

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY
DIVISION OF LABOR

Percy A. Miller, Jr., Commissioner

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SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT

BUREAU OF MIGRANT LABOR

Fiscal Year - July 1, 1949 to June 30, 1950
with Five-year Review of Migrant Program

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By John G. Sholl, Supervisor

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Alfred E. Driscoll
Governor

Percy A. Miller, Jr.
Commissioner
Department of Labor and Industry

M I G R A N T L A B O R B O A R D

Jay C. Garrison, Elmer,
Salem County Freeholder
and farm leader
Chairman

OTHER PUBLIC MEMBERS

John M. Seabrook, Bridgeton, farm manager
Leon B. Schachter, Camden, business manager of the
Meat & Cannery Workers Union Local 56
Mrs. Lenora B. Willette, Belleville, President of the
New Jersey Women's Government Study Council
Rev. Robert D. Smith, Somerville, Canon of the Social
Services of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of N. J.

STATE DEPARTMENTS

<u>Department Heads</u>		<u>Alternates</u>
	AGRICULTURE	
Willard H. Allen, Secretary		William C. Lynn, Assistant Secretary
	CONSERVATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	
Charles R. Erdman, Jr. Commissioner		William T. Vanderlipp, Director Division of Planning & Development
	EDUCATION	
Dr. John H. Bosshart, Commissioner		Thomas J. Durell, Assistant Commissioner
	HEALTH	
Dr. Daniel Bergsma, Commissioner		Carl Weigele, Director, Bureau of Preventable Diseases
	INSTITUTIONS & AGENCIES	
Sanford Bates, Commissioner		Elmer V. Andrews, Deputy Commissioner of Welfare
	LABOR & INDUSTRY	
Percy A. Miller, Jr., Commissioner		J. Lyman Brown, Dep. Commissioner and Director, Division of Labor
	LAW & PUBLIC SAFETY	
Col Charles H. Schoeffel, Supt., Division of State Police		Major R. A. Snook, Executive Officer

SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT
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PROSPECT
and
RETROSPECT

The program to provide better living and working conditions for migrant workers was started five years ago in New Jersey, which gives the state a distinct advantage now that the nation has become more migrant conscious and President Truman has appointed a Federal commission to study the migrant question. Rev. Robert D. Smith, a member of the Migrant Labor Board, personally appeared in Washington to inform the new commission of the advances made by New Jersey, which, according to outside observers, place this state in the forefront of the movement to effectively meet the problems of these seasonal workers.

This annual report of the Migrant Labor Board and Bureau, in the Department of Labor and Industry, will in a large part include a review of the reasons for establishing this work in New Jersey and of the goals striven for during the last half-decade.

Always the question arises as to the need for migrants. They have been coming to this state for more than 30 years and have become part of the agricultural economy. Farmers depend upon this migrant army to reinforce year-round farmhands and local labor in growing and harvesting vast crops of fruits and vegetables that make up a large segment of the \$300,000,000 annual production on approximately 26,000 farms. Many of these migrants are skilled in the harvesting art and make good wages when they are steadily employed in the gathering of such major crops as apples, asparagus, beans, berries, peaches, potatoes and tomatoes.

While an increasing number of unemployed factory and industrial workers have turned to farm jobs, there are not enough of them who are fitted for long, hard toil in the fields, or are acceptable to the farmers or who are willing to leave their city homes and hopes of being reemployed there, to fill all the farm needs. Unions have protested efforts to try to force unemployed industrial workers to take farm jobs. Records of the State Employment Service show that comparatively few unemployed persons register for farm jobs. Better rural housing developed under the migrant program and much cheaper living costs should induce capable unemployed persons to take farm jobs.

No certifications to bring migrants into the state are made by this Bureau. This all clears through SES, which is geared up with the Federal Department of Labor for such work. However, the Board and Bureau have not been unmindful of unemployment in the state. A special labor committee was set up last year to keep in touch with the situation. Mr. Willard H. Allen, State Secretary of Agriculture, is chairman of this committee and other members are Commissioner Charles R. Erdman, Mr. Leon B. Schachter, AF of L, representing labor, Mr. John M. Seabrook and Canon Smith. This committee met twice last summer and its reports were discussed at length by the Board. Mr. Allen held another meeting of this committee in February.

Because truck crops are so perishable and have to be gathered every day, most farmers want their workers quickly available, with the result that now about one out of every five of the larger farms in the state has its own migrant camp. As of June 30, 1950, there are 2,111 such camps in New Jersey, which house a normal number of 17,000 seasonal workers. This represents an increase of 206 camps over the previous year.

Too little attention was paid to proper housing for these roving workers in the depression days of the 30's. There were reports of some of them living in the woods, others in sketchy "hobo camps". Entire families crowded into chicken coops or cattle pens. Conditions became so bad that there was a public demand for action.

A Legislative commission made an investigation in 1930, and in 1940, the Tolan Committee in Congress started national hearings which continued for two years, which investigation included a tour of New Jersey. There was also a grand jury investigation in one of the counties of alleged deplorable living conditions among migrants.

Nothing concrete was done about the problem, however, until the Migrant Labor Act was adopted by the Legislature in 1945 as the result of a move started by the Consumers' League of New Jersey, the sub-committee on Child and Migrant Labor Committee of the Middle Atlantic Conference of Christian and Congregational Churches, the Department of Social Service of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey and the New Jersey Council of Churches. The Act was endorsed by the AF of L and the CIO.

The Post-War Economic Welfare Commission made an extensive study of the situation and public hearings were conducted. After much deliberation it was decided that the program should be administered by a Division of Migrant Labor (since changed to Bureau) in the then Department of Labor. The act was drawn by Dr. John F. Sly of the Princeton Surveys. It was referred to as the "Magna Charta for Migrants" by then Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins. Several of the states, notably California and Colorado, have requested copies of the act for study.

The act provides for a Migrant Labor Board consisting of the heads of seven state departments, and five public members, the latter appointed by the Governor, two to represent farmers, and one labor, with two other members at large. Jay C. Garrison, Salem County farm leader, has been chairman ever since the Board was established, which post he has filled in a most capable manner. His interest and effectiveness and that of the other public members would seem to be indicated by the fact that Governor Driscoll has reappointed all of them as their original terms have expired. The full membership of the Board is listed elsewhere in this report.

Where previously the numerous complex problems of migrants were scattered among various agencies, which often resulted in confusion and unnecessary cost through duplication of effort, all of them now clear through the Board and its Bureau.

AS VIEWED

In this connection, an evaluation of this State's setup has just been made in a report by Wisconsin's Commission on Human Rights, as part of a survey of its own migrant problem. The Wisconsin report states: "The New Jersey Migrant Labor Act's - - - - -

BY OUTSIDERS

most important accomplishment is that it establishes a centralized agency whose sole purpose is to concern itself with migrant labor. - - - - -It is apparent that New Jersey's program is a good one and is getting results."

The Board has held three or more meetings a year and has set the policies for the operation of the program. The members have shown enthusiastic interest in the development of this project and have given freely of their time and efforts without compensation.

Valuable counsel and direction for the advancement of this migrant project have also been given by Commissioner Harry C. Harper, for more than four years and by his recent successor, Commissioner Percy A. Miller, Jr., Deputy Commissioner J. Lyman Brown and also by other personnel of the Department of Labor and Industry.

How effective the progress may have been is indicated in an article in Collier's magazine by Howard Whitman after a country-wide tour, including this state, to study migrants. He wrote: "New Jersey is on its way toward solving its migrant labor problem. A few states have tried to raise the status of migrants. New Jersey has done the best job."

Considerable study was given to the preparation of a code for housing and sanitation in migrant camps by a committee of the Board headed by Mr. Seabrook and including William T. Vanderlipp, then Director of the Division of Planning and Engineering, Department of Economic Development, and William H. MacDonald, then Chief of the Bureau of Local Health Administration, Department of Health. This Code sets minimum standards and its enforcement has proved it to be fair to employers and effective in bringing about decided improvements in the camps.

These regulations apply to migrant camps of all descriptions. New York has a law which covers camps of 10 or more persons and although it lists only 400 camps, it spends many times the amount New Jersey does in its migrant program.

California has been struggling with the migrant problem for 30 years, and still finds it very much of an issue. Edward A. Brown, Supervisor of Camp Inspection, Division of Housing in that state, wrote in respect to New Jersey's code: "Summing up the whole problem which your state and ours is trying to solve, I believe that if more states would put in labor codes similar to yours, it would make the job for all of us a little casier."

Inspection of migrant camps started from scratch as there never had been any precedent set for such work for application of regulations of camps. It was necessary to hunt them out one by one through highways and by-ways. The 2,111 camps listed show those on farms very much in the majority. There are also included 14 railroad camps, and housing for seasonal workers in processing plants and fisheries. The inspection also applies to housing for upwards of 1800 to 2000 stablemen and other seasonal employees at the State's three big race tracks.

Most of the Bureau's inspectors are World War veterans with a knowledge of farm life. They know the location of every camp in their districts.

HEALTH
and
HAPPINESS

While the act provides that these camp inspections shall be the fundamental part of the program, other projects have been developed for the welfare of the migrants. Full and detailed reports on these have been sent to all Board members so they are not repeated in this report because of lack of space but are available to interested persons at the Bureau's office.

Health clinics were started early, with cooperation of the State Health Department, particularly in reference to control of venereal disease. A demonstration of cooperation between state departments and a community was seen in the operation for the last three summers of a school for migrant children at Freehold. The school attracted statewide and national attention among educators and welfare groups. The New York Times, commenting on it editorially, said: "The Migrant Labor Division of New Jersey's State Department of Labor and the State Department of Education, sponsors of the educational project, have done an excellent job."

A migrant family center was also established at Freehold under the direction of Mrs. Lenora B. Willette, a member of the Board, with the aid of a citizens' committee. It filled a long-felt need for migrant mothers and their children. Ten Negroes were employed on the Migrant Bureau's staff last summer in field work, operation of the school and center and other activities.

Contributing to the welfare of the migrants have also been the N. J. Council of Churches and the Home Missions Council of North America, which stress the need for an even more expanded program to reach more of these workers and their families, who are away from their home churches and social ties. Junior Red Cross branches in several parts of the state provided hundreds of toys and gifts for migrant children.

The supervisor of the Bureau has continued in that capacity from the very start of the program. He is a member of the National Migrant Committee of the Home Missions Council and also of the New Jersey Council's Committee. He represents New Jersey on the migrant committee organized by the Council of State Governments to study mutual problems among states along the Eastern seaboard, from Florida to Connecticut.

FACTS
and
FIGURES

In summation of the Migrant Bureau's activities since it was established, 20,468 visits have been made to farms and other possible camp locations to determine if migrant camps exist or to supplement official inspections, of which there have been an additional 11,891. The figures for the last year alone are: visits, 3,186; inspections, 3,249 and other stops, 2,186.

Before the state hotel safety fire law was put into force last year, the Bureau made a pilot survey of living conditions for an estimated 30,000 seasonal workers employed in Jersey resort hotels. This was prompted by complaints sent to the Bureau by some of the workers. A total of 464 of these hotel inspections were made. Fire safety was particularly stressed in all of them and letters were sent to 148 of the hotel operators directing them to correct bad conditions in quarters for their help.

Regular correspondence for the last five years included the writing of 4,731 letters, also the filling out and mailing of 7,386 form letters to camp operators, 1439 letters urging that camps be rebuilt or improved during the winter or off-season periods, and 1,922 other letters to camps with information about health clinics. These figures for the last year alone are: regular correspondence, 1,426 letters; 1,926 form letters.

Estimates based on inspection reports reveal that upwards of 500 new migrant camps have been constructed since the program was started. These and improvements made to old camps represent an outlay of approximately half a million dollars, while the total investment in all camps runs into the millions. Proportionately, this improvement in housing for seasonal rural workers is believed to be ahead of heavily financed projects for urban workers.

Since May, 1949, the Migrant Labor Bureau has also carried all the work of the Governor's Commission on Displaced Persons without extra compensation, entailing the contacting and interviewing of prospective members of the commission, serving as its secretary at six commission meetings, organizing and directing the first state-wide conference on Displaced Persons ever held in any state, speaking before local committees and church groups, investigation of 277 cases and clearing of 263 personal assurances for the Federal Commission, handling of much correspondence and phone calls and writing of 925 letters.

The original appropriation for migrant work was \$100,000 with \$25,000 designated for construction of a state camp. After long study and checking of costs of building and maintaining the three Federal farm labor camps then operating in New Jersey, in which investigation the Bureau was ably assisted by Mr. Vanderlipp, director of the Division of Planning and Engineering, State Department of Economic Development, the Board decided that it was not feasible to establish a state camp.

The state camp fund was never spent but was carried over during the exploratory period and the Bureau has always kept well within its budget in respect to other items. These unexpended funds to a total of \$57,251 were turned back to the State Treasury last year - the largest amount then lapsed by any Bureau to help balance the state budget.

ECHOES While migrants are by no means solely a wartime problem, New Jersey's
of program for them was launched in the midst of World War II. The war
WAR clouds are now looming again. Then living conditions for seasonal
workers were so bad the Government required that the thousands of inter-
nationals brought into the state to speed up food production be placed
only in approved housing. Now New Jersey is better prepared. Employers have
come to realize that improved quarters are good for domestic workers as well as
for internationals and that they also help to get and hold seasonal hands in
periods of severe labor shortages such as wars produce.

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MIGRANT CAMPS BY COUNTIES

On-the-farm camps are on the increase due to the fact that there
are no longer any central Federal camps, such as were operated
during the last War, and also that more employers find it prac-
tical to have their crews right on the premises for immediate
call during the busy harvest season. This list includes camps
of all types for seasonal workers.

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>NUMBER OF CAMPS</u>	
	<u>1949-50</u>	<u>1948-49</u>
Atlantic	104	70
Bergen	26	22
Burlington	172	159
Camden	31	29
Cape May	24	24
Cumberland	219	204
Essex	4	5
Gloucester	445	389
Hudson	4	5
Hunterdon	7	6
Mercer	152	143
Middlesex	170	164
Monmouth	264	235
Morris	21	16
Ocean	137	104
Passaic	14	9
Salem	286	292
Somerset	10	9
Sussex	1	1
Union	6	3
Warren	<u>14</u>	<u>6</u>
	2111	1895

INSPECTION DATA

	<u>1949-50</u>	<u>1948-49</u>
Total number of inspections and reinspections	3249	2707
Visits for camp surveys	3186	3832
Other stops for information about migrants	2186	1621
Approvals on first inspections	725	465
Conditional approvals on first inspections	1106	1336
Disapprovals on first inspections	<u>72</u>	<u>94</u>
Total	1903	1895

Changes recommended on 1949-50 inspections:

Cleanliness	526
Toilets	1255
Water	115
Quarters	264
Sleeping	71
Cooking	39
Fire Protection	569
Register	13
Screens	726
Others	<u>201</u>
Total Items	3779

Other approvals on reinspections	701	273
Conditional approvals on reinspections	594	475
Disapprovals on reinspections	<u>51</u>	<u>44</u>
Total	1346	792

Changes recommended on 1949-50 reinspections:

Cleanliness	196
Toilets	235
Water	38
Quarters	62
Sleeping	8
Cooking	7
Fire Protection	46
Register	6
Screens	106
Others	<u>22</u>
Total Items	726