

1964, fewer than 5 percent of the new hires by employers surveyed in the study were 45 years of age or over.

One fifth of all the employers surveyed hired no workers over 45. Of all new hires by these employers only 8.6 percent were workers who were 45 years of age or over.

Unfortunately, the overall unemployment rates for workers 45 years of age and over tend to conceal more than they reveal. For the last couple of years, the rates for this age group have ranged from about 2-3 percent for white workers to about 4-5½ percent for non-white workers. Hidden behind these figures, however, are some very serious job problems for older workers which can be attributed, directly or indirectly, to the discriminatory practices with which the legislation before this Committee seeks to deal.

For example, according to data compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the labor force participation rate in 1966 among white males between the ages of 45 and 54 was 95.8 percent. A decade ago it was 96.8 percent. Since few workers in this age group retire, this decline of one full percentage point must be explained by other developments. Among these developments, we submit, has been a tendency of older workers to withdraw from the labor force. The inadequate number of job opportunities, in relation to the available manpower supply, enables the employer to follow certain preconceived notions about the employment of older workers. Too often, they are placed at the end of the line. As a result, many of these workers become discouraged and they simply stop looking for work. But the official unemployment rates do not reflect this fact.

What is true of white workers is even more true of non-white workers. Thus, among non-white males, 45 to 54 years of age, the labor force participation rate, which exceeded 95 percent in the early 1950's was down to 90.7 percent in 1966.

Beyond this problem of an undercount of the extent of unemployment, the overall unemployment rates tend to camouflage some of the other harsh treatment to which many older workers are subjected in the job market. For example, workers 45 years of age and older made up 24 percent of the total unemployed in 1966. But they comprised 39 percent of the long-term (15 weeks or longer) unemployed during that year.

Moreover, the older workers are not only more prone to long-term joblessness, they are also the victims of more frequent bouts with unemployment. Thus, in 1964, of all those unemployed during the year less than 20 percent had three or more separate spells of joblessness. However, among workers 45 years of age and older who suffered unemployment during the year, over 25 percent had three or more separate bouts of joblessness. And so far as non-white males between 45 and 64 years of age are concerned, 43 percent of those who were unemployed in 1964 were jobless on three or more occasions in the course of the year.

In addition to all of this is the fact that a substantial number of older workers are forced into part-time employment. And this, too, is hidden if we look only at the unemployment rates. In 1966, 36 percent of the 1.7 million workers who were employed part-time in non-agricultural industries for economic reasons—that is, because they could not find full time jobs—were workers who were 45 years of age and older.

These conditions do not come about because older workers are not able to perform satisfactorily and efficiently the tasks required by their jobs. Medical research shows that there is no factual support for restrictive age limits in employment.

The employment problems of the older worker come about primarily as a result of employer attitudes, conditioned in no small measure by some of the very employment benefits which have been achieved for workers, such as seniority, pension plans, promotion-from-within policies and early retirement. Some of these attitudes may be justified in connection with particular occupations, but overall they have little justification in fact in present-day industry and business.

In saying this, Mr. Chairman, I do not wish to be misconstrued as expressing any serious skepticism about the importance and value of these aspects of modern employment relationships. The role they play in conditioning employment attitudes does, however, need to be kept in mind. The employer too often tends to think of the older worker as a less efficient and more costly worker. Thus, he is slower to hire him and quicker to fire him.

The result of the demonstrated failure of our economy to use fully the capabilities of older workers for productive purposes is a tremendous loss to the Nation's economy that has been estimated to run into the billions of dollars. Of equal, if not more, importance is the human loss in terms of the undermining of personal dignity and confidence that can afflict all too many workers, especially those with