

RECOMMENDATION

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INVESTIGATE WORKING, HOUSING, HEALTH AND SAFETY CONDITIONS FOR IMMIGRANT AND ITINERANT FARMWORKERS

Excluded: The Committee received testimony relating to the conditions of immigrant farmworkers in British Columbia. They are excluded from regulations governing minimum wage, hours of work and overtime. Under the Unemployment Insurance Act, farmworkers must be employed 7 days by a particular employer in order to be insurable. All other employees require a minimum of 15 hours of work or a wage of \$85 per week to be insurable.

Substandard: Nonenforcement of Health Act regulations has contributed to substandard housing conditions. Health and safety provisions under the Workers' Compensation Act do not extend to farmworkers.

Exploited: The Committee recognizes that many employers of farmworkers provide humane conditions for their employees and treat them fairly. At the same time, the general lack of protection experienced by individuals and families makes many of them vulnerable to both physical danger and economic exploitation. Health and safety protection are imperative in an industry with a high rate of occupational disease and risk of injury. Exposure to pesticides is particularly threatening to farmworkers and their children.

Minimum Standards: The Committee believes that, in addition to health and safety regulations, universal minimum housing standards and equality of access to work and social benefits should be applied to all immigrant and itinerant farmworkers.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Federal Government should urge the provincial Departments of Labour, Workers' Compensation Boards and other relevant federal and provincial departments to investigate immediately the working, housing, health and safety conditions for immigrant and itinerant farmworkers.