

suffered by many elderly Canadians (particularly women, whose pension entitlements may be minimal) and of age-based inequities in the provision of financial services.

The evidence supplied by witnesses leaves little room for doubt that age discrimination and other age-based abridgements of human rights are familiar realities for older Canadians. This is true despite the existence of federal and provincial human rights legislation specifically proscribing age discrimination, human rights commissions administering that legislation, and, more recently, constitutional guarantees of equal treatment for Canadians regardless of age.

Broader age-related human rights deficiencies are so extensive that they cannot be viewed merely as the random result of benign inattention. That is why the Committee has been led to confront the problem of ageism, and the central assumption that aging is automatically associated with declining capacities and productivity, frailty and helplessness. This assumption, we have been advised repeatedly, is refuted by contemporary research. It is, nevertheless, widely apparent on Canadian television screens, in advertisements, and in other media where attitudes are expressed and reinforced. It is also, sadly, apparent in our behaviour.

The Committee does not pretend to be able to offer solutions for all of the problems placed before it in the course of its investigation of aging and human rights. It submits this report in the hope that its representation of the concerns of Canada's aging and elderly will encourage the increased governmental and public attention which is, in many cases, a precondition for effective solutions.

Such attention will carry forward a process of inquiry and discussion which has already benefited from such notable parliamentary contributions as *Retirement Without Tears* (the landmark 1979 Senate study of retirement issues), the 1983 Report of the House of Commons Special Committee on Pension Reform, and the inquiry into the effectiveness of the Canadian Jobs Strategy (including its effectiveness for older workers) released by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration earlier this year. The Committee plans, itself, to contribute to this process in future reports which will focus on individual issues identified in the course of the present study, but which could not be addressed in detail because of their number and the press of events.