

Mr. CLAGUE. May I add one more——

Senator PROXMIRE. We have been very critical of the attitude that the only way we can solve our problem is by a super increase in effective demand.

I have felt that one constructive way we can do it is by doing something about the supply side of the labor market.

In other words, to the extent that we have constructive reductions in the size of the labor force, this can represent a plus, an improvement in our society. I think of two things, particularly.

I introduced a resolution about a week ago calling on Governors and State legislators to give consideration to increasing the school age, leaving age, from 14, 15, 16, generally 16 throughout the country, 16 in my State, to 17 universally, and to couple this with training of the youngsters who are still in school, who do not want to go on with their education, in the vocational skills which are in demand in the local community.

It seems to me if we can achieve this, it will undoubtedly reduce the labor force, and I think by perhaps as much as 1 million people.

I am not sure how much, but it might be very substantial, in a constructive way.

When these youngsters do finish their schools, they will be better able to get a job, to hold a job.

Their contribution to society will be improved in this technological age in which we live.

It seems to me, while this means the labor force is less, less employment perhaps, nevertheless society is moving ahead, and unemployment would be sharply reduced.

There is one other thing that I intend to introduce in the next day or two, it is a tough bill to draft but we are working on it, and that is a reduction in the social security retirement age from 62 to 60, but on the same basis as the reduction from 65 to 62.

In other words, it would be voluntary.

You would have a reduced benefit, so there would not be any increase in social security cost, and the benefit would have to be substantially reduced.

I wonder if you could help me on the statistics on either end of this.

(The reply to this inquiry was made in a letter dated August 23, which appears at p. 744.)

Perhaps you could not this afternoon, but if you could make those statistics available to me, to show me what kind of an impact on the labor force a reduction in the social security age from 62 to 60 would make, assuming that you have about the same pattern of response as you had in the reduction from 65 to 62.

And, in the second place, if you can tell me what effect on the labor force it would have if we increase the school dropout age from 16 to 17 or from 14 to 17, because expert after expert in our country has told us that this is the most serious kind of unemployment we have a very high proportion of youngsters between 14 and 19 being unemployed, very damaging to them as persons and to their future and often very damaging to the cities in which they live.

If we can solve these two problems, it seems to me we can help improve our employment situation.