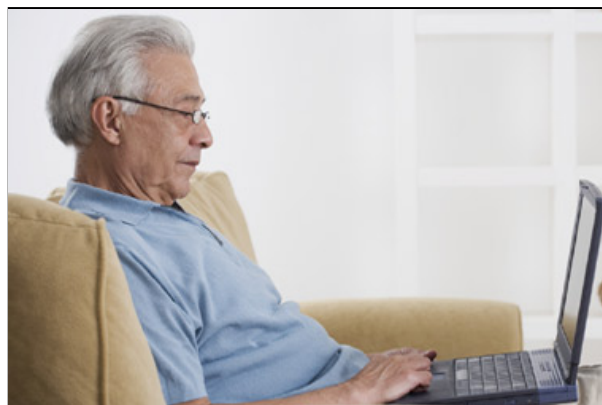




Edmonton East Member of Parliament Peter Goldring has presented a motion on the importance of older workers in the House of Commons. Motion M-515 received its first hour of debate October 4, 2010. This is the edited text of Mr. Goldring's statement in the House in support of the motion.

OLDER WORKERS -
A VALUABLE RESOURCE

Motion M-515 reads: **"That, in the opinion of the House, the government should continue to recognize the vital role of older workers in the Canadian economy and ensure its labour market programs and policies encourage older workers to contribute their skills and experience in the Canadian workforce."**



Older workers understand the need to acquire new skills if they want to remain in the workforce. Under some circumstances the federal government provided training for those needing to upgrade their qualifications.

for mentoring that experienced workers provide our country. My motion speaks to the Conservative government's focus on providing appropriate labour market programs and policies so older workers can continue contributing their skills and experience.

Canada has been through a difficult period.

But with the prudent economic leadership of our Conservative government we've fared better than most countries through the global recession.

While a forceful stimulus helped to reverse the decline last year, we'll be judged, as our Prime Minister has said, "by our capacity to lead the world through recovery and beyond."

The experience, knowledge and talents of older workers are key factors in this recovery and Canada's continuing competitiveness.

Our government recognizes the potential older workers bring to the workforce, their knowledge base and the invaluable capacity

Given our demographic challenges, and a slower growth in our workforce, Canada needs all workers active and contributing in



the coming years. Given that Canadians are living longer and healthier lives than in the past, more and more workers are choosing to extend their careers beyond the once normal retirement age of 65. For some it is a financial necessity, but others enjoy their careers, want to continue in them or explore new, more interesting occupational endeavours. Mandatory retirement, for the most part, is a thing of the past, as older workers in good health want to continue contributing to society.

For older workers who do not want to retire and are healthy enough to continue working to say 70 or 75 as do members of the other place and some Members of Parliament, why not? Why not utilize their wealth of knowledge, skills and enterprise?



Older workers frequently have the skills employers need in a labour market that is experiencing shortages. Those who choose to work beyond what used to be considered the normal retirement age can have rewarding second careers and contribute to society as well as family well-being

In 1900, just over a century ago, Canadian men had a life expectancy of 47, while women could expect to live just three years longer. When the first old age pension was introduced by the federal government, in 1927, payment began at age 70. Most Canadians would not live long enough to collect that pension, as the average life expectancy was 59 years for men and 62 years for women.

When the Canada Pension plan was intro-

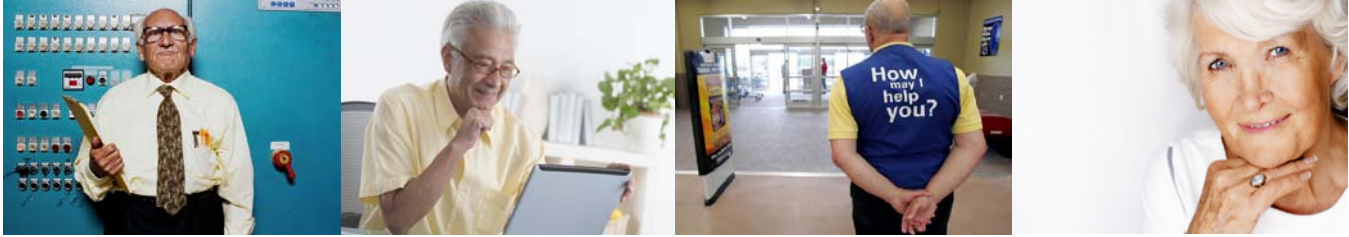
duced in 1965, age 65 was the start date for benefits. However it was common for workers to continue in the workforce until age 70, when they qualified for the Old Age Security Pension. The starting date for that pension was reduced to age 65 during the period of 1965-69. By 1965 the average life expectancy had risen to 69 years for men and 75 years for women. That's a 10 year increase for men from 1927.

Today Canadians today expect to live about 30 years longer on average that we did a century ago, 78 years for men and 83 years for women. That is another reason why Canadians are choosing to work longer. They know they can continue to contribute and still have time for a well-earned retirement

and leisure period when they are older.

In just 33 years, from 1976 to 2009, the number of workers aged 55 and over has increased from one million to three million. And as the "baby boom" generation grows older I would expect that number to continue to grow.

Our Government has seen the demographic changes in Canada and has responded accordingly. We now have a Minister of State



for Seniors, who is tasked with supporting our aging population, whether it be on combating the ever-increasing scourge of elder abuse or support for volunteering through initiatives such as the New Horizons For Seniors program.

Our Conservative government has met those challenges head on.

Canada's workforce is known throughout the world as resilient. We have one of the highest participation rates in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

We need to be inclusive in our labour market. The long-term benefits of releasing the economic potential of older workers and other groups such as persons with disabilities are enormous.

While our Government has been attentive to the needs of Canadian workers who experienced unemployment during the recent recession, we've also kept our eyes open for chances to develop skills for the future.

Let me summarize for you some of the program measures and initiatives our Conservative Government is offering.

We've increased funding for Targeted Initiative for Older Workers – to assist unem-

ployed older workers in vulnerable communities to retrain.

It's a five-year \$220 million cost-shared initiative with provincial and territorial governments. The goal is to help unemployed older workers in communities affected by significant downsizing, closures, or ongoing high unemployment, by preparing them for new and immediate employment.



The Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development at a 2009 announcement of programs to help unemployed older workers develop new skills that will enable them to find jobs in today's labour market.

This funding includes \$60 million under Canada's Economic Action Plan.

More than 10,000 unemployed older workers have been assisted through more than 200 projects that have been approved to date. This is concrete help that is good for the workers as individuals and good for Canada as a whole.

There has been a philosophical shift in Canadian retirement aspirations. From the idyllic "Freedom 55" of years gone by, come the new realities of potential retirees taking three very important premises into account: health, wealth, and constructive occupation of time.

With good health most people need the appropriate wealth, and they also need the all-important occupation of mind that will also contribute to their lifestyle. For many, in-

deed for most, that means that if they have the blessing of good health, most choose to continue in some form of engaging occupation for some time past the artificially crafted retirement year of 65.

Certainly most do not aspire to put their feet up and retire at 55. Retirement without occupation of time is not freedom – for most it is drudgery.

Older workers want their contributions recognized for the good value they contribute to society.

So, Mr. Speaker, this motion is for me and all other older workers. I certainly do hope that

this House and the good citizens of Edmonton East recognize that I can still contribute to society, and, as long as I can, that I am welcome to participate and continue.

I suppose in a way I speak for all older persons who can contribute, that want to continue to contribute to society, to their family financial well-being and who want to be reminded that there is true value to this contribution.

Update: Minister of State (Seniors) The Honourable Diane Ablonczy spoke in the House of Commons to support Mr. Goldring’s motion. She said older Canadians are an increasingly important segment of our labour force and are also a source of enormous potential and are invaluable mentors to younger generations.

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This brochure series is intended to highlight special issues that Member of Parliament, Peter Goldring, has been involved in. If you wish to comment, please take a moment to fill out the survey below, write or call to the address above.



Your Opinion Matters...

Should governments of all levels do more to encourage older workers?

Yes No

Should Canada have a mandatory retirement age?

Yes No

Comments: _____

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____
 Postal Code: _____
 Telephone: _____

No
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