

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

FRANCES PERKINS, *Secretary*

WOMEN'S BUREAU

FRIEDA S. MILLER, *Director*

+

WOMEN'S EMERGENCY FARM SERVICE
ON THE PACIFIC COAST IN 1943



BULLETIN OF THE WOMEN'S BUREAU, No. 204

UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON : 1945

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C.
Price 10 cents

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,
WOMEN'S BUREAU,
Washington, February 13, 1945.

MADAM: I am submitting herewith a description of the work on the Pacific coast farms done by nonfarm women and the conditions under which such work was organized and carried out in 1943. The survey records efforts to utilize this group of workers effectively in a wartime labor-shortage market and the difficulties encountered under Pacific coast farming conditions.

The field surveys were made and the report has been written by Frances W. Valentine.

Respectfully submitted.

FRIEDA S. MILLER, *Director.*

HON. FRANCES PERKINS,
Secretary of Labor.

CONTENTS

	Page
Letter of transmittal.....	ii
Part I. Introduction.....	1
The agriculture of the Pacific coast.....	1
The food-processing industry of the Pacific coast.....	2
Part II. The labor supply.....	2
Peacetime sources.....	2
The crisis in 1942.....	4
Examples of 1942 camps for women.....	5
Employment of young people.....	6
Federal Government plans for 1943.....	7
Part III. California's use of women in 1943.....	7
Standards established.....	8
Contract with farmer.....	9
Workers' enrollment.....	9
Recruitment of women.....	10
Women who served.....	11
Work done by women.....	11
Wages, earnings, and rates of pay.....	14
Hours.....	15
Transportation.....	16
Housing.....	16
Food.....	18
Attitude of farmers toward nonfarm women.....	18
Part IV. Oregon's use of women.....	20
Oregon agriculture.....	20
Labor requirements in Oregon.....	20
The 1943 program.....	21
The women who worked.....	21
Work done by women.....	22
Earnings.....	24
Earnings in other farm work.....	26
Hours.....	26
Rest and lunch periods.....	26
Drinking water.....	26
Sanitary conditions.....	27
Transportation.....	27
Insurance.....	27
Part V. Washington's use of women.....	27
Washington agriculture.....	27
Labor demands.....	28
The demand in 1943.....	28
The women who worked.....	30
Work done by women.....	30
Earnings.....	31
Hours.....	32
Sanitation.....	32
Health and safety.....	32
Part VI. Conclusions.....	33
Screening of workers and farmers.....	33
Sanitary facilities.....	34
Washing facilities.....	34
Drinking water in fields.....	34
Hours.....	35
Production and earnings.....	35

Women's Emergency Farm Service on the Pacific Coast in 1943

PART I.—INTRODUCTION

THE AGRICULTURE OF THE PACIFIC COAST¹

In a consideration of the use made of women in the agriculture of the three Pacific Coast States, the types of farming found there and the types of labor ordinarily prevailing are factors that must be given attention. These States are extremely important in the country's agriculture; in fact, many products have their highest output in a State of this group. Especially do the States rank high in the crops with which this report is concerned—berries, tree fruits, grapes, hops, and certain vegetables.

In the matter of vegetables, for example, California, Oregon, and Washington together, led by California, yield one-third of the celery; two-fifths of the carrots, the peas, the asparagus; two-thirds of the lettuce. Washington outranks all other States in the production of apples; Oregon all other States in the production of hops and of filberts; and California, as is common knowledge, leads in the production of grapes, English walnuts, peaches, apricots, plums, prunes, and many other fruits important to the American table.

California's variety of soil and climate is such that it can grow almost every vegetable, fruit, and nut that can be grown anywhere in the United States. Furthermore, it produces some that are grown commercially nowhere else.

In California the citrus fruits predominate; in Oregon it is pears and in Washington apples that are most valuable. Apples, pears, peaches, prunes, and cherries are grown extensively in each of the States; apricots in California and Washington. Berries are raised in quantities in northern California, Oregon, and Washington.

In addition to the great variety this area produces, the quantity of such crops is enormous. When one farm or ranch has 8,000 acres of grapes alone, for example, and is planting more, an idea of the huge numbers of farm laborers needed may be conceived. Though the vast grain fields, devoted chiefly to wheat but with some barley and oats, and such crops as the peas grown in great quantity for the canneries, are planted and harvested almost entirely by machinery, crews to operate the machinery are necessary. The range of temperature is such that in every month of the year some crop is being harvested.

Due to this variety in temperature, which ranges from the intense heat of the Imperial Valley in southern California to the more tem-

¹ Figures from U. S. Department of Agriculture's "Agricultural Statistics, 1943."

perate valleys of northern Washington, the time of ripening of the various crops proceeds slowly north. The highly specialized farm labor, in ordinary times, follows the crops as they ripen. Agriculture in California at least is practically a year-round industry, though of course the peak of the harvesting comes in the summer and early fall months.

The majority of the farms producing these crops are highly specialized. There are acres of nothing but lettuce in the area where lettuce is grown. There are valleys where every small farm grows the cane berries and nothing else; tracts where strawberries are grown; enormous areas—thousands and thousands of acres—of citrus fruits; thousands of acres of string beans, carrots, tomatoes, onions, potatoes. Most farms grow only one vegetable. There are whole valleys of orchards of apples, pears, prunes, cherries, English walnuts; miles of spinach, lettuce, asparagus. There are vineyards by the mile in certain sections. One part of a State is devoted to growing cannery peas, another to sugar beets or wheat. The crops of all these States are widely diversified, but the farms are not, most farmers confining themselves to one or two major crops.

Even poultry farming, which could be carried on anywhere, is highly concentrated in certain areas. Sometimes great orchards, groves, vineyards, or vegetable tracts are owned by companies rather than individuals and there may be no "farm home" close to the fields. The magnitude of agricultural operations on the Pacific coast, particularly in California, and the great number of farm laborers required, make farming truly a "war industry" of major importance.

THE FOOD-PROCESSING INDUSTRY OF THE PACIFIC COAST

The food-processing industry is so closely allied with the farming of the Pacific area that it can scarcely be considered separately. In fact, in many cases the canneries own and operate farm areas for the great food-processing industry of California. The fruits and vegetables produced here are canned, frozen, or dehydrated and shipped throughout the country and all over the world, supplying the armed forces as well as the civilian population.

Of the "green" fruit, the greater part is packed in large packing houses, usually located near the orchards. Canneries, on the contrary, have tended to move into or near the large cities and towns where more labor and shipping facilities are available.

PART II.—THE LABOR SUPPLY PEACETIME SOURCES

The care of and more particularly the harvesting of the products of this vast agricultural territory (California, Oregon, and Washington) have been largely dependent on an army of migratory farm workers who appeared out of winter quarters and started in with the crops in southern California, working north with the advancing seasons and

varying crops, and upon Japanese citizens or aliens who as owners, renters, or workers cared for market-garden crops. Some workers were specialists—cherry pickers, apple pickers, beet workers, soft-fruit pickers (soft fruit includes peaches, apricots, and cherries), or berry pickers. Others worked at any kind of harvest, but all had developed through the years an ambidextrous rapidity which is simply impossible for an inexperienced harvest hand to duplicate. They are called unskilled labor. In reality they have a highly developed technique that the average "green" worker cannot acquire for a long time.

With the tremendous expansion of the shipbuilding and airplane industries on the Pacific coast, the emergency demand for labor offered these migratory farm workers steady employment at high wages and many of them forsook the farms for other war industries. The Japanese citizens and aliens were moved out of the coastal region.

Also, as in the East, many small farmers whose efforts had never brought in much income found it more profitable to leave their farms while they could earn high wages in industry. This was particularly true where they were so near centers of industry as to be able to live at home and drive back and forth to their work. Farms deteriorated, but the owners got more income from their wages than they had from their crops and could return to farming later.

There had always been a nucleus of permanent help on the farms, who stayed the year round if the farms were large enough to demand it. Most of the labor, however, was taken on for harvesting the various crops, though certain stages of production—as blocking and thinning sugar beets, chopping cotton, pruning vineyards and orchards, pegging and stringing hops—needed extra workers before harvest time.

Throughout the Pacific States it had been the custom for many years for boys, girls, women, and often whole families who lived in towns or cities to go out from their communities in the summer and earn money by helping to pick fruit. These were families or individuals whose regular occupation was not agriculture, who did it both to earn money and as a pleasant change from town life. They took their own camping outfits and went to friends or relatives or to places where they had been before and knew conditions were agreeable. Sometimes the man of the family remained in his job and joined the family only for week ends. Naturally, these workers went where comfortable and clean housing was furnished by the farmer. They stayed several weeks and did a good job. It was not unusual, moreover, for families who had small farms to work for their neighbors at harvest time.

While family help was common, it was only supplementary to the migrants. The "fruit tramps," usually men alone, went from one orchard to another, from one State to another, finding jobs where they could. They were skilled by years of experience.

Though all these types of labor—migrants, fruit tramps, town boys and girls, and families seeking harvest work as a change—had done the harvesting for years, as the war progressed their ranks became depleted by the demands of the shipyards and war industries, which offered the irresistible inducement of more money than agricultural workers had ever earned before. Thus agriculture, unable to compete with war industry, found itself with crops to be harvested for which there was no labor.

THE CRISIS IN 1942

By 1943, producers in the three Pacific States were fully aware of the situation and made every preparation to meet it. Before examining what was done in 1943, however, what happened in 1942 must be considered.

Throughout the whole country 1942 was a record-breaking year for agriculture. Rainfalls and temperatures were propitious, droughts and floods few, and the Pacific area found itself with huge crops to be harvested and a serious shortage of labor. The only Government agency doing anything about farm labor was the United States Employment Service, which also was the agency supplying the war industries. It bent all its efforts to the job. The appeal for help was made directly to the public. Through the press, the radio, State departments of agriculture, chambers of commerce; through "harvest councils" hurriedly organized in the larger cities; through the efforts of various organizations—YMCA, YWCA, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts—many people went out to "help save the crops."

Day workers were the harvest help sought in the main. They were persons who went out from their homes by the day, taking their own food and furnishing their own transportation if they could. Gas could be provided for those who had cars. If they had no transportation, buses or farm trucks would take them to the locality for which they were booked, where farmers would meet them if necessary. Men, women, and children went out in this way, but the adults were largely a group of persons engaged through the week in other occupations who were contributing their week ends and vacations to harvest work. In the small towns, which were surrounded by agricultural lands and whose very life depended on agriculture, it was easy to understand that the crops must be taken care of. Most of the people in the towns had worked on farms at one time or another. To great numbers of people harvesting was not a new experience.

Even in 1942, however, an attempt at organization was being worked out. Many groups of young people went to farms, though often without adequate supervision; camps for youth were set up without enough planning or good management. But the faults were recognized and plans were made for much better organization in 1943. In 1942 the USES was the Government agency that placed farm labor, but it had no authority nor funds for supervisory work. In some areas a very active effort was made to get women for farm work, but in most localities no effort to place women except as day workers was made because (1) there was no housing for women on the farms, and (2) most farmers did not want women.

In California the American Women's Voluntary Services had anticipated this need and had realized early in 1942 that there was much work that women could do. An Agricultural Committee was formed under the leadership of an able and enthusiastic chairman. After study of the Women's Land Army in Britain and the use of women in this work in various other parts of the United States, and after consultation with several Government agencies, with State chambers of commerce, and with growers, the committee decided to work on a project of recruiting and housing women over 18 who were willing to help in harvesting the crops of California.

Examples of 1942 Camps for Women.

Some of the more hard-pressed farmers were ready to consider using women. In June a farmer from Vacaville, Calif., went to the AWVS chairman and said that he had read about women being recruited for farm work, and that he and a group of farmers were ready to put \$100 each into a pool to finance a camp for women if the AWVS would recruit them and supervise the camp. To the question as to where they could be housed, he replied that the district school board would give permission to establish the camp in the high school and to use the school buses to transport the workers; that they could even take the school buses out of the county to get workers if they would pay the mileage. (Since some of the farmers who wanted help were members of the school board, and others were influential members of the community, the practical value of using the school was easily understood.) The AWVS agreed to recruit the women, and this camp, successfully carried through in 1942, was the forerunner of the many camps of workers, both women and young people, established throughout California in 1943 in school buildings. This camp, set up in the high school with a capacity of 70 workers, maintained about 50 women picking apricots. The domestic-science room was used as a kitchen; the gymnasium, supplied with cots, was used as a dormitory; and an excellent camp was maintained. Other camps were set up as the need increased. The personnel of this camp were chiefly women who were able to take their vacations at this time or had no regular employment. No report of their earnings was available.

While this was being planned in northern California, in southern California the AWVS had been recruiting harvest workers. Booths had been put up in the streets of Santa Barbara and prospective recruits had signed up for harvest work. In cooperation with the USES, ranches were sought where the "volunteers"² could work. Several apricot growers were found who thought they would need women but had no housing facilities for them. (The housing that had been used by migratory workers was not satisfactory for women, nor were there sanitary or bathing facilities, and the growers frankly preferred Mexicans if they could get them, who would accept the housing they had.)

One grower who said he would like a group of women had the best apricot crop in his experience and did not know where he could get labor. He could provide a beautiful camp site with fine water piped to it. Tents with stoves, tables, and chairs were furnished and beds with springs (but no mattresses) or canvas cots. Outdoor showers were provided and the hot sun warmed the water in the metal pipes. Drinking water was hung in water coolers. Outdoor privies, inclosed but not roofed, were supplied, three for women at the camp and some out in the orchards. The campers bought and prepared their own food.

The women picked and halved apricots, using ladders that they moved themselves, and earned—partly on piece work and partly on hourly rates—something over \$3 a day. The hours were 9 a day, Sunday as well as weekdays, as the work lasted only 3 weeks.

² In California the men, women, and young people who were not ordinarily agricultural workers but who went out to harvest were called "volunteers" though they were paid.

On the whole, the experiment was satisfactory to both the grower and the women. Even at that early day the factors that were to prove essential to good camps were noted. Supervision was needed, the training of new workers was insufficient, careful explanation and demonstration of the work to new employees as they came on would have insured better work.

A tomato-picking camp recruited from the Los Angeles area was not entirely satisfactory, as the housing arrangements were difficult and the picking was not good enough at the rate paid to satisfy the women or enable the girls who followed them to make more than would pay their board. They did, however, enjoy their experience at the camp. They did not work full 8-hour days.

The camp in 1942 that really began to develop the possibilities of adult women workers was sponsored and recruited by the AWVS of southern California at the request of one of the largest California fruit growers. One hundred and fifty women were requested, to pick grapes in the San Joaquin Valley. The company would house them, feed them (the excellence of the food was soon to become known throughout the valley), maintain janitor service, and pay a camp director selected by the AWVS. Bus fare would be paid one way if the workers stayed 3 weeks, both ways if she stayed 6.

Women were housed in converted box cars, six workers to each car. There was a utility building with flush toilets, hot and cold showers, and wash bowls, and a building with the supervisor's quarters, living room, and place to lounge or play games, also tubs for the washing of clothing.

The women worked under the immediate supervision of regular ranch foremen; they were carefully instructed in their work and were not expected to be profitable workers the day they started. The pay was 65 cents an hour for all, and the working day was 9 hours—from 7 to 5—with a hot dinner at noon in the company dining room. A full week's pay was \$35.10, and after deduction for board \$26.35 remained for the worker.

Employment of Young People.

While the AWVS was busy with camps for adult women, its major interest, the YWCA had done similar work in organizing camps for girls of school age. It is not the province of this report to discuss the employment of youth and children in harvest or farm work, though in 1942 they were unquestionably the largest group of volunteer workers secured for harvest work in all the three Pacific Coast States. The efforts of 1942 showed clearly the need of definite organization standards and supervision. In California, the YWCA appointed a State Chairman for Agriculture and, in cooperation with the YMCA, the USES, the AWVS, the Chamber of Commerce, and the education authorities under the auspices of the San Francisco Harvest Council, worked during the winter of 1942 to establish standards that should enable the employment of youth to be more effective and satisfactory. As many of the same problems come up with adult women, standards were made to cover both young people and adults.

In Washington in 1942 the Governor sent out an appeal for all who could do so to offer their services, and asked the University of Washington to cooperate by sending groups of students to help harvest

apples. This job was put in the hands of the college dean, who turned the recruiting over to the students, a chairman for the women and one for the men being appointed. An office for registration was set up, and registration blanks were sent to all the organized groups of students (from church groups to fraternities there were some 200 student organizations). Altogether about 1,000 students, both men and women, went out to the two big apple sections, Yakima and Wenatchee. In both sections an alumnus who knew all the arrangements was on call ready to give assistance, and in each area there were women chairmen and local women who could be reached in any emergency to act as chaperons for the girl students. The Employment Service took over the job of arranging housing at ranch homes or at the YMCA for part of the men.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PLANS FOR 1943

At the end of April 1943 the Congress appropriated funds for a farm-labor program to be administered by the Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture through its various State offices. As one part of the Emergency Farm Labor Program, the Extension Service formulated plans for the greater use of women in farm work by setting up a Women's Land Army program. Miss Florence L. Hall, Extension Service, was named Chief of the Women's Land Army Division, United States Department of Agriculture. This did not mean that a new women's organization was to be set up, but rather that the use of women to replace men farm workers was to be promoted where needed and every encouragement given to such a movement. While each State was free to appoint a Women's Land Army leader, there was no compulsion, and the States made their own plans for using women on the farms. The National leader stood ready to give all help possible. Every woman who took part in the agricultural work of the country would be given a certificate of membership and participation in the Women's Land Army.

All three Pacific Coast States appointed WLA leaders from the regular personnel of the Extension Service, Home Economics Division. These women worked as assistants to the Farm Labor Supervisors, and though, because of the late passage of the bill, they did not participate in the early planning, they got into the work as soon as that was possible. While at first the real magnitude of the WLA job was not always foreseen, and leaders sometimes were carrying the double burden of an old plus a new job, the importance of the job became increasingly apparent to all. It was a job where "the more you do, the more you have to do," and where the success and enlargement of the program would depend to some extent on the interest, ability, and enthusiasm of the WLA leaders, and on the support and interest of others members of the Extension Service staff in the program.

PART III.—CALIFORNIA'S USE OF WOMEN IN 1943

With the experience of 1942 behind them, much planning and organization was done during the winter of 1942-43, particularly in Cali-

ifornia, where it was expected to have a considerable number of camps in 1943.

California already had done far more than most States in preparing to go to work itself on its farm-labor problem. Through its Food and Fiber Production Act it had appropriated a million and a half dollars to be administered by the California Farm Production Council, which was ready to help women's groups with plans.

STANDARDS ESTABLISHED

In March 1943, before the harvest season started and before the Federal and State Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture had been assigned the job of recruiting and placing farm workers, the San Francisco Harvest Council had appointed a committee and gathered material from such agencies as the AWVS, the YWCA, the California State and San Francisco departments of education, the USES, the Pacific Camping Association, and others, and had put out several manuals relating to harvest camps.

One of these manuals related to the duties and responsibilities of camp directors, one to those of the camp supervisor, one was on standards for living and working conditions in student camps, and another on the same for adult camps. The manuals also included a suggested contract to be signed by farmers who sought labor from the camps and an agreement to be signed by the workers enrolling. These handbooks became guides for the establishment of the 1943 camps, and while not every camp could meet every detail of the plans set forth, there was a definite standard that the camps sought to maintain. Having this standard down in black and white made its attainment much easier.

To discuss these manuals briefly: They recognized that the prime necessity of a satisfactory camp, one that not only gave good service to the farmers but kept the workers contented and working hard with good morale, was good supervision and leadership. As most of the harvest camps were for 50 or more persons, manuals set up duties for both a camp director and camp supervisors.

The director had the responsibility for the whole camp; was expected to be familiar with the labor needs of the farmers, with the potentialities of the camp members, and see that both were met; to know the plan and aims of the camp sponsor and work out the many problems that arise in any such organization. He or she was also to furnish the liaison between various community organizations in the vicinity of the camp, so that the community as a whole should be informed, interested in, and cooperative about the project.

The actual business management of the camp was the director's duty, including keeping the records, purchasing supplies, collecting and accounting for the board money, and so forth. He or she was responsible also for planning menus, for the morale, health, and physical welfare of the workers, the general upkeep of the camp, personnel problems, safety, and prevention of accidents.

In addition there were two manuals—for students and for adults—on standards for camps as they relate to living and working conditions. The first was prepared by the council subcommittee for Adult Harvest Camps and covered such topics as (1) *health*, including

nutrition, medical supervision, housing, (2) *safety*, including camp site, accident prevention, transportation, and telephone, (3) *sanitation*, covering milk, water, dishwashing, garbage, pest control, animals, latrines, showers, laundry facilities, (4) *conditions of employment*, including selection, wages, working conditions, supervision, community relationship, and a sample medical-report card.

The standards were, of course, utopian. It would have been impossible to attain all these goals. But the fact that they were established as what camp sponsors would like to have in their camps, and in part would insist on having, was important. It let farmers, workers, directors, supervisors, all know that the aim was to have for these inexperienced workers good camps, well run; that a good director with common sense and a sincere interest would be backed up.

Contract With Farmer.

There had been occasional difficulty in 1942 in getting farmers to stick to their agreements. Sometimes, seeing their crops approaching harvest time and without sufficient help to harvest them, they requested that a harvest camp be set up to serve them. After all the organizing and recruiting had been done and a camp was practically ready to open for operation, a farmer might get migrant or Mexican labor and change his mind about the camp, regardless of the time and effort that had been spent in getting workers for him.

Consequently, in 1943 a contract was drawn up for use between the "camp sponsor" and the grower or group of growers, or processor, which agreed that the sponsor should recruit a specified number of physically capable workers for an 8-hour day, 6-day week, and should maintain the camp at the number of workers agreed upon. The camp sponsor would be responsible for the staff and for the board of the workers, and also for the insurance of workers *while at the camp buildings or grounds*. It was agreed that the growers should provide housing and equipment, sanitary facilities, water, electricity, fuel and telephone, services (garbage disposal, ordinary maintenance service, police protection), transportation to and from place of work but not from recruiting centers to camp and return. The growers should provide also first-aid kits at work place, fresh drinking water in approved covered containers readily accessible, and proper toilet facilities convenient at the place where field work was performed. When there was no work for a camper who was available, her expenses at camp must be paid by the grower. All growers must guarantee workmen's compensation and liability insurance to campers while on the job and while being transported, and must guarantee liability insurance on all buildings and living accommodations.

A council of three was to be chosen to which any difficulty that might arise should be referred.

These in general were the provisions of the contract. There was no way of enforcing its provisions. The farmer might not have enough work; the sponsor might not recruit enough workers. The good will and good faith of both groups were vital.

Workers' Enrollment.

All workers recruited through the AWVS signed an enrollment application, were required to file a statement of physical fitness (a

woman physician in San Francisco offered to give the medical examination to women recruits for \$1.50, or they could apply to their own doctor), and if accepted were given an assignment card which they presented at the camp. A postcard was sent by the recruiting office to the camp with a return postal which acknowledged their arrival. Junior workers had to have the approval of parent or guardian. A general description of work plan was given, the hours of work (40 to 48), the cost of board (\$1.50 a day), the personal belongings to be brought (bedding and all personal equipment). Rates of pay were specified only as "prevailing wages will be paid."

RECRUITMENT OF WOMEN

The extremely serious shortage of harvesters in 1942 and the wide publicity given to the need for emergency help had made the whole population farm-labor conscious by 1943. This interest had been kept up through the winter by meetings of all organizations concerned in helping and having something to contribute, combined with press and radio publicity. In California, with the opening of the 130 new farm-labor offices by the Extension Service in 1943, each with a conspicuous and easily read sign outside, every important agricultural center and all large cities had offices, usually with a man and a woman ready to talk to recruits about the need and opportunities for both men and women in farm work and also to take the farmers' requests for help and to cooperate with existing organizations.

The Harvest Council, organized in 1942 in San Francisco and in several other large cities and with a membership representing all important organizations, had done and continued to do much work in getting emergency service people out for day-haul and week-end work. The American Women's Voluntary Services in California had been the outstanding organization promoting the use of women in farm work, and they continued and expanded their campaign, recruiting for both camp and day workers. In general, the women who went to camps were recruited largely through the AWVS, which worked in close cooperation with the farm-labor offices. The women who went out on day work registered through the farm-labor offices, the AWVS, or local committees, depending on the locality.

In 1943 the effort was made to base recruiting on actual needs reported, rather than a general cry for help. Where definite information as to time, place, work, cost, and probable earnings could be given, better results were obtained. Recruiting far ahead had been found unsatisfactory. Workers who were expected did not always turn up, had changed their minds.

Business houses and stores in the large cities were consulted to see if vacation times could be made to fit into harvest needs. Groups of foreign-born women, in some cases refugees from European countries, gave valuable help.

While there had been considerable publicity about a "vacation with pay in the country," more sensible recruiters were pointing out that though it was an essential job, and a patriotic service, it was hard, hot, dirty work, and were not urging people to go unless they "could take it." Recruiting for the camps involved, of course, women who were free enough of home responsibilities to stay away for at least a

week, preferably longer. This was more difficult, but women who can work 1, 2, and 3 weeks or more at a job become much more valuable than those who work for a day only.

In recruiting women for the camps the AWVS of San Francisco particularly tried very hard to screen the applicants and send only those who seemed likely to prove satisfactory workers. They reported much better success when that was done. If, due to a shortage of applicants, anyone who thought she wanted to go was sent, the turn-over was much greater, resulting in added cost and lowered efficiency.

WOMEN WHO SERVED

The women who went to the California camps were, for the large part, women who were or had been employed, who normally earned their own living. While there were a few college students, these were definitely in the minority. There were, however, a good many teachers and other professional women, as well as women from all sorts of business occupations.

There were a few homemakers whose families were of such ages or occupations that they could be left to look out for themselves. Occasionally there was a well-to-do older woman who had lived for years on "income" and now felt an obligation to help in the great emergency.

WORK DONE BY WOMEN

In general, farmers on the Pacific coast sought women for harvest work only. For the basic planting and cultivating they felt they must have men—Filipinos, Mexicans, Italians; the fields were considered too large, the work too heavy, to be suitable for women. In 1943 the demand for inexperienced women workers was considerably less than in 1942, but the kind of work for which they were wanted was the same. This was due partly to the smaller over-all production of the crops for which women were used, but more largely to the importation by the Government of agricultural workers from Mexico and to a larger number of regular migrants than had been anticipated. The Mexicans were imported through a contract with the Mexican Government, and worked at a prearranged rate per hour of 65 cents, or sometimes at piece work.

Cherry picking was an early-season job. Expert cherry pickers are rapid, ambidextrous, and skillful. "Greenhorns" were not so skillful but could do and did the job. Many children were used, as well as women. Sweet cherries are picked on the stem, graded and packed at the packing houses. Sour cherries can be pulled off, as they go to canneries and may be picked with less care.

Berry picking has always been considered a "women's and children's job," doubtless because small hands and fingers are supposed to get among the vines and canes more easily, and the stooping and bending over for low fruit such as strawberries is accepted more willingly by women and children.

Many of the berries picked in the Pacific States are canned or made into jams. Where that is done the berries often are picked into pails and emptied into barrels, requiring much less careful handling than if picked into pint or quart boxes for consumption fresh.

In the *fruit orchards* other than citrus many women were employed, but here again lighter crops than in 1942 in almost all fruits lessened the labor demand. Women thinned, picked, packed, and canned peaches, pears, plums, and apples as the harvests came along. Occasionally they sprayed fruit trees. Picking, in the case of all fruits, is done chiefly from three-legged ladders, wide at the bottom and tapering to a point at the top. The ladders are of various lengths according to the size of the trees—from 8 to 18 feet, sometimes longer. Almost any woman who is physically equal to farm work can move an 8-foot ladder and set it up if she has been given instruction with a demonstration of how to do it. Some can move longer ladders. Two together, properly taught, can move and set up any ladder they would use.

Picking the fruit was work that women accomplished with satisfaction to the growers after a little experience and instruction, and many women with and without former experience did this work. In the pear orchards much of the picking was done by size, pickers being given a ring and told to pick only fruit the size of the ring. They soon learned to gauge by the eye the proper size to pick. Apple orchards were sometimes picked twice, the first picking taking only the well-colored fruit. Picking requires very careful handling of the fruit, not to bruise it, and women generally were more careful than boys. It is heavy work, too, the full picking bags, which are hung over the shoulders by straps, holding about 25 pounds. Some growers considered these too heavy for women to carry down the ladders. It is simple for women to fill the bags only part full, so that they may be easily handled. This of course makes more trips up and down the ladder and so slows the work somewhat.

Apricots and pears were the principal fruits cut to be sun-dried. The cutters halve the ripe fruit, flicking out the apricot pits with a twist of the knife but leaving pear cores in, and spread them on wooden trays that are left in the hot sun until the fruit is dried, after which they are stacked in sheds until ready to pack. Some women prefer the stationary job of cutting and others the more active job of picking.

Prunes and English walnuts.—In September and October the harvest of prunes and of walnuts, coming at about the same time, demanded thousands of harvesters. Both crops are picked up from the ground, having been knocked or shaken from the trees—sometimes by a homemade shaker consisting of a rope tied to a tree and then to a truck which, alternately pulling and slackening the rope, shakes the fruit off the branches. Women crawl around or bend over and pick up into buckets the prunes or nuts; the fruit is put into lugs (boxes), the walnuts into sacks. Prunes vary in size and obviously large prunes fill boxes more rapidly than small ones. The condition of an orchard or grove also influences the speed of the work. If the ground is clean, cultivated, and smoothed before harvesting, the picking up is easy and rapid. If it has grown to tall weeds and the furrows are left from the last cultivation, the work is much harder. Often the buckets provided by the grower are too large and heavy; women do better with smaller pails.

Hops called for many pickers. The hops are very light and are picked into huge burlap bags, care being taken not to include leaves.

Workers can stand erect. Bags are weighed and marked with the worker's number. Women were used also as day workers for pegging and stringing hops. These were largely women accustomed to agricultural work who went out from nearby towns and worked by the hour.

Vegetable crops.—By midseason vast acreages of string beans and lima beans were ready to be picked. Women and children were again called on in great numbers. Many of the youth camps were established for vegetable picking, and numerous women helped pick by the day, particularly beans but to some extent carrots, onions, and potatoes.

Tomatoes were another crop that called for women and children. Many small farms had tomatoes, and unable to get either Mexicans or migrants, called for women as day pickers or from camps. Tomato picking requires care in handling the fruit, and when fruit is going to the cannery care in putting only acceptable fruit into the boxes. It is a hot, bending-over job and the juice from the vines covers the pickers with black stains. Farmers reported that boxes picked by emergency-service women were seldom rejected when inspected at the canneries for over-ripe, green, or damaged fruit.

The *lettuce* industry employs many women regularly in cutting, washing, and packing, but no camps were set up for women in the lettuce area. Many migrants worked there, and the Women's Land Army did not report any special recruiting for that work.

Grapes, a major crop in California, cover thousands of acres and employ thousands of women. Women were employed for picking, turning, and rolling grapes in many vineyards; also for thinning, that is, taking off leaves that shade the bunches. One of the largest growers, who had employed women in two camps all through the 1943 season, picking fruit and later grapes, kept on a group through the winter of 1943-44. The weather in the valley was mild enough to work out-of-doors all winter. Under an experienced foreman the women were taught to prune and tie the vines.

Wine grapes are cut back to a few buds from the main stem, raising grapes have a few long canes left that must be twisted around and tied to horizontal wires. On a visit to this crew in February the foreman was asked how the women were doing. "I hate to admit it, but they do a better job than the men did," was his reply. They were paid exactly the same wages as men, given the same excellent food, lodged in comfortable quarters with a good camp director. In the spring of 1944, 19 crews of 20 to 25 workers each were at work in these vineyards and 16 of the crews were women; 3 of the crews were supervised by women. The women were paid the same rate as the men, 70 cents an hour. This employer believes that large-scale employment of women is good business for him, and he tried to attract good workers by giving them good working conditions.

Harvesting seedless raisin grapes, which were particularly desired by the Government for their food value, consisted of four operations:

1. Cutting the bunches from the vines with a knife, and laying them on a large sheet of paper (tray), and leaving them in the rows to dry.
2. Turning the grapes: After 10 days, if grapes are all dry, workers turn them, two workers together taking the four corners of the paper

and flipping the contents over. This requires a continuous jack-knife position for workers and makes some women dizzy.

3. Rolling: When grapes are dry, folding the edges of the paper in over the grapes, rolling the tray up, and stacking at the side of the row under the vines or in the sun, according to whether or not they need further drying. This, like turning, is a back-breaking, muscle-stretching job.

4. Loading: Picking up the rolls and loading them on a tractor trailer that takes them to the yards, where they are dumped into field boxes and go to the packing sheds. Loading is easier than turning and rolling. Work in the fields and in the packing sheds usually is done by different groups of workers. Field workers worked 9 hours, packers 11.

WAGES, EARNINGS, AND RATES OF PAY

Because of the fact that most of the work was piece work, earnings varied with the individual and with the crop. Another factor influencing the "average earnings" of a group was that sometimes women with real harvesting experience were among the workers. In general it may be said that inexperienced women, harvesting for the first time, probably earned for the most part between 2 and 3 dollars a day. It is reported that some, after they knew they had made enough to cover their board, would ease up a little. Sometimes the inexperienced were given poor fields, poor berry patches or badly cultivated orchards where they could not possibly make good pay. Usually they had little or no previous training and often received inadequate instruction and induction when they first came on the job.

Quoting from the AWVS report for 1942, "Low wages in some crops and low earnings capacity in others seemed to be the major complaints. Many workers felt that wages should be paid on an hourly instead of a piece-work basis. Efficiency always increased with practice. Wages were generally adequate for fast workers."

The rate of pay and wages in 1943 were, undoubtedly, the highest they had been in years. Hourly rates were everywhere high, 50, 60, 70 and 75 cents being reported, with 60 to 70 prevailing, but very few of the inexperienced women harvesters worked at hourly rates. Some of the farm-labor supervisors felt that women would not want to work at hourly rates, because they could earn so much more at piece rates. That may be true of the experienced migratory women who did harvest work, but such evidence as there is does not show that it would be true of the nonfarm women as a whole. Nor were there any data on the production records of the nonfarm women or on the quality of their work compared to that of the professional harvesters, that would give farmers some basis for judging what a woman might be worth.

It was rarely possible to get any pay-roll data as to the earnings of inexperienced women, but certain general statements were made:

Berries, tomatoes, beans, all were harvest jobs, using great numbers of inexperienced harvesters, women and young people. Berries particularly were a "family job," where man, wife, and children could earn a good day's pay but the average nonfarm woman could not.

Strawberries paid 3 cents a pound.

Bean pickers.— $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 cents a pound was paid to yield \$3.50 to \$4 a day.

Tomato picking paid 15 to 20 cents a lug (about 32 lbs.; a bushel weighs 53 lbs.). This might yield average inexperienced workers between \$2 and \$4 a day. The WLA leaders reported \$2 a day for women in one county and \$5 to \$6 in another, showing the great variation in picking conditions.

Prunes were a poor-paying crop. Picking small prunes off the ground paid 20 to 25 cents a box, large prunes 30 to 35 cents. The AWVS reported daily earnings of \$1.80 to \$2 at one of the best camps. *Apples* netted all women better pay. At 15 and sometimes 20 cents a lug the majority of women could make \$4 a day; slow ones \$3, fast ones \$5 and up.

Pears paid 15 cents a lug, later raised to 18 cents. The earnings were about the same as for apples. When picking to size, using a metal ring as measure, the earnings were less, but in the last picking, when they stripped the trees, women made their best pay.

English walnuts.—The prevailing rates for walnuts were 30 to 50 cents a sack (weighing 50 to 60 lbs.). The average adult woman picked about 12 sacks a day, earning around \$3.50. One inexperienced woman said she earned nearly \$6 a day, and the all-time high was made by a professional Portuguese picker who earned \$11 in one day. Containers, usually pails, were of various sizes and were emptied into the sacks.

At one camp, organized by the WLA, the average daily earnings for all (including the \$11 walnut picker) were \$3.84. This was an actual pay-roll record. Women had picked walnuts and grapes.

Seedless-grape picking paid 5 cents a tray. A good picker might pick 100 trays a day, a very fast picker 150, earning respectively \$5 and \$7.50. But the average inexperienced worker would earn considerably less than that, though some women reported \$35 a week.

At the two camps employing steadily the largest numbers of women, hourly rates of 70 cents were paid for whatever work was done, whether picking plums or picking or pruning grapes. At a 9-hour day this made \$6.30 a day, from which \$1.25 was deducted for board.

These camps had started at 50 cents an hour September 1, 1942, had raised the pay to 60 cents two weeks later, to 65 cents in May 1943, and to 70 cents in October 1943. The weekly farm-labor reports gave the prevailing hourly rate in the valley around Fresno as 70 to 75 cents.

For day-haul women, earnings would be about the same; certainly no more, as they had less steady work through which they might gain experience.

Supervisors.—Women who volunteered to act as field supervisors received \$1 an hour, paid usually by the farmers. These were principally women who went out in charge of youth. If they were assigned to a camp, they were paid by the California Farm Production Council from State funds \$7.50 a day.

HOURS

The working hours at the camps usually were 9 a day, though some women may have worked a little longer.

As almost all the work done by the women from camps was piece work, they were able to take what time they wanted for lunch, which was eaten in the field. At the two camps where the girls were trucked back to lunch, they had an hour from the time they stopped work till they began again, which did not mean a full hour's rest. Here they worked 9 hours, and when the suggestion was made that they work only 8, the women objected to losing the extra hour's pay.

The day-haul women's hours varied greatly. Many times they could not work a full day. Naturally this lessened their efficiency and their value to the farmers, but in the emergency program the help they gave generally was acceptable for the time they could work.

Rest periods.—No provision was made for any rest period. Women took what they felt they needed. If working by the hour under a foreman, they usually kept going; if on piece work, they could pause if they chose.

TRANSPORTATION

The farmers arranged for the transportation from camp to the place of work and return. Sometimes the farmers had the use of school buses, so the only expense was the driver and the gasoline, but more often they used their own trucks. Transportation from home to camp usually was paid by adult workers themselves.

HOUSING

Many California camps were housed in public-school buildings. The life of the small communities in California is very closely linked with agriculture. The members of school committees were in many cases farmers. The district high schools were often fine buildings, well equipped in every way, with gymnasiums, showers, kitchens, cafeterias—even laundry facilities in some cases. Usually they were located in or near a town that was a business center for the surrounding farms.

It was therefore a natural thing for a number of farmers who wanted to employ a group of women harvesters to suggest using the school building to house them, and, further, to have no difficulty in securing consent. Cots generally were set up in the gymnasium. The toilets, hand bowls, and showers provided for the students gave ample sanitary facilities. The rooms where domestic science was taught afforded a place for cooking, and a lunch room or in some cases a cafeteria offered a place for meals. Generally there were small rooms to serve as offices, sitting rooms, and so forth. The farmer's group usually provided the furnishings needed, as cots and mattresses. The farmer-employers paid for the telephone, gas, electricity, and any other fuel used. In many little ways they assumed a share of the responsibility.

The AWVS continued in 1943 its sponsorship of camps for adult women³ 18 years and up and two camps for junior girls. This included all the preliminary organization work, the recruiting, interviewing, and placing of workers, the arrangement for the staff of the camp—cook, helpers, and camp director, the arrangements with the farmers for employment, wages, working hours, and transportation from camp to farm; the facilities for transportation from city

³ Sebastopol, Sonoma, Selma, Arvin, Delano, and Hollister.

to camp; and the arrangements for food, including buying and installing the necessary provisions to open the camp. Also, theirs was the responsibility of passing on the housing suggested or offered by the farmers; or if none was suggested, finding it.

If the housing was provided by the farm group asking for the camp, it was subject to the approval of the AWVS chairman. For the actual cost of board, which included, besides the food, the salaries of the camp cook and kitchen assistants, the AWVS was recompensed by the board paid by the women, usually \$1.50 a day. The salaries of the director and the supervisors (the latter employed only in the youth camps) were paid in 1943 by the California Farm Production Council, the agency that disbursed the money appropriated by the State.

The cost of the housing, utilities, and equipment was met by the farmers in the group; the organizing, recruiting, and general supervision was a volunteer service by the AWVS. This service was no mean offering. The job took the full time of an able and experienced committee chairman, with such part-time assistance as she could secure; and clerical help in the organization headquarters amounting to one part-time typist.

While the camps were run entirely on a nonprofit basis, funds might be transferred from one camp that was showing a small surplus to one with a slight deficit.

Two of the camps were operated entirely by the AWVS. They "sponsored" three other camps for adult women, two of which were the result of the camp requested of the AWVS in 1942 by one of the large fruit-growing corporations. This company furnished housing, board, all equipment, charging the women \$1.25 a day for board. They also paid the salary of the directors. Recruiting for these camps was done by the AWVS and, later, also by the Farm Labor Offices.

One was a small camp located on an apricot grower's ranch. It was a tent camp, with a cook-house built for meals and cooking. The grower's sister acted as supervisor. Board was \$1.25 a day. The whole set-up was approved by the AWVS, which recruited 18 workers for it, but it was operated entirely by the grower.

One more camp for adult women was opened in October at San Ramon again at the request of a group of growers, and was staffed and operated largely by the personnel of the local high school. It was well run and successful, due largely to the school leadership. Both the Farm Labor Office and the AWVS recruited for it.

The seventh and last camp for adults was one sponsored by the Sierra Club of California and included both men and women. The Sierra Club, a very long-established club of mountaineers and hikers, had responded in 1942 to an SOS from a large prune grower about 60 miles from San Francisco. They responded 200 strong, both men and women (of whom, it was reported, "at least 100 *really worked*"). Being experienced campers, all they asked was good drinking water and toilet facilities; in other respects they could look out for themselves, establishing their own camp and cooking their own meals. In 1942, they got 15 to 17 cents a lug (box) for prunes; women averaged 12 lugs a day, earning about \$2.

In 1943 the growers asked the Sierra Club to help again, and this time a schoolhouse offered its gymnasium as a place to house them.

The showers and toilet facilities of the school were made available, the commissary was established in a nearby church, and a young home-economics teacher presided over the camp and helped to cook on days when the camp almost had to close for lack of a cook. The superintendent of schools made contact with the farmers (he was also on the County Farm Labor staff) and helped to distribute the workers where they were most needed. In 1942 the Sierra Club had worked for a large grower. In 1943 that employer had Mexican labor and the campers worked for many small growers. The farmers liked having some men in the group (though they were far outnumbered by women) because the men could shake and knock down the prunes with 15-foot poles and the women (who had been advised to bring knee pads) could scramble around and pick them up. These small orchards were not so well cultivated, weeded, and smoothed as those of large growers, so picking was harder and slower; nor were the small farmers so eager to make things easy and pleasant for the workers as the large grower had been.

The Sierra Club workers filled their own canteens with drinking water and carried them to the fields. Sometimes the farmers brought around cool drinks. They appeared surprised that the women would really *work*. Women found the 15-pound buckets supplied by farmers too heavy and usually took smaller ones of their own, holding about 7 pounds. Toilet facilities, on many square miles of orchards, were nonexistent.

The camp was open 6 weeks. Members came and went, and in the end both the farmers and the workers were pleased with the service rendered, though the amounts earned were not large.

FOOD

The camps furnished a hot breakfast, usually put up lunches during the morning and sent them out to the workers, and gave them their chief meal at night. The two company camps brought their workers in to a hearty meal at noon, consisting (at the camp visited by the Women's Bureau agent in February) of soup, meat, potatoes, two vegetables, bread and butter, tea, coffee, milk, and choice of two kinds of dessert. This camp fed a large number of men workers from the same kitchen. The camp furnished a hearty supper with meat. The officials of this company said that if food was curtailed they found their workers' production falling off. All the food used was raised on the farm, but the company said the \$1.25 a day did not pay the cost of board. This and some other camps became known for their good food and attracted recruits, who chose camps with good living conditions if they could. Occasionally there was complaint about insufficient food and there is no doubt but that it takes experience to gage the appetites of vigorous farm workers, whether men or women.

ATTITUDE OF FARMERS TOWARD NONFARM WOMEN

The attitude of the farmers who employed women—those actually interviewed and those whose feelings were reported by workers, camp sponsors, WLA leaders, and farm-labor placement officers—did not differ much from that of the farmers in the North Atlantic region.

In general, they were surprised and pleased at the ability of the women to "catch on" and to do really good work. There was expressed several times the opinion that these women were much more careful about their work, did not put leaves or bruised or over-ripe fruit into their boxes, were "nicer" about their work than the boys or ordinary migrants. (This was said also in the canneries.) Many farmers said that in 1942 and 1943 they did not know how they could have got their crops in without the women and children.

Farmers and camp directors often expressed the idea that while the women worked hard in the morning they eased up after they knew they had earned enough to cover their board. (This was said of camp workers.) On the other hand, the largest employer of women, who paid them the same wage as men, expressed the keenest satisfaction with their work and ability and said that as far as he was concerned they were there to stay if they wanted to. His foreman said, "The women here come out to work. The quality of their work is very good. After a few weeks the nonfarm women are as good as regular women agricultural workers. They work right along, don't fool, catch on quickly."

Another expression of opinion was that "the women don't do so well as men when they get on tall ladders, and the effort will be to use women for ground and short-ladder work."

When all was said and done, however, there was no question but that farmers as a whole in 1943 preferred their regular migratory and local workers, and failing them the Mexicans imported from Mexico, and even prisoners of war, to the inexperienced nonfarm women. Those who had employed women felt differently, and some expressions of opinion related by the WLA leader in her report are quoted here:

San Joaquin County:

"In the packing shed, in the sorting and grading of potatoes and other products, women are superior to men. In onions the women seem to grasp and understand the work better than the men and are faster with their hands. In the field the women saved the crop, for which I had a Government contract, though it was hard work and women shouldn't have to do it. A woman takes more pains, takes pride in her work, and she is very cooperative, does what she is told and doesn't argue. The usual men workers don't care about the quality of the work."

Sonoma County:

"We couldn't have harvested our crop without these women. They have saved my crop (pears) from the picking through the drying process. I certainly hope the camp is here next year."

Contra Costa County:

"Due to the shortage of labor last year, we lost \$15,000 on our walnut crop. This year we will not lose any of the crop. The women are picking cleaner than any group that ever worked for us. The spirit of the women is excellent. I am sure you sent us the choicest women. We sincerely appreciate their help."

Contra Costa County:

"Last year the food losses in Contra Costa County, due to labor shortage, were heavy. This year we anticipate none. We appreciate the fine contribution the women have made and feel that they have aided all the farmers in Contra Costa County by their specific contribution to the harvest in the San Ramon Valley."

Fresno County:

"The women have harvested my large crop of Thompson seedless grapes. They picked, turned, and rolled quickly and efficiently. I am well pleased with the results."

Orange County:

"For the past 8 or 9 months we have been using a crew of women as lemon pickers. Their work has proved very satisfactory on the whole and I would

estimate that they can put out just about three-fourths as much as men. We have used them only for 5 days a week and 8 hours a day."

Kern County:

"We have a camp of 200 women at Delano and a camp of 150 women at Di Giorgio Farms. The women are used in all sorts of work, such as harvesting plums, grapes, and so forth. The women do excellent work. Volunteer labor was satisfactory in saving a large portion of many of our crops. We believe that this type of labor is successful, and that the use of such labor is essential to the saving of a large part of California's crops."

PART IV.—OREGON'S USE OF WOMEN

OREGON AGRICULTURE

The great variety in types of farming in Oregon, due to the diversity of soil and climate found in the State, makes a demand for practically every kind of labor, from the berry pickers in the western part of the State to the grain-harvest crews in the eastern. Almost every sort of fruit (except citrus) that grows anywhere in the United States grows in Oregon, with the pear, the sweet cherry, the apple, and the prune the most important fruit crops. While some of the tree fruit grown is sold as "green fruit" (that is, not to be processed) the bulk of the fruit and berry crop is processed—canned, frozen, or dehydrated, and shipped all over the world.

Berries are grown extensively and in great variety—strawberries, raspberries, boysenberries, youngberries, loganberries, blueberries, gooseberries, and cranberries.

More hops are grown in Oregon than in any other State. Both English walnuts and filberts are grown, the State ranking first in filberts and second only to California in walnuts.

Almost every kind of vegetable is raised commercially. Beans are important, as are peas, and both are primarily for the canneries. Potatoes and sugar beets are grown in large quantities in a few areas. Oregon's dairy industry extends through western Oregon and the great Willamette Valley. Some of the sugar-beet crops are harvested particularly in the west and coastal counties. All these, with the big grain ranches in the eastern part of the State and the very important sheep- and cattle-raising business in the east-central part, which is not suited to crops, involve practically every kind of farming. Up to the time of the present war, agriculture and lumber were the principal sources of wealth and employment in the State.

LABOR REQUIREMENTS IN OREGON

The farms of western Oregon are described by the farm-labor supervisor of the Extension Service as being similar to New England farms in size and diversity. There are many family-size farms, operated chiefly by the owner and his family, with extra help needed principally at harvest time. "One-man" fruit farms of 5, 10, and 15 acres, where everything but harvesting can be done by the owner, are common. From 1929 to 1941, harvesting was done by the migratory labor that came up from California, "following the fruit," either specializing in certain crops (as cherry pickers) or simply moving

north as the season advanced. It is estimated that Oregon always needed 40,000 harvest hands over and above the regular workers.

In 1941 the shortage of migrants began to be noticed, many of them having found more permanent and better-paying work in Pacific coast shipyards and aircraft plants. When the migrants did not appear, the farm placement director of the USES, the Government agency then in charge of farm labor, decided that responsibility would have to be put on "the home folks," stating later that "had it not been for the women and children we should have been in a mess."

In 1942 the use of women and children for harvesting had become prevalent, and much publicity was given to the need of having the help of every man, woman, and youth who could come out and help with the harvests. This they did with a fine spirit. In Oregon there was no women's organization that had taken special initiative in interesting women in farm work. The needs were made known through press, radio, and from public platforms, and thousands of women responded.

THE 1943 PROGRAM

In April 1943, with the provision by the Congress of a farm-labor appropriation, Oregon, like some other States, drew up a contract with the USES to recruit and place farm labor. The Extension Service employed State and county personnel for recruitment, training, and supervising the workers and appointed one to three farm-labor assistants in every county. In many cases one of these was a woman—a school principal or a teacher—who helped in recruiting women and children. It should be remembered that by far the greater part of the harvesters recruited were school children and more attention was given to their recruitment and placing than to that of women. It was not that women were not wanted; they were urged to come out for harvest work, but they were considered able to make their own plans and look after themselves. Then, too, the need of women workers in the canneries was fully as pressing as the need for farm workers, and an active campaign was put on to get women to take care of the fruit as it came to the canneries and packing houses. Fruit once picked cannot be held long, and the work at the canneries was just as essential as that in the fields. The two jobs must go along together and the balance must be kept between help to harvest and help to process important foods.

Oregon also asked for Mexican labor under the contract with the Mexican Government. As a result, Mexicans were assigned to the State to increase the farm-labor force. This, and the fact that many of the crops were below normal in 1943, eased the emergency considerably. Nevertheless, the employment of women for farm work was becoming increasingly common in 1943 in Oregon.

THE WOMEN WHO WORKED

In a State like Oregon, most of the population of the small towns, and many in the cities, have an agricultural background. Great numbers have parents or relatives or friends living on farms. When the emergency call went out for everyone who could do so to come out and help with crop harvesting the townspeople not only knew what it

meant but knew how to do the work. Many small-town women and women on small farms had been in the habit of helping to harvest various crops when they had time as an additional source of income. Most of these were housewives; others worked in the various jobs of any small town. Often women with children went for such work as berry picking. Sometimes whole families went. The girls of school age usually went out with the "platoons" of school children, which by 1943 had developed into efficient youth groups. They worked under leadership so well organized that it increased production considerably, to the great satisfaction of employers. Many teachers went as platoon leaders, supervising children's work.

In addition to all the town and city women who had some knowledge of agriculture, many women with no farm experience went out. These included homemakers and business and professional women on their week ends or during vacations. The women employees of the Statehouse and various other State offices gave generously of their Saturday afternoons, Sundays, and vacations. Women and men inmates of State institutions also were sent out under supervision and did excellent work.

At the beginning of the bean harvest, the farm-labor assistants went to the Governor and asked permission to recruit 50 Statehouse employees to pick beans. As many as 150 responded and went out to pick beans from 5:30 to 7:30 in the evenings, also on Saturdays and Sundays. Around Salem alone 5,000 bean pickers were needed.

WORK DONE BY WOMEN

There are certain jobs ordinarily delegated to women and often given the name of "women's and children's jobs." They are, unfortunately, likely to be jobs with the lowest earning possibilities. Whether that is the reason they are "women's and children's jobs," or whether they are natural jobs for women and children, is of little importance. Such jobs employed the greatest number of women.

Bean picking.—Bean picking ranked first in Oregon in the number of pickers needed. From June through October, with the peak in August, nearly 6,000 placements of women as bean pickers were made; probably many of whom there was no record went into the same work. It requires little skill, but involves continuous bending over (unless picking pole beans) and is monotonous.

Pickers fill baskets and empty them into bags, which are weighed and marked with pickers' numbers. There are huge acreages of beans, and in one area alone 10,000 pickers were wanted.

Hop picking.—In 1943 Oregon produced over 50 percent of the United States output of hops, growing some 17,000 acres. This crop required between 50,000 and 75,000 pickers in August and September. The USES reported about 5,200 placements of women, but most pickers got their own jobs. (When it is known that there are more jobs than workers, few workers take the time to go to an employment office.) Two persons pick a row together, one on each side. A good picker uses both hands, keeping her basket right under the hops being picked. The picking baskets are large, holding 25 pounds, and are dragged along the row until filled, then emptied into a large basket. Leaves must be kept out of the baskets and hops must not be dropped on the ground.

Berry picking.—The berry pickers gathered all varieties of berries—strawberries, loganberries, boysenberries, youngberries, blackberries, red raspberries, and blackcaps. Strawberries, though having a smaller acreage than before the war when labor was plentiful and cheap, are still an important berry crop. Picking strawberries is hard work, as it requires constant stooping and careful handling of the fruit. One can *pick fewer and earn less* than in any other berry picking except possibly red raspberries. At one area where a count was made, 468 of 534 pickers were women and children and 66 were older men. About 3,700 placements of women as berry pickers were reported by the USES.

Cranberries were picked almost entirely by women and children. All are picked by hand, as rakes are believed to injure the vines and fruit and do not pick clean.

Cherries.—Cherry picking, which requires the use of ladders, is often considered not suitable for women and children. Yet due to the anticipated shortage of men, Oregon decided that children of the platoon groups were capable of learning to put up ladders and to pick the cherries. Ladders (three-legged and from 8 to 16 feet high) must be put up so that they will not hurt the trees and will be close to the fruit. Cherries are picked into 8-quart buckets, which are provided with hooks for hanging on branches or ladders. When buckets are full, pickers go down and empty them into lug boxes. There is a definite technique in picking sweet cherries so as not to break the spurs. This takes time to learn. Sometimes when cherry trees are very tall, men pick the tops from high ladders, being paid an hourly rate, and women and children pick the lower branches.

Cherry pickers consider themselves specialists. Cherries for eating or brining are picked just as they begin to show color, before fully ripe, but cherries for the canneries are picked when ripe, and therefore have to be handled quickly and with care.

Last year there were many migratory workers in the section of Oregon along the Columbia River and in the region around Salem, which alone needed 5,000 pickers. Because of a light crop in California, the migratory pickers reached Oregon before they were needed and waited for the crop. As a result, inexperienced women and children were not used to any great extent.

Apricots and peaches follow the cherries, but professional cherry pickers do not stay for these harvests. Both of these were light crops in Oregon as in California, and while some women picked and thinned fruit, the numbers were not large.

Apples and pears.—In the Hood River Valley and other orchard sections along the Columbia River the apple and pear crops were below normal. Many migratory workers helped with the harvesting of apple and pear crops. Many local women also assisted with this harvest. Various growers had camps or camp sites where workers put up their own tents or trailers. Mexican nationals also were there for fruit picking and were satisfactory. In the Hood River area three buses a day were run from The Dalles to the orchards, carrying women and platoon children. These groups were taken to the young orchards where the trees were smaller and there was not so much ladder work. An Extension Service official said the objection of farmers to having women on tree crops was the moving of ladders, but he could not say that it was justified. The canvas apple-picking

half-bushel bags were considered too heavy (24–25 lbs. when full) for women to use on ladders. These canvas bags, hung from the shoulders and fastened around the waist with webbing straps, are used universally in the West. In the East, however, one-half bushel and one-fourth-bushel baskets or sacks, with an iron hook to hang on limbs while picking, are generally used. One-half-bushel baskets weigh the same as sacks.

Prunes, English walnuts, and filberts were other crops employing large numbers of women harvesters.

Dairy work.—Farmers in Oregon, as in California, were unwilling to employ women in dairy work, and did not believe women could do such work. Once in a while they would take a married couple. At a meeting of dairymen (of whom two were women) called by the YWCA General Secretary to discuss the possibilities of employing women, there was a stone wall of opposition. Besides the belief that women could not do the work, the housing of women workers was a problem that the dairymen were not interested in trying to solve.

The Extension Service held a training course at the State College at Corvallis, at which 5 women and 6 coeds were trained for dairy work.

Platoon leaders.—One job for which nonfarm women were used was that of supervising school children. Oregon school and farm authorities had realized that young workers are much more effective when working in rather small groups under the supervision of a responsible and trained adult.

Women were sought for these jobs. Often they were teachers, members of parent-teacher associations, or mothers of children going out. These platoon leaders were paid by the farmers a dollar an hour. They not only watched the work of the children, saw that they kept at work, but on occasion drove the buses. The platoon children generally worked 6 or 7 hours, and these hours suited better the women with home responsibilities who could not go out for 8 or 9 hours plus time consumed in transportation.

Other farm work.—Nonfarm women undoubtedly were employed in greater numbers than ever before. In the seasonal-crop harvests, the percentage of women and youth is constantly increasing and that of men decreasing. Women are doing new jobs in agriculture all the time. A girl taxi driver spoke of having worked at picking up brush in the orchards. Other girls drove trucks in the wheat fields. A good many worked on the peppermint farms, where peppermint is grown to be distilled for medicinal or cooking uses. Some were employed in the pruning and tying of berry canes; in the cultivation of vegetables; in training hops, in haying, in helping (rarely) with combines or pea viners, or in tractor driving. It is not possible to say how many nonfarm women worked nor how varied were the jobs.

EARNINGS

Many times, in inquiries about women's earnings, the sum mentioned was the amount a regular migratory worker could earn. The effort here is to show, instead, what the inexperienced, nonfarm women earned.

Hourly rates reported were from 60 to 75 cents. More may have been paid to one who knew her job. But the nonfarm harvest workers

were seldom paid hourly rates on any job that could have a piece rate. The inexperienced worker went in at the piece rates for regular workers and could not equal the professional in production, though she was generally regarded as a more careful worker.

Bean picking paid $2\frac{1}{4}$ cents a pound, with $\frac{1}{4}$ -cent bonus for those remaining throughout the season. One valuable record showed that the average amount picked by adult women was around 190 pounds a day, yielding about \$3.75 a day (or only 2 cents a pound) as average earnings for all women workers in an 8.3-hour day. It is not known, however, how many of these women were experienced. At a camp set up for migrant or other bean pickers near the coast, the WLA leader reported that the women were not satisfied with their earnings and would not stay. Few earned as much as \$2 a day. What factors brought those earnings down is not known. Another estimate for women was \$3 a day.

Strawberries and other berries.—Few migrants nowadays go to Oregon to pick strawberries. More berries were picked by children than by anyone else, and the women who picked generally had seasons of experience. The piece rate was 3 to 4 cents a pound. Women with several children often picked as a family. A condition that seems not quite fair in berry picking is that the piece rate is about the same for all berries (except raspberries, that pay a cent more) though a worker can pick 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ times as many boysenberries, youngberries, or loganberries in a given time as she can strawberries or raspberries.

Children were reported as earning less than \$1.50 a day. Nonfarm women earned more but "not very much more." One woman office worker said she earned 75 cents in half a day. A city man and wife said they earned \$5 together in a day at picking raspberries; they worked hard but did not have good picking. Of course there were rapid pickers who made more, especially if they had good picking. Experienced adults earned \$4.25 a day.

Cherries.—In 1943 cherries paid 3 cents a pound. That is a big increase over the three-fourths of a cent or one cent paid before the war. Now a top-notch professional cherry picker can earn, so the county agent reported, \$18 to \$20 a day; an average man picker, \$12 to \$14 a day; a good man, inexperienced, \$6 to \$8 a day. There was no report on nonfarm women, but cherry pickers were earning "good money."

Prunes paid 15, 20, and 26 cents a lug or field box.

Walnuts and filberts paid $11\frac{1}{2}$ cents and 3 cents a pound, respectively.

Peaches.—Women who worked in the peach orchards got good pay, but not many were needed. Those who thinned fruit from the ground got 65 cents an hour, those who thinned from ladders 95 cents. They worked an 8- or 9-hour day, the latter yielding earnings of \$5.85 or \$8.55 according to job.

Pears.—The piece rate for picking Bartlett pears in Oregon was 15 cents a 40-pound box. One grower had Mexicans who were paid 70 cents an hour and picked about 70 boxes in a 7-hour day, but when they were put on piece work production jumped to 120 boxes a day. Nonfarm women should have earned \$4 and \$6 a day. Some earned more.

Apples.—Apple picking, like everything else, has gone up in cost. In 1943 the piece rate was 12 to 15 cents a box (in the 30's it had been as low as $3\frac{1}{2}$ cents). A good many nonfarm women picked, and

could earn \$5 to \$8 a day. An expert professional man picker, it was said, could pick 200 boxes in 7 hours. That is close to a box every 2 minutes, an almost incredible speed that few if any men could keep up.

Earnings in Other Farm Work.

What nonfarm women earned in other farm jobs was difficult to ascertain. Hourly rates were 60 to 95 cents. Girl truck drivers got \$9 a day, and no doubt many individuals, in jobs they found for themselves, got higher pay than ever before.

Here, as in California, there were no definite data on the earnings of nonfarm women. The head of the Department of Farm Management had prepared the only factual material yet found on the amount of work done by women and youths of various age groups, with and without experience.

HOURS

The regular working day on farms in Oregon was reported to be 10 hours. It is probable that the nonfarm women who went out to harvest crops did not ordinarily work more than 8 or 9 hours. In some jobs, as cherry picking, when the heat was intense in the afternoon (100°), the pickers' work began at 5 a. m. and stopped by noon. In hops, 6 hours was given as the usual day. As the women had to be conveyed to the job every day and brought back at night, that added from 1 to 2 hours to their day. Also, a complaint frequently registered was that the farmer, after the harvest workers stopped for the day, still had to do his chores before he could drive the workers back, during which time the women and children had to sit around and wait, so their arrival at home might be delayed till 8 o'clock or later. Where special buses or private cars were used, this trouble did not exist.

Rest and Lunch Periods.

There were no designated rest periods. Whether or not a woman or girl paused to rest depended on how she felt or how anxious she was to earn as much as possible. As far as could be learned, there was no fixed hour or amount of time for lunch. In the study made by Dr. Mumford of 19 farms and 704 pickers, the time taken for lunch was 15 to 30 minutes. Few if any piece workers would take the one hour universally recommended for women doing hard physical work.

DRINKING WATER

Where children, especially platoon groups, were sent out under the authority of the farm-labor program of the Extension Service and the schools, it was required that the farmers have a supply of pure drinking water available for them. As the children would not use individual paper cups, a clean barrel, with a spigot at the bottom, with the barrel placed on a box and tilted up, was reported as one sort of home-made bubble fountain that was effective. Here again, since it was impossible to visit the workers on the job at the time of the survey, it cannot be stated how carefully the precautions with regard to safe drinking water were carried out, but observation and reports

indicated that here, as in almost every State visited in the Women's Bureau study, much remains to be done to insure a supply of good drinking water for workers in the fields.

SANITARY CONDITIONS

The sanitary conditions in the fields were reported as "improving," but without doubt there is room for much more improvement. The fact that the platoon children would not be sent out unless there were toilets in the field implies that many had no such facilities, as was indeed the case. Where there were toilets they generally were simple board structures, unroofed and unscreened. One camp set up for bean pickers (about 400) had "two toilets for men and two for women," though 95 percent of the workers were women and children. No standards were set up for women over 18 years of age.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation was reported as one of the chief difficulties. For short hauls farmers sent their trucks to cities or towns for workers. Where they did not have trucks available, or where the workers were to be distributed to several farms, school buses often were used, the cost of gasoline and driver being paid by the farmers. The children and adult workers generally paid their own transportation costs. Sometimes a woman had a car and could bring 5 or 6 workers with her.

INSURANCE

There were no insurance provisions for women workers, except as individual growers might so provide.

PART V.—WASHINGTON'S USE OF WOMEN

WASHINGTON AGRICULTURE

Like Oregon, Washington before the war was a State whose principal industries were agriculture and lumber. From the beginning of the war, shipyards and airplane factories along the coast and other war industries have offered new opportunities to every sort of worker, making great inroads into farm labor, and this, of course, in addition to the draft. Washington leads the United States in the production of apples, and produces more pears than any other State but California and more cherries than any other but Michigan.⁴ It ranks third in the production of asparagus, fourth in the production of cranberries.

In the rich farming section of the west are grown strawberries, red raspberries and blackberries, some loganberries, sweet and sour cherries, and Italian prunes.

Beans, carrots, beets, and potatoes all are important vegetable crops. These and many others of less importance are grown along the fertile valleys of the west coast and in the southern part of the State.

⁴ Agricultural Statistics, 1942, Department of Agriculture, pp. 224, 234, 257.

In the production of cannery peas, Washington ranks fourth in the United States. In recent years sugar beets have been grown to some extent.

The eastern part of the State is given over chiefly to wheat and other small grains, some cattle ranches, and such crops as hay, alfalfa, and cannery peas that can be taken care of chiefly by machinery.

LABOR DEMANDS

All the crops but those requiring heavy machinery could use large numbers of women as substitutes for men, and more and more women are being so used. The farms are for the most part small. There are many berry farms of 5, 10, or 15 acres, and other small-fruit farms of 20 to 30 acres. One man with the help of his family can take care of such farms except during harvesting season.

In the years of depression and before the war, the small farmers had not been able to make much money in berries and many either sold out or went into defense industries when the chance offered; so while in earlier years they had a much larger berry acreage and large groups of migratory workers, for the last few years migrants have not come, and more and more dependence has had to be placed on local women and children for harvesting.

Beans were the crop that produced an acute labor demand in 1943. Beans must be picked the day they are ripe or they get too large. Vines have to be gone over several times. Given a rain followed by a few warm days and the picking crisis becomes acute. Here again, women and children were called on for much of the harvest work.

The Yakima Valley, one of the richest agricultural sections of the United States, is the center of the farm-labor demand, for both fruits and hops. The Wenatchee Valley is the second great fruit section. Ordinarily thousands of migrants have come here annually for the fruit and hop picking. As migrants went into war industries, so also did many of the local residents who had lacked employment in the off season for agriculture. The supply became short not only of harvesters but of labor for the spring work of pruning, thinning, and spraying the orchards. Sugar-beet fields needed workers. Asparagus had to be cut, hops trained, and in the fall the harvesting made its heavy labor demands.

THE DEMAND IN 1943

In 1943 the program of the USES for recruiting farm labor and utilizing nonfarm workers was under way when the Extension Service was made the agency for handling farm labor. A contract was made between the USES and the Extension Service whereby the latter did the recruiting and the former the placing in 1943. The shortage of farm labor had become apparent in 1941. In 1942 the acute shortage had caused alarm and State-wide plans were under way in 1942-43. The Governor had appointed an emergency committee under the State Secretary of Agriculture, with a representative from the USES and an executive secretary. Chambers of commerce had appointed committees, the various cities had women's committees, all working to get more farm labor. The concentration of effort was, however, on school

children for harvest work. They were available in large numbers, and could easily be directed into farm work as their war effort. Competing with agriculture for women workers were the huge canning industry and the fruit-packing houses. Their peaks come at about the same time as the harvest peaks, and the bigger the fruit and vegetable crops the more workers are needed to see that all this produce is taken care of and not allowed to spoil. That is something every homemaker can understand. So at the same time that women were being sought for harvest work there was a high-powered publicity campaign going on to get women to come into the canneries. The need was so great that women could come for any time they chose. An evening shift of 4 hours—morning or afternoon shifts—“come any time as long as you come.” Women were sought by press, radio, sound machine, telephone calls, and personally written appeals. While enough women responded to take care of the fruit, many more could have been used to advantage.

Meantime, the Extension Service, through its WLA leader, the assistant farm-labor supervisor, was planning a State-wide campaign for women for the essential farm work. Quoting from her report—

The State was classified with 12 critical labor-shortage counties which needed additional cooperation and supervision to fulfil the requirements during the seasonal peak load of labor demands. Of these counties, 6 were served by city farm-labor committees who worked in cooperation with the county farm-labor committees. These city committees had been established before the Extension Service was delegated the farm-labor responsibility. It seemed advisable, to avoid confusion, to work out a State-wide program that would fit in with these committees already established and having women's programs well under way.

Cities having women's organizations in operation from which an active WLA program was carried out in the State:

Yakima—Food-for-Victory Program.

Seattle—Women Victory Volunteers.

Wenatchee—Victory Crop Volunteers.

Tacoma—Women's Victory Volunteers.

Spokane—The Victory Crop Corps.

Mount Vernon-Skagit—Victory Harvest Campaign for Victory Harvest.

These volunteer committees carried out an effective recruitment program and gave full cooperation to the State farm-labor staff. The recruitment was timed to fill the needs of the State, county, and local community seasonal-crop peak-load requirements. Publicity laid emphasis on recruitment needs as specified by the county agent and his county farm-labor committees. This publicity invoked three newspapers and radio and local telephone volunteer committees.

State-wide recruitment for peak loads was accomplished by various organizations, such as the State Federated Women's Clubs, the Business and Professional Clubs, the Altrusa and Zonta Clubs, the State Department of Education, the Federal Works Agency, and so forth. These assisted in giving State-wide and local support to the farm-labor program. These organizations were very responsive to the program and pledged support in the recruitment and development of the farm-labor program in local communities for the harvesting of farm crops.

During the early part of September, the colleges and universities in the State were visited for the recruitment of students to be used in acute emergencies in the harvesting of the apple crop of the State. In some of the colleges and universities the members of the student body set up standard working conditions they wanted established before they were willing to work in the apple harvest. The majority of these requirements were reasonable and acceptable to the growers. However, some of the requirements needed adjusting on the part of the grower as well as in the usage of this emergency labor.

An educational training program was planned to assist in developing a better understanding of the job needed to be done and in improving attitudes toward the problem as a whole. The educational program was planned to be presented

to the student body of each college and university 3 or 4 days before workers were called on for the emergency job.

Between 1,200 and 1,500 students volunteered to serve in this emergency requirement, the college and university faculty members pledging their full cooperation.

The weather conditions, volunteer help in cities and local communities, and the assistance of Mexican workers were equal to the labor-peak load, so the emergency labor supply was not needed in that year. The student-body members and faculty members of these colleges and universities were sent letters of appreciation for their cooperation and interest in helping to meet farm-labor program requirements.

THE WOMEN WHO WORKED

The report of the WLA leader sums up the types of nonfarm women who worked in the harvest as follows:

Women of many professions, such as teachers, clerks, stenographers, librarians, waitresses, nurses, homemakers, instructors in colleges, lawyers, technicians, and so forth, were among the groups in the State of Washington who volunteered their services in helping with the harvesting of crops.

WORK DONE BY WOMEN

The work done by the women of Washington was similar to that of California and Oregon. Chiefly it was harvesting fruit, berry, and vegetable crops. It was practically all done on a day-haul basis.

In the Spokane Valley women did an excellent job assisting in the harvesting of fruit, the cane berries, and vegetable truck crops. The Victory Crop Corps of Women were very conscientious workers. They were praised highly by the farm folk as well as by the Extension Service.

The apple crop of Washington State, one of its major crops, was harvested by the combined efforts of young people, men, and women. In some sections of the Chelan County area nearly 50 percent of the apple crop was picked and packed by women.

Few women were working on year-round jobs on large poultry farms. Several worked on dairy farms as helpers in the milk houses and the delivery of milk. Two women served in the capacity of Dairy Herd Improvement Association testers in the State.

As might be expected, women did more orchard work here than in other States. They thinned soft fruit and apples. They even sprayed orchards. One woman was observed spraying apples from a hose attached to a laid-down pipe system as casually as a city woman might water a lawn. (It is, none the less, a hard dirty job.) A woman who managed her own apple, pear, and asparagus farm of about 140 acres said that her foreman's wife drove the big John Deere tractor with a 600-gallon spray rig for spraying her orchards, which were on hilly ground, and also entirely managed the asparagus fields, hiring the pickers, supervising the sorting, and doing the selling. Naturally, she had much farm knowledge and experience, but took active part in all this work only in the war emergency.

Supervisors.—In Washington as elsewhere, a really important job for women that it was impossible to find enough women to take was the supervising of groups of children who went out on day haul or from the youth camps. It has been found, in every State that uses children, that only when well supervised is the work they do satisfactory.

Someone is needed not only to take instruction from the farmer as to what he wants done but to see that the children pick fruit properly without damaging the trees and do not indulge in fruit fights.

Supervisors are needed also to look after the children's interests and see that they get a fair deal and considerate treatment. Many children went out who would not ordinarily be sent alone for such work, and were "bossed" by men who little understood the handling of youngsters. If children are to be used, attention must be given to good organization and supervision and to the education of the farmers as well. A case in point reported by a berry grower was that of a neighboring grower who insisted that the children fill the berry baskets heaping full, instead of level as they must be for shipping. The grower then skimmed off the extra mound and got several crates of berries during the day's pick for which he paid nothing.

The Extension Service would gladly have arranged for the training of supervisors had the need been recognized and candidates secured in advance of the need. In fact it did, in at least Spokane and Tacoma, have such an afternoon and evening session.

The better supervisors were those who had had experience with groups of children, such as mothers, teachers, scout leaders, or camp counselors.

EARNINGS ⁵

Wage rates for experienced women were 60 cents, 75 cents, and even \$1 an hour. But these rates were not paid to inexperienced non-farm women, who worked for the most part at piece rates and did not, generally speaking, earn large amounts. Their speed, concentration, and endurance, if they worked for occasional days only, were not up to the high-pressure work rate necessary to earn high pay.

Berries.—Berry pickers were paid \$0.90 to \$1.25 a crate of 24 pint boxes. (In depression years the rate was 40 cents or 50 cents, and 70 cents was considered good pay.) "A good woman picker in an 8- or 9-hour day should pick 3 to 4 crates." Yet one man volunteer said he made only \$1.50 in one day picking raspberries, though he should have made \$5 if the picking had been good. Nowhere were production records available, or any records of earnings.

Berry pickers have traditionally been family groups with several children, all of whom can pick. Regular berry pickers usually work long days, starting sometimes as early as 4 a. m. and working until dark, in order to earn as much as possible. From the information obtainable it appears that less money was earned at berry picking than at any other job.

Apple picking.—Here again piece rates had gone up. One man said he remembers when 3 cents a box was the going price. In 1942, 6 and 7 cents a box was paid; in 1943, 10 cents was the prevailing rate and 15 cents was paid in some cases. Expert apple pickers (men) could earn \$18 to \$20 a day; Mexican greenhorns, \$6 to \$8. Women were reported to earn 60 percent as much as men, but here again no production records were available. On that basis the inexperienced nonfarm

⁵ In general, the cooperating committee organizations, even the farm-labor supervisors and USES, had nothing to say about rates of pay or earnings. As they were practically the only persons who could be consulted during the off season in which this survey was made, earnings data for nonfarm women are incomplete and unsatisfactory.

women might have earned \$3 to \$5 a day. A Washington University official reporting on the apple-picking work in 1943 said that the typical girl student came back with \$1.50 or \$2 over and above her expenses for 4 days (for railroad fare and board these were from \$15 to \$17), so they may have earned \$16 to \$20 in 4 days, or \$4 to \$5 a day.

Beans.—It was hard to find out what nonfarm women earned on beans. One committeewoman said they could earn \$2 a day easily, and that many earned \$5. (Whether or not they had had previous experience was not known, nor how long they worked.)

HOURS

Here again, in the matter of hours worked, there were few or no records. There were no definite hours, and since the work was all at piece rates many workers varied their hours to suit their own feelings or abilities. Supervisors who went out in farmers' trucks with children on day haul often were picked up as early as 6:30 a. m. and children were expected to be returned in 8 hours. Occasionally, the drive home was after the farmer had finished his chores, though the women and children might have stopped work some time before. Those who went in their own cars may have made it a 6- or 7-hour day.

The regular migrants and the local people who came in on their own initiative worked long hours. In the Puyallup Valley, it was said, people put in as much as 12, 14, and 15 hours a day. This is a large berry-growing region. The usual day for full-time nonfarm workers might be said to be 9 to 10 hours.

Rest periods.—No rest periods for adult women workers were reported or even mentioned anywhere. Women were considered able to make their own arrangements with the farmers, and to take rest if they needed it.

SANITATION

Drinking water.—From all information obtained, it would seem that the matter of pure, clean drinking water at working places needed considerable attention. The customary method was to take water out in a milk can. Children were supposed to bring their own cups, but few did so. The same doubtless was true of women, as has been the general experience. An effort was made to have State inspectors pass on the water at farms to which camp children were sent, but there were so many farms and so few inspectors that all the farms could not be covered.

Sanitary arrangements.—At the farms where women and children day workers were employed, these were reported generally as unsatisfactory. Often only a board privy, unroofed and unscreened, served everyone. In some cases there was no provision at all.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

As there were no camps for women there were no requirements as to physical fitness. Women made their own decisions as to whether or

not they were physically able to do the work. In the one camp for youth, the doctor's certificate was waived, not because it was considered unnecessary but because of difficulties in securing it.

Besides such usual farm hazards as falls, sunburn, insect bites, and so forth, there was mention by some women apple pickers of unpleasant effects of the heavy spray that covered the apples. They said it dried out their skin, made an irritating dust in the air, and got into their clothes.

PART VI.—CONCLUSIONS

SCREENING OF WORKERS AND FARMERS

During the 1943 season, in spite of a subnormal crop, more women than ever before worked in agriculture in the Pacific Coast States. In California the Extension Service estimated that 15,000 nonfarm volunteer women helped on farms because of the war emergency, and that about half of these were placed through the farm-labor offices. In the two other States, also, thousands of nonfarm women helped with the harvesting.

At time of survey (the early months of 1944) the prospects were that the crops needing women harvesters would be much larger than in the year before. More women would be needed both in the harvests and in the canneries. While the majority needed for harvest work probably would be placed through the farm-labor offices, many were to be recruited through various sponsoring agencies and some would find their own jobs through advertisements and other publicity measures.

A thoughtful and intelligent farmer in Washington said that "volunteers (i. e., inexperienced nonfarm women) should be disillusioned about what harvest work means, and that farmers must be educated to treat their help right." That farmer summed up in a few words what all promoters of the employment of women on farms know must be made clear to recruits, to placement officials, and to farmers.

Too often the women have no idea what the work is going to be like, how hard physically it will be for women whose muscles are soft from lack of physical exercise. That is why young women, fond of sports and athletics, or women who have done work calling for some physical effort, often find it easier to accustom themselves to active farm work than older women or women from sedentary jobs.

It should be a part of the duty of every farm-labor recruitment officer to understand as completely as possible the job for which he or she is recruiting workers, and to explain, equally fully and carefully, just what it means in physical exertion and endurance, so that workers who will stay only a day or two and decide they don't like it may be eliminated in advance.

The farmers should be urged to give their inexperienced women workers more careful explanation and instruction about the work to be done. Good farmers are not always good teachers. Probably the Extension Service Agricultural Agents can do more than anyone else to impress on the farmers the importance of induction, getting groups of farmers together and demonstrating good and bad techniques in starting inexperienced workers on new jobs.

Through its educational functions the Extension Service can do and is doing much to make farmers realize that to succeed with this new type of farm worker they must have patience, courtesy, and kindness and take time to instruct women carefully in the work they are to do. They must not take advantage of women's inexperience by assigning them to bad fields overrun with weeds, or orchards left rough and weedy. They must not expect women to carry heavy boxes long distances, nor must farmers permit mistakes to be made in checking up the amount of work done. Workers at one camp said of an employer, "We always thought he cheated himself every pay day, he kept such careless records"; while another said, "He always cheated the girls, sometimes several dollars." They did not want to be cheated nor to cheat; they wanted just the right pay for the work done.

SANITARY FACILITIES

In all three States, sanitary provisions for field workers were almost universally inadequate, often entirely lacking. As one man said, "Boys take one corner of the field, girls another." This is, perhaps, a matter of education of the farmer and of stipulations from sponsors or placement offices that suitable provision be made if workers are to be supplied. It is doubtful that, if a State passed regulatory measures, there would be any possibility of inspection and enforcement under present conditions. Where women have to work all day or half days in the areas far removed from permanent toilet facilities there should be adequate provision in the field or orchard of portable privies, screened, roofed,⁶ and tight.

WASHING FACILITIES

Facilities for washing should be provided near where the workers eat lunch. In the climate of the west coast during the months in which rain never falls, an outdoor wash bench with basins, soap, water, and paper towels would be adequate and inexpensive. Few if any farmers eat their dinners without the refreshment of washing hands and face. Yet few provide such opportunity for their harvest workers. A Red Cross first-aid kit should be supplied in the fields and someone who is a qualified first-aider should be on hand and known to the workers as the person to go to with cuts, scratches, and other minor injuries.

DRINKING WATER IN FIELDS

Except for Oregon's tipped-up barrel with a spigot, which afforded a sort of home-made bubble fountain, nothing was heard of any effort to provide clean or cooled drinking water in a region where the heat during much of the harvest is terrific—90° to 100° or more, many times. In some cases water was carried to fields in receptacles from which workers drank or the workers used a common cup unless they took their own. This is a practice that should be remedied. Desert water bags, ollas, and canteens are inexpensive and practical, with individual paper cups, as are large thermos cans, like milk cans, with a faucet.

⁶ If rain-proof roofs are not needed, screened roofs are.

HOURS

Throughout all these States a working day of 9 hours, rarely longer and sometimes 8 hours, prevailed for nonfarm women (though not for migrants). Sometimes on special crops the day was shortened. It did appear, however, that where the pay was not an important factor in their service, and where at best the earnings would be small, after women had earned their board there was a tendency to ease up and not work the full day. However, at a camp where earnings over and above board really amounted to something, though women at first asked for an 8-hour day they decided, after the matter had been taken up and practically agreed on, that they would rather work the 9-hour day and get the extra hour's pay. Here, as in the East, women seemed able to work an 8- or a 9-hour day, though there is no information as to output under the two schedules. If women work a 9-hour day they should have a full hour for lunch, which was seldom taken by piece workers. An hour for lunch was reported at two camps where the workers were trucked back to a hot meal, but the hour included transportation. Experience indicates that women's working efficiency in a 9-hour day is increased by a 15-minute period of complete rest and relaxation in mid-morning and mid-afternoon.

Where workers can go to a comfortable spot, wash, and sit in the shade for a leisurely lunch, their after-lunch efficiency will be higher than that of workers who snatch 15 minutes to eat and then go right on working.

In these States the theory that adult women are free agents able to take care of their own working conditions seems in some cases to have had acceptance over the idea that to secure a new group of workers in an industry care must be taken to see that working conditions are such as to attract and hold them. Here again the farmers and all others interested might well consider what has been demonstrated in war industries that have taken women on for work new to them, namely, that a good induction, a thorough understanding of the work to be done and its part in relation to the whole, patient supervision at first, and good working conditions will develop women more quickly and efficiently into valuable workers than the old policy expressed in "throw them in and they'll learn to swim."

PRODUCTION AND EARNINGS

It was very difficult at the time of year when this study was made (February to April 1944) to secure adequate data on women's production or earnings in 1943; particularly for the day workers, who were the overwhelming majority. Some camps that had wage data did not have complete or uniform records. Even to secure the "prevailing rates" on piece work was difficult. Hourly rates often were given, but few of the emergency farm-service women worked at hourly rates. Harvest work was almost entirely piece work.

The wage data given on the foregoing pages, therefore, represent the best that could be secured from sponsors of the adult women's camps, from individual women workers whose reliability was agreed to by the AWVS or the WLA, and from the reports of the WLA leaders of the Extension Service.

They do not represent the earnings of the regular and the migratory farm workers, nor do they represent the large group of more or less experienced volunteers who quite customarily help with harvest work by the day in their own neighborhoods. Rather they are the earnings of women who worked daily, from camps, over periods of from 1 to 6 weeks, of whom some were "green" and others, having worked for several weeks and become accustomed to it, were quite skilled, but all of whom were women who had gone into agriculture as a new venture.

