

Wetback Season Gets Under Way; Border Patrol Ready for Problem

McAllen, Tex.—The wetback season—when Mexican nationals try to sneak across the Rio Grande toward American farm jobs—is on.

The Border Patrol—Once the most hated group of men in the intensely agricultural valley—stands ready to cope with the problem. Patrolmen will work day and night. In cotton fields and industry, as well as on the river, wetbacks will be picked up. Fingerprints for the FBI and—if they have criminal records or are "repeaters"—charged with illegal entry.

In Mexico, an advertising campaign of "no work in Texas" is on to discourage such migration. Officials are pushing the "bracero" program whereby a limited number of Mexicans can be legally processed for temporary

work permits in the United States. Rains in Mexico, boosting that nation's farm activity, also will help hold down the wetback count.

Already patrolmen are picking up wetbacks at better than 300 a month, and the harvesting season has yet to hit its stride. Since 1954, the percentage of pickups at the river has been rising, while pickups of those who have already gotten into jobs here have been fewer.

The Border Patrol appears to have the situation under control. Not so a few years ago, before "Operation 54" caused hatred for the Patrol to hit a peak among farmers, many of whom used wetbacks.

The 1954 Cleanup
In 1954, a separate "task force" of hundreds of patrolmen

moved into the Rio Grande Valley with buses, jeeps, planes and other equipment for finding illegal laborers and shipping them back to Mexico.

Newspaper and radio advertising in two languages told the farmers and the wetbacks that the latter could leave the country voluntarily if they left immediately. Loudspeakers repeated the message in Spanish from planes flying over vegetable and cotton patches.

Within the next 15 days, 170,000 wetbacks walked across bridges to their homeland. An untold number rode taxis, trucks, and buses across. The task force got another 44,875

during the 15-day period.

Through the next month, another 28,000 were trucked, flown, shipped and marched into Mexico. Sixty days later, the task force was dissolved. The emergency which began during World War II labor shortage periods, was over.

It was estimated last month that there were fewer than 500 wetbacks working in the entire Rio Grande Valley.

Angry farmers, left in 1954 with half-picked cotton fields and a labor shortage, displayed an almost unanimous contempt for the Border Patrol. Charges of "Gestapo tactics" and "roughing up" flew.

The charges were never proved to the satisfaction of the Immigration Service. They were never disproved to the satisfaction of the valley's newspapers and farmers. Some resentment still exists.

A Different Type
Recently, the valley Farm Bureau, representing 4,000 farmers, endorsed a resolution to cut the numbers of the Border Patrol. Bureau manager C. B. Ray of Mercedes said the move was motivated only by economy. He said he did not know how much of the resentment was still felt in the valley but that the Patrol "wouldn't win any popularity contests around here."

A former patrolman, James Griffin, a major valley farmer and rancher who was most critical of the Patrol in 1954 when it "made an example of him," said many of the practices he objected to are no longer in use.

Chief Border Patrol Inspector George Harrison, who came here with the task force and stayed to take over the headquarters, said the wetback of today is different from the wetback of a few years ago.

"Those earlier wetbacks were simple, honest people, just looking for work," he explained. "But these days we get only the dregs. Many of them have criminal records. The honest laborer

can come over legally under the bracero program.
The result of the mass clean-up has been a cleaner, quieter valley. Wetback camps no longer breed disease and cause urban blight. Farmers are coming to use bracero labor more and more.

"The bracero is more dependable," said Griffin. "You can teach him how to run equipment, and he will stay with you until the job is done. In the old days, by the time you got a man trained, the Border Patrol would find him and cart him off."



PRINCESS GRACE TAKES A RIDE—Former film star, Grace Kelly, now Princess Grace of Monaco, fastens her "Mae West" just before taking a helicopter ride from the deck of the carrier USS Forrestal. She visited the ship while it was in Monaco's port.

On The Side

By E. V. Durling
(Distributed by King Features Syndicate, Inc.)

Saw Ethel Merman, the Astoria Nightingale, in "Happy Hunting" the other night. She was never better. What Bill Shakespeare said about the "infinite variety" of Cleopatra goes double for Ethel. She has been in more musical hits than any feminine star who has ever shone on Broadway. And I don't except Lillian Russell or Anna Held. Why does La Merman enjoy such success? Well, she's got rhythm plus. Her enunciation is superb. Her timing is perfect. Her sense of humor is exceptional. The top flight lyricists, tunesmiths and writers know when they hitch their wagon to the star yelet Merman, that wagon is bound to go places.

Twins

What's the record weight for twins at birth? That's what a Bronx subscriber asks. She has just become the mother of twin boys. One weighs seven pounds, nine ounces, and the other was eight pounds. She says the people at the hospital considered this unusual but did not know the record. Neither do I. But am checking. Incidentally, the father of these twins is of Irish descent. More proof of our claim that if a girl marries a man of Irish birth or descent her chances of becoming a mother of twins are greatly increased.

Sidelights

One of every 30 inhabitants of New York City is on relief. Of Puerto Ricans now living in New York, one of every 10 is on relief. The name of a barbershop on Broadway, near 36th st. Manhattan, is "Anthony's Tonsorial Studios."

Please Note

It should be kept in mind that when Abraham Lincoln said "all that I am I owe to my angel mother," he was speaking of his stepmother. She was, of course, Sarah Bush Johnston Lincoln, the second wife of Thomas Lincoln.

Longshot

As for longshots, consider the experience of Matthew Hobson, a London laborer. He borrowed two shillings, six pence, the equivalent of about 35 cents, from his landlady and with it won 75,000 pounds, the equivalent of \$210,000, in a football pool. And the money won is tax free. Gambling winnings are not taxed in Great Britain.

Passing By

Greer Garson, titian-tressed Irish beauty, my favorite red-haired actress, Greer in company with all bricketops, especially those of Irish origin can be a little difficult to handle at times. Nevertheless her husband "Buddy" Fogelson, the taciturn Texan, has managed to successfully surmount this frequent obstacle to matrimonial bliss. Mr.

Fogelson has stated that in so doing, he found very helpful our Horses and Women department pamphlet titled "How To Handle A Red-Haired Woman." He also found of some assistance the wife training advice in the report on the views of the stargazers titled "Living with a Libra."

Briefly
Now it is said fingerprints can be forged. That is, the fingerprints of an innocent person can be spread around the scene of a crime by the guilty criminal. A frightening situation. How long can the outstanding money earning power of a film star last? Clark Gable and Gary Cooper, both 56 years old, are earning more money than ever. With percentage of the gross agreements their take from one film can be as high as \$300,000.

Asides

The bust and hip measurements of beauty contest winners vary greatly but the waist measurements are nearly always 24 inches. Call this to the attention of your wife if she is thinking of trying for the Mrs. America title. . . . The title of the next novel of the sensationally successful young French writer, Mlle. Francoise Sagan, is "Dead Eyelids." Some title! Is reminiscent of Gertrude Stein. My favorite quaint title is still that of the mystery story, "The Corpse in The Derby Hat."

ALLIGATOR SERVICE

Princeton, N.J. — Bill Jones of South Orange and Ray Willey of Pittsburgh, Princeton students, report a lively business since starting their Student Alligator Agency, which orders the reptiles from Florida. They say some customers use the alligators to greet unwanted callers and to break dates.

Dead line for Sunday Classified is at noon Saturday

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