

Immigration of Jamaicans

to restrict to Jamaica, at first, the recruiting of workers. It is known that other Caribbean governments are interested in our seasonal workers. Therefore, if the present provisions are extended, the Canadian government would be ready to begin negotiations with the countries concerned.

[English]

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, the statement the minister has just made is extremely important. It raises a question which has concerned people in Canada and the United States for a number of years, the question of the importation of people from foreign countries to work on Canadian and United States farms.

The provision whereby these workers will be guaranteed a minimum wage of \$1.25 an hour is a good one, as is the requirement that they be given adequate housing facilities. However, Mr. Speaker, I would hope the government will do more than merely put this on paper. To my knowledge, every year there have been complaints and well founded newspaper articles about the fact that agricultural workers in general, working on seasonal projects, have been housed under the most primitive and unsanitary conditions possible. I would expect that the federal government, which is arranging this plan, will also arrange for inspection of the housing accommodation provided for these people in order to make sure that the agreement the minister has announced will actually be lived up to and enforced.

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, this decision of the minister or of the government to admit Jamaican workers into Canada to help bring in the crop, mainly in southwestern Ontario, comes as something of a surprise to me.

Every year this part of Ontario generally called the fruit and tobacco valley, cries out for additional manpower at a certain time of the year.

Well, every year in my area, as in many other areas of the province of Quebec, people are anxious to go and work at these crops in southwestern Ontario. Most of the time they are told that there is no work for them, that they cannot be hired. There are thousands of Canadians anxious to work at these crops.

I do not believe the minister at all when he tells us that there is a lack of manpower. Rather, I think that pressures are now being applied on the department and the government to allow the farmers of this part of

[Mr. Marchand.]

Ontario to get workers who will be paid about \$1.25 an hour instead of \$2 or even \$3 an hour during harvest time.

Here, I should like to call the attention of the minister to the fact that not only are people over 30 asking for work, but that a great number of university students from Toronto, Montreal and Quebec city would like to work for these Ontario farmers at harvest time.

I wonder whether it is sensible at this time to invite Jamaican workers to come and help with the harvest of this part of Ontario, this Canadian region?

Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister does not tell us how many immigrants will thus be admitted into Canada. He says that, according to the data of the National Employment Service, it will be possible to establish the number of Jamaican workers who will come. I appeal again to the hon. minister, not because I am against the Jamaican workers or the farmers who want to obtain workers at a lower price, but since we have students who are looking for such work in order to earn money to continue their studies and workers who want to earn enough to allow them to live in their own province, I do not think that, under the circumstances, it is at all advisable to invite Jamaicans or other foreigners to help with the fruit or tobacco harvest in Ontario.

[English]

Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that the government is taking some action to resolve the critical shortage of agricultural workers, but what I fail to understand is why this is confined strictly to southwestern Ontario when representations have been made in this house on behalf of farm organizations from western Canada in respect of the serious shortage of workers on the prairies and in many other parts of Canada. Therefore it is very difficult for me to understand why the minister is confining this to the fruit and vegetable growers; why these are the only people from whom he will accept applications, in southwestern Ontario.

An hon. Member: Also tobacco.

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, representation has been made to the minister's department regarding the sugar beet workers in southern Alberta and southern Manitoba, but there has been no announcement to the effect that the nationals of other countries will be allowed into Canada to help overcome this problem. I