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REPORT  
to  
THE AMERICAN SECTION OF  
JOINT COMMISSION  
ON  
MEXICAN MIGRANT LABOR

Submitted  
by  
General Joseph M. Swing  
Commissioner  
of  
Immigration and Naturalization  
United States Department of Justice

September 3, 1954

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In 1953 shortly after taking office Attorney General Herbert Brownell, Jr. personally studied the situation and interviewed leaders of groups vitally concerned with the problem from different viewpoints. The responsibility for the enforcement of the United States immigration laws rested on the Department of Justice through its Immigration and Naturalization Service. General Joseph M. Swing was appointed Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization in May 1954. In June 1954 a well-planned, large-scale, and energetic campaign was started to stamp out the wetback practice and all its attendant evils but sight was not lost of the need of protecting the interests of the employers and workers and the national interests of the two Republics. In this paper we have tried to show in detail the results so far of this campaign and the present and future plans of the Immigration and Naturalization Service to enforce the immigration laws so as to control the wetback situation and facilitate the legal employment in the United States of migrant Mexican laborers.

I. WETBACK "DRIVE"

(1) Commendation

(a) United States Effort - Humane Operation

Approximately 750 immigration officers, border patrol inspectors and investigators, 300 cars and buses, 7 planes and other equipment were used in the wetback drive. Men and equipment were furnished by every immigration district. Since its inauguration the drive has netted over 140,000 wetbacks. Seventy-five thousand laborers have been legally contracted. The difference has been made up by domestic labor.

Although 140,000 aliens were affected by the operation every effort was made to make the drive as humane as possible. Families were not separated. Wives were not separated from their husbands or children from their parents. Almost all of the aliens arrested were single men or men who had left their families in Mexico. Aliens with long residence in the United States who had established roots were not molested. Opportunity was given to all to collect wages due and gather personal belongings and other property before being returned to Mexico. Throughout the entire operation every consideration has been given to make the removal of these aliens as painless as possible.

The efforts of the Immigration and Naturalization Service to deal humanely in those cases where the alien subject to deportation had dependents who were citizens of the United States and in the cases of deportable aliens who had long residence in the United States are explained in considerable detail in a reply sent by the Commissioner to Congressman Lloyd M. Bentsen, Jr. on August 24, 1954 a copy of which is shown on the next following pages.

Since the apprehension of wetbacks was accelerated beginning in June 1954, approximately 140,000 have been arrested and returned to Mexico. This number is two or three times as great as the number in the same months in previous years. While the campaign was under way, many wetbacks returned to Mexico to escape apprehension and their number at least equals and undoubtedly exceeds the number apprehended.

In the spring of 1954 after the disastrous floods hit in the areas of Laredo and Hidalgo, Texas in the lower Rio Grande Valley, thousands of Mexican residents in the adjacent areas of Mexico were without food or funds or means to earn money. An emergency program was needed immediately. American and Mexican authorities worked out a plan whereby these destitute people could enter the United States at once to work. Several thousand of them were immediately contracted for work on the Texas side where they were urgently needed. This gave

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Dear Mr. Bentsen:

Many thanks for your letter of August 12, 1954. I am glad you wrote me concerning the so-called "19-c hardship cases" as it gives me an opportunity to spell out, somewhat in detail, our policy relative to the family groups.

First of all, let me say that as to the single Mexican worker, we are requiring such an individual to leave the United States. As to the alien married man whose family is composed entirely of aliens, we are also requiring his departure from the United States.

In those cases involving families with members who are United States citizens, an entirely different situation is presented. You will recall that under Section 19(c) of the 1917 Immigration Act, as amended, aliens with citizen spouses and children in the United States were entitled to apply for suspension of deportation. A large number of such cases were adjusted to a permanent resident status. However, for about a year or so prior to the enactment of the present Immigration and Nationality Act, Congress, in many instances, refused to agree to suspension in family cases where a visa was readily obtainable from an American Consul. This is particularly true in cases involving Mexicans where there was no quota limitation and the individuals lived reasonably close to the border. As a result, many suspension cases involving Mexicans were returned by the Congress to the Service for administrative action.

In a sizable number of the cases returned by the Congress for the reason stated above, the individuals have been successful in obtaining immigrant visas. I should mention that the greatest stumbling block to these individuals' obtaining visas was the fact that they had first to obtain a passport from the Mexican Government. Due to the long delays in obtaining such documents and the hardship this was imposing upon the individuals and their families, this Service and the State Department agreed to a waiver of the passport requirement in the cases of aliens having citizen spouses and citizen minor children. This step has gone a long way in contributing to a permanent solution of the problem in individual cases.

In a further effort to assist the alien members of these family groups in obtaining permanent residence, I want you to know that we are giving them ample opportunity to file an application with the American Consul for an immigrant visa; and, of a bona fide effort is being made in that regard, the individual alien is given sufficient time in which to depart to obtain his visa. Further, to assist the individual in this type of case in obtaining his visa without waiting for an extended period of time in Mexico, we are hoping that a procedure, including a Public Health examination, can be worked out whereby the alien's admissibility to the United States is established before his departure from this country.

This is to assure you that we will do everything possible, consistent with law and regulation, to alleviate hardship in these family cases.

I will remember your kind invitation on my next visit to the Valley. Kind regards,

Sincerely,

COMMISSIONER

Honorable Lloyd M. Bentzen, Jr.  
House of Representatives  
Washington 25, D. C.

the victims an opportunity quickly to earn money to help rebuild their homes and unite their families. It also gave the American growers much needed help. This type of mutual endeavor between the two countries has a salutary effect in many ways.

During August the Immigration and Naturalization Service office at San Antonio summarized the concensus of its key men as follows:

1. There are fewer illegal resident aliens in the Lower Rio Grande Valley now than at any time in the past decade.
2. The drive is carried on in a well organized manner.

On August 25, 1954 the office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service at San Francisco reported the following data:

"During May 1954 our border patrol officers were apprehending 9.0 Mexican nationals per man per day. The number of illegal Mexican nationals in this district was obviously then very large when each patrol officer in this district could average that many apprehensions per day. During the months of June and July there were removed from this district to Mexico 19,620 Mexican nationals, and at the present writing our border patrol officers and officers assigned to border patrol activities are apprehending only 2.5 Mexican nationals per man per day.

"It is believed that the above figures show very clearly that a large number of Mexican nationals have been removed from this district; that they are not getting back in any appreciable numbers; that those that are left in the district are becoming harder to locate; and that it is now a question of being able to ferret out individual illegal aliens rather than large groups as was the case before the drive began."

The following telegram was sent to General Joseph M. Swing on July 27, 1954 by William A. Burkett, Director of the California Department of Employment:

"Governor Goodwin J. Knight has requested me to convey to you and your staff our sincere thanks for your excellent work in removing illegal entrants from California during past several weeks. This Department and your regional officers estimated approximately one third of wetbacks discovered in California were being employed in California industry. During first month of your concentrated activity in California our estimates show claims for unemployment insurance benefits dropped 15 percent, as compared with normal drop during prior years same period of time of 5 percent. We attribute additional 10 percent



drop to fact our American unemployed citizens who were drawing benefits were referred to suitable jobs vacated by wetbacks. We estimate this saving to California employers and taxpayers to be approximately \$325,000 per week.

"We congratulate you and we are happy to have been of service to your agency in the recent wetback drive. We hope you continue your good work and emphasize that your branch of the government should continue to maintain check on the American-Mexican border to prevent illegal entrants from entering this country. We also hope you continue your drive in California and elsewhere to eliminate illegal entrants who are one of the major causes for unemployment of American citizens."

On June 14, 1954 Director Burkett sent the following telegram to Attorney General Herbert Brownell:

"This is to offer every possible assistance to your efforts to rid California industry and agriculture of wetback aliens and other illegal entrants. It is Governor Knight's view and mine that the jobs now held by persons who are illegally in the United States should be made available to our legal residents who are unemployed. Illegal entrants displace California workers industry and agriculture and adversely affect working conditions contribute to the rate of crime and spread of communicable disease. We estimate that there are 70,000 illegal alien wetbacks holding industrial jobs in California in addition to several thousand in California agriculture. I wish to offer you the assistance of our Department and the assistance of 75 investigators and 34 farm placement personnel to aid you in your enforcement efforts in California."

## I. WETBACK "DRIVE"

### (1) Commendation

#### (b) Mexican Effort

As is stated in more detail on page 78 of this paper, the Mexican government officers took custody of wetbacks expelled from the United States during the drive and transported them under guard by train or bus from the international border to the interior of Mexico. The Mexican Government defrayed the cost of this move. This "lift" is continuing.

General Swing has stated that plans are being considered whereby Mexican aliens being removed from the United States would be taken by United States military vessels from the Brownsville, Texas area to Tampico or Veracruz, Mexico and from San Diego to Mazatlan or Acapulco, Mexico. It is understood that the Mexican authorities would disperse some such deportees inland from these four seaports and would endeavor to resettle others in the area of the seaports inasmuch as an increase of the population in such areas is a part of Mexico's long range plan.

A boat-lift operation is scheduled to begin about September 6, 1954. The boat will ply from Port Isabel, Texas to Veracruz, Mexico. On each trip about 800 illegal Mexicans will be transported. The boat will also call in Mexico at the port of Tampico. Those Mexican ports each are able to receive as many as one thousand illegals per day. Mexico is anxious that this boat-lift be placed in operation as it wants to settle qualified workers in those areas to build up the population. Definite plans for a similar boat-lift from the San Diego, California area to ports on the west coast of Mexico have not yet been formulated. A boat-lift operation is a cleaner and cheaper operation than a bus- or train-lift. The boat-lift would alleviate the onerous burden on Mexico of hauling illegals to the interior by train or bus. The operation can be handled in a more orderly way by boat. The boat-lift, like the other lifts, is for the purpose of keeping potential wetbacks away from the international boundary area. The Mexican Government is cooperating in breaking up the present congregating of potential wetbacks in Mexico in the international boundary area.

## I. WETBACK "DRIVE"

### (1) Commendation

#### (c) Cooperation of Farmers and Employers

It is to be emphasized that the farmers cooperated splendidly with the Immigration and Naturalization Service in the wholesale removal of wetbacks from the United States. Many of the farmers realized that the wetback practice was economically and socially unsound and as law-abiding patriotic citizens were anxious that the evil be corrected. They did demand, and rightfully so, that the illegal laborers would be replaced by lawfully contracted laborers and they looked to this Service for facilitation of the furnishing of an adequate supply of legal labor.

The vast majority of farmers and other employers of illegal labor cooperated wholeheartedly. Realizing the Immigration and Naturalization Service meant business and realizing that their illegal labor could be replaced by legal labor, they were in favor of the exchange. Local police authorities in all areas of the operation whenever called upon and even voluntarily offered their needed and appreciated assistance.

From the standpoint of the employer of agricultural labor in the Lower Valley of Texas, it should be borne in mind throughout this whole paper that in the past limited steps had been taken to control the entry and use of wetback labor. Never before 1954 had such a firm stand been taken by the United States Government in this direction. When the employers of illegal labor realized that the government was taking a positive step to control that situation and that it would be necessary for them to contract for labor in accordance with the Mexican Agreement, a large majority of the farmers in many localities cooperated with the government. Steps were taken by the employers to contract legal labor in large numbers and in those instances where the farmer for years had been employing wetback labor and this labor was particularly qualified in some way or another, such as tractor driver, irrigator, etc., the farmer came to the Service in an effort to have these so-called "specials" legalized. In recognition of the problems of the farmers and the whole general background of wetback labor, the practice that prevailed in the California area of allowing the employer a certain limited time in which to get the so-called "specials" legalized under the Mexican Agreement was adopted. Through this recognition of the government's desire to rid the Valley of illegal aliens and the cooperative effort of many of the growers in this respect, it is a satisfying note to make in conclusion that not one of the growers could say or complain that he was not provided with adequate legal labor.

Illustrative of the attitude of large groups of growers is a copy of a circular distributed to 8,000 farmers by the California State Chamber of Commerce (Agriculture and Industry) dated July 7, 1954. A copy of that circular is on the page next following.

The Southern Pacific Railroad on August 3, 1954 issued the circular on the subject, copy of which is included on the page second next following.

CALIFORNIA STATE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
Agriculture and Industry

Offices: Sacramento Santa Rosa San Francisco Stockton Fresno  
Los Angeles Washington, D. C.

350 Bush Street, San Francisco 4, California

July 7, 1954

"WETBACKS"

As you are aware, the U. S. Immigration and Naturalization Service has launched a sustained drive in California to remove all illegal aliens, and "wetbacks" in particular, from this State.

The premises of any employer may be examined by Immigration officials in their search for such aliens. California employers, as good citizens, should welcome such an examination. Some of them have voluntarily requested the Immigration Service to inspect their premises in the interest of avoiding possible disruption of work schedules.

The employment of illegal aliens per se is not at present an offense. However, to knowingly harbor, shield from detection or transport an illegal alien carries a severe Federal penalty.

Should you suspect any employee of being in this country illegally, the nearest office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service should be notified, or the employee should be advised to return to his native country immediately in the hope of securing a visa to return to this country on a legal basis.

You may desire to review your employment practices with a view to checking more closely on applicants' credentials, such as alien registration identification cards, naturalization papers, birth certificates, etc.

If there are further questions, please contact the nearest office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

James Mussatti  
General Manager

C O P Y

August 3, 1954

Mr. A. S. McCann  
 Mr. M. L. Jennings  
 Mr. V. E. Anderson  
 Mr. J. A. McKinnon  
 Mr. L. P. Hopkins

Mr. J. J. Jordan  
 Mr. W. E. Eastman  
 Mr. P. D. Robinson  
 Mr. G. A. Bays  
 Mr. W. R. Adair

Please refer to my joint letter of April 8, 1952, file as above, regarding Senate Bill S.1851, amending Section 8 of the Immigration Act.

Currently the Immigration Service is conducting a full-scale roundup of Mexican nationals in this country illegally, which has included checks of our section and extra gangs at various points on the railroad. It has been called to our attention by the District Director, U. S. Immigration & Naturalization Service, San Francisco, that Immigration officers have reported that notice or warning has been given to "wet backs" of the approach of trains or vehicles carrying Immigration officers.

Please make it known quickly to all concerned that section foremen or anyone else giving notice or warning to any suspected illegal alien or Mexican national of the approach of Immigration officers may be subject to prosecution for a felony and, upon conviction, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding \$2,000 or imprisonment for five years, or both.

Acknowledge.

R. E. Hallawell

CC: Mr. E. E. Mayo  
 Mr. H. W. Myers  
 Mr. Geo. L. Buland  
 Mr. A. J. McKenna

C O P Y

I. WETBACK "DRIVE"

(1) Commendation

(d) Commendation - other (Los Angeles report)

In addition to the previously noted significant factors under the general heading of "Commendation", it is believed that the following excerpt from the report submitted August 26, 1954 by the district office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service at Los Angeles is significant in that it offers a different approach and concerns the lower California area.

"Prior to the commencement of the special border patrol operation, the wetback situation in this district presented known perplexing enforcement problems. The Central Office was kept fully informed. Apprehensions kept soaring and it became obvious that unless steps were taken to increase the pitifully small operating district border patrol force, the situation would get worse. It was no longer a district problem but a Service one.

'Commencing June 17, 1954, a special force of 491 investigators and patrol inspectors were assigned to this task in addition to the district border patrol force of about 240. The objectives were two-fold: (1) to rid the area of illegal aliens and (2) to recapture control of the line by preventing further mass illegal entries. The operation achieved both objectives within a relatively short time. It was done by concentrating a sufficient number of officers on the line to seal the border, coupled with the maintenance of strong road blocks behind the line, mopping up operations throughout the interior, and the removal of apprehended aliens into Mexico away from the border.

'The operation, heralded by a wide publicity program, caused thousands of wetbacks to flee to Mexico and elsewhere to escape apprehension. On the first day of the drive, June 17, 1954 apprehensions for the entire State of California were 2158 and they dropped steadily thereafter to 1150 on June 30, 1954. Normal operations had previously netted about 2000 a day. Present apprehensions average about 400 a day with a continuing downward trend.

'It is the concensus of the key men engaged in the work that control of the situation has been achieved and that it can be maintained provided an adequate permanent border patrol force and equipment are made available and provided further that the removal of apprehended aliens to the interior of Mexico is continued. In his memorandum of August 7, 1954 the Chief Patrol Inspector at El Centro reported that the line watchers are holding up well in spite of the fact that there has been no lessening of the build-up of potential crossers in Mexicali, Mexico. This is due to the fact that both local officers and officers on detail are becoming more skillful in line-watch operations, and as this skill increases, they are showing more enthusiasm for this type of work. It is considered, however, that the real test of the efficiency of our line-watch operation is yet to come and will be experienced soon when cotton picking will commence in full swing. It is his opinion that our present force of officers will be able to contain and halt any attempts at large scale entries. It is the concensus of officers in this district that the most important single element in this "drive" is the bus-lift to remove aliens from the border area and that almost equally important was the availability of enough men and the determination to stop the entry of wetbacks at the border. A continuation of the holding operation now in effect properly supplemented by sufficient personnel and material will prevent the illegal entry situation from returning to the condition as it existed prior to this "drive".

'The special operation has also had its effect on smuggling activities and the illegal transportation of aliens. This is evidenced by the fact that whereas such apprehensions averaged more than 125 a month prior to the "drive", in June of 1954 they dropped to 88 and dropped further to 33 for the month of July and to 13 for the first twenty-two days of August. This seems to establish that a tight control of the line and maintenance of strong road blocks tend to discourage criminal violations of the immigration laws.

#### "REACTION OF THE PRESS

'Generally, the press has been very favorable to the "drive" and its accomplishments. In an editorial, the Monday, July 26th issue of "The Bakersfield Californian" under the heading "Random Notes" stated:

"One argument in support of the deporting of illegal Mexican labor is seen in the report of William A. Burkett, state director of employment, who reveals that a large decline in unemployment insurance payments has occurred, much larger than accountable by the seasonal trend. Claims have dropped from 134,784 for the week ending June 17, 1954 to 114,838 for the week ending July 8. It was a decrease of 15 per cent, com-



pared with a drop of 4 per cent in the same period last year.

"Burkett asserted that the decrease, exceeding any in previous records for the same period could be due to unemployed persons taking jobs formerly held by Mexicans who were reported because they were in this country illegally. Many authorities have held that use of wetbacks served to increase unemployment conditions among American laboring ranks, increase relief and tax costs and cause other expensive trouble. The Fresno board of supervisors and others in the valley have held this view, officially, and Burkett's report seems to bear them out.

"It certainly costs the taxpayer a good deal to have officers of the Immigration Service spend so much time rounding up the wetbacks and transporting them back to the border. Local authorities were put to considerable expense, also, which reflects directly on the tax bills here."

'In an editorial headed "The Wetback Roundup", the Imperial Valley Press of June 16, 1954 said:

"Notice that the U.S. Border Patrol is planning an all-out drive to rid the Southwest of wetbacks brings this everlasting problem again in focus in Imperial Valley. We hope that this is not a hit-and-miss proposition, but a sincere effort to clear up the situation.

"While we cannot honestly agree with farmers that they 'have to use wets,' we certainly are aware of the factors involved and do not wish to see the farmers singled out in this matter.

"The avowed intention of the U.S. Border Patrol, as stated by its chief Harlon Carter, to stamp out use of wetbacks in industry and wherever they are found, is the type of approach that we favor.

"It is the second step undertaken by the Eisenhower administration since Attorney General Herbert Brownell visited the Valley last August. The first step was introduction of a workable program for hiring legal Mexican workers, which was started in January.

"This program has made it easier for farmers to employ legal help. Many new members have been noted by the Imperial Valley Farmers Association, processing group for legal labor.

"If the Mexican wetback roundup is an honest endeavor by the administration, to be followed by a realistic, impartial approach to the problem, we heartily endorse the plan."

'The Tuesday, June 22nd issue of "The Bakersfield Californian" under an article headed "Employment Director Lauds Wetback Drive" stated:

"California farmers who have been employing wetback Mexicans are showing an increased interest in hiring resident workers or legally contracted Mexican Nationals if local workers are not available. Director of Employment William A. Burkett said today in Sacramento in commenting on the state-wide roundup of wetbacks now being carried on by the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service.

"Assistant Director J. O. Reimel and I accompanied federal, state, county and city officers under the leadership of Robert Lowery of the Sacramento immigration service office, when the drive opened in the Sacramento area,' Burkett said. 'I personally talked with several employers who told me they plan to seek their farm workers through the state employment service in the future. Reports we have had from other areas in the state show that farmers throughout California are taking the same attitude.'

"Burkett pointed out that a number of farmer associations in California had pledged cooperation in the roundup prior to the beginning of the drive.

"Another aspect of the raid in which I was personally interested was the number of wetbacks who held social security cards,' the employment director said. 'Many of the aliens I talked with had such cards although they did not need them for farm work. Denial of social security cards to illegal aliens would do much to wipe out the problem because it would shut the aliens out of industrial jobs. I am in full agreement with Atty. Gen. Herbert L. Brownell's views that Congress should enact legislation which would authorize court injunctions to restrain employers from continuing to hire aliens illegally in this country when the employer has knowledge that the alien is an illegal entrant. In addition, the California State Veterans Employment Committee has recommended that legislation be enacted that would penalize those who hire illegal aliens.'

"The employment director had high praise for the 'excellent work of the border patrolmen, state highway patrolmen, sheriffs' officers and local police.'

"This roundup of illegal aliens is one of the best things that has happened in California in a long time insofar as the working people of the state are concerned. Removal of the wetbacks will open a large number of jobs to resident

workers who are now unemployed. Assistant U.S. Atty. Gen. Warren Olney III and I discussed this problem in Washington a few weeks ago and I am particularly gratified that the federal government acted so promptly and vigorously to meet what has in recent months been a growing menace to the economic welfare of California,' Burkett concluded."

I. WETRACK "DRIVE"

(2) Beneficial effects

(a) Labor's Report

A copy of the report in question is enclosed next hereunder for convenient reference.

Report on Mexican Labor Situation as Result of  
Immigration Service Wetback Cleanout

The Immigration and Naturalization Service started an intensive drive to clean out wetbacks in the later part of June. I & N S has deported 84,378 Mexican illegals since start of the drive on June 17 and report 60,456 voluntary departures for a grand total of 144,834 illegals removed from the United States. It is now possible to make some appraisal of the effect on the labor market in border states as a result of the highly successful drive by Immigration and Naturalization Service.

In California, the drive started at a period when there is comparatively little labor demand. The most immediate effect of the Immigration and Naturalization Service operation was to increase membership in many associations. The increases were substantial, ranging in some cases upward of fifty percent increase in membership. Users of illegal labor, fearing activities of the Border Patrol, to insure their position to obtain labor, joined associations, reversing a trend to drop memberships, and rely upon illegal rather than legal labor.

The first effect on labor contracting was to increase recontracting of workers. To illustrate, notification of return of 2,500 workers actually resulted in contract termination of only 500, the other 2,000 workers being recontracted. In the month of July the first effects on initial contracts were felt, with the El Centro Reception Center contracting 9,624 workers in contrast to 2,778 for the same period last year. On the basis of present indications, it is estimated by the Reception Center that during August and September, there will be demand for approximately 35,000 Mexican contract workers compared to contracting of 25,000 last year. The increase is attributable solely to the replacement of illegal workers by contract workers.

In the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, where the drive by Immigration and Naturalization Service started when cotton picking was getting under way, the resultant demand for legal workers to replace wets, is very dramatically illustrative of the success of the drive. At the peak of employment for the months from July to December 1953, there were less than 700 contract workers employed in the Lower Valley, that number dwindling to zero in August when cotton picking is at its height. Since July 1, the Reception Center at Hidalgo has contracted 50,326 to date, with a total of 46,935 workers contracted during the month of July. Since the opening of the center at Hidalgo on April 21, 575 workers have been recontracted.

The problem of supplying adequate labor to the Lower Valley was made more difficult by the attitude of some employers, many of whom made inquiry at the Reception Center about the length of time that would be required to secure labor and then stated that they weren't going to order labor until they were sure the Immigration and Naturalization Service would actually clean the Valley of wets. One large Gin association prior to the drive indicated they were willing to contract labor, but stated they would not contract and pay the higher rate until they were sure that other farmers in the Valley would not be able to pick their crop with the cheaper wetback labor. Other employers made no secret of the fact that they did not believe that the Farm Placement Service could supply sufficient labor, and that when that eventuality occurred they would be able to again employ wetbacks.

Subsequently, many farmers expressed their surprise and satisfaction at the ability of the two Governments, Mexican and American, to supply labor and the ease with which they could procure such labor. They had

been impressed before the innumerable stories of red tape and difficulties in getting legal labor. The customary payment to illegals for cotton picking in the Lower Valley has been substantially below the rate for contract Mexican workers. The Border Patrol's assistance to illegal workers in leaving the country and replacement of that major labor force with contract workers, also brought out American workers to pick cotton in larger numbers than before, the Texas Employment Commission reported. The domestic labor force in the Valley this season picking cotton is estimated at 35,000 compared to a reported employment of 19,780 in 1953 for the same period. American workers could not and would not compete with wetback workers in the past with the result that the domestic labor force has been a negligible factor for many years. Americans residing in the Valley have been accustomed to moving to other states and other areas in Texas where the wage was not lowered by the presence of hordes of illegal workers.

The Mexican Government, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Department of Agriculture and the Custom Service all gave unlimited cooperation in making it possible to bring in the large number of workers in the brief period of time, needed for Valley crops.

As to the quality of the labor, reports are that it has been good generally. Some workers from higher altitudes and cooler climate were unable to stand the heat and returned to Mexico, but a number of farmers have indicated that the number returning for that reason was about the same proportion as the number of wetbacks who would return to Mexico each year for the same reason. Another indication of the quality of the labor is the fact that on August 5, the Lower Valley reported 318,219 bales of cotton

ginned this year compared to 255,161 bales for the same period last year. This factor is not decisive because the crop is better this year. However, in the past people in the Valley have reported that 150,000 wets were needed to pick their crop. This number would include, of course, both women and children who are not as productive as physically able, adult males.

Facilities at the newly opened Reception Center at Hidalgo will be improved this fall. It was not felt earlier that the expense of expansion was warranted until there was concrete evidence that the Lower Valley employers would actually contract workers in substantial numbers.

Immigration Service activities at other points on the border have not resulted in the same forceful demonstration of the effectiveness of the drive for the reason that the heavy concentrations of illegals have been on the two extreme ends of the border. Nonetheless it is expected that the Farm Placement Service estimate of importation need for 350,000 Mexican workers this fiscal year will be on the conservative side. It was estimated that there would be need for approximately 90,000 contract workers in the Lower Valley alone, and going back to the middle of June, a total of 59,937 workers have already been contracted, with several peaks of employment to be reached before the end of the next fiscal year.

Agriculture in the Lower Valley produces on a year around basis. The big bulk of the labor in the Lower Valley will be returned before September 1, the normal date for plow-up because of pink boll worm control.



I. WETBACK "DRIVE"

(2) Beneficial Effects .

(b) Drop in costs to taxpayer

The California State Employment Director reports that since the wetback drive began the replacement of local Californians in jobs has reduced the unemployment claims a total of 30,000 a week resulting in a weekly savings to the State of California of \$325,000. He also estimates that California unemployment will be less than 5% (this figure is considered full employment) but best of all he attributes this to the elimination of the wetback whose place is being taken by local labor. The Director of Kern County California Charities has stated that the elimination of the wetback would doubtlessly reduce the number of illegitimate children who become charity cases after the wetback father absconds or is forced to leave the area.

I. WETBACK "DRIVE"

(2) Beneficial Effects

(c) Drop in Felony Rate

The Los Angeles district reports that since the wetback drive throughout the district there has been a marked decline in police arrests of wetbacks. For example, at Bakersfield, California in June 1953 police officers arrested 240 immigration violators. In May 1954, 72; in June 1954 up to June 17 when the drive started, 28, and from June 17 to July 26, 1954, a period of over a month, only 7, the last such arrest being on July 2. If there is a comparable decline of police arrests for immigration violators in all areas of the operation, thousands of police man hours of work are being saved for other law enforcement duties. Not only have arrests for immigration violations dropped considerably but there also has been a decline in felony arrests this year. The District Attorney's office of Imperial County, California reports "that a casual study of the figures and reference to our calendars showing a processing of criminals for last month (July) indicates a notable falling off of felony charges against wetbacks during the period of the heavy drive. It is evident therefore that the drive had a beneficial effect on the local crime situation. However, we have no way of knowing what will happen if the drive should be noticeably relaxed but we can guess."

In mid-August a survey was made in that part of Texas commonly referred to as the lower Rio Grande Valley (Counties of Starr, Willacy, Cameron, Hidalgo) to determine what effect if any the wholesale expulsion of wetbacks had made on the felony rate. It was concluded that there had been a marked decrease of about 75%. Sheriffs, Deputy Sheriffs, Constables, and Police Chiefs were interviewed and a synopsis of those interviews follows.

Rene A. Solis, Sheriff, Starr County, Rio Grande City, Texas

Sheriff Solis was interviewed and he sent me a letter, copy of which is attached, which reads, in part, as follows: "in regards to Crime Reduction changes that have occurred since the drive to curb Wet-back entry into the United States I wish to state that a very marked reduction has been noted by my department in both major and minor crimes since the drive has went into effect."

Tom Wingert, Chief Deputy Sheriff, Hidalgo County, Edinburg, Texas

Mr. Wingert stated that misdemeanors in Hidalgo County have been reduced approximately 75% since the wetback drive started. He added that this does not give the entire picture in relation to law enforcement, inasmuch as the decrease in misdemeanor cases has permitted his officers to devote additional time to investigating more serious crimes.

R. H. Gilliam, Chief of Police, Edinburg, Texas

Chief Gilliam has lived in Hidalgo County for 32 years, and for 15 years prior to his being appointed Chief of Police at Edinburg about a year ago, served as a Deputy Sheriff in Hidalgo County. He estimates about an 80% reduction in crime in Edinburg since the drive against wetbacks started. Weekends are generally the busiest time for the Edinburg Police Department, and Chief Gilliam stated that three weeks ago 28 arrests were made, two weeks ago 18 were made, and last week the arrests fell to 14. He was very enthusiastic about the drive, and stated that his officers could not possibly enforce the laws were it not for the fact that a number of patrol inspectors are regularly stationed at Edinburg.

Truett Jordan, Chief of Police, Mercedes, Texas

Was highly complimentary regarding the wetback drive, and stated that his only fear was that the Immigration and Naturalization Service would not continue to keep sufficient personnel available to combat the illegal entrants. Chief Jordan stated that during the past three years about 90% of the arrests made by his officers were aliens illegally in this country. Since the drive started he estimated a 40% drop in misdemeanor cases.

Joe Loftin, Chief of Police, Lyford, Texas

Stated that the wetback drive had been of great assistance to him and that at the labor camp near Lyford there were approximately 600 braceros, but no house had been broken into in Lyford during the past several weeks.

John L. Guseman, Chief of Police, Harlingen, Texas

Mr. Guseman is very favorably disposed toward the wetback drive. He stated that one of the first things that he did after being appointed Chief was to make a drive on the immoral class of aliens in Harlingen. He stated that he has always had very good relations with the border patrol and that they work very closely with them. As to the crime situation, he advised that his office keeps no breakdown on crime figures as to wetbacks and citizens or legal residents. However, he

stated that July and August are always the greatest wetback crime months. The overall figures on the number of cases cleared by investigation of Class I crimes (i.e., rape, murder, robbery, etc.) for 1953 amounted to 22%. For the first seven months of 1954, this figure rose to 55%. Guseman attributes this in part, at least, to a decrease in the number of wetbacks due to the drive. He stated that the hardest crimes to solve are those committed by wetbacks who then head for Mexico. In addition, he mentioned a number of good comments he has heard on the behavior of the braceros. One owner of a bar reported that he had been surprised at good conduct of the braceros. This man stated that before, when his place of business had been patronized by wetbacks, there were many fights and arguments when an alien was cut off from further drinks after he had been deemed to have had enough. The man continued that since his customers are now nearly all braceros, their behavior has been exemplary and he has practically no trouble. The total of all arrests made in Harlingen during August 1953 was 163; while for the same period in 1954 arrests dropped to 151. While Guseman stated that he is sure that the bracero program has greatly influenced the percentage of cases solved, particularly burglaries and robberies, he stated that it was still too soon to be able to determine the full effect that the wetback drive has had on the local crime problem.

Lt. T. Cavazos, Police Department, Brownsville, Texas

Lt. Cavazos is Acting Chief of Police during the vacation absence of Chief Gus O. Krausse. He stated that it was his estimate that 80% of the crimes investigated by this department were committed by wetbacks. Since July 15 this percentage has been reduced by two-thirds. He advised that his men have instructions to pick up all wetbacks, and that on the 11 PM to 8 AM shift, prior to the drive, an average of 16 or 17 aliens were arrested each night. Since the beginning of the drive, this number has now dropped to zero. In addition, he claimed that there were a large number of burglaries and robberies committed by the wetbacks. Now the perpetrators of such crimes are found to be local people. Another item which pleases the department is the fact that the investigator who was formerly assigned to a river patrol can now be released for other duties.

Mr. Lee Adams, Chief of Police, Donna, Texas

States that due to the elimination of the wetbacks in his town there has been a decrease in crime of at least thirty percent. Has very little trouble among the braceros--a few fights now and then among themselves. States that he believes local business is better due to the braceros as they come into town more than the wetbacks did. States he is very much in favor of getting rid of the wets as it enables his men to concentrate on routine duties. States he always has and will continue in the future to apprehend wetbacks and hold them for immigration.

Mr. Joe Wren, City Patrolman, Mercedes, Texas

States considerable decrease in crime rate since departure of wets from his town. Would not attempt to estimate the percent of reduction but states that as far as law-enforcement is concerned we are very much better off without the wets. Has very little trouble with the braceros. States that the current drive has allowed him to spend more time on routine duties since he does not have to worry with wets. Very much in favor of current drive.

On the page next following is a letter from the Sheriff of Starr County, Texas dated August 21, 1954 concerning the marked reduction in crime attributed to the wetback drive.

In the State of California many law enforcement officers were interviewed in August 1954 by officers of the San Francisco district of the Immigration and Naturalization Service concerning the effect on their problems which the accelerated drive on wetbacks had produced and a synopsis of the interviews with those officers follows.

The Visalia, California Police Department reports that petty thefts and thefts from cars have dropped to a negligible figure due to the absence of wetbacks. In addition, disturbance reports from Mexican settlements are reduced to practically none.

Madera Police Inspector Camey, Madera, California advises that their arrests, particularly for petty thefts, have dropped very considerably. This officer also volunteered the information that he has heard many compliments from the citizenry on our operation.

Undersheriff Norman Robb, Tulare County Sheriff's Office, reports their law enforcement problems decidedly decreased since our drive, and he expressed the hope that we continue. Disturbance calls from Mexican communities have been practically eliminated.

Sergeant Meeks, Fresno Police Department, advises that arrests in Fresno show a substantial decrease. As an example, wetbacks charged with vagrancy and arrested in July 1953 were 256. In July 1954 there were 156.

DR. M. J. RODRIGUEZ  
COUNTY JUDGE

JOSE S. MINOJOSA  
COUNTY CLERK

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

M. S. OLIVARES  
PRECINCT NO. 1

M. A. GUERRA  
PRECINCT NO. 2

J. M. LONGORIA  
PRECINCT NO. 3

E. A. MONTALVO  
PRECINCT NO. 4



ERNESTO TREYING  
DEPUTY CLERK

DR. RENE A. SOLIS  
SHERIFF

EPHRAIM A. DURAN  
ASSISTANT SHERIFF

AUGIA S. McLELLAN  
PROBATION

FRANK R. NYE, JR.  
COUNTY ATTORNEY

ARNULFO S. MARTINEZ  
COUNTY SHERIFF DEPUTY

J. M. MAY  
COUNTY SHERIFF DEPUTY  
AND EX-SHERIFF

# STARR COUNTY

Rio Grande City  
Texas

August 21, 1954

Mr. John Holland,  
District Director, U.S. Immigration & Naturalization,  
Service,  
Federal Bldg.,  
San Antonio, Texas.

Dear Mr. Holland;

In compliance with your recent request in regards to Crime Reduction changes that have occurred since the drive to curb Wet-back entry into the United States I wish to state that a very marked reduction has been noted by my department in both major and minor crimes since the drive has went into affect.

Trusting that this is the information your office desires, I am,

Very truly yours,

*Rene A. Solis*  
Rene A. Solis,  
Sheriff, Starr County,  
Rio Grande City, Texas

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RECEIVED  
AUG 23 1954  
U.S. DISTRICT DIRECTOR  
Immigration & Naturalization Service  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Chief of Police R. H. McSwain, Los Banos, California, reports a definite drop in drunk and vagrancy arrests since our drive. He also reports that arrests of Mexicans without driver's licenses have dropped to nothing, whereas formerly the wetback with a driver's license was a rarity.

Undersheriff Haney, Madera County Sheriff's Office, reports that thefts, highway violations, and hit-and run accidents have shown a considerable drop, which he contributes directly to the scarcity of wetbacks. He also states that complaints from Mexican beer parlors have dropped to none as have also complaints from the unemployed that they are unable to secure jobs because of wetbacks. He further states that the drive was very favorably accepted by the people in his county.

Undersheriff Latoracca, Merced County Sheriff's Office, states that crime in general has had a marked decrease, and particularly petty larceny.

Sheriff Tracy, Fresno County, California reports that advice received from constables is to the effect that police problems due to wetbacks have shown a big decrease.

Sergeant Earl Sked, California Highway Patrol, states that there do not appear to be any wetbacks driving on the highways since the drive got well under way. He states that in the past every fifth violation cited was a wetback. During June 1954 his unit booked 15 Mexicans to this Service. In July there were none, and in August only one so far.

Undersheriff Victor V. Tibbs, Monterey County Sheriff's Office, reports a material decrease in petty thefts within the county.

Chief Frank Osmer, Watsonville Police Department, Watsonville, California states that he has seen little change in the number of arrests of Mexican nationals, but he stated that in his opinion the legally contracted braceros were less inclined to be involved in arrests, as they were not living in fear of being arrested by the Immigration Service.

The South San Francisco Police Department reports that all illegal Mexicans seem to have been cleaned out of their city.

Lieutenant Walker, in charge of the California Highway Patrol Office, Sacramento area, advised that hit-run violations have always been a problem in that area, but that there has been a decided decrease in these cases since the wetback drive began.

Chief Jack O'Keefe, Stockton, California Police Department, states that his vice squad has reported a marked decrease in the activities of prostitutes who formerly operated in that part of the city frequented by wetbacks. He also states that narcotic violations have declined and that petty crimes in the "skid row" area are practically nonexistent.

Undersheriff Canlis and Captain Troute of the San Joaquin County Sheriff's office state that since our drive began their efficiency has increased as the perpetrators of crimes on farm laborers have been reported with the result that apprehensions of the criminals were made, whereas prior to the drive the wetbacks were afraid to report thefts and other crimes against them.

Captain Leland Drays, California Highway Patrol, San Joaquin Squad, reports that there has not been a hit-and-run accident involving wetbacks since May 12, 1954, but that prior to that time such violations were a regular occurrence.

Captain Burch, California Highway Patrol, Merced Sector, reports a decrease in traffic problems since July 1, 1954, which he attributes directly to the removal of wetbacks. Prior to the drive they had several fatal accidents involving wetbacks. Since the drive began they have had none. He hopes that we will continue our work because it lessens their problem and provides needed safety on highways.

Captain Riley, California Highway Patrol, Visalia Sector, reports a decided decrease in hit-and-run accidents and highway accidents due to the absence of wetback drivers on the highway.

On August 26, 1954, the office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service at Los Angeles submitted the following concerning the effect of the wetback drive on law enforcement generally:

"Reports from law enforcement agencies - municipal, county, and state - have been very encouraging. The county and municipal law enforcement agencies serving the areas immediately adjacent to the border have all reported that prior to June 17, 1954 there was a large number of crimes reported daily that were attributed to, and usually traced directly to residents of nearby areas in Mexico who would cross the border for the specific purpose of committing the crime and returning to Mexico with the loot. These crimes range from petty theft, pilfering, burglary, robbery to car and tractor stealing and



stripping. At the present time the commission of these crimes is down to a point where they are almost nonexistent. In other areas further removed from the border many crimes of like nature were unsolved but attributed to the illegal Mexican alien. There has been a marked decrease in such crimes in smaller communities, this decrease becoming less apparent further north of the border. There is one favorable comment that has been received from nearly all police departments even though they have not had any crime that was directly attributable to the illegal Mexican alien, and that comment was that the removal of the problem of the illegal Mexican alien freed their officers from the necessity of arresting those illegal aliens, therefore making more manpower available for the performance of their normal duties. The following sets forth some of the comments and figures from specific law enforcement agencies. For the month of July 1953, 1181 Mexican illegal aliens were arrested by the Los Angeles Police Department and turned over to this Service, whereas for the month of July 1954 but 75 illegal Mexican aliens were arrested and turned over to this Service. On July 9, 1953 the Los Angeles Police Department computed that it costs from \$20. to \$35. each to arrest and process an alien for this Service. On the basis of an average of \$25. for each alien arrested, a total of \$29,525 was expended by the City of Los Angeles solely for the arrest of illegal Mexican aliens for the month of July 1953 as against \$1875 for the month of July 1954. However, the biggest relief to the Los Angeles Police Department is the freeing of officer personnel and equipment to attend to their primary duties, namely, the suppression of crime and traffic problems.

'Bert Strand, Sheriff, San Diego County, and Lieutenant Deputy Sheriff Thomas Isbell advised the Chief Patrol Inspector, Chula Vista, that petty crimes and burglaries in the South Bay area of San Diego County dropped as much as 75 per cent since the beginning of the drive and that crimes throughout the entire county amounted to just under 50 per cent for the same period. The Chief Patrol Inspector, Chula Vista, advised that the same decreased trend in crimes has been reported throughout communities in that area.

'Deputy Chief Wesley Sharp and Lieutenant Greer, San Diego Police Department, have expressed themselves as being "well pleased for the saving in man hours and efforts and funds that the drive is saving their organization."

'Chief Criminal Deputy Lyons, Sheriff's Office, Imperial County, advised the Officer in Charge, Calexico, that burglaries and petty thefts have decreased approximately 95 per cent in the County area since the operation commenced on June 17, 1954.

'Joe Goff, Chief of Police, Calexico, stated that burglary and other crimes had decreased at least 50 per cent since the operation commenced. One example of the decreased petty thefts was cited. During the month prior to the commencement of the operation 60 garden hose thefts were reported. Since the commencement of the operation there had not been a single report of a garden hose theft.

'Dick Emerson, City Clerk, Calexico, for the past 30 years (actually functions as Manager for the City) stated that our operation had virtually "put our Police Department out of business."

'Al Brooks, Chief of the Fire Department, Calexico, stated that at present there were 14 police officers in the City of Calexico; that previous to June 17, 1954 they couldn't begin to control the situation; but that if things continued as they have been for the past two months a large reduction in the police force could be made. The following are figures quoted from the three principal cities in Imperial County relating to arrests by their Police Departments:

<u>Calexico Police Department</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>
1953	100	128
1954	84	50
<u>El Centro Police Department</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>
1953	197	199
1954	98	99
<u>Brawley Police Department</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>
1953	139	130
1954	102	66

'Both the El Centro Police Department and Brawley Police Department attributed the marked decrease in arrests to the removal of the illegal Mexican aliens.

'Captain Lou Garner of the Brawley Police Department states that because of the tremendous decrease that his officers now could work on the backlog of investigations that they had not been able to work on previously because of the pressure of the active field work.

Lieutenant C. B. Biggers, Acting Chief, Corona Police Department, expressed himself as being "very much pleased with the lack of

complaints by citizens recently over wetbacks taking their jobs and the accompanying cessation of physical attacks and robberies sometimes committed on the wetbacks by American citizens of the Mexican race."

'Sergeant L. H. Jackson, California Highway Patrol, Santa Barbara Office, stated that of recent, no illegal aliens had been involved in traffic accidents or been cited for traffic violations. He indicated that the removal of this type of alien was of considerable benefit to his organization."

I. WETBACK "DRIVE"

(2) Beneficial Effects

(d) Increase in Domestic and Legal Workers

In the lower Rio Grande Valley at the peak of the employment season last year there were about 700 contract workers. This year since July 1, the reception center at Hidalgo, Texas has contracted 50,326-46,935 during the month of July alone. The United States Employment Service estimates 9,000 contract workers will be needed this year in the lower Rio Grande Valley. These figures show that employers are willing to hire legal labor. It is now quite evident that families who are permanent residents in the lower Rio Grande Valley and who had in previous years left their homes to go to the Texas panhandle area and to California for employment because they were unable to compete with wetback laborers, are now returning to their residences and to local employment because of the vanishing competition of the wetbacks.

On August 25, 1954 the office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service at San Francisco reported the following concerning the effect of the wetback drive on the utilization of domestic and legal alien labor:

"The United States Employment Service office, San Francisco, California reports that recruitment of Mexican labor under the Bracero program has increased 26% as a direct result of the wetback drive.

'Richard Townes, Manager of the Stockton Office, California Department of Employment, reports that his Farm Labor Office made 1100 placements in August 1952, 1200 placements in August 1953, and 7700 placements for the first 19 days of August 1954. He stated that in his opinion this large increase in placements was due to the removal of the Mexican wetbacks and that for the first time in years certain growers and contractors are using his office to obtain farm help.

'Farm Placement Adviser W. O. Fahrney, California Department of Employment, Fresno, California states that 7,000 to 8,000 domestic employables are now on jobs who would otherwise have been out of work if wetback labor was available. Many growers have stated to Mr. Fahrney that they are happy over the situation, as they are more satisfied with legal labor and domestic

help. He does believe that there may be some labor shortage during the peak of the grape harvest, but believes it can be handled if the growers harvest their crops in an orderly manner.

'Mr. Charles Rhodes, Manager of the Northern Growers Farm Labor Association of Yuba City, California advises that the wetback drive has proved that a shortage of domestic farm help actually exists. He states that as a result of the drive many additional growers have joined the Association and the number of contract nationals being brought in under contract has increased from 14,000 to 24,000.

'Mr. Ben Lopez of the Growers Farm Labor Association, Salinas, California reports that as a direct result of the drive five new growers have joined the Association and have contracted for 150 braceros to work on their ranches. He further observes that the employment situation is much tighter now than when the drive began. He further reports that fewer skips are reported by his association members, which he attributes to the increased likelihood of Mexican nationals being apprehended if they are not in a legal status.

'Mr. Louis Braun, Farm Placement representative, California Department of Employment, Salinas, California reports that at present there are 4600 legal braceros in the Salinas area and that in an emergency a grower can secure contract nationals in one day.

'Mr. Allyn Bainbridge, California Farm Labor Placement representative, Stockton, California advises that the local farmers association had requested certification for approximately 50% increase of contract nationals over those used in the previous year. He attributed the increase wholly to the absence of wetbacks.

'The Armour & Company meat packing plant at South San Francisco was checked by a group of officers in July and 25 illegal Mexicans were apprehended and returned to Mexico. The superintendent of the company assigned plant employees to assist our officers in identifying and apprehending the aliens. As can readily be understood, the operations of the entire plant were curtailed, but the superintendent was very much pleased with the entire operation, as he stated that it would be a pleasure for him to call some of the "United States citizens" who had applications for employment pending and ask them to come to work the following morning.

'The Northwestern Pacific Railroad, a subsidiary of the Southern Pacific system, operates over a 300 mile stretch of wild country in Northern California that to a great degree is inaccessible by

highway. For a long period of time this railroad has been known to employ as many as 250 wetbacks as track laborers. A series of drives and two conferences with officials of the Southern Pacific Company have completely changed their attitude. Under the present policy the Northwestern Pacific no longer hires illegal Mexican laborers, and they are completely cooperative with this Service. They have indicated, however, that the quality and output of the presently available labor is less than could be obtained through the employment of wetbacks."

On August 26, 1954 the office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service at Los Angeles reported as follows concerning the increased utilization of domestic and legal labor as a result of the wetback drive:

"One of the most notable accomplishments of the drive has been its effect on employers of agricultural labor. Heretofore, most of the Mexican aliens entering illegally found employment in agriculture. Estimates have been made by observers that from 150,000 to 300,000 illegals were employed in agricultural pursuits. This Service found that the employment of such illegals was prevalent throughout the State. During the month of June 1954 in this district alone, out of a total of 43,342 Mexican aliens apprehended, 39,602 or approximately 91 per cent were found employed in agriculture or seeking work therein, and from July 1, 1953 through June 30, 1954 there were 620,207 apprehensions and of these 601,961 or 97 per cent were in this same category.

"While the primary objective of the drive was to rid the area of illegal aliens, everything was done to encourage and foster the use of contract labor under the Mexican Agricultural Labor Program. Associations theretofore participating in the program reported increases in their membership. This is attested by the fact that during the period from July 3 to July 26, 1954 a total of 8784 braceros were processed and contracted through the Reception Center at El Centro. This is about four times the number of braceros recruited and contracted during the month of July in 1952 and 1953. It is all the more significant considering that agricultural employment during the month of July is normally low. It begins to pick up usually the middle of August and continues through September. The United States Employment Service Reception Center at El Centro is making plans to recruit at the rate of about 2000 a day during the month of September. In the past years about 17,000 were recruited in September, whereas it is estimated that between 25,000 and 30,000 will be recruited this coming September.

'The reactions of large employers of agricultural labor to the drive are encouraging. William Tolbert, Manager of the Ventura County Citrus Association with offices in Santa Paula, California was interviewed on August 2, 1954. He represents one of the largest associations of its kind in the country. The association is comprised of packers and growers and they harvest some 36,800 acres of lemons and oranges each year. Presently the association is employing 1678 braceros recruited under the Mexican Agricultural Labor Program and by the end of September they expect to employ between 2000 and 2400. Mr. Tolbert stated that at their peak season last May they had 3476 braceros under contract. The association members pick almost all the citrus in the Santa Paula, Ventura, and Oxnard area, and in years past a great deal of this fruit was harvested by "wet" labor. This situation no longer exists. Mr. Tolbert stated and it was confirmed by our investigators that growers in that area are practically free of "wets" and that the fruit is now harvested almost 100% by domestic and contracted labor.

'Mr. Francis Nelson and Mr. L. L. Slate, Managers of the California Almond Orchards at Paso Robles were also interviewed. Members of this organization grow and harvest practically all of the almonds in the Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo area. In years past and before the commencement of the drive the help for harvesting the almonds was recruited mostly from "wets" working in the charcoal pits in the nearby mountains. During the drive the charcoal pit area was almost completely cleaned out of "wets" thus removing this source of labor. As a consequence, the California Almond Orchards joined the Arroyo Grande Farm Labor Association in order to participate in the Mexican Agricultural Labor Program, and they will so secure their needed harvest labor. Both Mr. Nelson and Mr. Slate stated that prior to the drive and the publicity attendant thereto they had very little, if any, sympathy for our problems but now they have a better understanding of the situation and stated that it was their intention to employ only legal and domestic labor.

'The majority of the farmers in San Diego County and certain of the larger packing houses are now members of the San Diego County Farmers, Inc. and participate in the Mexican Agricultural Labor Program. The latter organization has taken in 100 new members since July of this year. At the present time they have under employment 4100 braceros whereas at the same time last year they had about 1600. According to intelligence obtained by our officers, the sentiment among the farmers in that area is now against the use of "wets" and that authorized employers have very little sympathy for the use of wetbacks because of the unfair competition.

'This changed position of the farmer and rancher is further supported by officials of the California State Employment Service. In a report dated August 12, 1954 submitted by E. M. Hayes, Chief, Farm Placement Officer at Sacramento, Mr. Edward E. Bird, Farm Placement Representative at San Diego, stated "For the first time in many years I am unable to account for any wetbacks in our agricultural labor picture. There may still be a few but I haven't seen or heard of any. The Border Patrol has done a great job of cleaning them out. Perhaps I may have helped the situation myself. Many of the very small ranchers had made no effort to replace them which leads me to believe they now rely on family labor entirely, now that camp labor is no longer possible."

'The Chief Patrol Inspector at El Centro reports that under date of August 22, 1954 the general unemployment situation in that area was much greater this year than it was in 1953 and that as a consequence there was a larger reservoir of citizen and domestic labor available to the farmer at the time the drive began. He states further that the farmers in that area have been almost entirely converted from the use of "wet" labor to the use of contract braceros and domestic labor.

'During the course of the drive a constant flow of telephone calls and letters were received from citizens and residents thanking this Service, General Swing, the Attorney General and the President for making it possible for a citizen to obtain the employment vacated by a "wet" Mexican.

'In the Los Angeles Herald-Express of Monday, August 23, 1954 there appeared an article under the headline "Wetback Drive Benefits Told AFL Meet - Better Pay, More Jobs for Yanks" which is quoted in part below:

"Santa Barbara, Aug. 23--Removal of 'wetbacks' in a continuing drive by the federal government in cooperation with state authorities has been followed by increased wages for farm labor and lowered unemployment insurance applications, Secretary of Labor Thomas P. Mitchell said here today.

"Speaking to nearly 3000 delegates attending the annual convention of the California State Federation of Labor, the secretary said the campaign to oust illegal Mexican immigrants has saved California employers and taxpayers approximately \$350,000.

"In addition, he declared, the drive has meant that unemployed Americans are now working instead of having their



jobs taken by underpaid 'wetbacks.' Businessmen also are benefiting -- the money paid the 'wetbacks' is now staying in the United States.

"Many farmers who expected to use illegal labor this year rushed to join farm associations,' he declared. Recruitment of American workers was increased, but still it was necessary to admit 700 more Mexican nationals in July than in the same month last year. Unemployment insurance claims dropped 1 per cent because unemployed American citizens who were referred to suitable jobs vacated by 'wetbacks.'"

I. WETBACK DRIVE

(2) Beneficial Effects

e. Improved Conditions of Mexican Workers

The average wetback laborer lived under sub-standard conditions, sometimes sordid, unsanitary, disease-laden surroundings, although the tools and equipment he used in producing for his employer were good. The cooking utensils, bedding, and living quarters were often makeshift and inadequate. The local domestic laborer working in competition with the illegal laborer was unable to earn any more or provide any better for his family than the illegal and was forced by the circumstances beyond his control to accept almost the same sub-standard conditions. Under the contract labor program a higher minimum wage had been set. The employer is contract bound to furnish suitable living quarters, adequate utilities, cooking utensils and other equipment. Not only will the domestic laborer benefit through higher wages but where formerly numerous domestic laborers traveled from place to place following seasonal work and keeping ahead of the illegal laborers, these same domestics are now assured that foreign labor (legal) will appear only when the domestic help is unable to meet the labor demand.

I. WETBACK DRIVE

(2) Beneficial Effects

f. No Shortage of Labor and no Crop Loss

Notice is taken of the fact that there is no shortage of farm laborers available in Mexico. The appropriate agencies of the Department of Labor in collaboration with the labor offices in the various state governments expertly anticipate the need for farm labor in the various sections of the United States where Mexican laborers are employed. Whenever there is a shortage of adequate competent local labor the United States Department of Labor issues a certification of need which is the opening step taken by farmers, growers, and organizations in the procurement of Mexican laborers. The growers are in a better position under the Bracero program than under the wetback situation for the reason that when using legal labor they do not run the risk of having the laborers taken from them by arresting officers. They can feel confident that they will have legal laborers of a good quality when and where needed. Under the Bracero program they are free of the troubles inherent in bootleg labor.

I. WETBACK DRIVE

(2) Beneficial Effects

g. Decrease in County Welfare Expenditures

The District Director at San Antonio in his report of August 24, 1954 states that hospitals have benefited from the wetback drive because there has been a reduction in the number of charity cases. Interview reports follow.

\*Joaquin Martinez, Mission, Texas, owner of the Mission Dry Goods Company.

Mr. Martinez owns one of the largest mercantile establishments at Mission. For several years prior to last year he was a City Commissioner at Mission and has been very active in Chamber of Commerce and other civic activities in South Texas. He is presently Chairman of the Board of the Grandview Hospital, Edinburg, Texas which is a county owned and operated hospital. Mr. Martinez stated that he was pleased to have an opportunity of expressing his views concerning the wetback drive, although he knew that it was not too popular with the farmers in his trade area. He said that he was interested in the betterment of the entire Valley rather than the financial gains of a special group such as the farmers. He added, however, that he was not prejudiced against farmers because three members of his family operated farms in the area. He stated that in his opinion the Valley would never prosper until some system could be worked out which would result in thousands of Valley residents staying at home instead of going north every year as migrant laborers. Mr. Martinez gave me the following information concerning some of the activities of the Grandview Hospital during the past quarter.

Amount of money spent by Hidalgo County for charity cases:

May	\$2,294.70
June	1,845.75
July	1,472.55

Total patient days at County expense:

May	500
June	408
July	394

Patient days for others not at County expense:

May	1097
June	1184
July	1372

Percentage of bed occupancy of all cases, charity and others:

May	88.8
June	95.7
July	94.7

Mr. Martinez informed me that the deficit for the hospital during the last quarter was \$818.00. He informed me he regretted he could not give me the exact figures concerning the usual deficit, but said that he felt that the other members of the Board might resent his releasing too much information concerning the finances of the hospital, but he did hint that for the past several years the hospital has been losing approximately \$3,000 each quarter. As I was leaving Mr. Martinez' company, he stated "I hope you will be able to keep the wetbacks out of this country because obviously they are costing the taxpayers too much money."

"Miss Ione Van Vliet, Administrator, Dolly Vinsant Hospital, San Benito, Texas.

Miss Van Vliet stated that the number of charity cases handled by the hospital this year has been higher than ever before. However, no figures are kept as to aliens or citizens. The hospital fiscal year ends on October 31, and she estimated that approximately \$17,000 would be spent this year on charity cases. For the prior year this figure amounted to only \$13,000. She stated that the bracero program was good in that they were all covered by compensation insurance, but claimed that some farmers had carried this insurance previously on their wetbacks."

"Sister May Camillus, Administrator, Mercy Hospital, Brownsville, Texas.

Sister Camillus stated that this hospital does quite a bit of charity work, but claims that it is too early to tell just what effect the wetback drive will have on charity admissions. However, she is certain that the situation will improve as the wetbacks are eliminated. She stated that the hospital had just received the first insurance check covering a bracero and was very glad to see the system in effect. She could furnish no information on the percentage of charity cases previously handled who were wetbacks.

"John Warburton, City Secretary, La Feria, Texas

Warburton stated that many braceros are noted in town, particularly over the weekends, and that there have been more arrests for minor offenses (drunkenness, disorderly conduct, etc.) since the drive started. In his opinion, very little more money is being spent by these braceros than was previously spent by the wetbacks. However, he advised that there has been a reduction in free medical attention. He stated that his wife is Chairman of the Society of Christian Women, a church organization doing charity work, and that there has been a decided reduction in the number of charity cases since the drive began. It is his opinion that most thinking people believe the drive is a good thing if it is to be followed by a policy of keeping the wetbacks from entering the country. Skepticism was expressed that this would be done."

"Mr. G. J. Piper, Business Manager, McCalip-Ivy Hospital, Weslaco, Texas.

Stated that the charity work of their hospital has not been affected in any manner as they had very few wetback patients. Believed that the bracero program was very much more desirable from a health standpoint than the wetback situation. This is due to the fact that the braceros have insurance and for this reason the proper medical facilities are made available to them without cost when needed. By contrast, the wetbacks were in the United States illegally and afraid to come into town except in an extreme emergency. As a result, when they became sick they remained in the brush and spread their disease around without any effort to secure proper medical care."

The district office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service at San Francisco reported on August 25, 1954 the views of welfare and hospital officials on the effect of the wetback drive on their work:

"Mr. Jenson, Director of Fresno County welfare, takes a long-term view and looks forward to substantial savings in the treatment of tuberculars and also he expects a reduction in illegitimate births.

Dr. Louis M. Barber, Superintendent and Medical Director, San Joaquin General Hospital, reports a definite downswing in recent months on tuberculosis cases reported and believes

there may be a downswing of other types of medical cases, although he has no statistics. He attributes this downswing to the apprehension of wetbacks in that area during the current drive.

Sister Rose Cecilia, of the Catholic Social Service, Stockton, California, reports a noticed lessening of applications for welfare aid during the past two months, but she has noticed an increase of callers seeking advice as to how to correct their immigration status."

The district office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service at Los Angeles reported on August 26, 1954 concerning the social and economic effect of the wetback drive the following:

"Two months have elapsed since the operation started on June 17, 1954 to rid the State of California of illegal Mexican aliens. It is too early to determine the full effect; however, it can best be reflected by the views expressed by William A. Burkett, Director of Employment, State of California. As early as June 22, 1954 he stated that he "personally talked with several employers who told me they planned to work their farm workers through the State Employment Service in the future. Reports we have had from other areas in the State show that the farmers throughout California are taking the same attitude." On July 19, 1954 Mr. Burkett stated that the drive against "wetbacks" is "saving the State \$325,000 a week in unemployment funds." On July 26, 1954 Mr. Burkett released the figures that unemployment insurance payment claims had dropped from 134,784 for the week ending June 17, 1954 to 114,838 for the week ending July 8; that this was a decrease of 15 per cent compared with a drop of 4 per cent for the same period the preceding year.

Albert G. Wilbur, Director, Kern County Charities, stated on July 26, 1954 "that his department had in the past been effected to a very considerable extent by reason of the birth of illegitimate children born to 'wetbacks' and resident citizen women." The same reaction has been had from various County charity organizations, particularly in Riverside and Imperial Counties. Besides the moral and social aspects, the County Charities stated that many of these illegitimate children end up on the County relief rolls or drawing State aid for needy children. In the

metropolitan area, Los Angeles, an exact count has not been maintained of such type of cases; however, it may be said that several hundred Mexican male aliens have been apprehended in the present operation who were living out of wedlock with American citizens and legal resident alien women.

The Director of the Imperial County Welfare Office advised the Chief Patrol Inspector, El Centro, that their records indicated an increase in welfare to needy children. He said this increase was due to the fact that being a border County many families were moving there from other areas of California to be nearer the father who had departed to Mexico. He stated that although there had been an increase that he felt that if our operations were continued there would be an overall decrease in expenditures. Figures of his department are as follows:

	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>
1953	\$41,253	\$39,784
1954	43,235	42,378

Dr. Mathis, Imperial County Health Officer, stated that as yet "it is too early to tell;" that each year during the summer months the business of the tuberculosis and venereal disease clinics dropped off. He attributed the high rate of tuberculosis and venereal diseases in Imperial County to the illegal Mexican alien. His Chief of Sanitation stated that many of the "very poor cardboard shacks in the Mexican parts of Imperial Valley have been abandoned."

John Mueller, Director of the Welfare Department, San Diego, advised the Chief Patrol Inspector, Chula Vista, that there had been a noticeable decline in welfare payments during this period but was unable to state how much could be attributed directly to the improved illegal Mexican alien situation, but that job opportunities opened up by the removal of "wet" Mexicans had an important effect on the reduction on the relief rolls."



I. WETBACK DRIVE

(2) Beneficial Effects

h. Other Ways in which Mexico has Benefited

Mexico sustains a favorable trade balance from the legal contract labor program. These workers now earning better wages in the United States are able to return home with more money to spend in Mexico thereby strengthening the economy of their home country and helping that country in its effort to raise living standards. These workers learn new skills in the United States, mechanics, irrigation, crop raising methods, and harvest methods. Upon return to Mexico they can make use of their newly gained knowledge and become more productive citizens of their own country. A workable program of mutual benefit, free of friction will make for better international relations between the United States and Mexico. "Legals" are less vulnerable to exploitation than "wetbacks." If only 200,000 Braceros averaged working fifty days in the United States out of a year at \$2.00 per day each, the gross take would be twenty million dollars.

## I. WETBACK DRIVE

### (2) Beneficial Effects

#### i. Internal Security Checks - Advantages of a Clean-Up.

All Braceros admitted to the United States are fingerprinted and such prints are filed with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. That Bureau routinely reports back to the contributing immigration office whether the fingerprinted alien has an arrest record and if so, particulars of the arrest are given. Included in the Federal Bureau of Investigation report would be any arrests for immigration violations which the Immigration and Naturalization Service had previously reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation by the submission of fingerprints.

The immigration officer stationed at the recruiting center in Mexico has full authority to reject any applicant whom he believes to be inadmissible to the United States under the immigration laws, including those aliens believed to have subversive tendencies. In all fairness to the applicants, however, it must be stated that experience with them over many years indicates a very negligible trend among them toward Communism. They are more interested in earning the wear-with-all to purchase food and clothing than they are in subversive movements. If the immigration officer at the recruiting center rejects an alien he has no right of appeal. A further screening is provided for in that the immigration officer at the reception center at the port of entry is required to hold for special inquiry officer examination any alien in whose case the officer is in doubt as to whether the applicant is admissible.

There is one serious inherent danger in a large flow of wetbacks entering the United States clandestinely from Mexico and that is the possibility that trained agents of foreign countries bent on sabotage and similar dangerous missions, will commingle with the wetbacks as they sneak into the United States across the Mexican border. Patently, sealing the border against wetbacks will have the effect of tending to prevent the entry of foreign agents who may undertake to enter in the guise of wetbacks or by other methods.

It is believed that the present screening of Braceros is adequate to protect the United States against the entry of a Bracero of subversive tendencies. It is not believed that additional expenditure of funds on this score would be justified, particularly in view of the clean record which the Braceros have made in the United States in abstaining from supporting Communist movements.

The pro-Soviet organizations in the United States have not overlooked making a play for influence among wetbacks. See their "throwaway" sheet and United States Attorney correspondence next following.

ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO  
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
AND REFER TO INITIALS AND NUMBER

RHS:rt

United States Department of Justice

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
422 POST OFFICE BUILDING  
SEVENTH AND MISSION STREETS  
SAN FRANCISCO 1

July 30, 1954

Mr. Bruce Barber  
Regional Director  
Immigration & Naturalization Service  
630 Sansome Street  
San Francisco, California

Dear Bruce:

I am enclosing herewith a copy of the letter I sent today to the Northern California Committee for Protection of Foreign Born on the basis of the conversation you had today with Robert H. Schnacke of our office.

I have advised Laughlin E. Waters, United States Attorney, Los Angeles, of your interest in this matter and of the fact that the enclosed letter was sent.

Very truly yours,

LLOYD H. BURKE  
United States Attorney

RECEIVED  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
SAN FRANCISCO (P. O.)

COPY

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
Northern District of California  
422 Post Office Building  
Seventh and Mission Streets  
San Francisco 1

July 30, 1954

Northern California Committee  
for Portection of Foreign Born  
228 McAllister Street  
San Francisco, California

Sirs:

We are advised that the Northern California Committee for Portection of Foreign Born has caused to be prepared and intends to distribute, a printed pamphlet in English and Spanish with the heading "Naturalized Citizens and Non-Citizens, Know Your Rights!" and reading in English as follows:

"Agents of the Immigration and Naturalization Service are using all kinds of tricks and threats to deprive non-citizens naturalized citizens, and even native born Americans of their rights. Foreign born Americans should be aware of the laws of the United States and refuse to permit anyone to violate these laws by depriving them of their liberties. Only in this way will the American people be able to preserve their democratic rights to defeat those who would undermine the Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution.

#### NATURALIZED CITIZENS

"Naturalized American citizens have the same rights as native born American citizens. Naturalized citizens and native born Americans need not answer any questions put to them by anyone until after they have an opportunity to consult a lawyer or organization.

#### NON-CITIZENS

"Non-citizens have the right to consult an attorney or organization before they answer any questions put

to them by anyone. Non-citizens have a right to refuse to answer questions put to them by representatives of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

"If a non-citizen is arrested, the arresting officer should be asked to produce a warrant of the arrest. Unless there is a warrant of arrest, non-citizens can refuse to go anywhere with anyone. Consult your lawyer BEFORE you go or answer any questions.

#### SEARCH WARRANTS

"A warrant of arrest is not a search warrant. The officer making the arrest on a warrant for deportation has no right to search your home. Do not permit him to search. Do not permit him to take anything from your home or other premises. Do not permit him to examine or take any books, documents or papers belonging to you. If he demands to search or examine, demand and insist that he stop.

#### LETTERS FOR INTERVIEW

"If you receive a letter requesting you to come into the Immigration office for an interview do nothing until you have consulted your attorney and follow his advice.

#### SUBPOENAS

"If an officer serves a subpoena on you, accept the subpoena, MAKE NO STATEMENTS to the person serving it and ANSWER NO QUESTIONS. See your lawyer and follow his advice. You do not have to answer any questions or go anywhere with the agent delivering your subpoena. You need not be intimidated. Do not accept any promises of the officer that he will help you or give preferred treatment if you make a statement or answer questions, and do not be frightened if he tells you he will make it worse for you if you don't answer questions."

This letter is for the purpose of advising you, and you are hereby placed on notice of the fact, that the aforementioned pamphlet contains false and misleading legal advice and erroneous statements of law. It

is deemed that conveying such inaccurate advice to the persons to whom the pamphlet is addressed would constitute the inducing, counseling and procuring of such persons to violate laws of the United States.

It is strongly suggested (1) that you take immediate action to assure that the pamphlet described above be not circulated and distributed; (2) if any copies thereof have been released, that you take prompt steps to recapture them; and (3) that you notify any persons to whom such distribution has been made of the contents of this letter.

Very truly yours,

LLOYD H. BURKE  
United States Attorney

## I. WETBACK DRIVE

### (2) Beneficial Effects

#### j. Effect on Business Particularly Small Business

A comprehensive survey was conducted in the lower Rio Grande Valley to determine the general effect of the wetback drive on small businesses in that area. Many merchants and persons of related businesses and professions were interviewed and there follows a synopsis of such interviews.

"In determining the effect of the current drive on small business we concentrated our interviews among grocery stores, cafes, and clothing stores located in that portion of the various towns where the trade was predominately Mexicans as it was believed that the effect, either good or bad, would be more apparent in such places. In places of this type the results of our survey took on a definite trend and it developed that the elimination of the wetback has resulted in a drastic decrease in business among the clothing stores while the restaurant business increased a very small amount. Indications are that the volume of business among the grocery stores has remained more or less static. The greatest effect has been among the clothing stores and estimates as to the percentage of reduction in trade has run from fifty to seventy-five percent. This decrease in volume is explained almost without exception by the clothing store operators as being brought about by the fact that the wetbacks came to the United States to stay and brought their families with them and purchased clothing for the entire family from merchants in the area in which they were residing. By contrast the Braceros are admitted to the United States for a limited period of time and they leave their families in Mexico. The opinion is prevalent that the Bracero does very little trading in the United States and make their few purchases on their frequent trips to Mexico. The merchants believe that the Braceros are holding on to their money in order to return to their families in Mexico with as much money as possible and make their purchases there as they believe the money will buy more in Mexico. Several of the larger downtown businesses were checked and it appears that among these more centrally located and more modern business places there has been a small increase in business due to the presence of the Braceros. This is explained by the fact that the Braceros, being in the United States legally and free to move about, occasionally go into the downtown areas and trade with the larger stores. This freedom of movement was prohibited

to the wetbacks and their trade was confined to the Mexican areas of town where they were less conspicuous and less likely to be apprehended.

Narciso A. Guerra, La Grulla, Texas, Merchant and Theater Operator

Stated that the wetback drive came too late to make any change in his business because most of the stoop labor employed in the La Grulla area had completed their work before the drive started. He stated, however, that he has found that it is impossible to continue operating his general store and theater as so many of his regular customers have left La Grulla. Some of them perhaps will be back after working several months in some of the northern states, but he said he cannot stay in business when his regular customers are gone eight months out of each year. He stated that at the present time approximately 90% of the houses in the La Grulla community are nailed up because their occupants have temporarily moved out. It is understood that about 140 houses are vacant at La Grulla at this time. Incidentally, Mr. Guerra, who is a graduate of Texas A&I College, informed me that he has made an application for a job elsewhere because he can no longer stay in business.

J. T. Lindley, Manager and Owner of the Crawford Shoe Store, Edinburg, Texas

Mr. Lindley says his business has improved during recent weeks, and regardless of whether his business has improved, he would like to see all illegal aliens removed from this country, and stated that the Valley would be prosperous if every wetback could be moved out.

A. B. Chambers, Manager, Terry-Farris Store, Edinburg, Texas

Mr. Chambers stated that his sales to men had increased during recent weeks, but his sales on women's and children's clothes have dropped considerably since the drive started. He is of the opinion that neither the wetbacks nor the braceros are of any value to the ordinary merchant in the Valley, and that business would benefit if native labor stayed at home instead of migrating northward each year. As an example, Mr. Chambers referred to the Sinton store of the Terry-Farris chain. He said that Sinton is a much smaller town than Edinburg, but at the same time the company's store in Sinton is doing a much greater business than the one in Edinburg, and the Sinton customers are migrant laborers from South and Central Texas who have moved in to pick cotton near Sinton. Mr. Chambers



said he would like to see farmers pay a decent wage to native help and when extra help is needed, have people come from North Texas instead of bringing in braceros or wetbacks.

M. L. Kern, Manager, Woolworth Store, Edinburg, Texas

Mr. Kern had been managing the Woolworth Store in Edinburg for three years, and stated emphatically that business was not what he expected it to be this year, and doubts if business will ever improve until better wages are paid to local labor which will result in their remaining at home. He stated that his sales were up slightly as a result of the bracero program, but he is worried over future sales inasmuch as he has read in the papers about some 80,000 or 100,000 members of family groups who have returned to Mexico of their own accord.

Mrs. J. M. Mora, Edinburg, Texas, Co-owner of the Vera-Mora Dry Goods Company.

Mrs. Mora stated that business this year is a disappointment, although it is somewhat better than last year. She stated that since the braceros can come to town to make their purchases, she feels that the bracero program is better than the wetback program, but that neither the wetbacks nor braceros will help the economy of the Valley. She stated she was greatly concerned over the large number of illegal aliens who have left the area because there is no one to take their place. She said she hopes that some kind of a meeting can be held with the view of encouraging native labor to stay at home rather than to migrate north in search of employment.

J. D. Buckley, Mission, Texas, Manager, Anthony Department Store

Mr. Buckley stated that the wetback drive had helped his business some but that while his sales in men's clothing had increased, his sales in women's and children's clothing had decreased. This he attributed to the fact that the braceros were making purchases whereas the wetbacks and their families were no longer in the area.

Charles Pagenstecher, McAllen, Texas, Manager, Valley Mercantile Company

Mr. Pagenstecher, who is a Director of the Chamber of Commerce, was interviewed, inasmuch as Mr. Paul Vickers, the Manager of the Chamber of Commerce, was on vacation and not available

for interview. Mr. Pagenstecher stated that while he recognizes the wetback drive as a very controversial matter, he believes that the more rational thinkers will eventually agree that it is the best thing that ever happened to the Valley. He stated that a few merchants in the Valley who sell cheap merchandise may benefit from the wetbacks and braceros, but that the better class stores would be better off if some system could be worked out which would make working conditions more attractive and result in native labor remaining at home instead of migrating elsewhere for employment. He stated that he realized there would be times when certain outside labor was needed and perhaps braceros should be brought in under such conditions. He added that he did not believe that the farmers will ever make any effort to use any labor other than wetbacks unless the Immigration and Nationality laws are rigidly enforced.

C. E. Breedlove, Bank President, Los Fresnos, Texas

Breedlove stated that the economic condition was better this year than ever before, due to the bumper cotton crop.

However, he stated that most of the small farmers had just managed to pay off the debts they had incurred during the past three years due to the poor crops. In addition, he stated that business accounts had gone up this year but not as much as during 1951, which was the last comparable year. He advised that in his opinion the small farmers are the ones who are hurt most by the bracero program as they cannot afford the expense connected with the contracting program. He stated that the farmers would be better off if they could get legal help on the order of the "white card" plan. He contended that the local Mexicans would not work for the wages the local farmers could afford to pay and that after the first picking they went up north where wages were higher.

Joe Danacha, Grocer, San Benito, Texas

Danacha operates a grocery store patronized almost exclusively by persons of Mexican nationality. He stated that business has been much better since the start of the wetback drive. He estimated that one year ago, his gross weekly sales averaged \$1200 to \$1400 per week. He stated that they now are averaging about \$4000 per week. He attributes that upswing almost exclusively to his bracero business. In addition, he stated

that the Latin American people in the community like the new system much better as it means higher wages for everyone. He claimed that formerly when there was an abundance of wetback labor, peddlers, who made a practice of preying on these people, visited the farms and sold supplies to the wetbacks at exorbitant prices. He cited one instance in which a bracero who was formerly a wetback told him that he had paid \$1.00 a pound for bologna, when it was selling in the stores for about 28¢ per pound. He stated that he knew that all of the business men liked the new system.

Woodrow W. Wilson, Manager, Piggly-Wiggly Store, San Benito, Texas

Wilson operates a new store, probably the largest and most modern in San Benito. He stated that the first week business slacked off because the farmers had either lost their wetbacks or were afraid of losing them, and didn't want to invest any money for groceries that would be lost. After that he noticed an increase in the gross business. In addition to the bracero trade, he got business from some of the up state negroes who had come in to pick cotton. It is his observation that grocery men generally benefit more from the braceros than from the wetback trade. Wilson also stated that he was impressed with the honesty of most of the braceros. He stated that on a Saturday night his store will be crowded with them and there is opportunity for them to steal things without detection. However, he claims that there have been very few losses. Additionally, he stated that there had been about a 20% increase in business since July 15, most of which he attributed to the bracero trade. He admitted that some merchants were experiencing a falling off, but attributed that to the fact that they didn't go after business as aggressively as he did.

W. E. Schrader, Manager, C. R. Anthony Store, Brownsville, Texas

This is a medium sized department store selling clothes, dry goods and shoes. Schrader stated that the drive against the wetbacks had hurt his business. He estimated that there had been a drop of about 25% in sales compared with 1950-51, which he stated were comparable years as far as the cotton crop was concerned. He admitted that some of this was due to increased competition and the fact that there are now more stores. However, it was his contention that the loss was due mainly to a loss in wetback trade. He advised that

he used to change American money for pesos at the rate of about 200,000 pesos a season. Now, he stated, it will not amount to over 50,000 pesos for the season. (This refers to money changed for those returning to Mexico). He added that the devaluation of the peso would account for some of this amount. In addition, he stated that the local people will not do stoop labor in the area around their homes because they considered it degrading, although they would go to another part of the country and do the same work. Therefore, the contention of organized labor that the farmers will not give the local people a change to pick cotton is false, according to Schrader. (Schrader stated that he has a "few acres of cotton" himself).

Basilia A. Hernandez, Grocer, Brownsville, Texas

Mrs. Hernandez operates a very small grocery store in the Mexican section of Brownsville. She stated that she has noticed no change in the volume of business since the beginning of the drive. She admitted that a few wetbacks used to patronize her once in a while, but that all they would buy would be a soda or five cents worth of bread. Most of her customers are people living in the neighborhood. She stated that there are many of the Latin American people in the community who are without work and she believes that the drive is a good thing because those who want work are now able to find it.

Carlos Hernandez, Grocer, Los Fresnos, Texas

Hernandez stated that business was better when the wetbacks were here because they brought their families with them and needed to buy more supplies. It is his opinion that the braceros are sending most of their money home and that their patronage generally amounts to the sale of only bread, milk and sodas. He admitted that his business was a little better this year, but stated he thought this was due to the good cotton crop.

Mr. L. S. Adame - Grocery Store - 319 Ohio Avenue, Mercedes, Texas

Does not believe that business has been effected by the departure of the wetbacks and that the business he had from wets has now been replaced by business from the braceros. States there has been no replacement, however, for the business he has lost due to the local people going north in search of employment. Has no solution to the problem

but states that something needs to be done to keep the local people here. Suggests maybe higher wages might get the job done.

Mr. Juan Casares - Grocery Store - Listner Street, Donna, Texas

States no change in his business due to current wetback drive. States that his business has dropped off considerably but does not contribute such reduction to the wets or the braceros but rather to the departure of the local people looking for higher wages elsewhere. Believes that these people would stay in the Valley and in their own homes if they could secure jobs that paid a decent wage and that they would also spend their money in the Valley and there wouldn't be this decline in business every year about this time.

Mr. Antonio Villegas - Grocery Store - 302 No. Cage Blvd. Pharr, Texas

States that he is very much against the wetback labor and believes that it should be kept legal. States that he has had no change in his business due to current drive. Volunteered the opinion that there was plenty of local labor in the Valley and that we didn't need to bring labor from Mexico if we could keep the local labor at home. States that local labor migrates north about six months of each year where they can make more money because the employers in the Valley don't pay them enough to live on.

Mr. Eugenio de la Rosa - E. DeLa Rosa Department Store - 13 S. Main Street, McAllen, Texas

States that business has picked up a little since the braceros arrived as he had no business at all from the wetbacks. States that he favors getting rid of the wetback as they are in the United States illegally and should be put out. Believes we are better off with the braceros as they have the freedom of movement which enables them to come into town and do their shopping, whereas, the wetbacks had to remain in the brush or trade in the more secluded sections of town. States that he is in favor of the current drive as he does not like to see the laws of this country violated.

Mr. K. M. Anderson - Department Store - Alamo, Texas

States that although he is located on the main street of Alamo that his business is predominately from the Mexican people and that since the current wetback drive his business has dropped down considerably. Estimates at least a fifty percent reduction in volume. States that the wets came in with their entire families and bought clothes for everyone while the braceros come in and look around and buy nothing stating that they can do better with their money in Mexico. Does not believe that the braceros spend any of their money in the United States but are keeping it to take home with them. States that he does not believe the braceros are the same individuals or the same type of individual that the wetback was. Believes wetbacks were border residents who knew how to pick cotton and the braceros are from the interior and know nothing of cotton. States that the wets came to stay and the braceros are here only for a limited time and keep their money until they return home. Does not believe current drive has effected local labor as the local people will not work for the wages that are offered anyway--that they all go north for higher wages.

Mr. George Spielberg - Economy Dept. Store - 155 Texas Bldg. Weslaco, Texas

States that his business has dropped about sixty to seventy-five percent since the current drive started. Has very little business from the braceros and does not believe that the braceros have any money as they are sending it all home. This witness is very strong in his feeling that something should be done to keep local labor at home. States there would be no need of labor from Mexico if local employers would pay a decent wage to local people thereby keeping them at home and helping everybody's business. States there is a plentiful supply of local labor but that they will not work for the wetback wages that are being paid. Favors keeping the wetbacks out and working local labor at a liveable wage. Does not favor braceros because they get no business from them. States that he believes there are many jobs available for local people since the wets departed.

Mr. Elias Kalifa - Dry Goods Store - 121 S. 17th Street, McAllen, Texas

States that he had much more business from the wetbacks and their families than he has from the braceros--does not believe

the braceros are spending their money in the United States but are either doing their trading on the Mexican side or saving their money to take home with them. States that the braceros are here for only a short period and do little business with local merchants whereas the wets were here for as long as possible--permanently if left alone--and they did all their business with local merchants as they could not cross the river freely as the braceros do. Estimates that his business had dropped at least fifty percent since the current drive started and that he is considering going out of business. Would voice no opinion as to effect on local labor but knew only that he personally was a lot better off before the drive started.

Mr. Victor Morales, Jr. - Aztec Cafe - Weslaco, Texas

States there has been a small increase in his business since the braceros arrived and believes it is due to their ability to move about freely and come into town without fear of being caught. States that since the wetback has been eliminated he has been unable to secure dishwashers, bus boys, etc., but declined to discuss the salary he paid for such labor. States that local people are too proud to do such work regardless of the wages paid. Favors keeping the wets out if he could get local labor to work for him. Does not believe that braceros spend much money but they are free to come and go and the volume of business has picked up just a little as a result thereof. Believes business as a whole would be much better if something could be worked out which would enable the local people to stay in the Valley instead of heading north to look for work.

Mrs. Antonia Zavala - Willies Cafe - Donna, Texas

States that there is a slight increase in business due to braceros being here instead of wets. States that she gets very little business from the braceros as they do most of their trade on the Mexican side of the border. Did not appear to be too much concerned about the presence or absence of the wetbacks.

Mr. Victor Morales, Sr. - Aztec Cafe - Mercedes, Texas

States that the labor situation as a whole is hurting the entire Valley. States that his business has changed very little. That the braceros are here for a limited time and do not spend their money on this side but go to the other side for their trading. Also believes the bracero is

saving his money to take home to his family when their contract is completed. Business is bad but does not contribute the fact to the current drive but believes that it is caused by the annual migration north of the local people in their search for a liveable wage. States that he is unable to get labor for his cafe since the wetback has been eliminated. Favors a situation where the wetback could come and go as they pleased but with some sort of control over their activities and whereabouts. States that many of the farmers have commissaries on their farms and the bracero does not find it necessary to come into town to trade very much.

Mr. Raul Gonzalez - Azteca Cafe - 123 S. 17th St., McAllen, Texas

Business is up a very small amount due to braceros and their freedom of movement. States that he is against wetback labor and believes that something should be worked out that is according to law. Believes that the majority of the braceros are taking both their trade and their money back to Mexico. States there is plenty of local labor but the wages offered in the Valley are not enough to live on and the local people go elsewhere to seek higher wages. This migration continues about six months of each year and is harmful to business everywhere. States that his business would not be affected much if neither the wetbacks nor the braceros were here. He is much more interested in keeping the local citizens in the Valley and getting their business for the whole year rather than just six months a year.

In an effort to get as clear a picture as possible as to the economic effect of the current drive, an effort was made to contact a representative group of people who had no direct contact with the local labor situation. In this connection, the following business men were interviewed:

Mr. W. S. Ray - Vice President of the First State Bank, Alamo, Texas

Stated that the current drive has had an adverse effect on the business in his town due to the difficulty and uncertainty of the farmers in harvesting their cotton crop. Does not believe the present bracero setup is workable, and believes the final judgment as to the harm or benefit of the current drive will depend on the success of the bracero program. States that it is a common opinion among his business acquaintances that there is a change in the attitude of an individual when he ceases to be a wetback and becomes



a bracero. Believes this is due to the realization that he is now in the United States legally and that he has a contract and will be paid whether he does much work or not. Is of the opinion also that the bracero spends very little money with the local merchants, preferring to do business on the Mexican side. Believes that much consideration will be given to mechanical cotton pickers in the future rather than be concerned with an unreliable source of labor. States that he does not believe the current drive has had any effect on the local labor situation.

Mr. J. H. Vertrees, President, Chamber of Commerce, Donna, Texas

States that he believes there has been a decrease in business generally due to the current drive. This witness also mentioned the farmer's difficulty in getting his cotton picked has unsettled business generally. Does not believe the braceros trade with the local merchants in the volume that the wetback has done in the past. Refused to express an opinion on the current wetback drive, stating that he could not say at the present time whether the elimination of the wetback was going to be beneficial in the long run or not. Recognizes the illegality of the wetback and wishes to see a legal solution to the problem, but does not believe the present setup of the bracero program will work to the satisfaction of everyone concerned. Does not believe the current drive has affected local employment.

Mr. Enrique F. Mery - Grocery Store - 320 S. 17th Street - McAllen, Texas

States that he had some business from wets whereas he has no business from the braceros--not much change in volume either way. States that local citizens have gone north and that has hurt his business more than anything else. Believes some method should be worked out where the local people could remain in the Valley. Believes that wetbacks should be kept out for the protection of the local citizens. States that the wets do not pay taxes and do not contribute in any manner to the benefit of this country as a whole--benefit only a few people who use their cheap labor and profit therefrom.

Mr. G. G. Robles - Grocery Store - 131 Texas Avenue - Mercedes, Texas

Business may be a little better since braceros have arrived but not much different. Did not appear to be concerned one way or the other about the presence of the wetbacks. Does not believe local labor has been effected as they are all gone north anyway.

This witness appeared to be more or less indifferent about the entire matter.

There have been some small business operators, particularly among the cafes, who complain that with the wetbacks gone they are unable to secure labor for menial chores such as dishwashing, bus boys, etc., explaining that the local people are too proud to accept such jobs. These few were reluctant to discuss the current wages for jobs of this type but it is indicated that the salary of such jobs has been based on wetback labor and is insufficient to attract local labor.

Interviews conducted among the small business men has established that there is a widespread resentment of the fact that many of the local residents find it necessary to migrate north six months of each year in search of employment. Several small business men, complaining about the business situation in general, volunteered the opinion that the presence or absence of the wetbacks or the braceros failed to effect their business nearly as much as the annual migration of the local people seeking higher wages elsewhere. Almost without exception the opinion was volunteered that if the farmer and local business men would pay a liveable wage then this annual migration would cease and the local labor would remain in the Valley and there would be no need of labor of any sort from Mexico. They feel in addition that the money earned locally by local people would be spent with local merchants. It does not appear that the small business people are in favor of allowing the wets to remain in the United States but there is a strong indication that neither are they satisfied with the braceros as they do so little business with the local merchants. The usual solution offered to the problem relates to local labor earning a liveable wage and spending their earnings with local merchants.

Careful study and evaluation is necessary to realize the implications in the excerpt from the report of August 26, 1954 submitted by the district immigration office at Los Angeles. Mexican wetbacks have been employed not only in agriculture but also in industry such as factories, foundries, hotel food departments, and restaurants. Rival estimates have been bandied about as to the number of "wets" in agriculture and industry and as to whether the Immigration and Naturalization Service concentrated more against one or the other. The Los Angeles report seems to indicate that the recent drive netted a comparatively small number but

here again must be considered the number fleeing to Mexico to escape arrest. The excerpt from the Los Angeles report follows.

"From time to time various statements and allegations have been made concerning the number of so-called "wetbacks" employed in industry. Agricultural interests have often complained that whereas ranchers are visited frequently by Service officers, industry and the trades are not molested. In his telegram of June 15, 1954 addressed to me, Mr. William A. Burkett, Director of the State Employment Service of California, stated "We estimate that there are over 70,000 illegal alien 'wetbacks' holding industrial jobs in California."

During the years of mass migration and apprehension of "wetbacks" our limited personnel had to be deployed in the most effective manner to achieve the most with the least, but even then industry and trades were not overlooked. In April of 1949 about 60 officers were assigned in the Los Angeles area for a period of two months to check industrial plants, hotels, and restaurants and the trades for "wetbacks." They found and apprehended during that period of time only 400 aliens. Before and on a continuous basis since then two Investigators have been assigned in the Los Angeles area as free-lance operators to check the industry principally for European aliens in the United States. It was their observation that no large number of Mexican aliens were concentrated in industry. When the charge was again renewed in August of 1953 again a crew of 14 Investigators were assigned to check industry and the trades in the Los Angeles area. They so operated for a period of about six weeks and netted about 500 Mexican nationals. During the end of the detail the aliens were harder to find and then only one or two at a time in scattered localities.

The results of the special operation in the Los Angeles area since June 17, 1954 are enlightening. As part of the special Border Patrol operation on June 17, 1954, 85 Immigration Officers assisted by more than 30 Los Angeles Police Officers and Deputy Sheriffs, began an intensified drive to ferret out Mexican nationals illegally in the United States employed in industry (hotels, foundries, restaurants, trades, etc.). From June 17, 1954 to August 25, 1954 about 950 places of business, trades, and allied crafts in the Los Angeles area were visited and checked by officers for illegal aliens. These places were visited and checked from one to four different times during the period mentioned and some of the places were checked as many as seven different times. During that period, 3318 Mexican aliens illegally in the United States were apprehended and this with an average force of approximately 50 officers. It should be kept in mind that most of the large employers in this area are engaged in defense work.

Apprehensions of "wetbacks" in industry has always lagged far behind apprehensions in agriculture or enroute to agriculture. During the month of June 1954 in this district alone, out of a total of 43,342 Mexican nationals apprehended, 3740 or approximately nine percent, were found employed in industry. From July 1, 1953 through June 30, 1954 there were 620,207 apprehensions. Of these, but 18,246, or three percent, were found employed in industry.

During the operation of the special Border Patrol Detail throughout the whole State of California from June 11, 1954 through July 26, 1954 out of 51,685 apprehensions, 6012, or approximately ten percent, were found employed in industry. Thus it will be seen that notwithstanding the stepped up operations both in this district and San Francisco the ratios of apprehensions in industry and agriculture did not change materially. Further, it appears that the allegations of large numbers of aliens employed in industry are not supported.

An analysis of that phase of the special Border Patrol operation designed to rid industry of "wets" in the Los Angeles area brought to light many interesting observations. The largest concentration of industry west of the Mississippi is centered in the Los Angeles area. As previously stated, the majority of the heavy industry is engaged in defense work, principally airplanes and airplane parts. Such industry with its security checks offers little, if any, opportunity for the employment of illegal alien labor. It was found that such illegal aliens were employed principally in foundries, construction work, hotels, and restaurants. The operation heralded by statewide publicity perhaps caused thousands of aliens illegally here to abandon their employment and flee. In places which formerly yielded a large number of illegal aliens absenteeism prevailed. To illustrate, in November 1953 the American Foundry at Los Angeles was checked and 25 illegal aliens were apprehended. Seven days later it was rechecked and 14 illegal aliens were found. Yet when it was checked on June 18, 1954 but 7 illegal aliens were apprehended. It was checked again on June 23, 1954 resulting in 2 apprehensions; and rechecked again a few days later when none were found.

The Sierra Columbia Ceramic Company was checked on three occasions within the past year and from 12 to 20 "wetbacks" apprehended on each check. On June 18, 1954 it was checked and 2 apprehensions were made; subsequently checked the following week, no apprehensions; a few days later, no apprehensions. On August 10, 1954 a check was made and one alien apprehended.

The Herco Foundry and Bell Foundry are directly across the street from each other, and it has always been the practice to check both at the same time. In the past approximately 30 "wetbacks" were apprehended from the two foundries on each check. The first check made during the week of June 20, 1954 resulted in the apprehension of 4 aliens in the two foundries. Subsequent checks have failed to reveal any "wetbacks".

The Red Star Fertilizer, Downey, has been checked by this Service as often as time would permit for the past several years. Usually from 12 to 18 apprehensions were made on each occasion. The management has been reported to have bragged on various occasions in the past that they were operating with "wetback" labor and are going to continue doing so. The first check made after the operation commenced resulted in the apprehension of 10 "wetbacks". Subsequent check resulted in the apprehension of 5. Each subsequent check has resulted in decreasing small numbers. The last check made was on August 19, 1954 and resulted in 3 apprehensions. However, one of the most significant things was that they were operating with nearly a full crew, the majority of which was legal domestic help. This is a condition that never existed, at least for the past several years prior to June 17, 1954.

Four brick yards were checked in the Los Angeles area, three were operated almost entirely by "wetbacks," one about fifty percent "wetbacks." The three that were operated by "wetback" labor were, of course, virtually closed. The management in each case, of course, protested that they were being forced out of business, ruined, etc. However, it is noted that they are still able to operate with legal domestic labor, although it is true that they do have to pay higher wages.

The majority of members of industry are actually welcoming the clean-up campaign and are cooperating to the utmost. This sentiment is best expressed by the Standard Brass Foundry, South Gate. A few days after the operation commenced they 'phoned in requesting that officers be detailed to check their employees, stating that they were opposed to hiring "wetbacks" in general and that they particularly welcomed the clean-up operation as it removed unfair competition in the form of a few unscrupulous competitors who made it a practice to operate by hiring cheap labor or "wetbacks."

The railroads in the past have been employers of a large number of "wetbacks," particularly on track maintenance. Four officers, accompanied by Special Agents of the railroad, and at the request of the railroad, checked the Sante Fe tracks from Los Angeles to San Juan Capistrano, California, interrogating 360 workers without finding a single "wetback." Other section crews have been checked with very few apprehensions. Officers from the Colton Border Patrol Unit checked the track maintenance crews from San Bernardino to Barstow. Over 500 workers were interrogated with 7 apprehensions. The railroad shops and car maintenance divisions were checked, and it was found that while not as free of "wetbacks" that they were in reasonably good condition. For instance, the Southern Pacific yards and shops were checked. They maintain a round-the-clock operation seven days a week with several hundred employees each shift, and 32 illegal aliens were apprehended as a result of numerous checks. Santa Fe Railroad officials stated that over a year ago they began a reduction in force program, and have made a sincere effort to eliminate employment of "wetbacks." The result of the checks by this Service indicate that they did a good job, as of the few found employed, several were falsely representing themselves to be United States citizens.

All of the higher class and better known restaurants and hotels such as the Biltmore Hotel, Ambassador Hotel, Statler Hotel, Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, Beverly Hills Hotel, Clifton Cafeterias (chain), Wilshire Hotel, Miramar Hotel (Santa Monica), Jonathan Club, California club, Los Angeles Athletic Club, Ontra Cafeterias (chain), Mike Lyman's (chain), Hody's Drive In (chain), Brown Derby, Romanoff's, and the Alexandria Hotel were checked and a large number of "wetbacks" were apprehended at each of those places. They have been checked and rechecked. Of necessity in checking an establishment of this kind it is necessary to check it at their busiest hours when the greatest number of persons are employed, and removing their help at that hour is tantamount to closing them up. Practically all such establishments have now given up the practice of hiring "wetbacks," at least in large numbers. Numerous inquiries have been received asking how they may determine whether a person is legally in the United States. The Alexandria Hotel on 5th Street was one of the "die-hard" type, and the last check made on August 21, 1954 disclosed all employees were found to be United States citizens or legal resident aliens.

Likewise the Broadway Coffee Shop on the same date was inspected and all employees there were either Orientals or United States citizens.

The largest number apprehended from one single establishment was the Biltmore Hotel, 42 aliens. However, they are now making a very sincere effort to hire only legal labor, as are the majority of other like establishments. On July 12, 1954 four officers checked a large restaurant in the Santa Monica area concerning which information had been received. The manager greeted the officers with: "Go ahead and check if you wish, but you won't find any. I got rid of them all." When asked why, he replied, "Last Friday you checked a friend of mine and got six of his at the beginning of the dinner hour and practically closed him up, and I wasn't going to have the same thing happen to me."

The change of sentiment was well expressed by Wayne C. Wrightsman, Business Representative of the Waiters and Bartenders Union, San Diego, California, who stated that many of his union members were removed from hotels and restaurants in that area as a result of the operation; that the policy of his union now is to screen the members as to citizenship and immigration status before sending them out on jobs; that this change of policy was due to the fact that the employers now do not wish to employ and train persons whom they may lose because of their unlawful status.

Throughout Southern California small business in the main was not affected by the drive against "wetbacks." The majority of these smaller businesses required employment of persons in whom unusual trust could be placed or had an unusual amount of ability, often spread over several various fields.

Of the smaller type of businesses that felt the effects of the removal of their illegal alien help, the most outstanding are the small restaurants, small tailor shops, tortilleria factories, and nurseries. Many of the small tailor shops were operated by the owner, himself a tailor, with one or two illegal aliens assisting him. The average salary for an expert "wetback" tailor was \$65.00 to \$85.00 a week, while comparable legal domestic tailors' salaries were \$125.00 a week.

The effect on small businesses from the standpoint of loss of revenue from sales has in the most part little effect on the small business man except those that specialized in catering to "wetback" trade. The Chief Patrol Inspector, El Centro, reports that scattered throughout the County of Imperial, usually at crossroads, are located small combination grocery stores and service stations, the owner living on the premises. The only excuse for these stores was the trade from the "wetbacks," and these stores have practically gone out of business. Likewise, there were several larger stores in the cities that operated trucks that went from camp to camp of illegal aliens, selling their merchandise. That phase of the business is now non-existent. The Chief Patrol Inspector, El Centro, also reports that many bars and cafes in the Mexican parts of El Centro, Brawley, and Holtville have had a terrific slump in their business due to the operations commenced by this Service.

Francisco Quiroga, restaurateur and bartender, La Simpatica Cafe, Guadalupe, California, on August 7, 1954 advised intelligence officers from this office, "Business was bad, no 'wets'." Across from the establishment is an old ramshackle rooming house, the Chihuahua Rooms. That was practically vacant because of the removal of the "wetbacks."

The businesses in the Los Angeles area that appear to have been the hardest hit from the loss of revenue standpoint are those businesses such as jewelry stores, clothiers, etc., that specialize in selling their merchandise on a low down payment - time payment plan. Judging by the inquiries received from this type of business many of their clients have absconded for parts unknown while others have been apprehended during the "wetback" drive. They all appear to be trying to "lock the barn after the horse has been stolen" by making inquiries as to how they may determine whether an alien is a lawful resident.



II. CONTINUATION OF ENFORCEMENT

(1) By the United States

(a) Border Patrol

The demand for legals is seasonal. Without a sound bracero program an increase in the patrol inspectors solely by number is not an effective solution. We have drawn up a flexible schedule for utilizing patrol inspectors on the Mexican border during 1954, under which such officers are redistributed periodically to correspond with the planting and harvesting seasons. The number necessary in a particular place varies according to the needs. The posting of a patrol inspector, for example, every 100 yards along the border is not efficient nor necessary as terrain barriers exist in many places. They are posted strategically on the border and ranging back of the border. We plan to increase the border patrol by 200 patrol inspectors in 1955, and 200 in 1956.

## II. CONTINUATION OF ENFORCEMENT

### (1) By the United States

#### (b) Legislation

The Eighty-third Congress, Second Session, recently adjourned failed to pass Senate Bills 3660 and 3661 in which the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service was interested. The first bill declared it unlawful for any employer to employ any alien known by the employer to have illegally entered the United States within the last three years and for violation thereof provided injunctive procedures rather than criminal punishment. The second bill provided for the confiscation of the vehicle used in the transportation of the alien known by the owner of the vehicle to have illegally entered the United States within the past three years. Both of these bills were endorsed by the Immigration and Naturalization Service as bills which would discourage and reduce the employment and transportation of aliens illegally in the United States. It is recommended that the Immigration and Naturalization Service in the next Congress sponsor and endorse a similar bill providing for confiscation of vehicles. In view of the increasing willingness of employees to go "legal", it is our judgment that they should be given a chance to show that they will stay "legal". If they get in line and stay there, we will not press for the enactment of a bill similar to S. 3660 imposing restraints against employers of "wets".

There was a great deal of opposition by labor employers to the bill penalizing the employer of known wetbacks. If the employer becomes persuaded and educated to the fact that he can get adequate legal labor without resorting to the use of illegal labor, such a law will be unnecessary. The Commission takes the view that this bill is not as vital in law enforcement as the bill providing for confiscation of a vehicle used in illegal transportation.

The Commission may wish to give some study to the desirability of placing sanctions against employers of aliens illegally in the United States by means of some device which would be created by amendment of the Social Security Act. Obviously it would be a splendid thing for Immigration and Naturalization Service enforcement if social security cards were withheld from aliens who did not possess documentary evidence showing that they were lawful permanent residents of the United States or if temporarily in the United States showing that they possessed a status entitling them lawfully to be employed.

There is also thrown out this idea for the possible consideration of the Joint Commission, particularly the American Section. It might be possible to impose sanctions against the employers of

illegal alien labor by means of some minor amendment to the Internal Revenue Act. If it were provided by that Act, for example, that in withholding wages to be applied on the employee's tax bill, the employer must contribute to the withholding, but from his own funds rather than as a further deduction from the wages, the amount of 10% in all cases where the employer knew or had reason to believe that the employee was an alien illegally in the United States. Such a provision would undoubtedly "throw a scare" into erstwhile employers of wetback labor. That is, if they knew they were running the risk of being prosecuted under the Internal Revenue laws for income tax evasions or difficulties in connection with the employment of such labor it obviously would have the effect of further persuading them that their safest course lay in the employment exclusively of legally admitted Mexican laborers. Any method of "taxing" an employer of bootleg labor out of that business would be good.

Robert E. Van Deusen writing for "The Lutheran" magazine in an article on the "Wetback Problem" said:

"Attorney General Brownell has announced a stepped-up campaign to arrest and deport illegal entrants, with a greatly increased border patrol. At the same time, he proposed that Congress pass a law authorizing court injunctions to keep growers from hiring wetbacks knowingly, and providing for seizure and forfeiture of vehicles used in transporting illegal immigrants.

'Such a law would have teeth. It would enable the Immigration Service to crack down on Americans whose shriveled conscience makes this national scandal possible. It should be put on the 'must' list for passage before Congress adjourns."

## II. CONTINUATION OF ENFORCEMENT

### (1) By the United States

#### (c) Fence

The international boundary between Mexico and the United States, where there is no natural boundary, is marked in places by fences and in other stretches by monuments so placed that one can always see from one monument to the next. A fence stretching all along the border would be impracticable besides being prohibitive in cost. Fences do serve a useful purpose in deterring illegal crossing and in defining the border in populated areas. Fences should be erected wherever a city or village is on the border. Towers along the border located at strategic points are of some value. Construction of a chain of towers is not contemplated.

For convenient reference there is enclosed, on the next following pages a copy of a memorandum prepared in the Department of State, Office of Middle American Affairs, concerning the existence of fences on the United States-Mexico Boundary.

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Western Land Boundary Fence

Under an act of Congress approved August 19, 1935 (49 Stat. 660) the Secretary of State, acting through the United States Commissioner on the International Boundary and Water Commission, is authorized to construct and maintain fences on the international boundary with Mexico. Since 1939 the United States section of the Commission has constructed at the request of the Bureau of Animal Industry in the Department of Agriculture, as well as of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization in the Department of Justice and the Bureau of Customs in the Treasury Department, 222.04 miles of fence at a cost of \$754,947. This fence was placed at varying intervals along the boundary where the interested agencies believed it to be most urgently needed.

Of the fence constructed by the International Boundary and Water Commission, 13.57 miles are chain link and 208.47 miles are ranch type. They are located as follows:

Chain link:

5.53 miles at Calexico, California

.72 miles at Lukeville, Arizona

2.53 miles at Nogales, Arizona

.72 miles at Lochiel, Arizona

.77 miles at Naco, Arizona

2.30 miles at Douglas, Arizona

1.00 mile at Columbus, New Mexico

13.57

Ranch type:

1.70 miles near Tecate, Baja California, Mexico

23.93 miles near San Louis, Arizona

21.92 miles near Quitobaquito, Arizona

80.82 miles along Hidalgo County, New Mexico

80.10 miles along Cochise County, Arizona

208.47

In addition, the National Park Service constructed 14.68 miles of fence of a sub-standard ranch type near Quitobaquito, Arizona, and the Department of Agriculture has a ranch type fence in poor condition all along the southern border of San Diego County, California

The original plan envisaged construction of either chain-link or ranch-type fence on the entire 675 miles of the land boundary from El Paso to the Pacific Ocean below San Diego, California. The original estimates of the total cost ran to \$3 million for the entire project, and these estimates must be regarded as extremely low when reviewed against prevailing costs for labor, wire, and other construction materials at the present time.

The construction of a boundary fence falls within the direct responsibilities of the Department of State only in relation to the demarcation of the boundary and from the authorization of the United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission as the construction agency. The Department does not regard further marking of the boundary as urgent. The boundary can be marked as effectively and more economically by other means. As a consequence the Department of State itself is not in a position to justify further fence construction under current budgetary requirements and directives. The United States Section however would be glad to construct any boundary fence which other agencies may require and for which the Congress may make appropriations.

The United States Senate has passed the bill S. 114 introduced by Senator Anderson for himself and for Senators Hayden, Chavez and Knowland. This bill, presently before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, would authorize further appropriations for the construction, operation and maintenance of the land boundary fence.

ARA:MID:TRMartin:ra  
8/18/54

C O P Y

## II. CONTINUATION OF ENFORCEMENT

### (1) By the United States

#### (d) Use of identification badge for Braceros

Often when border patrol officers are checking laborers in the field or other places of employment the laborer claims to be a lawful contract laborer but explains that he has left his identification card at his quarters or that his employer has it. The officer then has to go to the employer's quarters or find his employer to check the story. If he does not take the laborer with him while making the check and it develops the laborer's story is not true, the alien has absconded by the time the officer returns. If the officer takes the laborer with him and on checking finds his story to be true then the employer is resentful. Either way the officer has just wasted time. Continuously carrying the identification card causes it to wear out and become illegible and the more wear and tear on it the easier it becomes to alter and the harder it becomes to detect such alteration.

A quick time-saving device for identification of the laborer would be a round pin-on plastic badge which the laborer would be required to wear. This badge would include a photograph, name, I-100 number, and the contract expiration date. The color of the badge should vary from year to year and a new badge issued each year.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service presently is working out the procedure for the issuance and use of such badges.

## II. CONTINUATION OF ENFORCEMENT

### (2) By Mexico

#### (a) Transportation of deportees to interior

The aliens apprehended in the wetback drive were delivered by bus loads to an expulsion point on the border. Mexican authorities immediately took them by train or bus to points in the interior of Mexico. The Mexican government defrayed the cost of this movement.

In the California operation family groups were sent out at Calexico and San Ysidro and permitted to go their way to nearby points if that was where they belonged and wanted to go. Family groups electing to return to the interior were joined to the lift. The majority of those removed were taken to Nogales, Arizona, and from there Mexican authorities hauled them by train to points far in the interior of Mexico. Similarly in the lower Rio Grande valley family groups optionally were sent out at Hidalgo, Texas, and the others brought to El Paso and transported by train to distant interior locations.

The transportation of the returning nationals to interior destinations has been very effective in preventing the probably prompt illegal return of many of the aliens to the United States. This cooperation of Mexico in getting the returned alien away from the border where the temptation to reenter illegally is always greatest, is invaluable. This is attested to by numerous other reports in this paper.

As shown previously in this paper, the possibility of moving Mexican deportees by United States Government vessels from Brownsville, Texas, to seaports on the East coast of Mexico and from San Diego to West coast seaports in Mexico is being studied.

In a report of August 25, 1954, the Immigration and Naturalization Service at San Francisco, California makes the following significant comment illustrating that the transportation of deportees to the interior of Mexico has a salutary effect on the percentage of "repeater" violators of the immigration laws:

"We have apprehended 4,726 aliens since July 19, and 286 of those aliens, or 6%, have admitted that they entered the United States by crossing the Mexican border without inspection since June 17, 1954. While the number of persons apprehended who have entered illegally since the drive commenced is rather large when we consider that the border was well patrolled, it shows a very definite decrease from what we were confronted with prior to the commencement of this drive. We, of course, expect that this percentage will continue to decrease as the border is more effectively patrolled."



## II. CONTINUATION OF ENFORCEMENT

### (2) Mexico

#### (b) Removal from trains

The contract labor recruiting centers in Mexico have at times been flooded with applicants before the center was ready to operate and before any orders or estimates had been received as to how many were needed. On occasions when only hundreds were needed, thousands appeared even after the estimates of need were known. Many appeared without the proper identifying letter required by the Mexican authorities.

Control of premature arrivals and arrivals in excess numbers might be controlled to some extent by the press, bulletins, and notices. Approximate estimates of desired numbers of applicants would have to be fairly correct and timely released. Municipal authorities of outlying districts could aid in the control by a more careful check on the letters of identity they issue. Persuasive methods should be used to have the prospective applicant bide his time.

At times the public roads and trains in Mexico have been clogged with would-be laborers, all headed toward a recruiting center, sometimes only a rumored recruiting center. In cases like this Mexico can only do that which constitutionally is permitted in regulating travel of its nationals within its border. Some control by Mexican authorities over spasmodic travel of laborers to recruiting centers is desirable.

The concentration of a large number of itinerant unemployed laborers in cities in Mexico is primarily an economic, social, and law enforcement problem for that Republic but both Mexico and the United States are concerned with means of preventing the concentration of a large number of itinerant unemployed Mexican laborers in areas in Mexico adjacent to the United States border.

## II CONTINUATION OF ENFORCEMENT

### (2) Mexico

#### (c) Border Patrol and coordination with United States Border Patrol.

Mexico has 25 exit control officers stationed at strategic points along the Mexican border to prevent unauthorized departures from Mexico. Joint radio communication between these officers and the United States Border Patrol has been tried with moderate success. Present radio communications between the two agencies would require the setting up of equipment on a different frequency to prevent foreign interception of messages intended solely for our men. These exit officers, although small in number, do slow the flow of illegal entries in the areas where they work and should be kept on duty and the force increased if possible.

At the present time the Bureau of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture has 220 employees on the Mexican border. 172 of these employees are temporary. The remaining 48 are permanent employees stationed at border ports of entry. The 172 temporary employees patrol the border guarding against the entry of livestock from Mexico. These officers do not assist, except in isolated cases, in the apprehension of wetbacks. These temporary officers are scheduled to be dropped as soon as the present quarantine on Mexican cattle is lifted and the border reopened to cattle, possibly December 31, 1954.

The remaining 48 permanent employees working at ports of entry have their own functions to perform and will be in no position to assist the Immigration and Naturalization Service in the prevention of apprehension of illegal entrants.

### III. STABILITY, CONTINUITY, AND IMPROVEMENT OF BRACERO PROGRAM

#### (1) United States

- (a) Streamlining of Procedures and Elimination of Red Tape
- (b) Alleviating Contract Burdens on Employers and Giving Employers a greater voice.

A copy of the Commissioner's memorandum entitled "Bracero Program" of August 25, 1954, is on the pages next following the text of this subdivision. Also a copy of the Department of Labor circular of September 1, 1954 on the same procedure.

It would be advantageous to the participating government agencies, to the employers, and to the laborers if some means could be worked out of transferring Mexican laborers from one area to another in the United States according to the need without the workers having to return to Mexico and reenter even though there was a lapse of time of a few weeks between the completion of the first contract and the beginning of work under the next contract.

There has been considerable confusion over the so-called 15-day grace period in the work contracts. Employers have erroneously interpreted the provision to mean that they have 15 days after the worker completes his work in which to return him to the reception center. The difficulty has been that during 15 days of idleness the laborers have tended to lose themselves or to get into difficulty with law enforcement agencies. When the contract is next revised, it should be spelled out very clearly that the 15-day grace period is allowable solely for the completion of a job for the same employer. Mexican agricultural laborers should be admitted temporarily to a date 15 days later than the expiration date of their contract. The purpose of this arrangement is to prevent the improper arrest of the worker. If the grace period is not reflected on the Form I-100 as included in the period of admission, he is prima facie illegally in the United States after the contract expiration date, and there have been aggravating instances of the improper arrest and detention of laborers who were honestly within the grace period.

It is believed that growers should be permitted to have some choice in selecting employees. They are willing to bear the cost of

screening and selecting by assigning their own employees to the work and they are willing for the government to supervise but they do definitely want to participate in the selection of workers. It is understood that the Mexican authorities resist the recruitment of employees in Mexico by prospective United States employers. Such recruitment is a punishable offense in Mexico. It is believed, however, that the employer should be permitted with Mexican approval to have a representative in a consulting capacity, at least, working with the recruiters at the recruitment centers. If, after a trial period, the plan was successful, it should be possible to reduce the number of government-paid selectors and would have the effect of transferring some of the cost of making selections to the growers and will give them more of an opportunity to procure the type of workers they want. The new procedure for the retention by good workers of their Forms I-100 when they return to Mexico described in the Commission's circular of August 25, 1954, should lay a fine groundwork for employer participation at the recruiting centers. The growers are enthusiastic over this new plan. The letter of commendation from the Agricultural Producers Labor Committee with offices in Los Angeles is enclosed following the government circulars.

Mexican laborers who have worked satisfactorily in the United States or who have special skills, and who on return to Mexico retain their identification cards (Form I-100) endorsed to show such competency, should not be required to channel themselves again through the recruiting centers in Mexico, but should bypass such centers entirely and be processed exclusively at the reception centers at the United States ports of entry.

At a meeting attended by representatives of the Departments of Labor and State and the Immigration and Naturalization Service on August 18, 1954, it was agreed the Joint Commission should look into the problem of working out some agreeable plan whereby employers could return "misfits" to the reception center without cost and obtain a replacement.

Each participating agency should survey the paper work within its own shop and also all of the reports which it may now be requiring from employers in an effort to have the volume and complexity of such reports reduced to a minimum. If some of the reports are due to requirements of Mexico for specific items of data, it may be possible at the next meeting of the full Joint Commission to explore the possibility of inducing the Mexican authorities to dispense with some of the items.

TO: District Director  
San Antonio  
El Paso  
Los Angeles  
San Francisco

56321/448-E  
August 25, 1954

FROM: Commissioner

SUBJECT: Bracero Program

The Immigration and Naturalization Service proposes to facilitate the return to the contracting employers of such key men (tractor drivers, irrigators, etc.) as they indicate are imperatively necessary in their operations. In addition, it is proposed to give every worker who has performed satisfactorily during his contract some indication of that performance. The I-100 card will serve as the medium for these two purposes.

To insure that the worker has one or the other of these endorsements stamped on his I-100, you will use every means possible to inform all the contractors and all the farm and grower associations in your district of this proposed procedure. In your broadcasts, or throw sheets, or whatever medium you use, you will indicate to the farmer that the purpose of these cards is the opening step in the campaign to facilitate -- (1) the employer gets the man whom he critically needs in his operations, (2) that the workers he does receive are satisfactory, and (3) that the unsatisfactory workers, not being authorized to keep their I-100, or having no comments stated thereon, will be presumed unsuitable and will not again be contracted.

You must inform the farmers that at present this is unilateral on the part of the Immigration Service, but it is expected that the Mexican Government will comply with this proposal.

It should be impressed on the contractors that they will have to help protect their own interests in this matter by making sure that laborers en route to Mexico report at reception centers as agreed in the contract, so that the official endorsements may be placed on the cards of the special and good workers before they leave for Mexico with their cards. And the contractors must be educated to turn in written lists of, or indicate on the manifest, those workers who are "special" or "satisfactory."

you are left to your own devices as to how you will record departures against the port of entry records kept on the duplicate I-100's. One possibility is the use of the departure manifest.

When a bracero within 45 days of his last departure from the United States presents an I-100 bearing one of those endorsements at a recruitment center for processing for employment, certain of the processing steps can be eliminated at the reception center. He will not need to be issued a new I-100 and he will not need to be fingerprinted again. A new contract will be necessary and the facts of the new contract and the new temporary stay will have to be posted on the old I-100. He will not need to be selected by a Labor Department selector. The Public Health Service has agreed not to medically reexamine the alien if he is reapplying within forty-five days of his last departure from the United States.

I-100 cards either endorsed or unendorsed presented by Mexican laborers more than 45 days after their last departure from the United States will not have the effect of abbreviating procedures but will serve as valuable guides in the selection of workers of proven good records. Endorsed cards will indicate the particular skill and the previous employer. Presentation of an unendorsed card will raise a question as to whether the holder performed satisfactory service while last employed in the United States.

The foregoing arrangements have been cleared with and approved by appropriate officials of the Department of Labor in Washington, but it will be necessary for you to collaborate closely with local representatives of that Department as well as the Public Health Service, and also the Mexican officials. Simultaneous instructions are being issued to all reception centers and migratory stations.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. A. Wong". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

In reply refer  
to FPC

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
Bureau of Employment Security  
Washington 25, D. C.

Regional Memorandum No.

TO: ALL REGIONAL DIRECTORS

September 1, 1954

FROM: Robert C. Goodwin  
Director

SUBJECT: Immigration and Naturalization Service Proposal for Endorsement  
of I-100 cards.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service proposes to facilitate the contracting of those Mexican workers who have performed satisfactorily during the contract period, including key men who the employers indicate are necessary in their operations, e. g., general farm hands and irrigators, etc. A copy of the I&NS release to its field staff is attached for your information.

To effectuate this procedure endorsement of I-100 cards will be made by the Bureau of Employment Security representative at the time a worker's contract is terminated.

A worker's I-100 card will be endorsed upon the termination of his contract as follows:

1. The I-100 of a worker with respect to whom no complaint has been lodged will be endorsed with the following information:

- a. "S" (indicating satisfactory)
- b. Date of termination
- c. Kind of work performed (such as cotton picking, vegetable worker, etc.)
- d. State and area of employment

2. If the worker's employment has been in specialized activities such as irrigator, ranch hand, etc., and he is satisfactory, the endorsement of the letters "SP" (indicating satisfactory and special) should be substituted for the letter "S".

The employer may identify those workers whom he considers key men possessing special skills by means of a written list or by suitable entry on the official manifest list.

An endorsement will be made on the back of the worker's I-100 card. It will be initialed by the compliance representative or by a designated official at the reception center.

A worker who is presented at a port of entry for repatriation will be permitted to keep his I-100 card if endorsement 1 or 2 above appears thereon. If no endorsement appears the I-100 card will be lifted by the I&NS official.

When available, suitable rubber stamps for endorsement purposes will be issued to regional offices and reception centers; in the meantime, terminating officials will write the proper endorsement in ink on a worker's I-100 card.

At the time of the termination interview, if it is determined that a worker has been satisfactory, the USES representative will enter an "S" on the Employer's Manifest List, opposite the name of the worker, will initial that entry, and will indicate the kind of work in which he was employed--citrus, vegetables, cotton, beets, etc.

When a worker within 45 days of his last departure from the United States presents an I-100 card bearing a satisfactory or special endorsement at a migratory station for processing for employment, certain of the processing steps can be eliminated. He will not need to be issued a new I-100 card at the reception center, and he will not need to be fingerprinted again. A new contract will be necessary and the facts of the new contract and the new temporary stay will have to be posted on the old I-100. He will not be given a selection interview. The Public Health Service has agreed not to reexamine the alien medically if he is reapplying within 45 days of his last departure from the United States.

I-100 cards which are presented by Mexican laborers more than 45 days after their last departure from the United States will not have the effect of abbreviating procedures, but will serve as valuable guides in the selection of workers of proven good records. Presentation of an unendorsed card will raise a question as to whether the holder performed satisfactory service while last employed in the United States. Unendorsed I-100 cards will usually indicate workers who were not properly terminated and who left the country through a point other than reception centers.

Steps should be taken immediately at the reception centers and migratory stations to coordinate this program with Immigration and Naturalization Service, Public Health Service and appropriate Mexican officials.



Information concerning this procedure should be given to appropriate State agencies, and to employers at the time of contracting, recontracting or extending contracts. In addition, employers in each region who now have Mexican contract workers are to be informed by letter (suggested form letter being sent under cover for your use) of this procedure.

Issuance of the "Honorable Mention" card will be discontinued and this procedure made effective on receipt of this instruction.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS LABOR COMMITTEE  
702 Architects Building  
816 West 5th Street  
Los Angeles 17, California

NEWS LETTER

August 27, 1954

1954 - #13

- I. SANTA PAULA LABOR MATTERS.
- II. IMMIGRATION, I-100 CARDS.

I. Santa Paula Labor Matters. Elections were held at the Mupu Citrus Association in Santa Paula on August 19, 1954. The results are as follows:

FOR  
LOCAL 78, CIO

17

FOR  
NO UNION

75

II. Immigration, I-100 Cards. According to information recently received from Immigration Officials, the new Commissioner, General J. M. Swing has made a very helpful and progressive move in connection with the Agriculture Labor Program, Public Law No. 78. It is suggested the employers of Mexican nationals purchase a rubber stamp of a size capable of fitting the back of the I-100 card with the provisions noted on the accompanying sample herewith. You will note space is provided for the date, the workers signature, the employers signature, and a space below to write in the workers qualifications, such as citrus picker, cotton chopper, etc., and if he is a specialist, such as an irrigator, tractor driver, etc., then write in "SPECIAL-Irrigator" or "SPECIAL, Tractor Driver".

When good men are terminated due to contract expiration or other valid reasons, the card will be filled out. The worker then must be repatriated to Mexico through the reception center; there the U.S.E.S. will note the information on their records and in turn he will then be taken to the U. S. Immigration where their records will be noted as to his permanent departure. It is then planned to hand this worker his I.D. card to keep with him while

in Mexico. Then, if and when, he is again selected for recruitment upon reaching the Reception Center, efforts will be made to return him to the original employer. If that is not possible then the stamp will serve as a recommendation to other employers.

His retention of the I-100 card will shorten the procedure in future recruiting.

We feel this is just another fine example of the splendid cooperation we receive from the U. S. Immigration Department and particularly under the administration of General J. M. Swing.

Yours very truly,

J. J. Miller  
Manager

EXAMPLE OF STAMP

Date
Qualified Worker
John Doe Corporation
By

### III. STABILITY, CONTINUITY, AND IMPROVEMENT OF BRACERO PROGRAM

#### (2) Mexico

- (a) Streamlining of Procedures and Eliminating Red Tape  
    - Labor
- (b) Improvement of Mexican Controls

The preparation of the report on this subtopic was assigned by the American Section to the Department of Labor. It is primarily the concern of that Department for the Mexican officials in Mexico to perform their part of the selection process in a streamlined fashion. The Immigration and Naturalization Service is offering a few suggestions, as follows.

Those workers who have returned to Mexico and who have in their possession I-100 identification cards endorsed to show special skills or satisfactory workmanship should not have to obtain letters of reference from local Mexican government officials and should not have to obtain listing of their names on the eligible roster prepared by the Mexican Federal Ministry of Labor. They should not have to go to the recruitment center at all but should be handled entirely at a reception center at a point of entry.

The problem of "misfits" continues to plague the farmers and the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Everything possible to tighten the screen against them at the point of origin should be done. It is better to stop them from leaving the interior of Mexico than to return them there at the expense of the United States farmer dissatisfied with their services. The proposal discussed under another heading that the farmers be permitted representation in the selection process at the recruiting center in Mexico should help screen out misfits at the port of origin and it would be helpful if Mexico could be induced to tolerate such representation. A misfit should pay part of his transportation, as more fully stated elsewhere in this report.

An officer of the Immigration and Naturalization Service has submitted an informal memorandum to the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization stating his personal views on the subject of "red tape" in Mexico in processing laborers at the recruitment centers there, as part of his comment on the minutes of the Joint Commission meeting in Mexico, D.F., on July 15, 1954. An excerpt from his notes follows.

"The Minutes do not reflect the experience of this year. Contrary to the statement of Calderon, the program has operated better than in any previous year since its inauguration in 1948.

- a) There have been smaller numbers congregating at reception centers than in previous years;
- b) There have been fewer complaints from employers of arbitrary action by the Mexican Government than in previous years.

Most of the red tape referred to by Calderon has been at his instigation. There has been much contention at El Centro over the documents required by the Mexican Consuls. While in Mexico City, Mr. Schoenthal discussed this subject with Mr. Calderon and subsequently wrote him a letter requesting elimination of some of the red tape involved. On May 12, he agreed to eliminate a copy of the Power of Attorney to the Mexican Consul, a copy of the letter from banks and financial statements. He agreed to eliminate a copy of the form designed by the Mexicans wherein the employer pledged not to hire illegals. He agreed to eliminate two copies of forms C and D demanded by the Mexican Government from each employer. One was a form agreeing to take out occupational disease and accident insurance and the other was a form agreeing to take out transportation insurance. The employer was required to submit these forms although, at the same time, he had to present copies of his insurance policies. The American Government requires a vehicle inspection statement for those who haul by truck. The Mexican representative insisted on the employer supplying a written statement certifying that they had made such inspection. It was pointed out that these files were always available to the Mexican representative and that he could examine each "Certificate of Inspection" required by the American Government. Calderon agreed to the elimination of this request by his representative. Calderon agreed to eliminate a copy of the route map for employers hauling by truck. The United States Government requires each employer to file a route map if workers are being moved by trucks, indicating where overnight stops will be made. This map has always been available to the Mexican Government and would not require them to have a copy also. Several other copies of forms were also eliminated. All of the above materials were available to the Mexican Government at any time they wanted them but, despite this fact, they insisted on having their own copies. The Mexican Government also requires copies of the individual

Work Contract, something which is useless to them. They have never been willing to use American copies on file at each reception center. With reference to delays in Washington on certification, Senor Calderon apparently has not yet caught up with the fact that for over a year ceilings have been established by area and the employer receives his order for Mexican workers directly from the local office and goes directly to a reception center."

#### IV. RECRUITMENT

##### (a) Interior Recruiting Centers

##### (b) Border Recruiting Centers

##### (c) Border Recruitment (Visas?)

Pursuant to the agreement with Mexico, recruiting centers are authorized in Mexico at Durango, Monterrey, Chihuahua City, Mexicali, Irapuato, and Guadalajara. Centers are not kept open continuously in some of these cities. Durango and Guadalajara are not active now (September 1954). Of the six places named, all are in the interior of Mexico except Mexicali.

It is understood that the Mexican populace in Mexicali has pressed the Mexican authorities in Mexico, D.F., to move the center from Mexicali because of the problems created by the concentration of an excess number of laborers in Mexicali at times who were desirous of being contracted for work in the United States. There is still in the discussion stage the proposal to move the center in Mexicali to Algodones, Mexico, which is on the Colorado River in the Yuma area and opposite Andrade, California. There are no facilities at present at Algodones and a building would have to be constructed. It is understood that the Department of Labor opposes the move from Mexicali to Algodones inasmuch as United States Employment Service personnel would have to commute from Mexicali over the 40 miles distance between the two places for daily duty. The Immigration and Naturalization Service in principle is opposed to the location of any recruiting center in any area adjacent to the United States border for the following reasons:

1. Such recruitment would be an incentive for Mexicans to move from the interior to border areas.
2. The difficulty in determining who is a border resident.
3. Difficulty in drawing a definite line as to who would be entitled to recruit border workers.
4. Border recruitment must be definitely avoided, it is believed, if the employer has the right of selection of his workers at the interior recruitment centers.
5. Mexican Government would consider border recruitment as an infringement upon its control of what persons would be

permitted to enter, assuming that border recruitment would include the name of the employee desired by the employer.

6. Border recruitment would cause a serious economic and social problem for the Mexican Government due to the fact that undoubtedly there would be an influx of Mexicans from the interior to the border.
7. Concentration of unemployed Mexicans in Mexican border areas stimulates the flow of wetbacks to the United States.

The question has been brought up as to whether Mexican laborers could or should be brought to the United States for temporary labor pursuant to the provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act. Provision is made for the importation of temporary laborers under section 101 (a) (15) (H) (ii) and the regulations for that procedure are contained in 8 CFR 214h. Briefly stated, under that procedure a certification of need would have to be obtained by the prospective employer from the United States Employment Service; the prospective employer would have to file a petition naming, or at least closely describing, all of the aliens whom he desires to import. Several other items of information are called for in the petition form (Form I-129B, see copy at end of this subdivision). The fee for filing a petition on Form I-129B is \$10 but any number of beneficiaries may be included in the petition. The petition procedure is used with respect to the importation of temporary laborers from other countries than Mexico.

It is worthy of note, however, that while the Immigration and Nationality Act repealed and replaced scores of other immigration laws, it did not repeal or modify Public Law 78 enacted by the Eighty-second Congress, which was designed specifically to provide Mexican farm labor on an as-needed basis in the United States. It is believed that the Congress regarded Public Law 78 as a satisfactory and proper means for the importation to the United States of Mexican agricultural laborers. The Immigration and Naturalization Service shares that view at present for the reason that Public Law 78 was tailored specifically to meet the Mexican farm laborer situation. That situation differs in volume and in many other ways from the situation with respect to other countries from which a comparatively small number of workers are imported to the United States for temporary service.

A departure bond may be and often is required in the cases of laborers brought temporarily from countries other than Mexico. (Public Law 78 expressly prohibits the exaction of a bond in the cases of Mexican agricultural laborers.)

As a long-range plan we believe that the United States should come to



some understanding with the Mexican Government which will permit the temporary importation of Mexican laborers along the same lines as has been so successfully experienced in the procurement of laborers from the British West Indies. Growers, particularly in the Eastern United States, deal directly with the British West Indies Labor Department officials in selecting and contracting the laborers. It is realized that if such a program were initiated with respect to Mexico, that there would be the problem of deciding how management would be represented. The solution might be for management to be represented by a rotating panel. If we can reach the point where management can deal with the Mexican Ministry of Labor, there would then be no need for operating under Public Law 78 which expires on December 31, 1955. It is the view of management, particularly in Texas and California, that they can select their employees in Mexico far more efficiently and economically than the selecting can be done for them by Mexican and United States agencies, and that they would be better off without the intended assistance now being given by the agencies. Approximately 80% of the Mexican laborers imported are employed in Southwestern United States. The other 20% are employed in Northern United States, and if management in the North requires subsidizing or facilitating by a United States agency, that assistance should be provided. It is our view that as a long-range objective, Federal assistance should be given only as needed and wanted; that the Federal Government should get out of the "hiring hall" business; and that when those things are realized, the general provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act governing the admission of temporary laborers will be adequate and there will be no need for special legislation for Mexicans.

V. DUPLICATIONS AND UNNECESSARY EXPENSES

(a) Agencies involved, coordination, and overlapping

(b) Costs (Excessive)

(c) Sharing of costs

The outline prepared by the American Section indicates that the report concerning coordination and overlapping of the functions of the various agencies involved and the question of whether the cost was excessive was to be prepared by Mr. McConnell, the Commissioner representing the Department of Justice on the Joint Commission and that the report covering the possibility of sharing the costs was to be prepared by the Department of Labor. The Immigration and Naturalization Service, therefore, does not presume to do more than submit a few incidental remarks concerning those topics.

It is understood from the outline and from the explanatory material which accompanied it that the Commission is not particularly interested in the cost of the border patrol inspector personnel or in the cost of expelling deportable Mexicans from the United States. It is understood that the Commission is vitally interested in the operation of the bracero program in the most efficient and economic way possible. Obviously, it is incumbent upon each United States agency participating in the bracero program to make sure that its functions are carried out with minimum manpower and that none of the centers are overstaffed. As stated elsewhere in this paper, it might be possible to cut down on the number of Government selectors at the recruiting centers by substituting for them representatives of the farmers' associations who would be paid by the growers. However, the Immigration and Naturalization Service is inclined to defer to the better judgment of the Department of Labor as to the feasibility of this plan. In fairness to the growers and in the interest of economy and efficiency, it is our thought that this plan is worth a trial at least as a step toward having the growers take over most of the hiring process.

VI. RELATIONSHIP OF MEXICAN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY TO MIGRANT LABOR  
PROBLEM

This topic was assigned to Mr. T. R. Martin, Assistant to Mr. William Belton, Mexican Desk, Department of State. The purpose of that report is admirably well stated in the explanatory material in the Commission's notes accompanying the outline. The Immigration and Naturalization Service does not presume to comment on this topic other than to point out the obvious fact, namely, that widespread unemployment in either Canada or Mexico or in Europe has historically aggravated the problem of preventing aliens from entering the United States unlawfully over the land borders, at seaports in the guise of crewmen, and as smuggled aliens from nearby foreign islands — particularly during periods of prosperity and high employment in the United States. For similar reasons, unemployment in foreign countries has also increased the work of deporting the ones who get through the first line of defense and try to lose themselves in the United States population.

VII. MORE EFFECTIVE USE OF UNITED STATES DOMESTIC LABOR SUPPLY  
(Assigned to Department of Labor)

In connection with the question of more effective use of United States domestic labor cognizance is taken of the fact that at a meeting concerning the bracero program on August 18, 1954, attended by representatives from the Departments of State and Labor and the Immigration and Naturalization Service a representative of the Department of Labor advanced the thought that the American Section of the Commission should consult with organized labor in preparing their final recommendations. The Department of Labor stated that the unions had requested the privilege of appearing before the Commission to present their views but that no commitment had been given by the Commission.

~~It is suggested that organized labor and organized employers should be heard equally.~~

10. The practice of having the identification cards of departing laborers endorsed to show skilled or satisfactory services and retained by the laborers will be continued and enlarged upon. This plan is fully described in this report in the Commissioner's letter of August 25, 1954, and in the instruction issued by the United States Department of Labor on September 1, 1954, on the same subject. The plan is being received enthusiastically by growers.
11. Mexican laborers whose identification cards are endorsed as they depart to Mexico to show that they are skilled or satisfactory workers should not be required to obtain Mexican "permisos" in order to apply for re-recruitment; nor should they be made to channel themselves again through a recruitment center in Mexico; rather, they should be permitted to come directly to the border, preferably on notice from the employer who wants them, and all of the processing should be performed at the United States port of entry.
12. Heretofore, in the negotiation of an agreement with the Mexican government for the importation to the United States of Mexican nationals for agricultural labor, management to a large extent has not been represented. In view of the vital interest of management and its expressed desire for such representation, it should be granted to them.
13. Legally contracted laborers should be issued identification badges at the time of their admission, such badges to be worn conspicuously while they are in the United States. This badge is in addition to the present identification card. We are going ahead with this plan.
14. With reference to the 15-day grace period, it is our view that those 15 days should be included in the period of admission shown on the identification card. But it should be made clear to employers that they are obligated to return the worker to the reception center as soon as he has completed the job unless he is re-contracted in the United States. The grace period should be utilized solely for completion of work for the same employer. This change will prevent the arrest of the worker as an "overstay" when he is honestly within the grace period.
15. From our observations and the complaints received, it is appreciated that the growers do have a real problem in coping with "problem" laborers such as misfits, malingerers, sloths, "slow downers," "kleptos," and similar inept individuals. It

is fully expected that within one or two years this problem will have become much less aggravating due to the fact that such aliens will not be able to produce as a recommendation an I-100 endorsed to show that they are good workers and will, therefore, be more readily detected and rejected at recruitment centers.

16. Employers should not be required to submit reports to agencies of either Government, except where there is positive and useful data to report.
17. If grower recruitment is allowed, the growers would keep case files in Mexico and would make them available to the Mexican authorities. In any event, it is believed that Mexico should take more advantage of available case files kept by the Americans so that they would not have to be furnished with duplicate copies of so many papers.
18. Overtures should be made to the Mexican Government asking it to establish controls over the northward movement of migrant laborers at points such as highway and railroad junctions.
19. It must be kept in mind that Mexican laborers are intended only for seasonal or other temporary services in the United States. If a grower wants the services of an individual for an indefinite time or on a year-round basis or for most of each year, the alien should not be classed and admitted as a bracero or other nonimmigrant but should be required to obtain an immigrant visa and enter as an immigrant coming for permanent residence. There has been some tendency to violate this principle and the Commission should take a plain and firm stand on the question. There is no quota restriction on Mexican aliens. Mexico is a nonquota country.
20. As a long-range objective, it is believed that the United States Government gradually should recede from the practice of serving as a hiring agency procuring Mexican farm laborers for American growers. The growers prefer to do their own selecting and hiring and aver that they can do it more economically and efficiently than the government and with more satisfactory results. This would mean that the cost of recruiting would be transferred from the government to the growers. Such a method can be used successfully as has been so eminently well demonstrated during the past seven years by American growers east of the Mississippi who have dealt directly with the government of the British West Indies in procuring farm laborers for temporary services in the United States, with very little and very general subsidization or supervision on the part of the United States Government. Growers in some of the northern states

probably would need some aid in obtaining workers from Mexico but they require only about 20% of the total number imported.

Growers should be encouraged to band together in associations or organizations according to common interests or by area. Those groups should then send delegates to periodic growers meetings for the purpose of selecting and instructing a small panel or committee to serve (1) as a liaison in dealing with the United States and Mexican Governments; (2) as a unified control over the proposed function of management in a recruiting or hiring capacity; and (3) as a clearing house for common problems in general.