

voting ages; this ratio will rise to 45 percent by the year 2000.

B. Labor Force and Employment Trends

1. The basic economic problem of the aged arises from the fact that the working life span has not increased as rapidly as the total life expectancy—hence, an increase in the average period of dependency in old age. This fact is brought out by a BLS study of working life expectancy.

By and large, the very forces which have tended to increase the proportion of the aged in the population also limited their opportunities for gainful employment.

2. The older worker as an employee

A. Handicaps:

1. Physical slowing down over age—affects his ability to perform where job calls for exacting physical standards.
2. Less adaptable to new methods.
3. He is regarded as a "poor investment" for training or retraining.
4. Belief that he increases costs of workmen's compensation insurance and other welfare programs.
5. Public "doesn't like to deal" with old people.

B. Advantages:

1. Lower absenteeism and accident frequency.
2. Advantage of experience—important where skill, judgment or policy making are factors.
3. Greater stability and attachment to firm.

3. The older worker as a job seeker

Once out of work, the man or woman above 45 finds it progressively more difficult to secure reemployment. There is obvious reluctance on the part of employers to hire older workers—unless they have some very special skill to offer, or unless we are in a period of severe labor shortage.

Prevalence of age barriers in hiring

—A questionnaire survey conducted recently in New York state revealed that of 176 employers responding, about two-fifths reported a formal age barrier for new employees. Of these, about one-fifth indicated they

would hire no new worker above 50, and almost one-half set the maximum age limit at 65. **This moreover is regarded as understatement:** It is likely that much larger proportion of companies have informal hiring limits much more rigid than indicated by this survey.

That is the meat of a round-table discussion conducted in San Francisco this year by the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics.

I brought these trends and these facts to your attention, because they do point-up the plight of the aged and "nearly old" worker, in general. So many valuable people could be lost to the employment force, to the state, to the private company—because of age barriers—that I think they should have greater protection—not only in the name of sentiment but in the name of efficiency.

It is something, certainly, to think about, along with many topics on your agenda. The Oregon State Employees Association does, indeed, have its work cut out for it at this conference and I, personally, and on behalf of the Governor wish you a pleasant, constructive and fruitful meeting.

INSURANCE:

DEPENDENTS' COVERAGE

The OSEA Group Life Insurance underwriters have asked that the following announcement be made: "An employee-member who is eligible to apply for the group insurance in his or her own right cannot be an eligible dependent and would not be covered under the terms of the contract. Should such a claim occur on a dependent who was also an employee-member, it would have to be denied." In short, husband and wife who are employee-members may each carry the insurance in their own right but cannot insure one another as dependents and only one may insure the dependent children. Premium adjustments will be made following notification of OSEA headquarters office by affected members.

Since gold rush days of the early 1850's, Oregon has produced gold valued at more than 100 million dollars.