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DOMESTIC AND IMPORTED WORKERS IN THE HARVEST LABOR MARKET

Santa Clara County, California, 1954

By Varden Fuller, John W. Mamer, George L. Viles

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I. INTRODUCTION, FINDINGS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

As a means of relieving farm labor shortage during World War II, the United States negotiated arrangements with Mexico, Canada, and several Caribbean countries whereby, under waiver of our immigration laws, Nationals of these countries were admitted temporarily under contract to work on U. S. farms. The largest of these farm labor programs was with Mexico. Whereas virtually all other war emergency measures were discontinued within a year or so after the end of hostilities, substantial portions of the alien farm labor program have been continued. Moreover, the size of the alien labor program, particularly the Mexican, has become much larger than in the war period. At the peak of the wartime phase, the largest number of Mexican Nationals under contract at any one time was approximately 63 thousand; in 1954, the seasonal peak reached 186 thousand. California has occupied a prominent position in both wartime and postwar phases of the Mexican labor program--its wartime peak was some 34 thousand; its 1954 peak was over 50 thousand.[4]

The unexpectedly high level of postwar industrial employment which has tended to drain manpower away from the farms is the apparent reason for the continuation of the alien contract farm labor arrangements. Yet, as in 1949 and 1954, there has from time to time been significant unemployment of local labor.

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4/ Rasmussen, Wayne D., A History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program, 1943-1947 (Washington: Govt. Print. Off., September, 1951), p. 226. (U. S. Department of Agriculture Monograph No. 13); and U. S. Bureau of Employment Security, "Employment and Wage Supplement," Farm Labor Market Developments (Washington: Govt. Print. Off., November, 1954), p. 8.

In consequence, the question has arisen as to why it was necessary for the country to be importing farm laborers at the same time that it had unemployed citizen manpower. Could not local labor resources be utilized more completely in accomplishing the necessary agricultural work? If so, this would at the same time ameliorate the burden of unemployment and minimize the growing dependence on alien farm labor.

The research herein reported was directed toward this general question. In initiating an examination of this question, it seemed apparent that only by knowing in detail the circumstances and conditions that prevail in local labor market situations in which Mexican National labor is employed would it be possible to arrive at definite and reliable conclusions. It would have been best to have surveyed the situation in a number of localities. But with the limited resources available, it was possible to survey only one locality. Accordingly, Santa Clara County was selected with the thought that it would possibly represent as many of the elements of the various local situations of the state as would any one locality that could be chosen. During the fall and winter of 1954, we interviewed extensively among the farmers, farm laborers, and agencies concerned with farm labor supply and employment in Santa Clara County. Our findings and conclusions are based on the results obtained from these interviews.

We have attempted to identify the various groups of workers that perform the agricultural tasks of the County and those that were or could potentially be available for farm work. In order to investigate the question of whether local people could do more of the work, we inquired into the intensity and efficiency of employment of those already engaged in farm work. Also, we have tried to identify and analyze the influences that apparently determine availability of persons who ostensibly might be farm workers. In this latter connection, we inquired into such matters as previous experience, attitudes toward farm work, knowledge of the work available, and how the worker goes about finding farm jobs. In effect, our entire inquiry was directed toward two points:

(a) Can local farm laborers be used more effectively than at present?

(b) What are the obstructions that stand in the way of more local labor going into farm work?

Before Mexican National farm laborers are contracted,[5/] responsible authorities in the local farm labor office, in the State Department of Employment, and in the U. S. Department of Labor must certify that a shortage of farm labor exists. The fact that Mexican Nationals were in Santa Clara County in all months of 1954, and in the magnitude of over 1,000 at the August-September peak, is evidence that in the judgment of these authorities a farm labor shortage did, in fact, exist. But, since only 5 per cent of the larger commercial farmers actually used Nationals, the shortage and its impact could not have been uniform among all farmers.

We therefore sought out the comparative experiences of individual farmers as to labor supply problems during 1954. We interviewed farmers who had contracted Mexican Nationals as well as farmers who depended exclusively upon citizen labor. The comparative labor supply experiences of farm employers are reported in Section III of this report.

Our survey of seasonal labor supply was based upon interviews with 251 workers currently employed at seasonal farm jobs or living in local community centers containing populations that were deemed to be potentially available for farm work. The permanent residences of those interviewed were as follows:

5/ The contract procedures and terms are established by intergovernmental agreement between the United States and Mexico. The agreed upon provisions are contained in two documents; the Migrant Labor Agreement and the Standard Work Contract, which are renegotiated and amended from time to time. Among many detailed provisions, these documents contain the minimum term of contract (six weeks), the guarantee of work (three fourths of the workdays during the contract term), the payment of prevailing wages, the furnishing of transportation, and the insurance required. Farm employers or their agents contract with the Mexican National worker at U. S. Government-operated reception centers near the main points of entry from Mexico. Authority to maintain such centers and to recruit and transport workers to and from the centers is conferred on the U. S. Secretary of Labor by act of Congress. From its approval on July 12, 1951 through December 31, 1953, this authority was in Public Law 78 (82d Cong., 1st sess.) which amends and supplies Title V to the Agricultural Act of 1949. By Public Law 237 (83d Cong., 1st sess.) approved August 8, 1953, the authority of Public Law 78 was extended through December 31, 1955. Copies of the U. S. Law and of the Migrant Labor Agreement and Standard Work Contract may be obtained from Bureau of Employment Security, Farm Placement Service, U. S. Department of Labor, Washington, D. C.

Place of residence	Per cent of sample
Santa Clara County	46.2
Elsewhere in Bay Area (mainly Oakland)	25.1
Elsewhere in California	16.7
Southwestern states, other than California	11.2
Other states	.8
All	100.0

In terms of their employment histories during the preceding 12 months, the sample group classified as follows:

Work experience in preceding year	Per cent of sample
Farm work only	38.2
Combination of farm and nonfarm, but primarily farm	12.4
Combination of farm and nonfarm, but primarily nonfarm	28.7
Nonfarm work only	20.7
All	100.0

Thus, almost four fifths of those surveyed had to some extent worked on farms in the preceding year. The extent of work participation by those in the farm labor subgroup is, in general terms, indicated as follows:

Work experience of those doing some farm work in preceding year	Per cent of subsample
Farm work exclusively	48.2
Primarily but not exclusively farm work	15.6
Primarily nonfarm, but some farm work	36.2
All	100.0

Of those interviewed who had worked in agriculture during the preceding year, approximately one half were heads of families in which, at some time during the year, several members of the family unit had worked in agriculture. In these family work units, there was an average of approximately four working persons, including the family head. However, the quantity of work performed by many of the family members was apparently very incidental.

Family work units were especially prominent among nonresidents who had come into Santa Clara County to work in the prune harvest. Working members of families

that were residents of the County or who resided within the day-haul community periphery tended to seek employment as individuals; their attachment to agriculture was far more casual and incidental than was that of the migrant family units.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Even though Santa Clara County agriculture is diversified in crops and sizes of farms, its fruits and vegetables present an extreme and urgent need of short-term seasonal labor. Beginning in latter August and extending through two to three weeks in September, the farm labor need is approximately double that of June, July, and latter September. In the most slack months of December through April, total farm employment is only 1/10 to 1/16 the August-September peak. Most of this wide variation is caused by abrupt changes in the short-term hand or "stoop" labor needs of fruits and vegetables, principally in their harvests.

2. The increased need of labor at the seasonal peak was, in 1954, supplied as follows: approximately one half were local residents, many of whom did non-farm work in other portions of the year; the other half were nonresidents of two main types--migrants who temporarily moved their families into the County and day-haul or commuting workers from nearby metropolitan areas, principally the East Bay.

3. Farm employers' experiences in obtaining labor during the survey year (1954) were far from uniform. At the extremes of experience, there were those who found that the citizen labor supply was so inadequate they were completely dependent on obtaining Mexican Nationals as against those who reported no difficulty in getting the quality and quantity of citizen labor needed. Intermediately, many operators experienced heavy labor turnover, considerable uncertainty, low-quality performance, and similar problems. Except for the unusually vigorous roundup of "wetbacks" during 1954, the experiences of the survey year were reported to be generally typical of recent postwar years. The varying experiences of operators were spread fairly uniformly over farms of different sizes; in general, however, the experiences of fruit growers were less adverse than were those in vegetables and strawberries.

4. The evidence obtained in this survey indicates that substantial proportions of each of the major domestic (citizen) sources of seasonal labor are not regularly or firmly attached to the farm labor force. Among local residents

who had done some farm work during 1954, less than half had been engaged exclusively in agriculture. Of those doing both farm and nonfarm work, the occupational pattern tended to be one of principal reliance on nonagriculture, to which the farm employment had been supplementary. Although local residents have considerable stability in respect to their communities of residence, their attachment to the seasonal farm labor force tends, with some exceptions, to be unstable and uncertain. Except for older workers who have done little or nothing but farm work during their lives, the general desire is to obtain nonfarm jobs. Under recently prevailing employment conditions that have been favorable, many are succeeding in making the change--for part of the year at least--and particularly those in the younger age categories. Family work units that migrate temporarily into the County have the most stable and firm attachment to the farm work force; yet, the heads of these families report that, as their children mature and remove themselves from the family work unit, their annual return is becoming increasingly doubtful. Day-haul workers from metropolitan areas overwhelmingly feel no sense of permanent attachment to the seasonal farm labor force; the extent of their participation in this work depends almost entirely upon whether metropolitan nonfarm employment is sufficiently slack to force them into the fields.

5. Mexican Nationals under contract were in Santa Clara County every month of 1954, from a minimum of 53 in April to a peak of 1,174 in August. At the peak, they constituted approximately 5 per cent of all temporary seasonal farm workers and were hired on less than 5 per cent of the larger commercial farms. The significance of this segment of the temporary labor supply does not therefore rest in its magnitude, which is minor, whether measured in proportions of work force or in proportions of employers using the particular labor.

6. The major contribution of the Mexican National farm labor program has been in its role of reducing uncertainty of labor supply. Whereas the extent of availability of citizen labor under presently prevailing employment practices is difficult or impossible to estimate with accuracy in advance of the season, the contracting procedure for Mexican Nationals is capable of yielding far greater certainty in the availability of contracted laborers. Even though the Mexican National labor is comparatively expensive because of additional costs of housing, transportation, insurance, etc., that are stipulated in the intergovernmental agreement, the reduction of uncertainty that is attained by the contracting employers is considered by most of them to be worth the extra cost.

7. The Mexican National farm labor program was initiated as a temporary wartime emergency expedient to relieve farm labor scarcity in the United States.

Its legality rests upon a proviso in the immigration law allowing for the temporary admission of otherwise inadmissible aliens, and it requires the continued concurrence of the Republic of Mexico. The extended and expanded use of this initially temporary program through the postwar years raises the question of whether it is advantageous and desirable as a permanent method of relieving farm labor scarcity and uncertainty.

8. Notwithstanding apparent advantages for the contracting farm employers and for the Mexican Nationals who participate in it, the evidence of this survey raises doubts that the program is adequate and satisfactory as a long-run solution:

a. It is a contributing factor to the widening breach between the standards and conditions of seasonal farm employment and the generally prevailing occupations standards and thus contributes to a growing alienation of citizen labor in respect to seasonal farm employment. The single-man housing that is being built for Nationals is not suitable for citizen families; the gap between farm and nonfarm rates of pay is growing ever wider; tasks and operations in which the Nationals have worked are coming to be regarded within worker communities as "Mexican work" and therefore to be avoided.

b. No general effort is being made to make seasonal farm work more attractive to citizen labor; individual employment relationships are casual and unstable; farm employers generally are passive about arranging for and obtaining laborers; citizen laborers are generally passive or negative in their regard for seasonal farm work; concurrently, while citizen workers envisage their ultimate future in nonagricultural occupations, the deliberate planning efforts of farm employers, individually and as associations, is largely concentrated in developing and improving the Mexican National program.

c. Maintaining a program of regular and recurrent temporary admissions of otherwise inadmissible aliens may be politically defensible as long as a high level of employment prevails, but if a burdensome level of unemployment should occur, demands for its curtailment or termination are highly probable. Such an unemployment situation may suspend or terminate the program and yet provide little or no relief to the problem of seasonal farm labor scarcity.

d. The willingness of the Republic of Mexico to participate in the program depends, among other things, on that nation having a surplus of labor. With expansion and improvement in the Mexican economy, the employers and government authorities of that nation may not be willing indefinitely to continue sharing its labor supply with United States farm employers.

9. Given the goals of prosperous economy and full employment to which this nation aspires, there is the probability that the occupational climate will remain generally favorable for continuing the transition of farm workers into nonfarm jobs. Consequently, there is the prospect that the scarcity of seasonal

farm labor will remain, and it may grow more intense. If farm employers continue to depend on present practices and approaches, they will apparently become increasingly dependent on Mexican National labor. Whether to promote stability and relief of uncertainty of labor supply in terms of citizen laborers or in terms of temporarily imported aliens is an important policy question that ought to be faced deliberately and in terms of long-range considerations.

10. If greater stability and reliability in the citizen labor supply is to be sought, the terms of employment will have to be made more nearly competitive with other alternatives that are available to citizens. Most important among the many changes that will be required to achieve this result is the development of comprehensive plans and arrangements among employers to offer guarantees of jobs and stability of employment not less attractive than the contract guarantees now given to Mexican Nationals. If this were done, it would need to be undertaken in a spirit of experimentation and forbearance, for the attributes of the citizen laborer do not much resemble those of the Mexican National. In the conceptions and beliefs of those who might be potentially available for seasonal farm work, the alienation is already strong and is apparently growing stronger. The reversal of this trend, if it is to occur, is a major undertaking. The investment it would require is not measurable entirely in monetary terms. Willingness to abandon an essentially passive approach toward the recruitment and use of citizen labor, to plan and to enter into arrangements with workers and other farm employers, to experiment, and to be patient with failures and defects--these are perhaps the greatest requirements.

Class	Value of products sold	Number of farms	Per cent
I	$25,000 or more	487	12.5
II	10,000 to 24,999	580	14.9
III	5,000 to 9,999	754	19.4
IV	2,500 to 4,999	868	22.3
V	1,200 to 2,499	907	23.4
VI	250 to 1,199	292	7.5
	All commercial farms	3,888	100.0

It is seen from the above that the County's commercial agriculture is not prominently either large-scale or small-scale farming. Rather, farms of all the various sizes are quite well represented.

In terms of value of farm products sold, fruits and nuts occupy the most predominant position in the agricultural economy of Santa Clara County, accounting for approximately two fifths of total value of farm product sales. Livestock and livestock products are second in value and contribute approximately three tenths of total farm sales. Vegetables contribute about one fourth; the remaining and comparatively minor categories are field crops and horticultural specialties.9/

In 1954 fruits and nuts occupied 81,000 acres, vegetables, 18,750 acres, and field crops, excluding volunteer hay and pasture, 17,665 acres. Prunes predominate the County's agriculture. The bearing acreages of the major tree fruits and nuts for 1949 and 1953 were as follows:10/

Tree fruits and nuts	Bearing acres 1949	1953
Apricots	18,366	14,949
Cherries	2,961	2,672
Pears	6,779	6,276
Prunes	51,590	42,262
Walnuts	8,322	8,280
Grapes	6,479	4,974

9/ U. S. Bureau of the Census, op. cit., p. 124. The relative positions of the sectors were about the same in 1954 as in 1949. See: Santa Clara County, California, Commissioner of Agriculture, Agricultural Crop Report, 1954, p. 9.

10/ California Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, Acreage Estimates of California Fruit and Nut Crops as of 1949 and Acreage Estimates of California Fruit and Nut Crops as of 1953. (Sacramento: June, 1950, and June, 1954.)

As is indicated in the foregoing figures, the acreage of tree fruits and nuts has recently been declining. In the ten years, 1944-1953, the over-all decline was slightly more than 21,000 acres. Approximately 15,000 acres went out of tree fruit production in the five years, 1949-1953. At the same time, the acreage of row crops has been increasing. However, the main increase in these row crops has been in strawberries, which jumped from 50 to 2,267 acres in the period 1949-1953. The acreages of vegetables have remained fairly constant during this same period.

The acreages of the major vegetable crops in 1949 and 1953 were as follows:[11/]

Vegetable crops	Harvested acres 1949	1953
Snap beans (processing)	1,570	1,580
Green limas (processing)	4,224	6,220
Broccoli	3,000	3,140
Celery (summer, fall, spring)	1,200	1,480
Lettuce (summer, fall, spring)	3,200	1,570
Tomatoes (processing)	1,231	2,010
(early fall)	400	400

Santa Clara County has experienced rapid industrialization and residential subdivision, a trend that probably will continue for years to come. Consequently, industrial plants are in close proximity to farms and to some extent scattered among them. Likewise, the labor supply for farms is intermingled with the industrial labor supply. The pools that make up the resident agricultural labor supply are not clearly distinct from those which serve industries and trades. Although hundreds of farm workers live on the individual farms on which they work, there are concentrations of farm worker residences in the incorporated and unincorporated urban and suburban areas. The major urban concentrations of farm workers are found in and adjacent to San Jose, a city of approximately 100,000, and Gilroy, a city of approximately 5,000. To some extent, farm workers reside in all the rural and suburban areas of the County.

Workers who are still predominantly in agriculture, together with others that have worked on farms in the past, tend to be located in compact and somewhat

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11/ California Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, Vegetable Crops in California (Sacramento: May, 1950 and July, 1954).

separated village centers in the urban peripheries. These village populations represent labor reserves that are being constantly reduced by the process of occupational mobility and at the same time are being to some extent replenished by new workers from other areas who come to reside in Santa Clara County temporarily and permanently. They are further replenished irregularly by reductions in urban employment.

In addition to these locally resident farm laborers, most of whom are engaged casually and intermittently on nearby farms, the County farm labor supply is augmented by migratory workers who come in mainly for the prune harvest and by day-haul workers who commute daily from the metropolitan Bay Area cities, mainly for the vegetable harvests. Finally, there are the Mexican National contract farm workers who are imported for temporary work, mainly but not exclusively during the peak season.

The total number of workers, local and nonlocal, occupied in Santa Clara County agriculture varies greatly in the course of the year. The peak employment of hired labor occurs in the latter part of August and early September. In 1954, the estimated total number of hired workers employed during the week ending August 28 was 25,024. This was comprised of the following groups:12/

Groups	Numbers	Per cent
Hired, year around	1,700	6.8
Hired, temporary, local	12,000	48.0
Hired, temporary, nonlocal	10,150	40.5
Mexican Nationals working under contract	1,174	4.7
Total	25,024	100.0

To complete the picture of the farm labor supply of Santa Clara County, there needs to be added the number of farm operators and family members and the Mexican Nationals illegally in the United States (wetbacks). The 1950 Census reports the number of operators working on farms as 3,816 and the number of unpaid family members as 1,889. Since the census is taken in April when agricultural activities are not at their peak, these numbers undercount farm operators and family workers possibly by 10 to 20 per cent.

It is impossible to determine actually how many wetbacks were part of the labor force either at the peak of the season or through the course of the year.

12/ Estimates were obtained from the Farm Placement Service, Santa Clara County.

These workers are likely to be employed irregularly, except during the season of peak labor demand. In 1954, the immigration authorities in an intensive campaign deported most of the illegal entrees before the peak of the season. The raids took place mainly between June 13-22. During these raids, 1,574 apprehensions were reported for northern California.[13/] It is probable that at least several hundred of those apprehended were found in Santa Clara County. At the time of our field investigation, it appeared that illegal entrees from Mexico had been almost completely eliminated from the County farm labor supply.

The employment of hired resident labor ranges from a low of approximately 2,900 in February and March to a high of 13,000 in August and September. The employment of nonlocal labor (exclusive of contracted Mexican Nationals) ranges from 100 to a little over 10,000 during the same period. The number of hired year-around workers ranged in 1954 from 1,350 to 1,650; the number of Mexican Nationals working under contract varied from 53 in April to a high of 1,174 in August.

As a proportion of the total labor supply, Mexican Nationals working under contract were a relatively small part of the total labor force. During the weeks of peak employment in 1954, the 1,174 Nationals were approximately 5 per cent of the total hired farm labor force. If we assumed that the number of commercial farms in 1954 was approximately the same as that reported in the 1950 Census of Agriculture, we can obtain an impression of the relative importance of the Mexican Nationals in terms of the numbers of farm operators who employ them. Fifty-eight farm operators employed contract Nationals in 1954; this is approximately 1.5 per cent of the number of commercial farms in Santa Clara County.

If we assume, as it is reasonable to do, that contract Nationals were employed mainly on the larger farms and hence measure the proportion of contracting operators in these terms, it is still evident that Nationals were used on only a small minority of farms. For example, if the 58 contracting operators are related to the 1,067 farms that produced at least $10,000 worth of products, then the contracting proportion is about 5 per cent of the operators in this size of farm category.

Some of the contracting employers had Mexican Nationals through most of the year, others had them four to six months, and many--particularly those

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13/ San Jose Mercury, June 22, 1954, p. 4.

contracting only a few Nationals--had them three months or less. At the August peak of 1954, there were 38 contracting employers in Santa Clara County; the numbers of Mexican Nationals under contract by these employers were as follows:

Number of Mexican Nationals under contract	Number of contracting farmers
Under 5	13
5- 9	7
10- 24	7
25- 49	3
50- 74	2
75- 100	2
Over 100	4
Total	38

Through the 1954 season, the numbers of Mexican Nationals in Santa Clara County varied as follows (midmonths):

January	107	July	570
February	103	August	1,174
March	68	September	864
April	53	October	563
May	376	November	261
June	475	December	175

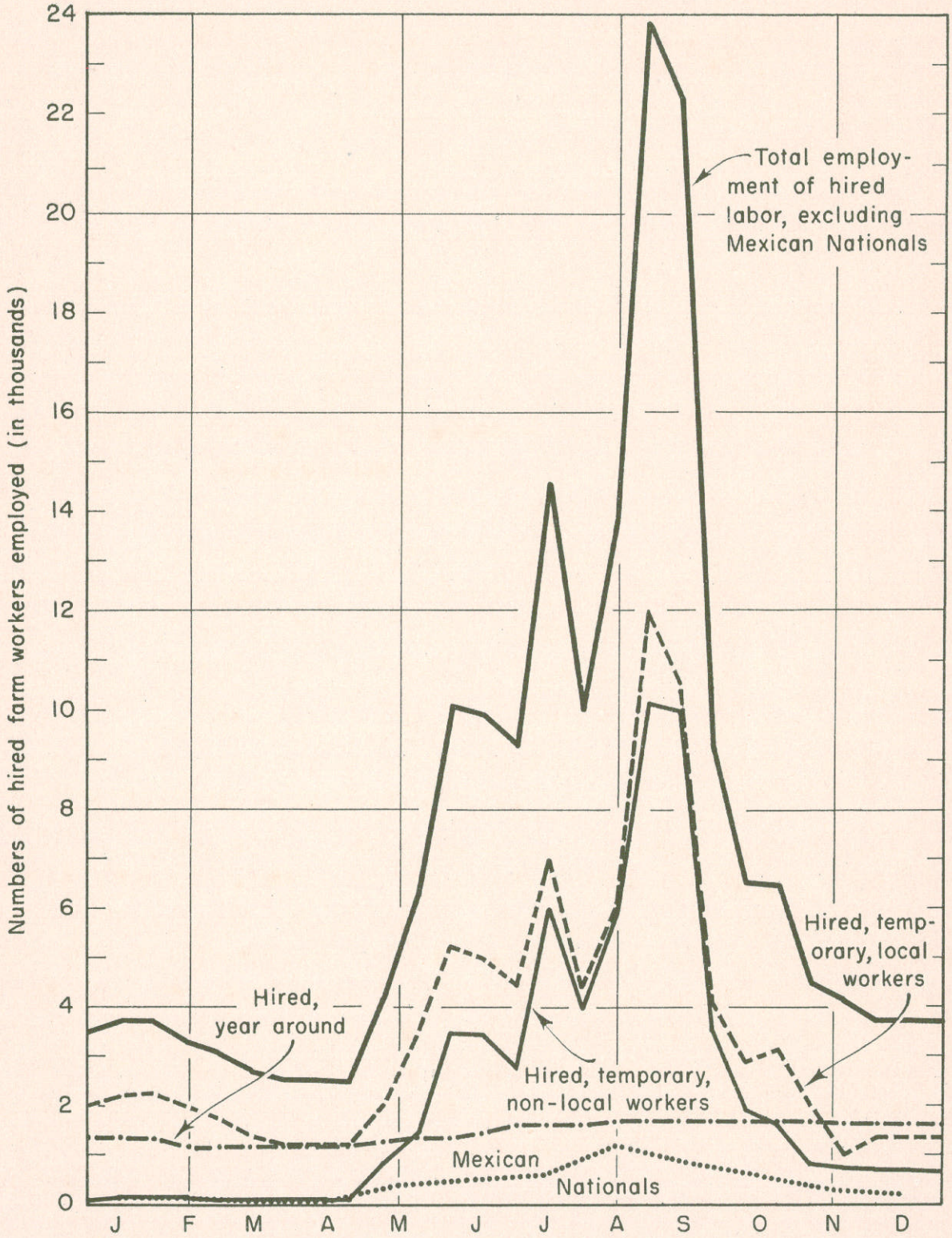
The extreme seasonal variability that affects all temporary agricultural workers in the County is depicted in Figure 1.

This inventory of the County farm labor supply reveals some prominent and important characteristics: (a) Many separate groups and supply sources enter into the County's farm work force; (b) citizen workers who are temporarily hired--of whom about half are regular County residents and half in the County seasonally or occasionally--are predominant in the scene, outnumbering regularly hired laborers, operators, and family workers combined by more than three to one. These temporarily employed citizens outnumbered contracted Mexican Nationals (in 1954) by twenty to one; and (c) contract Mexican Nationals were not used by farmers generally but only by approximately one in twenty of the larger commerical farms.

Figure 1

Seasonal Variation in the Employment of Hired Farm Labor

Santa Clara County, 1954



Source: Appendix Tables 2 and 3

III. FARMERS' EXPERIENCES IN OBTAINING SEASONAL LABOR

To obtain a general view of the experiences of farm employers with respect to obtaining seasonal workers, operators producing various types of fruits and vegetables on different sizes of operation were contacted. Some were interviewed directly; from others statements summarizing their experiences were obtained. The experiences reported ranged from extremely difficult seasonal labor supply problems to no difficulty at all in obtaining workers for any farm operation. Labor supply problems were not found to be exclusively associated with certain scales of operations or with certain types of crops. Small and large operators reported extreme difficulty in obtaining adequate crews for seasonal work. And on the other hand, among those who said they experienced no difficulty in obtaining seasonal workers, we found large as well as small operators. Similarly, reports of seasonal labor supply difficulties and of their absence came from both fruits and vegetable growers.

From the farm operator's point of view, the demand for seasonal labor has three parts: (1) obtaining workers who are capable of doing the work; (2) keeping the labor force for a sufficient time to get the crops harvested or the operation completed; and (3) getting the workers to perform the operations as the operator wants them performed. Although the nature of the problem varies among farmers, it exists much of the year in Santa Clara County. However, it assumes a crucial importance during the harvest season when the whole investment in the crops hinges upon a successful harvest that must be completed in a matter of a few days or weeks.

Essentially the experiences reported by the farm operators can be grouped into three broad categories: First, there were those who indicated that they found the seasonal labor supply situation very difficult. Second, some found the situation somewhat difficult but not insurmountable. Third, some farm operators reported that they had no difficulty obtaining satisfactory crews.

Those who reported the most serious labor supply difficulties indicated that farm operators rely on a labor supply that is becoming progressively disinclined to accept farm work. In their experiences, they find that many workers that formerly had done farm work are no longer willingly a part of the farm work force. This is indicated in the following comment of a farm operator:

> The local people don't want to work. They've been spoiled by factory work and unemployment payments. . . . There are some local people who've worked for us for years. These are good workers--good as any Nationals.

It is important to note, however, that in this comment local farm labor runs in two directions: some are found not willing to do farm work, but on the other hand, there are local workers who are quite satisfactory--workers who have a continuing interest in farm work. Actually, there were few specific illustrations of workers who did not want to work at all. Rather the first part of this comment and others similar to this reflect the observed tendency of the local labor to shift from farm to nonfarm work, for whatever reason.

Thus, employers find that a substantial part of the seasonal labor supply is made up either of workers who are temporarily in the farm labor market awaiting other employment or of farm workers who, while they in the past had done mainly farm work, are on the margin awaiting an opportunity to shift to nonfarm work. Neither of these groups is likely to have a serious or permanent interest in farm work. Further, there is added to this the open structure of the farm labor market; workers from other areas and from other skills temporarily move into the seasonal farm labor market. This situation, as reflected in the experiences of a farm operator, was described as follows:

> It was so hard to find good steady workers for the berry season I was ready to give up. . . . Plenty pickers, yes, but for how long? After a couple hours, a half a day, a day, others a week, and some a month. Come and go. Why? Some were collecting Social Security and didn't want to be working more than the required amount, others were just part time while a layoff of a few days of their steady jobs, and a few just wanted to make a few dollars for a meal or gas. The ones that stayed a month were steady only to be waiting for their favorite canneries to open.

Similar experiences were reported by another farm operator who commented as follows regarding his seasonal labor supply problems in 1954:

> Some had stayed long enough to earn gas money to secure other out-of-town jobs. Some were part-time workers or worked on their day off from their regular jobs. Some who seemed conscientious would find other steady work and leave us in a predicament. We would never know if the same people would return the next day or how long they will continue to work for us.

Farm operators whose labor problems were such as these were able to provide detailed accounts of labor force turnover. The accounts contained occasional reports of workers being discharged because of failure to perform the work as directed, but for the most part, the labor turnover was accounted for by those who quit to seek another job or for other reasons. Some quit without giving a reason. Many merely failed to reappear for work after being paid. Adjustments in response to this situation ranged from hiring larger crews to securing Mexican Nationals.

There was a broad range of reports that described some labor shortage and greater turnover of labor force in 1954 but indicated on the whole that the farm operators were able to adjust to the situation without loss of crops. This experience is typified by the following comment of a farm operator:

> This year it looked as though labor would be short. So I went to the Progressive Growers to get Nationals, but that was too much red tape. So I let the orchard be picked by contractors. With this arrangement I got sufficient labor in the orchards to pick the crop.

This grower stated that he found the use of a labor contractor so successful that he planned to follow the same procedure the succeeding year. Under this method he paid piece rates which he found to cause some waste, but the saving in labor costs more than offset the cost of the waste.

Although it is in the middle group that the vast bulk of the experiences of farm operators fall, not all in this group found adjustment to the labor supply situation so easy. Almost all operators experienced labor turnover problems. However, there was not uniform agreement as to whether the problem has become more serious in recent years. The farm operators with varying degrees of inconvenience and difficulty planted and harvested their crops with crews that essentially recruited themselves. Some indicated that part of the labor supply in Santa Clara County in 1954 and previous years was made up of illegal entrees from Mexico, a part of the labor supply that late in the summer of 1954 was largely eliminated. Those who had and those who had not used "wets" were of the opinion that local and migrant farm workers would not be available in sufficient supply in the future.

Beyond obtaining a crew initially, farm operators have the problems of keeping their workers through the season and of obtaining satisfactory work performance. A bonus payable to those who stay through the season is the principal method used to induce the worker to stay. Such bonuses are not uniformly used, however. In vegetables, the usual system is to pay increased piece rates as the fields are worked over and the output per man diminishes. Neither of these methods appears to have yielded good results except when they were built into other features of the employment relationship, such as good housing or continuous employment which also contributed to stability and loyalty of employees. Unsatisfactory work performance was frequently complained of, but we found little to indicate that farm employers did much by way of supervision and training to improve workmanship. This is quite understandable for, with the high rates of

labor turnover within the season, and from one season to the next, any considerable investment of time and effort in training and improving workmanship would have little prospect of paying off.

A third group of operators were those who reported that they had no difficulty in obtaining an adequate supply of seasonal workers in 1954. In general, producers of tree fruits, particularly prunes, experienced the least difficulty. The tree fruits with their stability of location and regular yearly harvest seasons are conducive to the building of a pattern among workers of returning to the same grower year after year. Further, workers migrating into the Santa Clara County tend to seek jobs first in the fruit harvest. Orchard operators located near main highways had the most favorable experiences in obtaining labor.

The more than ample supply of workers for prune harvest in Santa Clara County in 1954 was accounted for in part by the short harvest of prunes in the northern counties. Some workers who ordinarily worked in the northern counties and who had heard that the crop was short, at least temporarily, substituted Santa Clara County for Napa and the surrounding areas in their pattern of migration. Others who found themselves without work in Sonoma County came to Santa Clara County. Even without the short harvest in the north, however, the possibility of utilizing family labor places prune harvesting in a favorable position in obtaining a labor supply.

Some vegetable growers also reported that they obtained an adequate and satisfactory labor supply for their operations without active recruitment and without employing contract Nationals. Perhaps the most unqualified statement of the absence of labor supply problems was the following made by a vegetable grower:

> I have had no problem in the past year (1954). I use local people. I use the major share the year around. I seldom have an unsatisfactory worker. When I need additional men, the regular crew members bring additional men. Usually the crew workers bring good men. Each man keeps his own time card; we use the honor system.

This operator planned his operations so as to maintain a fairly stable labor force the year around. It was his judgment that this stability of labor requirements was the major factor in his ability to obtain and keep a satisfactory labor supply. In fact, he was of the opinion that, if in the future years his operations should require a high seasonal labor requirement, he would find it necessary to obtain Mexican Nationals.

As a part of the effort to obtain a general view of the experiences of farm operators with respect to obtaining seasonal workers, farmers were also queried

regarding their experiences with Mexican Nationals. Few farm operators who use Nationals depend upon them exclusively, rather the more common practice is to employ both. The actual working combination of the two types of workers is not uniform among all farm operators. Where the number of Nationals employed is large enough to make up a crew, they are usually employed in crews made up entirely of Nationals, while the citizen workers are likewise employed in homogeneous groups. The two types of crews may work adjacent to each other or in different fields and orchards. Where one or two Nationals are employed, they may work with citizen workers. However, whatever the working combination, the housing of the two groups is separate. The Nationals are usually housed in single-men-type units with a central dining room. When housing for citizen workers is provided, it is usually family-type housing, separated from the camps maintained for Nationals.

According to the provisions governing the temporary importation of foreign agricultural workers, the Nationals are to be used as a supplementary labor force to be employed when the supply of citizen workers is inadequate. Thus, according to the spirit of the intergovernment agreement, Mexican Nationals are to be replaced by citizen labor when it is available.

Those farm operators who employed Nationals stated that each year they made a determined attempt to utilize citizen labor. However, it was apparent that the farm operator faces serious difficulties in attempting to abide by the spirit of the law. Before the harvest season begins, the Mexican Nationals are contracted for and the required housing arrangements made. In a few short weeks crews are formed and trained. As the harvest season progresses, the number of citizen workers available for harvest work increases in part from the seasonal migration of workers. Although it is required that citizens, when available, be given preference, it is not feasible to fit one or several workers into a crew of Nationals. If a number of citizen workers are available and experienced, a crew of citizen workers could be substituted for a crew of Nationals. But this involves the substitution of an uncertain labor supply for one that is certain, for there is nothing to assure that the citizen crew will remain. It was, therefore, a common procedure to hire such citizen workers as were referred by the Farm Labor Office in addition to the Nationals. By this method the operator met the administrative requirements of the National program and at the same time maintained an assured labor supply.

Although we may conclude that the contribution of Mexican Nationals to total seasonal farm labor is minor, this role may easily fail to reflect the convenience and the increase in certainty of labor supply that comes about when Nationals are employed. This was stated by one farmer who said:

> Having Mexican Nationals in our camp as has been the custom for a great many past years and, as they are boarded on the premises, we know from day to day how many will be on hand which is absolutely necessary for the proper handling of our different varieties of plums and pears throughout the season which is from July 1 to October 1.

Another farm operator stated the value of the Nationals more explicitly:

> If it weren't for our being able to secure Mexican National workers, we would suffer substantial losses.

Most of those who had contracted Nationals found them to be desirable farm workers. In general, they performed the work assigned to them with a minimum of delay and complaint. Further, they can be repatriated to Mexico if they are undesirable or when the season is over. Generally, the farm operators reported the Nationals to be more acceptable than citizen workers, although there were a few who made critical remarks about the proportion of Nationals who were poor workers, such as the following:

> Nationals are not cheap. And there are a couple poor workers in each dozen.

Another farm operator stated:

> The trouble with Nationals is that you have got to take what they give you. And you always get some no good workers.

The following statement made by a farm operator is more typical:

> Like any other worker we find good and bad in their work and have to trade, but I find the Nationals willing and very steady.

The critical views regarding the quality of the National as a farm worker represent the exception rather than the rule. However, there was agreement with the assertion that Nationals were a costly labor supply and are contracted generally as a last resort to avoid risk of losing the crop.

In summary, as we review the experiences of the farm operators with respect to obtaining seasonal labor, it is apparent that there is great variation in expressions regarding the seriousness of the problem, but there was agreement, both by those who used Nationals and those who did not, that farm work opportunities are not attracting sufficient supplies of seasonal workers who have a continuing and serious interest in seasonal farm work. On the part of the farm operators, there was no interest expressed in any organized effort to face this situation except by the importation of foreign workers. No mention was made of

improving or modifying the circumstances of seasonal farm work. The general impression given was that there is little that can be done in this direction.

While obtaining workers has been a concern shared by many farmers, the most serious problems were faced by those who required stoop labor where family work units could not be employed. Yet, those farmers whose pattern of operations was such as to enable them to keep most of their workers employed fairly continuously had no difficulty. The question for the future is whether even continuous employment or the opportunity to employ the family will be sufficient to obtain a seasonal labor supply if there is a continuation of the present tendency for farm workers to move into other industries. For the present, opportunities for prolonged employment and for utilizing the whole family still assured a sufficient supply of labor, but as the evidence presented in the following pages suggests, these incentives may not continue to be sufficient.

In looking ahead, one additional factor should be noted. In Santa Clara County, as elsewhere, the production of fruits and vegetables is being mechanized. Some hand labor operations and some crops are being rapidly mechanized, while other crops and operations are being handled essentially as they were a decade or more ago. This raises a complex problem with respect to obtaining seasonal workers, particularly for those hand operations and crops that fall behind in the process of mechanization. Even though mechanization and technology may relieve the over-all dimensions of the seasonal hand and stoop labor problem, this will probably not bring much relief to the particular crops and operations that continue to need large quantities of hand labor. If the standards and conditions of employment associated with these tasks continue to diverge ever more widely from the generally prevailing occupational standards of other employment, it will likely prove increasingly difficult to man them even though the total demand for such labor may decline.

IV. INTENSITY OF UTILIZATION OF SEASONAL WORK FORCE

Excluding the incidental work of family members, the average amount of employment during the preceding year of all workers interviewed in all types of work was 174 days per year. Of this total, 77 days were in farm work and 97 days were in nonfarm work. Local residents who did farm work exclusively averaged 144 days as compared with 166 days by local residents who did both farm and nonfarm work. This average is composed of 52 days in agriculture and 114 days in nonagriculture. Residents of these same worker communities who did nonfarm work exclusively average 222 days.

Workers residing in Santa Clara County did not to any significant extent work outside the County. The diversity of their employment pattern was achieved within the County.

Seasonal workers who had moved their residences temporarily into the County and who were engaged in farm work when interviewed had confined themselves more exclusively to farm work than County residents. Workers in this category had averaged 43 days of farm employment in Santa Clara County. Those who had worked exclusively in agriculture during the preceding year had averaged 168 days. Comparing this with the 144-day average of residents who had worked exclusively in agriculture indicates that, by migrating, 24 additional days of work had been achieved.

Similarly, comparing the average employment of nonresidents working in combinations of agriculture and nonagriculture with residents in the same category indicates an even more substantial gain from migration, from 166 days to 228 days.

The comparative gains realized by this sample of workers from migration and from occupational diversification are summarized in the following:

Occupational category	Residents	Migrants
Workers in farm work only:		
Average days employment	144	168
Workers doing both farm and nonfarm work:		
Average days employment in agriculture	52	94
Average days employment in nonagriculture	114	134
Average total days	166	228
Workers doing nonfarm work exclusively:		
Average days employment	222	

This comparison clearly shows the severe limitation of earning capacity that imposes upon those who endeavor to work exclusively in agriculture and to avoid migration. Local residents who diversify the bases of their employment come out about the same as those who migrate but remain exclusively in agriculture.

By migrating and also diversifying occupations, workers were able to achieve about as many days as the local resident engaged exclusively in nonfarm work.

The poor results obtained by local residents depending entirely or primarily on agricultural work were mostly caused by the seasonal slump that hits Santa Clara agriculture heavily in the months of December through April. Those exclusively in farm work averaged only four to seven days of employment per month during those months of the slack season. While May through October were fairly active, only in August did exclusively farm workers, as an average, approach full employment.

Those workers whose employment pattern combined farm and nonfarm work did slightly better than those employed exclusively at farm work in every month of the year even though the seasonal distribution of their activity followed the same general lines. However, it is significant to note that the work experience of those who crossed industrial lines suggests that their main occupation was nonfarm and that farm work was supplemental.

The most casual employment was found in the instance of the day-haul workers. According to their reports, they had averaged 114 days of employment in the preceding year, 40 days of which had been in agriculture and 74 in nonagriculture. At the time of the interview, the workers in this category had averaged only 22 days of farm work in Santa Clara County.

The question whether local labor supplies are being fully and effectively utilized pertains most directly to local residents who are presumed to be potentially available the year around. In the tabulation that appears below, we summarize the comparative employment results obtained by various categories of resident workers, month by month. It is evident that there are wide and significant differences in the employment experiences of those who follow the different occupational lines. It is equally evident that there is the possibility and potential of attaining greater work output by local residents. In the relatively active months of the year, such as May, June, and July, their labor is seriously underutilized. Even in the peak of the agricultural season, those exclusively in farm work got less employment than did those in the other occupational categories. The number of days of employment per month for the several categories of workers was as follows:

Month	Those in farm work only	Those in combination of farm and nonfarm work			Those in nonfarm work only
		Farm	Nonfarm	Total	
December (1953)	7.0	3.6	4.5	8.1	15.4
January (1954)	5.0	2.0	4.2	6.2	15.1
February (1954)	3.9	1.7	3.9	5.6	14.0
March (1954)	5.0	1.4	6.7	8.1	17.5
April (1954)	7.1	2.6	9.2	11.8	18.3
May (1954)	16.5	8.0	9.4	17.4	19.1
June (1954)	17.7	10.3	8.5	18.8	19.2
July (1954)	18.8	6.7	14.2	20.9	22.4
August (1954)	21.7	7.1	15.8	22.9	22.5
September (1954)	17.8	3.7	15.4	19.1	21.8
October (1954)	12.7	2.5	12.4	14.9	20.6
November (1954)	11.2	2.4	9.3	11.7	16.2
Total	114.3	52.0	113.5	165.5	222.1

In obtaining the data on employment reported above, we required of our interviewees that they account for all of their time during the preceding year. Although recalling the employment of the preceding year was sometimes a considerable effort, we believe that, by working against the calendar, we were reasonably successful in obtaining accurate reports of the various employment situations for the majority. However, it is quite possible that the average days of employment as above reported does tend to overstate the situation. In respect to each employment situation reported, our manner of inquiry was to ask: How may days did you work on that job? Given an answer, we occasionally inquired further as to whether there had been any idle days during the period and whether there had been any short days. Frequently, the answer was yes, they had had some days of bad weather, or their field was not being picked that day, or they had sometimes quit at noon, etc. Hence, the average days of employment as above reported are likely to overstate the stiuation that actually prevailed. But the respondents were not sufficiently precise to justify systematic obtaining of this information or to attempt the making of appropriate corrections.

V. LABOR SUPPLY CHARACTERISTICS

Although Santa Clara County has a rich and important agricultural industry having much work that must be done, it is evident that few of those who have a hand, either as employers or workers, in planning for the accomplishment of this work approach it vigorously or positively. Few employers had precise or deliberate plans or anticipations as to where or how they would obtain the labor they would need; similarly, few of the workers who had done farm work in 1954 had been in it by virtue of deliberate plans or decisions. There was very little evidence of stability or certainty in the employment relationship on either side. More than half of the workers interviewed who had done some farm work within the preceding year stated that they had taken the farm job because they needed work and nothing else was available, a reason that may be regarded as essentially negative. As might be expected, positive reasons for entering into farm work were most frequently given by those who had done farm work exclusively. Even here, however, the most frequent positive reason given was that farm work offered the chance to utilize the labor of family members by working in the harvest as a family work group. This response was most characteristic of nonresidents who had come in to pick prunes and who generally were family work units. Other positive but less frequent reasons mentioned by those working exclusively in agriculture included considerations of pay (some of which were the opportunity of putting all family members to work at piece rates), free housing, and that they knew and liked the employer. Among workers that were primarily nonfarm but had done some farm work, the most frequent positive reasons given were: utilizing family workers, supplementing income, and outdoor, healthful vacations.

The same questions were asked as to reasons for taking nonfarm jobs. More of these responses were in the positive category, although here too some reported they took the only thing available to them. Rates of pay and steadiness of employment predominated on the positive side. But easier work, unemployment insurance coverage, vacations with pay, and seniority rights were also mentioned occasionally.

What are the means by which seasonal farm workers acquire their jobs? We asked this question in respect to present job if working in agriculture and with respect to next farm job for all who expected to do farm work in the future. The principal ways as reported were as follows:

	Per cent
Direct contact with farmer	52
Through another (fellow) worker	20
Day-haul bus driver	17
Farm Labor Office	8
Labor contractor	3
Total	100

It should be recognized that several factors lead to a probable overstatement of "direct contact" and an understatement of "Farm Labor Office." Some workers tend to build up a pattern that is followed over the years, a few returning to the same employer for several successive harvests. The original contract that led to the job may have been the Farm Labor Office, although the worker has come to regard "direct contact" as the source of his present job. In addition, there is a more direct manner in which the role of Farm Labor Office is understated. In some instances, the operators of the day-haul busses acquire their contacts through the Farm Labor Office. But since the drivers and operators of the busses carry on job-scouting activities of their own, it is impossible to acknowledge their respective roles. Moreover, workers referred by the Farm Labor Office often feel that they still must sell themselves to the farmer, thus obtaining the impression that they "really" obtain the job by direct contact.

Among those who had done farm work exclusively, the methods of obtaining jobs were substantially the same as above; direct contact with farmer or contract through other workers were still the major lines of reliance.

Of those who reported they expected to get a farm job in the future, we inquired how they expected to acquire the prospective job. Here again, "direct contact with farmer" maintained its predominant position, but the proportion reporting they would apply at the Farm Labor Office rose considerably--to one fifth. This increase was approximately offset by a parallel decrease in the proportion stating they would seek work through day-haul bus drivers. For many of the respondents, the next expected farm job was outside the Santa Clara County day-haul area, which would appear to explain the shift toward greater expected use of the Farm Labor Office.

The direction of all evidence obtained on this point is that the majority of workers, regardless of how continuously they are attached to agriculture, depend on direct application to obtain work. The supplementary methods used may

vary depending on the facilities available and upon local practices of farmers. Whether farmers in the particular crop and locality tend to rely on the Farm Labor Office, or on labor contractors, or on day-haul bus operators to supply their crews, or whether they request presently employed workers to recruit additional workers--these all affect how workers acquire their jobs. However, our conclusion is that, typically, the seasonal farm worker in the Santa Clara area is a self-recruited person.

This conclusion rests on the responses reported above as to how jobs were gotten and additionally on responses to a related question--how did the worker find out that the particular farm work was available? Responses to the latter question, in reference either to present or most recent farm job, classified as follows:

	Per cent
Formerly employed at ranch or knew operator	40
Farm Labor Office	24
Had done this type of work before	10
Heard from relatives or friends	10
Knew labor contractor	5
Asked at ranch	4
Was contacted by operator	3
Was contacted by labor contractor	2
Radio announcement	2
Total	100

Three significant points are indicated in these and preceding responses: (a) the Farm Labor Office has a more prominent role in disseminating information about farm work than in making placements; (b) channels that are mainly self-initiated by the worker account for more than two thirds of all information sources; and (c) the role of the farmer with respect to making known his labor needs and taking active steps--either directly or indirectly--to acquire workers is extremely passive.

There is little that assures or provides an incentive for efficient allocation of workers among available jobs within the area. At the approach of harvest season, the major interest of the individual farm operator--though his approach is passive--is to secure a labor supply to harvest his own crop on schedule. At this time, he is not in a position to be concerned about the general problem of efficient allocation of the workers, either in the interest of other farmers or in the interest of workers.

Even though workers usually take the initiative in bringing supply and demand together, the worker's knowledge of the employment opportunities in the area is limited. When they were questioned about alternate jobs that were available to them, those who were employed knew little more about the employment opportunities in the area than those who were unemployed. Among the workers who were interviewed during the season of peak labor demand, less than one in ten knew of specific other jobs that he could have had at the time of the interview, much less about the conditions of employment or earning possibilities of alternate jobs. The same lack of job knowledge is evident in the worker's information about his next prospective job. Few workers had definite jobs in mind that they planned to take after their current job was completed. The most commonly known facts about the next employment expected were the type of work and the general area in which the job would be sought.

There is little evidence that the worker has enough information to guide him in selecting among alternative employment opportunities so as to maximize the amount of his employment for the season. Even if he had considerable knowledge about particular alternate jobs, wage rate, location, housing, probable duration of the work, etc., he still would not be certain of selecting the best opportunity unless he also knew the numbers of workers to be employed, a factor which decisively affects the amount of employment to be obtained. If the method of payment is by the piece for work actually done, too many workers reduces the opportunity for attractive earnings. Even if the method of payment is by the hour, the employment of excessive workers reduces the number of hours per worker.

There is one situation where the procedure of personal contact may reduce the risk of finding work for the worker and reduce the risk of finding workers for the employer. That is where the workers return to the same grower year after year and where there is a clear understanding between employer and employees that the worker will return in the next year and that he will be hired when he returns. However, it was observed that, even in those situations where the groups returned several years and apparently were satisfied with the conditions, there was no formal agreement to return. In fact, some growers expressed the belief that any such agreement would have little meaning. A few went even further to say that they preferred not to keep the same workers for too many years because "they would begin to act like they owned the place."

Moreover, those workers who return to the same ranch year after year are in no better position than others to obtain knowledge of alternate employment opportunities in the area. Also, the farmer's risk of failing to obtain a labor

supply may be increased if, without firm and verified commitment, he depends on the return of previously employed workers. There is always the possibility that at least a part of the workers will not return. If there were more effective communication between the worker and the farm operator, this risk would be reduced, but there still remains the problem of efficient allocation of workers among the jobs in the area.

The same thing can be said about "direct contact" and relying on the "fellow workers" as a means of acquiring jobs. If the fellow worker is a crew leader, he may have the power to hire, but if the fellow worker is a neighbor or an acquaintance or the person with whom the respondent rides to his job, he is likely to be little better informed of the total employment picture than the one seeking work. Our interviews revealed no clique of "fellow workers" who had the unique characteristic of having a considerable and accurate stock of information about job opportunities in the Santa Clara County area.

As the day-haul operation was carried out in 1954, economic pressures operated against an efficient allocation of workers. The prevailing method was as follows: Previous to the harvest of a particular crop in Santa Clara County, the operators of the busses contacted farm operators regarding their harvest labor requirements. In 1954 few exclusive harvesting contracts were given; the farmer usually agreed to take all the workers that the bus operator could bring, and in turn the bus operator agreed to continue to bring workers until the end of the season. The driver collected a transportation charge from his worker-passengers, and in some instances, he also received from the farmer a payment per pound of the commodity his group of workers harvested.

As this general pattern worked out, the driver had an interest in bringing as many workers as he could. Since the workers were paid by the piece, the farmer had no objection to an oversupply, except insofar as the number exceeded the quantity that could be supervised adequately. The drivers did little screening of workers--taking all that they could persuade to come aboard the bus. Thus, some farm operators reported that a considerable portion of the crews furnished were not regular or desirable farm workers.

The workers, on the other hand, complained that often the fields were oversupplied with labor, reducing the earning possibilities of the particular job. A recourse the workers had in a situation where a driver took them to an overcrowded field was to take another bus the next day. But since this was the general pattern of operation, such a recourse was little more than a token protest.

After this situation had developed, the farm operator was not in position to change the pattern within the season. For once he had started an operation

under this arrangement, he was relcutant to risk reducing his labor supply by giving any one bus operator exclusive employment or contract rights. With the harvest already under way, when each farm operator is concerned with his own individual situation, each pursues his own strategy of reducing uncertainty. And he does this without much conception of over-all labor supplies or demands in the area and hence of the interacting consequences of one employer's actions upon others.

Thus, there was a general feeling of dissatisfaction on both sides with the day-haul operation as it was in 1954. Nevertheless, there was at least one exception to this. One of the local companies operating bean viners secured their crew by giving an exclusive contract to the operator of a day-haul bus. The operator of the viners expressed complete satisfaction with the quality of men provided and, on the other hand, no complaint was voiced by the men who were paid by the hour in this instance.

In addition to the above-noted imperfections of the labor market, serious barriers to increased employment of domestic labor in agriculture lie in the relative attractiveness of agricultural employment, that is, in the competitive position of agriculture in bidding for labor services. In the broad sense, insofar as labor is free to choose among the various occupations, agriculture in general competes with nonagriculture for the services of labor. Further, within agriculture, the various employers and types of farm work compete for the services of labor.

It has already been pointed out that workers indicated they know very little about other jobs than the ones they have at the time. Thus, it appears that typically job acceptance is not a matter of making a choice from among available alternatives but rather taking what workers believe can be had. Nevertheless, among the farm workers interviewed, there were some who took their current farm jobs for positive reasons. Of all workers interviewed, 17 per cent preferred farm work, 10 per cent had no preference, and 73 per cent expressed a preference for nonfarm work. Even if we restrict our analysis to the group that had the largest proportion of positive reasons for taking farm work--families in labor camps or rural locations and actively in farm work at the time of interview--we find that a minority prefer farm work. Of the family heads in this group, 27 per cent preferred farm work, 49 per cent preferred nonfarm work, and 24 per cent had no preference.

As one would expect, the preference for nonfarm work was most prominent among the group which came from the Bay Area and which was largely unemployed

urban workers. Among this group, "only work available" was the major reason for taking the current farm job; 86 per cent preferred nonfarm work; 6 per cent preferred farm work; and 8 per cent had no preference.

Work preferences may not have much significance unless they are actually being realized or are potentially realizable. Accordingly, we inquired further into work expectations and long-range plans. We found that many of those who would prefer nonfarm work do not really expect to obtain it. Of the large proportion who preferred nonfarm work, only five out of seven expected they would be able to obtain it. Consequently, the number expecting they would be in farm work in the future was almost double the number stating they preferred it. Another comparison of interest is that, whereas none stated a preference for a combination of farm and nonfarm work, 8 per cent of the total expected that was what they would be doing. Ten per cent had neither clear preferences nor expectations.

The above comparison of preferences and expectations, based upon all workers interviewed, portrays a pattern of attitudes and beliefs shared to some extent by all segments. Preference for nonfarm work ran highest in the day-haul workers from the metropolitan Bay Area. While the majority of this group thought they would get back into nonfarm work, a wide margin of uncertainty was reflected by the 30 per cent who had no clear expectation as to what they would be doing. Only 11 per cent of this group expected to continue in farm work.

Among Santa Clara County resident seasonal workers, 84 per cent stated they preferred nonfarm work, 50 per cent had done farm work within the past year, and 30 per cent expected they would be doing some farm work in the future.

Nonresidents who had moved temporarily into the County to obtain farm work had the greatest preference for and expectation of remaining in agriculture. But even among this group, 50 per cent stated a preference for nonfarm work, and 22 per cent said they expected to make the shift out of agriculture.

In a further effort to determine the extent of turnover and occupational mobility of seasonal farm laborers in Santa Clara County, and hence of prospective availability for farm work in the future, we pursued some additional lines of inquiry. We found that, of those who were nonresidents in the County (including migrants and day-haul workers) and who had been employed at farm work in the County within the current year (135 of the total sample of 251), only two fifths had done agricultural work in the County prior to the current year. When asked whether they would be available for farm work in Santa Clara County

next year (1955), only one fourth of these 135 workers responded affirmatively. When classified by previous experience, the responses were as follows:

	Of those who had been in Santa Clara County before	Of those who had not been in Santa Clara County before
	(per cent)	
Will be available in 1955	54	6
Will not be available in 1955	15	34
Availability uncertain	31	60
Total	100	100

These negative responses were heavily concentrated in the day-haul group. When the day-haulers are excluded, it was still true that the majority of nonresidents who were in the County for temporary farm work did not expect to be back next year--only 45 per cent responded affirmatively.

Only among local residents who had worked exclusively in agriculture (23 families) was full availability for local agricultural work next year reported. None of the locals who had done nonfarm work exclusively expected they would be available for farm work. Among local families with a mixed farm and nonfarm work record, only about half of the family heads expected they would be available for farm work, although they reported that all other working members of their families would continue to be available.

The evidence of these various responses suggests this observation: For the metropolitan day-haul group, availability for Santa Clara agriculture is determined almost entirely by whether metropolitan nonfarm employment is brisk or slack; for other nonresidents, some of whom migrate from considerable distances, availability is partly determined by opportunities elsewhere in both agriculture and nonagriculture; for the majority of local residents, availability is mainly influenced by the level of local nonfarm employment and the individual opportunities for occupation change.

Thus, the forces of occupational choice and opportunity, as they influence supply of workers available to agriculture, can most clearly be observed among local residents who are not in agriculture or are occupationally marginal to agriculture. We have already noted that only those workers who had been exclusively in agriculture in the preceding year unanimously expected they would be available for agriculture in Santa Clara County in the following year. Of those whose work had been a combination of farm and nonfarm, only one half said they

expected to be available, and of those who had been in nonfarm work, none expected to be available for farm work.

Examination of the ages of these respective groups and their expectations reveals that age is an influential factor. To begin with, ages are significant in respect to whether the individual is presently doing agricultural work or not. As the following comparison shows, those exclusively in agricultural work were predominantly in the older age categories whereas those partly and exclusively in nonfarm work were predominantly young people.

Age category	Those in farm work only	Those in combination of farm and nonfarm work	Those in nonfarm work only
		(per cent)	
20-39	27	58	71
40-60	56	38	27
Over 60 and under 20	17	4	2
Total	100	100	100

Moreover, those currently in the farm-nonfarm combination who had stated they would not be available for farm work in the future or were uncertain tended to be youthful in comparison to those who stated they expected to be available.

These age data support our general observations in respect to occupational preferences. It is mainly the older worker who has done little or nothing else in his lifetime who can be counted on to remain an agricultural laborer. Younger workers of the same ethnic group and community background generally hope to locate in nonfarm occupations, and, under circumstances as favorable as those presently prevailing, they are successful in considerable measure in doing so.

A further note should be added with respect to the older nonresident family heads who were in the County temporarily, mainly to harvest prunes. Many of these commented to the effect that whether they came back in the following years would depend primarily on whether their family workers were still interested and willing to come. As we noted previously, the preference for agricultural work on the part of many of these depended on the opportunity to get their family workers into employment. As the children of these families mature and follow the trend of seeking nonfarm work, thereby dissociating themselves from the family unit, it may be expected that family units heretofore available will be broken up and that in consequence the number will diminish.

VI. IS A SUPPLEMENTAL LABOR FORCE OF TEMPORARILY ADMITTED ALIENS THE BEST LONG-RANGE SOLUTION TO THE SEASONAL FARM LABOR PROBLEM?

The evidence obtained with respect to the seasonal farm labor situation in Santa Clara County in 1954 leads us to the conclusion that, with some additional arrangements to use citizen labor more effectively, the agricultural work could have been done without the Mexican Nationals. But we hasten to add that, at the commencement of the season, when the prospective situation had to be appraised and plans had to be made, there was no reliable evidence that sufficient citizens could be obtained. Basically, this is because the agriculture of the area depends on many persons and groups who are not certain to be available for farm work. Uncertainty of the labor supply in prospect, and not the supply situation that ultimately and actually develops, is therefore the more relevant consideration. Thus, the need for Mexican Nationals was not foremostly a need of labor as such, in physical terms, but the need of some way to reduce uncertainties in the labor supply.

From the viewpoint of the individual farm operator, it may seem unrealistic to draw a distinction between uncertainty of labor supply and labor shortage. In the perspective of the individual operator, if the indications of the labor supply in prospect are not sufficient to give assurance that his labor needs will be met, then there is a labor shortage. This in effect means that in addition to the minimum number of people required to do the work, there must be a margin sufficient to cover inefficiency in use as well as insurance against uncertainty.

Even though it appears that from one source or another enough citizen workers were available, there was no way under prevailing circumstances whereby this result could have been assured in advance. Obtaining Mexican Nationals is therefore a way of reducing uncertainty and introducing some elements of a guarantee. The immediate benefit of having the Mexican Nationals goes mainly to those farm employers who contract them and pay the expense of procurement. But their being in the area also helps to reduce labor supply tensions of noncontracting employers.

There is no doubt of the uncertainty of seasonal labor supply that faces a typical farm operator. Prior to the active season, he usually has no way of knowing for sure whether previously employed workers will return, whether new workers will show up, or if workers as needed can be obtained by registering his needs at the Farm Labor Office. Moreover, from day to day within the season,

there is always the uncertainty of whether the workers currently employed will remain on the job.

However, the uncertainty of the employer is no more than the reciprocal of the uncertainty of the worker. Again, speaking in terms of typical rather than exceptional instances, the unreliability of workers to return or to remain on the job is a reflection of the unreliability of the job itself. To begin with, weather and other influences on growing conditions make it impossible to know very far in advance when the harvest season will begin and how long it will last. So it would be difficult to estimate the job accurately even if the uncertainties were only those imposed by nature. Additionally, further uncertainties are introduced by both employer and worker. Being unsure of his labor supply, the employer is impelled to take on people as they come, In consequence, workers who return in expectation of re-employment to farms where they have been previously sometimes find that an ample crew has already been hired. Or in the anxiety of not having sufficient workers, the farm employer may take on many more workers than are actually required, thus diminishing the possible earning capacity per worker. Such occurrences as these impair or destroy whatever basis there might have been for developing attitudes of responsibility and reliability in the employment relationship.

Yet, here again, the coin has two sides. As our evidence shows, most citizen workers approach seasonal farm work negatively and without enthusiasm. Since for most farm workers agriculture is not a deliberate occupational choice to which they are deeply committed, almost any alternative is attractive. Alternatives sufficient to induce the workers away may develop in numerous nonfarm employments, or they may be nothing more than reports of better earning prospects in some other crop or some other farm or locality. As a result of these attitudes on the part of the worker, the individual employer who would do everything reasonable to stabilize his employment relationship is confronted with considerable hazard of failure. Hence, he is induced to take actions which seem to relieve immediate uncertainty and current pressures without much regard for the effects of these actions upon the future or upon the labor situation of other farm employers.

Thus, the obtaining of a labor supply that is basic to agricultural production and the obtaining of employment that is basic to earning a livelihood must both occur in an environment that lacks stability of relationship and in which uncertainty weighs heavily upon all parties concerned.

Obtaining Mexican Nationals is a way of reducing uncertainty of labor supply that offers several immediate advantages. To begin with, the date of arrival or delivery may be specified, although the employer may also make later adjustments through the contracting association and the governmental machinery that obtains and distributes contracted Nationals to various parts of the United States. Once here, the contract National is restricted to agricultural employment as directed by the contracting employer and the association. Should the National fail to perform satisfactorily the work assigned to him, he may be deported; also, should the National desert his farm employment contract, his status in the United States becomes illegal and he is deportable upon apprehension. The restriction of alternatives and the probability of being deported are powerful incentives to adaptability and compliancy.

Although the intergovernmental agreement governing the importation of Mexican Nationals involves a minimum term of contract and a minimum guarantee of employment, these have been found not to be burdensome upon the contracting employers. The reason for this is that the obligations of the contract may be met through the employers' association rather than by each individual employer-member. Thus, an employer who does not require Nationals throughout the minimum term of contract or who is unable to supply enough work to meet the minimum guarantee within the contract period may, by reassignment through the association, be individually relieved of satisfying these obligations. The obligations are then satisfied by the association membership at large.

Finally, another apparent and immediate advantage, particularly for the employer who feels the need or obligation of supplying housing for his workers (whether they be Nationals or not), is that the National is required to come without family, thus simplifying the housing requirement. This is not in all instances a clear advantage, for housing that meets specified standards is required prior to contracting. In consequence, outlays of considerable magnitude may be needed to meet the required standards. Once constructed, however, single-man housing is definitely cheaper per worker than is family housing.

In terms of direct and immediate costs, farm employers who have contracted Mexican Nationals report this labor to be more expensive than local citizens. In addition to wages approximately equal to what would have to be paid citizens, employers contracting Nationals must meet the various requirements of the intergovernmental compact--housing, transportation, and insurance--and must in addition support the overhead cost of the contracting association. While it appears

entirely reasonable that the direct and immediate labor cost comparison should be adverse to the National, it does not follow that, because Nationals are the more expensive, citizens would always be preferred if available. As we stated above, what the contracting employers pay for through the alien labor program is essentially a reduction of uncertainty of labor supply. Therefore, the relevant question is: Are there alternative ways of obtaining equal or greater reductions of labor supply uncertainty to which the Mexican National program might be compared? In the immediate and short-run sense, the answer is evidently in the negative. Although there are doubtless other ways of reducing uncertainty of labor supply, it is difficult to be sure that other approaches would be either lower in cost or equally productive in results.

For example, many people have suggested that the association-contracting procedure that has been developed for contracting and managing the employment of aliens could be adopted and used for citizen labor. But opinions to the contrary are equally strong and not less numerous. The plain fact of the matter is there is no real evidence either way because the association-contracting system has never really been tried with citizen labor.13/

Nevertheless, certain obvious differences in citizen as against alien labor cast doubts on the prospects. Most citizen workers have families and hence lack the ready mobility and the simplified housing requirements of the single man. Moreover, because of the provisions negotiated in the intergovernmental agreement and the conditions for temporary admission under immigration law, restrictions upon job choices can be imposed upon the National that cannot be imposed upon the citizen. Similarly, the ultimate disciplinary measure--deportation--that faces the National cannot apply to the citizen. And ultimately, there is unquestionably a difference in attitude toward seasonal farm work. In relation to other opportunities available to him within his own country, the National regards the opportunity to work in the United States as positive and favorable. In contrast, as the evidence in this study indicates, a substantial portion of

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13/ With the exception of Puerto Ricans on the Atlantic Coast who are contracted in a manner similar to Mexican Nationals but who also come to the mainland temporarily and as single men. There are isolated instances of food processing companies that are also engaged in farming that have developed contractual relations with farm laborers that resemble the Mexican National contractual relation. See Report of the President's Commission on Migratory Labor (Washington: Govt. Print. Off., 1951), p. 113.

citizen labor has only a passive and negative regard for seasonal farm work, holding it as a last resort if nothing else is to be had. These several significant differences between Nationals and citizens do not prove that the association-contracting procedure is not feasible for citizens but only suggest that alterations and adaptations need be made before this procedure could be given a fair trial. It seems reasonable to believe that a simplified organizational structure and hiring procedure could be designed that would achieve considerable stability and certainty in the employment of citizen workers yet avoid placing extensive or rigid obligations on either employer or worker. Perhaps a minimum form for such an organization procedure would be an association or cooperative of employers whose members would designate the association as the primary employing agent. The association would then hire workers on the basis of the pooled labor requirements of its total membership and assign the workers to the individual farms as needed. Thus, through the association approach, greater stability and continuity of employment could be achieved than is possible by the individual farmer with a consequent reduction of uncertainty on both sides.

Another proposal for expanded and systematic employment of citizen labor involves well-made and administered programs to arrange for an effective use of high school students from towns and cities. But in terms of presently prevailing farm employment conditions, there are numerous obstacles to be removed before this could be a reliable source of labor in California, although it is a main reliance in many parts of the United States.

As a direct and short-run solution to labor supply uncertainty, the contract National program has already demonstrated its merits. Alternatives that require extensive attention and arranging have never received equal investments of time, effort, or imagination by farm employers and by officials of government agencies concerned with farm labor supply problems. Thus, proposed alternatives are possibilities and prospects that are unsupported with evidence of trial and experience. The merits of possible alternatives cannot therefore be appraised other than speculatively.

It is important nevertheless to distinguish between short-run measures as against long-run solutions. The rationale of the Mexican National labor program, initially and through its postwar years, has been that it was a temporary emergency expedient. In fact, the legality of the importation program has rested on the 9th Proviso to Section 3 of the Immigration Law of 1917, which, at the discretion of the Attorney General, allows temporary admission of otherwise inadmissible aliens.

However, the remedy to farm labor shortage that was initially conceived as a temporary emergency measure has continued in effect since 1942--after 1947 and until 1951 on a diminishing scale but from 1951-1955 on an increasing scale. In California, and nationally as well, the magnitude of recent importations is much larger than during the wartime emergency. Nationally, Mexican contract workers were less than 2 per cent of all hired farm laborers at the wartime peak; in 1954, this proportion had risen to 6 per cent. As we have already reported herein, contracted Mexicans were only about 5 per cent of the hired farm work force in Santa Clara County and were used by less than 5 per cent of the County's farm employers. These proportions are far from dominant. However, it is not so much in its present though growing proportions but rather in its continued availability that the significance of the program lies. The employers who contract Mexican Nationals tend, as we have seen in this study, to become quite inflexibly dependent upon them. Moreover, and of no less importance, many employers that are not now users and may not expect soon to become users of Mexican Nationals, nevertheless tend toward a pattern of labor procurement and use that assumes Mexicans may be obtained when and if needed. Thus, by reason both of its direct and indirect impacts, what was conceived as a temporary emergency measure is well on the way to becoming permanent. The question therefore arises, and it should be a question of concern to farm employers individually and generally, whether the solution that seemed a strategic temporary measure is also the most desirable long-run solution.

Basically, a labor supply solution in terms of importing a supplementary corps of Mexican Nationals is only as permanent as is the defensibility of continued temporary admissions under the 9th Proviso and the expectation of continued concurrence by the Republic of Mexico. Reversals in either of these could terminate it. Concurrence and participation by Mexico depends largely upon whether that nation has surplus labor. As the economy of Mexico expands and develops, its employers and government authorities may come to feel that sharing its labor supply with United States farm employers may not be desirable. Within the United States, justifying temporary admissions of Mexican Nationals under waiver of immigration may not prove insurmountable so long as this nation is fortunate enough to have no significant burden of unemployment. But should a burdensome magnitude of unemployment occur, it seems reasonable to expect that sufficient political forces would rapidly be activated to curtail the National program substantially, if not to terminate it completely.

Furthermore, it seems reasonable to believe this would be the consequence of serious unemployment even if the volume of unemployed should fail to solve the labor supply problems of farm employers. And, reasoning from the evidence obtained in the present study and from past experience, there is strong basis for the conclusion that an abundance of unemployed may not bring a satisfactory solution of the seasonal labor supply problem of farm employers. In other words, the hypothesis leading to the above conclusion is that a lapse from the sustained high level of employment of 1951-1955 which may be sufficient to evoke termination of the Mexican National program may nevertheless fail to augment the farm labor supply or relieve its uncertainty. The implication of such a hypothesis is that, under conditions now prevailing and in prospect, seasonal agricultural labor supply is likely to be about equally uncertain whether the economic climate is one of full employment or substantial unemployment. Admittedly, this proposition is not in harmony with past experience, particularly that of the 1930s; consequently, it requires explanation.

Two lines of development bear upon it. One of these is that farm employment as an immediate and close alternative to unemployment relief is not likely in the future again to assume the same juxtaposition as in the past. In prior episodes of unemployment, there were no comprehensive unemployment insurance and social security programs; nor was there so broadly accepted a philosophy of responsibility for unemployed persons. Furthermore, organized labor had far less political power than at present. Maintaining a minimally disputed relationship between unemployment relief and farm work was difficult even in the 1930s. In the future, with new forces and influences in the picture, it may reasonably be expected this issue will be far more difficult should the misfortune of burdensome unemployment fall upon the nation again.

A second consideration bearing on the above hypothesis is that, while agricultural wages and employment conditions have remained relatively stationary at "prevailing levels" during the postwar period, those of nonagriculture have progressively improved. In consequence, the differential of attractiveness between farm and nonfarm work has widened in several important respects. This will be discussed in succeeding paragraphs. Meanwhile, the relevant point to be noted in reference to the above hypothesis is that obstacles to easy transition from nonfarm to farm work are mounting; and this in turn increases the uncertainty of labor supply from citizen sources.

In large part, the widening gap between the standards and conditions of farm as against nonfarm employment is a by-product of the use of Mexican Nationals as a temporary solution of farm labor scarcity. Housing is one feature in which this effect is readily apparent. As noted above, the housing appropriate to the Mexican National is the single-man bunkhouse or dormitory, usually also with a central dining hall. Where Nationals have been used continuously, this has been the direction of major construction and renovation of labor housing. These single-man facilities are obviously not appropriate for families. So an obstacle will be encountered here should there be occasion to attempt using citizen laborers, typically with families, as successors to Mexican Nationals.

Another related matter is attitudes within worker communities. Our interviews suggested that in part the negative and passive attitudes of citizens toward seasonal farm employment were attributable to the growing conception and belief that this was "Mexican work" and therefore to be shunned if at all possible.

Still another influence that tends to widen the breach between farm and nonfarm employment is that farm employers' organizational machinery--principally the contracting associations--created to administer the temporary solution tends to become entrenched and to build its own need or motivation to survive. For the personnel hired by these contracting associations, continuation of their positions depends on labor shortage and on the continued unreliability of citizen labor. From the perspective that these association personnel inevitably hold by reason of their employment, foreign labor occupies a premium position and does so consistently whether it is a matter of advising an individual farmer or a national or state agency administrator, or testifying before a committee of Congress. Hence, for obvious reasons, the prolongation of a program justified initially as temporary tends toward perpetuation of itself rather than toward elimination of basic causes.

Also, it must be noted that agriculture has not improved its competitive position for the procurement of labor supply in terms of regularity of employment offered. Again, this is evidently in part a consequence of relying upon the Mexican Nationals as a temporary solution. Almost two decades ago, in 1937, the principal farm organizations of California joined in the promulgation of a code of farm labor policies. The following was among these policies:

> Agriculture recognizes the need for continuous farm labor employment and recommends that practices to attain this result immediately be instituted by individual farmers and that programs of study be undertaken by farmers and official agencies.14/

It is quite possible that many individual farmers have endeavored toward the fulfillment of this policy objective. But it cannot be said that, in a comprehensive and purposeful manner, there have been programs of study by farmers and official agencies in furtherance of the objective. On the contrary, the functioning of official agencies concerned with farm labor in response to demands made upon them by farm employers has been overwhelmingly directed to assembling and distributing labor supply sufficient to meet short-term needs as they exist. The availability of machinery for doing this in terms of citizen labor supply, supplemented by Mexican Nationals as needed, has perpetuated and probably has encouraged expansion in crop specialization and consequently in short-term seasonal needs. We encountered examples of how this works in Santa Clara County. Certain employers reported they had been successfully operating without the use of Mexican Nationals, and they attributed this in large part to their fairly continuous employment. But the same employers also reported their intent of reducing the diversity of crops, adding further that this would mean the need to use Nationals. The logically implied question is this: Had there not been prospect of obtaining Nationals, would such operators not have considered their position with respect to obtaining labor before making the decision to specialize and thereby to reduce the continuity of their employment?

In the wage field, the competitive disadvantage of agriculture has also been deepening. Without engaging the question whether this is in consequence of the Mexican National program or not, the comparative statistics relating to the matter indicate as follows:

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14/ "Farm Labor policies unanimously adopted by the agricultural conference representatives of the following organizations: California State Chamber of Commerce--Agriculture Department, Agricultural Council of California, California Farm Bureau Federation, Associated Farmers of California, Inc., Farmers Union--California Division." Two-page mimeographed statement dated May, 1937, on file in Giannini Foundation Library.

Year	Farm wage[15]	Nonfarm wage[16]	Wage difference	Ratio of farm to nonfarm
	(dollars per hour)			(per cent)
1947	0.907	1.42	.51	63.9
1948	0.952	1.53	.58	62.2
1949	0.885	1.60	.71	55.3
1950	0.884	1.65	.77	53.6
1951	0.960	1.77	.81	54.2
1952	1.016	1.87	.85	54.3
1953	1.039	1.97	.93	52.7
1954	1.032	2.03	1.00	50.8

Whether the importation of Mexican Nationals to relieve scarcity and uncertainty of seasonal farm labor has long-run advantages parallel to its apparent short-run advantages should be decided in terms of such considerations as the several that were raised above. These considerations, as interpreted by the present authors, suggest there are hazards in agriculture becoming increasingly and more permanently dependent on a temporarily admitted alien labor supply. Possibly others will not feel that such potential hazards exist or, if so, that they are important.

As we reported in the beginning of this section, our findings indicate that, in such a situation as prevailed in Santa Clara County in 1954, there was a sufficient margin of unutilized citizen labor resource to justify the conclusion that the work would have been done, if necessary, without the Mexican Nationals. In an ultimate sense, it might therefore be said that citizen labor was displaced by National labor. But as we further noted, there was no way of being certain, in advance, that a sufficient supply of labor would be available. Consequently, the main purpose served by the National program was to reduce uncertainty of labor supply.

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15/ Annual average farm wage rates. California--composite rate per hour. United States Agricultural Marketing Service, Farm Labor (Washington: Govt. Print. Off.), monthly issues, 1947-1954.

16/ Average hourly earnings of production and related workers (including full and part time, including shipping, maintenance, and warehouse workers, including overtime and night-shift work, etc.) in manufacturing industries, California, 1947-1954. California State Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Labor Statistics and Research, Handbook of California Labor Statistics, 1953-54 (Sacramento, California: State Print. Off.).

Hence, the question of long-run advantage should be put in these terms: In the interests of all parties concerned, should the systematizing of employment relationships that will promote certainty of labor supply be done with Mexican Nationals (as it has been) **or** with citizen labor (as it has not been)?

On the workers' side, the generally prevailing attitude toward farm work that ranges from passive to vigorously negative is a substantial obstacle to the development of systematic and reliable employment relationships. Reciprocally, on the employers' side, the passive attitude toward making seasonal farm labor attractive to citizen workers is no less an obstacle. **There is nothing** to be gained from criticizing citizen laborers for disinterest or unreliability, for their attitudes and behavior are no more than a reflection of the employment standards that are offered. Similarly, criticism of farm employers for their individual actions is pointless, for each is operating within an established pattern of labor use and employment management that is complex in origin and quite beyond the power of any one individual to change substantially.

However, if any changes in direction are to occur, it would appear that the initiative needs to be taken by farm employers. Moreover, if effective action is to be taken against the basic root of the seasonal farm labor supply problem, employer initiative should be based on a well-considered and deliberate decision that a reversal of trend is desirable. Even though there are miscellaneous actions that might be taken to increase the orderliness with which labor requirements and the citizen supply are brought together, such actions will have limited effect so long as the planning and developing of systematic employment relationships is confined almost entirely to Nationals.

There appear to be two broad policy alternatives that might be followed:

(a) Continuing the course of the recent past in which farm employers are generally passive toward the recruitment and use of citizen labor, with the expectation of being able continuously to obtain sufficient Nationals to meet such supplemental needs as occur.

(b) A course of action that plans deliberately toward positive recruitment and use of citizen labor through the development of reliable employment relationships and improved job standards that will be attractive to citizen labor with the ultimate aim of building and substituting dependability of citizen labor for dependence on temporarily admitted aliens.

APPENDIX TABLES

TABLE 1

Distribution of Survey Sample by Primary Occupational Category and Place of Residence

Place of residence	Occupational category				
	Farm only	Farm primarily	Nonfarm primarily	Nonfarm only	Total
	number of workers				
Santa Clara County					
Rural	8	3	2	0	13
Urban	23	6	22	52	103
Subtotal	31	9	24	52	116
California migrants					
Central Coast	3	1	1	0	5
Imperial Valley	5	1	0	0	6
San Joaquin Valley	14	1	1	0	16
South Coast	3	3	9	0	15
Subtotal	25	6	11	0	42
United States migrant					
Arizona	8	1	3	0	12
New Mexico	2	0	1	0	3
Texas	5	5	3	0	13
Subtotal	15	6	7	0	28
Other migrants	2	0	0	0	2
Day haul, San Francisco Bay Area, mainly Oakland	25	8	30	0	63
Subtotal	25	8	30	0	63
Total	96	31	72	52	251
	per cent of workers				
Santa Clara County					
Rural	3.2	1.2	0.7	0.0	5.1
Urban	9.1	2.4	8.8	20.8	41.1
Subtotal	12.3	3.6	9.5	20.8	46.2
California migrants					
Central Coast	1.2	0.4	0.4	0.0	2.0
Imperial Valley	2.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	2.4
San Joaquin Valley	5.6	0.4	0.4	0.0	6.4
South Coast	1.2	1.2	3.6	0.0	6.0
Subtotal	10.0	2.4	4.4	0.0	16.8
United States migrant					
Arizona	3.2	0.4	1.2	0.0	4.8
New Mexico	0.7	0.0	0.4	0.0	1.1
Texas	2.0	2.0	1.2	0.0	5.2
Subtotal	5.9	2.4	2.8	0.0	11.1
Other migrants	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.7
Day haul, San Francisco Bay Area, mainly Oakland	10.0	3.2	12.0	0.0	25.2
Subtotal	10.0	3.2	12.0	0.0	25.2
Total	38.2	12.3	28.7	20.8	100.0

TABLE 2

Estimated Employment of Hired Farm Labor
Santa Clara County, California, 1954

Week ending	Hired year around	Hired temporary		Estimated unemployment	Total employment
		Local	Nonlocal		
January 2	1,350	2,000	125	1,450	3,475
January 9	1,350	2,100	150	1,450	
January 16	1,350	2,225	150	1,400	3,725
January 23	1,350	2,225	150	1,400	
January 30	1,350	2,250	100	1,400	3,700
February 6	1,300	2,100	100	1,350	
February 13	1,200	2,000	100	1,300	3,300
February 20	1,200	1,900	100	1,300	
February 27	1,200	1,750	100	1,200	3,050
March 6	1,200	1,750	100	1,250	
March 13	1,200	1,400	100	1,250	2,700
March 20	1,200	1,475	100	1,200	
March 27	1,200	1,225	100	1,200	2,525
April 3	1,200	1,225	100	1,200	
April 10	1,200	1,225	100	1,100	2,525
April 17	1,200	1,200	100	1,050	
April 24	1,200	1,200	100	1,000	2,500
May 1	1,250	1,900	200	800	
May 8	1,300	2,000	850	750	4,150
May 15	1,300	2,880	1,000	500	
May 22	1,350	3,500	1,400	400	6,250
May 29	1,350	4,300	2,500	450	
June 5	1,350	5,250	3,500	500	10,100
June 12	1,450	5,850	4,100	600	
June 19	1,450	5,000	3,450	750	9,900
June 26	1,400	3,000	2,250	1,000	
July 3	1,600	4,500	2,800	400	9,300
July 10	1,600	5,250	5,000	650	
July 17	1,600	7,000	6,000	900	14,600
July 24	1,600	5,500	4,400	1,200	
July 31	1,600	4,400	4,000	600	10,000
August 7	1,650	5,400	5,000	500	
August 14	1,650	6,000	5,850	350	13,850
August 21	1,700	7,000	9,750	300	
August 28	1,700	12,000	10,150	300	23,850
September 4	1,700	12,000	10,250	300	23,950
September 11	1,700	10,550	10,000	300	22,250
September 18	1,700	6,850	5,000	300	
September 25	1,700	4,110	3,500	350	9,310
October 2	1,700	2,890	1,500	400	
October 9	1,700	2,900	1,910	450	6,510
October 16	1,700	2,610	1,600	500	
October 23	1,700	3,160	1,600	450	6,460
October 30	1,700	2,555	1,400	550	
November 6	1,700	2,000	800	650	4,500
November 13	1,650	1,000	745	700	
November 20	1,650	1,000	745	750	4,145
November 27	1,650	1,070	750	750	
December 4	1,650	1,350	700	700	3,700
December 11	1,650	1,350	700	700	
December 18	1,650	1,355	700	650	3,705
December 25	1,650	1,355	680	650	3,685

Source: Farm Placement Service, Santa Clara County.

TABLE 5

Long-Range Plans, Preferences, and Availability for Farm Work in Santa Clara County in 1955, Family Heads Only

Place of residence and occupational category	Number of family heads	Long-run plans and expectations				Preferences			Availability for farm work in Santa Clara County in 1955		
		Farm work	Nonfarm work	Combination	Do not know	Farm work	Nonfarm work	Do not know	Yes	No	Do not know
Rural:											
Santa Clara residents											
Farm only	8	8	0	0	0	4	0	4	8	0	0
Primarily farm	3	1	1	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	2
Primarily nonfarm	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0
Total	13	9	3	0	1	4	5	4	9	2	2
California residents											
Farm only	25	23	1	0	1	9	7	9	15	4	6
Primarily farm	6	1	1	4	0	4	2	0	4	1	1
Primarily nonfarm	11	0	6	5	0	0	11	0	4	3	4
Total	42	24	8	9	1	13	20	9	23	8	11
United States migrants											
Farm only	15	9	3	1	2	2	8	5	5	5	5
Primarily farm	6	3	1	2	0	3	2	1	2	0	4
Primarily nonfarm	7	0	4	3	0	0	5	2	2	5	0
Total	28	12	8	6	2	5	15	8	9	10	9
Other migrants											
Primarily farm	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Total	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Total rural	85	47	19	15	4	23	41	21	41	20	24
Day haul:											
Farm only	25	6	9	0	10	3	19	3	1	5	19
Primarily farm	8	0	6	0	2	1	7	0	0	2	6
Primarily nonfarm	30	1	22	0	7	0	28	2	0	11	19
Total	63	7	37	0	19	4	54	5	1	18	44
Urban:											
Farm only	23	21	2	0	0	12	11	0	23	0	0
Primarily farm	6	1	4	0	1	0	6	0	2	4	0
Primarily nonfarm	22	2	15	5	0	3	19	0	12	6	4
Nonfarm only	52	0	52	0	0	1	51	0	0	43	9
Total	103	24	73	5	1	16	87	0	37	53	13
All	251	78	129	20	24	43	182	26	79	91	81
Per cent	100.0	31.1	51.4	8.0	9.5	17.1	72.5	10.4	31.4	36.3	32.3

TABLE 6

Age Distributions of Workers in Sample, Classified by Occupational Categories

Age groups in years	Farm only	Farm primarily	Nonfarm primarily	Nonfarm only
	per cent			
10-19	7.4	0.0	1.4	0.0
20-29	11.7	35.5	22.2	40.4
30-39	14.9	22.6	34.7	30.8
40-49	29.8	29.0	25.0	17.3
50-59	26.6	9.7	13.9	9.6
60-69	9.6	3.2	2.8	1.9
All ages	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0