

A STUDY OF THE EDUCATION OF 1033 MIGRANT CHILDREN IN
FIVE GOVERNMENT LABOR CAMPS IN CALIFORNIA IN 1941

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The statement, "Go west," was taken literally by over one million people in the past ten years. To the vast majority "west" meant California, for that is where the bulk of them terminated their wanderings. Arriving in the state with almost no worldly goods and facing a hostile native populace, the migrant began to look around for those mythical opportunities about which he had heard back home. Disillusionment was not long in coming; his outlook and hopes were soon displaced by insecurity and bewilderment.

The old adage "Misery loves company" has no better exemplification than in the migrant; so, dismayed, he sought his own kind in a row of hovels along a ditch bank. Here he became convinced, along with thousands of others, that California would never fulfill his dreams of a western Utopia.

He drifted into despair, indifference, and shiftlessness while unemployment, starvation, and filth became his lot. His standard of living and housing conditions excited the wrath of the community and the authorities.

As Paul S. Taylor wrote in a letter to H. E. Drobish in the Division of Rural Rehabilitation (37:52),

These (migratory) camps now litter the cultivated areas of the State constituting a serious menace to the health, morals, industrial peace, and economic stability of California. They are a target of just criticism from official and private sources both within and without the State.

However, indignation did not bring these troubles to light. Even the migrant knows his living conditions are deplorable and that he does not have the facilities for sanitation and good health. No one knows better than he that he is malnourished and hungry most of the time. The migrants are not a class; they are a situation. They are not a separate group but a symptom of maladjustment in our socio-economic scheme. This background and more is necessary to study the educational significance of migration. There is a need to know the cause of migration, the extent of the problem, and the social factors that are involved. These factors precede a study of how our educational system is involved. How do their living conditions affect our future citizens? What has been their training in citizenship, healthful living, and moral development? Are they being educated for a life in a democracy? Are the children given opportunity to develop special abilities and talents and to exercise self-expression?

Educators who understand all the factors involved might lead the way in an effort to alleviate the distress and point out that the present migratory system of farm labor is a dangerous influence on the educational opportunity of a large number of our citizens of tomorrow.

Purpose of the Study

Since the beginning of the depression in 1929 almost a million destitute persons have crossed the borders into California. All were seeking a better life and a place to forget the misery they had left behind. This mass influx constituted one of the major migrations in history. Assuming that the whole group is an average cross-section of American rural population, conservative estimates would place the number of children at 200,000; approximately one half of this number would be of school age. Indications would suggest that between five and ten per cent of the total child population of California have been deprived of the essential advantages.

The parents of these children migrated because of maladjustments in their home states, and they remain maladjusted in their new environment. The migrant is a controversial phenomena; he is condoned, condemned, neglected, exploited, invited, and shunned. The children, carried along in this ebb and flow, are denied the privi-

leges that come from a stabilized community life.

This study will attempt to determine the extent of retardation of 1033 children of migratory workers in California. Some of the other factors in the study will include the amount of education of migrant parents, the education of older sisters and brothers, the extent of child labor, age at which children leave school, and grade completed before leaving school for employment.

Location of Study

The study takes place within the geographical limits of California. This state is unique in many respects but chiefly in climate. To speak of a California climate is absurd. The state has practically every type of climate classified on the face of the globe. This is due to a wide variety of geographical features; to mention some--two longitudinal mountain ranges, a thousand miles of coast line, a desert, high mountain peaks, and land below sea-level.

A subtropical climate is found in Southern California with a temperature permitting vegetative growth to continue during the entire winter. In Northern California is the world-famed Mt. Shasta, land of perpetual ice and snow. The Mt. Shasta glacier exemplifies the polar climate of the frigid zone where vegetation is stunted and

often entirely absent. The desert offers a hot, almost rainless climate where the air is dry for most of the year. The vegetation is especially equipped to store and prevent loss of moisture. The Mediterranean climate--mild dry summers and cool wet winters--is typical of a large portion of California. Besides these different climates there is the alpine climate of the mountains: mild summers with snow and extreme cold in winter.

The state is largely agricultural with petroleum, mining, and lumbering taking place in selected parts. Among other industries are manufacturing, motion pictures, fishing, canning, and fruit drying. It is primarily with agriculture that this study deals.

California lies entirely within the north temperate zone with large flat areas suitable for farming. The state extends quite far south--as far as one-half of the southern states--making this portion suitable to sub-tropical fruits. The eastern portion of this section is largely desert with very fertile soil. The high productivity of this area has been proved by the advent of irrigation. The Colorado River is the chief source of water supply.

The Central Valley project with the Shasta and Friant Dams will furnish water for the irrigation of thousands of additional acres in the Sacramento and San Joaquin

Valleys. When these projects are completed and additional use is made of the Colorado River for irrigation, most of California's tillable soil will be under cultivation. When all agricultural areas are put to maximum use, California will support twenty times its present population. At present, with less than seven million people (1940 census), the state must export most of its farm produce.

Rich agricultural possibilities in the state have brought almost two million uninvited guests from distress areas in the nation. From time to time a majority of this group has become dependent on public and private charities. Only a small group has actually assimilated and become a part of the state; the remainder is still held apart by social custom and economic stratum.

Assimilation is vitally necessary. The educator will need help from the economist, the sociologist, the medical profession, and such agencies as those pertaining to welfare, health, trade, law enforcement, housing, and morals. It is too large a problem for the educator to contemplate single-handed.

Procedure in Making the Study

The material used in the study was obtained from the files in the offices of Farm Security Administration farm labor camps in California. The files contain much information on the background of every family registering for housing. The information is not open to the public and, as a matter of fact, is highly confidential.

Every family seeking shelter in the camp is required to answer a specified number of questions. These involve residence and family status as well as employment and educational background. The camp intake worker records the responses on a special form. These forms are referred to by the camp director when it is necessary to learn something of the workers' background or family. The forms give a complete history of the employment of the family head, including his experience as farm owner, tenant, share-cropper, or laborer. Other information includes the name, age, and grade completed. Length of residence in the home state and in California is also given. Car and license number is recorded to assist with identification of the family.

Besides studying these registration forms, the writer also interviewed migrant workers, camp directors, farm owners who hired migratory farm laborers, personnel of Federal farm relief organizations, welfare employees, and

members of the California State Relief Administration.

Camp directors, living right in the camp as next-door neighbors to these people, helping them with their personal problems, and knowing their interests and attitudes, were able to contribute substantially to this study.

Data was taken directly from records of the Farm Security Administration camps. This information, plus data mentioned above, was the basis for this study.

Definition of Terms Used in This Study

A migratory farm laborer as discussed in this study is a person who, in going from place to place in search of employment, jeopardizes his residence status.

A migrant child is one who follows his parents in their quest for agricultural labor. He may still be in school, or may be working full time. He contributes his earnings to the family and is a part of the family.

A farm tenant is one who rents a tract of land from the owner and pays cash rent.

A share-cropper is a type of tenant who farms a piece of land for another man on shares. The renter and the owner share in the crop.

The terms migrant, migratory farm laborer, and migratory agricultural worker are used synonymously.

Migration (usually) is the effort of an individual to escape from conditions judged to be unsatisfactory to

areas of more promising opportunity.

An owner-operator runs his own farm although, due to mortgages and other encumbrances, his equity may be as little as forty per cent.

Limitations of the Study

This investigation is in no sense final. There is no thought that this study should be considered to have answered the problem completely. Further investigation, intelligent legislation, and public action over a period of years will be necessary to produce results that can be noticed. This is intended only to shed some light on the situation, its causes and effects, and to suggest ways and means toward a solution.

It is felt that the sampling is small. A larger number of children would lend more weight. However, the sample was not a select group and is probably very representative of this type of children.

It was not definitely proved that the migrant child is more immoral than native California children although this was suggested. Nor was it proved that he is more of a disciplinary problem. Would he still be such a truant if he did not have to help support the family? Would he still live in filth if he were given more of a chance to be clean? Would he still steal if he had the things he

needs? Would his scholarship improve if his family were anchored to the soil? These are some of the questions that really need to be answered.

Studies in the Field

In 1934 the California State Relief Administration was inaugurated to relieve human suffering. This state agency saved the lives of thousands from 1934 to 1941. Because it cost untold millions to operate the plan, the state became anxious to learn the cause of such misery. Consequently the State Relief Administration conducted several surveys. The one that bears on the migratory children's problems is entitled "Migratory Labor in California." This study is largely economic and social and tends to prove the harmful effects of migratory habits on children. It does fail, however, to bring out clearly what effect migration has on mental growth.

Another organization that has as one of its functions the relief of human suffering is the Farm Security Administration. This agency conducted a survey under Edward J. Rowell, Regional Labor Relations Advisor in charge of the camps for migratory workers. Dr. Rowell found that the children of migratory workers were inevitably retarded with retardation increasing until the eighth grade. This was as far as the study was made. One hundred and seventy-five

white children were included.

The Federal Writers' Projects of the W.P.A. have made several studies on migration in California, but the authors did not include a consideration of the educational disadvantages.

Acquaintance with Problem

The writer first gained experience with the migratory labor problem while working as a laborer in California harvests during the summers from 1929 to 1932. Further acquaintance came about through associations with migrant youths in Civilian Conservation Corps where the writer was an enrollee from June, 1933, to July, 1934. Working with these young men for a year stimulated a desire to understand them better.

Additional background for the study was gained through experience as a social service case-worker for the Federal Emergency Relief Administration in 1934 and for the California State Relief Administration intermittently from 1935 to 1938. The duties of a case-worker consisted of visiting the homes of relief applicants and securing sufficient data to write a complete case history on the families. These personal contacts furnished the impetus for this investigation.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF THE MIGRATORY LABOR PROBLEM

Since the time of the Spanish explorations, California has meant a haven or mecca for those who were looking for a fuller life. Sir Francis Drake, Cabrillo, Robert Louis Stevenson, and a long line of adventurers have given that land a romantic aura that has persisted down to the present century. The lure of the West has been felt ever since the Spanish padres constructed a string of missions along El Camino Real from Mexico to San Francisco Bay. Ambitious opportunists in the state have consistently benefited from "Easterners" who were lured out west by overzealous chambers of commerce.

The westward movement received an impetus immediately after World War I when hundreds migrated to California from the poorer regions of the Great Plains States. From 1920 to 1930 over a million persons entered the state, mostly from this area. After 1929 migrants were not so readily absorbed into industry. At that time the drought and the depression joined forces to produce a new westward movement which was classified as a distress migration.

The dust bowl contributed a large percentage of the migratory farm families in California. As Lewis has stated (37:36),

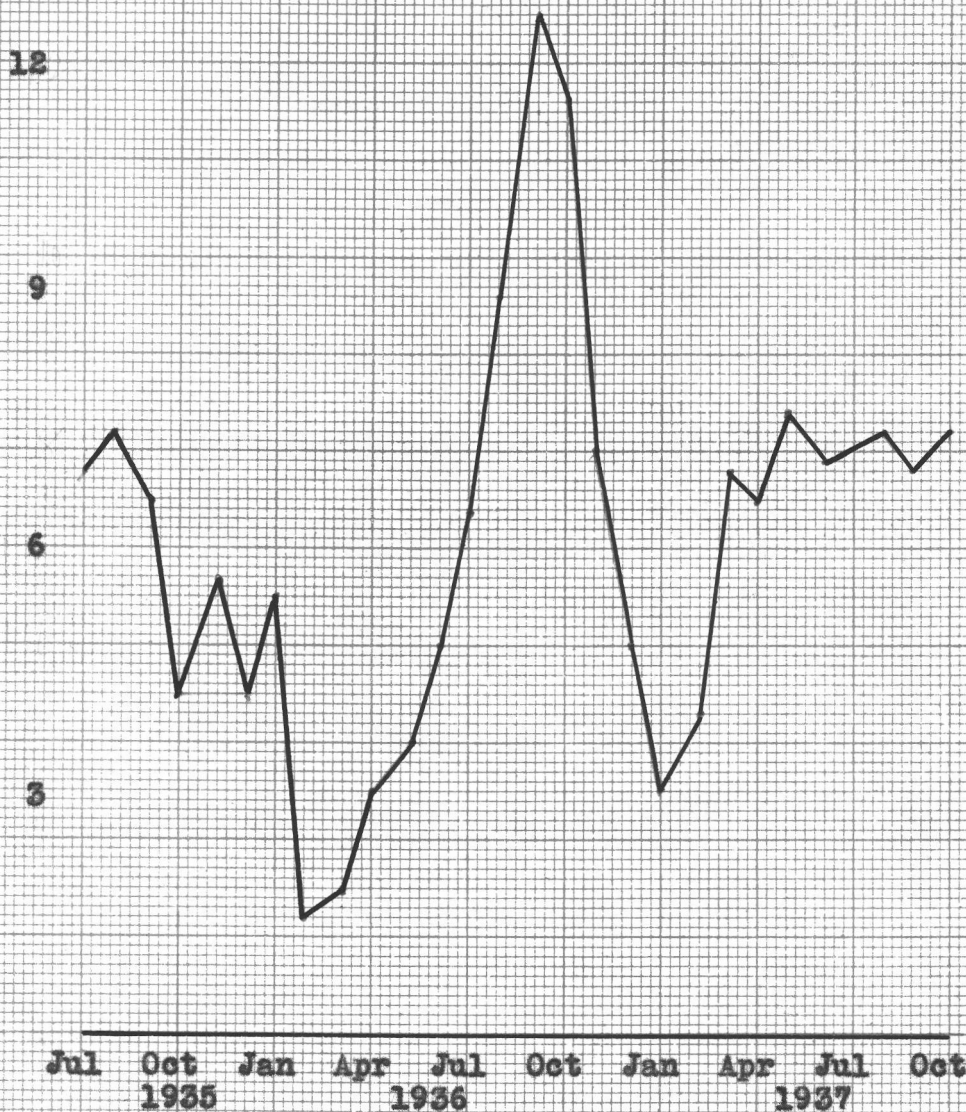
TABLE I

Population Increase of Eleven Agricultural
Counties in California from 1930 to 1940

Counties	1930	1940	Per cent Increase
Butte	34,093	42,840	25.7
Fresno	144,379	178,565	23.7
Kern	82,570	135,124	63.6
Kings	25,385	35,168	38.5
Madera	17,164	23,314	35.8
Merced	36,748	46,988	27.9
Riverside	81,024	105,524	30.2
San Joaquin	102,940	134,207	30.4
Stanislaus	56,641	74,866	32.2
Sutter	14,618	18,680	27.8
Yuba	11,331	17,034	50.3
Totals	625,640	799,063	35.1 (average)

Fig. 1. Migrants Entering California in Search of Manual Employment*

(thousands)



* From Farm Security Administration Study.
Based on monthly reports of quarantine
stations.

An additional source of labor supply for California agriculture presented itself as a result of the depression which started in 1929, and the drought which struck particularly the Great Plains from 1933 to 1935. Tens of thousands of people from farms and small towns in Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Missouri, and Kansas began pouring westward. A count made under Taylor, June to December 1935, identified 43,180 in need of manual employment who entered California by motor vehicle.

During the 1930-1942 period, 600,000 people entered California in search of manual employment. At the present time, fairly dependable estimates of the number of farm labor families in California place the figure at 400,000. This will present an idea of the enormity of the problem.

Woofert states (102:1):

When it (migration) reaches a large scale, it is symptomatic at the point of origin of the maladjustment of population to opportunity and at the point of destination, of at least a hope of better things. Migration has, therefore, been a safety valve for the American economy in past depressions and periods of friction.

Migration, then, is a symptom, not a cause. Since symptoms are only observed and not treated, it is necessary to look for underlying causes.

Mechanization on the farm is displacing the hired laborer in the cotton belt and in the area known as the "dust bowl." Farms in the best parts of this area are being mechanized and industrialized. The small farms with tenant and cropper families are being combined and made

TABLE II

United States Department of Agriculture
Farm Security Administration

This is a chart of individuals entering California in automobiles "in search of manual employment." Left-hand columns in each case show the inflow of cars bearing California licenses, or those who are returning Californians. Right-hand columns show the inflow of cars bearing out-of-state licenses. NOTE, however, that many of these entrants may still be returning to California from employment in other states, and this percentage may run as high as 50 per cent.

	1935		1936	
	Return	Out-State	Return	Out-State
January	(Beginning June 15.)		2,663	6,774
February			674	3,126
March			625	3,527
April			616	4,719
May			629	4,895
June	1,103	3,454	816	6,079
July	2,473	7,754	1,038	7,380
August	1,713	8,773	957	9,657
September	1,735	7,715	1,580	12,549
October	1,238	5,730	1,441	11,848
November	1,658	7,157	869	8,053
December	1,084	5,430	931	6,226
Total			12,839	84,633

	1937		1938	
	Return	Out-State	Return	Out-State
January	1,053	4,949	2,903	8,724
February	559	5,701	1,494	7,583
March	387	7,752	1,460	7,470
April	764	7,242	952	6,510
May	999	8,299	1,094	5,987
June	999	7,908	1,081	4,512
July	1,392	8,035	1,401	3,897
August	1,551	8,156	1,213	4,164
September	1,461	7,609	1,651	4,130
October	1,724	8,302	1,350	5,343
November	1,787	9,917	1,738	6,055
December	1,539	6,891	1,150	3,289
Total	14,215	90,761	17,487	67,664

TABLE II
Continued

	1939		1940	
	Return	Out-State	Return	Out-State
January	1,288	2,792	1,201	2,940
February	742	2,840	794	3,263
March	575	3,790	1,093	5,007
April	748	4,848	1,408	6,339
May	874	5,847	1,232	5,514
June	1,175	6,344	1,480	4,894
July	1,422	6,094	2,670	5,747
August	1,216	7,088	2,027	6,646
September	1,311	6,215	2,119	5,965
October	1,910	7,829	1,905	4,140
November	1,810	7,267	2,045	5,767
December	1,597	3,337	1,393	3,615
Total	14,668	64,291	19,367	59,837

	1941		1942	
	Return	Out-State	Return	Out-State
January	2,646	4,005	2,443	4,291
February	1,114	3,813	1,451	5,244
March	1,511	6,757	1,373	4,746
April	1,432	7,357	1,870	5,633
May	1,395	8,011	1,707	7,420
June	2,223	7,791		
July	1,989	9,027		
August	2,373	10,213		
September	3,091	10,704		
October	2,005	8,222		
November	1,756	7,389		
December	1,492	4,017		
Total	23,027	87,306		

**Fig. 2. Accumulative Graph Showing California's
Migrant Population Increase from 1935 to 1941**

(thousands) 1936 1937 1938 1939 1940 1941
800

700

600

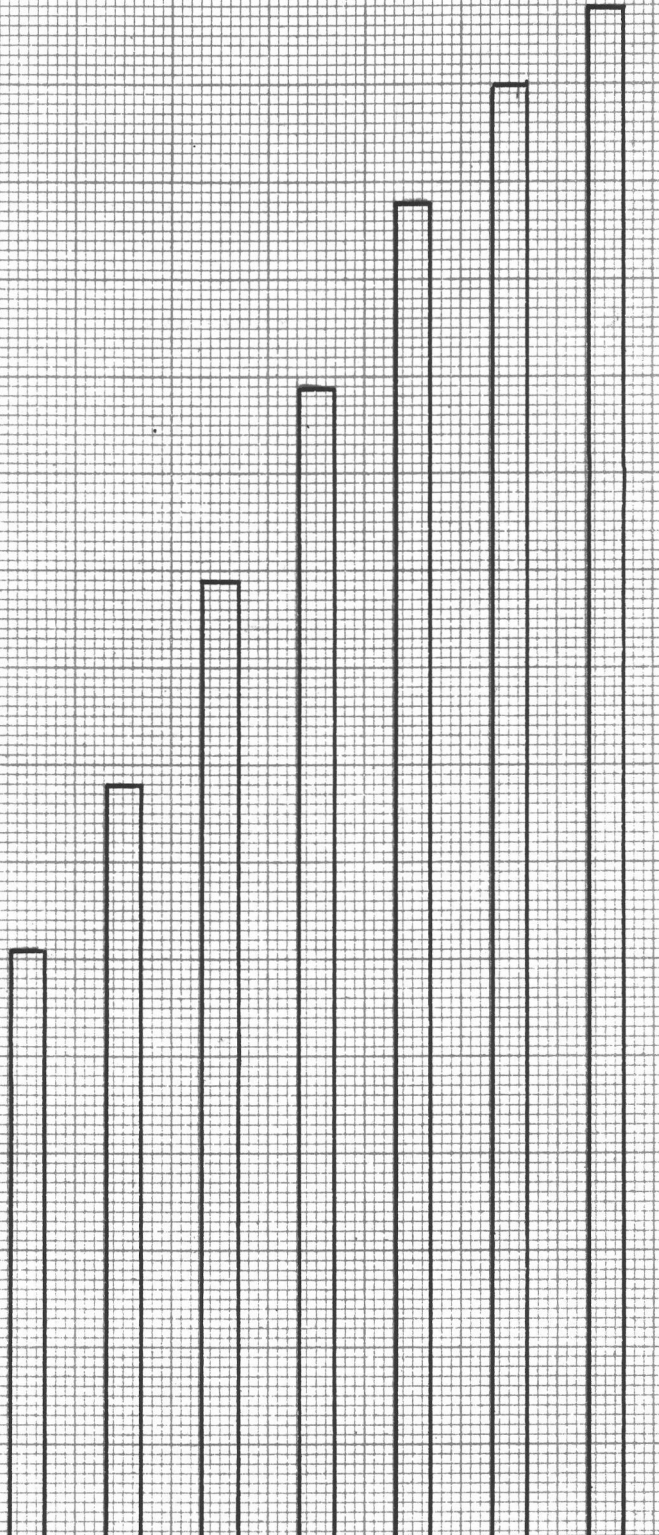
500

400

300

200

100



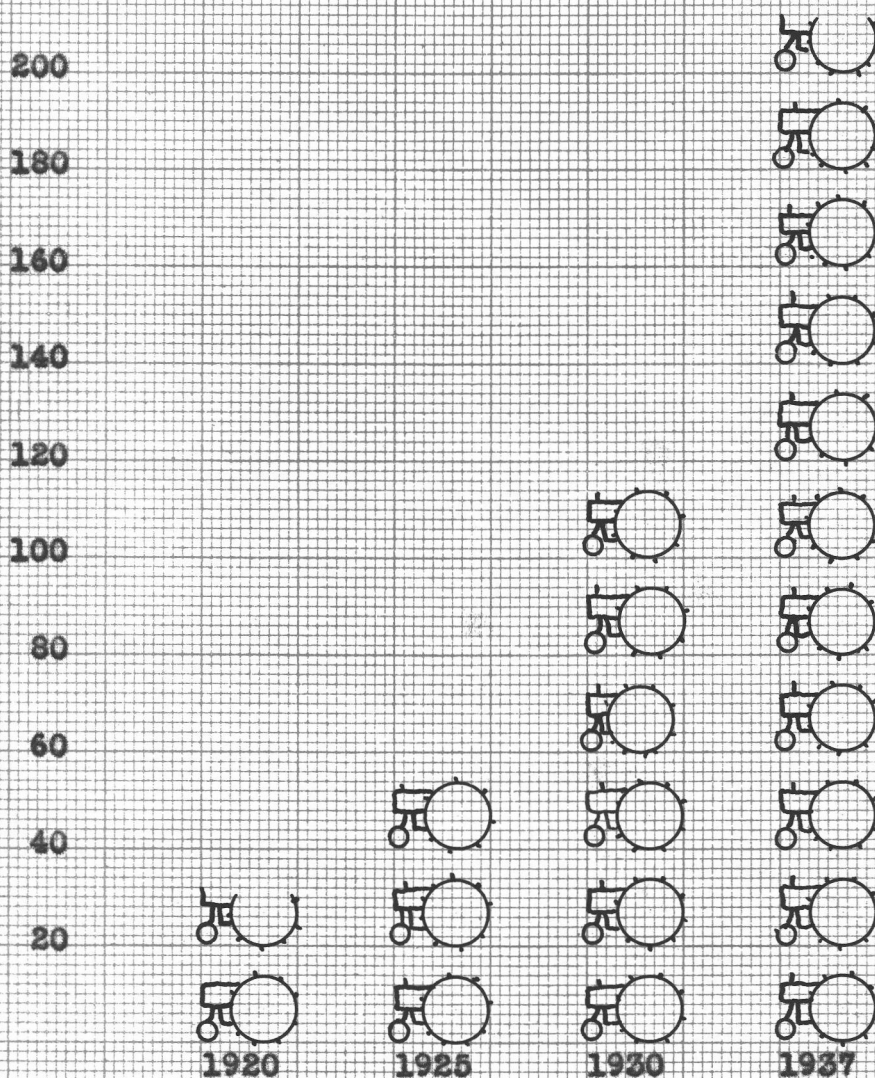
into large tracts. Farming is becoming a big business for a few, with little place for the small-scale operator. Labor is forced off the land and into the cities because of the increased use of the tractor.

On one farm in the south the landlord purchased 22 tractors. He then released 130 of the 160 sharecropper families who worked his land, keeping only 30 to run the machinery (21:4). It is estimated that every tractor displaces five farm families. Figure 3 shows the rise in the use of tractors from 1920 to 1937. In 1941 there were 20 times as many tractors in use as in 1920. The million and a half tractors now in use have made luxury for a few and misery for millions.

The small-tract, one-mule operator with a single row cultivator, staking his all on a single crop, has not been able to stand low farm prices and continued crop failure. One of the causes of low prices is the loss of foreign markets--especially since the outbreak of World War II. Dust storms and drought have taken their tolls. One of the big losses is the loss of the soil through the tenant system. Most of the tenants stay on a farm one or two years with consequently bad farming practices. They have no interest in preserving the soil they do not own, especially if they do not intend to remain long. The Farm Security Administration reminds us that (21:3):

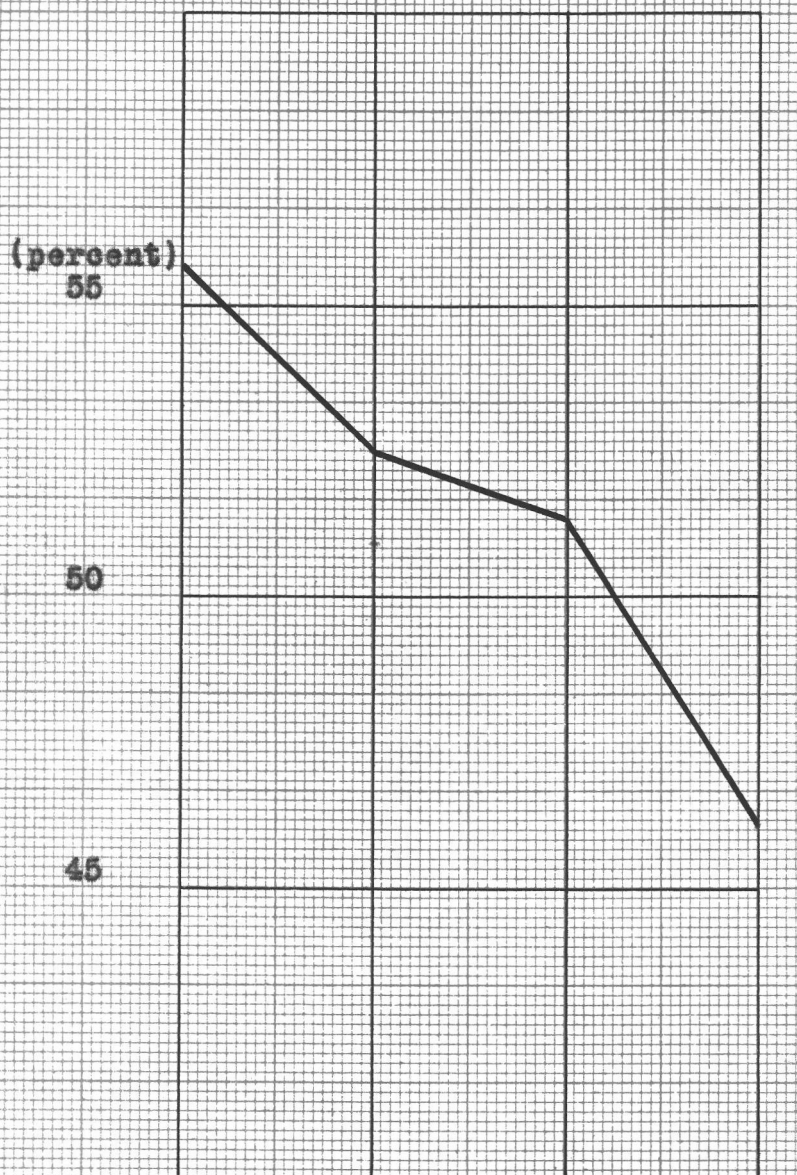
**Fig. 3. Increase in Use of Tractors
in Great Plains States***

(thousands)



* From United States Department of Agriculture.

Fig. 4. Decline of Farm Ownership from 1900 to 1930.*



* From Report of The President's Committee to Investigate Farm Ownership, February, 1937

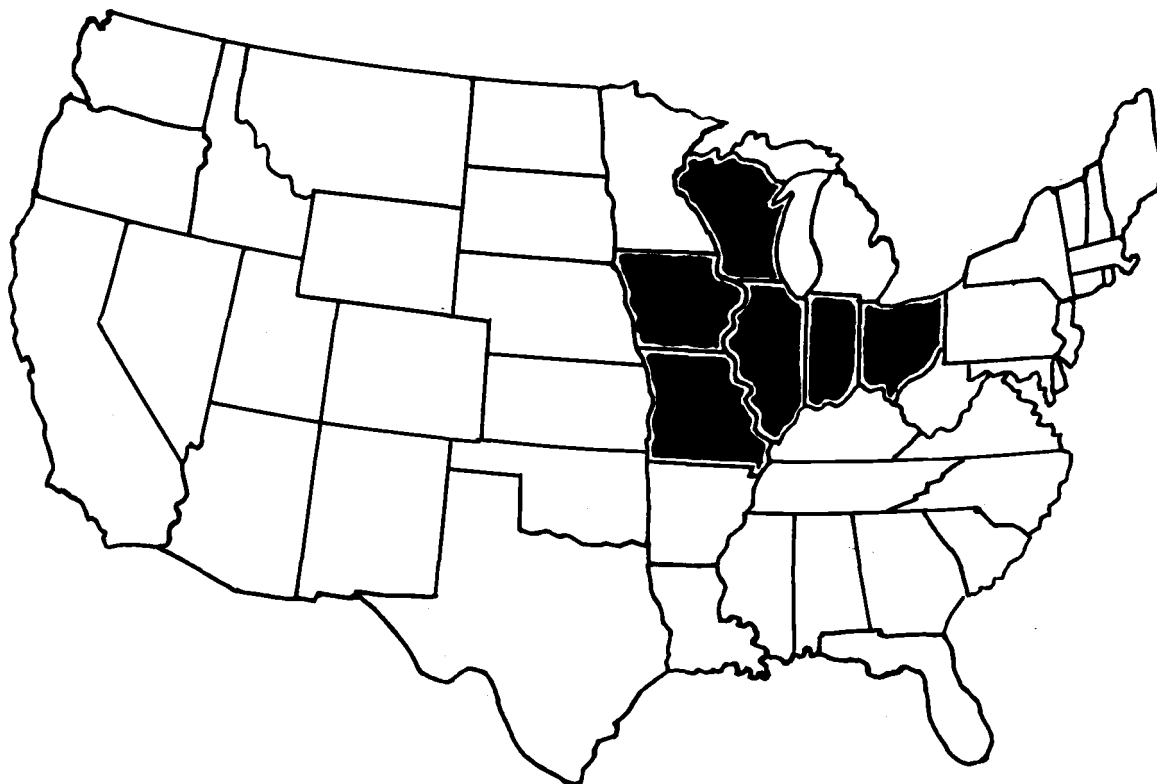
In fact, the amount of farm land available has been shrinking rapidly as a result of soil erosion. Already 50 million acres of cropland have been ruined, and four times that many have been badly damaged. This means that an area as big as 6 farm states-- Iowa, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Missouri--has been ruined for farming or robbed of much of its fertility.

Erosion is still whittling away our cropland. Every day enough soil to make two hundred 40-acre farms washes or blows away.

When trouble comes from depression, dust, drought, or disease it is the little farmer who feels it first. He is not able to compete against mechanization nor can he afford to buy expensive machinery. If he mortgages his farm, he soon becomes a tenant and then a laborer. When farms become fewer and larger, fewer people make a living in agriculture. A few are retained by the owners to operate tractors and to serve in managerial capacities.

Dust storms are the result of land that has been stripped of its protective covering. Cotton, tobacco, and corn, the three important cash crops, require cultivation between rows. As a result, the soil is kept loose. When the crops are harvested, very little vegetable matter is left in the field to be plowed under for humous. Loose soil, having nothing to anchor it, is at the mercy of the winds, and the farmer is at the mercy of the dust. Dust storms devastated millions of acres and uprooted millions of tenant farmers, damaging their homes, their lands, and

**Fig.5 An Area Equal To These Six States: Iowa
Wisconsin, Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, and
Indiana, Have Been Blown or Washed Away.**



their morale.

The goal of most agricultural workers is farm ownership. Taylor has said that the chances of farm laborers to rise to farm ownership are very small. The ambitious farm laborer will not cling to this type of work. In a democracy, he is taught that he may rise according to individual capacity. In practice there has been a tendency to fall rather than rise. Taylor says (79:3):

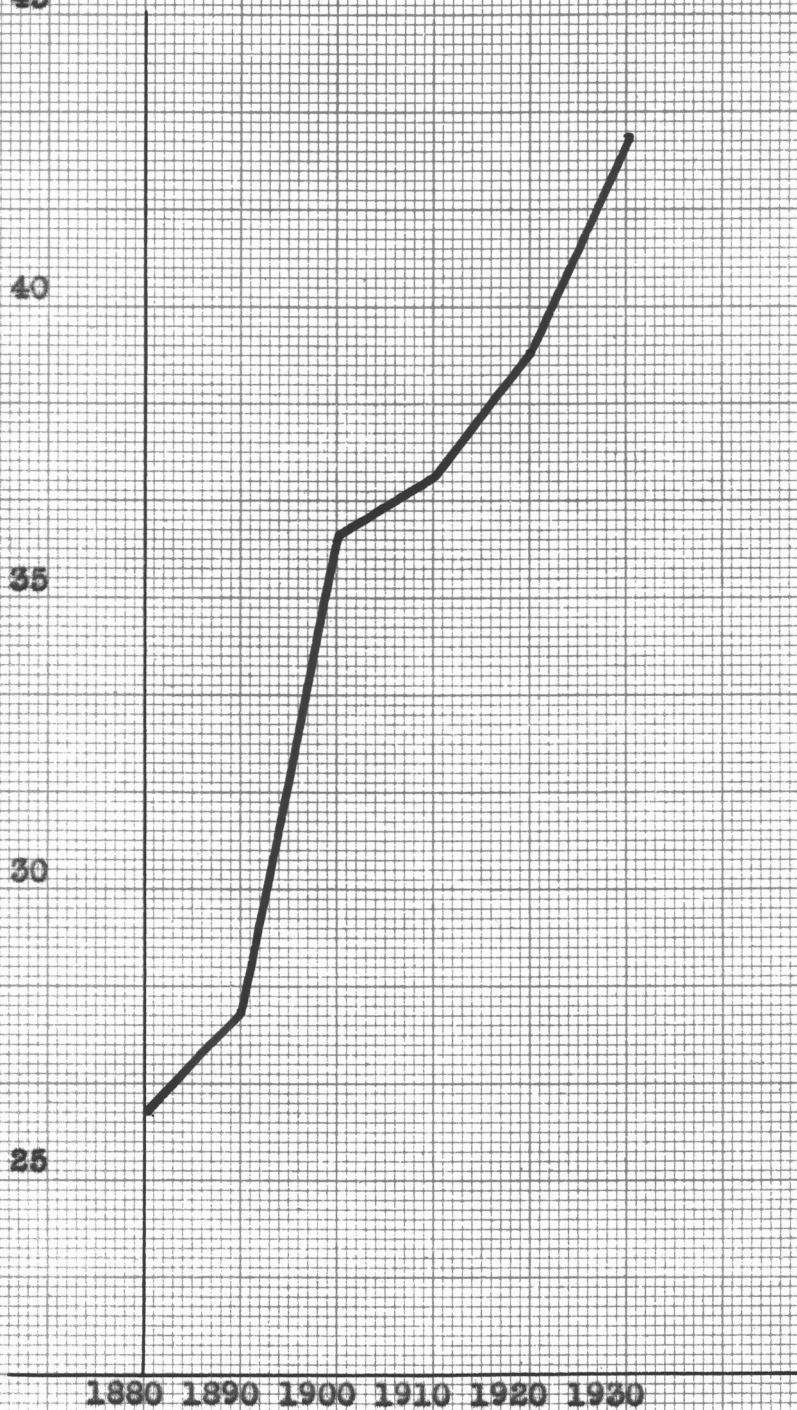
Tenancy has increased from 25 per cent of all farmers in 1880 to 42 per cent in 1935. Because of debt, the actual equity of operating owners is far less than these figures indicate. In some of our states. . . *in cent*
 .the equity is little more than one-fifth. Thus, hundreds of thousands of farm families have attained only a semblance of ownership. Especially in times of depression they have witnessed their hard-won equities steadily decline and finally disappear. After years of effort to retain their foothold as farm owners, they find themselves poorer for the struggle. At the same time. . . tenant farmers. . . have not been able to accumulate enough to make a first payment on a farm of their own.

Taylor says that these conditions sharpen the line which defines agricultural workers as a class, for they add to the difficulty of ascending the agricultural ladder.

Peculiarly, these states that are the least able to absorb their annual crop of young workers are producing the bulk of them. Almost 80 per cent of the new workers come from farms and rural areas. About 750,000 new

Fig. 5a. Rise in Farm Tenancy in United States from 1880 to 1930*

(percent)
45



workers come of age each year and find no outlet for their energies. This section, with two per cent of the national income, produces 14 per cent of the children. The per capita income in 1937 was \$314 compared to \$604 for the remainder of the country. The average tenant earned \$78 per person per year while the sharecropper earned even less. It is no wonder so many persons are ill-fed, ill-clothed, and ill-housed. This group is six times as susceptible to disease as the rest of the population. Infant deaths are four times as high as in the average family.

In the past, the new crop of workers went to the cities where opportunity was dynamic. But since the depression, the cities have had an unemployment problem that was tantamount to closing the doors on incoming workers from rural areas. Migration is the effort of people to better their conditions--to leave unhappy circumstances and search for a place where they can lead a fuller life. To apply this definition, it is necessary to contrast present and past opportunities. No longer can people take up free land when dissatisfied with the old. The American frontier has been pushed westward to the limit, because the last good homestead land has been taken up. The last chance to become an owner of a good homestead is gone. Today's pioneer, coming west, must be content to live on

someone else's land as tenant or laborer.

Migration is not a habit; it is a symptom. Evans has reported (20:2):

A consistent migratory pattern has not been reported as a notable characteristic of the individual families, but a desire for stability has been expressed with pitiable frequency. . .

Moreover in recent years the preponderantly one-way migration of families from the Great Plain states, removed from their farms. . .has mingled with the movement of seasonal agricultural workers. Already existing underemployment has been magnified, and a new train of problems has followed in the wake of their arrival on the Pacific coast.

The number of migrants pursuing agricultural labor in California is somewhere in the neighborhood of a half a million, or seven per cent of the population. A less conservative estimate places the figure above a million. Even though it is difficult to secure an accurate count, Evans concludes (20:4):

There is sufficient magnitude to the movement to have impressed the people of our western states with its inadequacy as a way of life. . .The only possible outcome of the erratic employment and the low wages offered is widespread material poverty. Material poverty in turn leads to hunger, improper clothing, and improper shelter. . .The agricultural worker. . .suffers from discrimination in relief, community hospitality, and loss of voting franchise. . .the farm worker is excluded from all legislation affecting the working class population. He is notably omitted from all of our laws with regard to social insurance, wages and hours, and labor relations.

On his triple disadvantaged status--poor, mobile and agricultural--he menaces the community even as his own well being is menaced. And we might well regard all approaches to the problems of the migrant's health, his housing, the education of his children, and his low and uncertain income, as subsidiary to the broader problem of making him a responsible, self-respecting member of organized society.

Much of the blame for excess migration to California has been laid to the old-age pension. This accusation has been proved false in a study made in 1938 by the Farm Security Administration. The average family head was found to be only thirty-three and one half years of age. Most of the group would have to live in the state for "thirty years before cashing in on any existing pension plan. . . Three-fourths of the group were between twenty and twenty-four." (97:2)

Another common belief is that farm relief programs are more attractive in California--but this is without foundation. Farm Security Administration reports that twenty times as much money has been spent by this agency to anchor families to the land in the states from which most migrants come as has been spent on the shelter, relief, and medical care of migratory families in California (97:1). Figure 6 will illustrate this point graphically.

Federal agencies have not been as guilty of enticing people to California as has private enterprise. One of

Fig. 6. Farm Security Administration Loans and Grants in Five Principal States of Origin of California's Migrants Compared with Aid to Migrants in California (up to December 31, 1939)

California
(\$5,957,078)

\$\$

Kansas
(\$20,277,607)

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

Missouri
(\$22,491,540)

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

Arkansas
(\$23,705,406)

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

Oklahoma
(\$24,867,098)

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

Texas
(\$43,642,804)

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

the handbills sent to the dust bowl to advertise for workers is shown in Figure 9.

Once people are firmly established in the state they often write back home and paint a prejudiced picture of the economic terrain--as in this letter from California to a relative "back home" (63:9).

Dear Odessa:

You and Coy must try and come to California this fall. We've got everything we want now. We get our relief check for forty dollars every two weeks and we've bought a new car. We go in town every two weeks and get commodities. That helps a heap on our grocery bill, and the case worker comes out and gives the children clothes so they can keep in school. You sure want to come out.

Your sister,

Bessie

Thirty years ago, migratory labor was not a great problem. Workers could not go long distances in search of seasonal employment. In this age, these workers have an automobile if they have nothing else. The car usually constitutes the bulk of the family wealth. In it, they can manage to go from job to job and satisfy their taste for travel at a comparatively low cost. Highways are numerous and California climate permits roadside camping a good part of the year. There is free water in most places and firewood can be gathered along the way.

Camping out might be conducive to good health, but it does not work out satisfactorily on a twelve-month basis.

Exposure to the elements during winter has often resulted in influenza and other respiratory diseases. Hastily constructed shelters of scrap tin, packing boxes, and cardboard are inadequate in winter storms.

Many of the families are constantly malnourished, making them easy prey to diseases; children contract intestinal troubles from fruit and stagnant drinking water. Pelagra and malaria are common because of unhealthful conditions. Epidemics of communicable diseases are readily spread due to crowded conditions and absence of immunization precautions. Provisions for sanitation are often absent or neglected and not supervised by local medical authorities.

Migratory labor in restricted quantities is very essential to California agriculture. The highly seasonal character of demand for this type of labor makes it necessary for thousands of men, women, and children to follow the crops as they mature. Due to such a wide variety of climates in the state, harvest time extends through a greater part of the year. Table V shows the principal crops and the months in which they are harvested. Although the main harvest comes in the fall, there is still need for 45,000 laborers through the winter and spring months. Over 200,000 workers are needed in the peak month of September. Figure 7 shows the demand for

**Fig. 7. Agricultural Labor Requirements of 33
Principal Counties in California, 1935***

(thousands)

200

160

120

80

40

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

* California harvest requires 200,000 workers in
September; only 40,000 during winter months.

farm labor in 33 agricultural counties in California in 1935. With 240,000 available workers and the need never approaching that number, it is obvious that there is never employment for them all. On the average, 45 to 50 per cent are unemployed all year, or it can be said that the average migrant is employed about 6.4 months out of the year. The National Child Labor Committee reports that the greatest need for workers comes in September when the demand calls for 198,000; in March only 48,000 workers are required. The average is about 92,000 workers per month. Figure 9a shows California labor supply expressed as per cent of demand for each month in 1935.

Having so much competition in farm labor, the migrants must divide the work among themselves. This results in very irregular employment with consequent low income. When the farmer has many employees to choose from he can lower the wage rate and still get his crops harvested. When 1000 workers show up at a farm that needs 500 for four weeks, the employer will often hire the whole group. This reduces the length of the job, allowing the worker to earn only half of what he expected. Often workers will work for less than the stipulated price in order to be sure of employment. The whole system has had a very demoralizing effect on the group. Table III (37:126) shows earnings of families steadily employed in California

TABLE III

Earnings of Families Steadily Employed in
California Agriculture from 1930 to 1935*

Earnings	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935
\$100 or less	4	7	4	3	2	2
100 - 200	3	3	4	4	2	2
201 - 300	10	9	10	8	6	1
301 - 400	9	8	9	10	6	1
401 - 500	12	12	13	15	9	3
501 - 600	12	10	14	11	7	2
601 - 700	10	10	5	6	5	1
701 - 800	15	14	11	10	6	2
801 - 900	6	6	5	1	1	-
901 - 1000	5	4	2	5	2	1
Over 1000	17	14	12	8	5	3
Not stated	3	2	2	1	-	-
Total	106	99	91	82	51	18

* From California State Relief Administration Study:
Migratory Labor in California, p. 126.

TABLE IV

Total Yearly Earnings of 230 Families in Which
Two or More Members Were Working in
California Agriculture in 1935*

Family Earnings	Employed Less Than 3 Months	Employed 3 - 5 Months	Employed 6 - 8 Months	Employed 9 - 11 Months	Employed All Year
\$100 or less	8	4	1	-	1
101 - 200	12	32	15	2	-
201 - 300	1	21	21	7	1
301 - 400	2	14	19	10	-
401 - 500	-	4	9	6	1
501 - 600	1	6	9	2	-
601 - 700	-	2	2	1	-
701 - 800	-	2	4	3	-
801 - 900	-	-	2	1	-
901 - 1000	-	-	-	-	1
Over 1000	-	-	2	-	-
Not Stated	-	1	-	-	-
Total	24	86	84	32	4
Average	\$133.				

* From California State Relief Administration Study:
Migratory Labor in California, p. 125.

agriculture from 1930 to 1935, the hardest years of the depression. Conditions improved only slightly from 1935 to 1941. With such low wages and scarcity of work, it was necessary for all employable members of a family to be on the job. This meant the mother and usually all of the children--girls as well as boys. Table IV (37:126) shows the earnings of 230 migrant families for the year 1935 when two or more members were employed. The average income was \$133 per family. In a study made by the National Child Labor Committee, it was concluded that the average yearly income was \$289. The real average probably lies between these two figures. It has been clearly established that migratory workers as a group live on substandard budgets. The average relief budget for migrant families was \$780 per year. Only a fortunate five or ten per cent ever reach this figure. Table III shows the decrease in size of incomes from labor beginning in 1930. In this year 106 families in the survey had year-around employment; in 1931 the figure had dropped to 99. All-year employment continued to go down until it went below 20 per cent. This drop in employment kept pace with the depression and the increase of the relief load. By 1936 the condition had become appalling. In a six-week period during the winter of 1935-36, over 69,000 homeless people made application for relief at public agencies.

TABLE V

Crops in California Indicating A Year-around Harvest

Month	Crop	Locality
January	Olives Oranges Cotton	Tehama, Butte Co. Southern California
February	Vegetables Cotton	Imperial Valley Southern California
March	Peas Vegetables	San Joaquin Valley Imperial Valley
April	Peas Lettuce	San Joaquin Valley Salinas
May	Hay Oranges Lettuce	Sacramento Valley San Joaquin Valley Salinas
June	Cherries Apricots	Sacramento Valley Napa Valley
July	Apricots Peaches Melons	Sacramento Valley San Joaquin Valley
August	Grapes Prunes Peaches Melons	Sacramento Valley
September	Grapes Prunes	San Joaquin Valley Santa Clara Valley
October	Tomatoes Rice Grapes Melons	Sacramento Valley San Joaquin Valley
November	Olives Rice	Butte County
December	Olives Oranges	Butte County

Private and denominational agencies were not included in this count. In all, over two million farm families have been on the relief rolls at one time or another since 1930 (21:1).

By the early part of 1936, indigent immigration had reached the climax. California was harboring almost a million persons who had no visible means of support. Los Angeles experienced an unprecedented overcrowding, with an accompanying crime wave, when 45 per cent of all migrants settled in that county. Police Chief James E. Davis instituted a frontier guard, placing eight policemen at each point where a highway crossed the California border. Persons attempting to enter the state with no visible means of support were refused entry. As a result Oregon, Nevada, and Arizona were collecting a residue which brought forth indignant comments. A Grants Pass, Oregon, newspaper suggested that if "California bars only criminal and penniless, Oregon would be faced with the possibility of having California's thousands of wandering vagrants pile up. . .to create a relief and crime problem, unknown here now" (9:9).

From Nevada came this declamation (9:9):

If the Constitution doesn't guarantee citizens the right to breathe the air, walk on the earth, view the sunset, and hunt for a job without a mounted policeman's approval, then we've no Constitution. How many Forty-Niners would've been able to show visible means of support on entering California?

Fig.8 Map of a Typical Migratory Cycle Followed
by a Family of Migrants During a
Twelve Month Period.

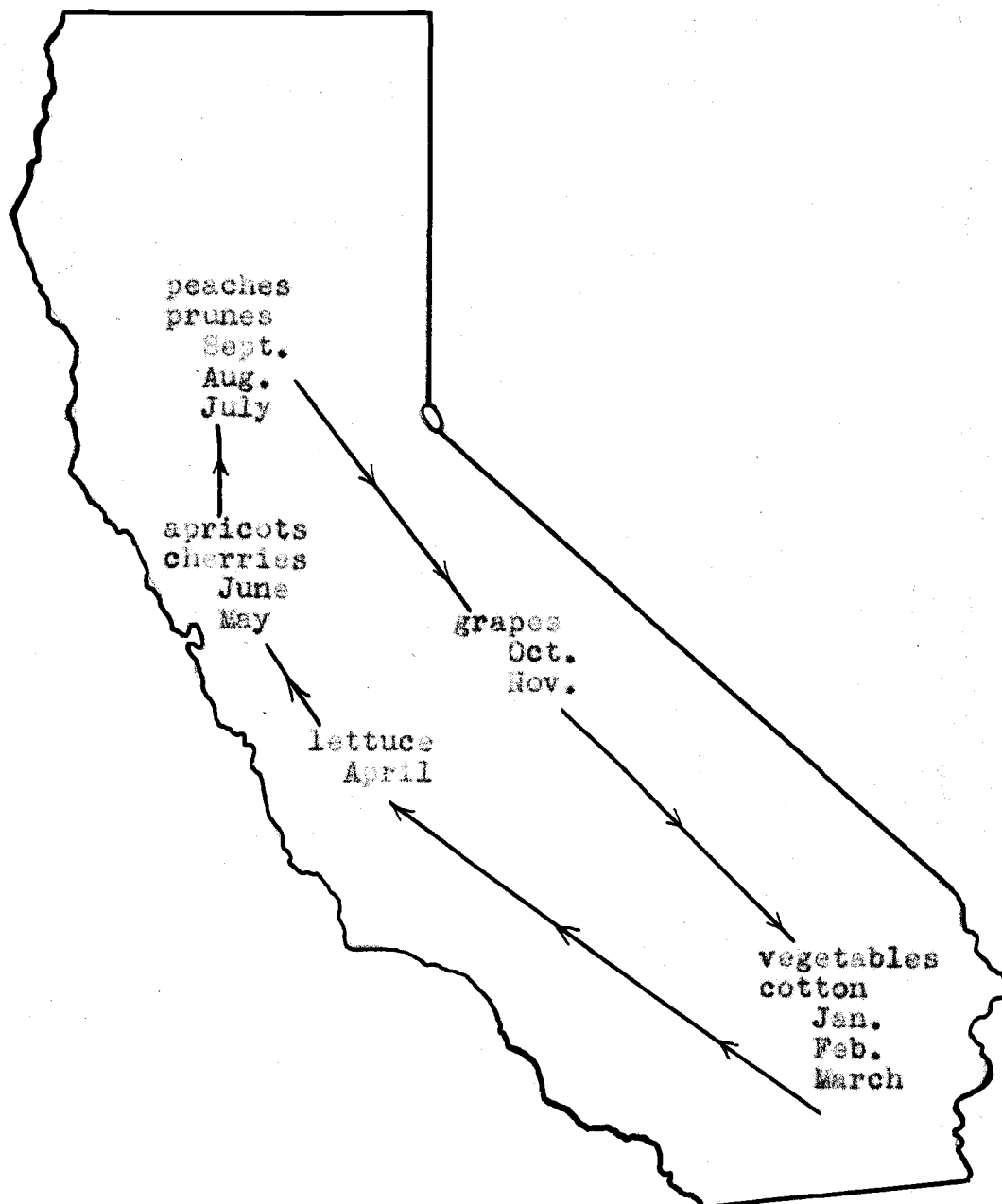


Fig. 9-Handbill Sent to Great Plains States to attract Workers to California.

800 PEA PICKERS Wanted

700 Acres of Good Peas
About 20 miles West of
Santa Maria, California
near Long Polk, California
Good Camp, Good Wat-
er and Store

BUSY ALL SEASON

will start about
**February 25th or
March 1st**

●
**L. Mort
Labor Contractor
Licensed and Bonded**

The Los Angeles police force could get no support from the state. Before the blockade did any real damage, the police cordon was withdrawn from the border and the migrant horde was allowed to continue its flow. This instance was cited to illustrate the strong feeling that existed in the southern part of the state.

That the migrant suffers from moving around is well known, but there also may be other influences working against him. The crop yield is not always in proportion to the area planted; the harvest is subject to a variety of influences such as insect plagues, disease and drought. Weather plays a vital part; cool weather will delay the harvest while a hot spell will accelerate it. If the market falls too low, the farmer may decide to leave the crop in the fields and not harvest it at all. If the crop is perishable, there may be a need for many workers for only a few days. Thus the worker might drive a long distance for only a few days' work and finish the job in dire financial straits. If he is unable to drive to another job, there is nothing left for him except charity. If he steals, he is classified as a "no-good Okie;" if he is proud, his family suffers. He has not been in one place long enough to establish credit and his friends are often unable to offer assistance. Unbelievable hardships have been endured in a land noted for its wealth of resources.

Discrimination has been detrimental to the morale of the agricultural worker, and he is subjected to it daily. His children are often segregated at school. As one migrant mother explained, "They said of my child on the school ground, 'He's from the county camp.' That makes it hard. Pretty soon the children begin to think they're not equal. That's a drawback to this education." (66:5). Segregation of migrant students is a common practice. Superintendents try to justify the procedure by saying that these children disrupt the schedule of regular classes. The townspeople also fear the spread of disease due to the unsanitary conditions in which the migrants live. Rowell points out (66:5) that "segregation, coupled with the greater age and poorer dress of the migrant children, raises a social barrier that removes the children and their parents one step further from the contacts of community life."

Discrimination against the farm labor class is not peculiar to modern times. In 1901 the United States Industrial Commission published this statement (79:6):

The annual inundation of grain fields in harvest time, hop yards in the picking season, fruit picking in districts of extensive market orchards. . .has a demoralizing effect on farm labor. Such employments demand little skill; the requirements of each are simply and easily satisfied. They constitute a low order of farm labor, if worthy to be classed with it at all. . .

Fig.9a Agricultural Unemployment Based on
Supply and Demand of Farm Labor for 1935.

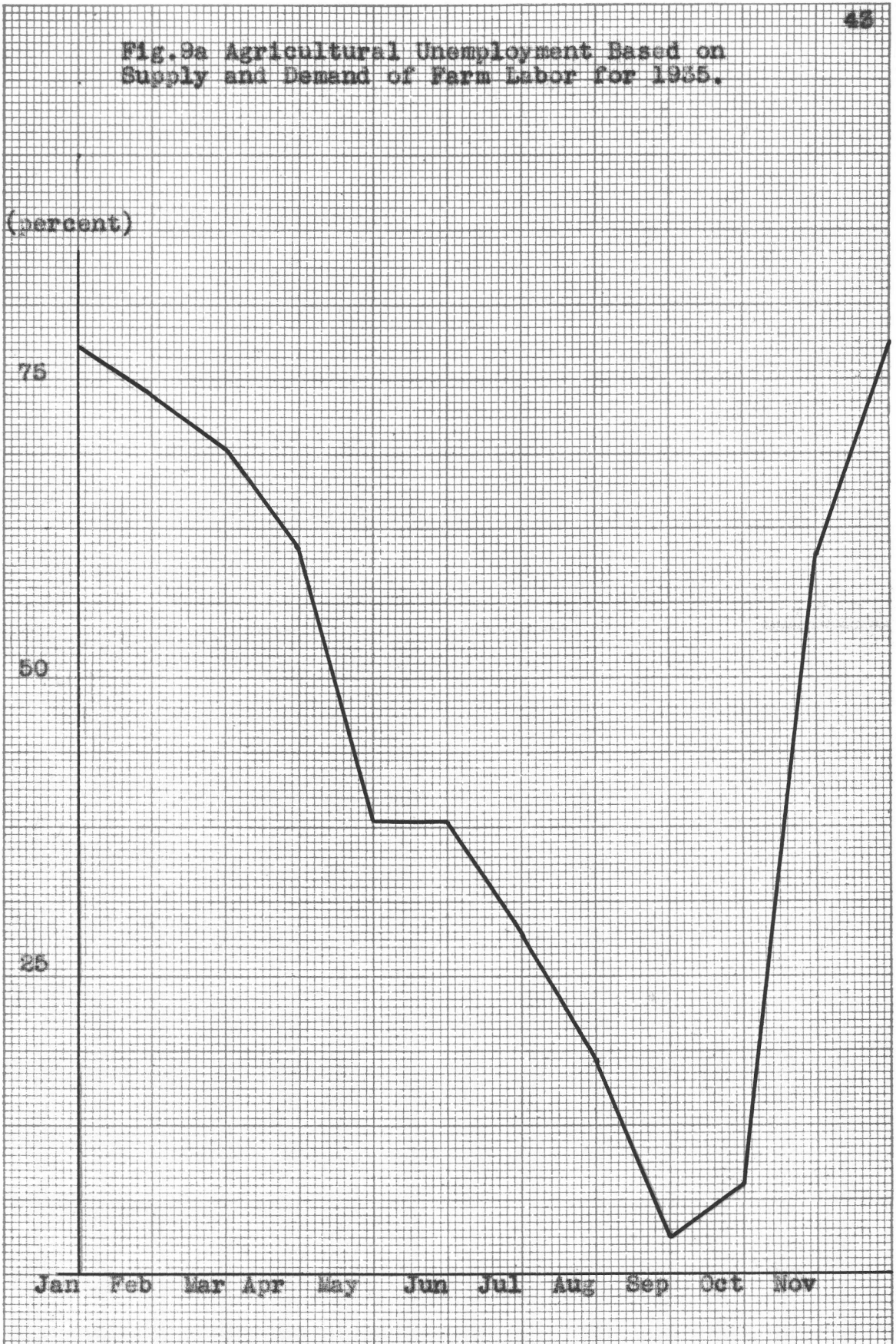
(percent)

75

50

25

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov



✓ In 1926, before the migrant problem was as acute as it became a decade later, this statement came from the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce (79:5):

The old-fashioned hired man is a thing of the past. . .there is no place for him, and the farmer who does not wake up to the realization that there is a caste in labor on the farm is sharing too much of his dollar with labor. We are not husbandmen. We are not farmers. We are producing to sell.

These attitudes are not humane nor are they based on the fundamental principles of democracy. Un-Christian remarks and attitudes towards this group will only serve to prolong and deepen the problem. As one labor camp manager remarked, "These people are not a class but a condition." This statement marks a step in the right direction--recognizing the difference between a symptom and a disease.✓

Studying the migrant families reveals a variety of types. The individuals are not as heterogeneous as one would imagine. The typical itinerant farm laborer may have one of several backgrounds. He may have been a refugee from the middle-west dust bowl where he owned a small tract of land or where he was a share-cropper with a low standard of living. Or he may be a second-generation farm laborer--a native westerner with a love for outdoor work and a dislike for confining employment.

He is a hardy sun-browned individual with robust

Fig.10 Comparison of California and U.S.
Curve of Growth, 1850 to 1940
(U.S. 16th Census 1940)

(millions)
140

120

100

80

60

40

20

United States

1850 1860 1870 1880 1890 1900 1910 1920 1930 1940

7

6

5

4

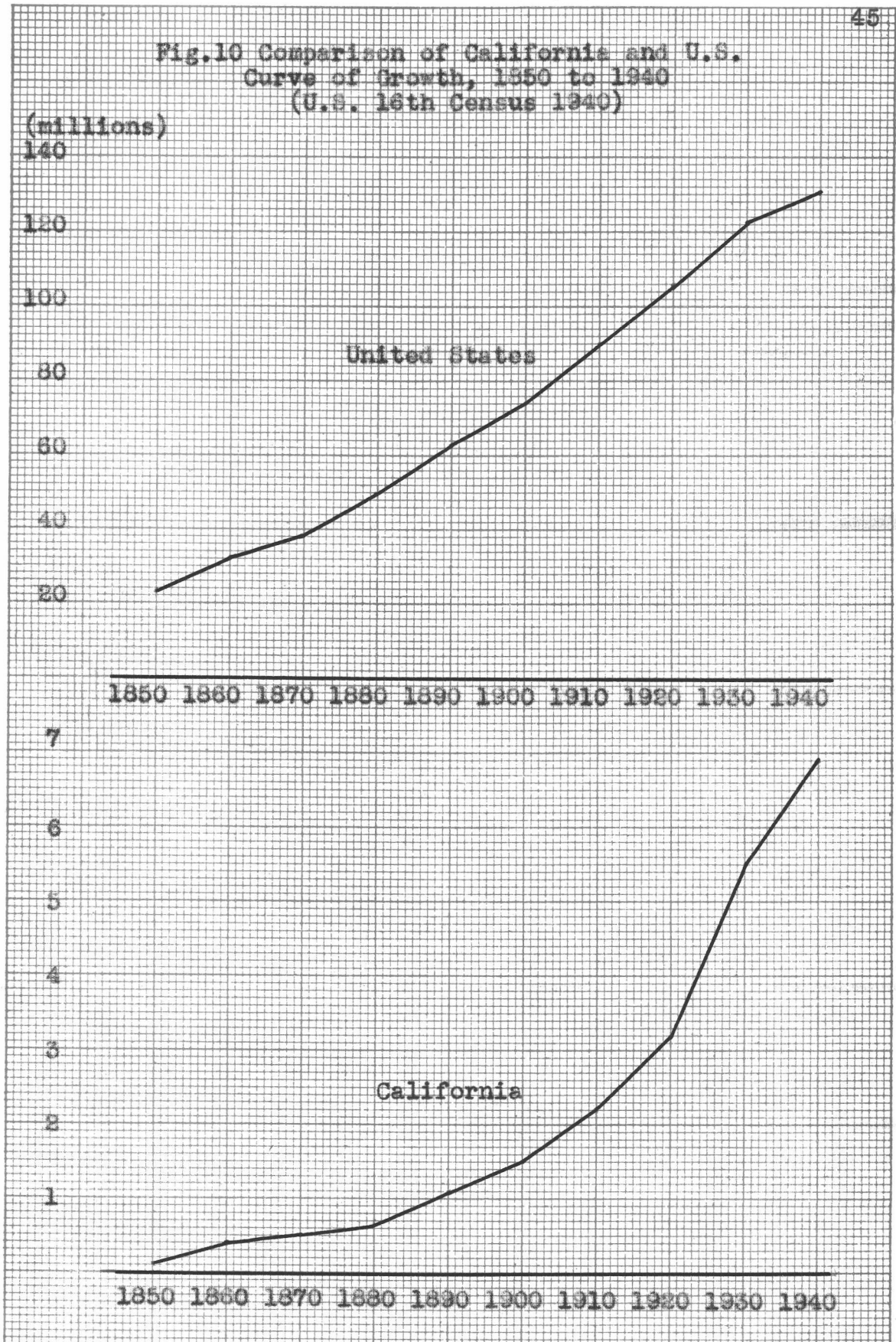
3

2

1

California

1850 1860 1870 1880 1890 1900 1910 1920 1930 1940



health and gypsy characteristics which make him unstable. He has a strong love for his family but no community loyalty. His wife is a co-worker and wage earner and wins respite from field labor only during confinement with childbirth. She has learned not to expect luxuries or conveniences and has no desire for self-improvement. She is interested in filling a three-fold capacity--wife, mother, and wage earner.

Any child in the family who attains the age when he can add to the family income, does so willingly. This is true of girls as well as boys. The child who forsakes childhood's dreams and hopes and becomes a small-scale wage earner acquires a permanent place in the good graces of his parents. His wages are wisely spent to defray family expenses. The National Child Labor Committee (52:1) estimates that 87 per cent of the children of school age work in the crops during the summer.

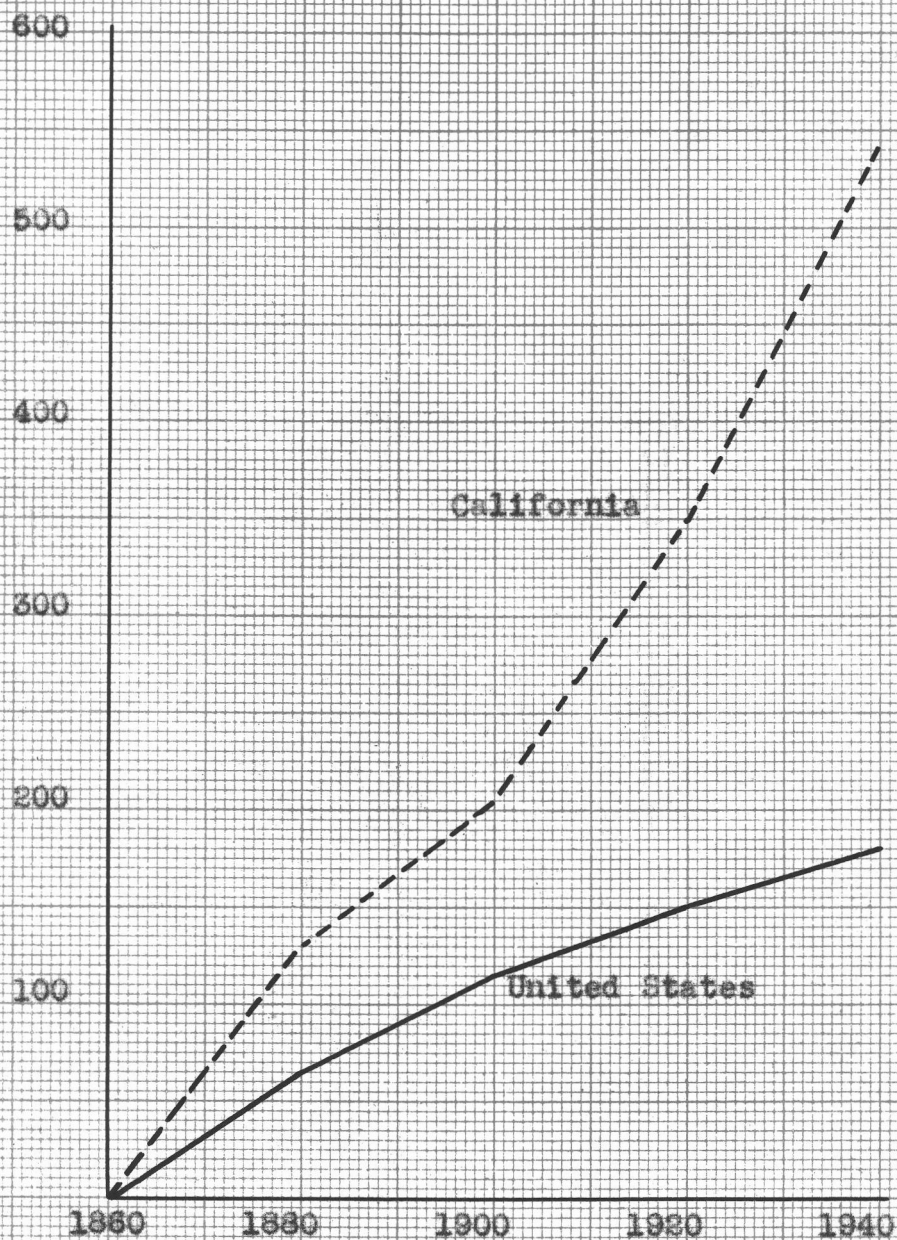
Groves says (24:290):

It is also clear that a large part of child labor is carried on in agriculture. Much of this is seasonable and temporary but it withdraws the child from school and frequently puts upon him longer hours of work and more arduous toil than in his growing years he should be given.

It is estimated that 10 per cent of all children from five to nine years of age, over 70 per cent of those ten to fourteen and nearly 85 per cent of those fifteen to

Fig.11 Comparison of California and U.S. Curve
of Growth, 1860 to 1940 Based on Percent
(U.S. 16th Census 1940)

(percent)



nineteen work some time during the year. Woofter says (102:7):

Children in migrant families, especially in those whose movements have been characterized as distress migration, are often robbed of essential advantages. . . . Since families' earnings depend on the number of hands working and earnings are low, the pressure for the use of children in the fields is great. . . . large numbers of children under 14 and even children as young as 6 or 7 years of age do field work on many kinds of crops. Hours of work are long, and working conditions are arduous, involving strained posture, continuous exposure to extremes of temperature, speed-up pressure, and the carrying of heavy burdens.

Coming from so many different states, these children may be expected to possess rather widely varied educational backgrounds. Walton says in his study (98:34):

Not a single child was accelerated, 15.5 per cent were in the normal grade for their age, 84.5 were retarded at least one year. More astonishing was the amount of retardation. Eighteen were retarded three years, 3 per cent were retarded over six years, and one boy was nine years retarded. Four children, ranging in age from 12 to 16 years, had never completed the first grade and the oldest of these had never been to school.

Truants as such do not exist in our philosophy. They are maladjusted children socially or educationally.

Equality of opportunity can never be maintained if agricultural child labor continues. As long as farm wages remain so low that children must work in order to increase the family earnings, there will be millions of children reaching adulthood without adequate educational oppor-

tunity. As Woofter says (102:9):

All efforts for child welfare should be intensified and extended until the glaring inequalities have been eliminated and until any American boy or girl in any part of the land should have an opportunity to reach adulthood in health and knowledge equal to that of the boys and girls in any other part of the land. Not until that goal is achieved will we be able to congratulate ourselves on having laid adequate cultural foundations for a strong nation.

CHAPTER III

THE STUDY

Because there is such a disparity of educational opportunity in various parts of the country it was felt necessary to determine the points of origin of the migrants in this study. The Southern and Great Plains states are highest in illiteracy and lowest in per capita expenditure on education. This section with one-sixth of the nation's income must educate one-third of the nation's children.

Origin of Migrant Families

Tabulation of the 347 families represented in this study revealed that 78 per cent originated from this area. The four states, Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, and Missouri, were represented by 73 per cent of the families. One in every three came from Oklahoma. It is noteworthy that the greatest number came from the areas that suffered greatest from dust storms and drought. This fact parallels the findings of the Farm Security Administration and other interested agencies. Arizona's fourth place on the table seems unduly high. Many of the migrants worked in that state enroute to California, and often stayed long enough to establish residence there when actually they came originally from the drought states.

Three-fourths of the parents included in this investigation came from states where poverty, infant mortality and illiteracy are high and where income, standard of living and educational opportunity are low.

Education of Parents

The mothers were slightly ahead of the fathers in education partly because boys usually quit school to go to work earlier than girls. This is true for several reasons: boys have a higher earning power; boys are more difficult to keep in school after becoming retarded; there are more farm jobs for boys. The average for mothers was 7.3 completed grades with 6.6 grades for fathers. Fifty-one per cent of the parents dropped out of school before reaching the eighth grade; eight per cent failed to reach the fourth. More mothers completed elementary and high school training than did fathers. More parents dropped out of school after the eighth grade than at any other point. Only 17 per cent attempted high school work; 44 per cent of these dropped out after one year; less than 20 per cent finally graduated. Of 690 parents, 14 failed to complete the first grade or never went to school at all. Table VII compares the achievements in education of migrant men and women.

TABLE VI

Origin of Farm Families Included in This Study

State	Number	Per cent
Oklahoma	120	34.6
Texas	55	15.9
Arkansas	47	13.5
Arizona	36	10.2
Missouri	32	9.2
Oregon	13	3.7
New Mexico	9	2.4
Washington	6	1.7
Colorado	5	1.4
Kansas	4	1.3
Nebraska	3	.8
Tennessee	3	.8
Alabama	2	.6
All Others	12	3.4
Total	347	

The table reads: Of the 347 families in this study, 120 came from Oklahoma; this represents 34.6 per cent of the total.

Fig.12 Origin of Migrant
Families in This Study.

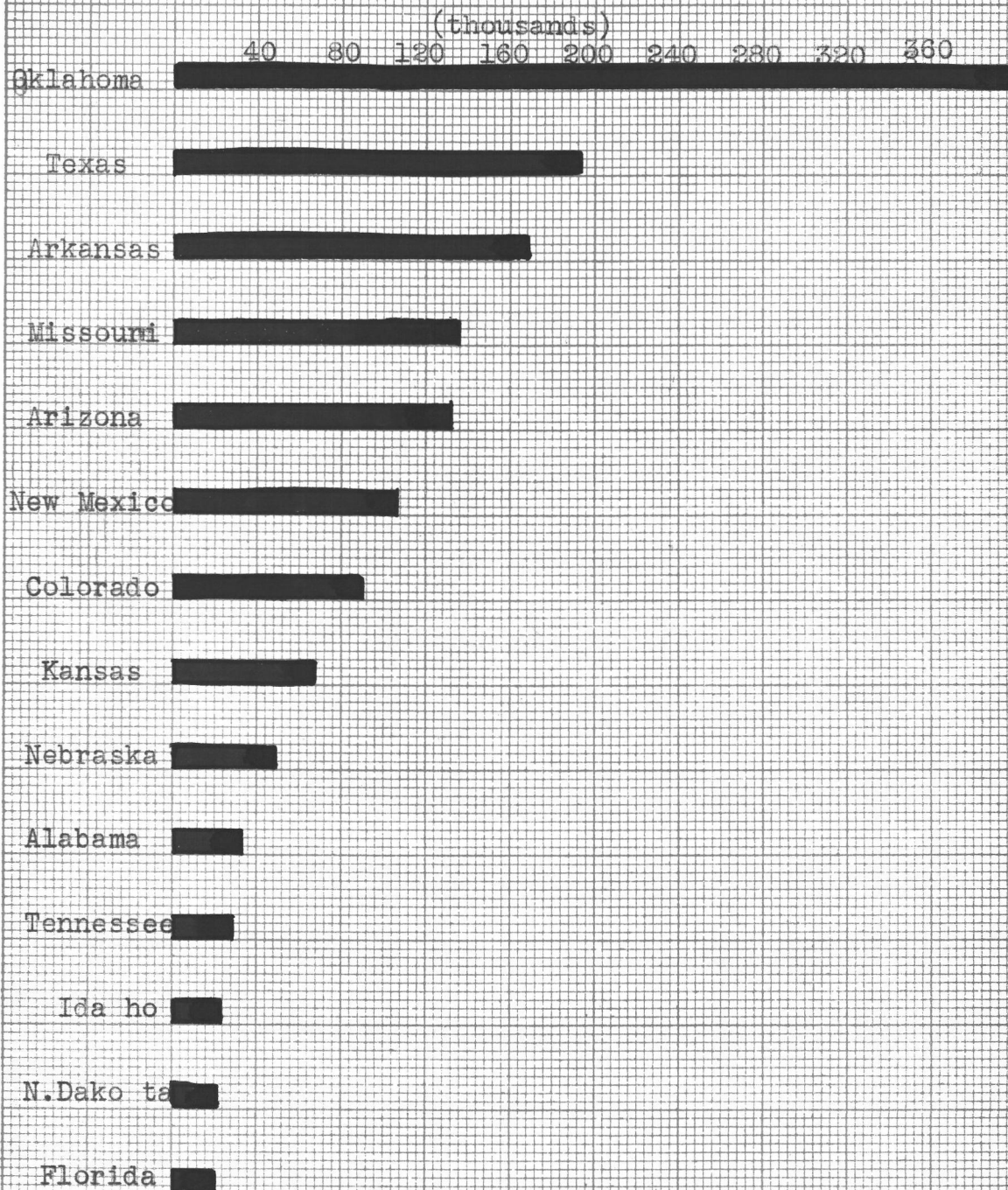


TABLE VII

The Extent of Education of Migratory
Parents in California

Grade	Men		Women	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
0	10	2.8	4	1.1
1	2	.5	0	0.0
2	9	2.5	2	.5
3	19	5.3	8	2.3
4	34	9.4	18	5.2
5	37	10.3	27	7.8
6	38	10.6	43	12.6
7	54	15.0	59	17.3
8	100	27.9	117	34.4
9	28	7.8	24	6.9
10	9	2.5	18	5.2
11	7	1.9	9	2.6
12	10	2.8	8	2.3
13	1	.2	3	.8
14	1	.2	0	0.0
Total	359		340	
Mean = 6.6 grades			Mean = 7.3 grades	

The table reads: Ten of the male parents in this study failed to complete the first grade; this represents 2.8 per cent of the total. The average migrant father completed 6.6 grades; the average migrant mother completed 7.3 grades.

Education of Other Members

Living with the 347 migrant families were 82 persons of school age who were not attending school. They included unmarried older sisters and brothers as well as nieces and nephews of the parents. Almost all of this group worked and contributed to the family income. It is interesting to note the parallel in educational achievement in the secondary field between this group and that of the parents, although this group has a better record in elementary school attendance. Only 5.5 per cent failed to reach the fourth grade as compared to 8 per cent for the parents; only 38.2 per cent failed to reach the eighth grade compared to 51 per cent for the parents. Sixty per cent completed the eighth grade and 27 per cent started high school. The percentage of high school students is appallingly low. Only nine per cent of those starting completed four years work. Table VIII demonstrates that the eighth grade is the terminal point for most of the migrant young people. Parents managed to keep 71 per cent of them in school up to that point. There are several reasons why this might be so. Elementary schools are more numerous and on the average closer to the home. Also the adolescent dislikes making a change from elementary to high school. Very often he is unable to dress as he would like and certainly he finds the high school more confining

TABLE VIII

The Educational Achievement of Other Members
of the Family Not in School

Grade	Number	Per cent
1	0	0.0
2	1	1.1
3	2	2.2
4	2	2.2
5	1	1.1
6	13	15.8
7	13	15.8
8	27	32.9
9	12	14.6
10	7	8.5
11	2	2.2
12	1	1.1
13	1	1.1
14	0	0.0
N = 82		Mean = 7.7 grades

than the country elementary school.

Education of Migrant Children

Table IX indicates the distribution of 605 migrant children about whom this study centers. The pupils range in age from six to twenty-one chronologically and from the

first to thirteenth grades. Over the nation as a whole, 20 per cent of the school enrollment is in high school. The percentage drops to 8.5 for migrant children. This indicates a tremendous drop-out before the ninth grade. It further proves that an elementary education is terminal for a majority of migrant children. Only 8.6 per cent begin high school and about one per cent finish. Of 534 children of elementary school age only 487 were attending; 47 were not enrolled. Of 164 children of high school age only 53 were in high school; 56 were working; the remainder were still in elementary school. There were 47 children 19 years of age and over, but only one was enrolled in college. There were 487 children in the elementary school. Of the 400 of these who will probably finish the eighth grade, 40 or 50 will commence high school. Of these, only eight or ten will be graduated.

Instead of finding an approximate number in each age group, there is an over-balance in the lower percentiles. Over one-third are six years old or under. The age groups are inclined to have fewer members as they get older. To illustrate: there are 197 more members from one to eleven years of age than from eleven to twenty-one. A slight mortality would account for a few of the members; the remainder, however, have left the home to make their own way. Many of the girls marry before the age of twenty-one; many

TABLE IX
Grade Placement of 605 Migratory Children
of School Age in California

Grade	Number	Per cent
0	64	10.5
1	74	12.3
2	77	12.7
3	59	9.7
4	53	8.7
5	65	10.7
6	54	8.9
7	50	8.2
8	55	9.0
Total	551	90.7
9	24	3.9
10	13	2.1
11	10	1.6
12	6	.9
Total	53	8.5
13	1	.1
Total	605	Mean = 4.4

of the boys sever parental ties before that age. The common belief that migrant families are large is not based on fact. It is true they may be above the average, but migrant families have not been studied in sufficiently

large numbers to prove this. The 347 families in this study averaged 2.9 children each. The fact that there were more younger children in the home does not mean that families are becoming larger but that the older children leave home and are not counted.

The 1033 migrant children in the study are segregated in five groups in Table X. The groups include pre-school, elementary, high school, college, and working.

Table XI illustrates the decreasing number of children in the older age groups. The children one expects to find in the highest decile of the age groups are married and are the parents of the children we find in the lowest decile. In other words there are two generations represented in this table.

The frequency table on page 62 shows the grade placement of 541 who are enrolled in school. The table reads: there are 74 pupils who have completed the first grade.* Nineteen were six years old; 29 were seven; 16 were eight; 8 were nine; and 2 were ten. Ten year olds were found from the second to seventh grades. Fourteen year olds were found from the fourth to the tenth grades. The youngest seventh grader was ten; the eldest was eighteen.

* As this study was made in the summer, figures were based on completed grades.

TABLE X
Distribution of 1033 Migratory Children

	Number	Per cent
Pre-school	394	39.2
Elementary (grades 1-8)	487	48.5
High School (grades 9-12)	53	5.1
College	1	.09
Working	98	6.8
N = 1033		

The left-hand column represents the ages of the students. By reading horizontally the reader will see in what grades the different aged children are found. The row of figures across the top represents the grades in school. By reading vertically downward one finds the number of children of each age in that grade. The line drawn diagonally represents the line of normalcy. In this study the writer assumes that children begin the first grade at the age of six and complete one grade per year. California law prescribes that a child must be five years and nine months old by September first of the current year in order to be enrolled.

TABLE XI

Age Distribution of 1033 Migrant Children

Age	Number	Per cent
1 and under	99	9.6
2	59	5.7
3	72	6.9
4	50	4.8
5	50	4.8
6	70	6.7
7	55	5.3
8	59	5.7
9	54	5.2
10	47	4.5
11	52	5.0
12	48	4.6
13	49	4.7
14	58	5.6
15	42	4.0
16	46	4.4
17	34	3.2
18	42	4.0
19	22	2.1
20	15	1.4
21	10	.9
Mean age=8.8 yrs. N = 1033		

TABLE XII

Frequency Table Showing Grade Placement
of 541 Migrant Children Enrolled in Schools

Age	Grade Completed											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
6	19											
7	29	15										
8	16	26	15									
9	8	23	13	9	1							
10	2	8	13	14	8	1	1					
11		3	11	18	14	5	1					
12		2	4	3	20	11	6	2				
13			3	6	11	15	8	4		1		
14				3	10	11	12	15	3	2		
15					1	5	11	16	5			
16						4	9	10	5	5	3	
17						2	1	8	5	2	2	1
18							1		6	2	3	3
19										1	2	1
20												1
21												1*
N =	74	77	59	53	65	54	50	55	24	13	10	6

* Completed first year of college.

The table reads: 74 children finished the first grade; 19 were six years of age; 29 were seven; 16 were eight; eight were nine years old; and two were ten years old.

Retardation

By starting to school at an age between five years-nine months and six years-nine months, the average first grader will complete the first year of school before his seventh birthday. If a child completed the first year while still seven years of age, in this study he is considered normal. He finishes the eighth grade at fourteen and graduates from high school at eighteen. The term "normal" will be used to designate those children who complete one grade per year.

Normal children totaled 146 or 27 per cent. Retarded children totaled 299 or 55 per cent. Retardation in the lower grades is probably due to sporadic attempts to attend school. Irregularity in attendance due to migration will usually hinder normal progress. There is almost uniformly more retardation the longer the child remains in school. As the child nears the age when he can work, he makes less and less progress in school. Most of the retardation occurs in the seventh and eighth grades when the child is 15 or 16. At this age he can express himself better in overt behavior than in the sedentary life of the modern classroom. The average school has little appeal for the migrant child who is too large for his class and has more energy than is demanded of him. There is also parental and financial pressure brought to bear at this

time. Migrant parents are unable to see the value of education beyond the eighth grade when their own training terminated at that point. This has been especially true when the family was faced with dire poverty. The modern high school demands a certain standard of dress that is beyond the means of most of the migrant family budgets. Parents have been heard to remark that their children refused to go to high school because they were ashamed of their clothing. Social approval is very important to the adolescent; if he can not get it in school, he will get it in the harvest fields.

The big drop in retardation from the eighth to ninth grades is significant. The eighth grade is the goal for many migrant children. Those who go on represent a slightly more select group and appear more earnest in their educational pursuits. Those who were less fit tended to drop out at the eighth grade or before. The high school group is slightly more homogenous.

Table XIII compares the migrant child's educational progress with a theoretical normal. The table reads: the average migrant child is 7.6 years old at the midpoint of the second year while 7.5 is normal; the migrant is, on the average, one-tenth of a year retarded in that grade.

It will be observed that retardation increases in the elementary grades the longer the student remains in

TABLE XIII

Comparison of Normal and Migrant Children
in Grade Placement*

Grade	Average Normal	Average Migrant	Difference
1	6.5		
2	7.5	7.6	.1
3	8.5	8.9	.4
4	9.5	10.1	.6
5	10.5	11.2	.7
6	11.5	12.3	.8
7	12.5	13.9	1.4
8	13.5	14.7	1.2
9	14.5	15.1	.6
10	15.5	16.4	.9
11	16.5	16.5	0.0
12	17.5	17.8	.3
13	18.5	21.0	2.5
Mean Retardation = .79 years			

* It is assumed that average resident children start to school between the ages of 5 years-9 months and 6 years-9 months, according to California school law. Conservative estimation would place the age for beginning the second grade at 7.5 years. It was found that the average migrant child was ready to begin the second grade at the age of 7.6 years. On this basis the average migrant child begins the second grade one-tenth of a year retarded.

school. Through selection the poorer students drop out before the ninth grade. Also the ones who are three and four years retarded become discouraged and leave school. When the poorer students have been eliminated, the record of the remaining students appears to be more impressive. By the junior year in high school only the best students remain, and the average are in the correct grade for that age. There were so few high school seniors and college students that it was not feasible to draw conclusions on retardation at those levels.

Table XIV shows retardation by age groups. No figures were available for students at ages six and seven. It will be noted that retardation increases up to the fifteenth year, after which age it declines gradually. Forty-four per cent of the retardation occurs between the thirteenth and sixteenth years. These are the years when parents recognize the children as potential wage earners. The children that remain in school after 16 years of age are those who are more academic and consequently less retarded. Retardation, as a rule, diminishes through high school. Lack of retardation in the upper age groups is due to the fact that the more retarded have left school.

Extent and percentage of retardation is given in Table XV. The table reads: 144 pupils or 26.6 per cent were found to be retarded one year, or they were one year

too old for their grade; 84 or 15.5 per cent were two years too old for their grade; 54 or 9.9 per cent were three years retarded and 14 or 2.5 per cent were four years retarded. Three children were retarded as much as five years.

It is to be noted that fewer are retarded two years than one year. It is probably surprising that more students are not retarded when migration causes them to miss one or two months of each school year. Boys and girls very often do not enroll for the fall term until school has been in session for several weeks. The spring exodus withdraws the children from the classroom early in May when the family moves on in search of early fruit harvests.

The fact that more students were not retarded three and four years is explained on the basis of social adjustment. Teachers are reluctant to retain a child in a grade when he becomes a physical misfit in the class. Physical growth is often the basis for promotion after a child has been retained one or more years.

Retardation by grades is shown in Table XVI. The table reads: 26 pupils were retarded in grade one, which amounted to 28.4 per cent of the class; 16 of them were retarded one year; 8 were two years; and two were retarded three years. The total retarded one year in all grades

TABLE XIV
Retardation of 299 Migrant Children*

Age	Number	Per cent
6	0	0.0
7	0	0.0
8	16	28.0
9	31	57.4
10	23	48.9
11	32	60.3
12	29	60.4
13	35	71.2
14	36	62.0
15	33	78.5
16	28	60.8
17	18	52.9
18	12	28.5
19	4	18.1
20	1	6.6
21	1	100.0

N = 299

* Since data was obtained in summer it was not possible to ascertain in what grades six and seven year-olds would be during the next school year. Retardation was not computed for this group.

was 144; the total retarded two years in all grades was 84. Retardation increases after the first grade, the highest percentage occurring in the sixth grade. After the ninth grade the group becomes slightly more select, the poorer students having become discouraged by this time and dropped out.

TABLE XV

Extent and Per cent Retardation Among
541 Migrant Children in School

Number of Years Retarded	Number	Per cent
1	144	26.6
2	84	15.5
3	54	9.9
4	14	2.5
5	3	.5
N = 299		

The three students who were classified as five years too old for their respective grades will probably not finish high school. It is unlikely that they will even start. The probability that a student will continue school becomes less and less as he becomes retarded. Migrant children drop out when they become social and physical misfits.

TABLE XVI

Retardation in Grades One to Thirteen

Grade Completed	Number Retarded	Per cent . of Class .	Pupils Retarded				
			1	2	3	4	5 years
1	26	28.4	16	8	2		
2	36	46.7	23	8	3	2	
3	31	52.5	13	11	4	3	
4	20	56.6	18	3	6	3	
5	42	64.6	20	11	10	1	
6	37	68.5	15	11	5	4	2
7	34	68.0	12	11	9	1	1
8	34	61.8	16	10	8		
9	16	66.6	5	5	6		
10	5	38.4	2	2	1		
11	5	50.0	3	2			
12	2	33.3	1	1			
13	1	100.0		1			
N = 299			144	84	54	14	3

The table reads: 26 pupils were retarded after completing first grade; 16 of these were retarded one year; eight were retarded two years; two were retarded three years.

Fig.13 Migrant Children's Progress in School
Compared to Normal Rate.

Grade

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

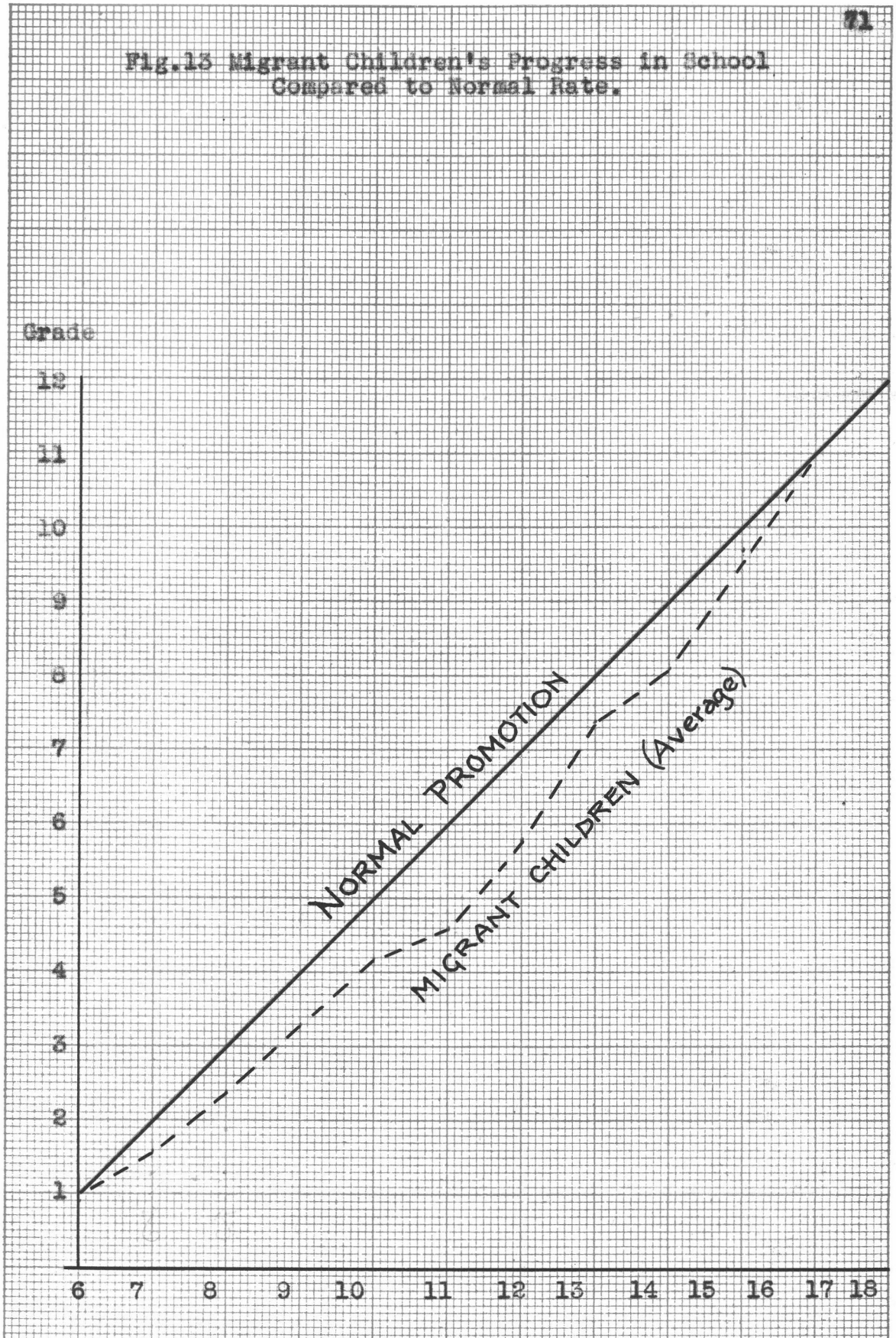
16

17

18

NORMAL PROMOTION

MIGRANT CHILDREN (Average)



The graph (Figure 13) on page 71 compares migrant children with the normal rate. The straight diagonal line stands for normal promotion, one grade per year. The dotted line follows the retardation found in this study. One square equals one-tenth of a year. At the normal rate a child begins school at six years of age and graduates from high school at the age of eighteen.

Child Labor

One hundred and eleven children left school without attempting high school work. It would be difficult to determine if this was due to economics or the educational system. Table XVII shows the grades completed by pupils before leaving school. It would seem that too many failed to give the high school a fair trial. Less than half of the elementary graduates attempted secondary work.

The number leaving school before the eighth year is appalling (66). All completed at least one year; two quit after the second grade; nine left after completing the third grade; 23 left after six years of work. Those that leave are usually the most retarded; so the drop-out becomes heavy in the final years of the elementary school. Leaving school is often symptomatic of a maladjustment. Evidence in the study points to three main reasons: first, the pupil becomes so far retarded that he no longer has

TABLE XVII

Grades Completed by Migrant Children
Before Leaving School for Work

Grade	Number	Per cent
1	0	0.0
2	2	1.2
3	9	5.6
4	7	4.3
5	8	5.0
6	23	14.3
7	17	10.6
8	45	28.1
Elementary total	111	69.3
9	22	13.7
10	10	6.2
11	5	3.1
12	10	6.2
High School total	47	29.3
13	2	1.2
College total	2	1.2
Total	160	

anything in common with the rest of the class; second, financial pressure is put upon him by the parents; and third, pressure is put upon him by society, i.e., his clothing, speech, and manners fail to conform to local standards. If the pupil becomes too conscious of his misfitness or nonconformity he leaves school and goes into the fields where he is already socially adjusted.

Table XVIII on page 75 is based on the number of children who have already left school. At what ages the children now enrolled will leave school can be only a conjecture. By studying Table XIX it can be predicted that of the 479 enrolled in the elementary schools, only 440 will finish; 26 will drop out after the third grade; 20 will drop out after the fourth; 24 will drop out after the fifth. Only 282 will be left to begin eighth grade work; 188 will graduate. Of the 74 pupils who finished the first grade six will graduate from high school.

Migration is a factor in child labor in California. Thirty of the children from 13 to 17 years of age inclusive were not enrolled in school. To apply this percentage to all the migrant children in the state it would mean that between two and three thousand were working instead of going to school. It has been said that there is no truancy in the real sense of the word. If truancy is working instead of attending school, the migrant child is

TABLE XVIII

Migrant Children of School Age Who Are
Not Attending School

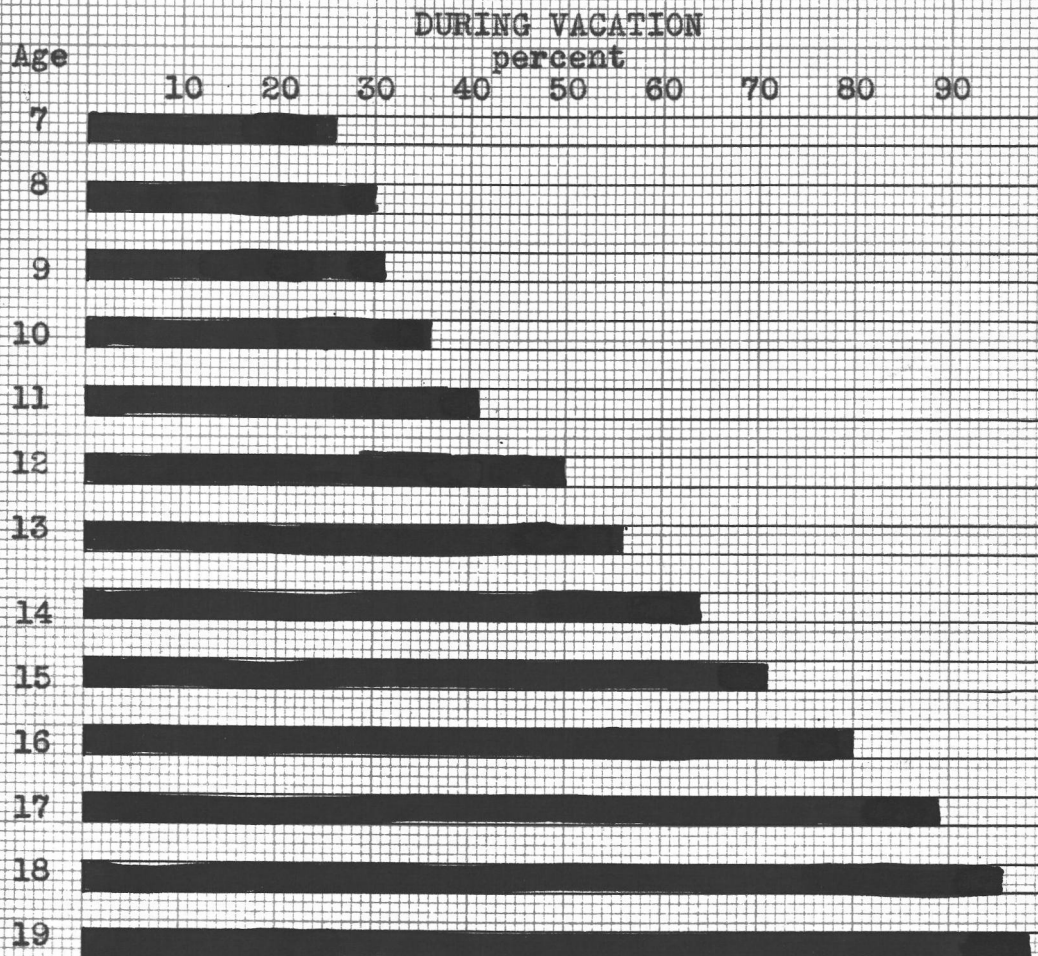
Age	Number	Per cent
13	1	.09
14	2	.18
15	4	.36
16	10	.93
17	13	1.21
N = 30		

TABLE XIX

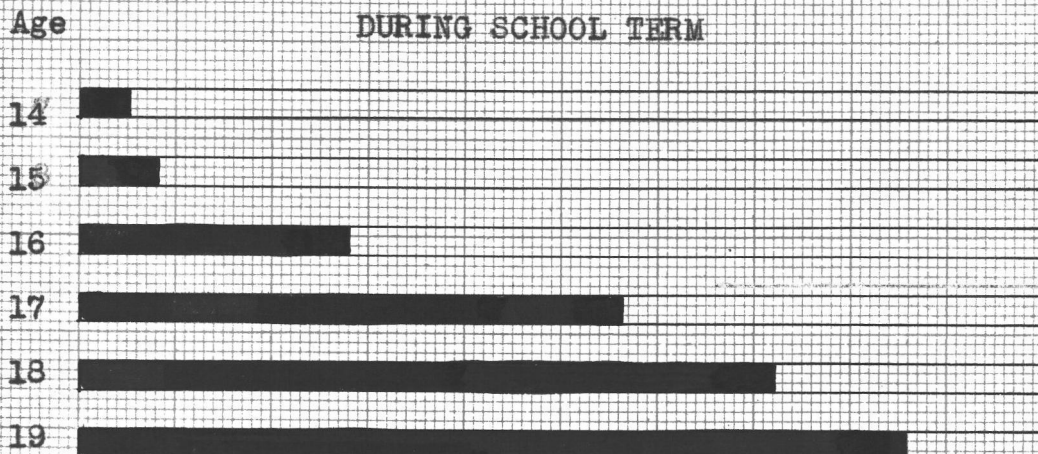
Ages At Which Children Left School for Work

Age	Number	Per cent
14	4	4.1
15	4	4.1
16	20	20.6
17	26	26.6
18	43	44.4
N = 97		

Fig.14 Number of Migrant Children
Employed in Agriculture.



■ working



often a truant. If truancy is staying out of school solely because he hates school, truancy is rare among this group. Observations indicate that migrant children usually fail to attend school because the parents need their earnings to supplement the family income. Work is necessary and vital for subsistence--not an escape from academic endeavor. In this study it has been found that child labor is common, but truancy is not an important factor.

Efforts to Meet the Problem

The West has long felt the need of migrant legislation. The first labor camp sanitation act in California went into effect as far back as August 10, 1913. The State Board of Health had the responsibility of enforcing this law but no funds were provided and the whole effort became ineffectual. The camps were so scattered and in out-of-the-way places that law enforcement was almost nil.

The year 1913 also saw the creation of the Commission of Immigration and Housing. To this group went the task of keeping labor camps sanitary and inhabitable. For the next twenty years the Commission did a routine job of inspecting but never really solved the problem. Finally in 1933 the Legislature placed this bureau under the Department of Industrial Relations. From this time on, the staff

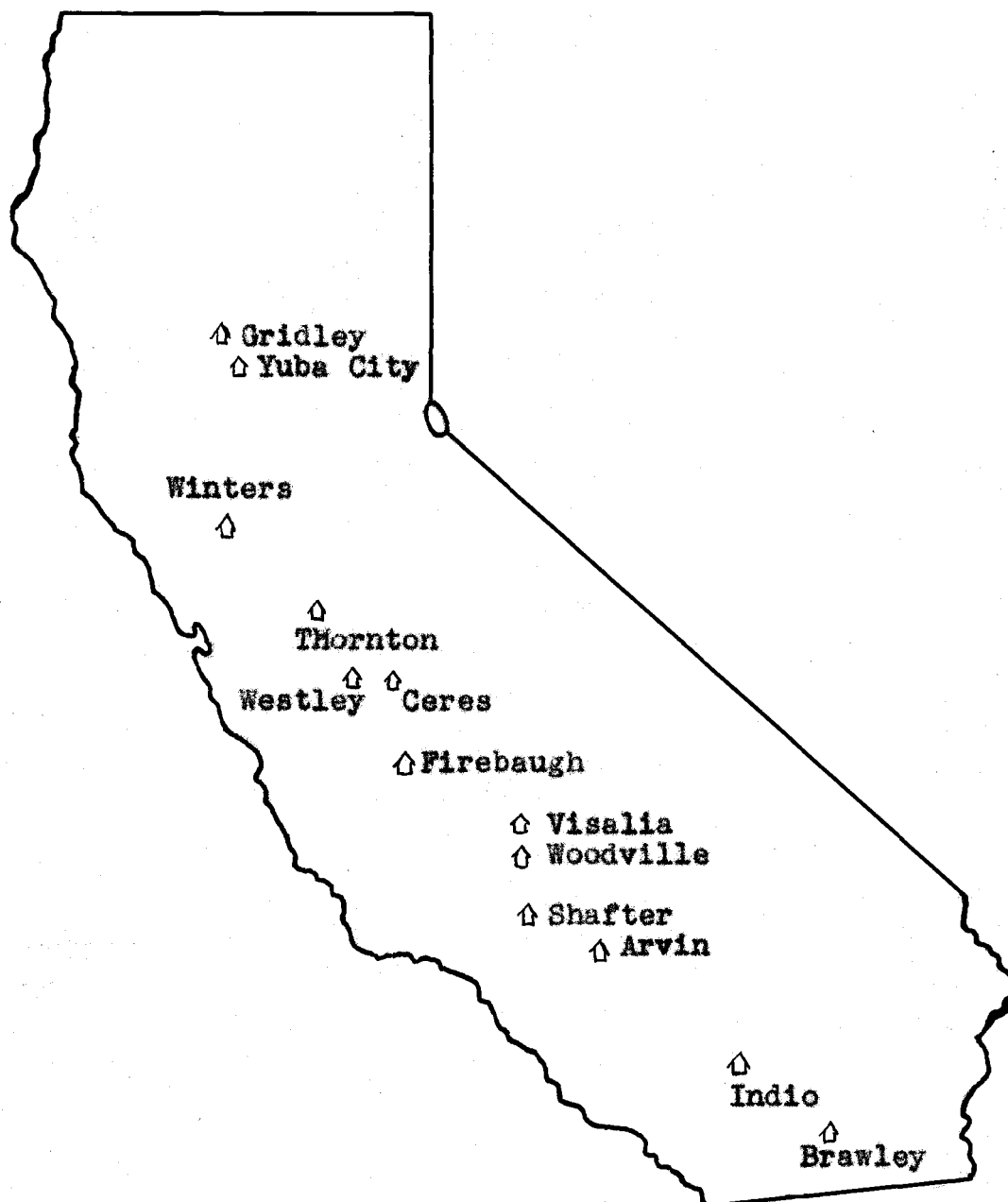
became smaller and less effectual. In 1934 the State Emergency Relief Administration set up the Rural Rehabilitation Division to remove destitute farm families from the relief rolls. In a survey made at this time it was found that 60,000 families that formerly made their living in agriculture were now on relief.

This organization immediately made plans for the supervision of sanitation in migratory labor camps and worked very efficiently until July, 1935. At this time the Federal Government created the Resettlement Administration, forebear of the present Farm Security Administration. With this existent negligence and indifference on the part of California agencies and the population in general, it is no wonder that unhealthy conditions persist.

The Farm Security Administration has continued to take an active part in this campaign against filth and disease and has perhaps done the best job of all. Through its camps it has provided sanitary shelters for 4,731 families, but there still remain 100,000 families camped on ditch banks and in public and private camp grounds. Something will have to be done for them.

The state has long been concerned about the irregular attendance of migratory children. As early as 1921 a compulsory school attendance law was passed. Previously a

Fig.15 Farm Security Administration
Labor Camps in California



child had to attend school only in the district where he resided. The new law required that he attend school in whatever district he might happen to be during the school term.

By 1927 the situation had become more acute and further legislation was provided. Under this new act the State Department had to encourage and help organize special classes for migratory children. This edict lasted ten years, and these special schools were renamed "emergency schools." The State Department was not successful in enforcing attendance. When the family lives in a federally enforced labor camp, the children find it more difficult to elude the attendance officer. Compulsory education is not the final solution.

Because these families move about so much it is difficult for the child's development to be a smooth growing process. In following the different crops the family will move from four to ten times during the school year. Often the child, if he attends school at all, will find himself facing many school situations. This moving about fails to give the child the feeling of belonging and he feels apart from society and authority. This makes it hard for the school, the attendance officer and most of all, for the child. Through no fault of his own the migrant child finds himself the victim of a peculiar social

order about which he can do nothing. Not only is he hurt by interrupted education and irregular attendance--he is the victim of filth, poverty, neglect, child labor, malnutrition, and immorality.

The educators in California are faced with a great problem. They cannot stabilize the education of the children until they stabilize the parents. Keep their wanderings to a minimum, and their educational opportunity will improve.

The Farm Security Administration has conducted several co-operative farm experiments. One of these in California proved one thing conclusively--that most people want a chance to work instead of relief. The government supplied the land, equipment, and management while fifteen dust bowl refugees supplied the stamina and courage. On a share-the-profits plan the venture has proved to be highly successful. The men worked to earn enough to pay the government for the land, stock, and equipment, besides retaining enough for living expenses. This plan is new and takes time to put into operation but has all the features of effective rehabilitation.

Evans suggests (20:5):

First, there must be an attack upon the conditions which are creating large supplies of labor which can find no other means of livelihood than that discovered through migration. Second, there must be an attack on that form of agricultural economy which re-

quires a large labor supply, available for sporadic and chaotic employment, from day to day as the need arises.

In order to better living conditions it has been found necessary to educate the grown-ups as well as the children. This is because many families were burdened by "habits left over from the old ways of life." Rehabilitation, of necessity, must involve reconditioning many habits that developed out of impoverished circumstances.

TABLE XX

Farm Security Camp Facilities Completed or
Projected to Be Complete by April 1, 1941
(From Farm Security Administration, U.S.D.A.)

Camp	Labor Homes	One Room Shelters	Tent Platforms	Trailer Spaces	Capacity (Family)
Ceres	50				50
Gridley	24		150	15	189
Winters	24		173		196
Westley	24	56	153		233
Visalia	78	307		25	410
Shafter	40	4	219	26	289
Arvin	44	106	98		248
Indio	40		185	20	245
Brawley			185	20	205
Yuba City	84	268	16		368
Thornton	30	105		8	143
Woodville	73	281	32		386
Firebaugh	36	297	12	24	368
Mobile #1			200		200
Mobile #2			200		200
Mobile #3			200		200
Mobile #5			200		200
Mobile #6			200		200
	547	1424	2232	138	4331

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary and Conclusions

Almost three-fourths of the parents in this study came from the poorer regions of four states--Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, and Missouri. As was expected, the academic attainment of this group was not high. The fathers completed, on the average, 6.6 grades while the mothers showed a better average with 7.3 grades. It would be difficult to ascertain if this situation was due to migration or lack of educational opportunity. The eighth grade was terminal for about 33 per cent while another 50 per cent failed to reach this point. Less than one per cent finished high school.

Others in the household, not classified as parents or as students, were also studied. This group followed very closely the educational pattern of the parents. The eighth grade was terminal for 33 per cent. The percentage of high school graduates was slightly higher than for the parents. The drop-out in the elementary grades was about the same.

Of the 1033 children studied, 605 were attending school; 551 were in the elementary grades; 53 were in high school; and one was enrolled in college. The average

pupil had completed 4.4 grades. There were 394 pre-school children and 98 who had left school to work.

Retardation was found in all grades, pupils on the average being retarded almost one year. Twenty-three per cent or 144 were one year too old for their grades while three pupils were five years retarded. Forty-nine per cent were retarded at least one grade. Pupils tend to become more retarded the longer they remain in school. This is true up to the eighth grade after which point the more retarded drop out of school. The group that continues is more select, on the average.

Many pupils leave school before completing the fourth grade. They are often two or three years retarded at this point and, discouraged, go into the fields where they can gain social recognition and more or less financial independence.

During the school year 4.9 per cent of the children of school age fail to enroll. Another five or ten per cent attend part time. During the summer, practically all children work in the harvest if there is work they can do.

The average migrant child completes the eighth grade when he is between fifteen and sixteen years of age and terminates his formal education at that point.

Retardation and child labor are common among migrant children and are detrimental to educational opportunity.

Migration is to be condemned for the following reasons:

1. The children of migrants have little chance for full social development or normal community life.
2. The children do not learn the fundamentals of cleanliness and sanitation.
3. Education is interrupted and intermittent, resulting in extreme retardation causing children to leave school at an early age.
4. Children are not given a chance to develop special talents or exercise self-expression.
5. Children fail to develop community loyalty.

Recommendations

It has been recognized that the migratory farm labor problem is not indigenous to the west coast; its effects are nation-wide. Therefore, national support will be necessary to carry out any remedial program effectively. Any program will of necessity have to come about by the combined efforts of Congress and the United States Department of Agriculture. The problem is too large to be undertaken by any state or group of states.

Solution will have to come about by sustained effort in several directions simultaneously. Conditions on the west coast will have to be attacked while farming and social conditions in the Great Plains states are under-

going a change. Situations which led to distress migration must be remedied at the point of origin.

To improve the migratory labor situation the following plans are recommended:

1. Improved educational facilities.

A. It would be necessary and feasible to have a school in each camp with a mobile faculty following the great mass of workers from crop to crop. The school would operate on a twelve-month basis giving the child added educational opportunity. The curriculum would be on the child's level and would give him opportunity for self-expression, security and social integration. His potentialities must be brought out to a maximum.

With this new philosophy, the schools would take the child where he is and provide him with experiences that give him satisfying and sociable acceptable outlets for his basic drives. Formalized courses of study should give way to a more functional type of education. The administration would not try to fit these square pegs in academic round holes. The curriculum would be more practical and vocational and less formal. Maturation, social integration, and emotional development would replace mastery of subject matter and book learning as desired outcomes.

To curb malnutrition and vitamin deficiencies, a free-lunch program should be inaugurated for all migrant

children. It would be necessary to re-educate a large number who were raised on pork, meal, and molasses. What was good enough for the grandfather is not good enough for the present generation. Many ideas handed down from forebears are found to be detrimental to sustained progress.

B. An Adult Education program should be inaugurated for migratory farm laborers. The program will be fostered in mobile as well as in permanent labor camps and will be under the sponsorship of the Agricultural Extension Service. Motion pictures, radio, lectures, and correspondence courses will be made available. Workers will also have access to local libraries.

2. Better legislation and law enforcement.

A. Child labor laws. Proper legislation would improve the migratory child labor situation. The California Legislature should enact more effective laws governing the employment of children in agriculture during the school year. The employer should be held responsible for the employment of children of school age.

B. Attendance laws. It is recommended that attendance laws be more strictly enforced. It should be the duty of the superintendent of schools in each county to enforce regular school attendance. The county superintendent of schools should be the chief attendance officer in each county and assume responsibility for keeping all children

in school while school is in session. Regular attendance should be compulsory for all children under sixteen years of age. Where necessary, special truant officers should be employed to enforce attendance of migrant children.

3. Improve conditions of migrants.

A. Mobile labor camps. It is recommended that more mobile camps, such as those provided by the Farm Security Administration, be constructed and put into use. A mobile camp consists of units that are moved on government trucks and follow the crops with the migrants. The units include generators, portable laundry and bathing facilities, tent platforms, water heaters, first aid units, business offices, nursery school, and all equipment necessary for operating an efficient camp. Tenants can work in the camp to pay small rental charges.

B. Permanent labor camps. The construction of permanent labor camps for migrant workers would improve sanitary conditions, as all occupants would be urged and given the opportunity to practice good health habits. These camps should have modern bathing and laundry facilities with a competent person to supervise use thereof.

There should be available tent platforms, cottages, and trailer spaces to suit the needs of a variety of families. Camps should be strategically located in agricultural areas.

C. Health and medical program. The permanent camp would undoubtedly improve the health and sanitary conditions of the migrant but there is a need for medical care. A program of preventive and corrective medicine is recommended. The plan would function under the guidance of the State Board of Health, the State Department of Social Welfare, and county welfare departments. Through a remedial program of this kind the number of unemployables in the state could be materially reduced. Other phases would include immunization, nutrition, child welfare, and free-lunch program. Health clinics could be located along the main routes of migration and made easily accessible to a maximum number of patients. Pay would be expected from those financially able. Sanitary and health regulations would be set up by the State Board of Health and enforced by local medical authorities.

4. Improve farming conditions.

A. Stabilize the farm people of the Great Plains states by returning them to the soil. Dispossessed families should be relocated on farms where their farm incomes can be supplemented by agricultural labor. Part of their subsistence can come directly from the soil by diversified farming in contrast to the old practice of one-crop farming where the families did not raise any of the products they consumed in their diets. Farmers should be

given long-term loans to buy farms of their own. With pride of ownership comes better care of the land.

B. Improve tenure system. Encourage tenants to remain longer on one farm. As much is lost through moving and as tenants seldom remain on a farm longer than three years, it is advocated that a better tenant-landlord understanding be developed. By remaining in one place over a period of years the tenant can make long term plans, make improvements, and take pride in his accomplishments. He is the one who benefits by his diligence and perseverance. If his tenure covers a long period he feels a sense of ownership and security that is vital in keeping the farmer on the soil.

C. Take better care of the soil. Soil conservation will necessarily become a common practice instead of theory. It shall become the duty of every farm worker, tenant, and landlord to preserve the soil. Since loss of soil has been one of the chief reasons for many farmers' abandoning their farms it behooves the nation to make soil conservation one of its chief objectives.

D. Encourage co-operative farm projects. This method of farming is one designed specifically to cut cost of production. A group of farmers, living on adjacent tracts of land, buy machinery and breeding animals cooperatively. The cost of maintenance is divided among all members of the co-operative. A farmer on a small tract will often be un-

able to purchase a harvester or other expensive equipment when he must rely on his own meager resources.

Further Studies

It was not intended that this study be considered final. It is hoped that other writers will feel the need to do further investigation along this line. The field is by no means closed and the problem is not close to solution. Many more investigations will need to be carried on before all the phases of the problem are brought to light. Some of the necessary studies will be stated here.

1. A comparison in academic achievement between migrant children in California and farm labor children in the Great Plains states. The children would be matched as to chronological age, sex, number, and background. Both groups would be tested for achievement. A study of this kind would help to show quantitatively and qualitatively the effects of migration on school achievement.

2. A study of correlation between length of migration history and academic achievement. A sample of children whose parents had been migrants for twenty years would be tested and compared with other children whose parents had been migrants for shorter periods of time. It is possible that there might be a positive relation between achievement and migration, i.e., children whose parents

had been migrants for a long period of time would be expected to make lower achievement scores. If results bear out this supposition, it can be said that migration is a factor in educational retardation.

3. A comparison of the educational attainments of migratory parents with that of their children. The object of this study would be to determine, if possible, whether parental influence has been a factor in children's dropping out of school. In a study of this kind it would be necessary to keep constant economic conditions and educational opportunity.

4. A study of the correlation between economic security and educational progress among migrants. Many children drop out of school before the ninth grade. How many of them leave for financial reasons is not known. By examining the annual incomes of many migrant families and the educational progress of the children it may be possible to suggest what percentage of migrant children would continue in school if finances permitted.

5. A determining study of the causes of elimination from school of migrant children. The purpose of this study would be to discover how many pupils leave school because of poverty, sickness, excess retardation, and other reasons. Survey and interview methods would be used.

6. A curriculum based on the needs of migrant children. This study would involve the formulation of a new philosophy of education especially adapted to the teaching of this type of children. The new philosophy would embody new objectives and new desired outcomes.

7. A health and sanitary rating scale for studying improvement in living conditions of the migrant. A five-point check list could be devised to rate labor camps and individual migrant abodes. Points would be given according to degree of absence or presence of certain necessary sanitary facilities.

There are many more studies to be made before this problem is in process of solution.

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APPENDIX

All drawings in the thesis are original with the writer and are not to be reproduced without his permission.



"LITTLE OKLAHOMA"



WHY CALIFORNIA HAS A MIGRANT PROBLEM

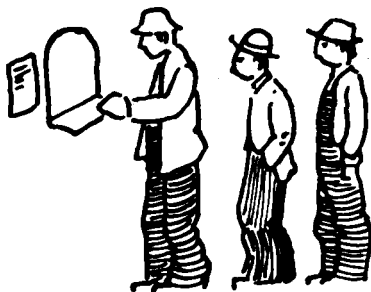
CALIFORNIA



Good climate



Free camp-grounds



Relief

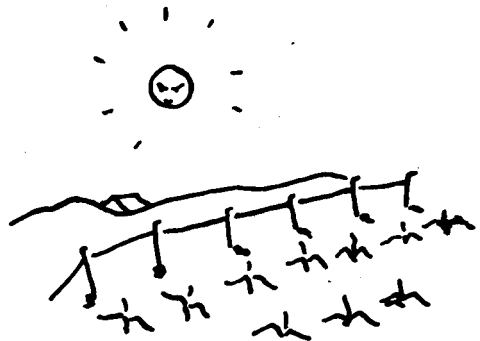


Old age pension



Mythical Opportunities

MIDWEST STATES



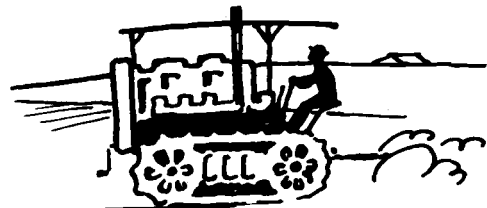
Drought



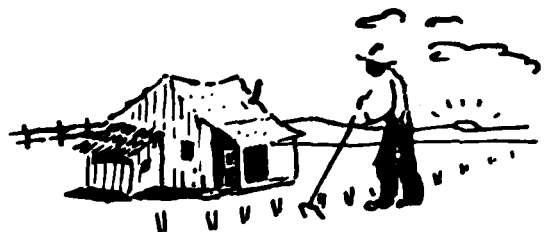
Dust storms



Soil erosion



Mechanization



Share-cropper system

Registration Blank For Applicants Of Relief
California State Relief Administration
(condensed)

Case Number

LAST NAME		CROSS REF		ALIAS		Maiden Name	
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DATE MOVED	HOME ADDRESS	MAIL ADDRESS	RENT MONTH	TEL. NO.	LANDLORD OR MORTGAGE HOLDER	CASE MOVEMENT	
						DATE OPEN	DATE CLOSE

RESIDENCE				DATE CITIZENSHIP		RACE		MARITAL STATUS		
	US	STATE	COUNTY			W		SINGLE	SEPARATED	DESERTED
M				N	1st PAPERS	2ND PAPERS	BL	MARR DATE	DIV-DATE	WID DATE
W				W			OTHER			

FIRST NAME		SEX	DATE OF BIRTH	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	PLACE OF BIRTH			OCCUPATION
					CITY	CO	STATE	
M								
W								

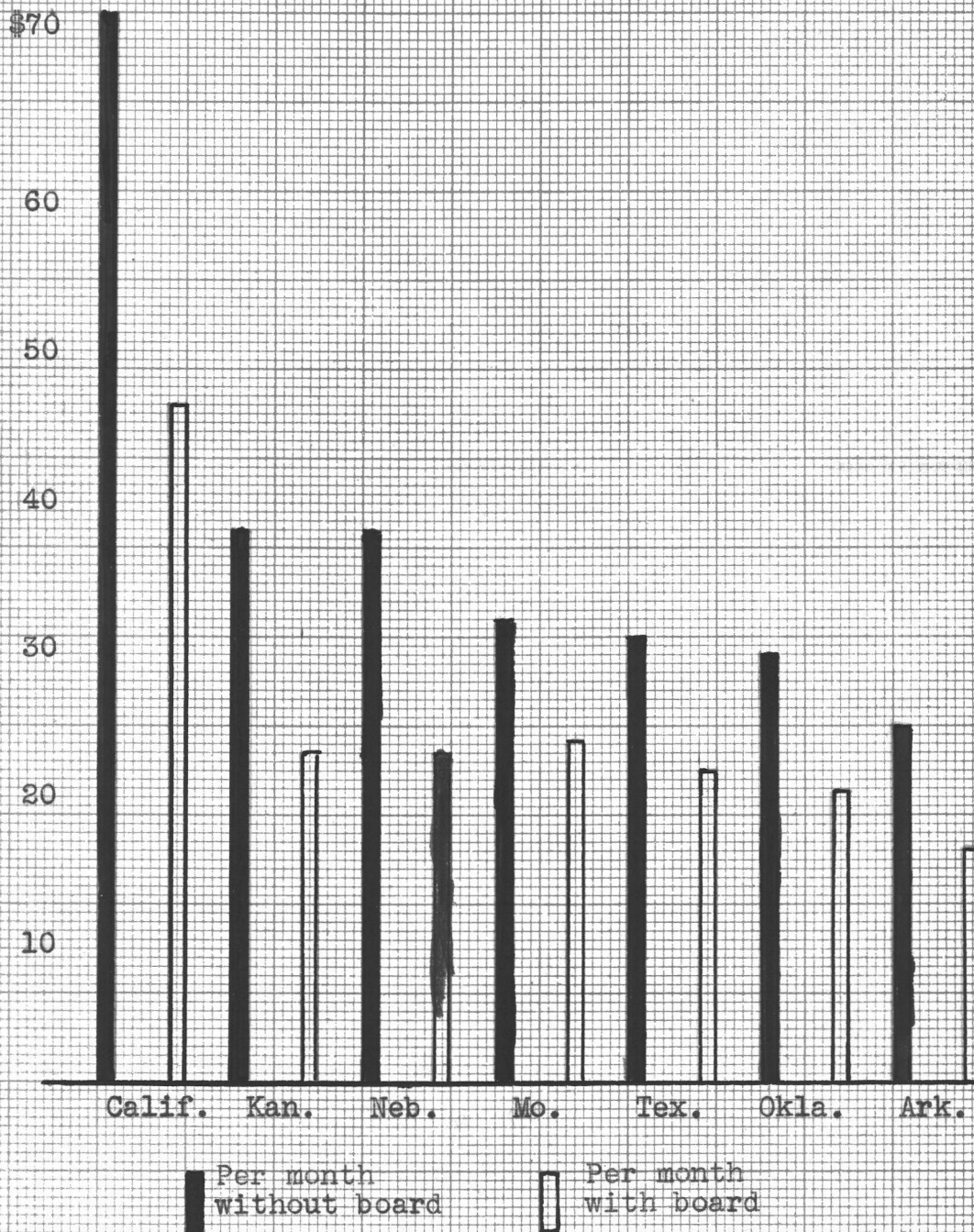
CHILDREN							
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OTHERS IN HOME	RELATIONSHIP						
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OTHERS IN HOUSEHOLD NOT DEPENDENT						SOCIAL SERVICE EXCH.	
FULL NAME	BIRTH DATE	RELATIONSHIP	OCCUPATION	MO CONTRIB	MOVED TO HOME DATE	DATE CLEARED	
						DATE KNOWN	AGENCY

LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE RELATIVES					
NAME	ADDRESS	RELATIONSHIP	NO. DEPEND.	MO. INCOME	MO CONTRIB

California's Farm Wages Compared With Those Of Six Other States



United States Farm Labor
Supply and Demand
(From "Crops and Markets" U.S.D.A.)

