

The more skilled older workers are often willing to spend as much as an hour a day commuting to well-paying jobs in other communities. Even with the length of time involved, it is worthwhile financially. Less skilled and lower-paid workers may be reluctant to take on this expense.

Commuting and transportation difficulties give rise to other problems, as a metropolitan office notes:

"Because of the size of our territory, it is a real problem to maintain continuity of service to the applicant. It is hard to keep them coming to us if they don't have car fare, which is an expensive item in the metropolitan area. Some of them do not have cars. We find they often do not come back unless they have a claim, so that counseling which may have been started sometimes is not continued. We lose contact with them, and do not always know whether they are still in the labor market."

d. Health and Physical Capacity

"When a laborer gets a backache or other physical ailments and can no longer perform in his usual occupation, he has very limited resources for other work. Our greatest problem with sawmill workers is severe physical disability."

This comment from an interviewer in a small rural office points up a hazard which may suddenly come upon any person. Loss of physical capacity, with attendant medical expense, lowered income, and problems of family care, may be a disaster. If the husband loses all capacity to work, the wife may have to assume the burden.

The same interviewer commented: "Women seem to live with their physical disabilities better than men. Their worst problem is when they are thrown on the labor market unexpectedly, by the husband's death or illness. Some of them have had very little work experience or training. They can't get into occupations with the same pay scale as the husband's."

While older workers are in general less prone to industrial accidents than younger ones,⁴ some do encounter severe health problems with advancing age. Less serious physical problems may also be troublesome:

Hearing defects may hamper placement in jobs where use of the telephone is important.