

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 53,960 last year to 65,975 at the 31st March, 1948. The total amounts lodged to Post Office Savings-bank accounts through this medium totalled £3,379,675 for the year, as against £3,073,406 for the previous year.

With the authority of a beneficiary the whole or portion of a benefit may be diverted to the Commissioner of Taxes for the purpose of meeting the income-tax payments of the beneficiary or her husband. At the 31st March, 1948, 5,520 benefits were wholly or partially being diverted in this manner, as against 6,602 for the previous year. The amount paid to the Commissioner of Taxes for the year was £227,535, compared with £248,072 for the year ended 31st March, 1947.

At 31st March, 1948, 10,179 of the benefits in force provided for continuation of benefit for a child beyond the age of sixteen years to assist in its further education.

*Number of Family Benefits according to Size of Families*

	Number of Children in Family.					
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
Number of families, 31st March, 1947	94,163	68,292	36,171	17,722	7,252	3,430
Number of families, 31st March, 1948	101,325	68,883	38,871	18,552	8,048	3,737

  

	Number of Children in Family— <i>etd.</i>				Total Number of Benefits.	Total Number of Children.
	7.	8.	9.	10 or more.		
Number of families, 31st March, 1947	1,576	797	401	217	230,621	490,260
Number of families, 31st March, 1948	1,984	988	462	287	243,137	521,394

The change in family groups resulting from the births of additional children and the cessation of benefit through children attaining the age beyond which benefit is not payable necessitated the handling of 86,400 reviews of benefit during the year. In addition, 7,100 reviews of benefit were necessary in respect of children attaining sixteen years of age and continuing at school as full-time day pupils.

A surprising feature revealed in the payment of this class of benefit is the large number of families who have changed their residence during the year. This is illustrated by the fact that 37,840 requests for change of paying-office were received up to 31st March, 1948, involving in approximately 92 per cent. of the cases a permanent change of residence.

### INVALIDS' BENEFITS

During the year 2,110 persons applied for benefit on the grounds of permanent incapacity for work or total blindness. Grants were made in 1,249 cases, 982 applications were declined, mainly because of medical evidence not indicating permanent incapacity, and 9,637 existing benefits were reviewed and renewed for a further year. The number of benefits in force decreased by 1,784 from 12,466 as at 31st March, 1947, to 10,682 as at 31st March, 1948. The expenditure for the year increased by £38,815 from £1,328,485 for the year ended 31st March, 1947, to £1,367,300 for the year ended 31st March, 1948. The increase in the rate of benefit from 1st October, 1947, is responsible for the increased expenditure, notwithstanding a decrease in the number of benefits in force.