

H. L. Johnston
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Report of
New York State Interdepartmental
Committee on
Farm and Food Processing Labor
1952

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON FARM AND
FOOD PROCESSING LABOR

Elton K. Hanks, Chairman

Harry N. Haight, Executive Director

GOVERNOR ALFRED E. SMITH STATE OFFICE BUILDING
ALBANY, NEW YORK

New York State Departments and Agencies Represented on the Committee
(Names of persons currently representing Commissioners and Agency Heads
are given in parentheses)

AGRICULTURE AND MARKETS.....C. Chester Du Mond, Commissioner
(Harry N. Haight)

EDUCATION.....Dr. Lewis A. Wilson, Commissioner
(Bruce E. Shear, W. J. Weaver, Robert Minnich)

EXECUTIVE

State Police.....John A. Gaffney, Superintendent
(Captain Eugene F. Hoyt, Sergeant Eugene V. Foster)

HEALTH.....Dr. Herman E. Hilleboe, Commissioner
(Dr. J. J. Quinlivan, Miss Eleanor Gochanour,
Earl Devendorf, A. F. Allen)

LABOR.....Edward F. Corsi, Commissioner

Employment Service
(N. F. Hopper, G. A. Hutchinson)

Division of Industrial Relations

Women in Industry, Minimum Wage
(Mrs. Emily Sims Marconnier, D. A. Daly)

SOCIAL WELFARE.....Robert T. Lansdale, Commissioner
(Winford Oliphant)

EXTENSION SERVICE of the NEW YORK STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
at CORNELL UNIVERSITY.....L. R. Simons, Director of Extension
(Elton K. Hanks, H. E. Thomas)

YOUTH COMMISSION.....Lee C. Dowling, Executive Director
(Robert P. Capes, Leonard F. Horan)

Report of Activities
by
INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON FARM AND FOOD PROCESSING LABOR
1952

The Interdepartmental Committee on Farm and Food Processing Labor was established in 1943 by the Governor primarily to improve the living and working conditions of those people who come to New York State annually to help in harvesting and processing farm crops.

Included on this Committee are representatives of nine state agencies whose programs directly affect migrant families. These agencies are the New York State Departments of Agriculture and Markets, Education, Executive (State Police), Health, Labor (including the Employment Service and Division of Industrial Relations, Women in Industry and Minimum Wage), and Social Welfare; the Extension Service of the New York State College of Agriculture at Cornell University and the Youth Commission.

The responsibility of the Committee is chiefly to improve the effectiveness of the work of each of these state agencies through joint planning, mutual assistance, understanding, and thorough study and evaluation of each program and problem. Each member agency has specific responsibilities --information, education, regulation, service--that are in the public interest.

Appreciable gains, both in understanding and in service, have been made in this program over the past several years. These were continued during 1952 as is evident from the reports contained herein. That there is still room for improvement is admitted freely. However, the Interdepartmental Committee and its component agencies have a firm resolve to do their best each year for the betterment of the migrants' situation.

Aside from the work of the Interdepartmental Committee, effected through its component agencies, there were these projects carried out by the Committee itself:

Report to Joint Legislative Committee on Interstate Cooperation

The Executive Director met with the New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Interstate Cooperation at its annual meeting held in New York City and reported concerning the activities of our Committee, especially as they referred to camps housing 10 or more and the enforcement of the child labor laws.

Child Care Program

The Committee was active in attempts to enlarge the child care program.

Report to the Council of Churches and Local Migrant Labor Committees

Officers of the Interdepartmental Committee had frequent meetings with members of the Home Missions Division of the Council of Churches and with members of local migrant labor committees and, wherever possible, assisted



Pre-school lunch

The recruitment and training of the staff followed the same pattern as other years. Fifty percent of the administrative and instructional staff have been with the program in previous years. The training conference was held again at King Ferry. Members of the New York State Department of Health as well as specialists in pre-school and school-age programs assisted in the training program. As customary the child care center at the King Ferry Camp was used as a demonstration school.

The child care services reached 75 more children in 1952 than in 1951. A total of 575 children were enrolled for 15,725 child days. This is nearly 2,000 more days of day care given than in 1951. The enrollment in the various centers varied from 17 in the smallest to 121 in the largest; 27% of the children were under two years of age; 43% between 2 to 6 years with 23% between 6 to 9 years and 7% between 10 to 14 years.

Cost of operating the Child Care Centers during 1952 was:

Total cost of operation	\$47,027.73*
Total enrollment	575
Total number of child days	15,725
Number of days all projects operated	585
Cost per child per day	2.99**

* Partly incomplete - February 1, 1953

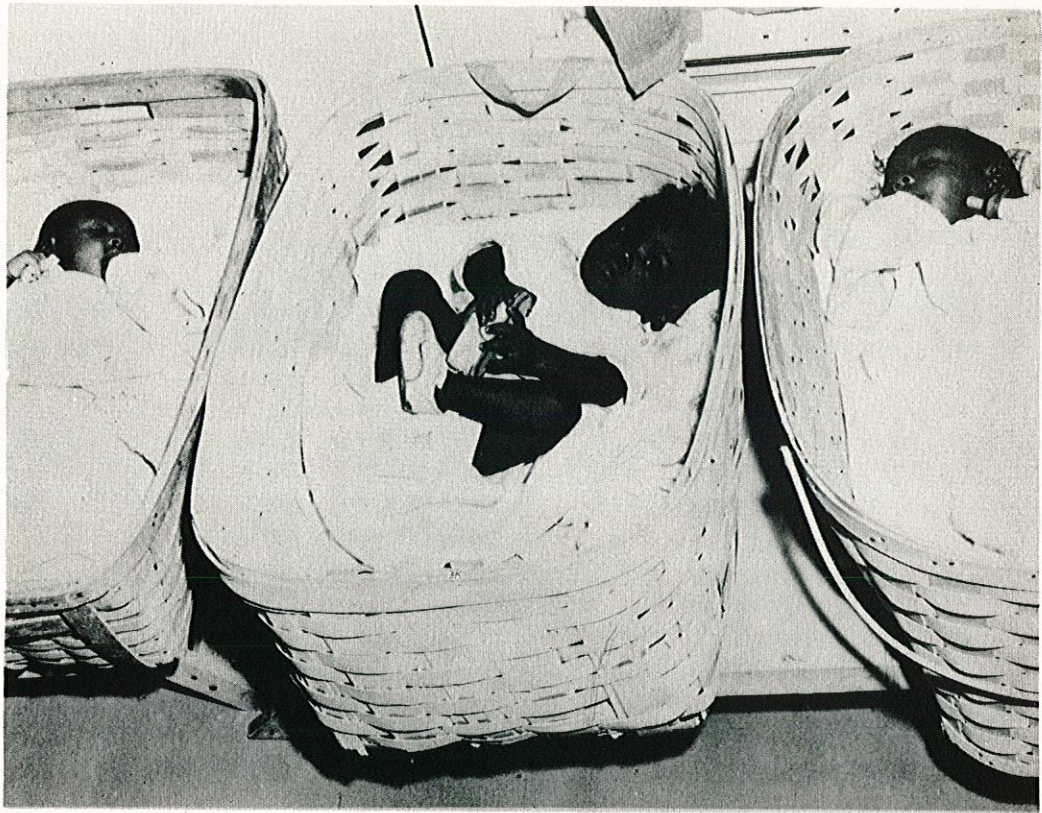
**Budget runs through March 1953

EDUCATION

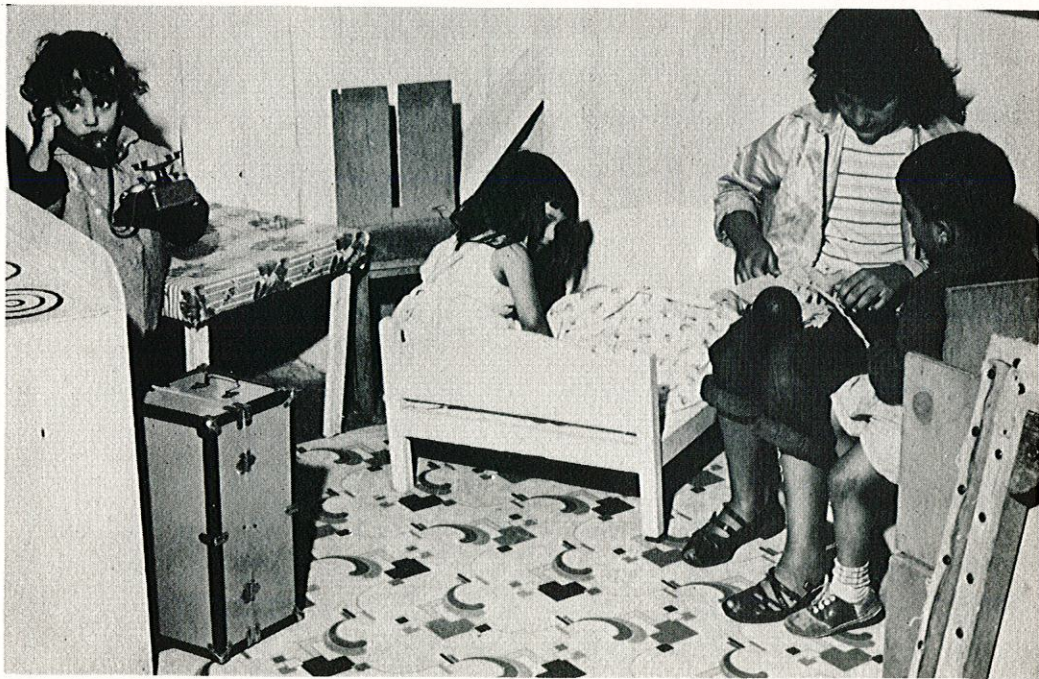
The Bureau of Guidance continued to emphasize the adjustment of migrant children to school and adjustment of the school to the children. In addition, the necessity for locating the children, securing regular attendance and the necessity for proper employment certification were stressed during the year. Three supervisors devoted a total of five weeks visiting schools and camps in areas where there was a concentration of migrant workers. The following table summarizes the extent of these visits:

Counties	<u>Visitations</u>		<u>Interviews</u>		
	<u>Schools Visited</u>	<u>Camps Visited</u>	<u>Superintendents</u>	<u>Principals</u>	<u>Others</u>
19	45	30	26	42	96

This field work, devoted to furthering the education of the migrant children, uncovered a gradually increasing sympathetic interest on the part of our schools, the teachers and administrators. This interest is not maintained at an equally high level in all schools but there is evidence of an honest effort being made to help the children of migrant workers wherever they are enrolled. One central school with fifty children from the families of



Infant rest



Indoor doll center

Many examples could be cited indicating the earnest effort schools are making to give the children of migrant workers the best education possible for the limited time they are enrolled. Many laymen can not possibly understand how complex some of these problems are to principals and superintendents, but the picture may be somewhat clarified by the realization that many of these children receive no schooling whatever from the time they leave New York State until they return again the following year.

In one school visited, 60% of the migrant children were also in attendance last year and the principal reported that he could notice definite progress on the part of many of these children. Most principals, however, reported that they were not in a position to describe definite progress on the part of the migrant children but individual teachers did agree that some progress was noticeable.

A school having 112 migrant children enrolled was faced with a serious problem due to crowded conditions. It was encouraging to note, however, that there was an excellent spirit of cooperation and all concerned were honestly trying to make the best of the situation. In still another school, attention was given to the problem of adjustment as the needs of the children were noted. Here the school nurse found a child in need of dental care and this posed a problem because the child was afraid to go to the dentist. By tact and sympathy, the nurse helped the child overcome her fear and have the tooth out. This experience proved to the child that the nurse was her friend and the child, in turn, became a great help in assuring the other migrant children that the nurse, the teachers and others in the school wanted to help them with their health problems as well as other problems. Following the incident, the children would come for assistance without hesitation.

Some schools have been instrumental in organizing citizen committees or in cooperating with established citizen committees, with the result that more interest is shown concerning the needs of migrants on the local level. Where this interest is shown, the schools and communities are rewarded by cooperation and advancement on the part of the migrants and their children. This year, the Education Department cooperated with the group sponsoring the summer school for migrants at King Ferry. The school was visited by three supervisors, one of whom served as a consultant at several meetings devoted to planning and evaluating the work of the school. A supervisor from the Bureau of Guidance attended two meetings in Washington to participate in discussions relating to the educational problems of migrant children, and a second supervisor participated in a conference of chief school attendance officers held in Boston to consider the education of migrant children.

This year, the Education Department placed a \$10,000 request in its budget for the establishment of several pilot summer schools for the children of migrant workers. The results were to be used in considering possibilities for a state-wide program. The item was not included, however, in the State Budget which was submitted to the Legislature.

TABLE I

CENSUS FIGURES --204 Migrant Labor Camps ¹

	Under 1 Yr.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Total
B	66	63	80	73	70	62	85	81	81	73	87	70	84	58	79	47	42	27	1228
G	64	64	71	73	64	80	80	52	73	72	74	66	58	49	70	51	43	26	1130
T	130	127	151	146	134	142	165	133	154	145	161	136	142	107	149	98	85	53	2358

¹ Camps housing 10 or more people and registered with the State Departments of Labor and Health.

TABLE II

DISTRIBUTION BY AGE AND GRADE ²
1690 Migrant Farm Children

Age Grade	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	19	Total
Special	2	2	4	7	9	7	6	2	2			1				42
K	9	49	21	6												85
1		29	100	62	16	5	1	2								215
2		1	36	81	61	27	12	3		1						222
3			2	23	79	60	36	17	5		4					226
4					16	59	53	23	26	8	7					192
5					2	18	53	47	40	11	11	4				186
6						1	13	46	58	25	28	12	3	1		187
7								18	37	30	34	17	7			143
8								2	5	31	38	26	2			104
9										4	15	20	7	1		47
10										1	5	11	5			22
11												6	5	2		13
12													2	3	1	6
Total	11	81	163	179	183	177	174	160	173	111	142	97	31	7	1	1690

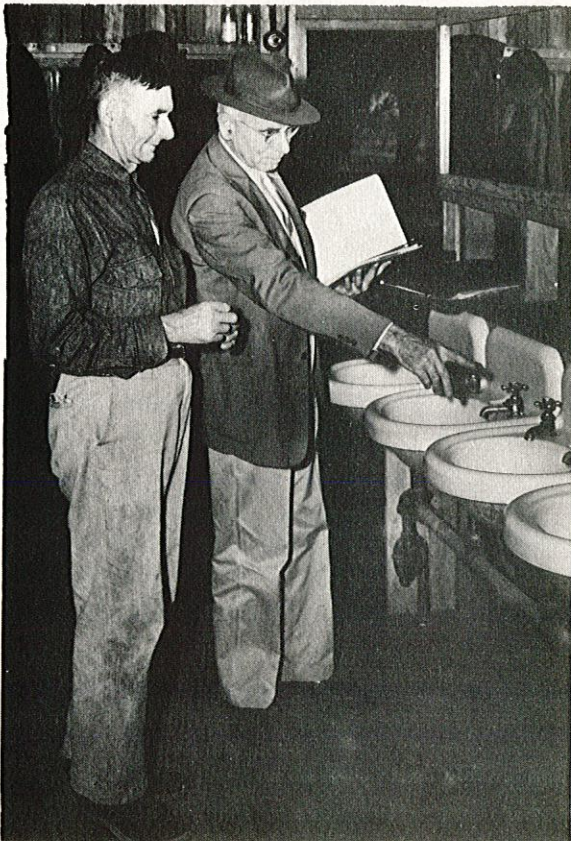
² 90 schools were contacted, 85% returned reports. Of this number, 70 schools reported children enrolled. The enrollment in schools ranged from one student to 112 students. For practical purposes the normal age for the grade is indicated by the blocked squares; the right and above indicate average.



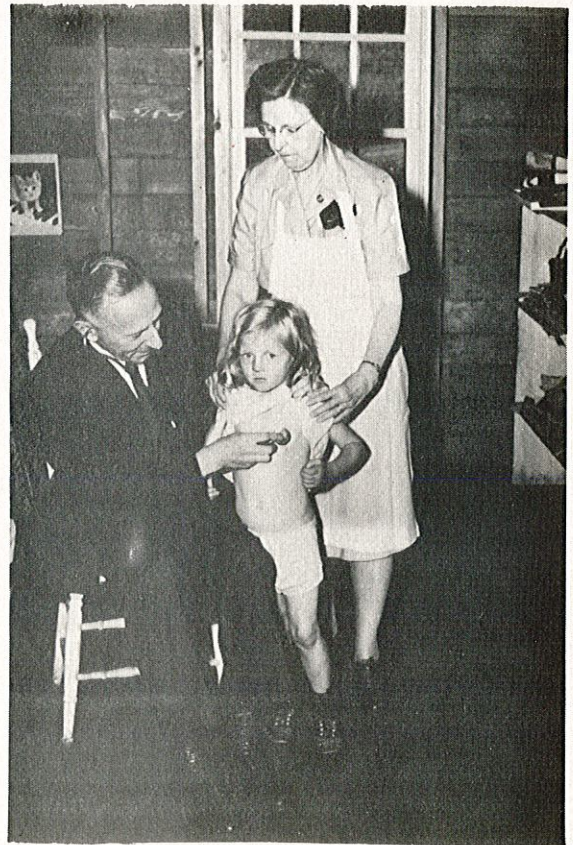
Child health consultation



**X-ray survey at camp
in Madison County**



**State sanitary engineer and camp
manager inspecting washroom**



**Doctor examines child
of migrant worker**

There were 6,972 sanitary inspections made of all properties. This represents an increase of 300 over the previous year. Of these inspections, 84% were made by state health department personnel.

The average number of inspections per property under supervision was 8.2--being practically the same as in the previous year. The camps were operated on the average of about 90 days with sanitary inspections being made approximately once every two weeks while the camps were in operation.

More camps were issued permits to operate than actually did so. This was due to the fact that several camps which expected to operate did not do so because of economic reasons. Temporary permits were issued to 84 camps, all but 3 of which subsequently received the regular annual permit when the needed changes had been made. The three operated under a temporary permit for the short period of their use.

The operators of 9 camps were denied permits. All but one either closed the camp or made needed improvements without any legal enforcement activity. One operator was summoned to a departmental hearing, following which he paid the assessed penalty and corrected conditions at the camp as well as at another camp for which he had been denied a permit.

No complete detail record exists of the many improvements which were made at the camps this year. However, almost every one of the 23 health department offices serving the areas in which these camps are located has reported a general improvement in the conditions of the camps. These range from entirely new camps, often of cement block construction, to smaller camp features such as installed laundry tubs, inside and outside painting, etc. The following improvements were reported by one office: bath houses with shower baths built at 21 camps; water under pressure installed at 15 camps; central feeding facilities including mess hall and kitchen provided at 6 camps; central cooking at 4 other camps; cabins or barracks refurnished at 19; and, new sewage disposal systems, flush toilets, laundry tubs and lavatories. As evidence of the general improvements, the reports show that the percentage of camps which were hazards to the health of the occupants were reduced from 12 in 1951 to 10 in 1952. The unsatisfactory conditions were principally in the camps used this year for the first time. These camps were usually buildings converted to house farm laborers without adequate remodeling in advance of their use. Most of these conditions will be corrected before another season commences.

Nursing services were given to the migrant families by five county public health nurses and state employed nurses. The state nurses served for 16 man-months working principally in the larger camps from July until November. This was approximately the same amount of nursing service as was given during the previous season.

Before the peak season, conferences were held by the public health nurses, their supervisors, and camp operators and owners to review the health services available, make an estimate of the expected health needs of the migrants and plan to meet these needs. Since the amount of nursing service was limited, it was decided to emphasize nursing care related to the communicable diseases, including tuberculosis and venereal disease, the



Typical migrant camps

County post-season reports indicate clearly that the local workers do the larger part of both the skilled and unskilled agricultural work and that this source of labor was used to the utmost throughout the state. The temporary closing of some industrial plants for inventory, "change-over", "seasonal lull", etc., continued to be helpful in meeting the labor needs in the vicinity of closed plant.

Interstate Labor

Migratory Labor - Following early spring discussions with employers requiring seasonal labor, a list of 504 migratory labor crew leaders was compiled and forwarded to the Florida State Employment Service. This list, coupled with those from other East Coast States, was used by the Florida agency to notify crew leaders of the time and place when representatives of northern States would be available for interviews. The joint itinerary of this group began in Homestead, Florida, on April 6, and included scheduled interviewing periods in 17 different local offices, ending in Jacksonville on April 24.

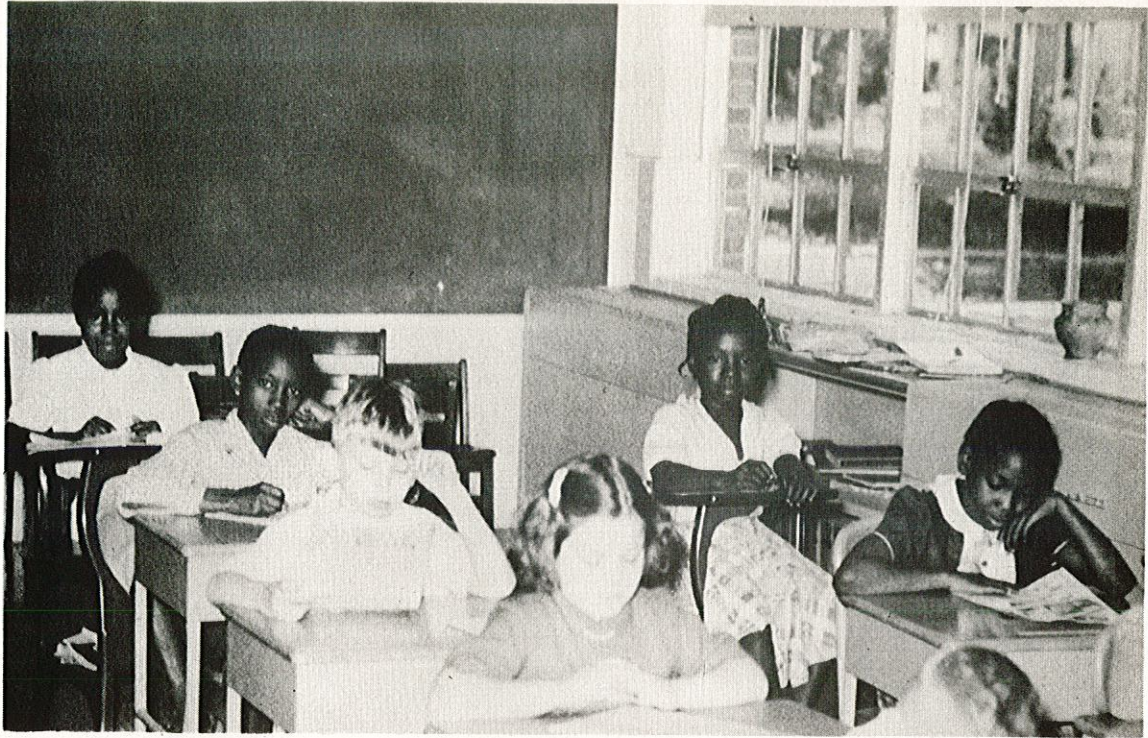
Of the 486 crews interviewed, 183 with 9,973 workers made firm commitments to New York State employers. Other crew leaders were interviewed regarding their availability to New York employers. Other crews had already made agreements. At the interviews, a leaflet was given each crew leader which showed a map of the State indicating principal highways, local office locations, with names of Farm Placement Representatives. One side of the leaflet contained a summary of State laws affecting seasonal workers.

Table I, entitled, "Survey of Size and Number of Migrant Crews Coming to New York - 1952", provides a comparison with the previous year. The table does not include all migrant workers in the state. It is an accurate record of those crews on whom records were made by the field staff. Note the continuing decline in the number of crews with more than 75 workers, while those containing 75 workers and less showed a marked increase.

Table II, entitled, "Estimated Utilization of Southern Migrants in New York at Peak Period by Counties - 1952", indicates only a slight decrease in total use when compared with 1951. There are, however, significant changes in the estimated use of migrants in several counties of the State, including an increase of 200 workers in Orleans County, affected by better earnings, and housing; a decrease of 30 in Wyoming County, which had a small crop and a short season; an increase of 139 in Oswego County, where one large employer changed to Puerto Rican workers; an increase of 130 in Monroe County, where migrants have proven satisfactory; and a decrease of 400 in Steuben County, ascribable to a crop of lower quality than normal, housing and lower earnings.

New users of southern migratory labor appear to be offering inducements in earnings, housing, and working conditions that attract workers away from areas where their use has long been established.

With the increased need for migratory workers in all areas of the eastern seaboard, New York State is particularly conscious of its geographical location in the migratory pattern.



**Children of migrants attending
public school**



**Migrant workers harvest the
bean crop**

TABLE II

Estimated Utilization of Southern Migrants in New York
at Peak Period by Counties - 1952

Allegany	40	Oneida	1600
Broome - Tioga	196	Onondaga	100
Cayuga	1276	Ontario	175
Chautauqua	150	Orange	239
Chenango	850	Orleans	1600
Columbia	350	Oswego	450
Cortland	107	Otsego	65
Delaware	40	Rockland	75
Dutchess	650	Saratoga	125
Erie	300	Seneca	50
Genesee	650	Steuben	1800
Herkimer	775	Suffolk	6000
Livingston	650	Ulster	900
Madison	1430	Wayne	2300
Montgomery	53	Yates	150
Niagara	500		
		Total	23,646

Division of Industrial Relations,
Women in Industry and Minimum Wage

For the fifth consecutive year the Division of Industrial Relations, Women in Industry and Minimum Wage of the New York State Department of Labor continued its program of farm inspections during the Summer of 1952. This program includes the enforcement of three laws -- child labor, migrant registration, and wage payment. Each year increasing cooperation on the part of growers is noted by investigators who visit the fruit and vegetable farms throughout the state.

During the summer of 1952, investigators inspected 960 fruit and vegetable farms. Included among the 21,869 workers employed on these farms were 1,471 children under 16 years of age; 849 of these children were 14 and 15 years of age with farm work permits; 389 in the same age group had no permits, and 233 were under 14 years of age. The proportion of farms in compliance in 1952 was 80% as compared with 77% in 1951, and 54% in 1948.

The employment of illegal child workers has been decreasing steadily since 1948 when 19% of the workers were illegally employed, compared with 4% in 1951 and 3% in 1952. The proportion of children under 14 years of age fell from 10% in 1948 to 1% in both 1951 and 1952.

Exceptions to the State Board of Social Welfare Rules were granted for practical reasons in all but two of the day care centers; two were in full compliance with the rules. The centers were well-run, and the staff competent and interested in the work. The children reflected excellent care. Every effort was made to do the best job possible with facilities and equipment available.

In addition to the camps which were issued permits by this Department, the Area staff made nine visits to migrant camps where no formalized child care programs were in operation. Reasons for these visits were concern over situations known from the previous season, or complaints referred to the Area office from a community source to the effect that there were children in the camps either receiving day care or without proper supervision. The Area reported these camps closed before any action could be taken relating to the situations. Copies of seven of these reports received from the Areas were sent to the Director of the New York State Migrant Child Care Program for consideration and comment before the opening of the 1953 season.

For the first time this year, a letter and a copy of the Day Care Rules were sent out to all growers before the migrant season opened. This was done after a conference concerning children between the Bureau of Child Welfare and the Executive Director of the Interdepartmental Committee on Farm and Food Processing Labor, relating to situations which existed during the previous year in migrant camps not included in the New York State Child Care Program. The letter provided the list of growers; this Department prepared the letter and released it. The letter explained the need for growers to apply for a permit if children in the camps were being cared for during the day by someone other than their own parents.

The New York State Department of Health also released a letter to the Regional Health Directors, County Health Commissioners, District State Health Officers, and City Health Officers. This letter was cleared with the Bureau of Child Welfare prior to release. It related to welfare departments' responsibilities for children in migrant camps.

EXTENSION SERVICE of the NEW YORK STATE COLLEGE
of AGRICULTURE at CORNELL UNIVERSITY

The work of the Extension Service in bringing about improved community-migrant-employer understanding was somewhat curtailed in 1952 because the person assigned to that work was "borrowed" by state and federal agencies to work in broader migrant field. However, community leaders have themselves carried on the work locally and assisted neighboring areas in meeting similar problems.

The Extension Service, because it has a county agricultural agent in each agricultural county who is working closely with employers, serves to inform growers of the services available from each of the cooperating agencies. It has helped growers to make more efficient use of labor; it has provided instruction on the building of satisfactory camps; and it has aided farm labor cooperatives in continuing their operations.

