9 | 1,091.2 | ----- | ----- |
| Aged widow..... | 350.1 | 350.1 | 36.20 | 290.2 | 290.2 | 20.90 | 73 |
| Aged dependent widower ¹ | .2 | .2 | 30.60 | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Widowed mother only ² | 2.0 | 2.0 | 36.10 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 21.40 | 69 |
| Widowed mother and 1 child..... | 88.0 | 176.0 | 75.00 | 81.0 | 162.0 | 36.70 | 104 |
| Widowed mother and 2 children..... | 61.4 | 184.2 | 91.50 | 45.4 | 136.2 | 50.70 | 80 |
| Widowed mother and 3 or more children..... | 41.0 | 171.0 | 90.00 | 27.1 | 110.6 | 54.50 | 65 |
| Divorced wife and 1 or more children ¹ | .1 | .2 | 84.40 | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| 1 child only..... | 122.3 | 122.3 | 35.10 | 110.8 | 110.8 | 13.50 | 160 |
| 2 children..... | 49.9 | 99.8 | 59.80 | 51.2 | 102.4 | 26.80 | 123 |
| 3 children..... | 19.5 | 58.5 | 75.60 | 19.5 | 58.6 | 37.70 | 101 |
| 4 or more children..... | 25.5 | 104.4 | 83.60 | 25.3 | 103.0 | 50.10 | 67 |
| 1 aged dependent parent..... | 14.7 | 14.7 | 36.70 | 12.0 | 12.0 | 13.80 | 166 |
| 2 aged dependent parents..... | 1.1 | 2.1 | 72.30 | 1.1 | 2.1 | 26.70 | 171 |

¹ Effective Sept. 1950, under the Social Security Act Amendments of 1950, benefits became payable to wives under age 65 with entitled children in their

care, aged dependent husbands or widowers, and former wives divorced. ² Benefits of child or children were being withheld.

Table 2.—Estimated number of families and beneficiaries in receipt of benefits and average monthly benefit in current-payment status, June 30, 1951, for selected family groups, by eligibility status¹ of retired worker

[In thousands, except for average benefit; data corrected to Oct. 31, 1951]

| Family classification of beneficiaries in current-payment status | Total | | | 1939 eligibles | | | New eligibles | | |
|--|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Number of families | Number of beneficiaries | Average monthly amount per family | Number of families | Number of beneficiaries | Average monthly amount per family | Number of families | Number of beneficiaries | Average monthly amount per family |
| Worker only..... | 1,478.8 | 1,478.8 | \$40.90 | 1,113.0 | 1,113.0 | \$46.20 | 365.8 | 365.8 | \$24.70 |
| Male..... | 1,091.1 | 1,091.1 | 43.50 | 854.2 | 854.2 | 48.30 | 236.9 | 236.9 | 26.10 |
| Female..... | 387.7 | 387.7 | 33.60 | 258.8 | 258.8 | 39.30 | 128.9 | 128.9 | 22.10 |
| Worker and wife aged 65 or over..... | 568.5 | 1,137.0 | 70.40 | 509.1 | 1,018.2 | 74.00 | 59.4 | 118.8 | 39.00 |
| Worker, wife under age 65, and 1 or more children..... | 24.0 | 86.5 | 73.10 | 13.8 | 48.9 | 91.60 | 10.2 | 37.6 | 48.10 |

¹ "1939 eligibles" are persons who had sufficient quarters of coverage to qualify for old-age benefits under the insured-status provisions in the 1939 amendments; "new eligibles" are persons who qual-

ified for old-age benefits solely as a result of the liberalized insured-status provisions in the 1950 amendments.

Table 3.—Estimated percentage distribution of old-age benefits in current-payment status on June 30, 1951, by eligibility status,¹ amount of monthly benefit, and sex of beneficiary

[Number in thousands; data corrected to Nov. 7, 1951]

| Old-age benefit amount | Total | | | Male | | | Female | | |
|------------------------|---------|----------------|---------------|---------|----------------|---------------|--------|----------------|------------------|
| | Total | 1939 eligibles | New eligibles | Total | 1939 eligibles | New eligibles | Total | 1939 eligibles | New eligibles |
| Total number..... | 2,090.7 | 1,651.9 | 438.8 | 1,700.6 | 1,391.0 | 309.6 | 390.1 | 260.9 | 129.2 |
| Total percent..... | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| \$20.00..... | 17.0 | 6.0 | 58.2 | 13.5 | 5.0 | 51.8 | 32.2 | 11.6 | 73.7 |
| 20.10-24.00..... | 4.5 | 3.1 | 10.0 | 3.9 | 2.5 | 10.2 | 7.3 | 6.3 | 9.4 |
| 25.00-29.90..... | 4.4 | 3.5 | 7.9 | 3.9 | 2.9 | 8.6 | 6.6 | 6.8 | 6.1 |
| 30.00-34.90..... | 5.6 | 5.1 | 7.7 | 5.1 | 4.3 | 8.9 | 8.0 | 9.5 | 5.0 |
| 35.00-39.90..... | 8.2 | 8.4 | 7.3 | 7.9 | 7.6 | 9.0 | 9.4 | 12.5 | 3.2 |
| 40.00-44.90..... | 11.7 | 13.4 | 5.4 | 11.4 | 12.4 | 7.0 | 13.0 | 18.6 | 1.7 |
| 45.00-49.90..... | 11.1 | 13.6 | 1.6 | 11.4 | 13.4 | 2.1 | 9.9 | 14.6 | .5 |
| 50.00-54.90..... | 12.3 | 15.3 | .7 | 13.3 | 16.1 | .9 | 7.7 | 11.3 | .3 |
| 55.00-59.90..... | 11.6 | 14.5 | .5 | 13.4 | 16.2 | .6 | 3.7 | 5.5 | .1 |
| 60.00-64.90..... | 8.3 | 10.5 | .4 | 9.9 | 12.0 | .5 | 1.5 | 2.2 | (²) |
| 65.00-68.50..... | 5.3 | 6.6 | .3 | 6.3 | 7.6 | .4 | .7 | 1.1 | (²) |

¹ "1939 eligibles" are persons who had sufficient quarters of coverage to qualify for old-age benefits under the insured-status provisions in the 1939 amendments; "new eligibles" are persons who qual-

ified for old-age benefits solely as a result of the liberalized insured-status provisions in the 1950 amendments.

² Less than 0.5 percent.

June 30, 1951, to a widowed mother and two children exceeded the average payment to a widowed mother and three children for the following reasons. For any given primary insurance amount less than \$56, the 80-percent-of-average-wage maximum provision results in identical family benefits for both family groups. The distribution of primary insurance amounts underlying the family benefits as of June 30, 1951, showed greater concentrations, however, at the lower amounts for the larger families than for the smaller families. Thus the average family benefit for all widow and three-

child families whose benefits were based on a primary insurance amount less than \$56 was lower than the corresponding average family benefit for the widow and two-child families. When benefits are based on primary insurance amounts in excess of \$56, the benefits payable to the larger families are greater than those payable to the smaller families. These larger families were insufficient in number, however, for their higher benefits to raise the over-all average for all widow and three-child families above that for widow and two-child families.

A distribution of all retired workers receiving old-age benefits as of June 30, 1951, by amount of benefit and by eligibility status, is shown in table 3. The proportion of old-age beneficiaries receiving the \$20 minimum was 17 percent, double the proportion receiving the \$10 minimum a year earlier. This increase reflects the fact that 58 percent of the 450,000 new eligibles receiving old-age benefits on June 30, 1951, were receiving the \$20 minimum.

Economic Status of Aged Persons and Dependent Survivors, June 1951

An increase in the number of persons with social insurance benefits and a decline in the number receiving public assistance were the most important developments between June 1950 and June 1951 in the economic status of aged persons and of dependent survivors. The number of aged beneficiaries of old-age and survivors insurance rose 44 percent, while the number of widowed mothers and survivor children receiving benefits under that program increased 23 and 15 percent, respectively. At the same time the number of old-age assistance recipients declined 2 percent, and the number of widows and paternal orphans in families receiving aid to dependent children dropped an estimated 4 percent. Old-age assistance recipients per 100 aged beneficiaries of old-age and survivors insurance numbered 133 in June 1950 and 90 a year later. For every 100 widowed mothers with old-age and survivors insurance benefits, an estimated 88 were in families receiving aid to dependent children in June 1950; an estimated 68 per 100 were in families receiving such aid in June 1951. The corresponding ratios for survivor children were an estimated 61 and 50 per 100 receiving insurance benefits.

Estimates for June 1951 of the number with income from employment, from social insurance and related programs, and from public assistance appear in the accompanying table. Similar estimates for June 1950 appeared in the BULLETIN for December 1950.

Not much is known about the size of