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② SEASONAL LABOR ON FRUIT AND VEGETABLE FARMS

NEW YORK STATE, 1945,

Surveyed by:

① New York (State) Department of Labor
Division of Industrial Relations,
Women in Industry & Minimum Wage
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SEASONAL FARM LABOR ON FRUIT AND VEGETABLE FARMS IN NEW YORK STATE

Program of the New York State Department of Labor

Pointing out that New York ranks high in the nation in agricultural production, Governor Dewey in his message to the Legislature in January 1945, said, "Since ...seasonal workers are necessary to our economy and welfare, it is the responsibility of the State of New York to insure for them acceptable living and working conditions."

The problems connected with seasonal labor on fruit and vegetable farms have been, for many years, of continuing concern to the growers themselves, to various State agencies and departments, to responsible people in the communities where such seasonal help is used, and to public-minded citizens in the State as a whole. After our entrance into the war, the problem of maintaining agricultural production in the State and at the same time protecting the health and welfare of the seasonal farm workers led to the creation in 1942 of the Farm Manpower Service and the State Interdepartmental Committee to study the situation and make recommendations to improve conditions.

Of particular concern to the New York Department of Labor has been the growing employment of child laborers and migrants in industrialized agriculture and the conditions of their employment. The increasing dependence, in the last few years, on these sources of seasonal farm labor has been a consequence of manpower shortages due to the withdrawal of local farm workers into the armed services and also, in part, to the higher wages paid in war plants.

Extent of seasonal farm labor

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It has been estimated by the New York State War Council that there were 126,800 seasonal farm workers employed in New York in 1945. Of these, 10,000 were out-of-state migrants living in privately operated labor camps, and another 10,000 were West Indians and prisoners of war housed in publicly supported camps. Practically all of the remaining 100,000 were local help who went to the farms each day from their homes and returned each night. 1/

Some indication of the extent to which seasonal farm work depends on the labor of children and youths is given in data published by the Department of Education for 1944. 2/

1. New York State College of Agriculture, Department of Agricultural Economics, "Farm Labor Contractors in New York, 1944 and 1945," by T.N. Hurd. Prepared at the request of the New York State War Council.
2. University of the State of New York, Bulletin to the Schools, "Pupils Aid Food Production," Vol. 31, No. 4, December 1944, pp. 99-101.

According to this source, there were:

Farm and country youth

Excused during the spring term for planting	14,778
Worked at general farm work and harvesting throughout the summer	40,000
Excused during fall term for harvesting	25,000

City youth

Received training in schools before placement on farms	1,800
Members of camp groups working on farms for periods varying from two weeks to three months	2,000
Transported daily to near-by farms for harvesting of truck crops	10,000

While there is probably considerable duplication in this total of over 90,000, the figures give some idea of the large number of children and youths involved.

Many of these children work under healthful conditions on family farms or the farms of neighbors. Chores assigned to them are suited to their age and strength. Thus over the course of their youth, in a practical and healthful way, they obtain the knowledge and skills needed to operate a farm. What of the others - the thousands of children from the cities and towns, hauled daily to farms to pick fruits and vegetables? Some claim it is healthful work; that it keeps children off hot city streets and "out of trouble." Others maintain that some branches of industrialized agriculture, notably bean and pea picking, employ thousands of children, many of them very young; that in some cases the conditions under which children work are as undesirable as those found in unregulated industrial employment; that picking in these "factories in the field" is often characterized by long hours, repetitive processes, unsuitable and sometimes hazardous conditions, and absence of supervision.

It is well to point out here that child labor does not exist in some branches of fruit and vegetable production in this State. Because of the insufficiency of young workers, the harvesting of tomatoes, peaches, grapes and other delicate fruits is performed largely by older youths and adults.

The Labor Department program for the summer of 1945

The New York State Child Labor Law applies to child workers on the farms as well as in factories; but while public opinion has long been aware of the evils of child labor in the factory, there is less information regarding employment conditions of child workers in agriculture. A large part of public opinion, associating farm labor with work on small home farms, has been inclined to consider such work as a rather pleasant and not too arduous task for children, ignoring the fact that in modern industrialized agriculture such labor can be quite as difficult and exhausting for a child as factory work.

In view of this, the Industrial Commissioner concluded that, as with any law, emphasis must first be placed on an educational and informational program; that public information was prerequisite to the observance and enforcement of the Labor Law. Therefore, in the summer of 1945 the Labor Department, with the cooperation of the State Interdepartmental Committee, inaugurated for the first time in the history of the State a widespread informational and educational campaign among fruit and vegetable growers, farm workers, interested agencies, and the public at large. The growing dependence on child farm laborers, the increasing number of complaints, and the beginning of an aroused public interest and concern made the summer of 1945 a propitious time for such a program.

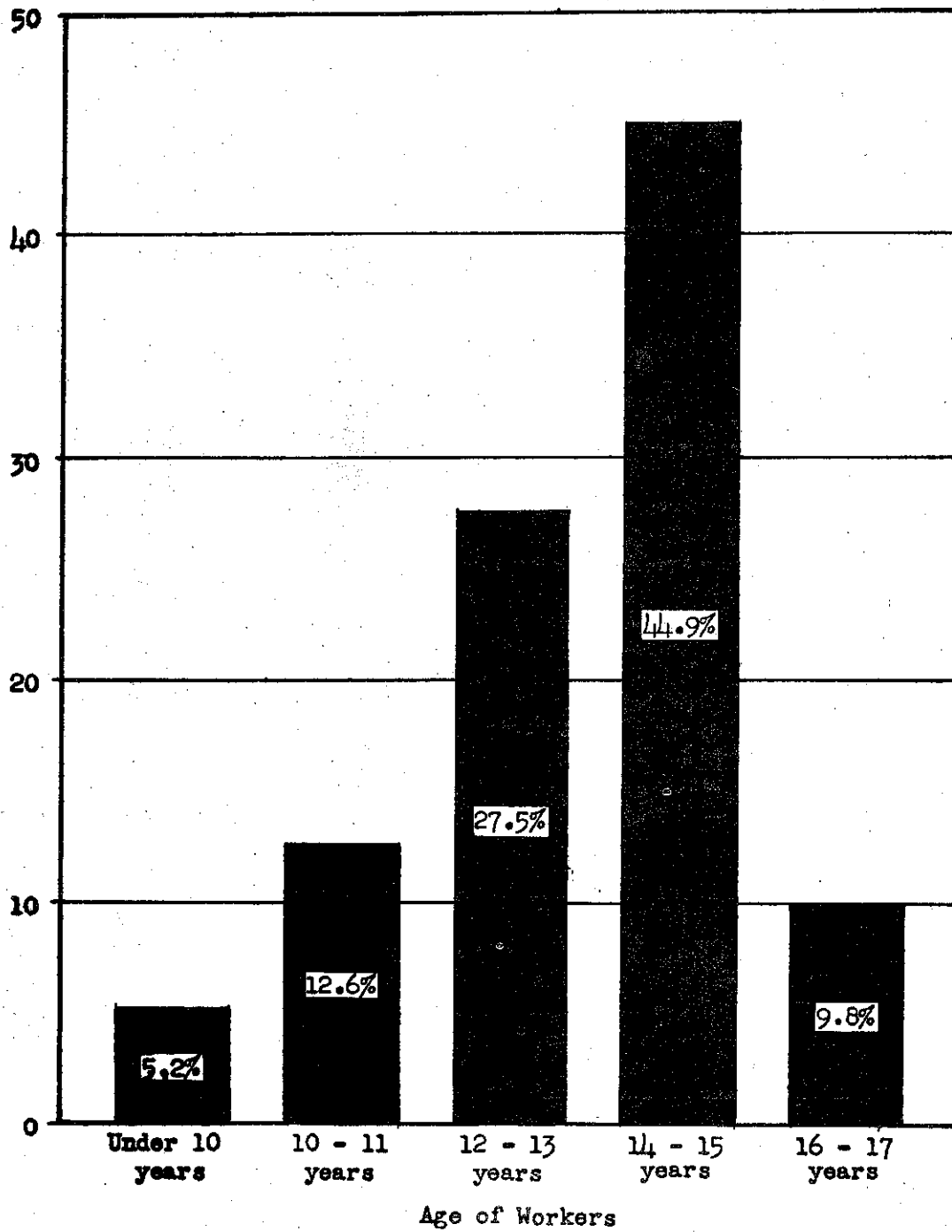
As a first step, the Industrial Commissioner convened a conference in Syracuse of some 60 representative leaders in their fields to discuss the problem of seasonal farm labor and the Labor Department's program. Represented were various State agencies, growers, civic and youth-serving organizations, social agencies and religious groups. As a result of the discussion, these representatives brought back into their communities a knowledge of the laws affecting farm labor, and the program of the Labor Department.

A second step was direct contact with growers, contractors, and farm workers by investigators of the Labor Department to lay the educational foundation for enforcement. These investigators, starting at dawn and returning late in the evening, visited the farms and labor camps, rode on the trucks carrying workers to the fields, and occasionally took a hand in the picking in order to become thoroughly acquainted with the situation. They discussed conditions with the growers, contractors and drivers. They explained the requirements of the laws and pointed out the ways in which they were being violated. They talked over the problems faced by the grower and often showed how it was possible, with a little effort, to comply with the law. Growers were told where to obtain applications for farm work permits without which children of 14 and 15 years of age may not work on farms. Investigators urged growers to recruit workers through the United States Employment Service, thus saving themselves much trouble and at the same time assuring more efficient production through the employment of children of legal age. Circulars listing the requirements of the Labor Law were left with the growers and contractors, and were also distributed to county farm agents through the Agricultural Extension Service.

As a result of these activities growers and contractors now are more aware of the provisions of the law and expect enforcement in the 1946 season. They also realize, as one of them said, that "The Labor Department doesn't have horns," - that the Department appreciates the problems of the growers in securing labor, and is anxious to help them obtain a legal labor supply.

Chart 1. Age of Day-Haul Workers under 18 Years

Per cent
of workers
under 18



and adults carried on day-haul trucks and buses. Almost three-fourths - 72 per cent - were children and youths less than 18 years of age; and of these, 45 per cent were under 14 years, the minimum age permitted by the Labor Law for work on farms.

The proportion of children under 14 years varied from a low of 28 per cent in Rochester to a high of 58 per cent in Utica, as shown in Table I. It is of special interest that the lowest proportion of young workers under 14 years of age was found in Rochester and Buffalo. It has already been pointed out that in the Rochester area the government sponsored day-haul program was an outstanding one. Such a program functioned in Buffalo also. On the other hand there was no supervised program at the time of investigators' visits in the two cities with the highest proportion of young children.

Table I. Day-Haul Workers Under 18 Years of Age, by Area and Age

Area	Number of workers		Per cent of minors under 18, aged:				
	Total	Under 18	Under 10	10 and 11	12 and 13	14 and 15	16 and 17
Total	2,622	1,892	5.2	12.6	27.5	44.9	9.8
Buffalo	769	639	3.9	11.9	26.9	47.0	10.3
Rochester	638	450	1.3	6.0	20.7	61.8	10.2
Syracuse	323	233	3.9	18.5	31.3	36.9	9.4
Utica	892	570	10.2	16.1	31.9	32.9	8.9

A strikingly high proportion of very young children was found on trucks in the Utica area. More than 10 per cent of the minors were younger than 10 years of age. In this group were 11 tots under six years, 16 children of six and seven years of age, and 31 who were eight or nine years old.

While less than 4 per cent of the children in the Syracuse area were under 10 years, there was a substantial proportion - 18.5 per cent - of 10 and 11 year olds.

The larger number of very young children on the Utica hauls, while partly explained by the absence of a supervised program, is also due in part to the fact that in this area it is more customary for whole families to go out as a group, particularly among the foreign-extraction sections of the population. The mothers take their young children along to augment family earnings, or because they hesitate to leave the children in the care of others, or because there is no place to leave them. According to a school official, mothers find it difficult to avail themselves of the child-care center facilities since the centers close at 5:30 P. M., while the mothers do not return from the field until 8 or 9 o'clock at night. One Utica mother stated that she had to take her 11-month infant and a folding carriage along with her on the truck to the farm because nurseries would not accept babies of this age.

Of course, not all of the very young children work. Some play in the fields, some pick a few berries or beans to help mother or do as she does; but

for others it is a serious job and means work all day long at the picking.

Data on family composition are available for almost 1,700 of the child children under 16 years of age who were interviewed on the farms.

Only one-fifth of the youngsters were accompanied by persons over 16 years, as shown in Table II. In most instances this was a mother; in some, a grandparent or aunt or uncle; in a considerable number of cases an older brother or sister; and in a few cases a "friend" or neighbor. More than half of the children under 10 years were accompanied by an older family member.

On the other hand, three out of every four children under 16 years of age came alone or with sisters or brothers also under 16 years. Among the 44 per cent who came alone were six children under 10 years old, 58 aged 10 or 11 and almost 200 of 12 and 13 years. Among those who were accompanied only by brothers or sisters under 16 years were 27 children less than 10 years old and 94 of 10 and 11 years of age.

Table II. Day-Haul Workers Under 16 Years, Classified by Family Relationship of Most Responsible Person Accompanying Them to Farm

Age	Total	Per cent who were accompanied by:			Per cent who were unaccompanied
		Persons over 16 years	Brother or sister under 16 years	Brother or sister, age not specified:	
Total	1,681	21.5	29.6	5.3	43.6
Under 10 years	83	56.7	32.5	3.6	7.2
10 and 11 "	245	30.2	38.3	7.8	23.7
12 and 13 "	532	21.1	36.3	5.8	36.8
14 and 15 "	821	15.7	22.4	4.4	57.5

The proportion of youngsters accompanied by a family member over 16 years was highest in Utica, ¹/_{where}, as has been noted, it is more customary for whole families to participate in the day-hauls. As a consequence of this custom, the Utica area also showed the lowest proportion of unaccompanied children. It must be recalled, however, that another by-product of this practice is the employment of a high proportion of very young children.

The participation of whole families on day-hauls in the Utica area is not the result of any special predilection for day-haul farm work. A social worker working among Italians - the largest group of foreign extraction in Utica - informed our investigator that fewer families volunteered for picking in the summer

1. See Appendix Table 1 for data by area.

of 1945 than formerly. She explained this by the higher wartime family incomes and the fact that youths of 14 to 18 years old could get better jobs in the cities. "Children from the Italian section dread farm work and are happy to get other jobs. ... Hours are very long. ... Excitement and the noise on trucks are bad for the children and mothers are upset and easily irritable with the children."

Rochester presents a contrasting picture. In this area investigators found the highest proportion of unaccompanied children and the lowest percentage of youngsters accompanied by older relatives. But because of the outstanding success of the government-sponsored day-haul program there were few very young children and a very high proportion of legally employed youngsters aged 14 or over. Furthermore, government supervisors visited several farms each day for the purpose of providing supervision for the youngsters.

Farm work permits

The results of the supervised day-haul program in the Rochester area are seen not only in the smaller proportion of agricultural child laborers under the 14 year legal age but also in the matter of farm work permits. In accordance with the requirements of the State Education and Labor Laws, children of 14 and 15 must have such permits to work on farms. These are obtained through the schools after presentation of an application signed by a parent, a birth certificate or other proof of age, and a record of doctor's examination showing physical fitness for the job. Two-thirds of the 14 and 15 year old children interviewed on the farms in the Rochester area had their certificates. In contrast, only 5 per cent had these permits in Buffalo; in Syracuse only one of 86 children, and in Utica only three of 190.

Conditions of travel

In order to prevent overcrowding and to protect workers against the risk of serious accidents, the Vehicle and Traffic Law requires that whenever any number of persons are transported more than five miles on a truck, there must be firmly attached seats for two-thirds of the workers, and securely attached side racks and tailboards. Furthermore, when more than five youths under 18 years are being transported, at least one adult must ride in the body of the truck.

In general, the trucks complied with the Law regarding number of seats. About 11 per cent of all workers had to stand or sit on the floor of trucks - varying from 5 per cent in Buffalo to 23 per cent in Syracuse. The seats, however, in very many cases, were far from "firmly attached." A very common procedure was to place a board across two empty crates or cement building blocks on each side of the truck. Conditions on a few trucks were particularly bad. One inspector witnessed a truck carrying 45 workers of whom 28 were children under 16 years of age. Fifteen of the children had to stand during a 22 mile trip. In another truck carrying three adults and 13 youngsters, there were only two seats provided - kitchen chairs. The children sat on the floor or their pails. On the return trip the children could not even sit on their pails since it is customary in bean and pea picking to take home a pailful of the vegetables.

Most trucks had tailboards but in eight cases this elementary safety precaution was lacking. One driver, apparently more greatly concerned with the lumber that he occasionally also hauled, maintained that "tailboards would be a nuisance." In some cases where tailboards were provided, these boards reached only part way across the truck, leaving a space where ladders were put out for child workers to climb on to the trucks. Sometimes, after the trucks started

these ladders were placed across the opening. Often, however, this was not done.

Because the Law does not require trucks to have tops, many children are hauled in trucks exposed to rain and inclement weather. Thirteen of the trucks witnessed by investigators had no such tops or had made no other provision for protecting the children in event of showers en route.

Distance from pick-up point to farm

Some of the farms were fairly near the respective cities, but others required two hours or more of travel to reach them before the earning-day began. Distance from pick-up point to farm varied from three to 50 miles.

Table III. Distance of Travel to Farms

Area	Distance in miles										
	Total	Over	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	50
	trips	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	50	
	re-	or	less	under	under	under	under	under	under	under	miles
	ported	less	than	15	20	25	30	35	40	50	
	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Total	83	5	14	15	11	8	14	7	4	3	2
Buffalo	22	-	1	2	2	2	10	2	3	-	-
Rochester	24	1	3	8	5	3	4	-	-	-	-
Syracuse	12	1	1	-	-	2	-	3	1	2	2
Utica	25	3	9	5	4	1	-	2	-	1	-

On 38 of the 83 trips children were hauled to farms at least 20 miles distant, and 16 of these trips were from 30 to 50 miles. On most of the Utica hauls children traveled less than 20 miles, while in the Syracuse area two-thirds of the hauls were at least 30 miles distant. One haul to a distant farm involved a hazardous trip up a hill on a dirt road so steep that from time to time a worker had to get out and set rocks behind the wheels to keep the truck from sliding back.

Supervision on trucks

It is certainly natural for a truck load of unsupervised children to indulge thoughtlessly in all kinds of horseplay and scuffling - dangerous on a moving vehicle and beyond the control of the driver. Inspectors reported many instances of truckloads of such yelling, excited children, standing on their seats and hanging over the sides of the truck. In one truck five children sat on the tailboard for a distance of 32 miles.

Furthermore, because of the delays in picking up children on various street corners and the pressure to get workers to the fields as early as possible to take advantage of clear weather, drivers sometimes travel at an illegal and hazardous speed. One investigator told of a truck load of children passing

another day-haul truck while speeding downhill on a two-lane road at 50 miles an hour. The truck carried six adult pickers and 20 children. Six of the workers were standing for a distance of 25 miles. Seats were not secure, consisting of planks laid across boxes. The tailboard did not extend across the whole back and some children were sitting in the opening with their legs hanging over. In addition to the unsafe and illegal condition of the truck with regard to seating arrangements and tailboard, and to the reckless driving, the operator ignored several stop lights. The Labor Department inspector learned that this driver had had an accident the year before, in which 14 workers were injured.

It is because of conditions such as those enumerated above that the Law requires that an adult must ride on the rear of trucks transporting more than five minors under 18 years to work locations more than five miles distant. Of a total of 83 hauls, 51 had no assigned supervisors, as shown in Table IV. While most of the unsupervised trucks did carry one or more adult workers, these workers could not be expected to, nor did they in most cases, assume responsibility for controlling and supervising the children.

Table IV. Supervision on Day-Haul Vehicles

	: All areas :	: Buffalo :	: Rochester :	: Syracuse :	: Utica :
Total trips	: 83 :	: 22 :	: 24 :	: 12 :	: 25 :
Supervised trips	: 32 :	: 6 :	: 15 :	: 3 :	: 8 :
Unsupervised trips	: 51 :	: 16 :	: 9 :	: 9 :	: 17 :

The results of Rochester's exceptional efforts are seen here also. While only about 25 to 30 per cent of the trips in other areas were supervised, in Rochester over 60 per cent of the trucks had such supervision.

Working Conditions of Children on Day-Haul Farms

Crops and jobs

The first farm was visited by investigators on July 12 and the sixty-seventh farm on September 11. During the two-month interval beans formed the largest crop for which the day-haul workers were used. Children were picking beans on 50 of the farms. Some of the first visits occurred while cherries, raspberries and peas were still being harvested and children were picking these crops on 12 farms, in all. On two farms children were engaged in weeding carrots and beets; on two others, pulling and topping onions; and on one farm, pulling rhubarb. The raspberry and cherry crops were found in the Buffalo and Rochester areas, the onion crops near Syracuse, and the peas in the Utica area.

In all four areas beans were the big August crop. Because a majority of the farms were visited in August, and because bean-picking overshadows all other seasonal farm labor in these areas anyway, the majority of the young people were employed at this job.

Hours worked in the field

Because of factors such as temperature, drought and storms, the time when crops are ready to be picked varies. This means, of course, that pickers' hours will vary accordingly. In some weeks, therefore, there are long working days; in others, short days or no work at all. Unlike the situation in factory and mercantile employment, where minors may not work more than eight hours a day, the hours of minors working as farm laborers are not limited by the Labor Law (except in canneries). While the hours of child workers varied considerably on the farms visited, three-fourths of the children worked eight hours a day or less. But one-fourth worked more than eight hours, with a considerable number working as many as 10 hours - excluding the time spent in traveling to and from the job.

Almost 1,500 of the children and youths of less than 18 years reported to investigators the number of hours they had spent in the field on the previous day or the last day they had worked. Among these were eight children, less than eight years of age, 49 children of eight or nine years, and 194 who were 10 or 11 years old.

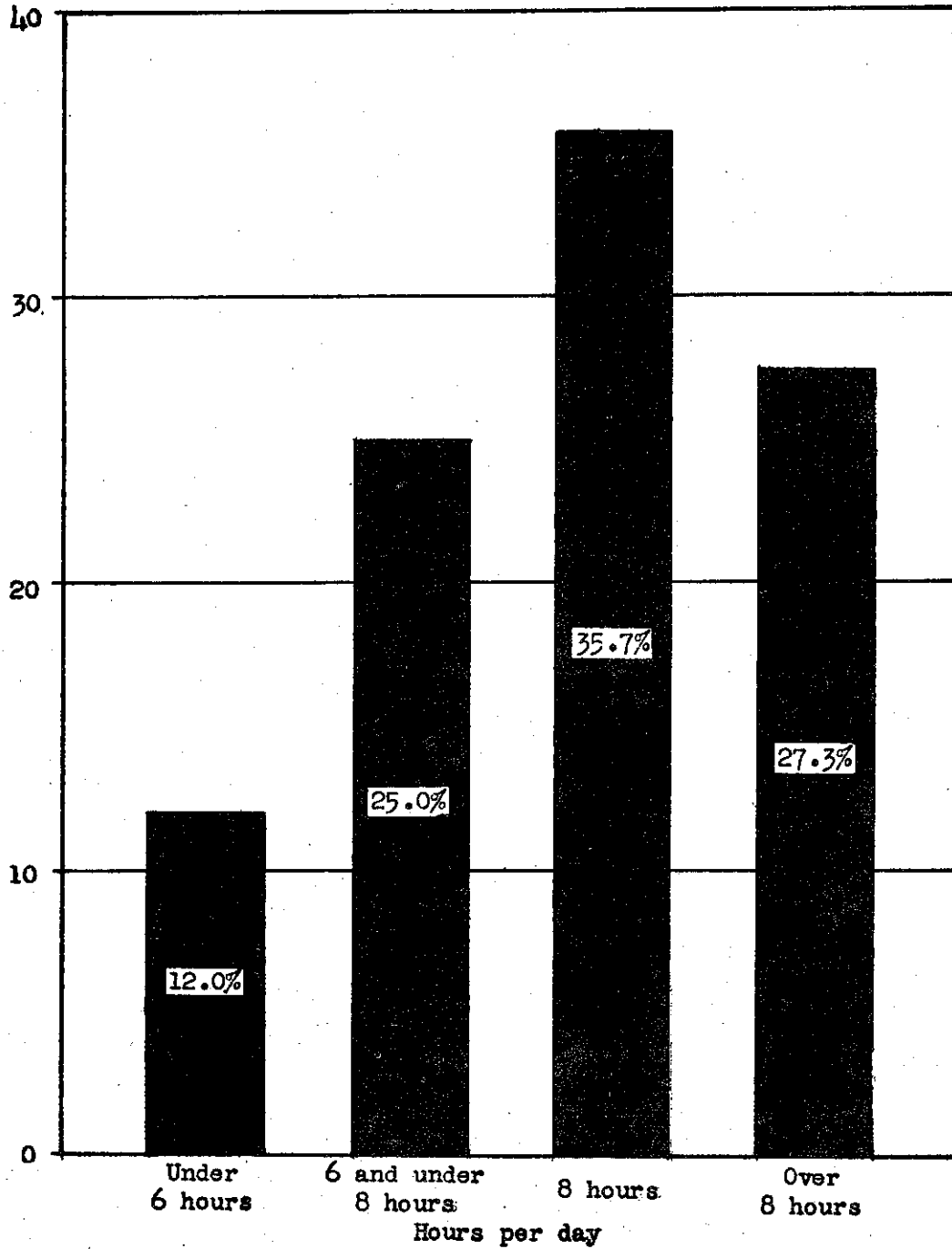
The most usual day was eight hours with the largest proportion of minors - almost 36 per cent - working exactly these hours. One of every four children worked less than eight hours but at least six hours, and 12 per cent spent short days of less than six hours in the field. Among the 27 per cent who picked for longer than eight hours on the day in question were 16 children of eight and nine years and 64 children of 10 and 11 years, 13 of whom worked at least 10 hours.

Surprisingly, it was found that a larger proportion of very young children worked over eight hours than those of 14 and 15 years of age. While less than 25 per cent of all the children of 14 and 15 worked more than eight hours, as shown in Table V, 28 per cent of the 12 and 13 year olds and 32 per cent of the children under 12 years old worked these long hours. This was true in all areas except Utica. ^{1/} and

1. See Appendix Table 2 for data by area.

Chart 2. Day's Hours Worked by Day-Haul Workers under 18 Years

Per cent
of workers
under 18



even here a larger proportion of children under 12 years worked long hours than did the 12 and 13 year olds. This is explained by the fact that in all areas, long days of more than eight hours were limited to a few farms and affected all workers on these farms, regardless of age. These farms, which were usually among the largest ones and frequently recruited pickers through a contractor, had a higher proportion of younger children.

Table V. Day's Hours of Day Haul-Workers Under 18 Years by Age Group

Age	Number of children	Per cent of children who worked the following daily hours:			
		Under 6 hours	6 and under 8 hours	8 hours	Over 8 hours
Total reporting	1,489	12.0	25.0	35.7	27.3
Under 12 years	251	9.2	24.3	34.6	31.9
12 and 13 "	469	9.4	28.1	34.3	28.2
14 and 15 "	702	15.4	23.2	36.9	24.5
16 and 17 "	67	6.0	23.9	35.8	34.3

Children in the Syracuse area were employed the longest hours. Less than 13 per cent worked fewer than eight hours and nearly one-half worked long days of over eight hours. Shortest hours were found in the Utica area where more than half the children worked less than eight hours. Even here, however, one of every five children spent more than eight hours in the field; and most of the extremely long hours for very young children occurred in this area.

Two eight year old Utica boys worked nine hours on the day preceding investigator's visit. One of them had spent 45 hours picking beans in the preceding week. Also, of the 13 children aged 10 and 11 years who worked 10 hours a day, seven were in the Utica area. Two of these children, a 10 year old boy and an 11 year old girl, had worked 50 hours in the preceding week.

Hours away from home

Actual hours in the field, combined with the hours consumed in traveling to and from the job, kept the young child workers away from home on an average of 12 hours a day. One of every five children was away from home a minimum of 13 hours.

Much time is consumed even before the children leave the city. When there is a central gathering place, like the USES, the child after arrival at the office may then have to wait for the truck to be loaded before starting on the trip. When there is no central gathering point the truck may cruise the city streets, picking up children at various points. The last ones on in the morning and the first ones off in the evening are lucky, as an additional hour or more can easily be consumed in this way.

The children must leave home early enough to meet the truck at the pickup point in time to get an early start on the farm. Three of the trucks began picking up workers between 5 and 6 o'clock in the morning. In order to dress and have breakfast before leaving home, these children had to arise at dawn or earlier - or go off without breakfast.

Investigators talked with a seven year old boy who had left his home, unaccompanied by any member of his family, at 6 o'clock in the morning for bean picking. Two eight year old twins, also unaccompanied, reported leaving their homes at the same hour. A nine year old boy accompanied by two sisters and a brother, all under 16, had left at 5 o'clock to meet the truck. A 14 year old girl left her home at 4:30 A. M. on the day she was interviewed.

The return trip in the evening entailed similar additional time. While a majority of the trucks returned their workers between 5 and 7 P. M., 11 trucks did not reach their destination until 8 or 9 o'clock in the evening. Many children who were set down at central points in the city reached their homes even later.

Altogether, investigators talked with 1,673 boys and girls under 18 years of age (only 86 of these were 16 or 17 years old), regarding the time they left home in the morning and returned at night. The most usual over-all day was about 12 hours, but almost one-fifth of the boys and girls interviewed were away from home for 13 hours or longer, as shown in Table VI. Only one-fifth of the children were away less than 11 hours.

Table VI. Hours Elapsed Between Leaving and Returning Home for Day-Haul Workers Under 18 Years of Age

Hours	Total	Buffalo	Rochester	Syracuse	Utica
Total reporting	1,673	582	412	227	452
Per cent:					
Under 8 hours	4.2	-	0.5	-	15.3
8 and under 10 hours	7.8	0.2	0.7	3.1	26.6
10 " " 11 "	9.0	2.6	11.7	4.4	17.0
11 " " 12 "	20.0	23.5	30.3	2.6	14.6
12 " " 13 "	39.5	55.4	36.4	35.2	24.3
13 " " 14 "	16.0	18.0	15.8	38.8	2.0
14 hours and over	3.5	0.3	4.6	15.9	0.2
Median hours	12.2	12.4	12.2	13.1	10.5

Longest over-all hours were found in Syracuse where only 10 per cent of the children were away from home for less than 12 hours. This was due to two reasons: hours spent in the field were longest, and eight of the 12 farms were 30 miles distant or further. By contrast, in the Utica area, with its near-by farms, and several short days when pickers returned home early because of rain, little more than one-fourth of the children were away from home as long as 12 hours.

It should be noted also that sometimes workers traveled to the farms only to be told on arrival that because of the weather or for other reasons there would be no work. Such time was also not compensated.

Hourly earnings

Workers who harvest fruits and vegetables are paid on a piece-rate basis. Bean picking paid three cents a pound in Buffalo and in the Rochester area, two, two and a half, and three cents a pound. Beans were paid by the bushel in Syracuse and Utica, usually at 50 cents a bushel.

It is very rare, indeed, for growers or contractors to keep records of the hours and earnings of individual workers. In order to obtain data on earnings, therefore, the children were asked the number of hours worked and wages earned on the last work-day preceding the investigator's visit, and hourly earnings were computed from these data.

Earnings varied widely with age, from less than 10 cents an hour to one dollar and over, as shown in Tables VII and VIII. Half of the young workers earned less than 32.5 cents an hour and one of every five received less than 20 cents. On the other hand, almost one-fourth of the youngsters earned 50 cents an hour or more.

Earnings were lowest in the Utica area where half of the children received less than 24.7 cents an hour, and none received as much as 80 cents. The most usual earnings in this area were from 10 to 20 cents. In contrast, Rochester children earned median hourly wages of 49.1 cents, and almost one-fourth of them were paid between 50 and 60 cents. The Buffalo and Syracuse children earned considerably less than the Rochester youngsters but substantially more than the Utica children.

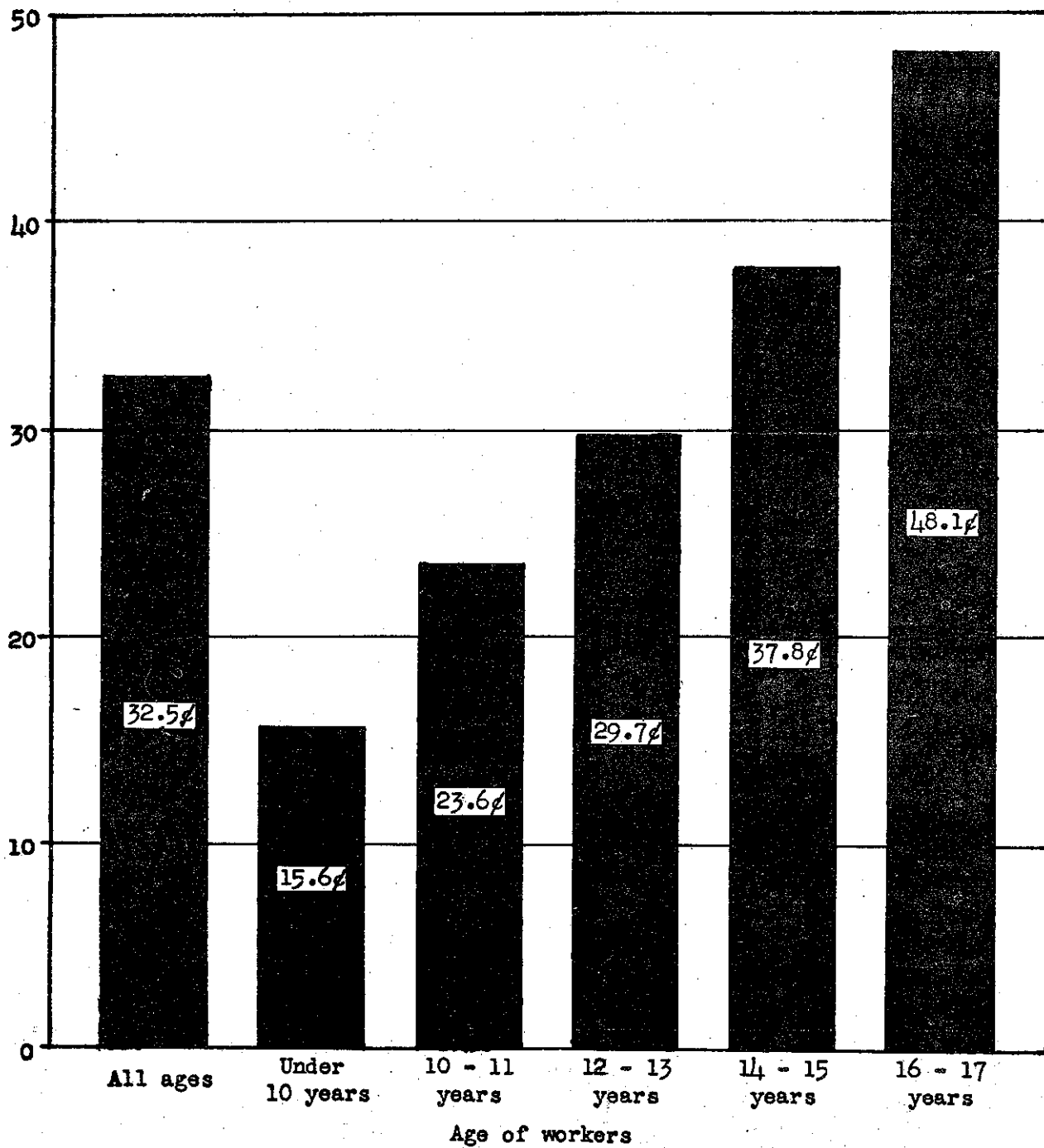
Table VII. Hourly Earnings of Day-Haul Workers Under 18 Years, by Area

Hourly earnings	Total	Buffalo	Rochester	Syracuse	Utica
Total reporting	1,427	455	318	205	449
Per cent earning:					
Under 10 cents	2.7	3.3	1.3	0.5	4.0
10 and under 20 cents	17.8	15.8	6.6	8.8	31.9
20 " " 30 "	24.2	27.5	13.5	21.0	29.9
30 " " 40 "	21.2	28.5	15.7	21.4	17.8
40 " " 50 "	10.6	10.5	14.2	12.2	7.3
50 " " 60 "	12.6	7.9	23.3	19.5	6.7
60 " " 70 "	5.3	3.1	11.9	6.8	2.2
70 " " 80 "	2.2	2.2	4.1	3.4	0.2
80 " " 90 "	1.7	0.4	5.0	2.9	-
90 cents and under \$1	0.4	0.4	-	2.0	-
\$1 and over	1.3	0.4	4.4	1.5	-
Median hourly earnings (cents)	32.5	31.2	49.1	39.2	24.7

The variation in hourly earnings from area to area cannot be explained by crop differences since beans were being harvested on most farms in all areas. Nor can the variation be ascribed to any one factor. To some extent the variation is due to rate of pay. However, in spite of the fact that rates were higher in the Rochester and Buffalo areas than in Syracuse and Utica, hourly earnings were higher in Syracuse than in Buffalo. Other important factors influencing earnings were age and family composition of the workers.

Chart 3. Hourly Earnings* of Day-Haul Workers under 18 Years, by Age

Cents
per hour



Hourly earnings by age

Average earnings varied directly with age from 17.2 cents an hour for the eight and nine year olds to 48.1 cents for those of 16 and 17 years. As shown in Table VIII, this direct relationship between earnings and age was characteristic of all areas, and to some extent explains variation by area also. Utica, which had the highest proportion of very young children, showed the lowest hourly earnings. On the other hand, Rochester with the lowest proportion of young workers had highest earnings.

Furthermore, the lower earnings in Utica tend to support the oft-made observation that family work is poorly paid work. Rochester, with the fewest family units showed high median hourly earnings of at least 46 cents in all age groups. In Utica, no age group attained a median hourly wage of more than 30 cents.

Table VIII. Median Hourly Earnings of Day-Haul Workers Under 18 Years, by Age and Area

Age	Total	Buffalo	Rochester	Syracuse	Utica
Total reporting	1,427	455	318	205	449
Median hourly earnings (cents)					
All ages	32.5	31.2	49.1	39.2	24.7
Under 8 years	*	*	-	-	*
8 and 9 years	17.2	*	*	*	14.1
10 " 11 "	23.6	25.0	*	27.5	18.5
12 " 13 "	29.7	29.6	46.3	37.8	25.2
14 " 15 "	37.8	34.5	50.7	52.5	30.3
16 " 17 "	48.1	*	51.8	*	*

* Not computed owing to small number involved.

Hourly production by age

The greater efficiency of the older children can be shown also by a comparison of median hourly rate of production in the picking of beans. This eliminates differences due to varying rates for bean picking as well as differences in wage rates for other crops. In the Buffalo and Rochester areas, production was reckoned in pounds; and in Syracuse and Utica, in bushels.

Table IX. Median Hourly Rate of Production of Beans, by Age Group and by Area

Age	Pounds per hour		Bushels per hour	
	Buffalo	Rochester	Syracuse	Utica
Total reporting	342	207	159	333
10 and 11 years	8.6	16.0	0.57	0.39
12 " 13 "	10.6	19.5	0.81	0.53
14 " 15 "	12.5	18.9	1.09	0.65

Table IX shows that the rate of bean picking varied directly with age in all four areas with one exception; the 12 and 13 year olds in Rochester, according to these data, were somewhat more productive than the children of 14 and 15. The difference is very slight, however, and may be attributable to the difference in the size of the sample for each of these age groups.

By eliminating differences due to wage rates, Table IX provides more direct evidence, not only on the relation between productivity and age, but shows also in the lower figures of Utica and Buffalo, compared respectively with Syracuse and Rochester, the lower efficiency of family work.

Method of wage payment

Picking of beans, peas, cherries and raspberries were all paid on a piece-work basis. The only children paid by the hour were the very few who were engaged in weeding carrots or beets, or pulling onions or rhubarb. The usual procedure for piece work was to issue tickets to the workers for each tray of fruit or bushel of beans picked. These tickets were then turned in by the worker and wages paid accordingly.

The Labor Law requires wages to be paid at least once a week, not more than six days after they are earned, or in full every two weeks. Furthermore, because of the great irregularity and labor turnover in day-haul employment, the United States Employment Service asked employers using the Government recruiting service to pay workers at the end of each day. This arrangement made daily pay the most prevalent. Among 64 employers reporting, 26 paid the young workers on this basis. The Buffalo and Rochester areas, which had government-sponsored programs accounted for 24 of these 26 cases. In Syracuse and Utica, where there was no functioning supervised day-haul program at the time of investigators' visits, only one farm in each area paid wages at the end of each day.

On 17 farms children were paid weekly. This was most characteristic of the Utica area which accounted for 12 of these cases.

The remaining 21 employers reported that children were paid according to their individual desire - daily, weekly, or most often at the end of the picking season.

Because workers often find it difficult to cash checks, the Labor Law requires payment of wages in cash unless permission is received from the Industrial Commissioner to pay by check. Several employers, however, usually those paying at the end of the season, paid the children by check.

Physical working conditions

"Look at these children. Isn't it better for them to be here on the farm than on the street?" This question was addressed to a Labor Department investigator by one grower interviewed.

The point is arguable, of course, and one that has been made over the course of the years in opposition to any regulation of the employment of children.

Certainly, a few hours of work under proper conditions may not harm a child. But picking for eight hours and longer under a hot sun is arduous work for young undeveloped children of eight and 10 and 12 years old. Bean picking "wears out" the back and knees. And when there is no sun, there are other hazards. One

investigator reported that children were working in a bean field which was damp until one o'clock in the afternoon, because of heavy rains during the night. Few children wore rubbers and many of them were wet from feet to waist. Another investigator witnessed children picking beans in the rain for 40 minutes.

Obviously, lifting and carrying heavy loads is detrimental to the health of young children. Nevertheless, while adults on some farms voluntarily helped the children with their filled baskets, official arrangements of this kind were made on only one of 48 bean fields. And in only five cases were the filled baskets less than 30 pounds in weight. On three farms the loads were 40 pounds; and on 10 fields children lifted and carried 50 pound baskets. Four growers reported that the little children carried the baskets in pairs.

On the four cherry farms the loads varied from 32 to 50 pounds, and children were exposed to the additional hazard of falling off ladders. Raspberry picking and rhubarb pulling entailed much lighter loads - usually 10 pounds. On three of the four pea fields visited arrangements were made for adults to carry the baskets.

Turnover

Labor turnover was large on the day-hauls. Even on the 31 farms with substantially the same crew of pickers over the season, many boys and girls did not report for work regularly. Of the remaining 29 farms reporting, seven employers stated that the young workers changed constantly from day to day, and 22 reported that only a part of the children could be relied upon for steady attendance while the remainder had to be recruited from a constantly changing group.

Lunches

"Sandwiches and pop" was the almost invariable answer to questions concerning lunch. The children brought their lunch from home. There were no facilities for supplementing what they had brought except an occasional near-by soda-pop stand. In some instances, growers supplied the pop.

A few farms had regularly scheduled lunch periods. In general, however, workers had from 20 minutes to one hour for lunch; but on one farm the investigator found the children eating their sandwiches while they worked. On several farms foremen were seen hurrying the children back to work after 20 minutes.

The absence of regular meal periods and adequate meals is important in view of the fact that many children were away from home for an average of 12 hours. Some left home without adequate breakfasts and returned after the dinner hour and as a result, spent the day with no regular meal at home.

Sanitary facilities

The fields on which the children worked were usually some distance from the farm houses and an available water supply. Water, when supplied, was usually carried in milk cans. Almost universally, all workers - children and adults, healthy or diseased - used the can covers or a common dipper as drinking vessels. On only three farms did the milk cans or barrels have spigots for drawing the water. On two farms workers brought their own glasses; and one farmer supplied the children with paper cups.

Water was not always supplied and sometimes the supply was inadequate. One investigator reported that, "Water had to be carried to this field from a town three miles distant. It was very hot in the fields and the children were clamoring for water which was finally brought at 11:45 A. M. only after emphatic insistence on my part. The truck drivers said that the grower was supposed to bring the water; the grower claimed his trucks were busy and could not bring the water."

Farm houses or outside privies were available to the children on seven farms. In the remaining cases there were no toilet facilities and arrangements were most primitive.

Workmen's compensation

Contrary to the general impression that farm work is not arduous, a study by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics in 1943, 1/ shows it to be the most arduous of occupations insofar as the number of fatal accidents and permanent total disabilities is concerned. In New York State, the Department of Agriculture and Markets reported that in 1945 accidents occurred on one of every eight farms, and that the "loss of time and interruption of work, as well as the suffering and medical expense were serious handicaps in farm operation." 2/

Workmen's compensation insurance is not required by law for agricultural employment. However, growers may voluntarily elect to cover their employees, and 14 of the growers interviewed reported that they had availed themselves of such insurance. Two other employers carried farmers' liability insurance. The remaining growers carried no insurance or made no report on this question.

Of the 14 farms with workmen's compensation, three reported that only adults were insured. One of these growers stated, "We don't employ the children; we employ their parents." When the investigator pointed out that most of the children were there without their parents, the employer replied, "Oh, that's just this year - the parents used to come." On another farm with workmen's compensation for adults only, tickets received by the children for each bushel picked had the following printed on the back:

"Bearer certifies that he is in the employ of crop contractor, who has agreed to furnish him with wages and transportation; and he is not under the supervision or control of Mr. X." (grower)

This was printed on the tickets beginning five years ago after an accident to one of the child workers. Actually, there was no contractual relationship on this farm.

1. United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Work Injuries in the United States during 1943," Bulletin No. 802.
2. State of New York, Department of Agriculture and Markets, Bureau of Statistics, New York Farm Work Report, March 1946.

SEASONAL FARM LABOR IN MIGRANT CAMPS

While out-of-state migrants comprised only 8 per cent of the 126,800 seasonal farm workers in New York State in 1945,¹ they probably perform considerably more than 8 per cent of the work of seasonal laborers because they are more steadily employed and work for longer periods. One consequence of the war has been a large increase in the number of such migrant workers from other States. The State Interdepartmental Committee recognized that large numbers of migrants would continue to be employed in this State, even after the war.²

In order to ascertain the living and working conditions of these workers, investigators visited 29 migrant farm labor camps in the Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Utica areas. Half of the camps were visited in September when some of them had already lost or discharged a part of their workers; in two camps all the workers had already left. Thus, of a possible maximum of 2,200 workers, the 27 camps housed approximately 1,200 workers at the time of the visits.

Physical Equipment and Condition of Camps

Size and location of camps

Of 28 camps reporting, one housed 350 migrants at capacity; two had room for 200, four more housed from 100 to 200 residents and 21 when full housed less than 100 people.

Sometimes the camps were located very near a main acreage to be worked on. But because growers frequently had several scattered fields with a total acreage varying from 22 up to 1,000 acres, and because camp laborers sometimes worked for more than one farmer, the fields to be picked were frequently quite far from the camps and workers had to be hauled to the fields each day by truck or bus. Most of the fields were within five miles of the camps; but at one camp, workers traveled 11 miles to work, two groups had to be hauled 15 miles and a fourth camp was 20 miles distant from the vegetable fields to be picked. This meant, of course, extra time added to the work days.

Camp buildings and furnishings

The migrant workers were usually housed in a barrack-like structure divided into unfinished one-room units with a small window or two and a separate entrance. Sometimes large families were allotted two rooms but often whole families shared one room.

1. See page 1

2. New York State Farm Manpower Service, "Policy and Program for Seasonal Farm Workers," Report to Governor Dewey, February 17, 1945.

This room was used for sleeping, cooking and eating, and in inclement weather provided the only shelter during the day as well. In more than half of the camps visited some rooms housed four, five, six and in one camp even seven persons. A Florida family of seven shared one room with two bunks. One child slept with its parents in the lower bunk and the four other children all slept together in the upper bunk. However, many rooms were occupied by only one or two workers. One camp provided spacious rooms, 10 feet by 18 feet, with cross ventilation and no more than two adults, or a total of four persons, to a room. In another camp where considerable effort was made to provide satisfactory living arrangements, warm air was blown into the rooms on wet and chilly days.

In some cases screens were provided for windows and doors, but by the end of the summer, these were often badly in need of repair.

The usual furnishings were very crude and sparse, often consisting of bunks with straw mattresses, a table, and a few chairs, or boxes serving as chairs. But one camp supplied bed springs for all occupants and another provided adequate shelves, besides tables and chairs, in each room. Families from near-by cities usually brought furniture of their own, but others generally had only what was provided for them.

In at least three camps there were full-time caretakers to look after the garbage, toilets and grounds.

Cooking, lighting and refrigeration

Gas or electric plates, oil stoves or coal and wood ranges were provided in every camp, although sometimes the workers complained that they were inadequate or inconvenient. Sometimes each family was provided with cooking facilities in its living quarters, and sometimes there were separate rooms or cook shacks. One excellently equipped camp supplied an electric stove in each room. On the other hand, women in another camp complained that the number of stoves was insufficient for the families using them, declaring that they experienced great difficulties in preparing breakfast at a time when everybody was in a hurry to get to work. Because of this some migrants brought their own oil stoves and kept them in their sleeping rooms, thus adding a fire hazard.

Electricity for lighting was provided in all camps. In some instances there was no cost to the workers for this service. But in at least eight camps, a charge was made - usually \$1.50 per month to cover electricity and gas.

Two camps supplied refrigeration in community kitchens and a few families brought ice boxes of their own. But refrigeration was lacking in most camps and food had to be eaten immediately or spoil.

Sanitation

The only source of water in a majority of the camps was an outside pump or faucet, often situated at quite a distance from the living quarters. Cold water for laundry, dish washing and bathing had to be carried from these pumps and then heated. The best arrangement encountered was in a camp in the Utica area which had a bath house with hot and cold showers, a separate laundry building with hot and cold water, as well as a sink with running water in each room.

A few camps had bath houses with hot and cold showers, or tubs which could be filled with water carried in from outside and heated, but bathing facilities were altogether lacking in most camps.

In one camp, water from the well had such an offensive odor that workers refused to use it for drinking purposes and the grower was therefore obliged to bring drinking water in kegs and barrels from his farm three miles away.

Four camps had flush toilets for the workers, not always in good condition. The usual arrangement was the out-house with separate sections for males and females. Most of these buildings probably started the summer in decent condition, but by August or September, through carelessness and neglect, a good many were unspeakably unsanitary.

The general lack of sanitation in some of the camps is indicated in the report of a director of a child care center serving farm labor camps in Erie County, who declared that the children's heads were chronically infested with lice. The children were deloused in the center each morning, but on returning to camp were again contaminated.

Recruiting and Transportation of Workers

Half of the 29 camps visited depended on out-of-state migrants to harvest the crops. In nine camps, the workers were Negro crop followers from Florida (except for one small group from Georgia), two camps brought their white workers from Kentucky, and four camps employed laborers from Pennsylvania. The remaining 14 camps, 13 in the Buffalo area and one in the Syracuse area, housed workers from these cities. Most of the New York State and Pennsylvania workers were of foreign extraction, usually Italian or Polish.

In the camps depending on local help, the grower or his foreman recruited the workers, largely from among the families who had worked for him previously. In the other camps, contractors were hired to recruit the workers. These contractors or their agents, contact the workers, informing them regarding wages and working and living conditions. They arrange the details of the trip north and supervise the work on the farms. The services of the contractor are usually compensated according to the quantity picked by his crew.

For those workers recruited from Buffalo and Syracuse, transportation was not a great problem. But the case of 80 Negroes brought from Florida illustrates the hardships endured by some of the out-of-state migrants. These 80 workers left Florida on June 27 and arrived at the camp a week later. They traveled night and day in two overcrowded trucks carrying no liability insurance. At night they caught what sleep they could in a sitting position. They were so exhausted on arrival that they had to rest for a week before they had the strength to begin work.

Sixty per cent of the workers traveled to the camp in the owners' trucks, at no cost to themselves. A sixth of the workers came by bus, but seven out of 10 paid their own bus fare or part of it. All but three of those who came in their own cars, or by train, paid their own way.

For local workers, limited quantities of household goods were brought by the owners' trucks. But workers coming from distant points brought with them only what they could carry by hand, or manage to ship at their own expense.

Table X. Method of Transportation to Migrant Camps

Method of transportation	Total number of workers	Cost paid by:		
		Worker	Owner	Owner and worker
Total number of workers reporting	605	180	397	28
Number who traveled by:				
Truck	419	56	363	-
Bus	108	49	31	28
Private car	57	56	1	-
Train	21	19	2	-

The Migrant Workers

Most of the migrant workers were farm laborers during the summers only. Of the 300 workers 18 years or older, who were interviewed by investigators of the Labor Department, one-fifth - mostly men - were farm workers the year round. Some of these were crop followers from the south, others had been tenant farmers. Of the remainder, two-fifths reported their usual occupation as "housewife." A tenth more were factory workers, and the rest had worked at various jobs - miners from Pennsylvania, domestics, service and trade workers.

For one-third of the 600 farm laborers of all ages, who were interviewed, the summer of 1945 was their first year as part of a migrant labor camp crew. Two-fifths had worked two or three seasons and the remainder from four to 20 seasons, often at the same camp. One Italian woman from Buffalo had been going to the same camp for 20 years. Another woman and two grown daughters had worked 14 summers for the same camp owner.

Some of the children had spent most of their summers in migrant camps. For a 17 year old girl from Florida, the summer of 1945 was her twelfth year as a migrant farm worker. Another Florida child of nine years had been a picker since the age of four. This was true of New York State children, also. A 16 year old Buffalo girl had spent every summer at labor camps since the age of two. A little eight year old from Buffalo had worked for four summers. A Syracuse family of nine members reported that three children of 12, 13 and 14 years had worked for six summers.

Family composition and age of migrants

The overwhelming majority of the workers in the camps came in family groups. At the time of the investigators' visits the camps housed 243 family groups representing 1,000 individual members. Some of the families were made up of father, mother and children but more frequently mother and children formed the family group. In these families there were 122 infants less than six years old and almost 300 boys and girls from six through 13 years of age. The families varied in size - from two members to two families of 10 members, one of 11 and one of 12. Half of the families were composed of two or three workers. Almost two-fifths of the families had four to six members and one of every 10 families was composed of at least seven persons.

However, 170 workers - 15 per cent of the total living in the camps at the time of investigators' visits - were unattached men, women, boys and girls. One-third of this unattached group were boys and girls of less than 18 years of age including children of 12 and 13. There were very few girls without some member of the family, but a few were "heads of households" themselves. Rose, aged 15, had come to live in the camp accompanied only by her 11 year old brother. Irene, aged 13, came alone.

According to one investigator, these young unattached people lived in groups of four or five, in most cases without linen, without mattresses, and usually without a substantial nourishing meal throughout the season. The interiors of some of the cabins housing such groups were described as "pig sties."

The age distribution of the migrants living in the camps at the time of investigators' visits is shown in Table XI. Slightly more than two-fifths were 18 years or over. One-fifth of the migrants were between 14 and 18 years of age and another one-fifth were less than 10 years of age.

Camps in the Buffalo area, which relied mostly on local workers, had the largest proportion of children under 14 years. The proportion of young children was considerably lower in the other three areas, where the camps employed out-of-state workers almost entirely.

Table XI. Age Distribution of Migrant Camp Residents, by Area

Age	Total	Buffalo	Rochester	Syracuse	Utica
Total reported	1,117	536	42	293	246
Per cent who were:					
18 years and over	41.7	28.8	73.8	42.1	63.7
14 and under 18 years	21.8	22.2	11.9	31.4	11.0
12 and 13 years	8.5	11.4	-	7.8	4.5
10 and 11 years	8.2	11.8	4.8	5.8	4.1
6 and under 10 years	8.9	11.6	-	6.8	6.9
Under 6 years	10.9	14.2	9.5	6.1	9.8

Child labor

Many of the very young child migrants did not work in the fields but of 605 pickers interviewed by investigators, one-fourth were under 14 years, the minimum age permitted by the Law. Among these were 113 children of 10 to 13 years, and 32 child workers less than 10 years old.

Children under 12 years old were found working on almost all farms; and none of the 14 and 15 year old boys and girls had farm work certificates as required by the Labor Law.

Some growers claimed ignorance of the Law. Others, while employing children under the legal age of 14 years, stated that they preferred older children. Among these were two growers who reported that they were reluctant to forego this source of labor supply as long as other growers employed young children. A few growers who found young children inefficient stated that the children were working at the insistence of their parents. Some growers pleaded that they could not get their crops harvested without the help of 12 and 13 year old children, particularly in a war period of manpower shortage and pressure for increased food production.

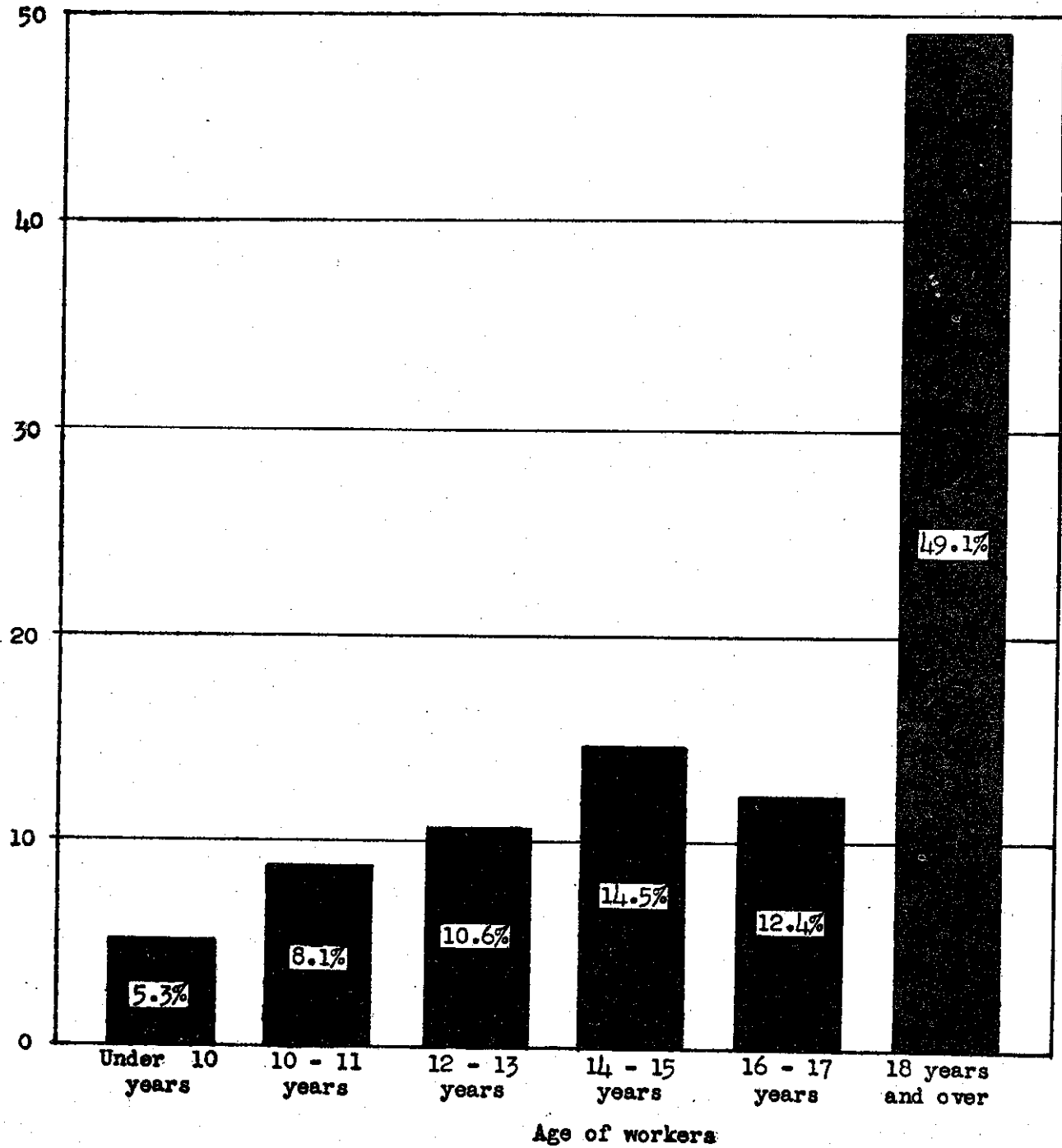
Child care centers

Since more than one-third of the migrants were children under 14 years of age, child care centers were important in providing supervision and guided educational and recreational activities for the youngsters while their parents were in the fields. Child care facilities were available for 17 of the 29 camps visited.

Four of the camps maintained child care centers on the camp grounds. These were conducted by the Home Missions Council and supported largely by federal funds secured under the Lanham Act. A nursery operated by the Catholic Charities of Buffalo was available for 13 Erie County camps located within a six mile radius of the center. The children at the various camps were picked up by bus starting at 6 A. M. and were returned at 6 P. M.

Chart 4. Age of Migrant Camp Workers

Per cent
of workers



The children's activities were directed by trained personnel, and a balanced mid-day meal and afternoon nap were provided. In some camps, the child care facilities were used only for infants under six years, but in at least three camps children up to 12 years of age attended the centers. In all five centers parents paid a fee of 10 cents a day for each child.

In 12 camps, no child care facilities were available. Nine of these were the camps housing migrant workers from Florida. In one camp employing Florida workers, a child care center which had operated in the previous year was discontinued in order to discourage workers from bringing little children with them. The management reported that the existence of the center had resulted in attracting too many children.

School attendance

Because much of the work performed by seasonal farm labor is done in the spring and fall while schools are in session, many migrant child-workers do not have the benefit of full school terms.

All but two of the children under 14 years in the camps visited had attended school for some part of the school year prior to the summer of 1945. Among the young workers of 14 to 17 years, three-fourths had attended school for some part of the year, 15 per cent worked on farms, in factories or stores, and 10 per cent had neither worked nor attended school.

While most of the local children had been at school for the full term, this was not true of the out-of-state children. Many lost from one to four weeks. The Florida children frequently left school before June and did not get back to school until the middle of October. One child, aged 13, had missed 13 weeks. Another had attended school from October through March only.

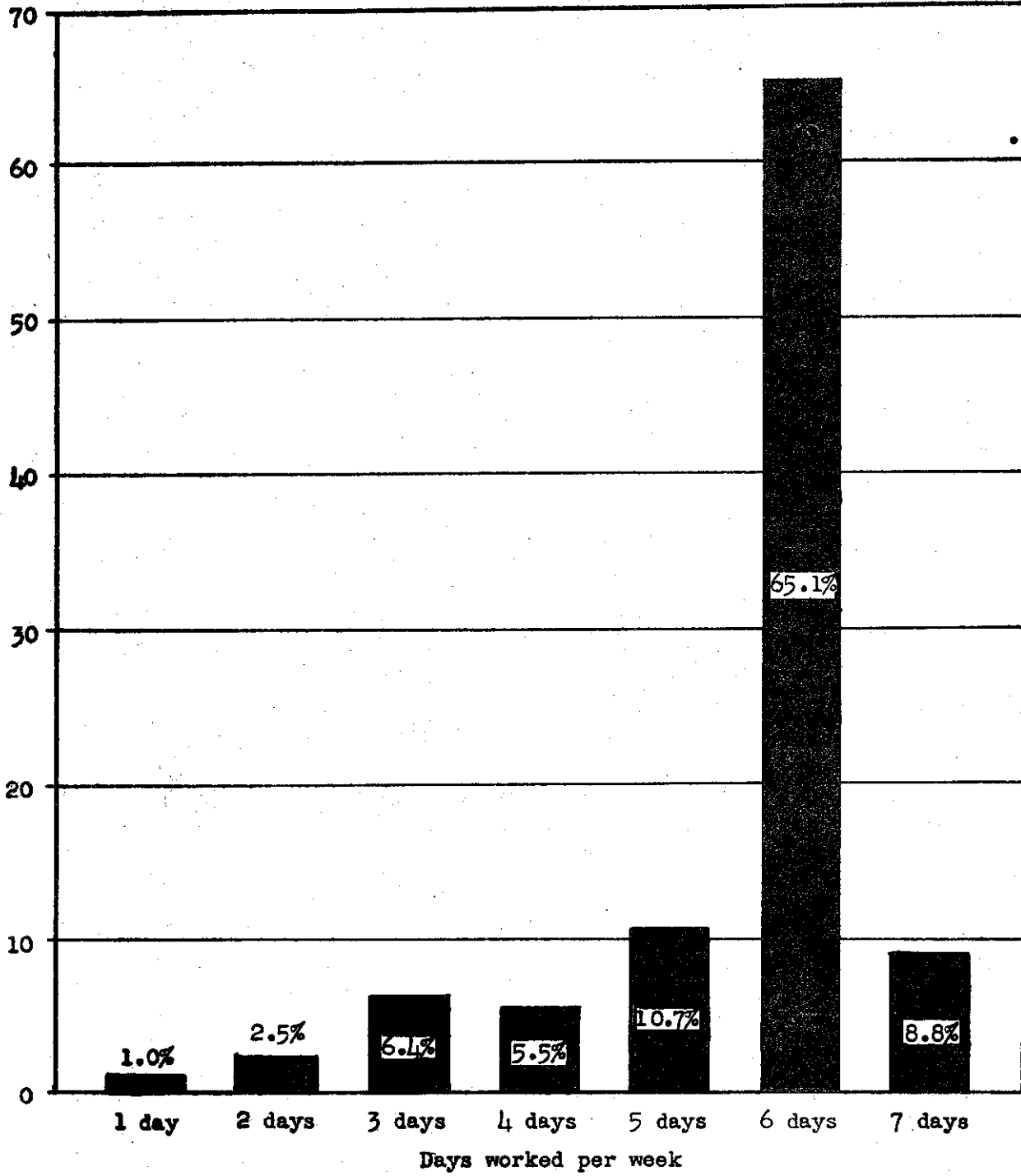
Communities vary in their acceptance of out-of-state children. In some places, these children attend the local schools while they are in the State. In other communities, no effort is made to see that they attend schools.

On one large well-organized farm employing Florida families beginning early in April, every effort is made to see that the children enroll in the local school and attend their classes until the end of the term in June. Even in this camp, however, where the families remain until October 1, the children do not attend school in September. They may do so if they wish, but the usual truancy regulations are not enforced, and the children do not customarily attend school for these three weeks.

Investigators noted that many of the out-of-state children were retarded - much older for their respective grades than was the case among local children. Most of the 12 year olds were only in the fourth or fifth grade instead of the sixth or seventh.

Chart 5. Days Worked per Week by Migrant Camp Workers

Per cent
of workers



Working Conditions of Migrant Farm Laborers

Crops and jobs

Most of the workers were engaged chiefly in harvesting beans, but many also picked berries, cherries, celery, tomatoes and other vegetables and fruits. A few were employed as foremen, truck drivers or kitchen help, and at the beginning of the season some had worked at hoeing and weeding.

Hours

In nine camps, work in the fields started at 7 A.M., 19 camps began work at 8 A.M., and one (which had few laborers left), at 9 A.M. The day's work ended anywhere from 4 P.M. to 7 P.M., with a customary 6 o'clock quitting time in 19 of the 29 camps.

The work-day varied from camp to camp ranging from 7-1/2 to 10-1/2 hours, but in 21 of the camps work-schedules called for nine hours or more per day. Workers in seven camps were on a 10 hour schedule and in two camps on a 10-1/2 hour schedule. On some days, however, because of poor weather, actual hours were shorter; on other days, working hours were prolonged to finish a picking.

Most camps operated on a six day basis. One small camp was on a five day week but in nine camps no provision was made for a day of rest, workers being scheduled to pick the crop every day including Sunday.

Table XII shows the number of days actually worked by 487 workers in the week preceding investigators' visits. The majority of the farm laborers worked six days but one-fourth worked five days or less because of illness, bad weather, relaxed pressure of work or the need to attend to household chores. Almost 9 per cent of the farm laborers worked for seven consecutive days without a day of rest. Among these were four boys and girls of 15 and 16 years and four child workers of only 9, 10 and 11 years of age. All but one of the boys and girls who worked every day including Sunday were local children from Buffalo. On the whole, boys and girls of 14 to 17 years had the fullest work-weeks, 85 per cent having spent six or seven days in the fields.

Table XII. Actual Days Worked the Previous Week by Camp Workers, by Age Group

Age groups	: Total : : workers :	Percentage of laborers working							
		: report- : ing :	: 7 days :	: 6 days :	: 5 days :	: 4 days :	: 3 days :	: 2 days :	: 1 day :
All ages	: 487 :	: 8.8 :	: 65.1 :	: 10.7 :	: 5.5 :	: 6.4 :	: 2.5 :	: 1.0 :	
18 years and over	: 284 :	: 12.3 :	: 59.5 :	: 13.0 :	: 5.0 :	: 5.6 :	: 3.5 :	: 1.1 :	
14 to 17 years	: 113 :	: 3.5 :	: 81.4 :	: 6.3 :	: 3.5 :	: 3.5 :	: 0.9 :	: 0.9 :	
Under 14 years	: 90 :	: 4.5 :	: 62.2 :	: 8.9 :	: 10.0 :	: 12.2 :	: 1.1 :	: 1.1 :	

Method of wage-payment

Migrant camp laborers, like day-haul workers, are almost always paid on a piece-work basis, receiving tickets representing the amount picked. The tickets are later redeemed by the employer. Often whole families pool their tickets and the mother or father collects the earnings of the entire family.

In Utica and Rochester the practice among the 10 camps visited was to redeem tickets at the end of the week. In Buffalo and Syracuse, the usual practice in all but one of the 19 camps was to pay workers at the end of the season, in violation of the Labor Law. Employers claimed, however, that the tickets were payable "on demand."

In one camp workers who stayed for the full season received a bonus of \$5 plus free transportation back to their homes in the South. But in two other camps in the Rochester area, investigators found that wages were illegally withheld. These camp owners withheld five cents an hour, which could be collected at the end of the season if the worker stayed for the whole period. If he left before the end of the season, this amount was forfeited even though earned.

Investigators reported few instances of deductions from wages, other than for gas and electricity; but in one camp the owner paid for all groceries and made deductions for this from the workers' wages.

Earnings of camp workers

Where there was pooling of production among all members of a family group, earnings of individual workers could not be obtained. However, information on individual earnings for the week preceding investigators' visits was reported by 375 workers.

Weekly wages ranged from less than \$5 to \$60, with half of the workers earning less than \$27.03, and one-tenth receiving less than \$10. At the other extreme were 12 per cent who earned \$40 or more during the week.

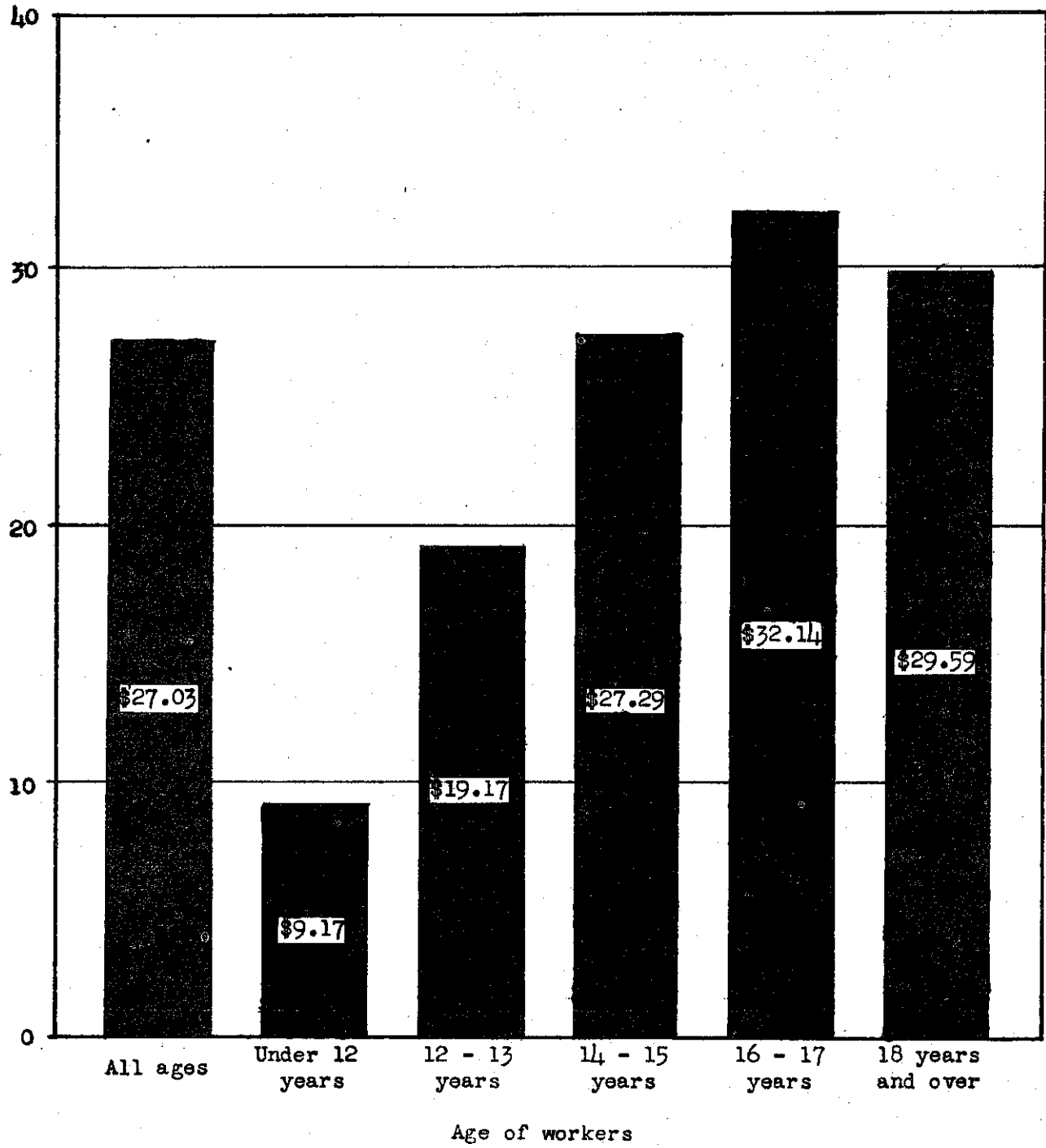
Earnings varied directly with age except for one group. Boys and girls of 16 and 17 years of age showed the highest median earnings - \$32.14 compared with \$29.59 for the older workers. This is explained by the fuller work-weeks of the 16 and 17 year olds.

Earnings dropped sharply for those under 14 years of age. Half of these young workers earned less than \$15 for a week's picking. Among these were five child workers of six and seven years. Seven year old Alfred working on all six days earned \$6 for the week; Baulah, also aged seven earned \$7.50 for five days of bean picking; the third seven year old received \$5.10 for six days work. Six year old Dan added \$1.50 to his family's earnings for his three days of work, while Ruth, also six years old, received \$9 representing an average of three bushels of beans a day on each of six days.

Six year old Dan and his family had traveled up from Florida in a truck - his mother, 19 and 20 year old Stanley and Maud and eight year old Lester. Everyone but Dan had worked six days the previous week; Mrs. G and Stanley each earned \$27, Maud was the best picker, getting \$30, and eight year old Lester had worked steadily enough to have earned \$15.

Chart 6. Weekly Earnings* of Migrant Camp Workers, by Age

Dollars
per week



* Median

The D family from Buffalo had not earned nearly so much. Mrs. D was staying in the camp with her four children, 16, 13, 10 and 8 years old. Little Lucy, the youngest, had worked three days and earned \$4.50; May, the 16 year old, only put in two days that week, getting \$5, but 13 year old Jack and 10 year old Jennie picked beans all week, earning \$18 and \$15 in the six days.

Table XIII. Week's Earnings of Workers Paid Individually, by Age

Week's earnings	Total	Age of worker							
		18 years and over	16 and 17 years	14 and 15 years	12 and 13 years	10 and 11 years	8 and 9 years	6 and 7 years	
Total reporting	375	212	48	47	35	20	8	5	
Under \$5	8	3	-	1	-	1	2	1	
\$5 and under \$10	30	5	2	2	6	6	5	4	
10 " "	15	27	15	3	1	4	4	-	
15 " "	20	49	22	5	6	9	6	1	
20 " "	25	50	27	4	8	8	3	-	
25 " "	30	58	37	4	12	5	-	-	
30 " "	35	59	35	14	9	1	-	-	
35 " "	40	48	29	12	5	2	-	-	
40 " "	45	20	17	2	1	-	-	-	
45 " "	50	13	12	-	1	-	-	-	
50 and over	13	10	2	1	-	-	-	-	
Median week's earnings	\$ 27.03	\$ 29.59	\$ 32.14	\$ 27.29	\$ 19.17	\$ 13.75	*	*	

*Not computed owing to small number involved.

Medical care

In the summer of 1944, a committee of the State War Council made a study of migrant camps. In its report, the committee pointed out that, "Inadequate medical and hospitalization care has been one of the most important migrant camp problems." Among the steps taken in the summer of 1945 to provide at least a partial solution of this problem was the allocation of funds to the State Health Department for an enlarged public health nursing staff. The purpose of this enlarged staff was to provide inspections of the migrant workers for evidence of communicable disease soon after arrival in camp, and at least weekly visits thereafter to check on illness and promote public health practices. Tuberculosis and venereal disease clinics were extended to provide increased facilities for workers in migrant camps, including diagnosis and treatment. Also, a program of health education was initiated in the camps.

As a result of this program, a considerable number of migrant workers had better care in the summer of 1945 than in previous years. In some camps public health nurses and doctors made weekly visits to give treatments - usually for

venereal disease - and to check on health. One of these camps had a separate room set aside as a clinic. In other camps little medical aid was available and sometimes consisted only of a first-aid kit and a posted telephone number of a physician in the nearest town.

The need for such care is emphasized by the report on one camp visited. This camp which housed southern migrants supplemented its labor force with day-haul children from a near-by city. All of the workers, children and adults, out-of-state and local, used a common drinking vessel in the fields in spite of the fact that there was a very high incidence of venereal disease among the out-of-state migrants. Although public health nurses visited the camp once a week to administer injections to the workers, the employer claimed that he had not been aware of the nature of the treatment.

In another case, a public health nurse reported that she had come across a young eight year old boy infected with a venereal disease. The nurse visited the camp where the boy was working in order to have him hospitalized. But the grower refused to point out the child until the nurse assured him that the boy could be back in the fields in two weeks.

These, of course, are extreme cases; but generally, poor eating habits, bad and insanitary housing, exposure to sun, muscle strains, and skin infections such as those suffered by hop pickers, are among the living and working conditions which make better health care for migrants essential.

Workmen's compensation

Although not required for farm workers by the Labor Law, 17 of 27 camp owners had availed themselves and their workers of the protection offered by workmen's compensation, and another grower carried the more limited farmers' liability insurance.

As pointed out previously, farm work showed the largest number of fatal accidents and permanent total disabilities for the country as a whole in 1943. And in New York State in 1945, accidents occurred on one of every eight farms. In spite of these hazards, workers in nine camps had no accident compensation.

Facilities for obtaining food

Eight of the 29 camps had stores or commissaries on the premises where food could be bought or hot meals obtained - usually at reasonable prices. But most often staples and other foods had to be purchased in the village which sometimes was as far as six miles distant. Often the grower or his representative, on a trip to town, did the buying for the workers; in other camps the growers' trucks made daily trips to take workers to the stores. Usually some food came to the camp in the baker's cart, the huckster's wagon or the milkman's truck. More difficult than obtaining food was the problem of keeping any supplies, and preparing meals in the limited space and with the crude facilities available.

One investigator reported many complaints from workers about discrimination in village stores. A social worker and a minister confirmed these complaints. Storekeepers cited as reasons for this discrimination their short supplies of merchandise and desire to accommodate their all-year customers.

Recreation

There was very little planned recreation at the camps. One camp had a baseball field and a place for pitching quoits. Another provided outdoor swings for the children. Two camps had well ventilated, sunny rooms set aside for recreation, both with juke boxes. But most camps lacked any recreational facilities. Occasionally, on a Saturday night the grower would take the workers in his truck to a movie or a fair, but mostly the workers just sat around and wearily chatted after the day's work.

Nor did near-by towns offer much in the way of recreational facilities for the migrants. Often the villages were too small to have such facilities. In other cases, migrants simply were unwelcome. This was especially true of Negro workers and workers of foreign extraction. In isolated cases, a conscious effort was made to include the migrants in the life of the community. In one community where ill-feeling had developed a social function was arranged at the parish house where the women farm workers and local women could get to know one another and thus promote better understanding. Such instances were few, however.

APPENDIX

**1945 Program of the New York State Labor Department as Presented
to the Farm Labor Conference at Syracuse, July 9, 1945**

In accordance with Governor Dewey's program, the Department of Labor proposes to undertake a farm labor program designed to be helpful to farmers, farm workers and their communities. This proposed program, to be discussed today, includes the following:

1. A check-up of the DAY-HAUL in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and Utica - as well as visits to migratory labor camps.
2. Investigators are to be stationed in the four cities to secure as much information as possible about YOUNG WORKERS on DAY HAULS.
3. Investigators are to visit the farms on which these children work.
4. Investigators are to work, also, with the U.S.E.S. and other local community groups so that information may be "pooled" and duplication avoided.
5. Investigators visiting farms and migratory labor camps are to supply information regarding THE STATE'S LABOR LAWS in the belief that farmers who know the laws wish to comply with those laws. Emphasis is to be placed on education and information, but action will be taken against flagrant violators.
6. Information about existing STATE LABOR LAWS will be disseminated widely. At the end of the Summer, the results of this program are to be analyzed, and a report submitted to the Industrial Commissioner.

NEW YORK STATE LABOR LAWS AFFECTING FARM WORKERS

EMPLOYMENT OF MINORS

Minimum age of employment - 14. Sections 130 and 131 of the Labor Law prohibit the employment of children under 14, except that children of 12 may work for their parents or guardians on the home farm.

Employment certificates required for minors of 14 and 15. Sections 130 and 131 of the Labor Law require that children of 14 and 15 must have farm work permits. No employment certificates are required for minors 16 years of age and over.

WAGE PAYMENT

Prompt payment of wages weekly, bi-weekly. Section 196, subdivision 2, of the Labor Law provides that employers shall pay wages weekly or in full every two weeks. Section 195 requires that wages be paid in cash unless the employer secures a permit to pay by check.

Collection of wages. Section 199 of the Labor Law authorizes the Industrial Commissioner to adjust wage claims for unpaid wages and to assist workers in collection of wages due.

Protection vs. frauds. Section 211 of the Labor Law authorizes the Industrial Commissioner to cooperate with any employee in the enforcement of a just claim against his employer and for the protection against frauds on the part of any person.

"Kick-back" prohibition. Section 962, subdivision 2, of the Penal Law prohibits the employer or any other person from obtaining any contribution or donation from the worker for procuring or retaining employment.

LABOR CAMPS

Inspection. Section 212 of the Labor Law authorizes the Industrial Commissioner to inspect all labor camps. It does not authorize the Industrial Commissioner to take any action with respect to labor camps except those operated in connection with a factory.

Appendix Table 1. Day-Haul Workers Under 16 Years, Classified by Area and Family Relationship of Most Responsible Person Accompanying Them to Farm

Age	Number of children	Per cent who were accompanied by:				Per cent who were unaccompanied
		Persons over 16	Brother or sister under 16	Brother or sister, age not specified		
Total - all areas						
Total	1,681	21.5	29.6	5.3	43.6	
Under 10 years	83	56.7	32.5	3.6	7.2	
10 and 11 "	245	30.2	38.3	7.8	23.7	
12 and 13 "	532	21.1	36.3	5.8	36.8	
14 and 15 "	821	15.7	22.4	4.4	57.5	
Buffalo						
Total	580	17.1	31.4	4.8	46.7	
Under 10 years	25	44.0	40.0	-	16.0	
10 and 11 "	78	25.6	44.9	6.4	23.1	
12 and 13 "	178	20.2	32.0	6.2	41.6	
14 and 15 "	299	10.7	26.8	4.0	58.5	
Rochester						
Total	376	10.4	22.6	2.7	64.3	
Under 10 years	8	*	*	*	*	
10 and 11 "	28	14.3	46.4	-	39.3	
12 and 13 "	94	13.8	37.2	2.1	46.9	
14 and 15 "	246	8.1	13.4	2.8	75.7	
Syracuse						
Total	210	22.9	41.3	4.8	31.0	
Under 10 years	8	*	*	*	-	
10 and 11 "	43	27.9	46.5	4.7	20.9	
12 and 13 "	73	15.1	52.0	5.5	27.4	
14 and 15 "	86	26.7	27.9	3.5	41.9	
Utica						
Total	515	34.1	28.0	8.0	29.9	
Under 10 years	42	76.2	19.0	2.4	2.4	
10 and 11 "	96	39.6	27.1	12.5	20.8	
12 and 13 "	187	27.8	33.7	7.5	31.0	
14 and 15 "	190	26.4	24.7	7.4	39.5	

*Not computed owing to small number involved.

Appendix Table 2. Day's Hours of Day-Haul Workers Under 18 Years
by Age Group and Area

Age	Number of children	Per cent of children who worked the following daily hours:			
		Under 6 hours	6 and under 8 hours	8 hours	Over 8 hours
Total - all areas					
Total reporting	1,489	12.0	25.0	35.7	27.3
Under 12 years	251	9.2	24.3	34.6	31.9
12 and 13 "	469	9.4	28.1	34.3	28.2
14 and 15 "	702	15.4	23.2	36.9	24.5
16 and 17 "	67	6.0	23.9	35.8	34.3
Buffalo					
Total reporting	460	17.2	18.9	47.6	16.3
Under 12 years	71	12.7	8.5	54.9	23.9
12 and 13 "	145	14.5	17.9	44.8	22.8
14 and 15 "	238	20.6	21.4	48.3	9.7
16 and 17 "	6	*	*	*	*
Rochester					
Total reporting	346	12.1	14.2	33.2	40.5
Under 12 years	26	3.9	7.7	11.5	76.9
12 and 13 "	82	3.7	15.8	31.7	48.8
14 and 15 "	208	16.4	13.9	35.1	34.6
16 and 17 "	30	*	*	*	*
Syracuse					
Total reporting	207	0.5	12.1	42.5	44.9
Under 12 years	44	2.3	9.1	45.4	43.2
12 and 13 "	68	-	16.2	35.3	48.5
14 and 15 "	78	-	11.5	46.2	42.3
16 and 17 "	17	*	*	*	*
Utica					
Total reporting	476	12.0	44.3	22.9	20.8
Under 12 years	110	10.9	44.6	22.7	21.8
12 and 13 "	174	11.5	47.1	26.4	15.0
14 and 15 "	178	14.0	41.6	19.7	24.7
16 and 17 "	14	*	*	*	*

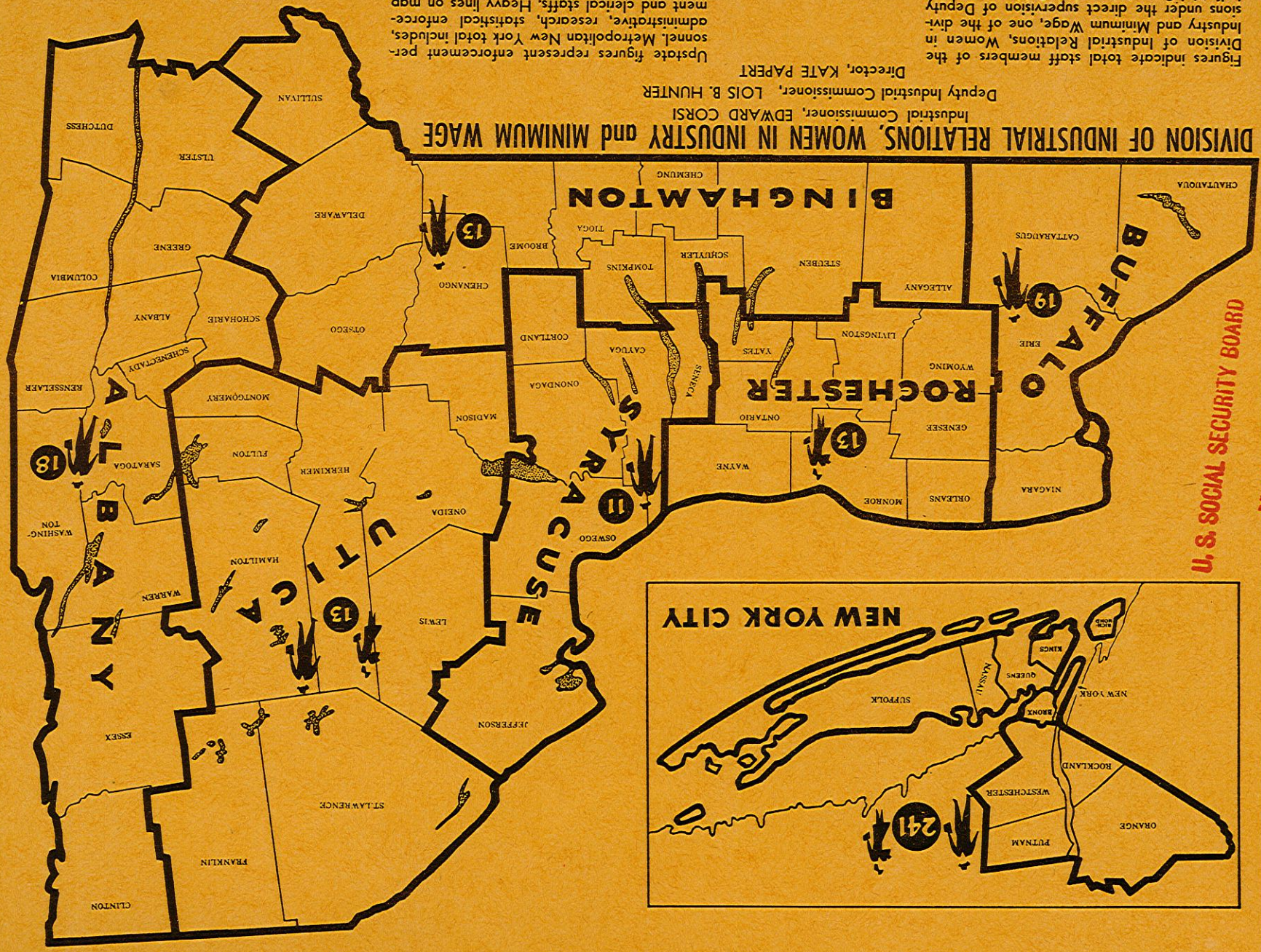
*Not computed owing to small number involved.

DIVISION OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, WOMEN IN INDUSTRY and MINIMUM WAGE

Industrial Commissioner, EDWARD CORSI
 Deputy Industrial Commissioner, LOIS B. HUNTER
 Director, KATE PAPERT

Figures indicate total staff members of the Division of Industrial Relations, Women in Industry and Minimum Wage, one of the divisions under the direct supervision of Deputy Industrial Commissioner Lois B. Hunter.

Upstate figures represent enforcement personnel, Metropolitan New York total includes administrative, research, statistical enforcement and clerical staffs. Heavy lines on map outline counties served by each regional office.



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