

Mr. CAREY. Mr. Chairman.

On the overall, as head of the Farm Service, in your opinion would stability of working conditions help to relieve the current spot shortage of farm labor?

In other words would more people be attracted to this as an occupation so that they would spend more time in it either through the annual worker program and so forth? Would the stability of working conditions and better wages on an annual basis tend to relieve the spot shortage of farm labor that now seems to occur in Long Island or Michigan and so forth?

Mr. POTTER. It is very difficult for me to answer that. Farmworkers, like other workers, are usually not motivated solely by wages and working conditions although improved and stable conditions would undoubtedly make farm work more attractive. Undoubtedly these are the most important factors and we do have examples where such improvements have attracted more workers, but considerations such as job status and length of the employment period are also motivation factors. For example, one reason for the difficulty in attracting a sufficient number of domestic workers to the apple harvest in the Northeastern States is that the period of employment is so short in relation to the distance to be traveled by migratory workers. A very substantial increase in wages would probably be necessary to make it worthwhile for migrants to travel several hundred miles for a few weeks employment. Another reason for spot shortages which could not be alleviated by wage increases is the beginning of the school term at the time of highest labor needs in some crops and areas. This not only withdraws from the labor force local high school youths but also causes migrants to leave early to enroll their children in schools. The problem on dairy farms seems to be the excessively long hours as much as low wage rates.

Mr. CAREY. I am concerned about this because in my own State I have been informed that many, many smaller dairy operators have been going out of the dairy business because they can simply not attract to the dairy farms even the minimum help they need, even though we have a surplus labor pool in the area nearby. What we need to do is to get people to go back on the farm if we can provide working conditions that are livable.

Mr. POTTER. The dairy industry is rather unique and certainly its management practices have left a lot to be desired in the past, and I think that the industry, itself, is making those efforts right now.

Mr. CAREY. Has the shortage of labor during pickingtime or harvesttime and in spot shortage that followed thereafter been any reason for the increase in importation of farm produce into this country in recent years, in recent months?

I know the New York area was seeing a great deal more importation of foreign citrus and fruits and vegetables that we did not see before.

Is there any of this due to the inability to supply harvest workers or to supply produce in these areas or is it the overall attraction of the market that we have in the metropolitan area now because of the high consumer spending rate?

Mr. POTTER. It may have been a factor but not the most important one. The increase in imports has been mostly from Mexico. It is true that labor is cheaper and more abundant there, but other expenses