

FEWER FARM WORKERS

The number of persons employed in agriculture will probably continue to decline in the next two decades, with the result that Canada's farm labour force may be reduced to slightly less than 500,000 by 1970 or 1980, according to a report entitled "Trends in the Agricultural Labour Force in Canada", recently released by Labour Minister Michael Starr.

The report, which covers the period 1921 to 1959, states that the agricultural labour force reached a peak in 1939, and then began to decline rapidly in the 1940's. Between 1946 and 1959 the number of persons with jobs in agriculture declined from an average of 1,186,000 to 692,000, an average decline of 38,000 each year.

Between 1946 and 1958 the decline in agricultural employment in Canada was 40 per cent, 10 per cent greater than the decline experienced in the United States.

A continuing growth in the domestic population should progressively reduce the rate of decline as the agricultural labour force reaches a minimum level.

CHANGES IN KIND OF LABOUR

The report states that this rapid decline has also been accompanied by changes in the characteristics of farm labour. For example, there is a diminishing supply of unpaid family help available to operators of farms. In 1946 unpaid family workers accounted for 30.4 per cent of the total number of persons with jobs on farms. By 1958 this percentage dropped to 20.7 per cent. The number of paid or hired workers has not increased in this same period, with the result that the farm labour force today consists primarily of farm operators.

The study shows that there is a higher proportion of older workers remaining on farms today. Men in the 25 to 44 age group represented only 37 per cent of farm labour. Over 42 per cent of all male farm workers were 45 years old or over.

Greater mechanization on farms and the need for less farm labour have brought changes in the pattern of seasonal employment. With the use of large-scale machinery, farmers speed up their seeding and harvesting operations, concentrating the employment of seasonal labour over much shorter periods of time and doing without extra year-round help after the peak period of farm activity is over.

UNSATISFACTORY WORKING CONDITIONS

Because of the traditional reliance on family labour, farmers have not given sufficient thought to improvements in working conditions. The hours of work are considerably longer in agriculture than in other industries. In 1958 farm workers put an average of 54 hours a week, compared with 40 hours for workers in non-agricultural industries. Wages for hired farm workers have been rising since

the early 1940's. In 1941, the average farm wages with board for male workers was \$35 a month; by 1958 the average wage had risen to \$120. However, farm wages remain lower even than those for many unskilled jobs in other industries.

The report states that, apart from the effects brought on by improved agricultural machinery and farm technology, a large number of other factors have been influential in bringing about the decline of the farm labour force since the 1940's. The small physical size of farms is one of a number of obstacles that hinder many farm families in producing a reasonable standard of living. The inadequate incomes that come from small farms have produced a shift of people out of agriculture into other better-paying industries.

The report also deals with such matters as immigration as a source of farm labour, detailed characteristics of the agricultural labour force, general employment continues on Canadian farms, and such factors as size of farms and farm income.

(A copy of this report may be obtained from the Queen's Printer, Ottawa at 25¢ a copy).

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ECLIPSE OF "NORTH STAR"

On October 29, the last of Trans-Canada Air Lines' passenger-carrying "North Stars" was withdrawn from service in Western Canada, heralding the beginning of the end to one of the finest chapters in Canada's aviation history.

The oft-maligned "North Star" was Canada's first venture in the construction of long-range, heavy-transport aircraft, which exploited and consolidated wartime aeronautical knowledge and skills.

In many ways, the "North Star", powered by four Rolls-Royce "Merlin" engines, was a profit without honor in its own country. And yet it was considered a superior transport when first introduced by TCA on trans-Atlantic routes in 1947.

The last passenger-carrying flight was No. 702, leaving Vancouver at 3:30 p.m., October 29, and travelling via Edmonton, Saskatoon, Winnipeg and Toronto, arriving in Montreal at 10:00 a.m. October 30.

NEW PASSENGER PLANES

"Viscounts" will continue to operate over the "North Star" routes west of Toronto. Early next year, 96-passenger Vickers "Vanguard" turbo-prop aircraft will be introduced on these routes, as TCA continues its progress towards an all-turbine fleet.

"North Stars" will continue to carry cargo to and from Western Canada until the "Vanguards" go into service.

The "North Star" made its maiden flight from Canadair Ltd.'s plant at Montreal in June 1946. That it has endured so long can be

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