

should not discount the fact that older people are more susceptible to illness and do have health problems. On the other hand, we also know that older people develop compensations as an outgrowth of the aging process, such as high dependability and good work habits.

I would like to comment on some research findings on the performance of older workers. Most of the earlier studies were conducted in Great Britain, and the reason is that Great Britain had manpower shortages during World Wars I and II and had to make use of their older people. These studies had more to do with specific aspects of work than they did total work performance. However, it was found that many physiologic changes become manifest at a relatively early age, in the mid-twenties. Vision, hearing, and eye-hand coordination are examples of this, and fortunately, most of these are correctable or compensations can be devised for such limitations.

However, these specific aspects correlate very poorly with work performance, and certainly this form of deterioration does not mean that older people are less successful in industrial work. We know that skills can be maintained at an age well beyond that which they are learned, at a reasonable pace. And this is particularly true among skilled workers and a good example of that would be stenography.

Studies of absenteeisms, accidents and turnover put the older worker in a relatively good light. The older worker usually has fewer absences, but when ill, takes more time to recuperate. They also have fewer accidents, but when injured, have a longer recuperative time. Occupational mobility is greatest among younger workers. Older workers are more apt to stay with a company. However, there are industrial and occupational differences. In some industries this distinction does not take place. Especially in industries where the work requires a higher expenditure of effort. In a study at Lockheed, we found that the morale level of workers was high in about the 20's. It dropped consistently to age 40 and then rose from 40 through 65 to a point beyond the morale level of workers 20 years of age. Now this study has been confirmed by others in the field of attitudes.

There are a few other interesting highlights from our research. Older workers seem to work best in small groups and under stress-free conditions and they are better in jobs emphasizing accuracy rather than speed. We feel, at Lockheed, that it is unfortunate that there is so much attention paid to chronological age and this happens despite the fact that we know that people react differently to the passage of time. However, I must be quick to point out that the average ages vary considerably from one occupation to another in our company and I think this gives some pretty good insight to one of the problems of the employment of the older person.

Let me mention some average ages by occupation. For example, the average age of our apprentices is 21. We hire apprentices right out of high school or junior college, train them for four years when they become journeymen, after which time they practice in their trade and serve American industry. We have people in electrodata programming work.