

Mr. THOMPSON. What is your attitude toward the green card workers from Mexico who come back and forth across the border into Arizona and other States to work on crops?

Mr. TRIGGS. I don't know that we have any attitude toward that problem.

Mr. THOMPSON. Your members use them, don't they?

Mr. TRIGGS. Yes. They are people who have in the past applied for admission to the United States. They are eligible to become citizens of the United States just as an Englishman or German is if he immigrates to this country and wishes to become a citizen.

The unusual thing about it—

Mr. THOMPSON. Except, of course, if one intends to become a citizen, one must come and stay for a period of time. These workers commute.

Mr. TRIGGS. Well, some of them do, and—along border stations. Many of them commute once or twice a year.

Mr. O'HARA. If I can get back to the—the bracero program terminated, I believe, after the 1964 growing season.

Mr. TRIGGS. Yes.

Mr. O'HARA. For the years of 1965 and 1966 the Consumer Price Index for fruits and vegetables rose only 2 percent, which is less than the total increase in the Consumer Price Index during that same period. So in general I think it is safe to say that we didn't have any substantial price increase as a result of the termination of the bracero program.

Mr. TRIGGS. May I comment on that, Mr. O'Hara?

We are subjected to hearing it constantly said that farmers predicted disaster, the crops would rot in the fields if the bracero program were not renewed.

I suppose some farmers who were personally affected did say that.

We did not. We did say that the adjustment should have been made more gradually. We did say, and do say now, that substantial tonnages of crops would have been lost if the Secretary of Labor had not admitted substantial numbers of Mexican braceros in 1965 and 1966.

I think an adjustment has now been made, although I wouldn't say that in the case of an occasional instance, sugarcane in south Florida being an example, we can do without foreign labor without some painful adjustment.

Mr. O'HARA. I think that the adjustment wouldn't be very difficult. As you have pointed out, if farm prices rise too high, there is going to be mechanization, and that is something which none of us opposes.

I think it also ought to be pointed out that labor costs represent only about 7 percent of total farm receipts. Thus, even if there is a substantial increase in labor costs, it wouldn't represent much of an increase in total costs.

Mr. TRIGGS. Did you say 10 percent?

Mr. O'HARA. Seven percent.

Mr. TRIGGS. I think it is a little larger than 7 percent, but not much. It is in that area.

Of course, this varies by the kind of commodity you produce. If you produce grain, labor cost is a negligible proportion. If you produce strawberries, it is very important.

Mr. O'HARA. We are talking about all agriculture. I understand the gentleman from Michigan has to leave shortly. I would yield to him if he has a question.