Family Benefits in Current-Payment Status, December 31, 1953

The number of families receiving monthly benefits under old-age and survivors insurance increased by almost three-fourths of a million in 1953. At the end of the year, monthly benefits were being paid to at least one member of 4.3 million families (table 29, page 54). Retired-worker families made up 74 percent of the total; they numbered 3,222,000—about 578,000 more than a year earlier. The number of survivor families totaled 1,086,000, an increase of almost 141,000 for the year.

The average family benefits were, in general, slightly higher at the end of 1953 than the corresponding averages a year earlier. The increases were the result of the large number of benefit awards computed under the new-start formula during the year; these awards are based on earnings after 1950 and use of the new benefit formula. Payments to 24,000 families, almost two and one-half times the number receiving the maximum at the end of 1952, families consisting of a widowed mother and two or more children made up 80 percent of the families receiving monthly benefits at the $25.00-60.00. About 30 percent of the families consisting of a retired worker and wife aged 65 or over were being paid the maximum family benefit of $137.50.

The statutory maximum of $188.75 a month was being paid to about 34,000 families, almost two and one-half times the number receiving the maximum at the end of 1952. Families consisting of a widowed mother and two or more children made up 80 percent of the families receiving the maximum amount, and families consisting of a retired worker and two or more dependents represented 17 percent.

The distribution of all retired workers receiving benefits by amount of old-age benefit and by benefit-computation method is shown in table 36, page 57. The proportion of old-age beneficiaries receiving the $25 minimum was almost 19 percent, slightly less than a year earlier. For men, the proportion receiving the minimum in 1953 was about 14 percent; for women, it was 33 percent. Only 3 percent of the old-age benefits computed under the new-start formula were at the $20 minimum, while about 20 percent were at the $65 maximum.

Notes and Brief Reports

Family Benefits in Current-Payment Status, December 31, 1953

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