

by government and local rates. This increase confirmed the entire immigration program established could be in jeopardy. Our minimum muck soil acreage is 400.

In drawing attention to this subject I am working in co-operation with the hon. member for Lambton-Kent (Mr. McCutcheon) and the hon. member for Kent (Ont.) (Mr. Danforth). I find in the *Windsor Star* of Tuesday, March 12 an article headed: "Jamaicans' pay increase hit". It is a long article, but it reads in part:

In addition to a guaranteed minimum of \$58 a week, the Jamaicans are provided with living accommodation and their fare to and from Jamaica by plane, which is \$140 return on charter flights and \$275 return when they have to be carried on regular flights.

The experience of employers in 1967 was that Jamaicans employed on a piecework basis on tomatoes and apples earned more than the \$145 minimum.

In the same article a Hamilton union chief is reported to have protested to the Ontario department of labour that Jamaican workers were ill paid and ill housed while they were in Ontario. The writer continues:

The most significant part of the protest was that the official misrepresented all the conditions under which Jamaican workers are allowed into Canada.

He even indicated that workers brought in had to pay their own air fare, when actually the only deductions made for this purpose are made at the request of the government authorities in Jamaica, who want to recover transportation costs of workers from Trinidad and other islands to Jamaica, before they embark for Canada.

With the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) speaking of restraints and the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Turner) studying a chain of food stores, I cannot understand how the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Marchand) can act in this way, adding further to the costs of producers and merchandisers who have to compete in world markets.

According to the *Ottawa Journal* of March 15 our jobless total is the highest since 1964. It stated that farm jobs dropped by 23,000 in one month. With 750,000 unemployed I cannot see how raising the wages of these Jamaican workers—some are experienced and some are not—can do anything but make the situation worse. If unemployment insurance were held off for a longer period, to the fall, possibly some of our own unemployed would work to help these market gardeners harvest their crops.

I hope the minister will reconsider this matter and retain the minimum wage at \$1.25

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for these immigrants coming in as casual labour. I would point out that these people are expecting an answer from me, and I hope the minister can do something about the matter.

**Hon. B. S. Mackasey (Member of the Administration):** Mr. Speaker, in the brief time at my disposal I shall try to acquaint the hon. member as to how this minimum figure was arrived at. On March 1 the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Marchand) announced that in the summer of 1968 we will once again admit seasonal agricultural workers from the West Indies to help with harvesting of crops in southwestern Ontario. This decision was not an easy one. There are indications that Canadian workers available for seasonal work in agriculture, especially students, will have more difficulty in finding summer jobs than last year. In fact this question was raised very recently by the hon. member for Oxford (Mr. Nesbitt).

The decision to go ahead with the off-shore labour program was made in spite of these indications. It was reached only because of the inherent difficulties in forecasting precisely the demand-supply relationship for a relatively small geographic area and for a type of work which is subject to fluctuations caused by climatic conditions.

The minister is very much aware of the dangers involved. If next summer there are Canadians asking for jobs, and not getting them, in the areas where there are West Indian workers under contract, he will be criticized for giving unfair treatment to Canadian labour. On the other hand, if there is a shortage of labour he will be equally criticized.

The conditions under which Canadian farmers can bring in West Indian workers this year are unchanged from last year. These conditions are not arbitrary. They were carefully reviewed with provincial representatives at a recent meeting of the federal-provincial agricultural manpower committee. The committee also reviewed the analysis made by the department of last year's movement, which revealed that the cost-benefit ratio for the West Indian workers compared well with that for domestic labour.

The hon. member for Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Madill) will certainly agree that it would be irresponsible to relax the conditions even more than they were last year, in view of the