

There is no hard core of resistance to the employment of older workers as may have been the case with respect to race and sex. So remedies of the nature utilized in dealing with those problems are not necessary here.

In dealing in areas where so much depends on the intention of those who can provide relief it is far better to educate and persuade than it is to restrict and coerce. Significantly, most state officials charged with the administration of age discrimination laws, believe that educational programs are the most effective and important means of helping older workers.³ If the older worker can be prepared for new employment, we believe new employment will become available for him.

Thus, we submit, the full range of federal programs already available to help the older worker should be utilized before we turn to restrictive legislation. The Manpower Development and Training Act programs can be more effectively used. The many programs of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare related to problems of the aging ought to be imaginatively pursued. Efforts to apprise employers of the merits of employing older workers ought to be made.

The Department of Labor has already begun such work. In 1956, it conducted an experiment designed to determine if older workers could be given more effective assistance in job employment offices. Over seven thousand persons 45 or over were selected at random from workers seeking employment through the Department in seven urban areas. One-half the applicants were to receive the service normally given; the other half were to receive special treatment which included counseling, referrals to training facilities, use of aptitude and proficiency tests, assistance in preparing resumes, and in-depth interviewing to determine all possible job qualifications. These efforts were coupled with community promotional campaigns and localized educational activities among employers. Almost 4½ times as many placements were made in the experimental group as with the group given normal service. By 1960, 24 states were using specially trained personnel to assist older workers in finding employment; most of the states with special programs were able to report a definite improvement in the proportion of older workers placed. In the same year, the Department of Labor reported a 20 per cent gain since 1958 in annual placement of job seekers 45 years and older.⁴

More recently other efforts have met with success. In North Carolina under the aegis of the North Carolina Fund, a highly imaginative program has been devised to make use of the services of older persons as part of the drive on poverty. In Columbus, Georgia, the Chamber of Commerce in co-operation with local businessmen and the state employment offices of Georgia and Alabama is making an extensive effort to recruit unemployed retired and retiring military personnel. Similar programs are under way in other communities across the country.

The goals of business and government are identical on this issue. We need qualified workers and age makes little difference in the tight employment situation which exists today. We are willing to work with the government to achieve this end. No malice toward the older worker has been shown. A problem exists which we believe results largely from misconceptions. This problem can be overcome by educating would-be employees and employers as well. Perhaps a new zeal to apply existing programs is necessary but, we submit, new legislation is not.

To the extent that these bills provide for a continuing program of education and information, they are to be commended. But, if the Subcommittee decides to adopt the punitive approach as well, certain additional safeguards beyond those provided are necessary.

Moreover, the bills do not resolve what may be the most serious disability to employment faced by older workers. If adopted in their present forms they would disrupt the operations of private pension and insurance plans which are currently benefiting millions of citizens throughout the nation. For example, of approximately sixteen thousand pension plans surveyed in 1965, the Department of Labor has noted that "Maximum participation ages were effective in

³ *The Older American Worker*, Report of the Secretary of Labor to the Congress under Section 715 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Research Material, page 110.

⁴ B. V. H. Schneider, *The Older Worker*, Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, Berkeley, pages 69-70.