

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS

Order-in-Council P.C. 2821 passed in April, 1943, changed the regulations governing the distribution of conscientious objectors who had been postponed as such by the mobilization boards. Prior to this order conscientious objectors were directed to alternative service camps. The new order provided authority for alternative service officers to direct these postponed conscientious objectors to employment where their services could be utilized to the best advantage in the national interests.

Because of the shortage of farm labour and because the great majority of these men were from farms, agriculture was singled out in the order as the industry which should logically have their services.

Evidence that this objective has been kept in the forefront by the alternative service officers is found in the fact that in a total of 8,858 conscientious objectors postponed, more than 5,160 were working on farms as at December 31, 1943. The order provided that postponed conscientious objectors in agriculture should be put under contract with their employers. The farmers were to pay \$25 a month plus board and lodging to each conscientious objector employed, and the difference between this, the going wage to be paid to the Canadian Red Cross. Since the passing of this order conscientious objectors on farms are being placed under contract as rapidly as possible. There are, however, many details to be arranged for each contract, and at December 31, 1943, 3,160 were under contract with farmers.

Early this spring arrangements were completed for the return of virtually all conscientious objectors who were experienced farmers from alternative service camps to their provinces of origin. This has resulted in a welcome addition to the permanent farm labour force. Details were worked out with the alternative service officers in co-operation with the directors of the respective Dominion-provincial farm labour programs for placing these conscientious objectors on farms where they were most urgently required.

CANADIAN JAPANESE

The Canadian Japanese moved from the coastal areas in British Columbia have furnished about 5,000 extra workers for Canadian farmers. About 3,000 in Alberta and 1,100 in Manitoba were employed on sugar beet farms during the summer months; the remainder are employed on fruit, vegetable and poultry farms in Ontario and British Columbia.

An agreement was in effect between the Dominion and Ontario governments for the employment of these men on Ontario farms during 1943. Arrangements have been made for its renewal, with certain modifications, for 1944 to provide for the transfer of a number of Canadian Japanese from British Columbia to the sugar beet farms in the vicinity of Chatham, Ontario.

PRISONERS OF WAR AND INTERNEES

In the spring of 1943 a project was organized for the use of prisoners of war on sugar beet farms in the Lethbridge area. The men were transported daily from the camp to the various farms where they were employed. Although 400 were available for employment, not more than 80 were used at any one time. These men continued to be engaged by farmers in the area until the beets were harvested in the fall.