

"OUR INESCAPABLE DUTY TO END
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST OLDER WORKERS"

by Assemblyman Joseph M. Kennick, Long Beach

As I read the list of authorities who have come here to address you upon the various phases of the problems of the older worker, and note the leadership provided by the workshop held this morning and yet to be held this afternoon, I find myself asking: "What am I doing here anyhow?" It couldn't be my age, naturally, and I make no pretense of being an authority. Presumably, then, I am here because of my long-standing dedication to the social and economic well-being of my fellow man; and because, from my first term in the California Legislature until now, I have sought to translate this concern into legislation and, in every possible way, to encourage constructive governmental and community action.

It was in keeping with this line of thought that I introduced in the 1963 Session of the Legislature, House Resolution Number 77, directed to the improvement of employment opportunities of older persons. This resolution, pursuant to the terms of which we are meeting here today in this first of a series of workshops to define and seek solutions to this pressing problem of our time, reads as follows:

"Relative to improving employment opportunities of older persons.

"WHEREAS, Legislation is now pending before the Congress of the United States which would provide new grant programs for experimental and demonstration projects to stimulate employment opportunities for older persons; and

"WHEREAS, In California, it is known that many older applicants seeking employment are not placed in proportion to the number of those needing employment; and

"WHEREAS, There is a need for current data concerning employer and union attitudes and action in providing employment for older workers; and

"WHEREAS, Such data would be valuable in the stimulation of community understanding and support of employment opportunities for older persons; now, therefore be it

"RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, That the Department of Employment and the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Aging are requested to undertake jointly a study of how and where employment opportunities for older persons may be improved and expanded throughout the State, and to report their joint findings and recommendations thereon to the Assembly on or before the fifth legislative day of the 1965 Regular Session."

That resolution was passed and that is the task before us today. And this will remain our task until hammered out upon the anvil of creative exploration and fitted into the structure of our political and economic life.