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OCT. 4 1977

Human Nature Won't Be Altered

RETIRED people tend either to brag about how much they are doing or to complain that they have too little to do.

Some are happy; others are not. All are affected by inflation that eats into their pensions and Social Security.

If and when the law to ban mandatory retirement is implemented, there will be new problems and perhaps more laws.

Whatever happens, changing the age of retirement will not alter human nature. Those who are unprepared for retirement at age 65 may not be much more ready at age 70 or 80.

Those who have lively interests in activities other than their jobs or businesses will be able to expand them and enjoy life. Those who have confined their lives to working, eating and sleeping may feel lost with too much time available.

One poll showed that 74 per cent

of retired people missed the money they'd been earning; 62 per cent missed the work itself, and about half felt a loss of self-esteem.

Happiness in retirement generally requires a variety of interests. Weekend fishermen, golfers, travelers, TV watchers, etc., may get caught up quickly when their favorite sport is no longer limited by time available.

After retirement, money and health become greater influences on how a person spends time. Aches and pains that were overruled by the necessity of reporting for work may be severe enough to discourage participation in retirement fun.

Besides higher basic living expenses, prices have gone up for hobbies and other interests. Car and gasoline prices have zoomed. Motels and roadside meals cost more. Museums and other attractions that used to be free now have gate charges.

Not a few people are concerned about the way Social Security reserves have dwindled and the fact that the number of people over 65 is increasing annually. New minimum wage laws might help, as workers pay Social Security a percentage tax.

It has been argued that age is an unreasonable basis for determining whether an individual can continue to do his or her work. Surveys show that about one in three would like to continue working after 65, but they are not necessarily the ones who are most capable of continuing to do their work well.

Employers may face difficult tasks in telling one person that he or she must retire because performance is deteriorating, while allowing another of similar age to continue. This might be more depressing than uniform age patterns which allow all to retire with dignity and pride.