This concise review is one of a series prepared at the request of California legislators. It is based upon extensive materials which could form the basis of a more detailed report if specifically requested. In order to maintain its value as an impartial fact-finding agency, the Bureau avoids definite recommendations on controversial subjects.

February 27, 1939
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TRANSIENTS AND MIGRANTS

I. INTRODUCTION

Internal migration in the United States is not now. Approximately one-fifth of the native Americans had migrated, at the time of each census between 1850 and 1930, from the states of their birth. The continent has been tamed and settled by pioneers who migrated from the older sections of the country toward the West. In practically every instance they were seeking a better economic opportunity than the older settlements afforded. During depression years the number of migrants increases, but in the past, when fertile lands were available, they were praised for their individualism and pioneer spirit. The frontier of available lands may have been closed by 1890, but the movement of Americans from the farm to the city, from city to farm, or from farm to farm, did not cease. In the early months of 1933 it was estimated that there were over a million and a quarter homeless transients in the country.

The major causes of migration in search of better opportunity have continued to push people into other, at the time, more attractive areas. Long-continued agricultural depressions, technological displacements, droughts and floods have driven people in large numbers to the West and to northern


2. Estimates of the National Committee on the Care of the Transient and Homeless. New York Times, February 17, 1933.

3. Paul S. Taylor in an address before the Commonwealth Club of California, April 15, 1938: "This process of sweeping farmers from the land is now under way - western Texas, southwestern Oklahoma, the Black Wax Prairie of Texas, the Arkansas and Mississippi Deltas, and it is incipient in other areas. In 1930 the proportion of farm tractors in the United States which was found on farms of the ten southern states was only 12 per cent. By 1937 it had risen to 18 per cent. In seven years the number of tractors in the cotton states has practically doubled."
industrial centers. The number of individuals from other states who entered California by motor vehicle dropped from 90,761 in 1937 to 67,644 in 1938. At the same time the number of Californians who reentered the state increased from 14,215 to 17,487. Forty-eight per cent of 4,500 migrants with less than a year's residence in California who were seeking agricultural employment in 1938 reported that they left home for lack of work; 35 per cent because of drought; 7.5 per cent because of health; 2.3 per cent were displaced by machines; and 1.3 per cent because of floods.

The number of migrants in California is high. Over a quarter of a million people "in need of manual employment" entered California by motor vehicle alone between July 1, 1935 and December 31, 1938. The exact number of residents of other states who have entered California in search of employment is not known, since available figures do not include those who entered the state by railroad or bus.

Some of the migrants have settled in the large urban centers. Others have become casual and seasonal laborers in canneries and fruit and vegetable sheds. Most of them have sought employment by following the crops, thereby supplementing the already large number of intrastate migrants who form the migratory labor corps serving the seasonal demand of California's agricultural industry. The result is a surplus supply of agricultural labor with its

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3. The exact number of migratory laborers and their dependents is unknown. "Unquestionably, the uncertain basis of the estimates should be stressed, and the urgent desirability of a new school census which will enumerate
attendant problems of unemployment, low wages, inadequate and unsanitary housing; malnutrition, public health, relief, education, policing, and personal and family disintegration.

Types of Migrants

The use of the term transient should be restricted to its administrative meaning and not be expanded to cover all persons who have moved, within the last few years, from one state to another. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration defined, for administrative purposes, federal transients to be "all persons in need of relief who have not resided within the boundaries of a state for twelve consecutive months." The term, as popularly used, carries a definite connotation of vagrancy and of local pauper relief. The popular and official use of such references to the migrant as "transient," "bum," "undesirable alien," "hobo," "invader," "floater," "ne'er-do-well," "panhandler" is after all an attempt to solve a complicated problem, with many economic and social ramifications, by the simple expedient of calling names, invoking the vagrancy laws, and passing the needy or unemployed homeless man as rapidly as possible on to the next community.

The migrant population may be divided into three groups: (1) the habitual migrant (the "chronic wanderer"); (2) the migratory laborer; and

children of agricultural migrants and so provide an index of the total agricultural migrant population, should be emphasized." Paul S. Taylor and Edward J. Rowell, "Patterns of Agricultural Labor Migration within California," Monthly Labor Review, 47:981, November, 1938.


2. See article by Loring A. Schuler in California (State Chamber of Commerce), August, 1938, pp. 5-9, 30-33, entitled: "The dust bowl moves to California; 200,000 are here - more keep coming - they'll soon be voters - what can we do?"
(3) the unassimilated recent entrant into the state. This classification is somewhat arbitrary because the habitual migrant works at casual and seasonal jobs; the migratory laborer must be continuously on the move from job to job, crop to crop, and agricultural operation to agricultural operation; the recent entrant into the state, coming largely from an agricultural background, joins the stream of migratory laborers. They all present the same economic and social problems. For this reason no attempt will be made in this bulletin to deal with each class separately.

Not all migratory laborers are in agriculture. This type of labor is used in the oil fields, in railroad maintenance, highway construction, large public works, logging, and fishing. Seasonal employment, characteristic of agricultural labor in California, is also found in the above types of work as well as in the manufacture of agricultural implements, the production and refining of petroleum, slaughtering and meat packing, lime, cement, plaster, and glass manufacture, clothing, millinery, automobiles, bread and bakery products, furniture and fixtures, rubber products and canning and packing of fish.

Workers engaged in preserving and canning fruits and vegetables are considered in this bulletin as agricultural workers. Many of the problems discussed in this bulletin are common to all migratory and seasonal workers, but attention is focused upon those migrants who work in agriculture.

1. Most of the newcomers seem to be from Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas and Missouri; whites represent a larger percentage in the migrant group than they do in the general population of the United States; most heads of households are men in their best working years (between 20 and 44 years of age); the usual occupation before migration was farm labor. The above characterizations are indicated in A Study of 6,655 Migrant Households in California, 1938 (Farm Security Administration, Region IX).

Migrants and Industrialized Agriculture

Paid farm laborers composed over 57 per cent of all people gainfully employed in California agriculture in 1930. The comparable ratio for the United States as a whole is only 26 per cent. The California agricultural labor supply has been successively drawn from the Chinese, Japanese, Italians, Portuguese, Mexican, Hindu and Filipino immigrants.

Labor supply has exceeded labor demand in California since 1924 except for October, 1936 and October, 1937.

The influx into California of refugees from the drought states has not only increased the available number of agricultural laborers, but is changing the age, family, linguistic and cultural characteristics of agricultural laborers. The surplus would in fact be much larger if many Mexicans who constituted a large part of the migratory labor corps of the 1920's had not repatriated themselves under the agrarian program of the Mexican government. The chart on the next page shows, however, that the excess of laborers over demand since 1935 has not been much higher than in the period before 1928.

There is little opportunity, under the industrialized agricultural economy prevalent in California, for either the older migratory laborer or the recent refugee from the dust bowl to settle down on a farm as an owner-operator or as tenant-operator. In order to eke out a scanty living they must follow


2. The industrial character of California agriculture may be recalled by the following summary of an article by Taylor and Vasey, "Contemporary Background of California Farm Labor," Rural Sociology, p. 419, December, 1936: "The growth of intensive agriculture, then, with highly capitalized, large-scale farming methods and concentrated ownership, huge total payments to farm laborers, has given California an industrialized agriculture, a system of open-air food factories, it might be called. Nearly six per cent of the farms of California are operated by managers, which is six times as high as the national average. Wage relations are highly developed, and gang labor
California Farm Labor Supply Expressed as Per Cent of Demand, 1924-1938

Source: U. S. Dept. of Agric., Crops and Markets.
the crops along well-defined routes of migration. There are, of course, numerous individual variations of these patterns. Actual routes followed during the year commencing June, 1934, by 50 Mexican families and 50 "white" families are as follows:

Beginning with the truck crops in Imperial Valley in January, the Mexicans leave as early as March for Nipomo peas or as late as June for Hemet apricots. Some linger in the citrus belt of Southern California or the truck gardens of Los Angeles County. Guasti, the large vineyard in San Bernardino County, provides some with summer work. Seasonal work of various sorts can be found during much of the year, though most of it is done by those of more permanent residence who migrate very little. Around Santa Paula, Ventura, and Conejos, work in the walnut groves is added to possibilities of citrus and truck crop labor. Most of the Mexicans find their summer and fall work in the San Joaquin Valley south from Fresno. Thinning fruit, chopping cotton, and harvesting fruit and cotton provide sufficient work to keep them in the area. It is notable that the Mexican migration runs from the great Mexican center of Brawley to Fresno, in contrast to the more scattered points of origin of the American whites.

The American whites, starting from diverse areas in Imperial Valley, move out earlier than the Mexicans and go as far north as Marysville for the peach harvest. Then they move south again for grapes and cotton. Of the 50 American schedules, not one gave Brawley or Los Angeles as a stopping place. The heavier lines in northern California are caused by a great deal of movement back and forth in that part of the State. It is not infrequent, for example, that two trips are made to the Marysville area, one for thinning peaches, and a second for the harvest; between times, Brentwood offers opportunity to pick apricots. Though the selection was made on the basis of State-wide migration, the fact that a few of the American white families did not include southern California in the migration also adds to the width of the lines in the north.

In addition, many California migrants cross and recross the Arizona, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington state lines.

is employed, with foremen and subforemen. Elaborate piece rates are set up, with bonus payments. Farmers' agents recruit and distribute laborers, extremely few of whom belong to the family of the farm operator. Incipient labor organizations have arisen, and bitter strikes have been conducted. The state maintains labor commissioners who aid rural laborers to collect unpaid wages, just as they aid urban workers.

"The family farm, which still expresses the national ideal, is subordinate in California to the influence of agriculture on an industrialized pattern."

II. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Employment is, as a rule, discontinuous because of distances to be travelled, inaccurate information as to labor needs, the existence of a surplus supply of labor, and the unpredictability of prices and the weather. These factors, along with low wages, mean that the annual income of the agricultural laborer is below official estimates of what is necessary to insure an adequate living. The average earnings in 1935 of 775 California agricultural laborers were $289, which was equivalent to 30 per cent of the SRA minimum emergency relief budget of $780 for a family of 4.5.¹ Agricultural laborers in the highest earning class yet surveyed averaged $483 from July, 1934 to June, 1935. Only 8 of this "select group" could meet the Heller Committee's "health and decency" budget of $1080 for a family of five, and only 14 per cent met the SRA minimum subsistence budget of $780.²

Relief and Public Assistance

The immediate and dramatic problem of migrants and agricultural workers in California has appeared, then, to be that of furnishing relief. Public relief has supplemented the meager earnings of a large proportion of the agricultural workers who have lived for many years in California. Refugee families are generally destitute when they arrive. If they bring any money with them,

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¹ California State Relief Administration, Migratory Labor in California, 1936, pp. 119-129. It is emphasized that SRA budget #4, used here for comparison, was a "minimum subsistence" budget, not a "health and decency" budget. It allowed, at that time, $36.08 for food, $15.50 for rent, $3.87 for utilities, $4.50 for clothing and nothing for incidentals, for a family of 4.5 for each 4-week period.

Labor and Agriculture and the National Labor Board, used the device at the time of the Imperial Valley strike of 1934.

The proper sphere of police action in labor disputes has been a particularly pressing question in California agriculture. A bill was introduced in the 1937 legislature to take away all police authority of the State Highway Patrol and limit its functions to the enforcement of the Motor Vehicle Act. The Assembly Committee on Labor and Capital reported the bill out on the last day of the session.

The Criminal Syndicalism Act is considered by the Agricultural Council of California to be a bulwark against the unionization of farm laborers and its use for such purposes has been frequently charged by labor leaders. The growers fought all bills designed to repeal the Act or to forbid public authorities from refusing permits to assemble or to distribute circulars.

**Housing**

From the Wheatland riots of 1916 to the present day the most persistent complaint of migratory agricultural workers has been that they are housed in overcrowded and unsanitary quarters. Public officials and students of migratory labor have taken up the cry. Descriptions of housing conditions that surpass any description of urban slums are found in reports of the California Commission of Immigration and Housing, the California State Department of Health, the

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2. A.B. 2437 introduced by Mr. Gilbert on January 22, 1937; see also A.B. 1427 introduced by Messrs. Hunt and Rosenthal on January 21, 1937, which was refused passage.


State Relief Administration, the United States Department of Labor, the Works Progress Administration, the Resettlement Administration, and the Farm Security Administration.

The housing problem of the migrant divides itself into three phases: (1) housing on the road between jobs or in search of employment; (2) housing while waiting for employment or lying-over between jobs; and (3) housing while employed. Most families have their own automobile or truck in which they transport themselves and usually some household goods in the long trek after the crops. Housing on the road consists, in the main, of camping out along the roadside or of stopping over at a cheap automobile camp. Overcrowding and insufficient and improper sanitary facilities, which contribute to the spread of debilitating and communicable diseases, are the principal criticisms of these modes of living while on the road. No governmental agency, as a rule, concerns itself with the overnight camping out of the migrants. The Commission of Immigration and Housing was entrusted with the inspection of auto camps in 1929 but already its staff had been reduced so that it has never been able to inspect comprehensively the auto camps of the state.

An adequate housing program, from the point of view of the public welfare, must provide facilities for migrant labor during the off-season of unemployment and for the surplus labor that may be attracted to an area, as well as for those who may be employed. Except for the Resettlement and Farm Security Administrations, no interest, other than the provision of meager relief, has been taken in the housing of migratory laborers and their families during the off-seasons. The Farm Security Administration is maintaining temporary winter quarters in the Imperial Valley and in Fresno and Tulare Counties.

Single men usually spend the winter in metropolitan areas and increase the case load of unattached men. The cities of Sacramento and Fresno maintain municipal shelter camps for the single man. The Sacramento Shelter has a bed capacity of 500 and can feed 1,500 men at a meal. An effort is made, however, to restrict the use of the shelter to single unemployed men who are residents of Sacramento County. The Fresno Shelter, on the other hand, has been maintained by the city for six years for the use of single migrants. An appropriation of $7,500 has been made for the current winter. Almost 12,000 single men registered at the shelter last winter. City authorities look upon the shelter largely as a crime prevention project. "Over one third of those registered had been directed there by the police, who sent them to the shelter instead of putting them in the county jail as vagrants. In fact, over 50 men came directly to the camp from the police court in lieu of jail sentences on vagrancy charges." 1 Since the men are allowed to stay only 24 hours unless, during that time, they have received definite promise of work, the shelters can hardly be considered as a housing scheme.

The housing of the unneeded applicants for work, drawn into a concentration of surplus labor through no fault of their own and often in response to deliberate attempts of growers to inflate the labor supply, was to some extent met in 1938 by temporary Farm Security Administration camps near Westley and Thornton. FSA plans to construct this year six mobile labor camps, each of which is to be set down at three or four places in the state during the harvests.

The Commission of Immigration and Housing has possessed statutory jurisdiction over labor camps since 1915 and has undertaken, through inspection, persuasion, and, at times, prosecution to enforce the Labor Camp Sanitation Act. There are some 8,000 labor and auto camps scattered throughout the state, which are subject to inspection by the Division, yet there are only four inspectors, including the supervisor, to do the work. The Commission's work with respect to migratory workers has been described as follows in a publication of the SRA:

From 1927 on, the Commission was weakened. The reorganization that year of a number of state divisions under one Department of Industrial Relations and the incorporation of the Commission of Immigration and Housing in that Department deprived the Commission of its autonomy. In the middle of 1933, the appropriations for the Commission were cut in half, the staff was cut to 11, 8 of whom are administrative and 3 of whom are clerical employees. Four camp inspectors remain to cover the labor camp situation in the entire state. In place of the original Complaint Department which had 8 members, there remain 2 people shouldering complaints in addition to other duties which they have to carry at the same time. Of 7 offices in 1923, 3 remain, one in San Francisco, one in Los Angeles and one in Sacramento. An untrained executive replaced one with training, for the first time. He was appointed to head the Division in November, 1933, after it had been thoroughly weakened less than half a year previously.

This reduction of personnel in the Division has come at a time when the influx of migrants from the drought states has greatly increased the number of people affected by the inadequacy of and lack of sanitation in agricultural labor camps.

The Division has drafted model city ordinances designed to regulate the "construction, sanitation and conduct" of multi-family dwellings, tent camps, auto and trailer camps, and model county ordinances to prohibit squatter camps. Several counties and cities have adopted these or similar

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ordinances and their respective health departments are entrusted with their enforcement. The ordinances do not apply, however, to those premises or dwellings which are subject to the jurisdiction of the Division of Immigration and Housing under the Trailer Camp Act of 1937, the Auto Camp Act of 1931 or the Labor Camp Act of 1913.

Under an act of 1927, public service districts may be organized, upon petition to the county board of a majority or more of the electors within the proposed district, to construct and maintain public labor camps. The district is to be governed by a board of 3 trustees appointed by the county supervisors from among the electors of the district. The county board must levy a tax up to 5 mills per dollar upon the request of the district trustees. No camps have been constructed under this act. Several important agricultural associations in the state insist upon local control of labor camps even when they have been constructed by the state or federal governments.

The Voluntary Committee on Welfare and Relief and the subcommittee on agricultural labor of the California Research Committee on Labor Problems have recommended to Governor Olson that the state share in the costs of the long-range settlement projects of the Farm Security Administration possibly through a state department of rural rehabilitation.

In 1935 the SERA constructed two migratory agricultural laborers' camps at Marysville and Arvin. The two projects were taken over and completed by the


2. Farm labor policies, May, 1937, Agricultural Conference of Representatives of the State Chamber of Commerce (Agricultural Department), Agricultural Council of California, California Farm Bureau Federation, Associated Farmers of California, Inc., and the California Division of the Farmers Union.
The primary purpose of the camps was to demonstrate the desirability and feasibility of providing good housing for agricultural labor. On November 18, 1935, however, the regional office of the Resettlement Administration referred to the proposed camps, in a statement to the California Conference on the Housing of Migratory Agricultural Workers, as "in part... a legitimate subsidy to the small farmers whose ranches are served thereby" and as "direct assistance... to the migrant laborers."

Eight other camps have been completed by the Farm Security Administration, making ten in all with a total capacity of 1,960 families. The camps are located at Brawley, Gridley, Windsor, Indio, Shafter, Visalia, Westley, and Winters. It is proposed to build another camp this year at Firebaugh.

The completed camps provide modern sanitary facilities, hot and cold water, tent platforms, community centers and small hospital clinics. Each family supplies tents and housekeeping equipment. Ten cents daily and an hour's work a week in keeping the camp orderly are required of each family by the organized camp community. None of the money goes to the federal government. The head of the family must be employed in agricultural work or willing to accept such employment.

Collective subsistence part-time farms are maintained adjacent to four of these camps, and another will be developed at Firebaugh. This aspect of housing is considered at greater length in the section on community assimilation.

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1. W. E. Packard, "The Resettlement Administration Program in Migratory Labor Camps," June 1, 1935 (mime); California State Relief Administration, Migratory Labor in California, 1936, pp. 30-95.

2. Interview with Dr. Omer Mills, Regional Economist, Farm Security Administration, Region IX, February 8, 1939.
Some of the large growers have opposed the construction of migratory labor camps and particularly their operation by the federal government. Many of them dislike the RA and the FSA practice of allowing union meetings on camp property. They declared, according to a report of the SRA in 1936, that the camps would develop into "hot-beds of red agitation and of Communism." It is also argued that the government is assuming a function that should be left to the private initiative of the grower, although the camp program would be acceptable if control and management were placed in local hands. The growers, however, have not taken advantage of the Public Service District Act of 1927 to tax themselves to provide camp facilities which would be under their own control.

Another phase of the Farm Security Administration program which affects the housing of agricultural workers is the establishment of part-time subsistence farming units and of large cooperative farms. These aspects of the program, however, are more significant as rehabilitation schemes and will be considered under the section on community assimilation of migrants.

1. California State Relief Administration, Migratory Labor in California (1936), pp. 92-93. Compare the memorial introduced in Washington House of Representatives on January 19, 1939 based upon "accurate reports by impartial observers of the conditions existing in camps heretofore established in California" which declares that "the construction of said camps, wherever located, has resulted in the accumulation of drifters and undesirable aliens and agitators and has caused strikes, labor unrest and civil strife."

The Bakersfield Conference on Agricultural Labor recommended:

...That thirty new FSA camps be built at a cost of $3,000,000,000, since some $7,000,000 had been spent in the past year for growers' benefits; ...that an equal number be built by the State under the Division of Immigration and Housing; ...that all camps have adequate nurseries and recreational facilities; ...that a housing authority be set up for permanent housing for stable agricultural labor groups, this authority to have worker representation; ...that the service of inspection be transferred to the State Department of Public Health and that 15 inspectors be the minimum.

Health

Any large group of people which is irregularly employed, ill-housed, ill-fed, overexposed to the weather, and which lacks access to hygienic advice and medical care will show a high incidence of disease and physical defects.

Dr. Omer Mills of the Farm Security Administration has listed four main types of health problems which arise from the constant mobility of these people, the lack of sanitary living conditions and their low income. They are: (1) the easy and rapid spread of communicable diseases; (2) the prevalence of sickness caused by unsanitary living conditions; (3) the high incidence of diseases traceable to malnutrition; and (4) a general neglect of health due to poverty and to ineligibility for state and county aid.

Unsanitary living conditions have already been discussed. It is only necessary here to point out their relation to such diseases as dysentery, diarrhea, and typhoid. Disease is no respecter of county boundary lines, especially when its carriers cross them several times a year.

Smallpox was

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2. Omer Mills, "Health Problems among Migratory Workers," address, Health Officers Section, California League of Municipalities, September 8, 1938.
3. The fear that migrant children may be carrying infectious disease is given as a reason for segregating migrant students.
carried last year by agricultural workers from the San Joaquin Valley to the Imperial, and typhoid from the Imperial into Kern County. In 1936, approximately 90 per cent of the reported cases of typhoid fever in California occurred among rural migrants.¹

Tuberculosis is considered to be widespread among migrants. A pediatrician of the Bureau of Child Hygiene, State Department of Public Health, reported in 1937 that "Cases in adults were frequently encountered, often so obvious that they were self-diagnosed." The Bureau of Tuberculosis of the State Health Department reported in 1937 that a survey of migrant camps at Shafter, Nasco and Hoover showed 34 cases of tuberculosis among 70 families. One hundred and forty families were listed as non-tuberculous but it was not known how many cases there were among the contacts.² Tuberculosis must be attacked as a communicable disease, on the one hand, and on the other as the result, in many instances, of long-continued malnutrition.

Malnutrition lies at the base of much of the poor health of migrants. This seems particularly true of the children in the group. Many of the more recent recruits into agricultural labor in the state are from states where rural poverty is high and has been accentuated by drought and the depression. A recent study of the health of a thousand migratory children showed that approximately 30 per cent suffered from malnutrition, rickets or lack of adequate diets.³

¹. See report on communicable diseases, September 24, 1938, Weekly Bulletin, California State Department of Health, p. 139.
Table III

Comparison of Migratory and Resident American Children With Medical and Hygienic Defects, by Age Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Groups</th>
<th>0-1</th>
<th>1-2</th>
<th>2-6</th>
<th>6 &amp; over</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RESIDENT</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
<td>60.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIGRATORY</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
<td>79.7%</td>
<td>85.4%</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
<td>83.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diseases and poor health traceable to unsanitary living conditions and to malnutrition are definitely related to economic status. This is particularly true of workers in California's industrialized agriculture. They have no opportunity to raise any foodstuffs and must purchase groceries, even as the urban worker does, in the market-place. Furthermore, it is impossible to save from the meager annual earnings enough to pay doctor, drug and hospital bills or to feed a family while one or more workers are ill or injured. The Bureau of Tuberculosis of the State Department of Health reported that large numbers of migrants in Riverside and Kern counties, many of whom were tuberculous, were living on potatoes and onions.

1. Faverman, p. 20. Table VIII.

2. Mention should be made of "occupational" diseases in California's agriculture which result from the introduction of such equipment as liquid petroleum gases and new fumigants.
The primary interest of public health departments is in the prevention of disease. The State Department of Public Health does not have adequate personnel to administer an effective preventive program. There were only 13 officers and employees in the Bureau of Epidemiology and Tuberculosis. The Bureau of Child Hygiene has a personnel of three and the Bureau of Orthopedics, which administers aid to physically defective children, consists of one public health nurse.¹

The Department has made a definite beginning toward solving the health problems of migratory workers. It has engaged in field work, in cooperation with the United States Public Health Service and Children's Bureau under Titles V and VI of the Social Security Act, in those counties where migrants congregate. Nutritionists have been sent out to educate women in the preparation and use of fruits and vegetables. Typhoid, chicken-pox and diphtheria immunizations are given to both children and adults. Children are given tuberculin tests and reactors are X-rayed with apparatus mounted on a motor truck.²

The social service to migratory labor staff for the year 1938-39 consisted, at the period of peak activity, of four medical social service workers, three probationary medical officers and seven public health nurses. Federal social security funds expended on this program amounted to $22,270 in 1937-38 and to $47,890 in the current year.³

There are now 24 counties with full-time health units. Clinics are usually maintained and public health nurses visit schools, give vaccinations,

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¹ State of California, Budget for the Biennium, 1939-41, pp. 601-602.
² California State Department of Public Health, Weekly Bulletin, June 18, 1938.
³ State of California, Budget for the Biennium, 1939-41, p. 621.
immunizations, tuberculin tests; make health talks, hold conferences, etc.

Federal and state funds have enabled county health units to increase the number of public health nurses and sanitary engineers on their staffs. Health departments inspect the camps of migratory workers\(^1\) in counties, such as Madera, Tulare, San Joaquin, Kern and others, with ordinances to regulate the sanitary conditions of camps.

The treatment of disease among the indigent or low income residents of a county is largely the responsibility of county hospitals. Only in emergencies are non-residents admitted. The extent of the costs in some counties of caring for non-residents is indicated by the fact that Kern County spent for the first half of 1937 over $54,000 for medical services to out-of-state people.\(^2\) The cost to public health of having communicable disease carriers at large cannot be estimated.

To meet the problem caused by refusal of admission to overcrowded county hospitals, the Farm Security Administration, with the cooperation of the California Medical Association, the State Relief Administration, and the State Department of Health, undertook to provide medical and hospital care to non-resident agricultural workers through a non-profit corporation, the Agricultural Workers Health and Medical Association. Panels of general practitioners and of specialists are set up in various parts of the state from which the client has free choice. He is also free to choose his hospital if hospitalization is indicated. Drugs and food are furnished where necessary. General headquarters are maintained at Fresno with district offices scattered between Marysville and

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2. Kern County Health Department, "Survey of Kern County Migratory Labor Program" (Supplementary Report, July 1, 1938), p. 3.
the Imperial Valley. The Farm Security Administration expended $387,000 through the Association for medical care and drugs to 12,010 non-resident agricultural workers between March 29 and December 31, 1938. There were in December 1938, some 50,695 people eligible for such care in California.

Representative Voorhis of California introduced a bill on August 12, 1937, to amend the Social Security Act to authorize an annual appropriation of $7,000,000 to be distributed to the states, under plans to be approved by the Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service, to provide medical care of non-resident needy persons. The bill was not reported out of the Committee on Ways and Means.

The general topic of health insurance and medical care is discussed by Fern E. Schneider and Samuel C. May in Bulletin No. 3 of the Bureau of Public Administration's legislative problems series. An insurance system, however, is not intended and cannot be expected to meet the need of workers with such low annual earnings as agricultural laborers receive. The Federal Interdepartmental Committee to Coordinate Health and Welfare Activities recommends that the federal government, through grants-in-aid to the states of one-half the total costs, assist in providing and extending medical care to "those who, though able to obtain food, shelter and clothing from their own resources, are unable to procure...essential medical services, hospitalization, and emergency dentistry." Bills to implement the recommendation of the Interdepartmental

4. Interdepartmental Committee to Coordinate Health and Welfare Activities, National Health Conference (1938), and the report of its Technical Committee on Medical Care, The Need for a National Health Program (1938).
The last enumeration of migrant children in California was in 1927, when the State Department of Education counted 37,000 children "who declared that they were migratory and definitely stated that they and their parents had no permanent place of residence." An increase of this number to about 42,000 by 1930 is indicated by an interpolation based on the population census of school attendance in rural areas. The number is undoubtedly much larger today with the inflow of migrants from the drought states and the consequent increase in the proportion of families who follow the crops.

In a study of agricultural migratory laborers in the San Joaquin Valley during July and August, 1937, the SRA found that approximately 70 per cent of white children and 86 per cent of Mexican children between six and 15 years of age are in a retarded grade for their age. Only 50 per cent of all California school children were retarded in 1930. The extent of retardation among migrant children is indicated in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years retarded</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Mexican</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One year or more</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>85.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two years or more</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>57.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three years or more</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four years or more</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total retarded</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>86.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among migratory "white" persons over 15 years of age only 54 per cent had reached the 8th grade but approximately 91 per cent had reached the 4th grade.


Among Mexicans only 25 per cent had reached the 9th grade and only 63 per cent had reached the 4th grade.

The problem of educating migrant children is complicated by (1) widespread child labor, (2) seasonal movement of families, (3) malnutrition of the children, and (4) the hostility of the community to the migrant which is reflected in the attitude of resident children toward the "Okies."

The number of children in agricultural work in California is unknown. California statutes permit children over 16 years of age to work in agriculture beyond the 8 hours a day and 48 hours a week limits which are imposed on the work of other minors up to 18 years of age. Minors of any age may be employed out of school hours or when schools are not in session. The result is that large numbers of children stay out of school to assist with field work at the peak demand for farm hands or they attend school from early morning to noon and then work for the rest of the day. Either their schooling is intermittently interrupted or they work long hours at monotonous tasks after the day's schooling is over.

Compulsory school attendance laws are another means of preventing child labor. California statutes require children between the ages of 8 and 16 years to be sent to school. Children of migrant parents are not excepted, for the statute specifically provides that a child removed from a school before the completion of the school term shall be enrolled in a school of the jurisdiction to which the minor is removed. Compulsory attendance is enforced by

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2. The subject of child labor in agriculture is comprehensively surveyed in Child Labor (1932), the report of the subcommittee on child labor of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection, pp. 213-313.
supervisors of attendance\(^1\) who are supposed to see that children enroll in
school within 3 days of moving into their district. If, however, the attitude
of influential members of the community favors the employment of children dur-
ing the rush of the harvest, the chances are slight that children of migrant
agricultural laborers will be compelled to attend school.

The effect of constant mobility upon the schooling of migrant children
is shown by the following reference of an SRA investigator to the life his-
tories of the Hillis family which has followed the crops since 1923:\(^2\)

Regular attendance at school was impossible. In some instances the
children were required to work in the fields to help meet the family
budget. Even when parents were willing to have the children attend
school the frequent changes resulted in irregularity of class place-
ment. Transfer cards were usually forgotten. They changed from loca-
tion to location in haste, and time consumed visiting the schools was
often considered as wasted. Frequently the departure occurred over a
week end, or in the evenings when access to records was impossible.
This caused delay in proper placement in the next school. The only
consistent education of the children of this clan has been secured
during the winter months when they settled in one of the larger cities.
On these occasions the children attended school regularly, the mothers
kept house and the fathers worked at their trade.

The assignment of migratory children to the proper grade is easier in
California, with its standardized curriculum, than in some states. Even here,
the above quotation shows, it is largely a matter of guess work.

Constantly shifting labor peaks affect the administration of the school
program in the agricultural areas. The attendance, for instance, at the
Aguinas and Air Point Schools in Santa Clara County trebled and quadrupled
respectively during March, April and May of 1935 when spring peas were being
harvested. A recent study of agricultural labor migration shows that the

\(^{1}\) Cal. School Code (1935), secs. 1.130, 1.131, 1.161.

\(^{2}\) California State Relief Administration, Migratory Labor in California

\(^{3}\) California State Department of Social Welfare, California Children,
August 15, 1938.
enrollment of Mexican children in Imperial County fluctuates "with great irregularity as well as with great intensity." Six Imperial County schools, for instance, had their peak enrollment in the first three months of the 1929-30 school year, but the peak recurred in the same period in only 2 of those schools in 1932-33 and in only one in 1934-35.¹

In 1921 the State Superintendent of Public Instruction was authorized, within the limits of a $10,000 appropriation, to establish special elementary classes for the children of migratory laborers. The Act made it the duty of county superintendents and boards of education to cooperate but specified that the consent of the governing board of a school district must be secured before a public school house could be used for migratory classes.²

The duty of the State Superintendent was changed in 1927 from that of maintenance to one of "superintendence and encouragement." A Migratory School Revolving Fund of $10,000 was set up, out of which the State Superintendent could apportion to counties with special migrant classes up to $75 for each teacher so engaged. The state grant was conditioned upon the allocation by the county of an equal amount from the unapportioned school fund. Furthermore, the Revolving Fund was augmented by an apportionment from the general fund based upon the average daily attendance in migratory classes. This fund could be used only for the payment of teachers' salaries; while buildings, equipment, and supplies were furnished either by the school districts or the county. The 1937 Legislature repealed these provisions and authorized county superintendents

². Cal. Stats., 1921, ch. 691.
of schools to provide for migrant education from the regular unapportioned county elementary school fund.\(^1\)

The allotment of state funds based upon the average daily attendance of the preceding school year is not designed to care for sharp seasonal or yearly fluctuations in school enrollment caused by such factors as crop, weather, or market conditions. None of the state funds can be used for any purpose except the payment of teachers' salaries. The burden of purchasing land, constructing buildings and equipping them falls upon the local school district which may naturally hesitate to use local funds to provide permanent facilities for a transient population.

In several instances, cooperative relationships have been established between the Farm Security Administration and local school districts which contain federal camps. In Tulare County a vocational school has been built on land adjacent to a camp which was deeded to the county by the Farm Security Administration. Lumber for the building was furnished by NYA and labor by WPA. An elementary school is being held in the camp community building. At Arvin land was leased to the school district for a nominal sum and 3 one-room buildings have been constructed, which are now being used for the second year.\(^2\)

Until July, 1931, the encouragement and supervision of migrant schools was entrusted to a Bureau of Attendance and Migratory Schools under the Division of Special Education. At that time, however, its functions were combined with the Bureau of Mental Hygiene. The results through 1931 of the cooperative activity of the state and county departments of education were encouraging. The

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\(^1\) Cal. Stats., 1937, ch. 216.
\(^2\) Interview with Dr. Omer Mills. February 8, 1939.
state department reported, for instance, that: 1

There has been a constant improvement in the migratory schools of Fresno County during the last two years which is no doubt due to the following factors: The oversupply of teachers throughout the state has made it possible to select good teachers. The teachers are better prepared by our teacher training institutions for this type of teaching service. Attendance at the migratory schools has been much improved through the services of a supervisor of attendance and a school nurse. Rural supervision especially primary supervision has done much to raise the standards of the migratory schools. Each year the migratory schools are being better supplied with materials and equipment for constructive school work. Although library books available for use in migratory schools are always discards, the quantity and assortment is improving. Hot lunches served to children in the migratory schools have proven of great benefit, have increased their vitality, and have improved their school work.

There is no mention of the migratory school program in the report of the State Department for the biennium 1935-36.

The effect of malnutrition upon the ability of migrant children to engage in a full educational program has been indicated in the section on Health.

The hostile attitude of the resident community toward migrants has encouraged the establishment of special classes for their children. It is quite true that there are administrative advantages in not enrolling a highly mobile group in the regular classes. Nevertheless, the effect is to accentuate the feeling of isolation and separateness which are already developed from their camp life, the distinctively poorer clothing and the common taunts of resident children. This attitude, as well as the financial problem, indicates that only under a state administered and financed migratory school system will the educational needs of migratory children receive adequate attention.

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Delinquency

No study has been made of the comparative delinquency of the resident and migratory farm population of California, although many loose charges have been made. There is no doubt, however, that fertile ground for the growth of delinquency exists in the low income, crowded housing, meager education, community isolation, and injured morale of highly mobile agricultural laborers of the Pacific Coast. In recent years thousands of new migrants from other parts of the country have been torn from their communities and thrown into a different mode of life in this state.

Mr. R. W. Hollenberg, Assistant Director of the ninth region of the Farm Security Administration, is of the opinion, which is based upon his observations of the migratory labor camps in California, that there is little delinquency among migratory agricultural laborers when they participate in stable community life.

Community Assimilation

The problem of assimilating migrant laborers into community life is not confined to the dust bowl refugees who have moved into California during recent years. It is difficult for agricultural laborers, regardless of the length of their residence in the state, to give up the migrant life that takes them from a job in one section of the state to a job in another section and to

1. Since 1931 the California Bureau of Juvenile Research, at first organized as part of the Whittier State School, has been part of the State Department of Institutions. It is empowered to "carry on research into the causes and consequences of delinquency and mental deficiency, and shall inquire into social, educational and psychological problems relating thereto..." Cal. Welfare and Institutions Code (1937), sec. 506. The research work of the Bureau has been impaired by the lack of adequate appropriations and, as the result of its close working connections with state institutions, has largely confined its activities to the "field of child guidance demonstration in California."

2. Personal interview, February 10, 1939.
settle down in a community. It should be noted here that economists such as Paul S. Taylor and Carter Goodrich consider it economically and socially unsound to impose artificial restrictions upon the free movement of population in adjustment to economic and technological changes in the various regions of the country. The problem of assimilation then becomes of prime importance because of the danger to the community of allowing a large minority to remain permanently unassimilated.

The migratory labor system appears, in the first place, to be an integral part of the industrialized and intensive agricultural economy of the state. There is a definite economic need for mobile labor to supplement resident labor at the seasonal peaks. One alternative is to diversify crops in each crop area so that successive seasonal needs for labor will keep a fairly constant number of laborers employed the year round.

It is almost impossible, in the second place, for agricultural laborers to become farm owners and operators. California farm land sells at a high market price compared with farm land in other sections of the country. An irrigated and mechanized farm cannot be operated without easy access to capital which a recent farm laborer would not possess in competition with the commercial operators.¹

The Farm Security Administration has, in response to this situation, undertaken two experiments in rural rehabilitation. One is the location of migrant laborers in garden houses at Arvin, Indio and Shafter where they can raise their own subsistence and maintain a stable domicile. The fathers and older sons can use these homes as a base from which to migrate, when necessary.

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¹ The costs of undertaking part-time farming are discussed in R. L. Adams and J. L. Mann, Part-Time Farming for Income, University of California, Agricultural Exp. Station, Bull. #581, July, 1934.
to where agricultural employment is available. Some 100 of these houses, each located on one fourth of an acre of land, have been constructed. They are rented to agricultural laborers for $8.20 a month. Funds have been allocated for approximately 50 more cottages of this type at Farmersville, adjacent to the Tulare Migratory Labor Camp. There are 24 labor homes, without a farm, at Westley.

Cooperative farms are also being set up by the Farm Security Administration to enable the tenants to share the advantages of large-scale, mechanized cultivation of irrigated land. One type of cooperative farm was recently opened at Coolidge, Arizona. Sixty families, most of whom were formerly migratory, have been settled on a 4,200-acre tract of irrigated land in the Gila Valley at a cost of $500,000. Equipment, livestock and poultry cost approximately $65,000 more. Each family is a member of the operating corporation but owns none of the land. The project remains government property. Each head of a family is paid $50 monthly for working on the communal land and is to receive a proportionate share of the net profits from the sale of produce. The Farm Security Administration expects that ultimately each family will receive $1,200 annually, in addition to housing.\(^1\) The project will ultimately care for 30 additional families. The Farm Security Administration estimates the average cost per family for setting up the project will be approximately $7,000 as compared with an average cost of $14,000 for establishing an individual farm on desert land.\(^2\)

\(^1\) San Francisco Chronicle, January 5, 1939; "This World: Review of the Week," San Francisco Chronicle, January 15, 1939, p. 4. The Farm Security Administration announces that the purpose of the project is "to work out a successful agricultural enterprise that would encourage private capital to undertake similar ventures."

\(^2\) Interview with Dr. Omer Mills, February 8, 1939.
Another type of cooperative farm is the small subsistence farm developed on land adjacent to migratory labor camps. The Farm Security Administration plans during this year to develop such farming at Thornton, Yuba City, Gridley, Winters, and Firebaugh. They will care for approximately 155 families who will farm part-time on some 895 acres of land and work as laborers on nearby farms during seasons of demand. Occupants of the adjacent camps as well as resident farm laborers may become participating members in the cooperatives.

Counties may establish county housing authorities according to the provisions of the Low Cost Housing Acts passed in the 1938 extra session of the California Legislature. Under the powers granted to local housing authorities (1) to demolish, clear or remove buildings from any slum or blighted area and (2) to provide decent, safe and sanitary urban or rural dwellings for persons of low income, agricultural counties could undertake the construction and maintenance of housing facilities for resident and migratory agricultural laborers. The housing authorities are authorized to issue revenues bonds to be secured by the housing projects. The United States Housing Authority may lend a local housing authority up to 90 per cent of a project's cost. Only 10 per cent of the costs would have to be raised through local financing. The property of housing authorities is exempt from taxes and assessments, but they are empowered to make payments to governmental units in lieu of taxes. No county with a large number of agricultural laborers, except Los Angeles, has created a housing authority. None of the four county housing projects in Los Angeles County are designed for agricultural workers.

1. Interview with Dr. Omer Mills, February 8, 1939.
2. Cal. Stats. 1938, ch. 4, sec. 3 (i).
The rehabilitation approach to the problems of migrant labor removes the necessity for relief during off-seasons, increases the economic security of the laborers, and removes them and their families from the unsanitary and disorganized mode of migrant life. It gives them a chance to develop a community of interests and to participate on a basis of equality in communal activities such as work, recreation, adult education, the education of their children, and civic affairs.

Migrant laborers who, by the industrial character of California agriculture, are forced to be constantly on the move, may find it impossible to qualify as voters. The statutes require a residence of 90 days in the county and 40 days in the precinct in which a person claims his vote. Registration books are closed 39 days before an election. "Some county clerks," according to the subcommittee on agricultural labor of the California Research Committee on Labor Problems, "have debarred residents of migratory labor camps from registration as voters in California, even when they have lived in those camps the requisite length of time prescribed by statute."

III. CONCLUSION: LONG RANGE PLANNING

The inadequacy of dependable information on the economic and social aspects of agricultural labor is generally recognized. The ramifications of the problem are extensive. It is intimately interrelated with economic conditions of urban life, with the industrialized character of intensive agriculture,

3. See, for instance, the Pacific Coast Regional Committee of the Social Science Research Council, Sub-Committee on Seasonal Agricultural Labor in the West, Agricultural Labor in the Pacific Coast States: A Bibliography and Suggestions for Research (1938).
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