the various State legislatures, to exempt farmers from obligations carried by other employers. This was a mistake—or, rather, a whole series of mistakes.

As I have noted, the result has been disastrous for farmworkers. And instead of helping the average farmer, it has squeezed him harder than ever.

To understand this—as I am sure you understand it, Mr. Chairman—the agricultural industry must be looked at the way it is today, not the way it was yesterday. I used to read about farm life when I was a boy growing up in a suburban area of the city of New York. There were even what we would call family farms left in that area in those days. And many senior Members of the Congress grew up on the kind of farms I used to read about.

It seemed to be a simple life and a good life. There was the farmer and his wife and their children. And there was the "hired man," or maybe several of them, who lived on the farm, and ate at the family table; who taught the boys how to handle the team, how to hoe, and how to whittle—family retainers, as permanent as the barn or the well.

It was a pretty picture. I am not sure how true it was then but I know it's not true now.

Yet it was this picture, I am convinced, that was most influential in excluding farmworkers from the legal protections that were being won by other workers.

It is a shame to spoil this pretty picture with facts, but here are a few more.

For one thing, half of all the farms in the United States employ no farm labor at all. A mere 2.7 percent of the farms pay half the farm wages; and 6 percent of the farms account for 76 percent of the wage bill.

These are 1959 figures, the latest available. However, despite the changes of recent years, there is no evidence to suggest that these proportions have shifted in any significant way.

Now let's look at the farm labor force. In 1965—again I am using the most recent figures—some 3 million Americans earned wages for farm work. But for more than a third of them it was incidental. Fewer than 2 million worked longer than 25 days. Only about 650,000 were employed for more than 150 days.

As of October 1966, the average cash hourly wage for domestic farmworkers was $1.18. In the South, which provides half the employment, the average was 95 cents an hour. The highest mainland rates were on the Pacific coast—an average of $1.57. The best sectional average, translated into full-time employment—which few farmworkers enjoy—still comes out to a poverty-level income.

That pretty picture I mentioned a few moments ago has to suffer another revision.

Of the nearly 2 million farmworkers who were employed more than 25 days in 1963, hardly one-fourth were provided with housing—and the housing was almost always primitive or worse. Less than 12 percent were given food grown on the farm. Fewer than 10 percent received wood or other fuel. Only 7 percent were served one meal a day.

This is today's version of the farm "hired man" who figured in the tales we read as boys. That kind of "hired man" is a myth.