

Discrimination: Plenty for Everybody

NEARLY everybody might find some reason to feel "discrimination" if we looked. That is why all people will never become "equals," regardless of social and political palaver.

Many inequalities have been changed, not always for the better. Some cannot be changed. Others ought not to be changed, because alterations could destroy rights of others. Most people are aware of "reverse discrimination" that resulted from "affirmative action" demanded by reformers to adjust prior discrepancies.

The extent of bias, discrimination or deprivation of rights may be greater than we have supposed.

Feminists have campaigned strenuously for such things as equal pay and "unisex" insurance rates, while most women have stood pat in wanting to retain special privileges or rights they have because they are women. A lot of them may want both.

These are major civil rights issues. There are numerous others

that loom large to those affected by what they regard as unjust discrimination.

Recently an Oklahoma City man who is 6 feet 7 inches tall announced plans to form a club for tall people who must cope with furniture, cars and clothing designed for average people.

Previously, a survey of 156 chief executives of major companies found that 56 percent were more than 6 feet tall, while only 3 percent were under 5-feet 7 inches. Another study produced an offsetting result favoring short men. It concluded they live longer than tall men.

Then a Chicago organization called "The Committee Against Physical Prejudice" claimed that our national obsession for physical attractiveness and youthfulness discriminated against ordinary-looking people.

It didn't get far but was succeeded by a group that argued "ugly people" were victims of bias. The climax may have come last fall when a California club bemoaned

problems its members encountered from being "too good-looking."

The National Association to Aid Fat Americans survived at least 11 years in its campaign against hiring practices that its officers claimed favor thinner people.

Discrimination originally connoted ability to tell differences but now it implies unfair treatment of others.

A sensible observation on the matter was made by Thomas Sowell, a black economist, about three years ago. He wrote:

"What determines how rapidly a group moves ahead is not discrimination but the fit between elements of its culture and the requirements of the economy. To get ahead, you have to have some ability to work, some ability at entrepreneurship or something else that the society values."

It is up to each individual, for the most part, to overcome whatever bias or discrimination affects him or her.