

Notes and Brief Reports

Economic Status of Aged Persons and Dependent Survivors, June 1952

At the end of June 1952 about 3 in every 10 persons 65 years of age and over in the United States were drawing benefits under social insurance and related programs. Two in every 10 persons in this age group, including several hundred thousand also receiving old-age and survivors insurance, were on the old-age assistance rolls. Approximately half the aged population, in other words, were receiving payments under public programs based either on past employment or service, or on need. Fewer than one-third of all persons past age 65 had any income from employment either as earners or the wives of earners.

The accompanying tables present estimates of the number of aged persons and of survivors in the population in June 1952 who were receiving income from employment,

Table 1.—Estimated number of persons aged 65 and over, receiving income from specified source, June 1952¹

Source of income	Number of persons		
	Total	Men	Women
Total population aged 65 and over ²	13.2	6.2	7.0
Employment.....	4.1	2.5	1.6
Earners.....	3.1	2.5	.6
Wives of earners.....	1.0	1.0
Social insurance and related programs:			
Old-age and survivors insurance.....	3.4	1.9	1.6
Railroad retirement.....	.4	.2	.2
Federal employee retirement programs.....	.2	.1	(³)
Veterans' compensation and pension program.....	.3	.2	.1
Other ⁴3	.1	.2
Old-age assistance.....	2.6	1.2	1.4

¹ Continental United States.

² Includes persons with no income and with income from sources other than those specified. Some persons received income from more than one of the sources listed.

³ Fewer than 50,000.

⁴ Beneficiaries of State and local government employee retirement programs and wives of male beneficiaries of programs other than old-age and survivors insurance and railroad retirement.

Sources: Number of persons of specified age, sex, and marital status estimated from Bureau of the Census data. Number of persons in receipt of payments under social insurance and related programs and from public assistance, reported by administrative agencies (partly estimated).

social insurance and related programs, and public assistance.

Comparison of the 1952 data with similar estimates for earlier years indicates that a slow but significant shift is taking place in the relative importance of these income sources for the aged. Approximately as many aged persons were working in 1952 as were employed in 1944, the peak war year for the employment of older workers. Because of the increase in the total aged population, however, such workers and the aged dependent wives of workers, as a proportion of the total, dropped from about 40 percent to about 31 percent. The proportion receiving old-age and survivors insurance benefits rose during the same period from 5 percent to 26 percent. Increases, although of a smaller magnitude, occurred also in the proportion with benefits from the special programs for railroad and government workers. The relative number receiving old-age assistance showed few important changes, constituting approximately one-fifth of the total throughout the period.

A substantial rise in the proportion of social insurance beneficiaries has also taken place among orphans and widows under age 65. Between 1944 and 1952 the relative number of paternal orphans with old-age and survivors insurance benefits rose from about 14 per 100 to about 39 per 100, the relative number with veterans' benefits from about 4 per 100 to about 14. Over the same period, old-age and survivors insurance beneficiaries among widows under age 65 with children under age 18 in their care increased from approximately 11 per 100 to approximately 29, and the number with veterans' benefits from 4 to 13 per 100. More than half the widows in June 1952 were working, but whether the proportion with income from employment was larger or smaller than it was during the war years is not known, since there are no reliable estimates of employment among widows in the earlier period. The relative number of widows and orphans on the rolls for aid to dependent children was somewhat but not

Table 2.—Estimated number of widows under age 65, and of children under age 18 with father dead, receiving income from specified sources, June 1952¹

Source of income	[In millions]		Paternal orphans under age 18 ³
	Total	With 1 or more children under age 18	
Total in population ⁴	3.4	.7	2.1
Employment.....	2.0	.4	.1
Social insurance and related programs:			
Old-age and survivors insurance.....	.2	.2	.8
Veterans' compensation program.....	.4	.1	.3
Other ⁵	(⁶)	(⁶)	.1
Aid to dependent children.....	.1	.1	.3

¹ Continental United States.

² Excludes widows who have remarried.

³ Includes children not living with widowed mother.

⁴ Includes persons with no income and with income from sources other than those listed. Some persons received income from more than one source.

⁵ Railroad retirement and Federal employee retirement programs.

⁶ Fewer than 50,000.

Sources: Number of widows in population and employed persons among widows and paternal orphans under age 18 estimated from Bureau of the Census data. Number of paternal orphans under age 18 based on 1949 estimate prepared by Division of the Actuary, Social Security Administration. Number of persons in receipt of payments under social insurance and related programs and from aid to dependent children, reported by administrative agencies (partly estimated).

much larger in 1952 than in 1944, when about 1 in every 8 were recipients of this form of public assistance.

Social Welfare Expenditures in the United States, Fiscal Year 1950-51

Considerable interest exists, both in this country and elsewhere, in the proportion of its national income that the United States is spending from public funds for social welfare. To meet the many requests for such information, a summary of public welfare programs and expenditures in the fiscal year 1949-50 was presented in the *Bulletin* last year.¹ Similar data are now available for 1950-51.

For purposes of this analysis, social welfare has been broadly defined to

¹ October 1951, pp. 14-16.