

I—SCHEMES FOR SALARIED PERSONS, WORKERS AND MINERS

Coverage

Under the salaried persons pension insurance scheme, all salaried persons whose annual occupational earnings do not exceed 15,000 DM are compulsorily covered. For salaried persons who have made contributions to the pension insurance scheme and whose earnings rise above 15,000 DM a year it is provided that they may continue insurance on a voluntary basis, under conditions to be discussed later. Also covered are certain groups of self-employed persons as, for example, handicraft workers, instructors, artists, midwives and persons caring for the sick.

Under the mineworkers pension insurance scheme, all persons, including workers and salaried persons, who work in undertakings in which minerals or similar substances are produced by a mining process are compulsorily covered. Compulsory coverage is extended to persons in factories and business premises which are physically and industrially linked with mining. Further, workers and salaried employees of employers' or workers' organizations which look after the occupational interests of those in mining, and workers and salaried employees in mining offices and head offices are required to insure under the mineworkers' scheme if they were so insured before taking up employment with the employers' or workers' organization or in the mining office or head office, and if they can show that they have either completed 60 months of insurance under the mineworkers' scheme whilst performing underground work, or if they have been insured under the mineworkers' scheme for a total of 180 months.

The workers pension insurance scheme covers all workers who are not members of the salaried employees or mineworkers pensions schemes if they are employed for remuneration or as apprentices, or are undergoing any other form of vocational training. In addition, certain groups of self-employed persons such as those engaged in domestic industries, homeworkers, coastal shipping employees and coastal fishermen are included in the workers' pension insurance scheme. Also covered are persons working abroad on official missions.

There are certain exceptions to the compulsory coverage of German pension insurance. Among those exempted are persons working for their spouse; persons who receive as remuneration only free maintenance; salaried workers earning more than 15,000 DM annually; officials of the federal government, the provinces, the Bank Deutscher Lander, the Berliner Zentralbank, the Provincial Central Banks, and other similar organizations; short-term and professional soldiers; most of those engaged in "independent professions"; persons not engaged in remunerative activity; persons gainfully employed in the course of attendance as a regular student at an educational institute; and persons drawing old age pensions.

Old Age Pensions

The insurance schemes provide insured members, their dependents and survivors with monthly cash benefits as a matter of right, except for invalidity benefits where rehabilitation is encouraged.

Old age pensions are payable under the workers, salaried persons and mineworkers plans to men and women at age 65. The qualifying period for an old age pension is 180 months of insurance coverage. Retirement is not required unless the pension is paid before age 65. Benefits are available to men at age 60, if they have been unemployed a year or longer, and continue, between age 60 and 65, for as long as they continue to be unemployed. A woman with 10 years of covered employment in the last 20 years who is no longer employed can receive benefits at age 60.