

Today's world, with its adulation of and undue emphasis on youth, its feeling that the mental quickness and adaptability of youth and the new educational processes are the only key to success in business, has imposed the requirement that only job applicants in the twenties or younger should be considered.

"Get them right out of the cradle and educate and train them," has become the motto of many large business organizations. This has imposed an unbearable heartache upon a society in which 40 percent of our total work force is 45 years old or older.

A man does not reach the prime of life until he reaches 40 or 45. Yet when he should have the most reason to be entitled to security, when his standard of living and financial obligations have reached their highest point, as long as he continues to hold his job he is considered to be a very valuable employee because of his experience and good judgment but let him lose his job and he will have a very difficult time to find another one.

This causes the people in the forties and fifties who are unemployed considerable distress because a group of longtime unemployed are developing there, people who never again may be able to work.

It causes even the people in those age brackets who have jobs to live under the shadow of the constant fear that if they lose that job they won't be able to find another.

Since the turn of the century the life expectancy of the average American has increased 20 years. Yet the hiring policies of many employers are rooted in the past prejudices and practices.

How irrational is a society which with one hand does everything possible to extend the lifespan of man but with the other hand throws him on the industrial scrapheap as unusable because of his chronological age. Man's true age lies in the lifespan ahead of him, not the span behind him.

There is a growing group of longtime unemployed developing among these older workers. As the unemployment period lengthens, the worker's self-confidence weakens.

The man becomes depressed and bitter. Eventually he may stop applying for work, despite his great need for means of support for himself and his family. It is for these disadvantaged, downhearted, discouraged, sometimes desperate, and always discriminated against older workers that the Fraternal Order of Eagles appears before you today.

There is nothing new about unfair discrimination in the hiring of employees. Seventy years ago there could be found in New York and Boston newspapers help wanted ads, stating "Irish need not apply" or "Protestants only."

The term "Gentiles only" appeared frequently. All of these, thank the Lord, have disappeared. More recently ads have stated "whites only" and something has been done about it. Then there were employers who refused to hire men who belonged to labor unions and something has been done about that. But the cruel, senseless discrimination against older people in employment goes on unchecked.

A dozen years ago the Fraternal Order of Eagles started its "Jobs After Forty" program for the purpose of striking down age discrimination in employment. And it presented to Congress petitions signed by over a million people, asking that Congress pass a law prohibiting