

F90252

+C22

WI

Pam 56-3081

RECEIVED  
WHITEWATER S. C.

JUN 11 1953

REPORT

on

SURVEY OF SERVICES AND FACILITIES

for

MIGRANT WORKERS EMPLOYED

by

WISCONSIN CANNERS

May 25, 1953

Wisconsin Cannery Association  
1003 Tenney Building  
Madison, Wisconsin

"WISCONSIN AGRICULTURE DEPENDS ON THE 12,000 MIGRANTS WHO COME HERE EACH YEAR TO TEND, HARVEST AND PROCESS CERTAIN FARM AND ORCHARD CROPS, AS WE DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH PEOPLE AVAILABLE IN THE STATE WHEN WE NEED THEM. THEREFORE, WE BELIEVE IT IS UP TO THOSE WHO EMPLOY THE MIGRANT WORKERS, AND THE COMMUNITIES WHERE THEY WORK, TO COOPERATE IN PROVIDING BETTER HOUSING, HEALTH CONDITIONS, RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND PART-TIME EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE MIGRANTS AND THEIR FAMILIES. WE BELIEVE THAT WISCONSIN LEADS THE COUNTRY IN ITS ENLIGHTENED HANDLING OF THE MIGRANT WORKERS, AND THE CANNING INDUSTRY VOLUNTARILY NOW SEEKS TO LEAD THE WAY IN BRINGING ABOUT THE GREATER IMPROVEMENT THAT STILL LIES AHEAD."

Ray D. Krier, President  
 Wisconsin Cannery Association,  
 announcing the Migrant Relations  
 Committee, March, 1953

Dear Cannerymen:

This is a letter of appreciation not to one of you, but to all of you. For certainly this first survey made by your new Migrant Relations Committee indicates that as a group you are marching straight ahead in meeting migrant problems. This is an impressive record, and one which brings credit not alone to your industry but also to the State of Wisconsin. Citizens of good will everywhere owe you their gratitude.

The conditions surrounding the use of migrant labor in the United States as a whole have been notoriously bad. Press, radio, articles and movies have exposed sorry stories of sub-standard housing, health, and educational opportunity for migrants, placed against a background of employer apathy, agency confusion, and community hostility. Efforts for improvement from the federal level have too often been stymied.

In recent years Wisconsin has managed to pull itself out of this morass of national defeatism into a position of positive leadership. State agencies have pooled their information and co-ordinated their efforts. Agricultural experts have pointed to a desirable connection between agricultural needs and migrant needs. Church and civic groups and community leaders have held conferences and workshops and have developed local projects in town, school, and playground to facilitate the satisfactory adjustment of the migrants. A wide range of organizations have sent representatives to work on a citizens' State Migrant Committee of the Wisconsin Welfare Council. In the vanguard of this movement has been the enlightened endeavors of the cannerymen to solve long-standing and complicated migrant problems with patience, intelligence, and common sense. This was typified during the 1951 legislative session in the support given to a law for better housing. And now the formation of your special migrant committee in 1953 marks a further milestone.

During the four years of its activities as a state-supported public agency the Governor's Commission on Human Rights has had no more encouraging experience than that of mutual cooperation with the Wisconsin Cannerymen Association. Desiring to promote better opportunities for any disadvantaged group of people in the state, while not expecting the millennium in the difficult field of human rights, the Commission has been greatly impressed by the genuine concern of a key group of employers with the human side of the migrant problem. The Governor's Commission and the Cannerymen Association have found common ground in a recognition that reasonably satisfied and healthy workers are the best workers and that humanity is the best policy.

And so our Commission salutes you for what you have done and offers you a toast for what you will yet do. Perhaps we admire you most for the sentiment expressed by your President, Ray Krier: "The canning industry voluntarily now seeks to lead the way in bringing about the greater improvement that still lies ahead." For cannerymen are more than employers. They are people. And the best thing about people is their surprising ability for imaginative leadership and for setting in motion the skills that shape the world.

Rebecca Barton

## INTRODUCTION

Early this year the Migrant Relations Committee was formed to conduct an organized program of study and improvement of working conditions for migrant workers in the Wisconsin canning industry.

Hailed as the first of its kind in the country, this new Committee is assisted by Mrs. Rebecca Barton, Director of the Governor's Commission on Human Rights, serving in an advisory capacity.

The Committee agreed upon these following objectives:

1. Integrate work of the canning industry with the state's program for migrant workers.
2. Stimulate community and employer assistance in educational and recreational activities for migrant workers.
3. Serve as a clearing agency to exchange information on good employer practices.
4. Promote utilizing of existing and potential community resources.
5. Encourage a better health program.

It was decided that a survey should be made to learn what services and facilities for migrant workers in Wisconsin canneries are presently available. Purpose of this study was to report on what is already being done, and to thereby promote better practices among all canning companies in the state.

We hope this report will be helpful to our members, and interesting to our friends outside the industry.

## SUMMARY OF REPORT

The men and women who come into Wisconsin as "migrant workers" every year are needed by the canning industry, and are entitled to good housing, healthful conditions, recreational and spiritual facilities, and even part-time educational opportunities where possible.

This survey shows that the majority of canners in this state recognize their responsibilities to these migrant workers, and are doing their best to provide properly for these employees at their work camps. Others are improving their facilities, and want to know what more can be done to make living conditions better for their workers.

The canners believe that more cooperation by the local communities will help them in meeting the problems that arise from this yearly influx of migrant workers, many from outside the United States.

We believe, too, that patient understanding, and a willingness to "educate" some of these workers to appreciate and take care of modern equipment which they may not have in the places they come from, will do much to remove complaints of misuse and abuse made in the past.

More than half of the 145 canning factories in the state employ migrant workers -- in farming operations, and some in the canneries. Of the seventy-eight plants using these workers, seventy-one responded to the survey questionnaire -- representing better than ninety per cent of these canners.

The seventy-one factories reporting showed British West Indians at forty-six, Texas-Mexicans at twenty-seven, Southern Whites at sixteen, Mexican Nationals at four, Puerto Ricans at four, and Southern Negroes at two. These include single men and families. While some companies employ workers from one section, many use them from two or more areas.

RECREATION FACILITIES AT CAMP: Ball fields were available at thirty-eight camps and recreation rooms at twenty-nine. Of the thirty-three camps housing family groups, fourteen included a children's playground and nine of these had playground equipment. Thirteen camps had equipment for showing movies and three of the camps provided television. Other facilities in camp recreation rooms included radio, phonograph, piano, reading material, and games.

COMMUNITY AGENCIES HELPING PROVIDE RECREATION: Local churches helped provide some recreation for migrant workers at thirty-three camps. Local volunteer groups helped in fourteen camps. Local governmental units in several areas made recreation facilities available, such as ball park (2), swimming pool (2), and playground equipment (1). In one case, the local high school physical education instructor was made available to supervise games.

KIND OF RECREATION PREFERRED: Cannerymen indicated on the questionnaire that the type of recreation the migrants prefer most generally was movies at local theaters. Among sports, cricket was first choice among the British West Indians, and baseball among other groups. Various card games were popular, and among the British West Indian workers dominoes and checkers also ranked high. Several cannerymen reported that the preferred recreation was playing musical instruments and group musical presentations. Comments by a number of cannerymen emphasized the migrants' interest in attending community affairs such as county fairs, band concerts, church functions, dances, stock car races, circuses and carnivals. Several cannerymen furnish buses to take their migrant workers to these events.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ATTENDING RELIGIOUS SERVICES: Sixty-seven of the seventy-one cannerymen reporting stated that their migrant workers had been invited to attend local churches. Services were held at twenty camps, and local clergymen had visited twenty-one other camps. Twenty-three cannerymen reported that they furnished transportation to and from a distant church, at least when the nearby church was not that of the migrant worker's choice.

HEALTH SERVICES: Forty-one canners reported they had arrangements with local doctors to guarantee payment for services needed by migrant workers or their families. This covered non-occupational injury or disease only, because all migrants employed by canners are covered by Workmen's Compensation. British West Indian workers were all covered by group health insurance financed by deduction from their wages. At ten camps a company nurse was provided. Free chest X-rays were offered migrant workers at twenty-eight camps.

COMMUNITY PREPARATION: Canners indicated that more should be done to prepare the community for the annual influx of migrant workers. Many pointed out that migrants were expected and welcomed, particularly by local merchants. Seventeen canners furnished a pre-season news release to the local paper as to the number and type of migrant workers that would be coming into the community. Sixteen canners also arranged pre-season conferences with local officials, or volunteer groups, or churches, to make some community preparation for the arrival of the migrants.

ORIENTATION OF MIGRANT WORKERS: Fifty-five canners held orientation meetings for their migrant workers and thirteen furnished leaflets or other written instructions to them.

OTHER SERVICES AND FACILITIES: One canner arranged to have a local bank send a cashier to the camp the night the workers were paid to cash checks and make it easy for workers to send bank drafts home. Many canners furnished transportation to town, to give their migrant workers opportunities for shopping and going to movies. Several canners having large camps each assign a trained man to take care of the migrant workers' personal needs, such as buying money orders, taking care of mail, and shopping for small personal items. One canner using Texas-Mexicans, furnished a bus to transport children to and from a day school.

TOTALS ON SEVENTY-ONE COMPANIES  
RESPONDING TO SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. WHAT KINDS OF MIGRANT WORKERS DID YOU EMPLOY IN 1952?

Texas-Mexicans:	Single males - 27	Families - 27
Southern White:	Single males - 16	Families - 4
Southern Negro:	Single males - 3	Families - 2
British West Indians - 46		Mexican Nationals - 4
Puerto Rican (single males) - 4		High School Students - 3
Floater (single males) - 3		Local Migrant Workers - 2
Migrant Whites (single males) - 1		

2. WHAT RECREATION FACILITIES WERE AVAILABLE AT YOUR CAMP(S)?

Recreation room - 29	Table games - 2	Church school - 1
Ball field - 38	Local ball games - 1	Radio - 8
Television - 3	Dancing - 1	City parks - 3
Movies - 13	Piano - 1	Canning Co. yard - 1
Children's playground - 14	Swimming - 2	City recreation facilities - 4
Playground equipment - 9	Singing - 1	
Reading material - 3	Dominoes - 1	None - 1
Annual Horse Show - 1		

3. WHAT KIND OF RECREATION DID YOUR MIGRANT WORKERS PREFER?

Checkers - 4	Table tennis - 1	Radio - 3	Group musical presentations - 1
Music - 4	Cricket - 18	Taverns - 4	Organized playground activities - 2
Boxing - 1	Dances - 2	Soccer - 2	Children's playground equip. - 1
Dice - 1	Swimming - 3	Local theater - 2	
Volley Ball - 1	Baseball - 13	Stock car races - 1	Trips to state & city fairs in company buses - 2
Rugby - 1	Reading - 8	Church functions - 1	
Dominoes - 11	Cards - 12	Outdoor games - 2	Social gatherings sponsored by company & workers - 1
Church - 2	Movies - 25	Fairs - 1	
Television - 2	Games - 3	Circus - 1	
Carnivals - 1	Band Concerts - 1		





SOME COMMENTS FROM CANNERS

"We have a local bank send cashier to camp to cash checks the night men are paid. This keeps workers out of taverns and makes it easy for them to send bank drafts home. Soft drinks and cigarettes available at all hours at cost. Company representative expedites incoming and outgoing mail."

---

"We have had wonderful experience with our migrant workers. We treat them the same way we treat our other help and they respond. They go to all public places and we try to see that they go to the right places where we know they will be treated right. We have no problems as our workers have been excellent."

---

"We have placed ourselves in a position of recognizing any requests of the workers to better their welfare, trying to do within reason things that will cause them to be better satisfied."

---

"We transport them to County Fair and any other large public gatherings."

---

"Our camp has been certified by the State Board of Health and the workers are just as proud of this camp as we are."

---

"Take group to stock car races, and to town for shopping. Local families invited groups of our men for Sunday meals."

---

SURVEY OF FACILITIES & SERVICES FURNISHED MIGRANTS EMPLOYED  
BY WISCONSIN CANNERS

The association's Migrant Relations Committee believes the information requested on this questionnaire will be helpful to show what Wisconsin canners are already doing regarding the migrant worker problem and to suggest practices which other employers may wish to follow. Your co-operation in returning this questionnaire promptly will be appreciated. Extra copy is for your file.

COMPANY \_\_\_\_\_ . PLANT LOCATION(S) COVERED \_\_\_\_\_  
BY THIS REPORT \_\_\_\_\_

What kinds of migrant workers did you employ in 1952?

Texas-Mexicans: single males ; families .

Southern White: single males ; families .

Southern Negro: single males ; families .

British West Indians ; Mexican Nationals .

Others (specify) \_\_\_\_\_ : single males ; families .

What recreation facilities were available at your camp(s)?

Recreation room  Ball field  Television  Movies

Children's playground  Playground equipment

Others \_\_\_\_\_

What agencies in your community helped provide recreation for your migrant workers?

Churches  Service Clubs  Volunteer groups  Government agencies

Others \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of recreation did your migrant workers prefer? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What opportunities were available for attending religious services?

Local clergymen invited to meetings at camp

Services held at camp

Workers invited to attend local churches

Transportation to church provided

What health services were provided for non-occupational injury or disease?

Arrangements with local doctor(s) to guarantee payment for needed services

Group health insurance (such as BWI)

Company nurse(s) available

Free chest X-rays

Others \_\_\_\_\_

What do you do to prepare your local community for the annual influx of migrant workers?

Issue pre-season news release

Arrange pre-season conference with officials and interested persons in community

Other \_\_\_\_\_

What do you do to orient workers on arrival?

Orientation meeting  Furnish leaflet or other written instructions

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Comments on other services and facilities you have furnished migrants: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_