

forced to retire at an unusually young age. Most people are forced to retire at age 65, but airline stewardesses don't even enjoy that privilege.

These, at least, are practical problems. But there is one problem confronting the older worker that is even more painful, more widespread than either of those previously mentioned. That is discrimination.

Age discrimination is not the same as the insidious discrimination based on race or creed prejudices and bigotry. Racial or religious discrimination results in nonemployment because of feelings about a person entirely unrelated to his ability to do a job. This is hardly a problem for the older job seeker.

Discrimination arises for him because of assumptions that are made about the effects of age on performance. One would not hire a 45-year-old woman to model teenage clothes. One probably would not hire an older man to work on placing girders in rising skyscrapers.

But, as a general rule, ability is ageless. A young man with capacities does not lose them with age, unless his capacities are dependent upon his physical characteristics or the speed of his reactions. In many instances, rather, a worker's skills are honed and sharpened by experience.

Studies have shown in fact, that older workers bring qualities to a job that tend to make them very desirable employees indeed. For one, they rate high in dependability—they have a much lower rate of absenteeism than their young coworkers. They also have a high rate of job stability—they are less likely to move around from office to office, from place to place. And their rate of work injuries is lower than that of younger groups.

These qualities, which are prized by any employer, are the fruits of experience—experience gained through years in the labor force.

The Federal Government sets a good example by its policy banning age discrimination. It backs up its stated policy to protect the older worker against unfair elimination from job searches through efforts of the U.S. Employment Service. This agency was one of the first, public or private, to recognize the special position of the unemployed worker, and it actively seeks to place older workers by supporting and counseling the workers in their search for employment and by trying to encourage prospective employers to look more kindly on the older job applicant.

These are still small, if essential efforts. This country needs to have its private industries and businesses follow the Federal example in their attitudes toward the older worker. The advantages are manifold. Not only would business and industry gain skills, wisdom, and experience accumulated during long working years, but they would be doing the workers themselves a service by showing that they have not outlived their productivity when they are merely on the threshold of middle age.

It is an old saying that "life begins at 40." It can be just as true that new work can begin at 40 as well.

I would like to conclude by pointing out to the committee that this problem with the aging worker, you take some of these people between the ages of 50 and 60, as soon as they give their age the door is shut to them and they cannot get an interview. If they could just go in and talk to the personnel man and just discuss their experience and what they could do for that firm, there might be some opportunity for them. But