

Fruit Growers Clarify Picker Problem Position

(Editor's note: The Fruit Growers League here has taken issue with statements reported by the Mail Tribune's farm editor concerning problems of obtaining a sufficient number of seasonal workers to harvest fruit. The problem was discussed by the farm editor in a column Nov. 1. The Fruit Growers League's statement, which will be published in two installments because of its length, was submitted by Charles E. Henry, president. The first installment appears here.)

The pear industry, as a prominent part of Jackson county agriculture, has all the problems common to farmers plus others due to the intensity of its operation. Of these, one of the most important is the need for a large number of seasonal workers at the same time they are required in adjoining states.

The Family Council

Editor's Note: The Family Council consists of a judge, a psychiatrist, three clergymen, three editors and a women's editor. Each article is a summary of an actual case history. The Council reports on problems that have been dealt with by responsible agencies and counselors.

Gretchen L. - We find we were defrauded by an uncle we trusted.

William L. - My nieces have been misled by troublemakers.

Gretchen L. - My sister and I are in our late twenties. Our parents are dead, but we considered ourselves fortunate to be part of a warm and loving family of aunts, uncles and cousins. We were particularly close to our grandmother, our father's mother, who died two years ago.

But now there's nothing but quarreling and "bad blood" among us and all because of my uncle, my father's brother. When my grandmother died, she left all her property to my sister and me. She knew my uncle was wealthy and didn't need it.

Somehow, though, my uncle and his lawyer convinced us that my grandmother left enormous debts plus a pending lawsuit against her. One of her ex-tenants was suing for \$50,000. They scared us into signing everything over to my uncle. We settled for \$500 each and a few pieces of antique furniture.

Last week we learned that we were duped. The estate was large, the debts were small, the lawsuit was dismissed, and there was plenty left over. Now we hear my uncle is selling my grandmother's holdings to a man who's building a big apartment house.

How could a blood relative, especially one who doesn't need more money, do that to us?

William L. - I feel very badly over this. I have tried to explain to my nieces that I acted in their interests. They would have been saddled with obligations which the estate could not possibly meet.

This rift is the result of their listening to envious but-thinkies. Some old cronies, friends of my mother, have been trying to stir up trouble in our family for years and now they've succeeded.

It's true I sold mother's properties to a builder. But this deal turned up recently, long after I had straightened out Mother's affairs with funds from my own pocket. There were long-standing judgments and liens waiting to be satisfied. And she was one of the landlords the housing inspectors were after for one violation after another. She had just let things pile up.

Even now I'm trying to help her tenants find new apartments at the low rents they can afford and I'm paying their moving expenses. The malicious rumors about my "gold mine" are false.

Gretchen and Elsie should know I have their best interest at heart. Just let them find nice husbands and I'll set them each up with dowries, the way my poor brother would wish. I know that's what my mother had in mind for them.

The Council: This is not the first family to be rent asunder by a dollar sign. But the cleavage seems quite unnecessary and, in view of the carefully nurtured family affection underlying the dispute, easily mended.

Where are the lawyers in this picture? If ever a cold and impartial presentation of facts were called for, it's now. There seems to be a discrepancy in the story as told by each side. Surely, before signing these, these girls must have asked to see the exact details of the estate and knew what they were signing. And even if they were too naive to ask,

the Nov. 1 issue in an article based largely on the experience and ideas of two anonymous pear growers.

If these growers were quoted correctly it is quite apparent that they have had little experience in the recruitment of labor and are not familiar with the state and federal regulations governing its use.

Welcome Opportunity

We welcome the opportunity to correct some of the errors in the article, for it is the concern of the Fruit Growers League, which represents all of the growers, that the impression given might imply the two growers were speaking for the League.

We cannot agree with the farm editor, or his informants, for these reasons:

1) The use of Mexican Nationals is not at the mere option of the orchardists. Public Law 78 requires certification by both the Oregon state employment service and the U.S. department of labor that there are not enough able, willing and qualified domestic workers available to perform the work, before application can be made for recruitment.

Also, no domestic worker, who is "able, willing and qualified" may be denied work so long as Mexican Nationals are on the job. The same law requires that equal wages and working conditions shall be afforded both domestic and national workers. The employer has no choice.

2) The farm labor camp, operated by the Fruit Growers League, is located near the Medford airport, just 1.8 miles north of the city limits. It is not at White City as stated in the article. This camp consists of 10 buildings leased from the city of Medford and two erected by the League on their own land adjoining on the north.

During the past five years, the League has made capital expenditures of over \$38,000 in land, buildings, sewerage system and city water line. The annual maintenance and insurance amount to \$1500.

These facilities provide 14,000 square feet of barrack floor space and 8,400 square feet of service space, or a total of 22,400 square feet to accommodate 500 workers. The location and erection of equivalent facilities within the city of Medford, even if such zoning could be achieved, would require an expenditure that would stagger the imagination.

3) The statement that the established picking rate per box was changed after the start of the season is also in error. These established rates are determined by a wage survey of the OSES and cannot be changed without permission of the secretary of labor.

For the 1960 season, the base rates were 14 to 20 cents per box with premiums, over the base rate, paid for two pickings, poor fruit or box lining.

Medford, as a part of the three Pacific coast states, pays the highest agricultural wages in the nation. The amount of money earned is entirely dependent on the worker. Many of them made well over \$20 per day.

4) No one could be happier, than the pear growers 1) "to stop labor from shifting from orchard to orchard" and 2) "establish a large labor pool."

The first is the prerogative of the individual; you cannot stop a man from leaving a job, and the second is a pure dream, for the minute there is an over supply, the migrant worker moves out. These two conditions are responsible for the terrific turnover that destroys the efficiency of so many migrant workers.

This is the reason why one Mexican National, working steadily every day, will pick as much fruit as four migrants. This is not a mere guess. Payroll records, over many years, will substantiate it.

The following is taken from a report by the manager of the local employment office:

"The certification of Mexican National workers for use in local agricultural work is controlled by the U.S. government through the bureau of employment security. Before these workers can be used in any area, the federal bureau requires that an intensive and continuous labor recruitment program be undertaken throughout the state where they are to be used and, as far as possible, in the neighboring states. With specific reference to the Medford pear harvest this has been done each year.

Principal Deterrents

"There are two principal deterrents to the recruitment of adequate harvest labor. The first is the shortness of Medford season, which amounts to only six or seven weeks. The second is the fact that this is not a crop suitable to harvest by family groups, including women and children. The work is very arduous. Most women and younger children are unable to handle the ladders necessary to do this work.

"At the time the harvest of the Medford crop is underway there is also a large labor demand in both the neighboring states of California and Washington. These job opportunities offer the migrant workers much longer periods of employment due to the variety of crops grown."

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Black Forest Recluse Claimed Really Anastasia

Hamburg, Germany - UPI-A handwriting expert said Thursday that a lonely Black Forest recluse is Anastasia, grand duchess of Russia.

Minna Becker, in an official report to a Hamburg court, said there "is no doubt" that Mrs. Anna Anderson is the daughter of Czar Nicholas II and the only member of the Russian royal family to escape the Bolshevik massacre in 1918.

40-Year Fight

Mrs. Anderson, now 60, has fought for 40 years to prove her identity as Anastasia. She claims she was carried, seriously wounded, from the basement in Ekaterinburg where her family died, and spirited to the West.

The Soviets claim the entire royal family was wiped out by Bolshevik soldiers.

Three times in the last 25 years, Mrs. Anderson has brought suits to prove her identity. She lost the first two.

Mrs. Becker's report was the second expert testimony in this third trial favoring Mrs. Anderson's claim.

Said Not Imposter

Earlier this year, Prof. O. Reche, the dean of German anthropologists, testified that Mrs. Anderson is not an imposter but is the real grand duchess believed long since dead.

Mrs. Becker's 67-page report said a comparison of handwriting between Anastasia and Mrs. Anderson left no room for doubt that the recluse's claim is valid.

"Both persons are identical," the handwriting expert said. "There is no doubt that the handwriting of Mrs. Anderson is that of Anastasia."

Librarians Plan To Attend Meeting

Jackson county school librarians plan to attend a conference Monday in Grants Pass on "Challenges in Reading for Children and Young People."

Mrs. Florence Moberly will be hostess in the Josephine county library. The program has been planned to give librarians an opportunity to examine materials and to hear new ideas and trends.

Appraisal of the library with reference to the young people and stimulants to good reading will be discussed.

Among school librarians attending the conference will be Lois Martin, McLoughlin Junior High school; Frances Patton, Medford High school; Mabel Sims, Phoenix; Precia Medley, Roosevelt school; Mildred Rogers, Hedrick Junior High school; and Helen Broadbeck, Central Point.

Texas City, Tex. - Mrs. J. C. Hyett and her son found they were driving a hot car. It wasn't stolen.

Somebody had removed the radiator while the auto was parked outside her son's school.

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