

Mr. DENT. Mr. Erlenborn?

Mr. ERLBORN. In your opinion, why is it we have developed this age discrimination? What factors are involved? I can think of some that might be, for instance, if it is necessary to upgrade skills, you probably would get more returns from a young man with upgraded skills.

Dr. SHEPPARD. On the last point there is a study that shows older workers have lower absentee rates, lower accident rates on the job. This is what I referred to earlier when I said they don't put all of the formula into the computer and come out with the final figure.

Secretary Wirtz released a study about 2 years ago of what they were told by employers. Many mentioned the pension costs and other types of costs. But nobody asked for data to prove or disprove it and what would offset it. This is what I mentioned before. It is in general partly the fact the older worker has less education than the younger worker. I am talking of the unemployed. The average older worker may have skills making him less obsolescent. This legislation does not say an older, stupid worker, let us say, has to be hired by an employer. It says, if he is qualified on every other count, age should not be used against him.

It has become a problem primarily, I believe, because of the attitudes about the older worker which are not all founded in fact. After a while it is just like in the studies of other minority groups—you can make an analogy—older workers come to believe what society believes about them and in some studies I have seen before and studies I have done myself, you can ask workers how old they feel to be. If they themselves consider themselves young, even though chronologically they are considered old, they will act young in what they do to get a job.

Vice versa, if you ask a worker chronologically young how old he thinks he is and he thinks he is old, he will act old in terms of trying to get a job.

What we had to do in South Bend, the reason we had to have a Project Enable there, we found many of these Studebaker workers said, after the plant shut down, "Nobody wants me; I am too stupid to learn," and so on. So they had to create a staff. Many were ex-Studebaker workers. They had to knock on the door and give them counseling. In many cases they were subprofessional counselors. They had to convince these people they were not too old and convince employers they were not too old.

It should not be necessary to have special projects every time a crisis occurs. We have to have these projects now because we don't have legislation that automatically takes care of discrimination against the older workers.

Here again is more cost. It costs more for these ad hoc projects than to have a routine legislation that takes care of these older workers. Again, we have not put into the computer the costs for not having the legislation.

Mr. ERLBORN. Do you see in this law some classes of employment that may require younger people. As a poor example, let us say, a "bunny girl."

Dr. SHEPPARD. Did you say a poor example?

Mr. DENT. We should first see how many girls apply for them.

Dr. SHEPPARD. I believe in all laws there are problems of administration, but they should not be used as arguments against the legislation.