

Another proposal regarding Unemployment Insurance was to permit employers to employ any worker 45 or over on a 30-day trial basis without adverse effect on the employer's experience rating or unemployment insurance reserve account. It was felt that this would obviate against adverse experience rating by employers willing and wanting to employ older persons, but at the same time, avoid penalty to the employer where the employee is discharged through no fault of his own or the employer's during the trial period.

In Workmen's Compensation, several changes were proposed. Growing out of an extensive discussion by labor and management representatives in one workshop was an interesting proposal to change the basic concept of the present "second injury" provisions of the program as they relate to the hiring of an individual who has been previously injured. The proposal would entail the underwriting of the costs of physical examinations incurred by employers on the part of such applicants for employment; the changing of the present law to permit the employee to waive benefits under the "second injury" provisions; this protection would be replaced by eligibility for such benefits, if reinjured, from a special fund operated with State funds. It was argued that such a plan would provide a real incentive to employers to hire older workers with previous injuries, and, at the same time, provide continued protection in the event of later injury or disability.

2. Training, Retraining, and Counseling

Proposals made clearly indicated the need for much broader programs of training, retraining, and counseling services than now exist to help older people maintain or find new employment. Many believed present programs and facilities are not geared as much as they should be to the individual needs of older people for such training or the needs of employers or a rapidly changing economy. There were several suggestions that a real upgrading of the content of existing training or retraining programs could be accomplished for older workers if fuller use was made of educational programs in public schools and colleges and of adult education programs. Similar suggestions were made regarding modification of certain requirements which act to restrict older people from enrolling in certain educational programs, to develop new and appropriate classes for older adults, or the employment of qualified retired persons as instructors in such programs.

There was considerable concern that steps be taken to provide a more acceptable climate for retraining, especially on the part of unemployed older men and women who have major family responsibilities. This concern expressed itself in such proposals as supplementation of training payments under either Unemployment Insurance or expansion of the Manpower Development and Training Act, relocation allowances after