

INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF LABOR AFFAIRS
FROM
THE DEPARTMENT'S COMMISSION
ON MIGRANT LABOR

11/26

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FIRST CONFERENCE ON MIGRANT LABOR

Sponsored By

THE TEXAS COUNCIL ON MIGRANT LABOR

November 8, 1958 - Austin, Texas

STATE CONFERENCE ON MIGRANT LABOR

The first Conference on Migrant Labor, sponsored by the Texas Council on Migrant Labor, was held in Austin, Texas, on the 8th of November, 1958. Mr. Carlos Castillon, Executive Secretary of the Council, presided at the General Assembly. After persons were welcomed and introductions were made, Mr. Glenn E. Garrett, Chairman of the Council, addressed the Assembly on the history and objectives of the Texas Council on Migrant Labor.

The General Assembly was then recessed at 10:40 A. M. until 2:30 P. M., during which time the committees on transportation, education, welfare, and housing met for the purpose of discussing means to improve conditions thereto related.

The General Assembly reconvened at 2:30 P. M. and the moderators reported on recommendations proposed by their respective committee. The following reports were made:

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Mrs. Anne Magee, Moderator

A. Whereas, there exist barriers to school accomplishment encountered by children of migrant families; and, although the Texas Education Agency now provides additional allotment to school districts that experience an influx of migrant children; and although some school districts are taking advantage of these allotments and have adopted a curriculum to benefit these children, there exists a need to revise Texas Compulsory School Attendance Laws and Child Labor Laws to solve some of the problems now encountered in providing school opportunities for children of migrant families; therefore, it is recommended by the Committee on Education as follows:

- (1) That the Texas Compulsory School Attendance Law be revised to include children of ages 6 and 17 and that they be required to attend the entire school term.
- (2) That the authority to issue work permits be changed from the County Judge to the School Board or County Superintendent, and that the age limit for issuing such certificate be from 14 to 17 years.
- (3) That the lunch program which is provided at no cost for students be continued. The Committee feels the program is an important element in encouraging attendance.
- (4) The Committee feels that the Migrant Pupil Formula provided by the Texas Education Agency is highly commendable for meeting the need for teachers and recommends the transfer of teachers, or the use of mobile units. The Committee recommends the Council on Migrant Labor to study the possibility of obtaining a grant from some agency to experiment with the use of a mobile school unit.
- (5) The Committee recommends that the Council on Migrant Labor explore the possibility of using college or university senior students to teach migrant children during the peak load periods - about three to four months - that such students be given an emergency teaching certificate and paid a salary.

(6) The Committee notes differences in practice between one district and another in reference to school attendance law and recommends that the Council encourage all districts to make a diligent effort to enforce the attendance law.

(7) Evidence has been submitted to the Committee which shows that the increasing influx of Mexican Nationals is causing people to migrate and creating a problem in the education of migrant children; therefore, the Committee recommends that the Council make every effort to see that the Bracero Program as it now exists be abolished.

HOUSING COMMITTEE

John J. Terrell, Moderator

B. Whereas, there exists a need to provide adequate housing to safeguard safety, welfare, and health of citizen migrants, as well as those persons in the communities where they are employed; and, Whereas, there exists a need to place the responsibility of providing adequate housing on the person or persons who make migrant housing available; and, Whereas, under present Texas laws, the State Board of Health does not have the statutory authority to license labor camps and to promulgate rules and regulations establishing minimum housing standards; it is, therefore, recommended by the Committee on Housing as follows:

That the Texas State Department of Health be given statutory authority to require the state licensing of migratory labor housing and that pursuant to this authority, the Texas State Board of Health be further authorized to formulate and promulgate rules and regulations establishing minimum migrant labor housing standards and that pursuant to this authority, the Texas State Board of Health be given the authority to hold at least five regional public hearings by the same persons to determine the conditions and requirements in the respective regions.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Miss Betty Jane Whitaker, Moderator

C. Whereas, our present laws do not adequately authorize the state agencies to promulgate rules and regulations relative to the problems of health, safety, comfort, and sanitation of migrant workers being transported within this state; it is, therefore, recommended by the Committee on Transportation as follows:

(1) That the Texas Council on Migrant Labor submit a request to the Legislature for the regulation of transportation of Texas citizen migrants similar to those of the Interstate Commerce Commission.

(1 a) It is further recommended that the Council move slowly and that such suggested legislation strike a balance between economic reality and human dignity so that it will prove an aid rather than a burden to the people intended to be helped.

(1 b) The Committee does not find that the accident ratio is higher for migrants than for others and that it is requested that the crewleader receive due consideration in determining whether seating facilities in trucks for short distance hauls be required--it is desired that the crewleader continue to use his truck for hauling produce and to prevent a reduction in his earning power.

(2) Crewleaders have in some instances exploited the domestic migrants and it is recommended that there be a license fee and registration of crewleader to insure that they properly assume the role of individual employers; that they be held responsible for matters as social security, migration work plan, and matters related to working conditions. In determining the effect of licensing crewleaders, the responsibilities which they must assume, and not the amount of the license fee, should be the controlling factor.

WELFARE COMMITTEE

Col. J. T. Ellis, Moderator

D. Whereas, there have been numerous studies of various phases of the so-called migrant labor problem by various groups. So far as this Committee is aware, these studies have not been correlated in such a way as to present the total picture of the migrant and his problem as it pertains to general welfare.

It is, therefore, the thinking of this Group that the Texas Council on Migrant Labor should undertake at the earliest possible date to review what studies have been made in this field and to conduct such other studies and surveys as the Council feels is necessary in order that the extent of the problem be known.

Many communities in Texas are affected by this problem--economically, socially, and otherwise. This is particularly true of communities from which the migrants originate and the communities to which they go in looking for work, both in the State and outside the State.

It is, therefore, the thinking of this Group that any successful and complete survey will require the cooperation of community leaders, local governmental agencies, and other interested citizens; and the Texas Council on Migrant Labor is urged to utilize all of these resources in making the recommended surveys.

It is the thinking of this Committee that the studies or surveys can best be done under the direction of the Council.

It is recognized that a general welfare survey would entail the expenditure of a considerable sum of money. It is the recommendation of the Committee that the funds for a survey be obtained from the following sources:

- (1) Appropriation of State funds.
- (2) Authority to solicit, accept, and expend funds from sources other than State funds.

It is the opinion of this Group that the Texas Council on Migrant Labor should not be limited in its survey but that, rather, all phases of the problem should be studied carefully since Texas not only uses great numbers of citizen migrant laborers but also furnishes more of its citizens for labor in other states than any other state.

After the reports were read, Mr. J. T. Fulford, delegate from the Texas Farm Bureau, submitted his minority report objecting to any regulations that would bring about additional costs to the farmer and objected to the recommendation that the importation of Mexican Nationals be discontinued in that domestic migrant workers are not available when needed.

Mr. Fred Schmidt, delegate from the Texas State AFL-CIO, recommended that the survey to which the Welfare Committee referred be interpreted to include a study of ways and means for providing accident, health, and life insurance coverage, as well as adequate minimum wage coverage for Texas citizen migrant workers.

Rev. Erwin A. Juraschek, delegate from the American GI Forum of Texas, recommended that the Texas Council on Migrant Labor hereafter sponsor an annual conference on migrant labor.

Mr. Castillon again thanked participants for their contribution and emphasized the need for establishing functioning committees at the community level and offered the assistance of the Council in getting these committees started.

The film "Colorado Cares" is available to any community that is interested in developing such committees. This film was shown at the Welfare Session and received approval by that committee.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 P. M.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONFERENCE

I. Housing Session

1. Lorenzo Aguilar, Texas Employment Commission, Weslaco, Texas
2. Rafaela Aguilar, Bishop's Committee for the Spanish Speaking
3. Mrs. Sam B. Barton, Texas Farmers Union
4. San Juana N. Edgerton, Secretary-clerk, Texas Council on Migrant Labor
5. J. T. Fulford, Texas Farm Bureau
6. Jerry Holleman, Texas State AFL-CIO
7. John J. Reagor, Consultant, Texas Employment Commission, Austin
8. Daniel Sandoval, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
9. Leslie W. Seymour, Texas Council of Churches
10. John J. Terrell, Texas Association of Home Builders, chairman, presiding
11. H. Marvin Thompson, Texas Council of Churches
12. Rev. John A. Wagner, Bishop's Committee for the Spanish Speaking
13. Frank J. Von Zuben, Consultant, State Department of Health

****Roy L. Haynes, afternoon session

II. WELFARE SESSION

1. Dudley Bayne, Manager, City of Hereford
2. Beagle, Gail, Secretary-clerk, Texas Council of Churches
3. Col. J. T. Ellis, Administrative Assistant to Gov. Price Daniel, chairman, presiding
4. Henry B. Gonzalez, State Senator
5. Tip Hall, Jr., Texas Farmers' Union
6. Mrs. John W. (Evelyn) Johnson, State Welfare Department
7. Rev. Erwin A. Juraschek, American GI Forum of Texas
8. Frank W. Langham, Secretary, American Bible Society
9. Oscar M. Laurel, State Representative
10. A. W. Penn, State Board of Insurance Commissioners
11. Hope Plata, Bishop's Committee for the Spanish Speaking
12. Fred H. Schmidt, Texas State AFL-CIO
13. Mrs. Marvin Thompson, Texas Council of Churches
14. Mrs. John C. Watkins, Texas Council of Churches
15. J. Weldon Watson, Consultant, State Department of Public Welfare

III. TRANSPORTATION SESSION

1. A. C. Arnim, Bureau of Labor Statistics
2. Dr. Ervin E. Baden, Mayor, Raymondville, Texas
3. Edward H. Bush, Texas Cotton Ginners' Association
4. Joe Castanuela, The Amalgated Sugar Company (Employer)
5. R. E. Foiles, Pan American Motor Coaches, Harlingen, Texas
6. Rafael Garcia, Texas Employment Commission, Laredo
7. Glenn E. Garrett, Texas Good Neighbor Commission
8. J. D. Griffin, Private Insurance Agent
9. Roy L. Haynes, U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Employment Security, Dallas
10. J. Manley Head, Texas Motor Bus Association, Inc.
11. Agustin L. Hernandez, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

III. TRANSPORTATION SESSION (continued)

12. Ed R. Herring, Manager, Membership Relations, L.R.G. Valley Chamber of Commerce, Weslaco
13. Guy E. Huddleston, Railroad Commission of Texas
14. Bill Kavanaugh, State Department of Public Safety
15. Angus McDonald, State Board of Insurance Commissioners
16. Mrs. Monta B. Morgan, Commissioner, Bureau of Labor Statistics
17. Rev. William Nash, O.M.I., Bishop's Committee for the Spanish Speaking
18. V. D. Raimond, Pan American Motor Coaches, Harlingen
19. C. B. Ray, Texas Farm Bureau
20. John D. Reed, Attorney, Private Labor Agencies
21. George San Miguel, Winter Garden Bracero Transportation, Eagle Pass, Texas
22. Rev. Sherrill Smith, Catholic Social Action Office, Archdiocese of San Antonio
23. Albert J. Solis, Employer - Stockley-Van Camp, Inc.
24. Mert Starnes, Attorney for Texas Motor Bus Association, Inc.
25. O. L. Stiefer, Bureau of Labor Statistics
26. Josephine L. Verain, Attorney, San Antonio
27. Hollis Ward, Winter Garden Braceros Transportation
28. Leon J. Whitehead, Interstate Commerce Commission, Bureau of Motor Carriers
29. R. L. Wilson, Private Insurance Agent
30. Whitaker, Betty Jane, Texas Council of Churches
31. Betty Klaeveman, Secretary-Clerk for the Session
32. Henry LeBlanc, Texas Employment Commission

IV. EDUCATION SESSION

1. Dr. Sam B. Barton, Texas Farmers' Union
2. Rev. Joseph Barton, Texas Council of Churches
3. Mrs. Carlin, Bishop's Committee for the Spanish Speaking
4. Carlos Castillon, Executive Secretary, Texas Council on Migrant Labor
5. Matt Goode, Secretary-clerk, Texas Good Neighbor Commission
6. Leon Graham, Texas Education Agency
7. Harold Kilpatrick, Texas Council of Churches
8. Mrs. Anne Magee, Edinburg Independent School District
9. Frank M. Pinedo, American GI Forum of Texas
10. Alfonso Rodriguez, Texas State AFL-CIO
11. Mrs. Martin Ryan, Bishop's Committee for the Spanish Speaking
12. Felix Salazar, Jr., League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
13. Zola Williams, Bureau of Labor Statistics