

Comments were made in every local office visited, that age is not a great problem in employment for the fully qualified worker with needed skills and recent work experience. Many job orders call for a mature and stable worker, particularly in clerical and highly skilled jobs. Local offices cite placements of workers in their 70's and even 80's.

But when the older worker is out of a job, problems tend to cluster. The "older worker syndrome" has been described as "age plus something else"--physical problems, obsolescent skills, lack of mobility, or the individual's own attitude toward himself. There are many factors which may interfere with the older worker's reemployment. Age may be the last straw which puts him into the problem group.

a. Problems of Skills

Local office staff believe that older workers can be placed at almost any age if they have marketable, up-to-date skills and are able to work.

The journeyman in most crafts and trades, whose skills are needed in the labor market, has good employment prospects. But the 60-year-old man who has worked for years as a carpenter in production line jobs may have never fully qualified as a Finish Carpenter or in other skilled jobs. If continuous and heavy production pressure begins to tax his strength, he may find few opportunities for other employment in his occupation.

However, skills alone are not always a guarantee of employment. In some white-collar occupations, older workers with long experience and unquestioned proficiency may find that employers' age preferences whether overtly expressed or not, as well as changes in educational or professional requirements, may outweigh experience.

One local office reports a "hard-core" situation which is becoming common in many communities:

"We have no large 'production' type operations, but there is a large supply of workers with limited skills, including minority group members, whose main experience has been in such jobs. This group and our unskilled labor supply is growing through immigration, while job opportunities in production are decreasing. Not much industry is coming in. Several large firms have moved out, as have several small electronic firms.

"With the older group, education and literacy are a problem for our local unskilled labor supply. Also, the kind of experience they have is not in heavy