

**CLASS, RACE, AND ETHNIC RELATIONS IN MANITOBA
COMMERCIAL MARKET GARDENING, 1945-1993**

by

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Avis Darlene Mysyk

A thesis
presented to the University of Manitoba in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

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BY

AVIS DARLENE MYSYK

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation, based upon field and archival research from 1991 to 1993, focuses on the development of Manitoba commercial market gardening and its attendant labour needs. Specifically, the objective is to determine how class, "race", and ethnic relations have manifested themselves in this sector of Canadian agriculture. I argue that class relations have primacy over "race" and ethnic relations and that two main classes have developed in the industry over time - the petty bourgeoisie and farm workers. Each has also developed into class fractions - small, medium, and large growers on the one hand and racialized fractions of the working class on the other. The conflicts that arose were specifically class conflicts between the medium petty bourgeoisie and farm workers. That events took this turn may have been entirely coincidental but relate directly to the necessity of placing any analysis of social relations in their historical context.

I also argue that the recent expansion of Manitoba commercial market gardening may be a temporary phenomenon due to the fact that, despite growers' access to a potentially unlimited supply of Mexican labour, recent trade policies, such as the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement and the North American Free Trade Agreement, leave the medium petty bourgeoisie extremely vulnerable in the sphere of exchange.

Despite the difficulties I encountered in accessing much of this data due to the sensitivity of the subject matter, I believe this dissertation contributes valuable information to a topic which has been almost entirely neglected in the anthropological literature to date.

DEDICATED TO

**MY PARENTS, STELLA
AND THE LATE JARVIS MYSYK**

**CLASS, RACE, AND ETHNIC RELATIONS IN MANITOBA
COMMERCIAL MARKET GARDENING, 1945-1993**

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Canadian agriculture is currently undergoing a major crisis. Not only has the "cost-price squeeze" forced many Canadian farmers¹ off the land but liberal trade policies, such as the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement (CUSTA) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), threaten the livelihood of many more. Crises in agriculture are not unique to the 1990's, however. They have occurred continuously, especially since 1945, as farmers have become integrated into the capitalist economy. Increasing specialization and mechanization, accompanied by intensification of market relations, have led to competition between, and the development of class fractions among, those farmers who have managed to survive.

Crises in agriculture are of two interrelated types: long-term and short-term. Long-term crises are generated by the cost-price squeeze, a process whereby the cost of producing a commodity rises faster than the return to the farmer upon selling that commodity (Mitchell 1975:18). Prior to 1945, such crises were often averted by successful lobbying

on the part of influential farm organizations for the regulation of the price of commodities. In part, this was possible because the cost of production was relatively stable. Not so after 1945. Crises could now be averted by increasing the volume of production through mechanization on a larger land base. This solution to the cost-price squeeze was pursued by many farmers. "They became the 'high risk' entrepreneurs who would exchange debts for capital equipment and land on the gamble that productivity advantages would pay dividends" (Mitchell, p. 19). The results were disastrous. Short-term crises, generated by the "boom and bust" cycle of agriculture, simply became more severe.

The boom and bust cycle means that any food shortages, caused by a decline in production, lead to high food prices. Motivated by high food prices, farmers increase production, only to find consumers either unwilling or unable to pay more for that food. This results in food surpluses and, ultimately, in lower prices to farmers. The cycle is complete, and begins again, once smaller farmers have been eliminated from competition through bankruptcy (Mitchell, p. 7).

Commercial market gardening² in Manitoba had not been immune to these pressures, yet the anomalous characteristic of being labour rather than capital intensive has allowed it to expand in recent years. This expansion might not have occurred had it not been for the implementation of the Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program as of 1974,

which promised Manitoba commercial market gardeners a (potentially) unlimited supply of labour.

Under conditions of labour shortages, there are at least four alternatives to labour import.

These are (a) increasing imports in order to diminish labour needs by freeing labour presently used; (b) implementing labour mobility and manpower training policies, including mobilization of so-called marginal workers, e.g., teenagers, elderly, handicapped, etc.; (c) capital substitution of labour; (d) export of productive activities (Sassen-Koob 1978:521).

The most common solution to labour shortages in agriculture has been the capital substitution of labour (that is, mechanization), not its import. Given the perishable nature of their product, Manitoba commercial market gardeners have pursued this alternative as far as possible. The alternative of increasing imports in other sectors of the economy in order to release labour for use in agriculture has limited applicability. It might only occur if labour shortages were absolute and not relative (Satzewich 1991:68).³ The export of productive activities, a fairly recent phenomenon associated with agribusiness interests, has never been a viable alternative for individual farmers.

Apart from mechanization, the only alternative to labour import available to Manitoba commercial market gardeners had primarily been the mobilization of domestic labour. Dissatisfaction on the part of the farmers in regard to the "inexperience" and/or "unreliability" of domestic labour eventually led to the final alternative, labour import. Given

the importance of the labour component in certain sectors of Canadian agriculture, the problem becomes one of tracing the development of Manitoba commercial market gardening and its attendant labour needs.

1.2 OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

Preliminary research into the history of Manitoba agriculture reveals that its labour force has traditionally consisted of groups of workers from various racial and ethnic backgrounds. The main purpose of this study is to examine how class, race, and ethnic relations have manifested themselves in Manitoba commercial market gardening.

In relation to this are four specific objectives. The first is to determine the socioeconomic position of Manitoba commercial market gardeners in the Canadian class structure. It will be argued that the majority are petty bourgeois based upon the fact that they both own and operate the means of production. The second is to examine past and present labour sources in Manitoba agriculture and, more specifically, in commercial market gardening with regard to class, race, and ethnicity. It will be argued that two main classes have developed in Manitoba agriculture: the petty bourgeoisie (farmers) and the proletariat (farm workers). Related to the process of class formation is that of "class fractioning". In the case of the petty bourgeoisie, this has taken the form of

small, medium, and large producers divided along economic, political and/or ideological lines. In the case of farm workers, class fractioning may occur along ethnic or, as some choose to view it, racial lines. While racism may be used to justify the means by which such class fractions are either incorporated into or denied access to a particular set of production relations, it is clear that neither the object nor the content of racism is uniform but, rather, is subject to change over time. In fact, it appears that racism is more likely to come into play in times of relative, not absolute, labour shortages.

The third objective is to compare and contrast the former US-Mexico *Bracero* Program and the present Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program. Since the details of each agreement are remarkably similar, it is apparent that the former served as a model for the latter, despite major differences in how the programs have been implemented. The fourth and final objective is to evaluate the future of Manitoba commercial market gardening based upon the possible effects of both the CUSTA and the NAFTA. It will be further argued that the recent expansion of Manitoba commercial market gardening may be a temporary phenomenon. Since the full impact of the CUSTA has yet to be realized and since the NAFTA was just recently ratified, one can only speculate upon their effects. Certain trends indicate, however, that not only will marketing boards--the only line of defense most commercial

market gardeners have against foreign competition--be phased out under the CUSTA but, under the NAFTA, the mobility of Mexican labour may be severely curtailed.

This study is formally delimited to south central Manitoba, including Winnipeg, since 1945, although I briefly address the earliest stages of market gardening and its labour sources before 1945. Choosing the region was fairly straightforward, given that most vegetables can only be grown under certain soil and climatic conditions such as those found in south central Manitoba. Choosing the year proved to be more difficult. I discovered, however, that market gardening does not attain commercial status until a certain scale of production has been achieved. In Manitoba, the transition from "limited market" to "commercial market" gardening, and the class fractioning that accompanied it, began around 1945. I also discovered that the problem of alleged labour shortages and the possibility of hiring offshore labour only came to the fore once this transition had begun. It is this transition period that provides the baseline for this study.

One could arguably label this study a "political economy" of Manitoba commercial market gardening, the minimal requirements of which are: "(a) a focus on the totality of social, political and economic structures which are (b) specified in a determinant hierarchy" (Schmidt 1981:66). Beyond this, however, I have attempted to follow as closely as possible Roseberry's (1988:171-172) suggestion that:

It is insufficient to assert that transformations are not structurally determined but result from human agency...What requires stressing is the unity of structure and agency, the activity of human subjects in structured contexts that are themselves the products of past activity but, as structured products, exert determinative pressures and set limits upon future activity.

1.3 METHOD AND RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

Initially, I had intended to focus exclusively on the origins and development of the Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program itself. Through formal and informal interviews, supplemented by life histories and photography, I had hoped to determine how the program actually worked "on the ground". For reasons unclear to me at the time, however, I was frequently met with guarded suspicion and/or entirely ignored⁴ by farmers who, coincidentally, also regulated outsiders' access to Mexican workers. It was not until I was granted an interview with the president of the Manitoba Farm Workers' Association that I began to realize why I had been received with such animosity. During the interview, I was informed that the issue of offshore labour was "politically hot"--so hot, I assume, that the president ultimately declined further involvement in my study. I was also informed by the Employer Specialist at Winnipeg's Canada Employment and Immigration Centre that he could not divulge any "trade secrets" of the Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program.

Curious as to why I now lacked access to virtually all key players in the Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program, I managed to locate a government-sponsored study, rumoured to be extremely controversial, as well as back issues of the Winnipeg Tribune through which I was able to partially reconstruct the events surrounding the origins and development of the program. As I illustrate in Chapter 4, the use of Mexican workers in Manitoba commercial market gardening gave rise to conflicts not only between farmers and domestic workers but between farmers and the provincial government as well, conflicts which are still very much alive in the minds of those who were involved. Although I explained that I was a student conducting independent research into the offshore labour program in Manitoba, I was in all likelihood thought to be either a government employee or a union organizer looking to cause more trouble.

While this unexpected turn of events was disappointing, it was not surprising. Friedland and Nelkin (1971) and Nelkin (1970) note the reluctance of some growers to place students in farm labour camps in New York State as part of a teaching research project. Satzewich (1991) also discovered that some information on the Canada-Commonwealth Caribbean Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program was restricted under Canada's Access to Information Act because it was deemed sensitive to either national security or diplomatic relations.

Under these circumstances, I decided to incorporate the study of the Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program into a more general study of the growth of Manitoba commercial market gardening and its attendant labour needs. By adding greater historical depth, the primacy of class over race and/or ethnic relations became much clearer. According to Panitch (1985:3):

The value of class analysis lies in its ability to make sense out of a society through an examination of the processes of class formation and the relations among classes that mark its historical development. Insofar as this is undertaken without engaging in economic or class reductionism--i.e., insofar as classes are treated in their actual cultural and political as well as economic dimensions, and insofar as the complex determinants of a society's history are not reduced to the subjective will of this or that singular class, class analysis can be a very valuable tool indeed.

As a guideline in tracing the growth of Manitoba commercial market gardening and its labour requirements, I relied upon the working model preferred by Hobsbawm (1974:10) in writing what is referred to as "social history":

One starts with the material and historical environment, goes on to the forces and techniques of production..., the structure of the consequent economy--divisions of labour, exchange, accumulation, distribution of surplus, and so forth--and the social relations arising from these. These might be followed by the institutions and the image of society and its functioning which underlie them.

The research techniques by which I gathered this information were three-fold: (1) historical reconstruction and other "unobtrusive measures" (Webb et al. 1966); (2) informal

interviewing; and (3) participant observation, including photography.

When I began the research process in the summer of 1991, I initially relied upon "opportunistic" sampling, that is, interviewing whoever I could convince to co-operate (Werner and Schoepfle 1987:198). It soon became obvious, for the reasons explained above, that I would have to make rigorous and innovative use of "network" sampling, that is, using the information gathered from earlier sources to pursue yet others (Werner and Schoepfle, p. 183). The process eventually developed into a multi-faceted research project whereby one technique was verified and/or pursued through another, and these through as many sources as possible.

Thus, historical reconstruction, especially of early labour sources, was based upon the Canada Sessional Papers and upon documents from the National Archives of Canada. The aforementioned "unobtrusive measures" by which background information on both agriculture and labour was collected included Statistics Canada and Manitoba Agriculture census material,⁵ local histories, and various local newspapers (the Winnipeg Tribune, the Winnipeg Free Press, the Winnipeg Sun, the Manitoba Co-operator (a farmers' weekly), and the Daily Graphic (Portage la Prairie)).

Informal interviews on a variety of general issues pertinent to this study were conducted with representatives of the National Farmers' Union (Brandon) and the Department of

Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Winnipeg). More specific issues were pursued in informal interviews with the Employer Specialist for the Canada Employment and Immigration Centre (Winnipeg), the former Agricultural Manpower Officer and the Chief of the Horticultural Section for Manitoba Agriculture (Portage la Prairie and Carman, respectively), the past and present managers of Agriculture Employment Services (Portage la Prairie), both the president of and a former activist in the Manitoba Farm Workers' Association (Portage la Prairie and Winnipeg, respectively), and the General Manager of the Manitoba Vegetable Producers' Marketing Board (Winnipeg) who gave me the names, addresses, and phone numbers of its members.

Of the forty-six whom I contacted by telephone and/or in person, by far the majority were potato producers who, by the 1970's, had mechanized their operations and were therefore ineligible for the Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program. Only ten of the forty-six were major vegetable producers and only six of these hired Mexicans. Two of the six refused to be interviewed at all. One, however, was willing to grant both interviews and free access to his fields to talk briefly with the workers and to take photographs (provided I did not disrupt the work process nor use the photographs in my study).⁶ On this, and on potato farms, I was also allowed to directly participate in some of

the "easier" tasks, such as tying cauliflower and culling potatoes.

It was through participating, however minimally, in the actual production process that I came to appreciate the imperatives of commercial market gardening. Even the easiest of tasks are difficult at first and require patience and stamina. Timing and coordination, especially in the production of perishables, are of the utmost concern. One is left empathizing with both farmers who, usually in a race against the weather, are driven to bring in their crops and with farm workers who, in assisting farmers to do so, expect an adequate return for their labour. Although I found little evidence of class, racial, or ethnic conflict during my field research, I nonetheless came to understand the reasons why it had occurred in the recent past.

NOTES

1. A "farmer" is one whose primary occupation is the cultivation of land and/or the raising of livestock. The term is reminiscent of the mixed farming of the past but is still used in the popular sense. "Growers" or "producers" are terms which reflect the specialized farming of today--one refers to "vegetable growers" or "wheat producers". The terms farmers, growers, and producers are used interchangeably throughout this work.
2. "Market gardening" (or "truck farming" in Britain) is the popular term for that sub-sector of agriculture which involves the growing of potatoes and vegetables for other than home use. "Potato", "root crop", and "summer crop" production are the terms used in the industry itself. Market gardening becomes "commercial" once an acreage reaches a certain size.
3. Absolute labour shortages arise due to the exhaustion of the domestic labour supply. Relative labour shortages arise due to the refusal of domestic labour to work for low wages.
4. Illustrative of such behaviour was my experience with one grower in particular who, after grilling me about what I was "really" after, wanted me to guarantee that my work would not "fall into the hands" of either the media or government officials and then insisted that my study be "unbiased" (that is, from his point of view only). Suddenly, he seemed to have a change of heart and enthusiastically constructed an elaborate schedule of the months in and days on which I should come out to conduct my research. Three subsequent attempts to contact him, however, were unsuccessful. The first time, he was "going away" on holidays; the second, he was "too busy"; the third, he was simply "not in".
5. Statistics Canada census material was particularly problematic to work with. Changes in type or categories of information would sometimes occur for no given reason. Other information simply did not exist or did not exist in a consistent form for extended periods of time.
6. The foreman, one of the farmer's sons, seemed to take these conditions very seriously. Almost every time I tried to chat with or to photograph the workers, the foreman would suddenly appear and the workers would quickly resume their tasks. Yet at lunch time, when the foreman had suggested I talk to them, I would be left standing in a cloud of dust as the workers boarded their vehicles and drove off.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 CLASS, RACE, AND ETHNIC RELATIONS

The number of studies that focus upon class, race, and/or ethnic relations in advanced capitalist countries has burgeoned in recent years. In this chapter, I present a brief overview of three general perspectives on the subject: the Marxist, the dependency, and the non-Marxist.¹ Each perspective understands social relations to be ones of production, exchange, or distribution, respectively; hence, each differs in the significance it attributes to class, race, and ethnic relations.

For Marxists, classes are defined on the basis of the relationship of each to the means of production. In a capitalist society, there exist three fundamental relations to the means of production: the capitalist class, or bourgeoisie, who owns the means of production and purchases the labour power of others to operate it; the working class, or proletariat, who owns only its labour power which it sells to the capitalist class in return for a wage; and various

"transitional" classes, such as the petty bourgeoisie, who both own and operate the means of production.

Insofar as individuals share the same position in relation to the means of production, they form a class "in itself". Only when these individuals become aware of their class position and, collectively, develop appropriate strategies to defend their interests against those of other classes, do they become a class "for itself". This distinction is complicated, however, by the existence of class fractions, that is, the economic, political, and ideological divisions that can develop within a class and which can undermine its solidarity.

For dependency theorists, there has been but a single division of labour, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, combined with multiple stratification since the sixteenth century (Frank 1975:84). The working class, in particular, may be divided into four strata: professionals and semi-professionals; the proletariat, including the petty bourgeoisie; the sub-proletariat, including unskilled labourers and those engaged in marginal employment, concentrated in the core countries; and the semi-proletariat, including peasants and migrant workers, concentrated in peripheral countries (Wallerstein 1979:102, 187, 266). For dependency theorists, the defining feature of capitalism is not the capital-wage labour relationship but, rather, world market exchange. Thus, historically specific production

relations matter little, as long as the proletariat, in whatever form it may take, yields part of the surplus value it creates to the bourgeoisie (Miles 1987:60-61).

For non-Marxists, classes may be defined in one of two ways: as statistical categories of individuals who share the same position vis-a-vis their market situation, that is, their differential access to goods and services; or as status groups, which bear less relation to differential access to goods and services than to differences in lifestyle. In either case, class relations (if they are mentioned at all) are relations of distribution or people's perception of such.

More elusive than the concept of class are those of race and ethnicity which, because they are difficult to define, are sometimes used interchangeably. Hughes and Kallen (1974:83) offer the following distinction between the two:

The concept *race*...refers to any arbitrary classification of human populations utilizing such biological criteria as actual or assumed physiological and genetic differences. The concept *ethnicity*...refers to any arbitrary classification of human populations utilizing the bio-cultural criterion of actual or assumed ancestry in conjunction with such socio-cultural criteria as actual or assumed nationality or religion.

Ethnicity, like the non-Marxist concept of class, may also be defined in one of two ways. The "ethnic category" is "a conceptual or statistical category which may or may not correspond with an actual...social group" (Hughes and Kallen, p. 87). The "ethnic group" is one whose members "categorize themselves as being alike by virtue of common ancestry...and

interact together so as to develop a common culture and common forms of social organization" (Hughes and Kallen, p. 88). The ethnic group may or may not correspond to the ethnic category, depending upon whether it is self- or other-defined (Cohen 1978:386).

The concept of race, of course, has no scientific basis. "What exists is not 'race' but phenotypical variation: 'race' is a word used to describe or refer to such variation" (Miles 1982:20). What does exist is "racism" or

those negative beliefs held by one group which identify and set apart another by attributing significance to some biological or other 'inherent' characteristic(s) which it is said to possess, and which deterministically associate that characteristic(s) with some other (negatively evaluated) feature(s) or action(s). (Phizacklea and Miles 1980:22).

In an attempt to explain the increase of racism in the midst of economic recession, some researchers (see, for example, Bolaria and Li 1988a) have begun to make a distinction between "racial group" and "racial category". This renewal of interest in the concept of race, however, is a "false problematic" (Miles 1982:30) or a reification of "race" and will not be pursued further here in this form.

This may very well be where Marxist, dependency, and non-Marxist theorists part company on the subject of race and ethnicity since, for the former, class remains the core analytical concept in the study of social relations while for the latter two it has become the racial or ethnic group or category.

Non-Marxists, for example, have little problem explaining racial or ethnic factors: they are simply "anachronisms" in societies in which status is allocated on the basis of achieved rather than ascribed characteristics. The fact that some groups had not successfully assimilated into such societies, however, required an explanation. The explanation was found not in the process by which racial or ethnic inequalities are created and maintained but, rather, in the "rediscovery" of ethnicity whereby subjective group boundaries assume primacy (see Barth 1969).

Bell (1975), one of the main proponents of the "new" ethnicity, claims that economic (class) interests of the old industrial order have lost efficacy as an organizing principle and have been replaced by political (ethnic) interests of the new "post-industrial" order. What interests are ethnic groups pursuing? They are pursuing "prestige, respect, civil rights, political power,...economic opportunity" (Glazer and Moynihan 1975:5), the access to which lies with the state. Implicit in this argument is the assumption that, since the economic needs of individuals or groups in post-industrial societies have been successfully met, all that remains to be accomplished is a more equitable distribution of goods and services already available (Thompson 1988:101).

If, for non-Marxists, race and ethnicity replace class, for dependency theorists, race and ethnicity appear to become synonymous with class. I use the term "appear" because the

relationship between class, race, and ethnicity is seldom clearly spelled out. Frank (1975:90), for example, is all but silent on the issue, claiming only that organizational factors (such as race and ethnicity) "channel, concentrate, or disperse the diffusionary and exploitative relations to which the entire capitalist system and its participants are subject".

Wallerstein, who has written fairly extensively on class, race, and ethnicity (1979; 1983; 1991), does little to clarify the issue. In his latest work, for example, he argues that:

The concept of 'race' is related to the axial division of labour in the world-economy, the core-periphery antinomy...The concept of 'ethnic group' is related to the creation of household structures that permit the maintenance of large components of non-waged labour in the accumulation of capital (Wallerstein 1991:79).

According to Wallerstein (p. 79), neither of the two terms is directly related to class.

Wallerstein is more successful in distinguishing the short and long term functions of classes versus those of ethnic groups. If the function of a class is to bargain for economic gain in the short run and to seize state power in the long run, the function of an ethnic group, in the short run, is to alter the distribution of goods according to some arbitrarily defined status.

Ethno-national consciousness is the constant resort of all those for whom class organization offers the risk of a loss of relative advantage through the normal workings of the market and class dominated political bargaining (Wallerstein 1979:228).

The function of an ethnic group, in the long run, is to support the status quo by providing substantial personal benefits for the ethnic elite.

To be sure, this breeds confusion. But there is less confusion in the advantages drawn by the upper class hangers-on of an oppressed ethno-nation than in the failure of the working-class movements in the core capitalist countries to represent the interests of the weakest strata of the proletariat (of 'minority' ethnic status) and thereby prevent a growing gap...between the interests of workers of upper ethnic status and those of lower ethnic status (Wallerstein, p. 230).

Indeed, a common sense of cultural identity may serve to obscure class divisions within an ethnic group (Miles 1982:68).

Marxists would argue that under no condition can phenomenal (that is, race and ethnic) relations be abstracted from the specific production (that is, class) relations of which they form a part (Miles 1982). In order to understand the relationship between class, race, and ethnic relations, one must first identify the dominant mode of production and the primary classes that constitute it. Once the class structure has been established, one must identify through historical analysis the political, economic, and ideological profile of each class in order to determine the way in which class fractions may have formed. If class fractions have formed on the basis of phenotypical and/or cultural traits, this is "racialization",

a process of delineation of group boundaries and of allocation of persons within those boundaries by

primary reference to (supposedly) inherent and/or biological (usually phenotypical) characteristics (Miles, p. 157).

Racialization differs from racism in that:

The process [of racialization] can have as its object the identification and reproduction of groups which are self- or other-defined, while the criteria used to define the groups can be positively or negatively evaluated (Miles, p. 157).

The analysis of phenotypical or cultural differences is always secondary to that of class formation since in no way do such differences alter the basic structure of production relations.

This conclusion is in accord with that of McAll (1990:204), who argues for the primacy of objective class over subjective ethnic (or "race") relations. What must be examined, however, is the role class fractions play in the formation of these relations.

2.2 ARE FARMERS A CLASS?

Typical of most literature on Canadian agriculture is the tendency to treat farmers as a homogeneous class distinguished, if at all, by region (Stirling and Conway 1988:73).² At first glance, then, the question "Are farmers a class?" seems simplistic. Of course farmers are a class, but which class? Depending upon the theoretical approach taken, responses vary. For non-Marxists, farmers are no longer a class; for dependency theorists, they are predominantly capitalist. For Marxists, Canadian farmers are mainly petty

bourgeois divided, especially since 1945, into small, medium, and large class fractions.

One particular volume of studies provides an example of a non-Marxist perspective as applied to Canadian agriculture.

Tyler (1968:234) begins by defining "social class" as:

a group, classification, or category of people who exhibited, individually and as a group, distinctive and distinguishable behavioral similarities ascribable to their adherence, either implicit or explicit, to a particular pattern or set of social norms.

Basing his observations upon the criteria of common occupation, possession of political and economic power, and self-identity, Tyler argues that, if Canadian farmers once constituted a social class, they do no longer. The problem, in Tyler's opinion, is that too many of today's farmers suffer from "cultural lag"; they desperately cling to the outmoded ideology of "agrarian fundamentalism", or farming as a way of life, rather than embracing that of "economic development", or farming as a business (Tyler, pp. 300-301). One solution to this problem, according to Tyler, would be to control entry into farming by imposing monetary or educational restrictions as does any other business or profession.

Abell (1968:206) carries Tyler's concept of "cultural lag" even further, placing the blame for rural poverty squarely on the shoulders of the poor: "It is the numerous individuals who do not share the aspiration to better themselves...who will continue to frustrate local, regional and national efforts to overcome 'rural poverty'". Current

government monetary incentives, such as transfer payments and welfare schemes which encourage and enable the disadvantaged to "stay put", are also to blame. Abell's solution to rural poverty is more extreme than Tyler's: the state must not rule out the possibility of expropriating the lands of inefficient producers (Abell, p. 206).

In the discussion paper following Abell's article, Verner (1968:220), cannot agree enough:

We are beginning to recognize...that susceptibility to poverty is a condition transmitted from one generation to the next so that we have families in which the line of descent is marked by the inability of individual members to break away from this family tradition [of] a low standard of living, large families, persistent unemployment, sub-standard values, inadequate education, poor health and resistance to change.

What one is seeing, of course, is the direct application of Lewis' concept of the "culture of poverty" (1966) to Canada's farming population. The notion that the poor are poor through their own lack of ability and initiative, however, lacks a sense of both holism and history (Leacock 1971). The concept of "culture" cannot be reduced to psychology alone, nor can that of "poverty" be isolated from the socioeconomic context which gives rise to it. With regard to small farmers, their seemingly "backward" or "traditional" practices, such as reducing personal and/or productive consumption or engaging in wage labour to supplement their income, are simply responses to evolving conditions of production under capitalism (Hedley 1976).

The world system approach is used by Ghorayshi (1986, 1987, 1990) to argue that the majority of Canadian farms are capitalist based upon her implicit assumption that, since Canada is a capitalist country, so too must be its agricultural sector. According to Ghorayshi (1986:146), a capitalist farm is "an enterprise in which the individual capitalist employs a certain minimum number of wage workers and for the most part does not participate in direct production". Researchers must accept this minimum number of wage workers to be five (person years of labour) because Marx also "appears" to do so (Ghorayshi, p. 149). The reader is left to conclude that a petty bourgeois farm is one in which less than five person years of labour is employed.

Yet it was not Marx who claimed that an enterprise must hire at least five wage workers to qualify as capitalist; it was one Edmund Burke, "famous sophist and sycophant" (Marx 1977:440). The key to determining whether or not an enterprise is capitalist is not the number of wage workers employed per se, but the amount of capital available to the employer:

We saw...that a certain minimum amount of capital was necessary in order that the number of workers simultaneously employed, and consequently the amount of surplus-value produced, *might* suffice to liberate the employer himself from manual labour, to convert him from a small master into a capitalist, and thus formally to establish the capital-relation (Marx, p. 448, emphasis added).

The capital-relation requires the total separation of management and labour. If the employer both manages and labours, and only seasonally calls upon a reserve army of

workers (as do Manitoba commercial market gardeners), then petty commodity, not capitalist, production prevails. "The intermittent hiring of temporary labour cannot be a criterion for capitalist agriculture" (Clement 1983:234).

Ghorayshi, however, chooses to ignore the distinction between owner-manager and owner-operator. Instead, she invokes Marx's labour theory of value to "prove" that a capitalist farm is one in which a minimum of five person years of labour is employed. Yet again she errs. The value of labour power is determined by the quantity of labour necessary to produce (and reproduce) itself at a historically-determined subsistence level. Thus, while extremely complex, Marx's labour theory of value does no more than explain the transfer of equivalent value from one commodity (labour power) to another (money), not the capitalist or petty bourgeois nature of an enterprise. What Ghorayshi appears to refer to is not Marx's labour theory of value, but his theory of surplus value, as follows.

The working day is divided into two parts: "necessary labour time", or that part of the working day during which the labourer produces value equal to the value of his/her labour power, and "surplus labour time", that part of the working day that extends beyond necessary labour time, during which the worker produces "surplus value" for the employer.

There are various ways in which the employer can increase his/her surplus value. In the early stages of capitalist development, he/she may extend the length of the working day,

make work continuous without breaks, apply crude discipline through direct control, and/or hire the whole of the worker's family at a reduced rate. That which then accrues to the employer is called "absolute" surplus value. In the later stages of capitalist development, he/she may implement other technical and/or social changes in production. He/she may, for example, mechanize and/or hire a number of workers simultaneously. In either case, that which accrues to the employer is called "relative" surplus value. Any or all of these strategies may be pursued by both capitalist and petty bourgeois farmers if they hope to make a profit, yet Ghorayshi (1986:156) insists that Marx's "law of value" [sic] only applies to farms in which five or more person years of labour are employed.

What types of farms might these be? Ignoring regional differences in scale as well as the capital or labour intensive nature of farm type, Ghorayshi (1987:364) claims that fruit and vegetable, poultry, and cattle operations are capitalist while grains and dairy operations are not. At the same time, she claims that, as of 1981, only 0.7% of farms in Canada (0.3% in Manitoba) were actually capitalist (Ghorayshi 1986:151). These figures hardly support her thesis that the majority of Canadian (or Manitoba) farms are capitalist (see Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1 which illustrate that no more than 1.7 person years of labour are hired in any agricultural region in south central Manitoba).

Table 2.1
Hired Agricultural Labour by Census Agricultural Region, Manitoba 1981-1991 (see Figure 2.1).

Weeks of Paid Labour				
	Year Round		Seasonal	
	Farms Reporting	No. of Weeks/ Workers*	Farms Reporting	No. of Weeks
Province				
1981	2347	133,373/1.1	7611	114,354
1986	2617	167,867/1.2	10,798	174,839
1991	3487	208,745/1.2	8813	145,326
Region 7				
1981	302	18,963/1.2	927	18,393
1986	306	24,062/1.5	1313	33,171
1991	413	35,843/1.7	1098	26,193
Region 8				
1981	426	25,942/1.2	1174	20,889
1986	479	34,379/1.4	1819	31,575
1991	623	36,506/1.1	1494	27,362
Region 9				
1981	340	26,689/1.5	854	13,504
1986	418	32,310/1.5	1198	19,058
1991	538	39,374/1.4	948	17,399
Region 11				
1981	194	11,764/1.2	441	6914
1986	200	13,293/1.3	629	9602
1991	208	13,693/1.3	464	6217

Sources:

- 1981: Statistics Canada 1982, 1981 Census of Canada, Agriculture Manitoba, Catalogue 96-908, Table 25.
- 1986: Statistics Canada 1987, 1986 Census of Canada, Agriculture Manitoba, Catalogue 96-109, Table 15.
- 1991: Statistics Canada 1992, 1991 Census of Canada, Agriculture Manitoba (Pt. 1), Catalogue 95-363, Table 31.1.

*The number of workers (year round and seasonal) were not given by Statistics Canada. One can calculate the number of year round workers in the following way: (total no. of wks. ÷ 52 wks) ÷ no. of farms = no. of workers. One cannot calculate the number of seasonal workers, however, since the number of weeks each worked is unknown.

MANITOBA

1991 Census Agricultural Regions

MANITOBA

Régions agricoles de recensement, 1991

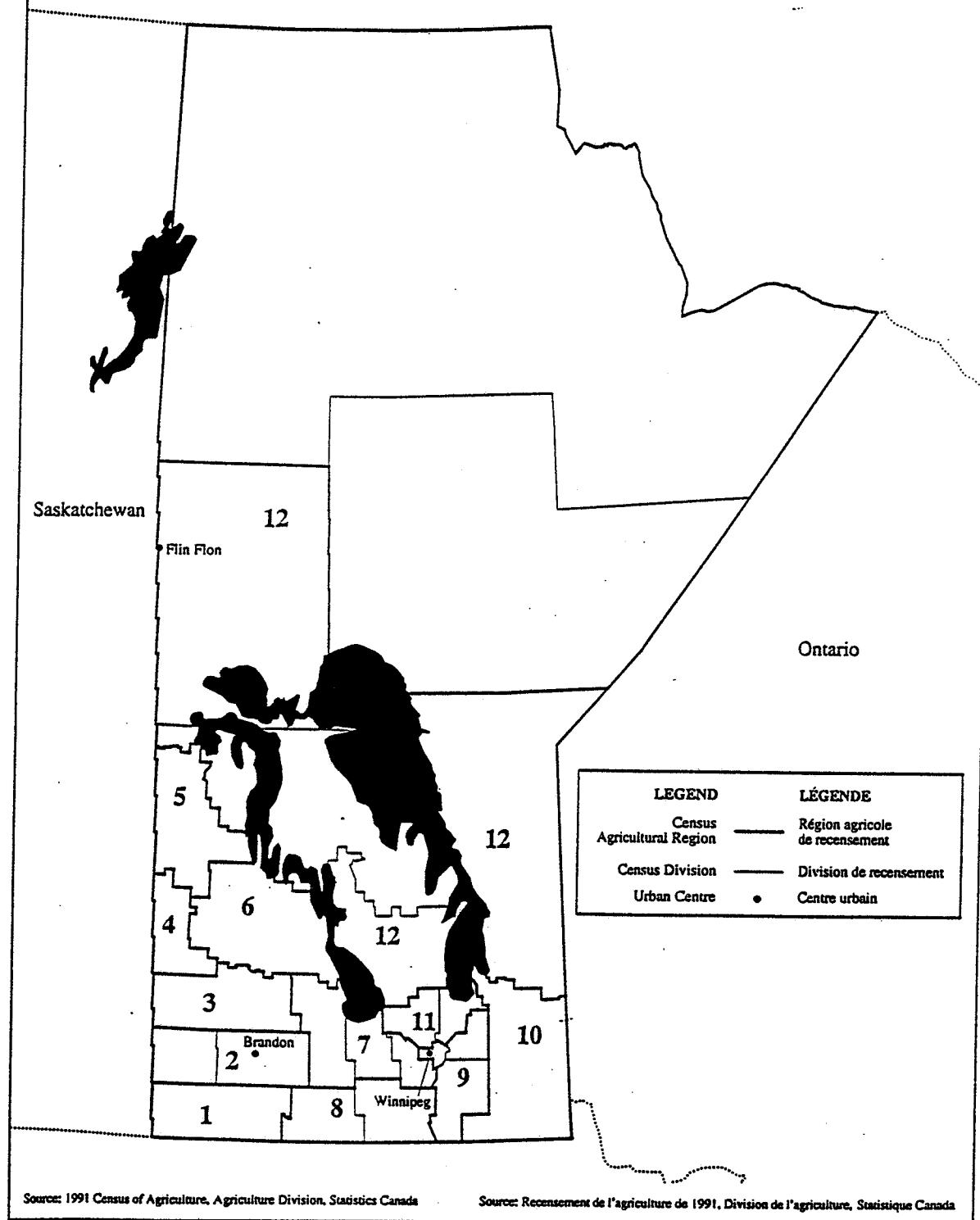


Figure 2.1 Census Agricultural Regions, Manitoba 1991.

The key to Ghorayshi's whole argument, had she chosen to pursue it, lies in one brief statement: "To the extent that farmers...depend on market transactions...they have capitalistic dimensions" (Ghorayshi, p. 146). But "capitalistic" is not the same as "capitalist". What Ghorayshi fails to understand is that, while surplus value is realized through exchange, it is created through production and that production, not exchange, relations determine whether a farm is capitalist or petty bourgeois.

Contrary to Ghorayshi, most researchers contend that the majority of Canadian farmers are petty bourgeois, based upon the criteria of both owning and operating the means of production (Johnson 1981). Upon what criteria, then, does one distinguish between class fractions among the petty bourgeoisie?

Distinguishing class fractions is an arbitrary process at best. Criteria such as the size of farm and the value of agricultural products sold, the value of capital assets, the capital or labour intensive nature of the operation, and the number and type of wage workers (full time/part time or permanent/seasonal) all vary through time and across commodity groups. In conjunction with economic criteria, some researchers (*Briarpatch* 1982; Stirling and Conway 1988) have pursued differences in political and/or ideological tendencies that have developed between small, medium, and large producers since 1945.

Small farmers or "populists", as represented, for example, by the National Farmers Union (NFU), are those whose livelihood is most threatened by the crisis in Canadian agriculture. Yet, because the NFU has historically considered farmers to be a homogeneous class, it has found it difficult, until recently, to form alliances with groups outside the farming sector. For this reason, populists are most likely to support state intervention on their behalf. They are also most likely to combine farming with other occupations (a process known as proletarianization, which signals the dissolution of the petty bourgeoisie), since the surplus value extracted from producers by the non-farm sector ultimately derives from the labour component (family or hired) of the farm.

Medium farmers, or "vested interest groups", are typically represented by marketing boards or agencies as are many of Manitoba's commercial market gardeners. Because of their involvement in commercial interests beyond the farm gate, medium farmers tend to develop alliances with interests on the output side of farming such as wholesalers and retailers. Yet, because of their vulnerable position in the sphere of exchange, medium farmers tolerate limited state intervention to protect their largely provincial markets.

Large farmers are represented by such "right-wing commodity groups" as beef, pork, and grain producers' associations. Because these groups mainly supply the export market, they take a strong free enterprise stance, advocating

an end to all restrictions on production and marketing. Typically, they forge alliances with interest groups on both the input and output sides of farming, such as banks, machinery and chemical companies, and food processors. It is among these commodity groups that one is most likely to see the total separation of management and labour characteristic of capitalist production.

The difficulty of distinguishing class fractions is further complicated by the fact that most Canadian farmers are, on the one hand, small businessmen who view the capital-labour relation through conservative eyes and, on the other, victims of the business ethic who gain market protection through their own union-like powers (Wilson 1990:80-81). It is not surprising, then, that expressions of "right" or "left wing" become blurred when applied to the farm sector (Wilson, p. 80).

2.3 THE "INDIAN PROBLEM"

The relative success of Manitoba agriculture can be partially attributed to the participation of aboriginal peoples in farm work over the past one hundred years. Nonetheless, their socioeconomic position has noticeably deteriorated over time. According to Frideres (1988b:83), the "Indian problem" (or why aboriginal peoples now occupy this position) has typically been viewed as "a problem Indians have" and seldom as a "white problem". Thus, non-Marxists

explain the Indian problem primarily as one of the culture of poverty. Dependency theorists explain it as the inevitable result of colonialism, while Marxists attempt to locate Canada's aboriginal peoples within the context of capitalist development, tracing their socioeconomic demise from full participation in the economy to pauperism. The issue is far from being resolved, especially since aboriginal peoples often are defined or define themselves as an ethnic category or an ethnic group.

Bird (1984), for example, questions why both federal and provincial governments have spent millions on reserve development with so few results. In his opinion, one major obstacle is the Department of Indian Affairs, whose paternalism has discouraged Indians from taking their own initiative in development matters. Another is those sections of the Indian Act which make loans difficult for Indians to obtain and which, therefore, should be eliminated "to allow Indians the same financial opportunities--if indeed the same risks--open to other Canadians" (Bird, p. 69). Indian lands, according to Bird, could be mortgaged to the Crown through the Bank of Canada. In the event of foreclosure on a loan, the Bank of Canada could simply expropriate the lands in the name of the Crown. A third obstacle to economic development on reserves is the "culture of poverty" which has killed the Indians' spirit and robbed them of all hope for the future. History, Bird (p. 75) admits, has been harsh to Indian people:

"But history has been harsh to others, too--Jews, Poles, Hutterites, Negroes, to name a few. They have survived--even thrived". Indians must quit blaming the white man for their problems and accept responsibility for their own actions. Bird (p. 76) concludes with this sage advice to reserve Indians: "You need a job? Find one. None available? Make one".

One answer to Bird's question as to why millions have been spent on reserve development with so few results can be found in Lithman's (1983) description of the establishment of a garment factory on Maple River Reserve (pseudonym) in Manitoba. Through an elaborate scheme of public grants and loans and, thus, at no risk to himself, a local entrepreneur was able to relocate and refinance Maple Fashions and take advantage of the pool of cheap (mainly female) labour on the reserve. Despite protest by the band administration of the time that the reserve did not need a sweatshop which would only exploit Indians, the project went ahead, only to collapse within a few years due to mismanagement. In a word, public monies were used not for reserve development but for private interest.

How, then, can the "problem" of reserve Indians be understood? The most common approach has been some combination of internal colonialism and dependency. Internal colonialism may be defined as the cultural domination, political oppression, and economic exploitation of colonized by colonizers within the bounds of a shared territory (Wolpe

1975:229). According to Frideres (1988a:367-372; see also Carstens 1971 and Dunning 1964), internal colonialism in Canada was a seven-stage process involving: (1) forced incursion of a colonizing group into a geographical area; (2) destruction of the sociocultural structures of the indigenous group; (3) external political control; (4) indigenous economic dependence through exploitation of land and labour; (5) provision of inferior social services for the colonized; (6) racism; and (7) establishment of a colour-line.

It is the fourth stage, indigenous economic dependence, which is of concern here. By the dependency of reserve Indians is meant:

a continuing need for government assistance because the reserve communities never got the help they needed to build their own economy or get jobs in the mainstream. Dependency is a term now used to describe the *state of mind* engendered in the course of a hundred-odd years of having their lives run for them (Buckley 1992:10, emphasis added).

While one may debate whether or not there is any difference between the psychologism of the "culture of poverty" and that of "dependency", or whether or not Indians have been nothing more than passive victims of colonialism for the past two hundred years, there is little doubt that they have been exploited for both their land and labour.

Under certain conditions, exploitation may be justified by political policies and ideologies that centre on such characteristics as ethnicity or race. This must not blind one to the fact, however, that the concept of exploitation, or the

direct or indirect extraction of surplus value from producers, implies the existence of class relations which Wolpe (1975:230) argues are residual to the internal colonial and dependency approaches. The historical relationship between class exploitation and ethnic or racial exploitation is thus left unspecified (Wolpe, p. 235).

Is it possible to locate Canada's aboriginal peoples in a broader socioeconomic context without reifying their racial or ethnic status? One may begin by referring to the formation of the relative surplus population, or reserve army of labour, under capitalism (Marx 1977:794-797). The floating surplus population, represented today by unemployment insurance recipients (Braverman 1974:387), consists of those workers who are alternatively drawn into, then expelled from, the productive process as industries expand and contract. The latent surplus population are those workers who have been displaced by the penetration of capitalist relations of production in agriculture. The stagnant surplus population consists of those workers whose employment is irregular or casual. Lastly are the paupers or those who have been absolutely impoverished by capitalist exploitation, represented today by welfare recipients (Braverman, p. 401). From the point of view of capital, the availability of a large reserve army of labour serves to hold down the average wage rate of the active working class and to weaken its strength by way of job competition. It also allows capital to expand and

contract without major disruption to the process of accumulation.

How have Canada's aboriginal peoples fit into this process? Knight (1978) maintains that, after the fur trade era, Indians did not simply become "redundant" to the economy. Instead, they became part of the country's active work force until at least 1945 by combining intermittent wage labour in primary resource industries with petty commodity production and traditional subsistence activities. While the transition from indigenous economies to reserve dependence occurred more rapidly on the prairies than in other parts of Canada, Indians did not take on the characteristics of a reserve labour force until after 1945, when welfare payments began to replace a working wage.

In his study of Manitoba's Indian reserve system, Miller (1981) identifies aboriginal peoples in the late 1800's not as part of the active labour force, but as part of the floating surplus population seasonally employed in agriculture, as well as engaged in petty commodity production. Miller would most likely agree with Knight (1978:180) that "Indian workers were not a colonial reserve labour force in any simple way", especially since there is no evidence to suggest that aboriginal workers were used to depress wage rates or to undermine the struggles of non-Indian workers. The only function they seem to have fulfilled for capital at the time

was to provide labour power during periods of expansion and contraction (Miller 1981:109-110).

It was not until after 1945 that many Indians in southern Manitoba became, and remain in dwindling numbers today, part of the latent surplus population displaced by mechanization in agriculture. The lack of other employment opportunities has been well documented by the Manitoba Department of Agriculture and Immigration (1959) and Hawthorne (1966), who illustrate the increasingly casual nature of jobs at this time. It would not violate Dunning's (1964) distinction between Type A and Type B reserves, therefore, to extend the classification of stagnant surplus population typical of the north (Loxley 1981:161) to the south as well.

With the piece-meal introduction of social assistance to Manitoba's aboriginal peoples since the 1960's, many have been reduced to pauperism as the unemployment rates on some reserves have risen to 75 or 100 percent. As to who could possibly benefit from such impoverishment is answered, in part, by Frideres (1988a:372) who claims that, for every non-Indian, the state spends \$740 per year while for every treaty Indian, it spends \$530, a savings of \$210 per Indian per year, or a total of \$52 million per year.

The historical transformation of Manitoba's aboriginal peoples from what may be considered either part of the active working class (Knight 1978) or a floating surplus population (Miller 1981), to a latent surplus, to a stagnant surplus

(Loxley 1981) and, finally, to paupers or welfare recipients puts to rest any doubts as to the validity of Marx's absolute general law of capitalist accumulation (1977:799) whereby the accumulation of wealth at one pole is, at the same time, the accumulation of misery at the other. And, as Knight (1978:180) explains:

Racial stereotypes and racialism directed against Indians certainly existed and were extremely widespread...However, I would hold that racism was not the central cause of exploitation and expropriation of Indian people but merely a rationale for such (emphasis added).

They have become, in Miles' (1982) words, a "racialized" fraction of the working class.

2.4 THE MIGRATORY PROCESS

It is interesting to note that, although the Canada-Commonwealth Caribbean and the Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Programs have been in effect since 1966 and 1974 respectively, very few researchers have studied the former and none the latter. Two of the few are Cecil and Ebanks (1991) who examine, from a non-Marxist perspective, the "human condition" of West Indian [sic] farm labour in southern Ontario. The authors' ultimate goal is to determine whether or not these workers' "total humanity" is capable of being expressed in multicultural Canada.

Despite their observations that West Indian farm labourers are "not always accepted" in southern Ontario, that growers "carefully maintain" a social distance between

themselves and their West Indian workers so as to avoid being "manipulated" by them, and that the positive "social impact" of West Indian labour may actually be a positive "economic impact", Cecil and Ebanks choose to ignore these findings in favour of the following conclusion: for West Indian farm labourers, plantations in their home countries represent a "poor economic choice" but a "culturally relevant" system; "neo-plantations" (as the authors term farms in southern Ontario) represent a "good economic choice" but a "culturally irrelevant", even "racist" system.³ Cecil and Ebanks (p. 401) consider it unconscionable that, even though "the men are prepared to travel to Ontario for economic gain, while putting their personal lives 'on hold'...seasonal black workers have little access to a full share of the greater human system, with everything that is entailed".

Cecil and Ebanks' perspective on migration derives many of its assumptions from neo-classical economics. All factors of production, that is, goods and services, capital and labour, are fully mobile. Guided by the "invisible hand" of the market, factors of production migrate in response to "rational" economic considerations of relative costs and benefits. From a sociological perspective, the unit of analysis is the individual and how he/she "adapts", "adjusts", or "assimilates" (Kearney 1986:333; Van Kemper 1979:11). The political implication of this free market model of individual decision-making is that the state should neither encourage nor

discourage migration (Wood 1982:304) yet, as Bourguignon (1977:34) points out, "the freedom to emigrate would clearly be meaningless if other countries made immigration impossible". In fact, the very attractiveness of migrant labour is its vulnerability to political and legal constraints in the receiving country (Gibson and Graham 1986:135; Miles 1987:159-160).

Those few researchers who advocate a dependency approach to labour migration (Bolaria and Li 1988b; Wall 1992) fare little better. Perhaps the most glaring error in both studies is the authors' inability to realize that much of their data actually refers to Mexican Mennonite and not to Caribbean or Mexican farm workers as illustrated, for example, by their observations that whole families work in the fields in Ontario. While dependents might accompany Mexican Mennonite men to Canada, they most certainly do not accompany Caribbean or Mexican men, who must come alone.

Bolaria and Li (1988b:196) allude, of course, to the "permanent structural necessity" of foreign workers in Canadian agriculture and, in a subsequent article (1988c), cite well-known dependency arguments as to the "functions" of such labour: the transfer of the cost of reproduction of migrant labour to the sending countries (Burawoy 1976); the provision of "cheap" labour (Portes 1978); and the regulation of class conflict (Jenkins 1978). It must be pointed out, however, that recent class conflict between domestic farm

workers and growers did not develop in either Ontario or Manitoba until after foreign workers had been brought in.

Given the recent mobility of capital on a global scale, many researchers now question the permanent functional necessity of migrant labour (see, for example, Bach and Schraml 1982:324, 326; Gibson and Graham 1986:143). General consensus now has it that,

because it constituted a solution to a particular problem at a particular point in time, one cannot assume that the migrant labour system will constitute a permanent characteristic, or at least not in terms of its earlier size and form (Miles 1982:163).

Wall's (1992) preoccupation is with the "personalistic" relations that certain ethnic groups establish with Ontario growers out of dependency on the latter for such "favours" as housing and job opportunities. Wall, however, seems to be unaware of the fact that, such relations aside, adequate housing and guaranteed employment are *mandatory*, not favours, under Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Programs and that the personalistic (and humiliating) labour relations that she describes are little more than examples of the crude strategies of labour discipline that characterize the creation of absolute surplus value.

The passivity that the dependency perspective normally accords to human subjects is due, in part, to its focus upon structure rather than process (Roseberry 1988:170). In order to resolve the impasse between the individual and the structural approaches to migration, dependency theorists now

call for an analysis of household subsistence strategies within the wider social, economic, and political contexts in which they occur (Bach and Schraml 1982; Schmink 1984; Wood 1981, 1982).

Marxists have moved in the opposite direction. Rejecting what they consider the economic determinism of Castles and Kosacks' (1985) classic work on capitalism and migrant labour, they focus instead on the role of the state and the incorporation of migrant labour into specific production relations in receiving countries. Satzewich (1991), for example, focuses almost exclusively on the state's role in admitting Caribbean farm workers into Canada on a temporary basis. Phizacklea and Miles (1980) concentrate on the intersection of class, race, and ethnic identification of both domestic and immigrant (mainly West Indian) workers in Britain in order to explain their level of involvement in certain types of group action. They conclude that the class consciousness that exists among these workers is in danger of being fragmented by racist attitudes toward blacks and that the formation of inter-ethnic alliances between workers from the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent seems unlikely.

In a similar vein, McAll (1990:120-125) suggests that:

If...ethnicity gives way to class at the level of perceived identity, in the case of long-distance labour migration class can give way to ethnicity... [Coming] to a consciousness of class can be a long and difficult process and one that is liable to be thrown into reverse, while coming to a consciousness of oneself as a group in opposition

to other groups (ethnicity) is the immediate consequence of contact between groups.

Nagengast and Kearney (1990) illustrate this process very clearly in the case of the development of ethnic consciousness and, subsequently, of political action among Mixtec migrants in order to press for their rights along the US-Mexican border. One is still left with the question, however, as to why a consciousness of class may give way to a consciousness of ethnicity in one case and a consciousness of ethnicity to a consciousness of class in another. To answer this, one must take a closer look at the role of the state.

2.5 THE ROLE OF THE STATE

Until recently, the role of the state in capitalist societies has largely been ignored. Non-Marxists, especially assimilationists, would argue that such societies are, of necessity, stratified on the basis of individual or group achievement. From an assimilationist perspective, if the individual or the group--be it a race, class (in the non-Marxist sense), or ethnic group--occupies a lower position in a society's system of stratification, it is not due to any fault of society, which offers ample opportunity for social mobility. Rather, it is due to the individual's or the group's own unwillingness or inability to achieve higher status. In fact, the state itself, through its paternalistic, charitable, and protectionist policies, is considered responsible for blocking the individual's or group's chances

to become socially mobile. According to assimilationists, the state must refrain from "meddling" in the economy and allow the invisible and non-discriminatory hand of the market to determine the worth of the individual or the group. Why the state has had to intervene with social reforms that at least give the appearance of equality is seldom questioned by non-Marxists (Thompson 1988:96).

Marxists would argue that the state under capitalism is not simply a neutral arbitrator between competing classes or groups (see, for example, Glazer and Moynihan 1975). Rather, the state acts in the general interests of capital by fulfilling three basic yet contradictory functions: accumulation, legitimization, and coercion (Panitch 1980:192). In relation to Canadian agriculture, the accumulation function consists of four main strategies (Basran and Hay 1988:44-45):

- (1) To regulate the fiscal and monetary climate for economic growth through private enterprise;
- (2) To underwrite the private risks of production at public expense by subsidizing farmers in order to appease both consumer and agribusiness interests (the latter of which are also heavily subsidized);
- (3) To provide the technical infrastructure for capitalist development through public utilities (road, rail, and air transport and communications, hydro-electric power, etc.); and

- (4) To provide a capitalist labour market through control of land and immigration policies, and to absorb the social costs of production through education, health care, unemployment insurance, and welfare.

This last strategy forms part of the state's legitimization function, the purpose of which is to defuse political unrest on the part of subordinate groups or classes. In fact, the state may choose to deflect attention away from poverty and inequality by defining them as "ethnic" or "racial" problems rather than as a "class" problem (Thompson 1988:99). Only when the legitimization functions fails does the state resort to its coercive function to suppress popular or working class resistance through force.

Contrary to dependency theorists, who assume that the state is the direct instrument of the capitalist class (see, for example, Wallerstein 1979:69-70), Marxists assume that:

the exercise of the various state functions is by no means uniform in all periods and in all societies, and that the size and prominence of any one of these state functions must be examined in light of the 'empirically given circumstances' of a particular society (Panitch 1980:193).

Nowhere was this more evident than in the state's refusal, for almost twenty years, to supply commercial market gardeners in Ontario with migrant labour from the Caribbean (Satzewich 1991), that is, to exercise certain aspects of its accumulation function on behalf of capital. Despite persistent lobbying on the part of influential farm organizations from 1947 and 1963, the state flatly denied that

labour shortages existed in the industry. Increased pressure on the state only provoked the response that farmers themselves were to blame for their labour recruitment and retention problems because of their unwillingness to provide domestic workers with adequate wages, housing, and transportation. Not until 1965 did the state grudgingly agree that farmers' labour problems might, indeed, be structural (that is, not under their direct control) and begin to negotiate the terms of a contract by which Caribbean workers would be allowed into Canada on a seasonal basis. The response of the state to requests for Mexican workers by Manitoba commercial market gardeners followed a similar although not identical pattern ten years later.⁴

In Ontario, the state had been concerned about potential "race relations" problems if it were to admit black workers into Canada. In Manitoba, its concern was to justify the use of Mexican workers⁵ in light of high unemployment rates on Indian reservations. Ironically, the "race relations" problem in Manitoba came to manifest itself as blatant racism not toward Mexican, but toward Indian farm labourers, a strange twist on much of the literature which finds that migrant (or immigrant), not domestic, labour is the object of racism (see, for example, Bustamante 1983; Castles and Kosack 1985; Miles 1982; Phizacklea and Miles, 1980; Satzewich 1991). This only serves to illustrate the hypothesis, stated above, that

neither the object nor the content of racism is uniform over time but, rather, is culturally and historically specific.

In summary, I would argue that the best approach to understanding class, race, and ethnic relations in Manitoba commercial market gardening is, first, to determine the primary classes that constitute the industry and, second, to identify the class fractions that have formed within it. I argue that Manitoba farmers are members of the petty bourgeoisie based upon the fact that they own and operate the means of production and that, since 1945, class fractions of small, medium, and large have developed, albeit in a somewhat arbitrary manner. In the case of farm workers, class fractions have developed on the basis of physical and/or cultural traits, a process called racialization. The specific manner in which racialized class fractions are either incorporated into or denied access to specific production relations depends; to a large extent, upon the ideology of racism held by either the state and/or employers. Both the object and content of racism, however, change over time and the effects of this in Manitoba commercial market gardening are explored more fully in Chapter 4.

NOTES

1. The choice of primarily Canadian examples is intentional. The justification for this choice hinges on the assumption that class, race, and ethnic relations manifest themselves in culturally and historically specific ways.
2. Since group settlement on the prairies was an integral part of Canada's early immigration policy (see Figure 2.2), ethnic distinctions would also have been important, but apparently they had little influence on what crops were produced in the past and even less so today. Dawson (1936:378), for example, notes that wheat had been the main cash crop of most of those who took up agriculture on the prairies and, in the Red River Valley in particular, grain crops (wheat, oats, barley, rye, and flax) were by far the most important, followed by the raising of livestock (Murchie 1936:135-136). Today, of course, Manitoba's commercial market gardeners are of diverse ethnic origins. Obviously, industry requirements have always cross-cut both ethnic and class boundaries.
3. Cecil and Ebanks' (1991) choice of terms is somewhat confusing. First, the analogy they draw between "plantations" and "neo-plantations" is questionable since these are entirely different modes of production (slave and capitalist, respectively). Second, their judgement as to the cultural "relevance" or "irrelevance" of such systems seems to be based upon whether or not off-plantation relations are "easy and natural" [sic] (Cecil and Ebanks, p. 391). It is left to the reader to infer what this might mean.
4. The change in attitude of the federal government toward importing temporary workers from the Caribbean and Mexico corresponded to changes in Canada's immigration policy in 1962, 1967, and again in 1974. These changes are said to have entailed a shift from a post-war policy of "white only or white if possible" (Hawkins 1977:78) to one of "tap on, tap off" (Parai 1975:454), thus tying immigration more closely to the country's economic needs. Ideally, this allows for increased immigration during economic expansion and decreased immigration during economic contraction (Parai, p. 454). Cappon (1975:52) argues that, in reality, these changes represent "the subservience of public policy to private interest", the most blatant example of which is Canada's "guestworker" programs. Satzewich (1991:179) is quick to point out, however, that, while this may be true, it is no coincidence that such workers have not been granted citizenship status. Their temporary status in Canada is not entirely due to economic imperatives but in part to the persistence of racism in immigration policy.

5. The state actually preferred Mexican to Caribbean workers because they were "racially" closer to Canada's white majority (Satzewich 1991:172), but apparently not "close enough" to warrant citizenship status.

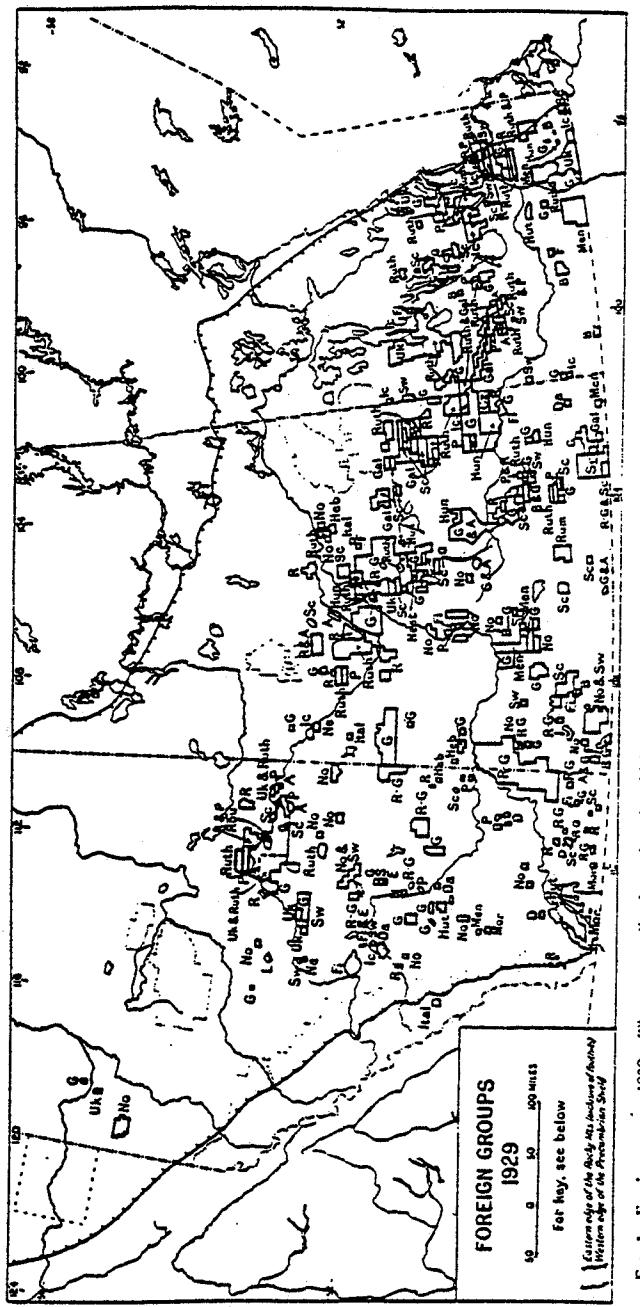


FIG. 1—Foreign groups, 1929. The areas outlined are those in which the groups still retain to some extent their old-world practices and languages. Key to symbols:
 A, Austrian; B, Bulgarians; Cz, Czechoslovakia; D, Dutch; Da, Danes; E, Estonians; F, French; Fi, Finns; G, Germans; Gal, Galicians; H, Hungarians; Hut, Hutterites; Ic, Icelanders; Ita, Italian; L, Letts; Men, Mennonites; Mor, Moravians; No, Negroes; Nest, Nestorians ("Assyrians"); No, Norwegians; P, Poles; R, Russians; Rum, Romanians; S, Swiss; Sc, Scandinavians (undifferentiated); Uk, Ukrainians.

Figure 2.2 Group Settlement on the Prairies (Dawson 1936).

CHAPTER 3

MARKET GARDENING IN MANITOBA

3.1 EARLY DEVELOPMENT

It is difficult at best to trace the exact origins of market gardening in Manitoba. There are several reasons for this. First, while gardening was common (and highly successful), there were few commercial endeavours for lack of both local markets and labour until well into the 1900's (Morton 1957:256). It was only slowly, in and around what is now Winnipeg, that market gardeners began to supply the needs of city-dwellers who had neither the time nor the know-how to grow their own food. Second, it was not until after sectoral expansion in 1945 that complete statistics on both potato and vegetable production began to be published by the Manitoba Department of Agriculture. Third, Manitoba's agricultural sector has long been dominated by wheat production which overshadows virtually all else in importance. For years, the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association was the "official" voice of all Manitoba farmers; market gardeners would later follow its lead on issues of relevance to their own industry.

In spite of these problems, one can make some brief references to the earliest market gardeners. These early

growers, from various ethnic backgrounds, were some of the first to gain access to Red and Assiniboine river lots in the late 1800's and early 1900's. "Crops needing intensive care, or those grown especially for the early market occupied the smaller acreages close to the rivers, and whenever possible on river flats" (Peters 1988:254). Larger acreages further back from the rivers were given over to potatoes. Until the late 1930's, almost 90% of market gardening in the province was located on these lots.

Growers would combine their earnings from market gardening with those from other small businesses or from wage labour. To varying degrees, they were assisted in their gardening endeavours by government-sponsored societies and institutes, all of whose general goals were to promote more efficient crop production.

The older Agricultural Societies had done useful work by means of fairs and the competitive display of...produce; and this work continued. But the Institutes were designed to bring agricultural science directly to the individual farmer and to apply it on the individual farm (Morton 1957:256).

The first of these institutes to be established was the Brandon Experimental Farm in 1888, where exploratory research into plant adaptability was carried out. In 1905, the Manitoba Agricultural College was established and, in 1915, the Morden Research Station, but it was not until the Depression and war years (1929-1945) that any notable advances were made in market gardening. During the 1930's, for example, the Morden Research Station disseminated information on recommended plant

varieties by region in order to promote agricultural diversification. With regard to south central Manitoba, it was concluded at the time that:

Where fertile soil occurs in close proximity to a large city, or if the transportation facilities are good and costs low, the most economical use of such land is generally the growing of vegetables and small fruits. A small acreage is usually sufficient for the market gardener, and the price of the land is too high to allow for any but this most intensive use (Murchie 1936:48).

And, during the Second World War, the Manitoba Agricultural College initiated a program of vegetable seed production in order to meet local food shortages.

Why the relatively belated interest on the part of the Dominion Government in promoting market gardening? For one reason, the west had been slow to produce an agricultural staple in enough abundance to support the commercial, financial, and industrial centres of the east (Fowke 1978:220). Since wheat production seemed the most promising at the time, it became the primary focus of agricultural institutes until the 1930's, when the market for wheat collapsed. Only then did the government realize that crop diversification, rather than exclusive dependence upon wheat, should be pursued. For another reason, the government had devoted more time, overall, to immigration and the settlement of the west than to the extension of technical assistance to farmers (Fowke, pp. 177-178).

Such assistance, at any rate, was seen as controversial by some farmers, who argued that there was no place for

government intervention in a free enterprise economy. Even more controversial, however, were the protective tariffs on goods that eastern manufacturers had imposed upon western farmers. On the one hand, farmers were encouraged to expand and modernize their holdings. On the other hand, expanded production and greater technical efficiency could only provide farmers with an elusive income incentive, since one area in which the government was hesitant to assist was that of marketing.

Dyson's Pickles, one of the first processing plants to be built in Winnipeg in 1887, provided an outlet for cucumbers, cauliflower, and onions. Small farmers' markets--one on the corner of Dufferin Avenue and a second on Colony Street--existed as well. Most market gardeners, however, sold their produce door-to-door using horse-drawn carts until complaints by retail grocers about these "peddling" activities prompted city councillors to open a Central Farmers' Market behind City Hall in 1914. But a central marketing location was no solution to the problem of having to "buy dear and sell cheap", the beginning of the cost-price squeeze from which farmers have never been able to escape. Some farmers began to take action.

The years 1910 to 1930 saw the rise of "agrarian populism", that is, the organized protest by small farmers from British Columbia to the Maritimes against the effects of unfettered capitalist development (Conway 1981:4-5). In 1910, the Canadian Council of Agriculture, of which the Manitoba

Grain Growers' Association was a part, presented various resolutions to the Dominion Government demanding, above all, "reciprocal Free Trade between Canada and the United States in all horticultural, agricultural and animal products, spraying materials, fertilizers, illuminating, fuel and lubricating oils, cement, fish and lumber" (Morton 1967:297). An additional concern was to gain control of the annual harvest and, following the lead of prairie wheat producers, some Manitoba market gardeners attempted to organize themselves into early co-operatives (see section 3.3.1).

However cohesive it may have been, this class-based response of the traditional petty bourgeoisie to the growing power of capital rapidly disintegrated after World War II (Stirling and Conway 1988:82), just as its common interests with the working class had, decades earlier (Phillips 1990:15).

Ignoring, or never fully understanding, their real location in the larger economy, it is not surprising that Populists fail to see themselves as representing a class from the past which stands between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and whose interests lie with neither, yet whose historical fate it is to join one or the other as the logic of capitalist competition threatens its members' ability to exist (Conway 1981:6).

The dilemma of the petty bourgeoisie of having little control over marketing, and even less over the cost of production, continues today.

3.2 POST-WAR TRENDS IN MARKET GARDENING

After 1945, certain trends began to appear as Canadian agriculture became increasingly integrated into the capitalist economy. These trends, which include the appearance of larger yet fewer farms, increasing expenses and, for many, decreasing income, correlate strongly with the division of the traditional petty bourgeoisie into several class fractions and even with the rise of a small capitalist class of farmers. Manitoba market gardeners were not immune to these trends.

The years 1945 to 1960 were ones of expansion in market gardening as some growers began to move their operations out of the Winnipeg area and into rural Manitoba. The move was encouraged by the Manitoba Department of Agriculture which, in an attempt to promote crop diversification in a predominantly wheat economy, slowly convinced farmers to experiment with special crops in the "Pembina Triangle", a 600 square mile area of sandy loams that extends from Haskett on the U.S. border, northwest to Thornhill, east to Rosenfeld, and south to just west of Emerson (*Winnipeg Tribune* [hereafter WT] 1958:5). Initial results were overwhelmingly successful but did not come without certain financial risks; a grower could not go into special crops on a small scale. He/she required (1) a large acreage on which to at least partially mechanize, and (2) costly storage facilities for his/her crops. Labour may have been cheaper in rural Manitoba but, because of the labour-intensive nature of commercial market gardening, he/she

now required more labour than before. Those who could made this transition until, today, only a handful of medium and large growers produce what it once took hundreds of small ones to raise (Peters 1988:299).

One of the more notable trends of this transition has been the decrease in the number of farms in Manitoba, combined with an increase in the size of those remaining (see Table 3.1). It must be kept in mind, however, that the figures tend to conceal the range of variability in farm sizes (see Tables 3.2 and 3.3); in fact, the acreage categories were changed in 1971 by Statistics Canada to reflect the increase in farm size. Although the divisions between "small", "medium", and "large" farms are arbitrary, one nonetheless notices the tendency of small farms to increase or hold fairly steady in number over the years, of medium farms to decrease in number, and of large farms to definitely increase in number.

Stirling and Conway (1988:76) suggest that the trend may be toward a "disappearing middle", that is, a polarization of farms into "small" and "large". Why this is occurring is uncertain, but it may be related to the fact that tax incentives introduced in 1972 have made the consolidation of farms possible and even advantageous for their owners. Thus, while the number of family farms has decreased since 1971, the number of partnership arrangements and legally constituted companies has increased (see Table 3.4). These latter arrangements have the benefit of transferring farm property

Table 3.1

Numbers and Size of Farms, Manitoba 1946-1991.

	Number of Farms	Average Size (acres)
1946	54,448	306
1951	52,383	338
1956	49,201	364
1961	43,306	420
1966	39,747	480
1971	34,981	543
1976	32,104	593
1981	29,442	639
1986	27,336	700
1991	25,706	not available

Sources:

1946-1986: Manitoba Agriculture Yearbook 1989, Table 100B.

1991: Statistics Canada 1992, 1991 Census of Canada,
Agriculture Manitoba (Pt. 1), Catalogue 95-363,
Table 11.1.

Table 3.2
Percentage of Farms Classified by Size,
Manitoba 1946-1966.

	1946	1951	1956	1961	1966
Acres					
1-4	not available	1.3	0.9	0.9	1.1
5-10	not available	2.2	2.2	1.3	1.6
11-50	not available	4.5	4.2	3.2	3.3
51-100	not available	4.9	4.6	3.9	3.8
101-200	not available	25.5	22.5	19.0	15.7
201-299	not available	7.8	7.8	8.1	7.1
300-479	not available	29.0	29.0	28.8	26.7
480-639	not available	12.0	13.6	15.1	15.3
640-959	not available	9.4	11.1	13.5	16.0
960-1279	not available	2.2	2.6	3.7	5.3
1280 and over	not available	1.2	1.5	2.5	4.1

Sources:

- 1946-1956: Statistics Canada 1957, 1956 Census of Canada,
Agriculture Manitoba, Table 3.
1961-1966: Statistics Canada 1973, 1971 Census of Canada,
Agriculture Manitoba, Catalogue 96-708, Table 4.

Table 3.3

Percentage of Farms Classified by Size,
Manitoba 1971-1991.

	1971	1976	1981	1986	1991
Acres					
under 10	1.9	1.9	2.6	2.8	2.3
10-69	4.9	5.8	6.2	6.3	6.5
60-239	18.3	17.6	18.3	17.9	18.4
240-399	22.1	19.3	16.9	15.6	14.5
400-559	17.3	15.8	14.0	12.5	11.8
560-759	14.2	14.3	13.2	12.8	11.9
760-1119	12.5	14.1	14.3	14.3	14.3
1120-1599	5.5	6.6	8.0	9.1	9.8
1600-2239	1.9	2.6	3.8	4.7	5.2
2240-2879	0.6	0.9	1.3	2.0	2.1
2880 and over	0.8	1.1	1.4	2.0	1.1
3520 and over	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Sources:

1971-1986: Statistics Canada 1987, 1986 Census of Canada,
Agriculture Manitoba, Catalogue 96-109, Table 29.
 1991: Statistics Canada 1992, 1991 Census of Canada,
Agriculture Manitoba (Pt. 1), Catalogue 95-363,
Table 11.1.

Table 3.4

Number of Farms Classified by Type of Organization, Manitoba 1946-1991.

				Legally Constituted Company (2)		
	Total	Individual or Family	Partnership (1)	Family	Other	Other (3)
1946	54,448	not available	not available	not available	not available	not available
1951	52,383	not available	not available	not available	not available	not available
1956	49,201	not available	not available	not available	not available	not available
1961	43,306	not available	not available	not available	not available	not available
1966	39,747	not available	not available	not available	not available	not available
1971	34,981	32,183	2094	548	67	89
1976	32,104	29,748	973	1089	165	129
1981	29,442	25,701	2653	882	85	121
1986	27,336	22,869	3229	1035	81	122
1991	25,706	17,017	7075	1279	207	128

(1) Written or verbal.

(2) Shares owned mostly by operator and his/her family or by some other persons or business.

(3) Institutions, community pastures, land operated privately for an estate or trust, Hutterite colonies, co-operatives.

Source:

1971-1991: Statistics Canada 1992, 1991 Census of Canada, Census Overview of Canadian Agriculture, Catalogue 93-348, Table 4.

from generation to generation without placing an excessive financial burden on either (Hay and Basran 1988:17). In spite of this trend, however, data collected from the Manitoba Vegetable Producers' Marketing Board indicate that, of those commercial market gardeners supplying the board, just over half the farms (29 out of 51) remain family units while just under half (22 out of 51) are either partnerships or family companies. Family units are most common among potato producers while partnerships or family companies predominate among five of the six largest vegetable producers.

There are, however, limitations on how large a farm can become. The most efficient crop production is carried out on an optimum number of acres, above which production is rendered inefficient due to the large amount of fixed capital invested. The larger the acreage and the more mechanized the operation, the less flexibility a farmer has to downsize or diversify in bad years, which may be one of the reasons that the six largest vegetable farms in Manitoba range in size from 100 to 800 acres, with the average being approximately 360 acres. This is well below the 1986 average farm size of 700 acres as shown in Table 3.1; in fact, even the largest vegetable farm of 800 acres could reasonably fall within the "middle" size category in Table 3.3.

A second indication of the integration of farms into the capitalist economy is the increase in the value of agricultural products sold. Table 3.5 illustrates this trend;

Table 3.5

Percentage of Farms Classified by Value of Agricultural Products Sold, Manitoba 1946-1991.

	1946	1951	1956	1961	1966	1971	1976	1981	1986	1991
Under \$2500	67.6	50.1	not available	43.9	31.1	27.5	14.9	9.9	7.6	7.1
\$2500-\$9999	29.8	46.4	not available	48.7	48.2	45.4	26.6	17.3	14.0	13.1
\$10000-\$49000	1.0	3.6	not available	7.5	19.1	25.3	47.0	43.1	35.3	34.4
\$50000-\$99999	N/A	N/A	not available	N/A	1.6	1.7	8.5	18.8	21.6	20.8
\$100000-\$249999	N/A	N/A	not available	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.0	8.8	17.0	18.5
\$250000 and over	N/A	N/A	not available	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2.0	4.5	6.0

Sources:

1946: Statistics Canada 1949, 1946 Census of Canada, Vol. IV, Agriculture (Manitoba), Table 35.

1951: Statistics Canada 1953, 1951 Census of Canada, Vol. VI, Agriculture (Manitoba), Table 34.

1961-1966: Statistics Canada 1973, 1971 Census of Canada, Agriculture Manitoba, Catalogue 96-708, Table 3.

1971-1981: Statistics Canada 1982, 1981 Census of Canada, Agriculture Manitoba, Catalogue 96-908, Table 3.

1986: Statistics Canada 1987, 1986 Census of Canada, Agriculture Manitoba, Catalogue 96-109, Table. 27.

1991: Statistics Canada 1992, 1991 Census of Canada, Agriculture Manitoba (Pt. 2), Catalogue 95-364, Table 28.

since 1946, the percentage of Manitoba farms with sales below \$10,000 has decreased, while the percentage those with sales above \$10,000 has increased. In 1991, 79.7 percent of farms reported sales of \$10,000 or more as opposed to only 1 percent in 1946.

Some researchers, e.g., Ghorayshi (1990), assume a direct correlation between value of agricultural products sold and farm size, that is, the greater the value, the larger the farm and, in some cases, this may be true. Horticultural data indicate, for example, that from 1947 to 1980 the total value of commercial (fresh-market and processed) and non-commercial (home-use) vegetables has increased (see Table 3.6; sudden drops in value are usually attributable to inclement weather). According to Statistics Canada, data on processed and non-commercial vegetables were "unavailable" after 1980. Even so, the total value of fresh-market vegetables alone in 1989 was \$5,800,000. If, as Statistics Canada claims, 227 farms reported, this averages approximately \$25,000 per farm. Of course, this is only an average; the very smallest farms might average much less while the very largest, much more. Yet one only needs to consider the effects of the subsidy war presently occurring between the United States and the European Economic Community in the wheat sector. As a result, Canadian wheat producers, many of whom farm thousands of acres, claim that they are receiving Depression-level prices for their crops. It thus becomes obvious that virtually any farm,

Table 3.6
Value of Selected Horticultural Crops,
Manitoba 1936-1991.

- Thousands of Dollars -

	Potatoes	Commercial Vegetables		Non-Commercial Vegetables
		Fresh	Processing	
1936	1,408	not available	not available	not available
1937	1,389	not available	not available	not available
1938	1,110	not available	not available	not available
1939	1,935	not available	not available	not available
1940	1,659	not available	not available	not available
1941	2,291	not available	not available	not available
1942	2,018	not available	not available	not available
1943	2,745	not available	not available	not available
1944	1,572	not available	not available	not available
1945	2,124	not available	not available	not available
1946	2,103	not available	not available	not available
1947	2,663	2,200	250	1,116
1948	2,505	2,640	300	1,400
1949	2,460	2,500	275	1,400
1950	2,543	2,250	250	1,400
1951	3,321	2,250	250	1,400
1952	3,893	2,250	400	1,500
1953	1,853	2,250	400	1,500
1954	2,586	2,500	500	1,500
1955	2,649	2,750	800	1,750

1956	2,747	3,250	1,000	1,750
1957	2,992	3,750	1,050	1,750
1958	2,220	3,750	1,050	1,750
1959	2,432	2,812	1,010	1,750
1960	2,448	3,000	1,250	1,800
1961	1,802	2,900	1,250	1,800
1962	2,989	3,000	1,250	1,750
1963	2,772	3,300	1,250	1,750
1964	7,488	1,469	900	2,500
1965	7,077	1,640	346	2,500
1966	4,909	1,461	442	2,500
1967	5,626	2,482	398	2,500
1968	5,580	1,662	398	2,500
1969	7,297	1,996	378	2,500
1970	6,810	2,023	275	2,500
1971	7,257	2,757	300	2,500
1972	7,680	3,165	240	2,500
1973	9,258	3,135	240	2,500
1974	12,878	2,374	240	2,500
1975	17,500	2,993	375	2,500
1976	14,100	3,053	400	3,000
1977	21,475	2,802	200	3,000
1978	24,560	3,785	200	3,000
1979	22,490	4,456	230	3,500
1980	29,280	5,677	130	4,500
1981	36,140	6,711	not available	not available
1982	30,500	7,288	not available	not available
1983	27,082	6,037	not available	not available
1984	33,562	9,865	not available	not available

1985	38,025	6,466	not available	not available
1986	33,577	10,150	not available	not available
1987	49,889	11,153	not available	not available
1988	51,150	8,852	not available	not available
1989	45,239	5,800	not available	not available
1990	not available	not available	not available	not available
1991	not available	not available	not available	not available

Sources:

1936-1980: 100 Years of Agriculture in Manitoba.
 1981-1989: Manitoba Agriculture Yearbook (annual).

through forces beyond its control, can change from one sales class to another regardless of its size. One cannot, therefore, assume a direct correlation between value of agricultural products and farm size; any divisions between small, medium, and large farms may be entirely arbitrary.

Nonetheless, if one considers the expenses required to maintain a farm in Manitoba, one can see that the income of many farms would be inadequate (compare, for example, Tables 3.5 and 3.7). Table 3.7 indicates that total farm expenses (the cost of production) have greatly increased from \$65,370,000 (approximately \$1200 per farm) in 1946 to \$1,531,563,000 (approximately \$54,565 per farm) in 1991. Machinery expenses, for example, peaked during the mid-1950's, then declined, suggesting that the majority of Manitoba farms had succeeded in mechanizing as far as possible by then. Yet machinery remains the second-highest source of expenditures next to crop expenses. As with machinery expenses, crop expenses (seed, fertilizer, pesticide) are also controlled by a few large corporations (Brownstone 1961:328). Further, while expenditures on rent and taxes have steadily declined due to falling land values, interest on debts has climbed fairly steadily over the years. In fact, the only area over which farmers have some control is the cost of labour. This can be reduced through mechanization, as has occurred in the potato and beet sectors, and/or by seeking out the cheapest sources of labour possible, as in the vegetable sector.¹

Table 3.7

**Total Farm Expenses and Percent Distribution of Expenses
by Major Sources, Manitoba 1946-1991.**

- Thousands of Dollars -
Percent of Total Farm Expenses Contributed By

	Total (1)	Machinery	Crop Expenses	Livestock Expenses	Rent/Taxes	Interest on Debt.	Wages	Other (2)
1946	65,370	21,637 (33.1%)	2,456 (3.8%)	8,478 (13.0%)	15,039 (23.0%)	2,807 (4.3%)	10,692 (16.4%)	4,261 (6.5%)
1951	94,450	36,169 (38.3%)	5,008 (5.3%)	9,201 (9.7%)	18,504 (19.6%)	5,198 (5.5%)	11,899 (12.6%)	8,471 (9.0%)
1956	99,828	41,176 (41.2%)	5,851 (5.9%)	8,923 (8.9%)	16,759 (16.8%)	6,412 (6.4%)	11,058 (11.1%)	9,649 (9.7%)
1961	119,168	46,028 (38.6%)	10,458 (8.8%)	11,312 (9.5%)	18,882 (15.8%)	8,833 (7.4%)	12,571 (10.5%)	11,084 (9.3%)
1966	175,424	51,551 (29.4%)	26,049 (14.8%)	20,177 (11.5%)	23,829 (13.6%)	17,948 (10.2%)	14,341 (8.2%)	21,529 (12.3%)
1971	217,162	60,949 (28.1%)	31,067 (14.3%)	32,356 (14.9%)	22,152 (10.2%)	22,275 (10.3%)	16,228 (7.5%)	32,135 (14.8%)
1976	534,203	116,982 (21.9%)	117,670 (22.0%)	86,596 (16.2%)	54,375 (10.2%)	57,735 (10.8%)	28,174 (5.3%)	72,671 (13.6%)
1981	1,228,907	248,757 (20.2%)	307,913 (25.1%)	148,715 (12.1%)	115,010 (9.4%)	210,582 (17.1%)	63,176 (5.1%)	134,754 (11.0%)
1986	1,402,670	273,253 (19.5%)	394,490 (28.1%)	178,917 (12.8%)	136,880 (9.8%)	160,371 (11.4%)	100,691 (7.2%)	158,068 (11.3%)
1991	1,531,563	309,516 (20.2%)	384,725 (25.1%)	174,600 (11.4%)	138,891 (9.1%)	152,397 (10.0%)	129,648 (8.5%)	241,786 (15.8%)

(1) Not including depreciation on buildings and machinery.

(2) Includes utilities, repairs, insurance, premiums, etc.

Source:

Statistics Canada, Agriculture Economic Statistics, Catalogue 21-603E.

3.3 MARKETING STRATEGIES

3.3.1 Marketing Co-operatives

If prairie farmers spoke with one voice on some issues, they certainly did not on others. Among market gardeners, nowhere was this more evident than in the realm of marketing.

The problem actually began at the point of production. Not only did insects and plant diseases pose a major problem in the early years of market gardening, but few growers were concerned with quality in the grading and packaging of their crops. The resulting inferior produce was what then appeared in the marketplace. Local wholesalers, retailers, and consumers alike rejected what they considered to be typical of Manitoba produce and insisted instead on produce imported from the United States. A lesson in quality production might have been learned from this were it not for the more unscrupulous buyers who, taking advantage of this disorganization, forced all farmers into fierce competition among themselves for a share of the local market at depressed prices.

In response to a disorganized market, several growers' groups established themselves in Winnipeg in the Northend Farmers' Market, off Main Street, in the early 1930's. The Manitoba Vegetable and Potato Growers' Co-operative, whose members were largely from the Bird's Hill area, served the wholesale and retail trade, while the Manitoba Truck Farmers' Co-operative, whose members came mainly from Winnipeg proper, strictly served the wholesale trade. A third marketing pool,

Manitoba Associated Growers, eventually joined with the Truck Farmers' Co-op to form the Winnipeg Gardeners' Co-operative Limited in 1947.

Its first order of business, that of promotion, was to adopt the "Peak of the Market" logo which is still in use today. The second was to establish four basic principles worth quoting here, since they illustrate both the strengths and weaknesses of this and future co-operative endeavors of market gardeners:

1. Produce sold by the shareholder is sold on a commission basis. Pooling of sales is done over varying periods to determine the selling price. From this price, the handling charges, set and approved by the directors, are deducted and the net price is paid to the shareholders.
2. The grower's entire crop must be delivered to and sold through the organization.
3. A quota system assures each shareholder of his portion of the sales of the firm.
4. Each grower must guarantee his produce and absorb any claims made upon the company in respect to his product (Peters 1988:276).

The Winnipeg Gardeners' Co-op and the Manitoba Vegetable and Potato Growers' Co-op competed with one another for business until 1956 when they, too, merged to form Gardeners' Sales Limited, composed mainly of Winnipeg growers. As its membership grew to include other Manitoba growers, Gardeners' Sales expanded into a new state-of-the-art building on King Edward Street (present location of the Manitoba Vegetable Producers' Marketing Board), with facilities for washing, grading, hydro-cooling, and controlled temperature storage. Soon, Gardeners' Sales controlled approximately 65% of total potato and 80% of total vegetable production in the province

(Peters, p. 277). It also became a major supplier of agricultural equipment, chemicals, and registered seed.

Once quality could be assured, Gardeners' Sales turned its attention to promoting its product. The "Peak of the Market" logo, transferred to it from the Winnipeg Gardeners' Co-op, appeared on billboards across the prairie provinces. More importantly, though, was the establishment in 1956 of a fact-finding committee, composed of market gardeners and representatives of the Manitoba Department of Agriculture, to inform buyers of the seasonal availability of Manitoba produce and thus minimize competition from US growers. (This fact-finding function would be taken over by the Vegetable Marketing Commission in 1966). In this way, Gardeners' Sales held somewhat of an umbrella over the industry for years, diminished only by the fact that, being a co-operative, it could not gain 100 percent control over its supply. Although it had adopted the original principles of the Winnipeg Gardeners' Co-op (see above), it could not eliminate competition from farmers who continued to produce and market as they saw fit.

3.3.2 The Vegetable Growers' Association of Manitoba

While co-operatives were busy struggling for efficiency in marketing, the Manitoba Department of Agriculture granted a charter in 1953 to another group, the Vegetable Growers' Association of Manitoba (VGAM), which was to further assist in

the areas of production and promotion. The association, headed by an elected board of directors, consisted of a Potato and a Market Vegetable Section, three standing committees (Projects, Research, and Resolutions), and a special Tariff Committee. The VGAM gave exclusive voice to all market gardeners who then worked in conjunction with the federal and provincial governments, research stations, wholesalers and retailers, and consumer groups in order to advance the industry in Manitoba.

It is interesting to note the heavy government involvement in the VGAM from the outset. The idea for its formation originated in the Manitoba Agricultural College, one of the provincial Department of Agriculture's research stations. In order for its extension services to be effective, it had to reach all growers; hence, an organized group of participants proved ideal. The Department of Agriculture also provides the VGAM with secretarial services as well as pays the costs of publishing and mailing convention programs.

At the association's first convention in the same year as its formation (1953), the Deputy Minister of the Department of Agriculture set out what he considered should be the VGAM's main objectives and the means by which to attain them. These included the testing of selected plant varieties and the provision of educational services to farmers in the areas of land use and chemical application; efficient and quality production through planning and adherence to strict grading standards; and enhanced public relations through advertising

and honest merchandizing methods (Peters, p. 282). In the same year, the VGAM was assigned a potato specialist and, in 1956, a vegetable specialist.

One has only to review the wide variety of topics covered at VGAM conventions over the years to appreciate the scope of its efforts; they range from organic farming to irrigation policies to safety precautions on the worksite. The VGAM's promotional efforts have also been outstanding. Like the agricultural societies before it, the VGAM encouraged industry-wide competitions for quality produce with media coverage of these and other public events. It provided tours of farms in order to convince processing firms to establish themselves in south central Manitoba. It also gained a seat on the Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC), an influential lobbying group established in 1922. One of the goals of the CHC is to advance vegetable and potato production on a national scale. To do so requires an understanding of the industry's place in the Canadian economy and, hence, representation not only by producers but by agricultural specialists, wholesalers, and processors.

Many of the CHC's concerns center around strengthening the class position of farmers in the Canadian economy:

We hold the unequivocal view that if Canada is to advance beyond economic colonialism and a dependence on exports of basic raw resources, it must be a primary market for its own produce at reasonably compensatory returns to its producers, and that it must recognize the right to such reasonable returns for agriculture, just as it

already recognizes such rights for labor, manufacturing and commerce (Peters, p. 367).

As was mentioned above, however, farmers are at an equally distinct disadvantage in the realm of marketing as they are in that of production. Powerful interest groups, in this case wholesalers, retailers, and processors, are more likely than producers to determine "farm gate" prices, due to the fact that both sellers and buyers operate within a system of "imperfect competition"; that is, there exist many, often individual, sellers but only a few or even just one buyer (oligopsony and monopsony, respectively) who has the power to force lower prices onto sellers. This power differential seems to have eluded the CHC.

In fact, in response to the organization of market gardeners under Gardeners' Sales in the 1950's, certain buyers formed their own lobbying group in 1960--the Manitoba Fruit and Vegetable Wholesalers' Association. As with any other association interested in promoting the industry as a whole, its objectives include fostering closer co-operation between its members and between members and farmers, and supporting "desirable" and opposing "undesirable" legislation while at the same time encouraging competition on a "fair and ethical plane" (Peters, p. 342). The implication of these last two objectives for farm gate prices becomes clearer when one realizes who some of the members of this association are--Chiquita Brands Limited, Del Monte Banana Company, Sunkist Growers Limited, Scott National Limited--all powerful

corporations whose advantage lies in operating on economies of scale. The end result is that:

Because consumers do not want higher food prices but labor costs in food marketing are continually rising, processors and retailers keep constant downward pressure on farm product prices (Hiscocks 1972:21).

In spite of the advances made by the VGAM, there were two areas that were beyond their control. The first was marketing. Although the association has worked closely over the years with the Manitoba Fruit and Vegetable Wholesalers' Association, growers are still forced to sell their produce at prices below the cost of production. The second was keeping small farmers in business. This, however, may have been inevitable given the fact that the VGAM has come to represent medium, not small, producers.

3.3.3 The Manitoba Vegetable Producers' Marketing Board

Why did marketing co-operatives prove so unsuccessful as to necessitate a government-regulated marketing board? To answer this question, one must first examine the two main functions of a marketing co-operative, namely, to increase marketing efficiency and to act as a bargaining agent.

Marketing efficiency can be increased through various means such as ensuring a quality product, reducing overall handling costs, and regulating the flow of produce so as to maximize returns to individual producers. These were the

original intentions behind the principles laid down by the Winnipeg Gardeners' Co-op in 1947 (see above). Ideally, adherence to such principles should cause markets for the product to expand and, ultimately, increase and even stabilize farm income by spreading the burdens and benefits equally among its members.

But efficient marketing depends upon success in the bargaining arena, and it is here that marketing co-operatives have fallen short. Brownstone (1961:326) suggests that these shortcomings cannot be attributed to the co-operative endeavor per se.

Rather it lies in the nature of the industry itself with its many unspecialized, limited-output producers who have neither the economic or social incentives nor the discipline to organize voluntarily and remain organized.

Because membership is voluntary, the co-operative may not be able to garner enough support to command a consistent supply of the product, resulting in a loss of control over its marketing objectives.

This problem is not uncommon, as the experience of Okanagan Valley fruit growers in the 1920's illustrates. Their first attempts at voluntary co-operative marketing faltered when the industry began to expand. Markets for the surplus product became difficult to find and, as prices began to fall, an increasing number of members tried to sell independently, leading to competition between them and to even lower prices. The co-operative was subsequently re-organized on a contract

basis in an effort to secure greater control over the product. But, once supply had been seasonally regulated, non-members took advantage of the higher prices and unloaded all of their produce onto the market. Members likewise followed suit to the point where it became obvious that "the growers who stood to gain most from the activities of the co-operative were those who didn't join" (Drummond 1965:247). Thus, if the co-operative is not able to have total control over the product, its role as a bargaining agent and hence its success in marketing diminishes. In fact, the board of the early Winnipeg Gardeners' Co-op had anticipated these very problems from the outset.

There was always the great temptation for members to sell on the open market for a few cents higher price when it suited them and then to run to the pool when things got tough, or prices began to fall (Gardeners' Sales n.d.:14).²

A marketing board (as opposed to a marketing co-operative) is defined as "a compulsory, horizontal marketing organization for primary and processed natural products operating under authority delegated by the government" (Hiscocks 1972:20). The term "compulsory" means that all farms producing a given commodity in a designated region are compelled by law to adhere to the regulations of a marketing plan. In Manitoba, any grower with four or more acres of potatoes or half an acre or more of root crops (e.g., carrots, onions, turnips, parsnips, rutabagas) must sell through the Manitoba Vegetable Producers' Marketing Board (Peters

1988:289). Summer crops (e.g., lettuce, cabbage, celery, tomatoes, corn, broccoli) are exempt because of their perishable nature. The term "horizontal" means that the board controls and pools the output of all member farms.

All marketing boards have three main objectives: (1) to maintain or increase incomes of the producers of the particular commodity through price negotiation; (2) to stabilize income from the sale of the product by controlling supply; and (3) to equalize market opportunities and returns between producers (Hiscocks 1972:21). The above objectives are virtually identical to those of marketing co-operatives with one exception: "government authority through legislation" ensures compulsory, not just voluntary, participation in the marketing board.

Depending on the nature of the commodity, its relative share of the market, and the provincial or federal legislation under which it is controlled, marketing boards are classified as one of three types. The "negotiating committee" type, e.g., the Manitoba Vegetable Producers' Marketing Board, negotiates the minimum price to be received from buyers for the product. The "negotiating-agency" type, e.g., the Ontario Asparagus Growers' Marketing Board, negotiates the price and terms of sale of the product but may or may not be involved in the actual sale or collection of payment. The "central selling agency" type, e.g., the British Columbia Coast Vegetable Marketing Board, appoints an agency to control and market the

product but cannot take ownership of the product at any stage of marketing.

Established in 1972, the Manitoba Vegetable Producers' Marketing Board consists of a manager and staff and nine elected members, six of whom represent potato and three, vegetable, growers. Neither the provincial nor the federal government has any significant involvement, other than supervisory, in the board. Its stated purpose is "to maintain a fair product price for the grower and to facilitate orderly product marketing with a consistent supply of uniformly high quality product" (Peters 1988:289-290). Its powers are minimal as compared, for example, to those of the Ontario Asparagus Growers' Marketing Board or the B.C. Coast Vegetable Marketing Board (see Table 3.8). Of the thirteen possible powers and procedures allotted to marketing boards, the following characterize the Manitoba Vegetable Producers' Marketing Board (Hiscocks and Bennett 1981:272-273):

- (1) Pooling: The board pools all proceeds from sales so that each producer receives the same average price after adjustments for grade, etc.
- (2) Producer prices: The board has the power to set minimum and maximum producer prices.
- (3) Price determination: Through negotiation with buyers.
- (4) Quotas: The board has the power to set marketing quotas but not production quotas for every producer. A freight equalization levy is charged on over-quotas.

Table 3.8
Powers and Procedures of Selected Marketing Boards

	Manitoba Vegetable Producers' Marketing Board	Ontario Asparagus Growers' Marketing Board	British Columbia Coast Vegetable Marketing Board
Pooling	yes	yes	yes
Establish Consumer & Wholesale Price	no	no	wholesale & consumer
Establish Producer Price	minimum & maximum	minimum	minimum & maximum
Type of Pricing	negotiation	negotiation	fixed
Quotas	marketing	marketing	marketing
Licensing	yes	yes	yes
Seizure & Disposal	no	no	yes
Control of Inter-Provincial & Export Trade	no	yes	yes
Purchase & Sell	yes	yes	no
Market Information	no	no	no
Market Development (Domestic)	no	no	no
Market Development (Export)	no	no	no
Promotion	yes	no	yes

Source: Hiscocks, G.A. and T.A. Bennett (1981:276-277)

- (5) Licensing: The board has the power to require licensing of any persons involved in any way with the marketing process.
- (6) Purchase and sell: The board has the power to both purchase and sell the regulated products.
- (7) Promotion: The board has the power to promote the regulated products.

It is worth looking briefly at the Manitoba Vegetable Producers' Marketing Board's procedure for determining prices, for herein lies an understanding of its rather limited powers. Prices are determined through negotiation, usually with wholesalers (not, however, with processors since this falls under federal, not provincial, jurisdiction), and are subject to certain limitations. If the board competes with similar boards from other provinces, negotiations in Manitoba are postponed until prices have been set in, for example, British Columbia or Ontario. While the Manitoba Vegetable Producers' Marketing Board could apply for federal rather than provincial legislation in order to strengthen its inter-provincial powers, it is unlikely that either BC or Ontario would be willing to give up the provincial protection that each presently has. Nevertheless, if buyers consider the prices too high, they may choose to purchase less and/or to seek sources of supply which are not subject to marketing board legislation. In either case, producers are at a disadvantage in that the demand for most vegetables is fairly "price

"inelastic", that is, if the price of one item is too high, the consumer will substitute another item for it.

Even the limited powers now held by the Manitoba Vegetable Producers' Marketing Board were not won easily. As early as 1941, the Manitoba Vegetable and Potato Growers' Co-op had petitioned the provincial government for a compulsory marketing board, but the proposal first had to be voted upon by all growers who would be affected by it. The proposal was vetoed in 1958 and again in 1962 amid accusations of government interference in the voters' lists and allegations of infringement on individual rights. Small farmers feared that they would either be forced to sell all of their produce at set prices to the marketing board or else face fines or imprisonment.

It was not until 1964 that the VGAM was allowed to incorporate Gardeners' Sales into the government-controlled Manitoba Potato Marketing Commission as part of a pilot project. Its apparent success led to the formation of the Manitoba Vegetable Marketing Commission in 1965 but not, however, without opposition. Both the Liberal and the New Democratic parties accused the Conservative government of carrying out a provincial "power-grab" and argued that authority should remain at the local level. Power exercised directly by the state, as opposed to power exercised by producers and sanctioned by the state, indicated that the

Conservatives neither trusted growers nor thought them capable of running their own affairs.³

Perhaps the strongest criticism came from the Manitoba Vegetable Processors' Association who argued that government-controlled marketing boards put processors at a distinct disadvantage by interfering with free market forces. Processors would be compelled to buy vegetables at fixed prices, would not be able to grow their own produce, and would not be allowed to enter into free contracts with individual producers. The association demanded that processors be allowed to engage in "permissive marketing" so that they could buy from any source, and that the membership of marketing boards be broadened to include all interested parties.

In 1966, some growers, having formed a group called the United Vegetable Growers of Manitoba (UVGM), staged a province-wide protest against compulsory marketing, claiming that 250 small and part-time producers would be forced out of business due to excessive costs. Under such pressure, the Minister of Agriculture was obligated to investigate the marketing commissions and, in 1967, decided that the Vegetable Marketing Commission should be dismantled. The Potato Marketing Commission would continue to function for several more months before it, too, would be dismantled. Now it was the VGAM's turn to stage a protest of men and machines in front of the Manitoba Legislature. The VGAM, some 150 members strong, continued to pressure the government for a producers'

marketing board until, in 1972, both the Manitoba Vegetable Producers' Marketing Board and the Manitoba Root Crop Producers' Marketing Board were created (the two amalgamated in 1982). The VGAM, composed mainly of medium farmers, had finally achieved the protection they had been demanding for years--a provincial marketing board.

3.4 CONTRACTS WITH FOOD PROCESSORS

Gathering information on potato and vegetable processors is a difficult task due to the fact that, as private companies, they are not obligated to open their books to the public. Certain generalizations about the industry can be made, however, despite variations in the type of food processed. The implications of these generalizations for the future of commercial market gardening in Manitoba are addressed in Chapter 5.

Small Canadian-owned processing companies have long played an important part in Manitoba's history (Peters 1988:369). The David J. Dyson pickling company, mentioned above, operated from 1887 until it was sold in 1921 to Western Vinegar, which eventually folded. The Kildonan Canning Company operated from 1925 until 1950 when it was destroyed by fire. Canada Packers opened a pickling company in 1950. In Morden, Canadian Canners began canning peas, beans, corn, and beets in 1952; in 1972, it became Morden Fine Foods and, in 1978, Best

Pack of Farm King, which finally closed in 1982. In Winkler, Gardenland Cannery operated until 1972.

A recent trend across Canada, however, has been away from small, Canadian-owned firms and toward foreign-owned (mainly American-owned) ones. Presently, the major players in potato and vegetable processing in Manitoba are American-owned Carnation Company (established in 1958), Canadian-owned McCain Foods (established in the early 1960's) and, until recently, American-owned Campbell Soup Company (established in 1960). One major drawback to this trend is that foreign-owned, as opposed to Canadian-owned, branch plants may not be supplied with the latest technology nor be allowed to export to any country in which the parent company is either located or has another branch plant (Warnock 1978:109). Branch plant shutdowns, especially in times of economic crisis, are thus not uncommon.

Perhaps the most studied case of food processors in Canada is that of McCain Foods, whose origins in New Brunswick date back to the early 1900's and whose scale of operation rivals that of its foreign-owned competitors. The level of vertical integration that McCain's has achieved, from machinery and fertilizer production and sales, to land ownership, to processing and finished-product transport, has assured it of success. In fact, this success has led to increased horizontal integration as well, with plants in

Prince Edward Island, Manitoba, Alberta, the United States, and abroad (Martens 1977; Warnock 1978).

The actual amount of land that McCain's owns is unknown, although estimates range from 3,000 to 11,000 acres in New Brunswick alone (Martens 1977:6; Warnock 1978:112). Direct corporate involvement in farming, however, is on the decline in North America because it was found to be unprofitable, something that, as Warnock (p. 111) points out, farmers knew all along. Campbell's, for example, used to own experimental tomato farms outside of Portage la Prairie until the company decided to channel the funds into the University of Manitoba's agricultural research stations instead.

Rather than produce their own crops, companies such as McCain's, Carnation, and Campbell's have chosen the more lucrative alternative of entering into contractual arrangements for produce with petty commodity producers. In this way, the processor is assured a high-quality product but is absolved from the natural risks of weather, plant disease, and soil depletion, the need to finance the capital costs of starting up new farms, and the need to supervise labour (Clement 1983:233). To food processors, land ownership is primarily a speculative venture and any direct involvement in production simply serves as a lever of control over the price of produce (Warnock 1978:111).

The most contentious issue is the contracts themselves. The terms of a contract generally favor the processor who is

not legally bound to take the contracted produce on time or at all; the farmer, however, is legally bound to deliver on demand. In the case of McCain's (and Carnation), which supply farmers with inputs (machinery and/or fertilizer) in exchange for raw produce (potatoes), deliveries may be forestalled so that the interest on inputs compounds over the winter (Martens 1977:17). Such was not the case with Campbell's which did not supply its contractees with inputs. Although Martens (p. 44) claims that the contracts offered by both McCain's and Carnation are identical, I was led to believe that farmers prefer dealing with Carnation because it alone is willing to negotiate prices with farmers as a group rather than as individuals. Campbell's, like McCain's, negotiated with individuals only, thus precluding any advantages that collective bargaining would give to contractees.

The grading of produce, another problem area, is often an arbitrary process, with cuts from shipments at the discretion of company inspectors and dependent upon the percentage of the volume recovered after processing earlier shipments. Martens (p. 23) cites the example of one contractee who tried to deliver the same load of potatoes twice in one day. The first time, the inspector calculated a 54 percent cut which the farmer refused to accept; the second time, the inspector calculated a 20 percent cut for the same potatoes which the farmer then unloaded immediately. Not all processors are so

arbitrary in their grading, however; Campbell's, for example, was far more consistent.

The importing of produce is a third major concern, especially since over 80 percent of all potatoes in Manitoba are contracted to processors (not so with vegetables which are primarily destined for the fresh market). As a rule, Carnation, McCain's, and Campbell's alike import raw produce from other provinces or from the United States when there are local shortages. The danger, however, lies in the right of processors to import for reasons other than local shortages. They have been known, for example, to import cheap raw produce rather than to pay more expensive local prices.

Despite these problems, one potato farmer assured me that processors in Manitoba are not as "ruthless" as those out east. An occasional unfulfilled contract due, for example, to an "act of God" (natural disaster) is not penalized. Only when this becomes a regular occurrence will processors either buy the shortfall on the open market and charge the farmer the difference or else terminate the contract entirely. Another told me that, while farmers would prefer to be free from contracts, they do keep growers in business producing high-quality foodstuffs. Their enthusiasm is belied, however, by the opinions of other growers. Very few risk contracting all of their crops to a processor; a certain amount will always be destined for the fresh market. In fact, one vegetable producer warned others of the dangers of contracting their

crops to Campbell's in the event of a shut-down. He, himself, never once entered into a contract with the company, preferring instead to sell entirely on the fresh market.

But growers' problems keep mounting. Both McCain and Carnation, for example, had been pressuring potato farmers in southwestern Manitoba to either install irrigation systems at their own expense of more than \$650 an acre or suffer the consequence of having their contracts terminated. The installation of these systems depended, however, upon the proposed diversion of the Assiniboine River south from Portage la Prairie, a highly contentious project touted as one in which the supposed "burgeoning" populations of Carman, Morden, Winkler, and Altona would have been supplied with much-needed water. Seldom mentioned in this on-going debate were the names of McCain and Carnation, two of the major backers of the project which was opposed by a coalition of fifty-two community groups, environmental organizations, and Indian bands, all of whom draw their drinking water from the area that would have been affected. Caught in the middle, of course, were those potato producers who contract most, if not all, of their crops to McCain or Carnation. Due to such strong opposition to the project, attention has now shifted from the Assiniboine to the Red River instead.

In summary, while most researchers probably agree that capital and labour confront each other in the sphere of production, few may realize that individual capitals,

including individual farmers, confront each other as competitors in the sphere of exchange. Thus, by 1945, Manitoba market gardening became subject to the same trends that characterize the whole of Canadian agriculture, including class fractioning between small, medium, and large producers. Those who survived the transformation to commercial status and managed to consolidate themselves as a class fraction were the medium petty bourgeoisie. Nonetheless, power differentials in the sphere of exchange, especially those between growers and processors, continue to threaten the existence of the petty bourgeoisie. One area over which commercial market gardeners still maintain some control is that of the cost of labour. Their sources of labour and the means by which each was procured forms the subject of the following chapter.

NOTES

1. Ironically, it is the increase in constant capital, that is, mechanization that causes profits to fall since surplus value is created by variable capital, that is, labour power.
2. Such seemingly contradictory behavior is apparently characteristic of the agrarian petty bourgeoisie who, according to Conway (1981:5) is "simultaneously hostile to and supportive of the capitalist economy which ensnares it".
3. The 1960's was apparently noted for federal-provincial conflicts over the control of agricultural surplus. Beyond this, however, provincial governments discovered that "for relatively small expenditures...they could offer politically popular programs that helped sustain an important segment of their economy while giving their farmers an advantage in the market" (Wilson 1990:190).

CHAPTER 4

LABOUR

4.1 EARLY SOURCES

One of the earliest sources of labour that farmers in south central Manitoba depended upon, apart from that of their own families, was that of the Ojibwa from Sandy Bay, Long Plain, Indian Gardens (and its sister reserve at Swan Lake), and Roseau River, and of the Dakota (the Portage la Prairie Sioux, later the Dakota Tipi and Long Plain Sioux (see Figure 4.1)). This source of labour was not planned; most bands, aware that a scarcity of game would of necessity force them to pursue other means of subsistence, enthusiastically took up farming after 1870. The transformation of these primarily hunting and gathering peoples into farmers, however, often met with failure, not because of their "wandering nature", but because of a lack of commitment on the part of the Dominion Government to its policy of reserve agriculture (Carter 1990; Dyck 1986).

Certain bands engaged in agriculture even before this time. The Ojibwa at Indian Gardens along the Assiniboine grew corn and potatoes; those at Roseau River cultivated large

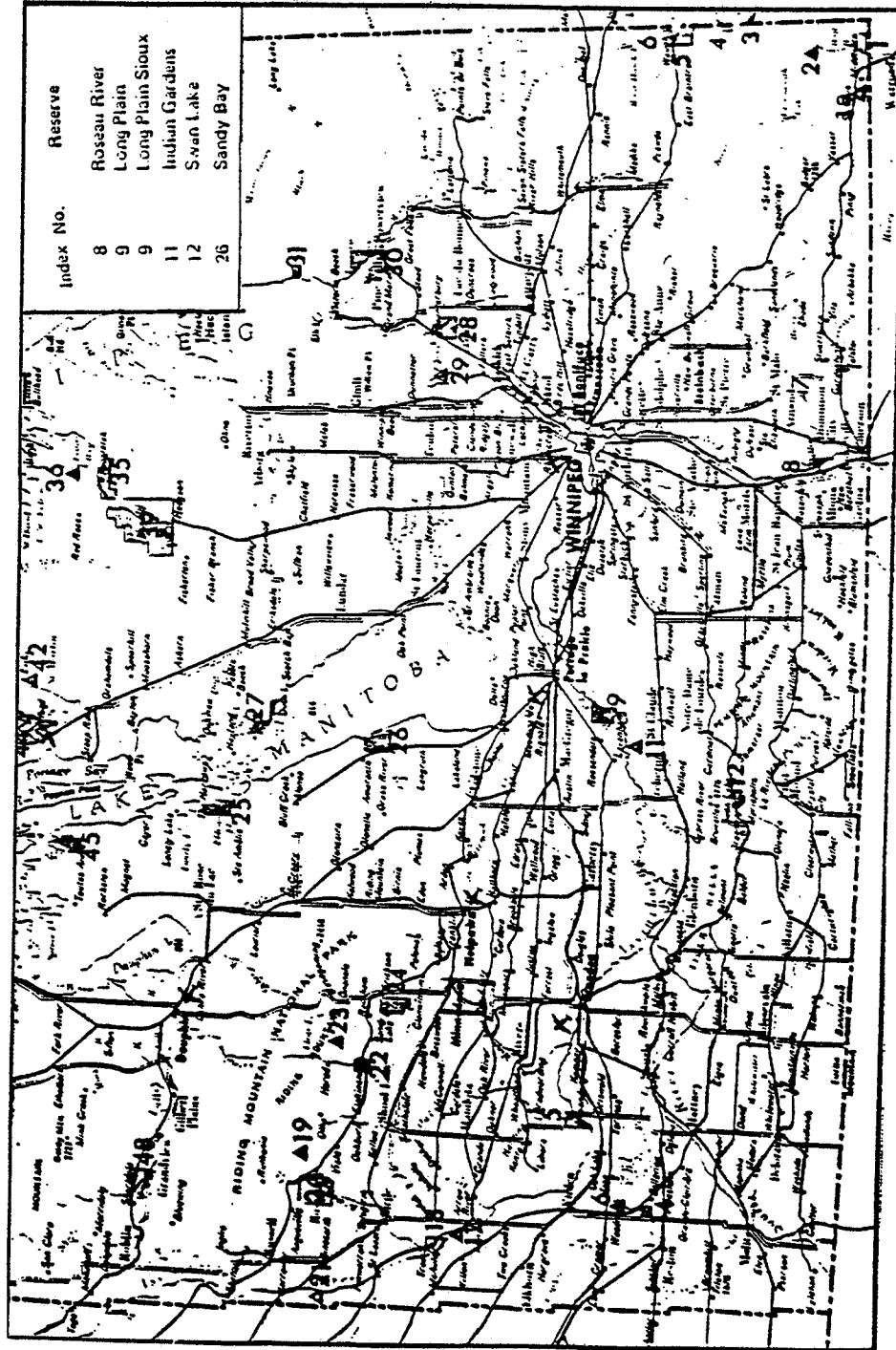


Figure 4.1 Indian Reserves in South Central Manitoba.
Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (1978).

gardens (Carter 1990:40). The Indian Gardens band, as well as the Swan Lake band (once it finally settled around 1895), showed great interest in pursuing agriculture, located as they were on fairly fertile lands where cereal and root crops seemed to do well. The Long Plain band continued to hunt until around 1884, after which it attempted to cultivate its land, but the soil proved to be too sandy. The Roseau Reserve, although apparently well-suited for agriculture, was so near the white settlements of Emerson and Dominion City that the Indians there succumbed to the influence of alcohol far sooner than any others. By 1886, they were neglecting their crops in favour of gathering seneca root (Ogletree, October 29, 1886. CSP 1888, No. 15:48) and, by 1888, were being offered high wages to help in the harvest off-reserve (Ogletree, August 21, 1888. CSP 1889, No. 16:44), both of which were far more lucrative than farming.

Two exceptions were the Ojibwa at Sandy Bay on the southwest shore of Lake Manitoba and the Dakota Tipi near Portage la Prairie. The Sandy Bay Reserve was one of the few under study whose land was unsuitable for agriculture. The band managed, however, to raise cattle successfully and make a good enough living from gathering natural resources and working on grain fields in southern Manitoba that, by 1900, Indian Agent Swinford was able to report that: "They are always well dressed and fat, which is the best proof that their resources and occupations are manifold and profitable"

(October 12. CSP 1901, No. 27:89). The Portage la Prairie Sioux, originally a small group of twenty-three families, settled on the outskirts of Portage la Prairie around 1886. Refugees of the Minnesota Uprising of 1863-1864, they escaped the attention of Indian Affairs for years and, never having been given a reserve, supported themselves as casual workers in Portage or as farmhands in its vicinity where their labour was much sought after and well remunerated for the time (Elias 1988:189; Howard 1984:33).

Despite most bands' willingness to farm, the government was often slow to provide assistance beyond what was stipulated in Treaties 1 and 2, namely, one plough and harrow per family and one ox per band (Miller 1981:86). In 1880, Indian Agent Ogletree reported to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs:

I have been urging on the members of the several bands [in the Portage la Prairie Agency] to break more land but invariably the reply is the Government will not supply us with oxen (NAC RG 10 Black, v. 3721, file 23715).

What supplies the bands did receive were often inferior:

They have been furnished--by no fault of the Government which paid the price of prime supplies and implements--with inferior and old worn out cattle, or cattle too wild for working or dairy purposes, and with supplies of all kinds of the most inferior quality, which would not be accepted at any price by the ordinary consumer (McColl, December 31, 1878. CSP 1879, No. 7:55).

Despite these setbacks, Indian agriculture did advance throughout the late 1880's--so much so, in fact, that white settlers began to complain about unfair competition from

Indian farmers. Preoccupied with the successful settlement of the west, the government turned its attention away from the promotion of Indian agriculture and toward the dismantling of the reserve system (Miller 1981:115). In the late 1800's, for example, the government began to enforce a policy of subsistence farming among the Indians, thereby restricting their land base, their access to labour-saving technology and, ultimately, their ability to compete with white farmers. The policy had the desired effect; by 1900, Indians had become so discouraged that agriculture no longer formed the basis of the reserve economy (Carter 1990:237).

From here, it was only one small step to conclude that, since extensive tracts of reserve land were simply lying idle, they should be thrown open to white settlement. "Proof" of the Indians' incorrigible nature could be found in the example of the Long Plain band which, by 1891, was "given more to roaming about than formerly" (Ogletree, August 22. CSP 1892, No. 14:45). In fact, by 1900, "many of the Indians [from the Portage la Prairie Agency worked] as labourers for the settlers" rather than farm their own lands (Swinford, October 12. CSP 1901, No. 27:85).

Several years later, one Inspector of Indian Agencies reported:

The lands of all the bands of the [Portage la Prairie] agency are now valuable, and for all the farming they are doing, or are likely to do, they would be as well on one reserve...as they would be under closer supervision and much better attention

could be given them in every respect (Marlatt, June 30, 1906. CSP 1906-1907, No. 27:105).

In the following year, Marlatt recommended with regard to the relatively well-off bands of the Manitowahapah Agency, such as Sandy Bay, that:

the Indian (if he is not to become extinct), should be removed from the settled portions of our country and placed on reservations remote from our civilization. Here he can follow his natural mode of life and be subject to the best influences of our Christianity and education, without coming in constant contact with that which is worst in us to follow (CSP 1907-1908, No. 27:102).

Incidentally, he adds: "The country surrounding Lake Winnipegosis, and on the lower reaches of Saskatchewan, is ideal for Indian life, while it is of little value for colonization". Even the Portage la Prairie Sioux, whose "model Indian community" was praised in 1900, were, by 1911, "fast becoming a general nuisance" and should be removed from the area (Logan, March 15. CSP 1912, No. 27:106).

Given the lack of commitment on the part of the Dominion Government to provide for their subsistence through agriculture, aboriginal peoples had little choice but to combine subsistence or petty commodity production with seasonal farm labour in order to survive. For decades, they were the backbone of Manitoba agriculture in the form of a floating surplus population.

4.2 WAR-TIME LABOUR

At no time were labour shortages in agriculture more acute than during Canada's participation in the First and Second World Wars. These absolute labour shortages necessitated the suspension of normal labour market relations in order to mobilize workers, especially "enemy aliens" of varying ethnic origins, within the confines of Canada's national boundaries.

During the First World War, the Dominion Government introduced conscription into the military amid cries of protest from farm organizations. Faced with the real threat of food shortages, however, the government decided to periodically exempt farmers and farm labourers from service over the war years. Those "enemy aliens"--including Ukrainians, Czechoslovakians, Bulgarians, Croatians, and Germans--already involved in essential industries and agriculture were allowed to continue; those that were not were interned and made to work for the service of the government for \$0.25 a day. Such work included the construction of roads and railways as well as of experimental farms in Kapuskasing (Ontario), Spirit Lake (Quebec), and Nappan (Nova Scotia). Initial efforts to employ these men for the service of private individuals and corporations were soon terminated due to "difficulties" with the wages being offered (Kay 1983:83-84). Between military exemptions and the use of "enemy aliens", the

needs of the agricultural sector were apparently filled and labour shortages ceased to be a problem until World War II.

At that time, the agricultural sector suffered even more severe labour shortages than during World War I, as able-bodied men and women flocked instead into the war industries and the military. By 1942, farmers and farm labourers were prohibited from any other than agricultural work; by the following year, the government had agreed to postpone military service by essential agricultural workers and to transport farm workers, free of charge, to any province that suffered labour shortages. A joint agreement between Canada and the United States also allowed free movement across the border of men and machines for the purpose of harvesting grain.

Recruitment into agricultural work did not stop here. In 1942, the beginning of the school year was postponed for two weeks so that approximately 3,000 Winnipeg high school students could harvest grain and sugar beets in the province (WT 1942:13). In 1943, a "Vacation for Victory" campaign was initiated to encourage those employed in urban centres to volunteer their holiday time to work on the harvest (WT 1943b:13). And, of course, there were always aboriginal Canadian and prisoner of war labour sources that could be tapped. The case of the Japanese evacuees from British Columbia in 1942, however, was unique.

On behalf of the Manitoba Sugar Beet Growers' Association and the Manitoba Sugar Company, the British Columbia Security

Commission sought employment for initially 1,053 (later 1,162) Japanese on sugar beet farms in Manitoba (La Violette 1948:138-139). Since growers were eager to have a guaranteed supply of labour, the provincial government accepted the workers on the condition that the federal government assume all financial and supervisory responsibilities for them. Many Japanese saw this as an opportunity to retain some semblance of family units rather than be dispersed across Canada, and quickly re-grouped so as to meet the requirement that "families include at least 80 per cent workers and number approximately six in order to fit the available housing" (Roy et al. 1990:142). The opportunity proved disappointing to the Japanese. Many complained of inadequate income to support the number of people assigned to each farm, especially over the winter (Adachi 1976:282; La Violette 1948:130). While the Japanese were allowed to move family members from farm to farm in order to bring the number of workers and acres more into line in some regions, they were not allowed entirely free movement. At the request of growers, the federal Department of Labour froze their jobs as essential agricultural workers (Roy et al. 1990:142). In response, the Japanese bargained for higher wages which they apparently received. For all the hysteria surrounding the "Yellow Peril", growers in Manitoba were generally pleased with their Japanese workers.

The labour supply that has probably proved the most contentious on a long-term basis has been that of aboriginal

Canadians. In 1942, between 300 and 500 aboriginal Canadians from southern Manitoba reserves (*WT* 1942:13), as well as 460 from northern reserves, were expected to assist in the harvest. The latter number was projected to be 1,000 in 1943 and approximately 600 in 1944 (*WT* 1944:5). Those from southern reserves had already been assisting in Manitoba harvests for decades and were, therefore, experienced in such work. But it was to the apparent surprise of growers and government alike to discover that the inexperienced northerners "adapted quickly" to harvest work. In fact, growers considered them more than satisfactory and "voluntarily paid the Indians the higher wages" of \$4.00 a day for stooking [stacking sheaves of grain] and \$4.50 a day for threshing as opposed to \$3.00 and \$3.50 respectively (*WT* 1943a:11).

The post-war years, however, were difficult for aboriginal peoples (Lithman 1984:40), and with good reason. Reserve farming had long been in decline and mechanization was beginning to reduce the demand for workers on white farms. During the 1950's, the Department of Indian Affairs made some effort to place aboriginal workers on sugar beet farms in Alberta and Ontario (NAC RG 10, v. 8414, file 1/21-1, pt. 3, 21 June 1955; pt. 5, 14 May 1958; pt. 6, 25 March 1959). Apart from this, little else than work on sugar beet farms in southern Manitoba was available until the 1960's when government assistance and various make-work projects for aboriginal peoples were implemented. Marcoux (1976:2)

suggests that such projects helped "stabilize" the aboriginal labour force in Manitoba and actually led to present farm labour shortages but, as I show in Section 4.4.3, this is not entirely certain.

4.3 MEXICAN MENNONITES

One reliable source of farm labour, especially for growers in southwestern Manitoba, has been what are termed "Mexican Mennonites". The original members of this Anabaptist sect immigrated to Canada from Russia in the late 1800's, seeking group settlement, freedom of language and religion, and exemption from military service in the attempt to keep the group's ideals of strict conformity in sacred and secular matters intact. Those who settled in Manitoba represented four subgroups of the Mennonite communities of Russia: *Chortitza* and *Furstenland* (the conservative *Altkolonier* or Old Colony), *Bergthal* (the most liberal), and *Kleine Gemeinde* (middle-ground) (Bohuslawsky 1988b:51).

Within ten years of their arrival, the Manitoba government began to renege on parts of the agreement it had made with the Mennonites in order to hasten their assimilation into Canadian society. But incorporation of the colonies into the system of municipal government (1880) and public schooling (1890) and, during World War II, of their members into the Canadian army, was viewed by some Mennonites as a deliberate attack on their autonomy. In response to both real and

perceived threats to their "model" communities, many Mennonites, especially the more conservative, decided once more to emigrate, this time to Mexico. There was, however, another equally important reason for their decision to emigrate--scarcity of land in the Mennonite colonies of Manitoba.

Their departure was not without problems (Redekop 1969). First, their farms were quickly bought up by speculators at a very low price (\$15 to \$25 an acre) and later resold to other Mennonites, including returnees from Mexico, for \$75 to \$100 an acre. Second, the exodus to Mexico greatly reduced the power of the *Waisenamt*, the trust organization in charge of group finances. Rather than close the accounts down, the organization handed them over to a Notary Public in Morden, who was to collect debts owed to the emigrants and send them along to Mexico. Those who remained in Manitoba simply refused to repay their debts. This second incident, in particular, created a feeling of resentment between those who stayed and those who left, which some say still exists today (Redekop, p. 18).

Nor did their problems end in Mexico. Wealth, as such, is not scorned by the Mennonites, but it is generally believed that "one must prosper only in those ways consistent with the norms of hard work and honesty" (Redekop, p. 98). For a traditionally agrarian peoples like the Mennonites, this translates into farming and rules out activities such as

marketing which, besides being considered "speculative" and therefore of "questionable honesty", implies forbidden contact with the outside world (Sawatzky 1971:125).

In spite of these beliefs, not all had access to the limited land base in Mexico and, as their population grew, tensions developed between the *Wirte* (those with property) and the increasing number of *Anwohner* (those without). The *Anwohner* accused the *Wirte* of intentionally perpetuating the existence of an internal pool of cheap and captive labour by giving preferential employment to Mexicans. The *Wirte* claimed that the *Anwohner* were simply unable to make anything of themselves and therefore deserved their low status in the colonies. The *Wirte* also believed that, if the Mexicans were not given jobs, they would be driven by poverty to crime; besides, Mexican labourers respected authority whereas the *Anwohner* saw themselves as the social equals of the *Wirte* and demanded to be treated accordingly (Sawatzky, pp. 296-297).

This growing disparity in the material well-being of the *Wirte* and the *Anwohner* leads one to question the nature of the class structure among the Mexican Mennonites. Sawatzky (p. 302) states that:

Although it cannot be said that social class stratification exists as a deliberately created and sustained element of Mennonite society, nevertheless differences in economic status tend to be carried over into social relations.

Redekop (1969:100) claims that, among the Mexican Mennonites, there is no class structure and no class consciousness, yet he

identifies three classes: an upper class consisting of religious and secular leaders and prosperous farmers; a middle class of small farmers and those in related occupations; and a lower class of cowherds, the landless, and teachers (teachers have been relegated to low status because the more conservative Mexican Mennonites believe that "children could be taught as well at home and that, in any case, God imparted knowledge and wisdom directly to persons deserving of them" (Sawatzky 1971:308)).

Thus, it seems that economic status among the Mexican Mennonites is directly related to one's occupation as well as to access to land, one of the few acceptable sources of wealth. The suggestion that differences in economic status may carry over into social relations does not necessarily mean, however, that a consciousness of class has to exist, neither in Mexico nor in Manitoba (see, for example, Harper n.d.:36). Because contact with the outside world is frowned upon, social relations tend to be limited to those within and between colonies, making it appear to their members that the relations between landowners and labourers, colony leaders and members, clergy and laymen, are personal, not economic ones.

Life was not easy in their new homeland. From the beginning, many returned regularly to Canada during the harvest season to earn enough to carry on in Mexico; others would stay in Canada for several years in the hope of earning enough to buy land in Mexico. When immigration regulations

were relaxed after World War II, still more made the seasonal trip to Canada. Most who come are from the poorer colonies in northern Mexico where the number of landless is increasing. Those born in 1947 or later to Canadian parents may also apply for Canadian citizenship. So determined are they to return to Canada that, in 1966, it came to the attention of the federal government that some were being transported 2,000 miles, non-stop, to work in beets and potatoes at minimum wage or less in southwestern Manitoba. In one case, 29 individuals were crowded into a camper unit on top of a half-ton truck designed for 4 to 5 persons. Several were reported to be suffering from dysentery (*WT* 1966:1).

In the late 1980's, communities in southwestern Manitoba witnessed an influx of Mexican Mennonites seeking work. Not only were they escaping from the ravages of a stagnant economy, but also from the possibility of conscription into the Mexican military under impending social unrest. The Mennonite Central Committee (Manitoba) estimated that, in 1986, there were 416 returnees; in 1987, 461 (*Winnipeg Free Press* [hereafter *WFP*] 1988:1); and, in 1988, 535 (*WFP* 1991:2). Many found employment in the manufacturing sector; others in seasonal work on potato and beet farms. In either case, their presence was resented by their Manitoba brethren.

Because of the poverty in which many live in Mexico, Mexican Mennonites are seen by Manitobans in general as "backward" and "dirty" (Sawatzky 1971:321). The more

conservative are accused of being unreliable because they leave a job at a crucial time and return to Mexico to avoid having to send their children to public school in Manitoba. The most serious criticism stems from the fact that, in hard economic times in Manitoba, such an influx of immigrants puts a strain on community resources. The Mexican Mennonites are criticized for taking full advantage of all the public assistance programs to which they are entitled, yet contributing little to the local economy since they take most of their earnings back with them to Mexico. The end result is that:

many members of the community feel that if in its time it was 'impossible' for these people to continue to live amidst the 'evils' of Canadian society, then from the moral point of view they should not now look to Canada for a living; in addition, they are regarded as not having contributed to the creation of the wealth which they are now 'undeservedly' sharing (Sawatzky, p. 322).

By 1991, however, the influx of Mexican Mennonites had virtually ceased. Not only was Manitoba's manufacturing sector experiencing a downturn, but Mexican Mennonites had come to realize that they could not better themselves financially in such a hostile atmosphere. Once again, the majority of this ethnically-based floating surplus population returned to Mexico.

4.4 THE CANADA-MEXICO SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS' PROGRAM

4.4.1 The Origins of the Program

In a country like Canada with more than a million and a half presently unemployed, what is meant by a "labour shortage"? To the commercial market gardener, a labour shortage means a lack of both "skilled" workers, experienced in the use of expensive machinery, and "unskilled" workers, accustomed to stoop labour. It means a lack of workers who the grower trusts to live side by side with his/her family on the farm site. It means a lack of workers whom he/she considers reliable and motivated, and who share the same pride in the farm as the grower him/herself. Ironically, it also means a lack of workers who will accept less than competitive wages.

In theory, the official stance of both federal and provincial levels of government on unemployment has long been that:

The maintenance of a surplus of workers at the bottom [of the employment ladder] is extremely costly to the nation in unemployment benefits, welfare assistance, loss in tax collections and in weakening the productive capacity of the country, to say nothing of the social evils created by idleness (Manitoba Department of Agriculture and Immigration 1959:88).

In reality, full employment would mean an increase in workers' bargaining power, the formation of new unions and, in the agricultural sector, the possibility of strike action at critical stages of harvesting. The farmer's dilemma, at last

today, thus appears to be one of "relative", not "absolute", labour shortages.

Under pressure from growers in Ontario, the federal government agreed to import labourers from the Commonwealth Caribbean as of 1966. The program was meant to be only a temporary solution to labour shortages and was justified to the public as development aid--workers could use the money they earned in Canada to stimulate their own economies at home (Bogacz and Forsyth 1990:22). Ontario growers, however, resented the fact that, under the Canada-Commonwealth Caribbean Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program, they were expected to pay the workers' return airfare; they preferred, instead, to pay brokerage fees to recruiters of those Mexican workers who followed the harvest north into the United States. Growers were warned by Canada Manpower, however, that only after they had exhausted all Canadian sources would Mexicans be allowed in (WT 1973a:2). So insistent were Ontario growers that their crops were rotting in the fields due to labour shortages, the federal government finally decided to study the issue.

Whether or not the government would have been aware of it, large growers in California consistently claim that fresh produce will rot in the fields unless offshore workers are available to fill labour shortages. Galarza (1977:367) calls this "double-edged mystification", intended to arouse public sympathy for growers and to worry consumers that the price of

basic foods might increase. But factors other than labour shortages also result in waste. There is waste by legal command, that is, intentional destruction of produce to rid the fresh market of unwanted surplus; waste due to "acts of God"; waste to relieve gluts in the processing market; and waste for bargaining purposes, that is, withholding shipments to processors in an attempt to get a better price (Galarza, pp.367-368). Whatever the cause of waste, the result is highly photogenic.

The government study, which concluded that growers were unable to hire and keep Canadians because of "inhumane" treatment, cited

instances of a family of 10 working in the fields for a family wage of \$50 to \$60 a week, while being housed in an old chicken-coop without sanitation (WT 1974a:2).

Not all growers abused their workers, of course, but those who did were subject to exposure by the media. One Ontario grower's intransigence on the housing issue was reflected in his response to the finding of his one-room shacks with cracked walls stuffed with newspaper to keep out the rain: "I guess I'll have to fix them up. The government's starting to come around" (WT 1973b:5).

By 1974, Canada Manpower had established a total of thirty Agricultural Employment Services (AES) offices across Canada in an attempt to standardize the working and living conditions of domestic farm labour. Employer-employee agreements (see Appendix A) must stipulate both the terms of

employment and the type and cost to the employee of accommodation. At the same time, the federal government, in response to the powerful Ontario farm lobby, agreed to extend the Foreign Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program to include Mexico. When Manitoba growers heard of these arrangements, they, too, wanted to participate.

4.4.2 The Structure of the Program

In contrast to the recruitment process of offshore workers in other countries (see, for example, Haney 1979), the process in Canada has never had even the appearance of being under any other than government control. From its inception, the Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program has depended upon the co-ordinated effort of government agencies in both sending and receiving countries. The prospective employer must first complete a Human Resource Forecast form (see Appendix B), indicating his/her anticipated labour shortages and proving that he/she has exhausted all sources of labour both locally, through an AES office, and nationally, through a Canada Employment Center (CEC). If the CEC determines that a grower qualifies for the offshore labour program, his/her job order plus a signed employer-worker agreement (see Appendix C) is sent to a regional Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC) office for approval. The information is forwarded to the appropriate government liaison officer in Canada who then notifies the

Minister of Labour in the sending country as to the number and names (if applicable) of workers required. The minister recruits (through newspapers, posters, and word of mouth) and selects the workers, arranges for their medical examinations and documentation, and conveys the results to the CEIC post in the sending country for final approval. Once this process has been completed, the workers are flown to Canada, received by their liaison officer, and transported to their place of employment.

The Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program agreement (see Appendix D) is valid for a three-year period, but is reviewed annually and may be terminated by either party at any time, provided that written notice has been given at least three months in advance, and after bilateral consultation. The type of employment must be agricultural and, at present, no longer than eight months per year (April to November) in duration. In the event that named workers are unavailable, the Government of Mexico is obligated to maintain a reserve pool of at least one hundred unnamed workers who may be called upon at any time to fill those positions. All workers must be male, eighteen years of age or older, citizens of Mexico, and have no criminal record.

The employer, for his/her part, must be able to guarantee no less than six 40-hour weeks of agricultural work for each employee (thus excluding potato and beet growers, whose operations are highly mechanized, from the program). If

circumstances prevent this, the employee is compensated either at the prevailing wage rate for the type of work he has been hired to do, or by a cash advance to cover personal expenses. Under normal conditions, the employee may agree to work more than the required 8 hours per day or the 5 days per week (there is no provision for overtime wage-rates). He may also agree to work for another employer. Acceptable living accommodations, inspected in advance by a designated government employee, must be provided free of charge. If meals, rather than kitchen facilities, are provided by the employer, he/she may deduct \$6.50 a day from the worker's paycheque. Other deductions the employer may make from the employee's earnings include health insurance premiums plus 2% of the worker's gross earnings (no less than \$50 and no more than \$166) to partially cover transportation costs.

Given the high levels of unemployment, especially on Manitoba reserves, the provincial government had always opposed the use of offshore labour, at least in theory. As early as 1958, beet growers had petitioned the provincial government to allow them to import Mexican workers, but were refused (Manitoba Department of Agriculture and Immigration 1959:94). Even in 1974, when beet and onion growers complained of being "forced" to pay the minimum wage just to attract Canadian workers, the government still ignored them (WT 1974b:1). The only exception made that year was to allow a Winkler potato-grower to bring in nine Mexicans after a

Canada-wide search for truck drivers failed. In January 1975, the provincial government tabled a policy on immigration which stated that the importation of foreign agricultural workers was only a temporary solution to labour shortages. In the meantime, growers must adhere to recommended guidelines to make farm labour more attractive to Canadians: a minimum wage; a 40-hour work week, plus overtime pay; vacation time or pay; acceptable housing facilities; and pension, unemployment insurance, and workers' compensation benefits.

That same year, thirty Mexicans were imported under the Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program and growers were eager to share their opinions with the public. "The Indians and Mexicans work together with no bad blood," said one grower; besides, "If there wasn't so much welfare, [Canadians] would have to work" (Hunter 1975:5). Not once did it occur to the growers that, at the prevailing wage-rate, a worker could make the same or more on welfare.

The Mexican presence might have been overlooked for another year had one unfortunate incident not made the headlines that summer. It was discovered that living accommodations for aboriginal workers on certain beet farms in southern Manitoba were so woefully inadequate that the Children's Aid Society removed five children from the shacks and old milk trucks that served as their homes. One journalist commented sarcastically:

It is ironic that the Mexican migrants, who have a history of being exploited by California land

owners, live in comfort while the Indians, from reserves in rural Manitoba, exist in filth and squalor (Hunter, p. 1).

To this, growers responded that, since the Manitoba government refused to participate in a federal-provincial cost sharing program for housing, they could hardly be expected to shoulder the financial burden on their own, especially for a seasonal labour force consisting of extended families. The fact that money was available to house Mexican workers was apparently downplayed.

4.4.3 The Manitoba Farm Workers' Association

In March of 1976, some 450 Indian and Métis farm workers, assisted by a labour consultant to the provincial NDP government, announced that they were organizing themselves into the Manitoba Farm Workers' Association (MFWA). Their demands were basic to any industry yet had never been included under Manitoba's Employment Standards Act. Highest on their list of demands were recognition of the MFWA as the workers' bargaining agent; mandatory job classifications; and recommended wage rates. Further demands included a grievance procedure; sick leave, workers' compensation, and better safety standards; first-aid kits, drinking water, and toilets in the fields; and rest periods and lunch facilities. Housing and transportation were also pressing issues since a lack of these amenities put MFWA members at a distinct disadvantage compared to the Mexicans. Aboriginal workers had to leave

their communities at 5:00 AM to arrive at work by 8:00 AM. Underlying their demands was their insistence that, while it was the growers' right to seed and harvest, it was the workers' right to be treated with dignity (see Appendix E).

The first attempt at negotiations between MFWA representatives and those of vegetable, potato, and beet growers, in May of 1976, failed. Despite assurances from Agriculture Minister, Sam Uskiw, that the MFWA was a lobbying group, not a union, and did not, therefore, have the right to strike, growers refused to sign a written agreement. Some flatly refused to hire aboriginal labourers anymore; only one agreed to pay his workers more than the minimum wage (WT 1976a:3). Talks soon broke off, with the MFWA threatening not to assist in the 1976 harvest if they had no written contract. Several days later, fifteen members of the MFWA picketed the main Canada Manpower office in Winnipeg to protest the importation of Mexican workers.

An attempt made by Uskiw to mediate between the MFWA and growers also failed. Growers argued that they wanted to retain a "gentlemen's agreement" approach to hiring, implying that the employer-employee relationship was one of equality. Their opinion of unions was summed up by one grower: "[Once] you have a set of rules...the flexibility is lost, it dehumanizes" (McCook 1976:5). The government accused the growers of living in the past and insisted that they become more progressive in their thinking; the MFWA charged the growers with racism. When

the negotiations deteriorated into a shouting match, Uskiw announced that he would leave future discussions to workers and growers themselves.

Uskiw could not, however, just walk away. In the Manitoba Legislature, he had to answer to the opposition who criticized the NDP for giving more assistance to the MFWA than to growers. Uskiw disagreed. Not only would every facet of a planned Local Employment Assistance Program (LEAP), including grower seminars on employer-employee relations as well as the training of aboriginal labour, be funded by federal and provincial monies, but the NDP had assisted both the MFWA and growers in preparing negotiating proposals. In the meantime, the provincial government had commissioned a study into the farm labour situation in Manitoba. The study, entitled "The Right Thing for the Wrong Reason" (Marcoux 1976), concluded that, since the available number of aboriginal farm workers (435) far exceeded the requirements of growers (approximately 104 full-time and 126 part-time), the importation of Mexicans should be phased out by 1980. The study also outlined the strategy by which aboriginal labour, through government assistance, could be mobilized for the benefit of growers.

The strategy included alcohol education, a nutrition program, a "retrieval" or basic human skills program, and a youth program to foster pride in aboriginal identity (Marcoux 1976). Hypothetically, the purpose of these programs was to alleviate such dimensions of rural poverty as physical

weakness, isolation, and vulnerability. On a continuum of acceptability by local or other elite, Chambers (1983:164) would place these programs in the "high" range since they usually give quick results and are non-threatening to those who hold power. But the strategy did not end there. It also included worker retraining and upgrading, and on-going government support of the MFWA (Marcoux 1976), both of "low" acceptability to the elite because of the potential to politically mobilize a formerly powerless group and, therefore, to redistribute wealth; that is, the strategy attacked not just the symptoms, but the cause, of rural poverty (Chambers, 1983:164). Nonetheless, two growers did sign as sponsors of the proposed LEAP.

While the study was being conducted, tension escalated between growers, on the one hand, and government and workers, on the other. At least one MFWA organizer and his family were threatened with physical violence. The government was accused of interference and was blamed for inciting hostility and racism around Portage la Prairie. Premier Ed Schreyer was said to have moved too fast in trying to change growers' minds about the labour situation and that this could only have a negative impact in the long run. Growers, for example, could switch to capital-intensive production and eliminate all jobs (this strategy was, in fact, pursued by beet and potato growers who, although agreeing to recognize the MFWA, by 1977 had mechanized their operations and no longer required large

numbers of workers); food processors could pull out of the province and, in so doing, eliminate even more jobs. Some claimed that Schreyer's very credibility with the farm vote was in jeopardy in the upcoming provincial election of 1977 (Hainstock 1976:9).

By June of 1976, the twenty-four Mexicans who had been expected that year were working quietly alongside their aboriginal Canadian counterparts. Despite complaints that Mexicans were taking jobs away from Canadians, "Mexicans and natives have indicated no hard feelings toward each other this year," said one grower (McCook 1976:5). Disputes had been minimal and, to that point, there had been no work stoppages. The Mexican Consul General at the time noted that, "Most Mexicans have a lot of very good friends among Indians in Canada. They identify with them as workmates," but added, "I warned them when they arrived, the first fight, the first riot, I'd send them back to Mexico" (WT 1976b:1). Because of these tensions, a major clash between growers, on the one hand, and aboriginal rights groups and labour organizations, on the other, was anticipated.

Undercurrents of racism against aboriginal workers could still, however, be detected, as in the comment of another grower that: "Mexicans may be more productive in comparison with local labour because their need is greater...Their Canadian colleagues...are accustomed to more of a hand-to-mouth existence" (WT 1976b:15). Another grower commented that

Mexicans demonstrate to others that "you have to work in this country to make a living" (McCook 1976:5).

As a result of Marcoux's (1976) study, it was discovered that 312 of the 450 MFWA members went without work in 1975 (thus contradicting his claim, mentioned above, that a stabilized aboriginal labour force in Manitoba had led to present farm labour shortages). Even though the following year was an election year and proposed changes to Manitoba labour law had conveniently been placed on the back burner, the NDP nonetheless decided to terminate the Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program for 1977.

The AES manager at the time apologized for any misunderstandings between growers, workers, and the government; commercial market gardening was still in its "infancy" in Manitoba, he explained, and growers had been "unaware" of what was expected of them (Meakin 1977:15). Even so, he added, aboriginal workers should be responsible for providing their own housing or means of transportation to and from the job; they would be expected to do so if they worked in Winnipeg.

Growers were even more upset. One of the largest growers, like Ontario growers before him, claimed that, due to labour shortages, his vegetables were rotting in the fields (Riley 1977:4). Another claimed that the ban on Mexican workers was "crippling" the industry. Cutbacks in production and a decline in produce quality and variety, he predicted, would lead to

the importation of vegetables, higher prices, an end to seasonal agricultural jobs, and reduced employment in secondary industries such as food processing. All blamed "bureaucrats" in Ottawa who take decisions with no first-hand knowledge of a situation. Mexicans create more jobs than they take away, growers argued, especially since they are "more adapted to menial labour" (Wall 1977:4), to which an Indian worker from Sandy Bay responded that, of course, Mexicans were motivated: "...they had to produce or they would be sent back. That's incentive to work" (Wall, p. 4).

Canada Manpower officials were unmoved by growers' complaints. "I find it difficult to understand why farmers can't find 24 suitable labourers out of [a] pool of 300," said one (WT 1977:4).

Although the NDP lost the provincial election to the Progressive Conservatives in 1977, the proposed LEAP to train local labour and to educate growers in employer-employee relations went ahead. The results, however, did not impress growers. The program was a waste of money, they complained; in their opinion, locals with any ambition would seek better jobs elsewhere and those who did stay were incapable of retaining the information given them. By early 1978, the MFWA conceded that some offshore workers should be brought in if it could be proven that employment opportunities for Canadians would increase as some growers had claimed they would. Given the

Conservatives' anti-labour stance, one wonders whether or not the MFWA had any choice in the matter.

Eighteen Mexicans were brought in that year, a number "...so small," scoffed one grower, "as to be ridiculous in terms of the national employment situation" (Francis 1978:53). An obvious conclusion might then be: why bother at all? Instead, the grower concluded that a hundred Mexicans should be brought in for 1979. Another grower complained that, since the formation of the VGAM some fifty years ago, the number of growers had declined due to the combination of low crop prices and a shortage of experienced labour. As of 1978, carrot and cabbage acreage was down, he said; there were no longer any lettuce growers, almost no tomato growers and only two celery and three onion growers (Francis, p. 53). No mention was made of the warning the UVGM had issued in the late 1960's that small growers were being forced out of the industry because they were unable to compete with the larger growers in the VGAM. Nor was mention made of Canadian wholesalers' and processors' preference for cheaper produce from the United States and Mexico. According to growers, the problem had to be the labour force.

4.4.4 The Program Today

Except for occasional criticism from the NDP, the issue of the offshore labour program in Manitoba has seldom been broached publicly since 1977; in fact, the number of Mexicans

brought in has increased, not decreased, over the years (see Table 4.1). To date, farm workers are still not covered under Manitoba's Employment Standards Act, although housing has been provided for some aboriginal workers. Responsibility for transporting workers to and from their reserves has been transferred from the AES to the MFWA. While the AES manager hopes growers will eventually assume this responsibility themselves, it seems unlikely.

According to the president of the MFWA, nothing has really changed. If anything, the association's power has eroded since 1977; membership has dropped from 450 to 150 (some claim that the MFWA no longer exists). The government grants a few MFWA demands now and again, but growers continue to treat their workers according to the mood of the day. There are, for example, no "thanks" for overtime during the harvest, no cash bonuses on workers' paycheques, no big meals in gratitude for jobs well done once the season is over. Some growers disagree, claiming that Indian labourers are "a bunch of whiners" who only work long enough to qualify for unemployment insurance. At least one grower is said to tuck cash bonuses into his workers' pay envelopes now and again, and more than one throw harvest parties for their workers at the end of the season. So what if Canada's unemployment rate is ten or eleven percent, one grower asked me, rhetorically; why strap farmers with the burden of employing the unemployable?

Table 4.1

Numbers of Mexican Farm Workers,
Manitoba 1974-1993

YEAR	<u>NUMBER OF MEXICAN MEXICAN FARM WORKERS</u>
1974	9
1975	30
1976	24
1977	0
1978	19
1979	18
1980	20
1981	23
1982	41
1983	31
1984	29
1985	32
1986	32
1987	32
1988	40
1989	70
1990	74
1991	75
1992	66
1993	66

What has happened since 1977 to erode the MFWA's power base? Based upon Morin's (1952) survey of factors which led to the successful unionization of American farm workers, the stage appeared to be set. Farm workers in Manitoba formed a homogeneous group with regard to their culture, language, and common nature of their problems. They were concentrated in a geographically delimited industry that required a fairly large seasonal labour force. Despite the fact that they may have lacked strategic skills to organize, they gained these, plus financial and administrative support, from both the federal and provincial governments. Membership dues in the MFWA were not prohibitive at \$1.00 a year. Given the fact that the association did not have the right to strike, its role as labour contractor in providing a valuable service to workers and growers alike had the potential to lead to its general acceptance. However, when the NDP failed to carry through with its proposed changes in labour legislation due to the upcoming election, Manitoba farm workers were again left unprotected. Once the Conservatives gained power, gone, apparently, was the MFWA's opportunity to organize on a continuing basis, gone the possibility of joining a national federation of farm labourers. Even its sudden concession that some Mexicans should be brought in to help "train" local labourers suggests that the MFWA had little choice in the matter. Was the MFWA's effectiveness betrayed?

Not necessarily, said the former Agricultural Manpower Officer for the Province of Manitoba. The NDP had always been supportive but cautious of the MFWA. It did not "abandon" the MFWA to curry favour with the farm vote. Rather, once the MFWA was granted most of its demands, the conflict was all but over. It was left to civil servants to "solve" the problem of importing Mexican labour. Their solution was a compromise whereby an incremental number of Canadians per Mexican would be hired every year until 1980, when the program would be terminated. At the time, the compromise seemed to please everyone--the federal government (in accordance with its "Canadians first" employment policy); farmers (who insist that Mexicans create, not take away, jobs); and the MFWA (whose members would be guaranteed employment).

For their part, growers seem to have concluded that hiring offshore workers is, by now, not just a temporary solution to labour shortages, but their right. The best proof of this, I was told, is the "totally unacceptable" practice of laying off local and out of province labourers once the Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program has been approved for another year. Yet some growers still hold to the argument that: "Mexicans...are the best workers because they're driven by poverty...The local people...are either unemployed or on welfare...They need constant supervision" (Armstrong 1987:4). Initially, growers expected the Mexicans to do any job they were assigned. The Mexican Consul General

at the time observed: "The farmers know how to get a lot of profit with the Mexicans. They do everything, hoeing, truck driving, all for the same salary" (WT 1976b:1). This quickly ended when a vehicle mishap involving an unlicensed Mexican driver forced the CEC to issue job classifications and corresponding recommended wage rates (see Appendices F and G). Other irregularities still exist. The inspection of housing for Mexicans is to be done in person by a designated government employee, yet is often conducted over the telephone. The housing is to be supplied at no cost to Mexican workers, yet some growers charge them for utilities of which there is no mention in the employer-employee agreement.

According to the president of the MFWA, the Mexicans are treated as badly as Indians used to be. Since they speak little English, the Mexicans are probably unaware that they are only required to perform agricultural work, yet growers make them tend their lawns and gardens in slack periods. Socializing with locals after hours is discouraged by growers, who believe that the Mexicans will learn "bad things". Even shopping in town was prohibited until recently. Originally, supplies were brought to the Mexicans so that they never left the farm site.

Most growers are enthusiastic at having found labourers whom they consider to be as dedicated to hard work as they are themselves. "You could get them up at three in the morning," one grower said, "and they would be ready to go. And they

never complain...at least not to your face". One of the grower's Mexican workers, who claimed he had back problems, said he was unable to work more than an eight-hour day but, after being convinced by his co-workers that he would not be allowed back into Canada the following year, decided to work the additional hours. Another was informed that his wife, who had been ill for some time, had died, yet he decided to stay and work rather than return to Mexico for the funeral. "Now that's a strong work ethic," the grower nodded approvingly.

A strong work ethic? The Mexicans have no choice but to work a twelve-hour day, seven days a week, said the Employer Specialist at Winnipeg's CEIC office; they are a "captive labour force". Farmers may benefit from this reliable, self-managing labour force, he said, but the wages, however low they may seem, mean that hundreds of thousands of dollars are taken out of Canada each year, dollars that might otherwise be spent here. As it stands now, the federal government must spend more on social assistance programs for the unemployed, while the Mexicans apparently brag that they will be able to build homes that "rival those of the rich" in their own country. For as much as growers complain about the local labour force, he said, they resist the idea of hiring at 120% of their needs so that enough workers will show up on any given day. The Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program is a "sweetheart" deal that, in his opinion, has gone on for far too long.

In summary, it may be said that in Canada, as in the United States, "the history of farm labour is a history of a succession of labour reservoirs" (Burawoy 1976:1064), and ethnically-based ones as well. Despite differences in how aboriginal Canadians, Japanese, Mexican Mennonites, and Mexicans have been incorporated into production relations, all have formed part of a floating surplus drawn into and expelled from Manitoba agriculture on a seasonal basis. Of particular interest is the fact that, until recently, farm workers have seldom organized themselves, neither on the basis of class nor ethnicity (the exception being the Japanese), in opposition to growers. Perhaps this is not surprising given that, as a class fraction partially supported by the state, the medium petty bourgeoisie is more cohesive than any racialized class fraction of farm workers has ever been. Of interest as well is how a formerly "satisfactory" group of farm workers can suddenly become "unsatisfactory" in the eyes of growers. Here, of course, I refer to the case of aboriginal Canadians who, during times of absolute labour shortages, were preferred workers and yet, during times of relative labour shortages, were supplanted by Mexicans. One might be tempted to conclude that, under such circumstances, a class or ethnic consciousness will most certainly develop and, in fact, it did in the form of the MFWA opposed, not to Mexican farm workers, but to growers. Yet this class consciousness did not come from the workers themselves; it was brought to them from the

outside by a labour organizer. Had this not occurred, the result may have been an intra-class conflict between aboriginal Canadian and Mexican farm workers.

CHAPTER 5

BILATERAL AND TRILATERAL RELATIONS: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

5.1 THE US-MEXICO BRACERO PROGRAM

What are the origins of the "sweetheart deal" that Manitoba commercial market gardeners presently enjoy? Although I was told that there was no apparent coincidence between the termination of the US-Mexico Bracero Program in 1964 and the initiation of the Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program in 1974, the details of the two bilateral agreements are virtually identical, which suggests that the former served as a model for the latter. This may come as no surprise--by 1974, Mexico could claim a total of twenty-six years experience (1917-1921 and 1942-1964) with such agreements with the US. The similarities between the two agreements, however, end there; the differences, while not the exclusive focus of this section, are significant.

First, economies of scale in agriculture, or "factories in the field" as McWilliams (1939) terms them, developed far sooner in the US than in Canada, leading to claims of domestic labour shortages and to the use of *braceros* as early as the First World War. (It will be recalled that Manitoba market

gardening, in particular, only achieved economy of scale, that is, commercial status, after the Second World War). Second, the US-Mexico *Bracero* Program was frequently jeopardized by flagrant abuse of Mexican workers by their employers resulting, in one case, in a ban on the use of *braceros* in Texas from 1943 to 1947. Third, the US-Mexico program was further complicated by the growing presence of illegals ("wetbacks"), especially after 1944. At least to this point, the viability of the Canada-Mexico program has not been threatened by either worker abuse or illegals.

Kiser and Kiser (1979:14) claim that, in the US, "the really fundamental arguments for and against the use of Mexican labor have not changed significantly since 1917". The same may be said of Canada since 1945. On the one hand, growers insist that the industry is continually plagued by domestic labour shortages; on the other, opponents claim that, if domestic workers were offered a living wage, there would be few if any labour shortages.

Thus, at the outset, both programs were justified as a temporary employment strategy to offset domestic labour shortages. The process by which growers qualified for Mexican workers was also similar. Employers in both the US and Canada first had to demonstrate their need for Mexicans by proving that their efforts to hire domestic workers (primarily through the United States Employment Service in the US or Agricultural Employment Services in Canada) had been unsuccessful. Upon

approval of their request, employers were then expected to enter into written agreements with the *braceros* and to repatriate them upon termination of the contract. Claims of domestic labour shortages were seldom verified by the US Government; in fact, Galarza (1964:121-125) explains how growers regularly "created" such shortages. Growers would estimate in advance the number of *braceros* they would need that season. Advertisements would then be placed for domestic workers but, since the wages offered were so low, few would apply. Those who did might even be denied employment and *braceros* hired in their stead. (This is not entirely unlike the practice of some Manitoba growers who lay off domestic workers once their request for Mexicans has been approved for another year.)

Unable to prevent the mass emigration of its workers after the revolution (1910-1920), the Mexican Government at first published a "model contract" (1920) in an attempt to protect its workers from abuse in the US. The contract called for the payment of workers' transportation costs to and from their place of employment, a minimum wage of \$2 a day, the posting of a bond of compliance by the employer for each worker contracted, and free medical care. According to Cardoso (1979:25):

The naiveté of the framers of the model contract is striking...No political jurisdiction in the United States provided, by law, any of the work guarantees for agricultural workers. It is doubtful that more than a handful of employers would have considered the extension of these benefits to *braceros*.

Nor would many in the future.

One of the most detailed accounts of the second US-Mexico *Bracero* Program (1942-1964) can be found in Kirstein (1977). Despite the fact that this period was characterized by constant suspension, negotiation, and new agreements (Kirstein, p. 18), the first (1942) agreement formed the basis of all subsequent agreements (Majka and Majka 1982:139) and quite possibly of those between Canada and Mexico as well.

The 1942 agreement included four general provisions. First, *braceros* were exempt from military service. Because their exemption had been unclear in the first US-Mexico agreement (1917-1921), some *braceros* had actually been drafted into the US Armed Forces (see Cardoso 1979). Second, *braceros* were to be guaranteed "non-discriminatory treatment" in the US. Ironically, this provision only applied to employment in defense industries and government, not in agriculture (Kirstein 1977:15). Third, return transportation was to be provided by the employer nation to ensure that *braceros* were not stranded in the US as they had been during the 1930's (Kiser and Kiser 1979:68). Fourth, *braceros* could only be employed where there were certified labour shortages, that is, they could not be competitively hired to depress domestic wages. This provision is probably one of the most difficult to enforce. In fact, evidence from the US seems to indicate that: "Rises in farm labour wages were inversely related to

the percentage of *braceros* employed in a particular region" (Majka and Majka 1982:141).

The 1942 agreement further included several specific provisions with regard to wages and employment. First, *braceros* were to be paid either minimum wage or the prevailing wage offered to domestic workers. Second, *braceros* could only engage in agricultural work unless either the worker or his government agreed to other types of work. Third, *braceros* were to be guaranteed housing facilities, and sanitary and medical services equal to those offered to domestic labour. Fourth, *braceros* were to be guaranteed employment for up to 75 percent of their stay plus a daily subsistence allowance of \$3 for each day they were unemployed. Fifth, *braceros* were to be repatriated to Mexico at the end of their contracts. Finally, 10 percent of the *braceros'* wages were to be forwarded to the Mexican Agricultural Credit Bank for use in development. All of these provisions (except the last which was eventually dropped from the US-Mexico agreement and has never appeared in the Canada-Mexico agreement) appear in one form or another in the Canada-Mexico agreement.

Lack of compliance with the 1942 agreement on the part of the US growers caused the Mexican Government to terminate it in 1943, only to reinstate it several months later with several modifications. Specific reference was now made to Mexican Federal Labour Law with regard to the payment of living expenses and transportation costs and to the

repatriation of *braceros* by the employer nation. With regard to wages and employment, the guaranteed minimum wage was replaced by the prevailing domestic wage (the higher of the two is expected in the Canada-Mexico agreement). Both the *bracero* and his government would now have to consent to his employment outside of agriculture. Adequate housing, and sanitary and medical services would have to be provided without cost to the *bracero*. Finally, lodging and subsistence would have to be provided without cost even if the *bracero* were unemployed for less than 25 percent of the contract period.

In 1948, the US Government chose to withdraw from its role in selecting, contracting, transporting, and protecting *braceros*, allowing employers to enter directly into individual contracts with *braceros* instead. The 1948 agreement obviously favoured growers who, although still subject to certain restrictions, no longer had to guarantee *braceros* either a minimum wage or subsistence pay during slack periods. Nor was there any mechanism to ensure employer compliance with the written contract. Majka and Majka (1982:144) note that, since corporate agriculture had never been capable of managing its own labour supply, the US Government had to intervene again in 1951, as Mexican complaints of worker abuse escalated.

It is interesting to note that the closest the Canadian Government has ever come to a "hands off" approach to its Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Programs was its decision in

1988 to withdraw extended support from the Commonwealth Caribbean and Mexican liaison services in order to combat the federal deficit (Scholtens 1988:14). This support (office facilities and secretarial and support staff) is now provided by the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association via Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Services (FARMS), a non-profit organization which operates on a user-pay basis. The Canadian Government remains responsible, however, for ensuring grower compliance with both bilateral agreements (Scholtens, p. 15).

It is also interesting to note that later versions of the standard US-Mexico contract included a clause to the following effect: "The employer was required to take reasonable precautions to prevent persons engaged in illegal and immoral activities from frequenting the places where workers are employed" (Coalson 1977:96). Although there is no equivalent clause in either of Canada's binational agreements with the Commonwealth Caribbean or Mexico, growers in both Ontario and Manitoba nonetheless discourage their offshore workers from "socializing with Canadians to any excess" (Bogacz and Forsyth 1990:22).

By 1974, Mexican President Luis Echeverría had announced the beginning of the new Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program and, in 1975, explained that: "We did not sign a new migrant labor agreement with the Government of the United States because the conditions proposed were not

compatible with the interests of Mexico" (Echeverría 1979:125). And what of the Mexicans themselves? Given the fact that no one to date has conducted a detailed study of the participants in the Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program, the whole area awaits further investigation. From the little information that does exist, however, and on the basis of Durand and Massey's (1993) comparison of thirty-two studies of sending communities in Mexico, a few preliminary words may be said.

Durand and Massey (p. 13) contend that community studies cannot sustain generalization to the whole of Mexico on such issues as the effects of past agrarian reforms and present agricultural modernization, the class composition of migrants, their legal and demographic profiles, their strategies of migration, and the economic effects on sending communities. They further contend that these issues are determined by various community-level factors, including the geographical and politico-economic position of sending communities within Mexico, the quality and distribution of local resources, the age of the migration stream, and the occupational niche it has established in the receiving country (Durand and Massey, p. 4).

With regard to the Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program, the cap on the number of participants is set at one hundred for Manitoba. All are eighteen to forty-five year old males who appear to be underemployed as day

labourers, small landholders, and shopkeepers in Mexico (Bohuslawsky 1988:53; WT 1976b:15). Because the program is state-regulated, the occupational niche that participants occupy is exclusively in agriculture and, because of its seasonality, the migratory strategy is of necessity either temporary (non-recurrent) or recurrent (Durand and Massey 1993:32).

Perhaps one of the most controversial aspects of migration is its economic effects on sending communities (Durand and Massey 1993; Kearney 1986). Consistent with much of the literature on Mexico (see, for example, Dinerman 1982; Stuart and Kearney 1981; Wiest 1973, 1979), it appears that participants in the Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program spend most of their earnings on immediate consumption needs rather than on investment in infrastructure. Durand and Massey (1993:28) rightly point out, however, that during the early stages of household formation when couples are marrying and raising families, such expenditures are not uncommon. Given that participants in the program are all younger to middle-aged males, it may come as no surprise, then, that their earnings appear to be spent on food, clothing, small appliances (televisions, VCR's, and stereos), new homes, and pickup trucks, although some do invest in their children's education and in upgrading small businesses (Bohuslawsky 1988:53).

Many factors, however, are still uncertain. The effects of agrarian reform and modernization on the sending communities, their geographical and politico-economic position within Mexico, the quality and distribution of local resources, and the age of the migration stream to Canada have yet to be documented. I did discover, however, that the Mexican Government appears to be tapping not only those states, such as Morelos and Guanajuato, that have a history of migration but also those, such as Puebla and Tlaxcala, that do not (Cockcroft 1983:190, ff.336). This suggests that in some cases the age of the migration stream to Canada is relatively new. It also suggests that the economic conditions in some sending communities may be deteriorating. If the response by the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) to the NAFTA is any indication, the Mexican Government's National Program for Modernization of the Countryside (1990-1994), which includes

removing at least two-thirds of the farmers from the land, elimination of all government subsidies to farmers, cutting back on the role of the central marketing board..., encouraging agribusiness expansion and opening up agricultural land to corporate and foreign ownership (Warnock 1993:25), may well backfire. And, regardless of the results in Mexico, the immediate future of southern Manitoba's aboriginal peoples appears to be one of continuing to supply cheap labour to white farmers.

5.2 THE FUTURE OF MANITOBA COMMERCIAL MARKET GARDENING

5.2.1 Under the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement (CUSTA)

The future of commercial market gardening in Manitoba and, indeed, in most of Canada, is at best uncertain. What is more certain are the effects on the industry that various liberal trade policies have had or will have in the future. Since it came into effect in 1989, the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement (CUSTA), for example, is alleged to have caused some processing plants in Canada to shut down and to have undercut the regulatory power of marketing boards.

The United States had two main reasons for including agriculture in its free trade agreement with Canada. The first was to set a precedent for future General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) negotiations by eliminating tariffs between two industrialized nations; the second, to expand the market for its agricultural exports to Canada. Canada, likewise, hoped to gain greater access to the US for its own agricultural exports, but was reluctant to sacrifice its traditional agricultural support programs.

Those producer groups who supply export markets with wheat, cattle, and hogs were initially supportive of the agreement; others, including market gardeners, who mainly supply the domestic market, were sceptical and with good reason. A preliminary report on the liberalization of agricultural trade warned that:

If absolute free trade meant that Canada must abandon its supply management programs..., marketing boards..., and production support, Canadian agriculture could experience a period of instability which could be very damaging both for producers and for the economy of our country (Frechette 1987:4, 6).

The real problem, however, was reported to lie with the food processing industry which, as tariffs are lowered and eventually eliminated, may turn to US suppliers. Lower costs of production, greater economies of scale, and a longer growing season in the US could edge Canadian produce out of the market. In conclusion, the report hinted that, because Canadian agriculture is largely government-regulated, the CUSTA "could necessitate greater concessions on this side of the border" (Frechette, p. 11).

What did this mean in concrete terms for commercial market gardeners? Over a period of ten years, all seasonal tariffs on fruit and vegetables and all duties on potatoes and onions would be removed. "Under special conditions", such as the dumping of US surplus in Canada, a temporary "snapback" clause allows for reimposition of the tariffs (Agriculture Canada 1988:39). Warnock (1988:209) explains what the snapback clause entails: "[Tariffs] can be reimposed only after five working days and after 48 hours of consultations, and only if prices were below 90% of those in 1987 and there had been no increase in acreage planted". Farm leaders agreed that, by the time the snapback clause were to come into effect, the market for their produce would be permanently broken.

Although no specific mention was made of Manitoba, the Agriculture Canada report (1988:42-45) predicted that the fresh market, processing, and seed potato sectors would remain competitive with those of the United States. The fresh market for carrots, onions, sweet corn, greenhouse cucumbers, and cole crops (cabbage, broccoli, brussel sprouts, and cauliflower) would also benefit from tariff reduction. Not so the fresh market for tomatoes and celery, nor the processing market for carrots, celery, corn, tomatoes, and pickling cucumbers. Both of these markets would be "adversely affected" by competition from American producers. Finally, as if to reassure those growers who hoped to expand their fresh market in the United States, the report stated: "The open border concept only allows spot checks, no more burdensome than that used by the United States for its own goods" (Agriculture Canada, p. 39).

The first and most unexpected blow to Manitoba commercial market gardeners was the announcement in August 1989 that, as a result of the CUSTA, Campbell's Soup in Portage la Prairie would close its doors in January 1991 in order to consolidate its operations in Toronto. Besides the 168 plant workers who would lose their jobs, an estimated 273 truckers and 9 local market gardeners would also be affected (Argan 1989:3). Much of the celery and carrot production, and a lesser amount of the cooking onion, rutabaga, and potato production in Manitoba had gone to supplying Campbell's. One onion supplier in

Portage claimed that he stood to lose between \$20,000 and \$30,000 annually because of the closure, yet his loss would not be a major one compared to others' whose acreages and storage facilities were almost entirely based on contracts with Campbell's (Robson 1989:2). One carrot and celery supplier, for example, claimed he stood to lose \$160,000 a year; another had recently built a \$250,000 shed to store his contracted produce (Friesen 1989:1, 9). Both the VGAM and the marketing board played down the closure, calling it a major disappointment but not that serious (Friesen, p. 9). Critics of the closure remained cautiously optimistic that McCain's and Carnation, the two other major processing plants, would remain in Manitoba.

The second major setback that commercial market gardeners faced as a result of the CUSTA was the arbitrary imposition of non-tariff barriers on Manitoba produce entering the United States. Despite Agriculture Canada's assurances that an open border would mean minimal spot checks, US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) inspectors had been delaying shipments at the unloading point in Minneapolis for three to four times longer than was necessary, checking not the recommended 1 or 2 percent but 15 percent of all shipments for pesticide residue. The irony of this is that, due to differences in pesticide legislation, 20 percent more active ingredients are registered for use and over seven times as many pesticide products are on the market in the US than in Canada (Shrybman

1992:43). Needless to say, no pesticide residue has ever been found on Manitoba produce, yet the USFDA takes two working days to determine whether or not tests are necessary and an additional fourteen to carry them out. As a result, two separate shipments of cauliflower, each held for two weeks in 1989 and 1990, and three of carrots, each held for almost a week in 1990 and 1991, all spoiled (Friesen 1991:1).

5.2.2 Under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

As if the CUSTA has not caused enough complications for Manitoba commercial market gardeners, the Canadian government recently took part in "fast-track" negotiations for a trilateral free trade agreement (NAFTA) between the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The potential economic benefits of the NAFTA were immediately lauded by *Business Week* (quoted in *Manitoba Co-operator* 1990:4): "Greater economies of scale, access to labour, and free movement of capital will help everyone in the long run".

Already disillusioned by the CUSTA, many farmers are sceptical. At the heart of the issue is the possibility that both the NAFTA and the GATT, which supersedes the NAFTA, will hasten the trend toward vertical integration and concentration of ownership of Canada's food system by a few large, mainly American, multinational corporations (Pugh 1992:10).

As if to reassure farmers that this would not happen, the Canadian International Trade Tribunal (1991:79-80) provided a

selected list of both new investments and plant shutdowns in the food processing industry since 1989. McCain's, for example, opened a new plant in Prince Edward Island in 1991 at a cost of \$36 million. Between 1989 and 1991, Campbell's invested a total of \$23.5 million to upgrade and expand various of its production facilities but, of course, its Portage la Prairie plant was closed. Producers in Ontario were the hardest hit, however, when no less than six processing plants closed their doors between 1989 and 1991.

Farm organizations were quick to point out that, under the NAFTA, agribusiness corporations, lured by cheap land and labour, good climate, and few pesticide regulations, would continue to establish large commercial operations not only in the southern United States, but in Mexico as well. Commented Wayne Easter, president of the NFU: "The potential damage to Canada's processing capabilities is enormous" (*Manitoba Co-operator* 1991:12):

Of more immediate concern to farmers, however, is the fear that the horticultural industry will not survive the end of tariffication which, until now, has prevented the US and Mexico from dumping surplus produce at depressed prices in Canada. In the absence of import controls, "dumping is a very effective strategy to gain market share and eliminate the competition" (Arsenault 1992:9). And, since there seems to be little "snap" in the snapback clause to prevent dumping, few

growers have enough confidence to expand their operations in the near future (Binkley 1991:5).

Closely associated with the problem of dumping is that of permissible levels of pesticide residue and bacteria in food. Traditionally, Canada's regulatory standards have been more stringent than those of either the US or Mexico. Under the NAFTA, however, each country is allowed to establish its own standards on the basis of cost effectiveness, and the onus is on the country of import to prove that a product poses a risk to human health (Arsenault 1992:10).

The CITT report cited above is all but silent on most of these issues. It does, however, predict that, under the NAFTA, the United States will remain Canada's major competitor in the fresh and processed fruit and vegetable industry since transportation costs will impede the entry of Mexican produce into Canada (CITT 1991:220). It further predicts that Canada will increase its own market share of the same in Mexico (CITT, p. 221). How transportation costs might be cheaper for Canadian than for Mexican growers and processors is unclear. In either case, "[greater] distances involved in transporting commodities must be factored into the final cost to consumers" (Pugh 1992:8, 10).

As to the future of the Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program, one can only speculate. Labour mobility was not included in the NAFTA negotiations. The "official" reason for its exclusion was that Mexico would

prefer to create jobs rather than export people; the "unofficial" reason was that, if the contentious issue of labour mobility (particularly from Mexico to the United States) had been included, negotiations would have come to a virtual standstill (Castañeda and Alarcón 1992:88). As former US trade representative, Carla Hills, stated: "We're negotiating a trade agreement" and nothing more (quoted in McGaughey 1992:35, emphasis added). Privately, however, Mexican President Carlos Salinas had been using the threat of massive Mexican migration to both the United States (Muñoz 1993:41) and Canada (Alvarez and Mendoza 1993:31) as a weapon in NAFTA negotiations.

General consensus has it that, in the short-term, the NAFTA will increase Mexican migration to the United States. Opinion varies, however, as to the long-term effects of the NAFTA on such movement (Muñoz 1993:41). On the one hand, it is argued that if President Salinas moves ahead with his proposed agricultural reforms, including the privatization of *ejido* (communal) lands, the long-term effects of the NAFTA will be the permanent displacement of an estimated 850,000 heads of peasant households (McGaughey 1992:8) and a corresponding increase in migration to the United States. On the other hand, it is argued that the long-term effects of the NAFTA will be the creation of employment opportunities in Mexico, especially in the *maquiladora* sector, and a corresponding decrease in migration to the United States. "In fact, both the Mexican and

the U.S. governments appear to be counting on the employment created as a result of the NAFTA to help stem the flow of Mexican workers to the United States" (Young 1992:98).

Whether or not the *maquiladora* sector can do this is uncertain. The population of Mexico is presently 86 million, of which between 50 and 60% are either un- or underemployed (Alvarez and Mendoza 1992:32; Grinspun and Cameron 1993:35). To date, the *maquiladora* sector has not employed more than 500,000 people (Grinspun and Cameron, p. 35). What, then, are the others to do? Where are they to go?

On the one hand, some, of course, could come to Canada. One commercial market gardener expressed the hope that, when the NAFTA is ratified, cheap Mexican labour will flow more freely across the borders. In fact, the CITT report cited above does anticipate changes to Canada's offshore labour programs. Without specifying what these changes might be, it hints that: "It is a matter of pride to Canadians that migrant workers are treated very well here, but modest concessions to competitiveness could be made without jeopardizing social justice or the supply of visiting workers" (CITT 1991:25).

On the other hand, an unexpected turn of events could also occur. The Mexican Action Network on Free Trade, one of many groups opposed to the NAFTA, argues that: "Cheap labor should be considered as a form of 'dumping', like a subsidy to capital, and should be penalized in exchanges" (quoted in McGaughey 1992:164-165). While the charge was directed at

Mexico's *maquiladora* sector, it should be noted that American trade laws supersede the NAFTA. If the United States were to decide that the Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program is a subsidy to Canadian farmers, the program might be terminated. This could be cause for concern since government-regulated programs, for all their shortcomings, are one of the few safeguards against worker abuse. Does Canada want to compete with the United States and Mexico in this arena as well?

In summary, while significant differences exist between the former US-Mexico *Bracero* Program and the present Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program, the details of the two agreements are almost identical. The exact nature of Mexican migration to Canada has yet to be as fully documented as it has been to the United States, but preliminary evidence suggests that those Mexican states not previously noted for high levels of out-migration are now being tapped for labour. This does not bode well for Mexico, especially in light of recent liberation struggles against the possible effects of the NAFTA.

Both the CUSTA and the NAFTA may even have negative repercussions on commercial market gardening in Manitoba. Plant closures and hold-ups of exports at the US border are already being blamed on the CUSTA. The NAFTA is predicted to have even more detrimental effects on commercial market gardening. In fact, the viability of the whole industry in

Canada may be seriously challenged as even the medium petty bourgeoisie find their very survival at stake.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The problem underlying this study is one of tracing the development of Manitoba commercial market gardening and its attendant labour needs. Since the history of Manitoba agriculture shows that its labour force has consisted of groups of workers from various "racial" and ethnic backgrounds, the main objective was to ascertain how class, "race", and ethnic relations have manifested themselves in Manitoba commercial market gardening in particular. Four related objectives were: (1) to locate Manitoba commercial market gardeners within the class structure of Canada; (2) to examine past and present labour sources with respect to class, race, and ethnicity; (3) to compare and contrast the US-Mexico Bracero Program and the Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program; and (4) to evaluate the future of Manitoba commercial market gardening in light of recent developments in liberal trade agreements, specifically the CUSTA and NAFTA.

It has been shown that market gardening developed rather slowly in Manitoba due mainly to reliance upon wheat as a cash crop. Not until 1945 and the beginning of specialization in the Pembina Triangle did market gardening reach commercial

proportions. At that point, market gardening became subject to certain trends that have come to characterize the whole of Canadian agriculture: a decrease in the number of farms; an increase in their size; an increase in the value of agricultural products sold; and an increase in farm expenses. These trends, all part of the cost-price squeeze, also signalled the end of what is often assumed in the literature to be a homogeneous class of producers, and the emergence of small, medium, and large class fractions of what I have argued are the petty bourgeoisie. Many small farmers, of course, did not survive this transition (it should also be noted that large producers, at least in Manitoba commercial market gardening, are rare). Those who did survive were primarily medium producers, all owners and operators of the means of production, but their consolidation as a class fraction of the petty bourgeoisie has been a struggle. Power differentials, especially in the sphere of exchange, are noteworthy. Food processors, machinery and chemical suppliers, wholesalers and retailers all control both input and output markets, leaving medium producers extremely vulnerable. Apart from a government-regulated marketing board to protect their largely provincial market, Manitoba commercial market gardeners have control over little else than the cost of labour.

The sources of Manitoba farm labour, most of them part of a floating surplus drawn into and expelled from agriculture on a seasonal basis, have largely been ethnically based.

Aboriginal Canadians, Japanese, Mexican Mennonites, and Mexicans might all be considered "racialized" fractions of the working class. Despite differences in how they have been incorporated into production relations in Manitoba agriculture, an interesting pattern emerges with regard to how racism has factored into the process. It was noted at the outset that racism is not uniformly present as a function of capitalism but that its object and content change over time. It appears that when farmers experience absolute labour shortages as, for example, during war-time, racism plays a negligible role on the work site. When farmers experience relative labour shortages, racism is used on their part in an attempt to deny certain racialized class fractions access to employment. This pattern seems to appear regardless of the manner in which the state has intervened to supply farmers with sources of labour.

The Japanese, for example, were incorporated into the production process through the suspension of normal labour market mechanisms which forced "enemy aliens" into farm labour, yet Manitoba farmers were pleased enough with those workers to grant them a wage increase. Aboriginal Canadians, likewise, were mobilized during war-time and actually commanded a higher wage than did non-aboriginal farm workers. Since 1945, however, racism and/or ethnic prejudice has played a greater part in denying certain ethnic groups access to the production process. Mexican Mennonites, for example, are

welcomed by their Manitoba brethren during economic expansion but are seen as "dirty" and "backward" during economic recession. Similarly, Aboriginal Canadians, whose labour power was once indispensable, are now seen as "lazy drunkards" who are laid off if they are even fortunate enough to be hired. Mexicans, of course, are now the preferred labour source in Manitoba commercial market gardening, thanks to the Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program.

What has been documented in much of the literature as inter-ethnic conflicts between racialized fractions of the working class and/or as racism directed at offshore labourers did not occur in Manitoba. Rather, aboriginal workers formed the Manitoba Farm Workers' Association in opposition not to Mexican workers but to growers, whose employment practices were considered unfair. What had the potential to become an inter-ethnic conflict thus became a class conflict between petty bourgeois producers and aboriginal labourers. Racism was (and still is) directed at Indian and Métis, not at Mexican, farm workers.

The class conflict, however, was short-lived and may never reoccur if liberal trade policies such as the CUSTA and the NAFTA destroy the livelihood of more Canadian farmers, as some predict they will. After having gained the right to bring in offshore workers under conditions very similar to those of the former US-Mexico Bracero Program, Manitoba commercial market gardeners now face new challenges. Plant

closures, the phasing out of marketing boards, and agribusiness competition from the US and Mexico, all threaten the survival of the medium petty bourgeoisie. Although the Canadian Government may be willing to make certain modifications to the Canada-Mexico Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program to increase growers' ability to compete, it is not at all certain that such modifications will not be contested by the US.

In order to understand the intricacies of the development of Manitoba commercial market gardening and its attendant labour needs, I have argued that a class analysis is the best approach. The process - past, present, and future - must be set in its historical context in order to appreciate the formation of fractions of the petty bourgeoisie, the incorporation of various racialized fractions of the working class into specific production relations, and the conflicts that have ensued. I have tried to show that class relations have primacy over "race" or ethnic relations. Of course, ethnicity (at least) must not be discounted, especially at the local level since it is not always obvious whether class fractions might take action on the basis of awareness of their class position or on the basis of ethnicity.

In conclusion, many questions remain unanswered, some due to the difficulty I encountered in researching this topic, others due to the fact that there are no easy answers. Are farmers' labour shortages a result of their unwillingness to

pay higher wages or of their inability to do so? Since Manitoba's cap of one hundred Mexican workers has never been met, do farmers really need these workers or could the positions be filled by domestic labourers? Are there as many farm workers available from Manitoba's reserves as was calculated or was the number exaggerated? Are aboriginal workers actually displaced by Mexicans or do Mexicans create more jobs than they take away? These and other questions will form the basis of further research.

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APPENDIX A

EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE AGREEMENT

**Source: Agricultural Employment Services
(Portage la Prairie, Manitoba)**

EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE AGREEMENT

AGREEMENT entered into this _____ day of _____ 19 _____.
BETWEEN:

(herein referred to as
the "EMPLOYER") _____ of _____
and _____ (Postal Address)

(herein referred to as
the "EMPLOYEE") _____ of _____
(Postal Address)

WITNESSETH as FOLLOWS:

1. The EMPLOYER hires the EMPLOYEE to work for the EMPLOYER as a Farm Labourer upon the following terms, which are hereby agreed to by the EMPLOYEE.
2. The term of employment shall commence on the _____ day of _____ 19 _____. Normal working hours are from _____ to _____, _____ days per week. Overtime pay will be at the rate of _____ per hour.
3. Wages will be \$ _____ per _____ (hour, day, week, month).
4. Deductions from wages will be made for Canada Pension Plan, Unemployment Insurance and Income Tax. Wages will be paid _____ (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly). A statement of earnings and deductions shall be issued with each pay.
5. Accommodations supplied shall consist of _____ which is valued at \$ _____ per _____ (week, month). Telephone, hydro and fuel are to be paid by _____. Any accommodation provided to the EMPLOYEE shall meet the standards established by the CANADA/MANITOBA Agricultural Employment Committee.
6. Room and board will be supplied at \$ _____ per _____ (day, week, month). The employer is responsible for regular maintenance such as plumbing, heating and shingles, but not for damage inflicted by the employee. The employee must maintain accommodations in the same condition as received.
7. Time off will amount to _____ day(s) per week and should be taken every _____ (week, second week, month, etc.)
8. Paid employee vacations will be provided on the basis of _____ days for each full year of service, or at a rate of _____ per cent of salary or wages earned.
9. Statutory holidays with pay include: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Labour Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. Others: _____.
10. Workers Compensation is provided. Yes _____ No _____.
11. Each party agrees to provide the other with _____ days notice of intent to terminate employment.
12. The EMPLOYER may terminate this agreement at any time by reason of the EMPLOYEE'S dissipation, violation of instructions or rules of the EMPLOYER, or failure to comply with any of the agreements on the part of the EMPLOYEE as herein set out.
13. The EMPLOYEE shall be diligent, follow instructions, and will handle with care all machinery, livestock and crops given to his charge.
14. In the event of the death or total incapacity of either party, or if the EMPLOYER ceases to carry on the business, or become bankrupt, this agreement shall forthwith terminate. In the event of the sickness of the EMPLOYEE, or other cause incapacitating him from performing the duties prescribed or referred to herein, or from attending to his duties, for _____ consecutive days, the EMPLOYER may terminate this agreement, without notice, upon payment to the EMPLOYEE of _____ dollars in lieu of notice, in addition to all arrears of wages when ascertained up to the date of such termination.
15. Nothing in this agreement shall be taken to create any liability by the AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICES for or in respect of any matter arising herein.



AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT
SERVICES

Signed this _____ day of _____, 19 _____.
EMPLOYEE _____

EMPLOYER _____

APPENDIX B

HUMAN RESOURCE FORECAST

**Source: Agricultural Employment Services
(Portage la Prairie, Manitoba)**

HUMAN RESOURCE FORECAST

Anticipated Occupational Shortage

OCCUPATIONAL TITLE: _____

WAGES:

Hourly Rate: _____

Piecework Rate: _____

Housing and Transportation Allowance: _____

Overtime Premium: _____

7th Day Premium: _____

Vacation Pay Rate: _____

Other: _____

WORKING CONDITIONS:

Hours Per Day: _____

Days Per Week: _____

Hours of Work Between: _____

Average Weekly Hours: _____

Type of Housing Provided: _____

Board/Meal Charge: (Up to \$6.50 per day for a minimum of three meals)

Guaranteed Minimum Hours per Day if Worker Assembles at Marshalling Point: _____

Washing and Bathing Facilities: _____

Toilet Facilities: _____

Coffee and Lunch Breaks: _____

Provision of Working Supplies: (i.e. Gloves, Rubbers, etc.) _____

Other: _____

DATE: _____ EMPLOYER'S SIGNATURE: _____

CERTIFICATION: The wages and working conditions offered are/are not sufficient to attract and retain in employment, Canadian citizens or permanent residents.

DATE: _____ AES OFFICER: _____

DATE: _____ CEC OFFICER: _____

HUMAN RESOURCE FORECAST/PLAN
Anticipated Occupational Shortage

OCCUPATIONAL TITLE: _____

DURATION AND EXTENT OF SHORTAGE:

OCCUPATION TASK DESCRIPTION:

CONSEQUENCES IF SHORTAGE NOT FILLED OR ADDRESSED:

METHODS OF FILLING/ADDRESSING SHORTAGE - SHORT TERM:

- Recruitment (CEC/NJB/Relocation) _____

- Training: _____

- Contracting Out: _____

cont'd...

- Reassignment of Tasks: _____

- Mechanical Substitution: _____

- Foreign Worker Recruitment: _____

- Other: _____

METHODS OF FILLING/ADDRESSING SHORTAGE - LONG TERM:

DATE: _____ EMPLOYER'S SIGNATURE: _____

CERTIFICATION: If the employer is requesting permission to recruit Foreign Workers to solve all or part of the identified occupational shortage as a short term solution, then has the employer made reasonable efforts to hire or train Canadian citizens or permanent residents for the employment in question?

Reasonable Effort Made _____ Not Made _____

DATE: _____ AES OFFICER: _____
DATE: _____ CEC OFFICER: _____

AUTHORIZATION: Given that the following conditions are met, the employer will be allowed to recruit Foreign Worker to a maximum of _____

Conditions: _____

DATE: _____ AUTHORIZING OFFICER: _____

(Note: Authorizing officer is as follows:
1 - 9 Foreign Workers - CEC Officer
10 - 49 Foreign Workers - RHQ Officer)

APPENDIX C

AGREEMENT FOR THE EMPLOYMENT IN CANADA OF SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS FROM MEXICO

Source: Canadian Employment and Immigration
Commission (Winnipeg, Manitoba)

AGREEMENT FOR THE EMPLOYMENT IN CANADA OF SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS FROM MEXICO

WHEREAS the Government of Canada and the Government of the United Mexican States are desirous that employment of a seasonal nature be arranged for Mexican Agricultural Workers in Canada where Canada determines that such workers are needed to satisfy the requirements of the Canadian agricultural labour market; and,

WHEREAS the Government of Canada and the Government of the United Mexican States have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to give effect to this joint desire; and,

WHEREAS the Government of Canada and the Government of the United Mexican States agree that an Agreement for the Employment in Canada of seasonal agricultural workers from Mexico be signed by each participating employer and worker; and,

WHEREAS the Government of Canada and the Government of the United Mexican States agree that an agent for the Government of the United Mexican States known as the "GOVERNMENT'S AGENT" shall be stationed in Canada to assist in the administration of the program;

THEREFORE, the following agreement for the employment in Canada of seasonal agricultural workers from Mexico is made in duplicate this _____ day of _____, 19 _____.

The EMPLOYER agrees to employ the WORKER(S) assigned to him by the Government of the United Mexican States under the Mexican Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program and to accept the terms and conditions hereunder as forming part of the employment Agreement between himself and such referred WORKER.

THE PARTIES agree as follows:

- I. 1. (a) Subject to compliance with the terms and the conditions found in this agreement, the EMPLOYER agrees to hire the WORKER as a _____ for a term of employment not less than six weeks with the expected completion of the period of employment to be the _____ day of _____, 19 _____.
(b) In the case of a TRANSFERRED WORKER, the term of employment shall consist of a cumulative term of not less than six weeks.
2. The normal working day is not to exceed eight hours, but the EMPLOYER may request of the WORKER and the WORKER may agree to extend his / her hours when the urgency of the situation requires it, and such requests shall be in accordance with the customs of the district and the spirit of this program, giving the same rights to Mexican workers as given to Canadian workers;
3. For each six consecutive days of work, the WORKER will be entitled to one day of rest, but the EMPLOYER may request that the WORKER and the WORKER may agree to have that day postponed until a day determined by mutual agreement where the urgency to finish farm work cannot be delayed;
4. The EMPLOYER shall give the WORKER a trial period of fourteen actual working days from the date of his arrival at the place of employment. The EMPLOYER shall not discharge the WORKER except for sufficient cause or refusal to work during that trial period.
5. The EMPLOYER shall, upon requesting the transfer of a WORKER, give a trial period of seven actual working days from the date of his arrival at the place of employment. Effective the eighth working day, such a WORKER shall be deemed to be a "named WORKER" and clause IV 1. (1) will apply.

II. The EMPLOYER also agrees:

WAGES

1. (a) To pay the WORKER at his place of employment weekly wages in lawful money of Canada at a rate equal to:
(i) the minimum wage for industrial workers provided by law in the province in which the WORKER is employed;
(ii) the rate determined from time to time by the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission to be the prevailing wage rate for the type of agricultural work being carried out by the WORKER in the locality in which the work will be done; or
(iii) the rate being paid by the EMPLOYER to his Canadian workers performing the same type of agricultural work; whichever is the greatest, provided:
(iv) that the average minimum work week shall be 40 hours;
(v) that, if circumstances prevent fulfillment of Clause II 1(a)(iv), the average weekly income paid to the WORKER over the period of employment is to be not less than an amount equal to a 40 hour week at the hourly minimum rate for industrial workers provided by law in the province, and
(vi) that where, for any reason whatsoever, no actual work is possible, the WORKER shall receive a reasonable advance to cover his personal expenses;
(b) to make deductions from the wages payable to the WORKER only for the following:
(i) those employer deductions required to be made under law;
(ii) all other deductions as required pursuant to this agreement;
(c) to pay the WORKER vacation pay in accordance with provincial legislation governing terms of employment in the province in which the WORKER is employed.

CONDITIONS

2. (a) to provide such adequate living accommodations to the WORKER, without cost to him, as meet the approval of the appropriate official of the governmental authority responsible for health and living conditions in the province where the WORKER is employed and, in the absence of such authority, the approval of the GOVERNMENT'S AGENT;
(b) to provide reasonable and proper meals for the worker and, where the WORKER elects to prepare his own meals, to furnish cooking utensils, fuel, and facilities without cost to the WORKER and to provide a minimum of thirty minutes for meal breaks;
(c) to comply with all laws, regulations and by-laws respecting conditions set by competent authority and, in addition, in the absence of any laws providing for payment of compensation to workers for personal injuries received or disease contracted as a result of the employment, shall obtain insurance accepted by the GOVERNMENT'S AGENT providing necessary compensation to the WORKER;
(d) to maintain and forward to the GOVERNMENT'S AGENT proper and accurate attendance and pay records, together with such rules of conduct, safety, discipline and care and maintenance of property as the WORKER may be required to observe;
(e) that the WORKER shall not be moved to another area or place of employment or transferred or loaned to another employer without the consent of the WORKER and the prior approval in writing of the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission and the GOVERNMENT'S AGENT;

TRAVEL

3. (a) to pay in advance to the EMPLOYER'S travel agent the cost of air transportation of the WORKER for travel to Canada and return to Mexico;
(b) to make arrangements:
(i) to meet and transport the WORKER from his point of arrival in Canada to his place of employment and, upon termination of his employment,
to transport the WORKER to his place of departure from Canada, and
(ii) to inform and obtain the consent of the GOVERNMENT'S AGENT to the transportation arrangements required in (i) above.

III The WORKER also agrees:

- EMPLOYMENT**
- (a) to work and reside at the place of employment or at such other place as the EMPLOYER, with the approval of the GOVERNMENT'S AGENT, may require;
 - (b) that the EMPLOYER may deduct from the WORKER'S wages a sum not to exceed \$6.50 per day for the cost of meals provided to the WORKER;
 - (c) to work at all times during the terms of employment under the supervision and direction of the EMPLOYER and perform the duties of the agricultural work requested of him;
 - (d) to obey and comply with all rules set down by the EMPLOYER which have been approved by the GOVERNMENT'S AGENT relating to the safety, discipline, and the care and maintenance of property;
 - (e) that he shall:
 - (i) maintain living quarters furnished to him by the EMPLOYER or his agent in the same clean condition in which he received them; and
 - (ii) if he fails to keep the living quarters in a clean condition he realizes that the EMPLOYER may, with the approval of the GOVERNMENT'S AGENT, deduct from his wages the cost to the EMPLOYER to maintain the quarters in the appropriate state of cleanliness;
 - (f) that he shall not work for any other person without the approval of the EMPLOYER, except in situations arising by reason of the EMPLOYER'S breach of this agreement and where alternative arrangements for employment are made under clause IV, 4;
 - (g) To return promptly to Mexico upon completion of his/her authorized work period.

TRAVEL

2. To pay to the EMPLOYER on account of transportation costs referred to in clause II 3(a) by way of regular payroll deductions a sum calculated at a rate of 2 percent of the WORKER'S gross pay, the aggregate payment not to be less than \$50.00 or greater than \$166.00.

IV THE PARTIES further agree:

1. That following completion of the trial period of employment by the WORKER, the EMPLOYER, after consultation with the GOVERNMENT'S AGENT, shall be entitled for non-compliance, refusal to work, or any other sufficient reason, to terminate the WORKER'S employment hereunder and so cause the WORKER to be repatriated; and where

(i) the WORKER was requested by name by the EMPLOYER, the full cost of such repatriation to

(ii) Mexico shall be paid by the EMPLOYER;
the WORKER was selected by the Government of Mexico and 50% or more of the term of the contract has been completed, the full cost of returning the WORKER will be the responsibility of the WORKER;
(iii) the WORKER was selected by the Government of Mexico and less than 50% of the term of the contract has been completed, the cost of the north-bound and south-bound flight will be the responsibility of the WORKER. In the event of insolvency of the WORKER, the Government of Mexico, through the GOVERNMENT'S AGENT will reimburse the EMPLOYER for the unpaid amount less any amounts collected under Clause III, 2.

2. That if, in the opinion of the GOVERNMENT'S AGENT, special personal or domestic circumstances exist which make repatriation of the WORKER desirable or necessary prior to the termination of the agreement, the EMPLOYER:

(i) shall be responsible for the full cost of repatriation to _____, Mexico, if 50% or more of the term of the agreement has been completed; but

(ii) shall not be responsible for any cost of repatriation where less than 50% of the term of the agreement has been completed.

3. That if, prior to the termination of the contract, repatriation of the WORKER for medical reasons is necessary, the EMPLOYER shall pay the reasonable transportation and subsistence expenses of the WORKER with respect to repatriation to

Mexico except in the instance where repatriation is necessary due to a physical

4. Or medical condition which was present prior to the WORKER leaving Mexico.
That if it is determined by the GOVERNMENT'S AGENT, after consultation with the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission, that the EMPLOYER has not satisfied his obligations under this agreement, the agreement will be rescinded by the GOVERNMENT'S AGENT on behalf of the WORKER, and if alternative agricultural employment cannot be arranged through the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission for the WORKER in that area of Canada, the EMPLOYER shall be responsible for the full costs of repatriation of the WORKER to

_____, Mexico; and if the term of employment as specified in Clause I-1, is not completed and employment is terminated under Clause IV 4, the WORKER shall receive from the EMPLOYER a payment to ensure that the total wages paid to the WORKER is not less than that which the WORKER would have received if the minimum period of employment had been completed.

5. That if the WORKER dies during the period of employment, the EMPLOYER shall notify the GOVERNMENT'S AGENT and upon the instructions of the GOVERNMENT'S AGENT, either

(i) provide suitable burial, or
(ii) remit to the GOVERNMENT'S AGENT a sum of money which shall represent the costs that the EMPLOYER would have incurred under 5 (i) above, in order that such money be applied to the costs undertaken by the Government of Mexico in having the WORKER returned to his relatives in Mexico.

6. That if a transferred WORKER is not suitable to perform the duties assigned by the receiving EMPLOYER, within the seven days trial period the EMPLOYER shall return the WORKER to the previous EMPLOYER and that EMPLOYER will be responsible for the repatriation cost of the WORKER.

FINANCIAL UNDERTAKINGS

7. That if the WORKER is to borrow moneys from the EMPLOYER:

(i) no loan from the EMPLOYER to the WORKER shall be for a sum that exceeds one month's wages; and
(ii) if the WORKER does not repay the loan to the EMPLOYER prior to the termination of the contract, the EMPLOYER must request such payment in writing from the GOVERNMENT'S AGENT within a period of one month after termination of the contract, or three months where the WORKER returned before the agreed date for termination of employment; and
(iii) if a proper request is made within the appropriate time, the GOVERNMENT'S AGENT will reimburse the EMPLOYER within a reasonable time.

8. (a) The WORKER agrees that the EMPLOYER shall recover by way of regular payroll deductions the sum of \$_____ per day until the date of departure to Mexico. Such amount will cover the premium for non-occupational medical insurance which includes accidents, sickness, hospitalization and death benefits. It is understood that no such deductions are to be taken from WORKERS by EMPLOYERS in provinces where provincial health schemes provide for comparable coverage.

(b) That the WORKER agrees that the EMPLOYER shall remit in advance directly to the insurance company engaged by the Government of Mexico the total amount of the insurance premium calculated for the stay period in Canada. Such amount will be recovered by the EMPLOYER with the deduction made to the WORKER'S wages according to clause IV 8 a). In the case where the WORKER leaves Canada before the employment agreement has expired, the EMPLOYER will be entitled to recover any unused portion of the insurance premium from the insurance company.

(c) The coverage for insurance shall include:

(i) the expenses for non-occupational medical insurance which include accident, sickness, hospitalization and death benefits.
(ii) any other expenses that might be looked upon under the agreement between the Government of Mexico and the insurance company to be of benefit to the WORKER.

(d) In the event of fire, the EMPLOYER'S responsibility for the WORKER'S personal clothing shall be limited to 1/3 its replacement cost to a maximum of \$150.00. The government of Mexico shall bear responsibility for the remaining cost of the replacement of the WORKER'S clothing.

9. That the agreement shall be governed by the laws of Canada.

EMPLOYER'S SIGNATURE: _____

Witness: _____

NAME OF EMPLOYER: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CORPORATE NAME: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

FAX NO.: _____

PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OF WORKER IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE: _____

DISPONIBLE EN FRANCAIS (EMP. 2268 F) / DISPONIBLE EN ESPANOL (EMP. 2268 SPA)

APPENDIX D

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES
BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA AND THE
GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES
CONCERNING THE MEXICAN SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS PROGRAM

Source: Canadian Employment and Immigration
Commission (Winnipeg, Manitoba)

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA AND
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES
CONCERNING THE
MEXICAN SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS PROGRAM

THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA (hereinafter referred to as "Canada") as represented by the Minister of Employment and Immigration and

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES (hereinafter referred to as "Mexico") as represented by the Secretary of "External Relations"

Desiring to continue to develop the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program which has been in existence since 1974 and which symbolizes the close bonds of friendship, understanding and cooperation existing between them; and

Desiring to ensure that the Program continues to be of mutual benefit to both parties and facilitates the movement of Mexican Seasonal Agricultural Workers into all areas of Canada where Canada determines that such workers are needed to satisfy the requirements of the Canadian agricultural labour market;

Canada and Mexico have agreed that the guiding principles underlying the Program will be:

1. (a) that the operation of the program will be administered according to the Operational Guidelines, attached as Annex I which will be subject to annual review by both parties and amended as necessary to reflect changes required for the successful administration of the Program and adherence to the principles contained in this Memorandum;
- (b) that workers are to be employed at a premium cost to the employers and are to receive from their respective employers, while engaged in employment in Canada, adequate accommodation and treatment equal to that received by Canadian workers performing the same type of agricultural work, in accordance with Canadian laws;
- (c) that workers are to be employed in any activity performed by Canadian workers in the Canadian agricultural sector only during those periods determined by Canada to be periods when workers resident in Canada are not available; and
- (d) that each worker will sign an Employment Agreement attached as Annex II outlining the conditions of employment under the Program, which agreement will be subject to annual review by both parties and amended after consultation with employer groups in Canada to reflect changes required for the successful administration of the Program and adherence to the principles contained in this Memorandum.

And have further agreed that:

2. This Memorandum of Understanding
 - (a) may be amended at any time with the approval in writing of both parties;
 - (b) becomes effective on the later of the dates of signature by representatives of both parties and will be valid for an initial period of three full calendar years and thereafter will continue in force unless terminated by either party giving at least three (3) months notice in writing to the other party after consultation during which at least a three month advance notice has been given; and

.../2

ANNEX I

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES TO THE MEMORANDUM
OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN
THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES

Further to the Principles contained in the Memorandum of Understanding, the parties have agreed that:

1. Canada

- (a) will establish directions, in accordance with its laws respecting immigration, limiting the admission to Canada of WORKERS from Mexico seeking entry to Canada for the purpose of engaging in seasonal employment in the agricultural sector to persons selected by Mexico who:
 - (i) are at least 18 years of age;
 - (ii) are nationals of Mexico;
 - (iii) satisfy the immigration laws of both countries; and
 - (iv) are parties to an Employment Agreement attached hereto as Annex II;
- (b) will endeavour to provide Mexico with a minimum of 10 working days notice as to the number of unnamed WORKERS required by EMPLOYERS from the labour pool referred to in section 2 (d) in order to facilitate the documentation process and enable their arrival by the dates required by the EMPLOYERS;
- (c) will endeavour to notify Mexico as soon as reasonably possible:
 - (i) of the cancellation of any requests for Mexican WORKERS prior to their departure from Mexico; and
 - (ii) of any new request whereby a WORKER whose request has been cancelled would be required, so that in case of short notice cancellation utmost effort will be made to reassign the workers affected;
- (d) through the Canadian Embassy in Mexico City will undertake to review the medical reports and other WORKER documentation, to complete employment authorizations for each WORKER, and to advise Mexico when all documentation is complete.

2. Mexico

- (a) upon receipt of the notice referred to in subclause 1(b), will complete, with the exception of major force clauses, within ten working days the recruitment, selection and documentation of unnamed WORKERS and will notify the Canadian Embassy in Mexico City and the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission through its Government Agent of the number of WORKERS, their names and the dates of arrival in Canada;
- (b) will only select for the Program persons who are bona fide agricultural WORKERS and who have no infections or communicable diseases, or any other physical or medical condition which would affect his ability to perform his assigned job, will arrange a medical examination including chest X-rays for each WORKER, where considered advisable will issue a WORKER with a medical alert card and will provide each WORKER with a suitable Mexican passport;
- (c) will endeavour to deliver the WORKER'S medical report and passport to the Canadian Embassy in Mexico City at least two weeks before the departure of any given WORKER'S flight;

- (d) will maintain a reserve pool of at least 100 selected unnamed WORKERS who are medically examined, whose passports have been issued and who are therefore ready to depart for Canada when requests are received from Canadian EMPLOYERS;
 - (e) will appoint one or more agents in Canada for the purpose of ensuring the smooth functioning of the Program for the mutual benefit of both the EMPLOYERS and WORKERS, and to perform the duties required of that agent under the attached Employment Agreement.
3. All WORKERS from Mexico engaged in employment in Canada pursuant to the Program will, to the extent provided for in the Employment Agreement, be entitled to the benefits
- (a) of a regime for the compensation to WORKERS for injuries received or disease contracted as a result of employment; and
 - (b) of insurance to cover non-professional medical expenses, hospital care and death benefits.
4. All travel arrangements for WORKERS selected for the purposes of the Program:
- (a) will provide for the most economical method of air transportation to and from Canada, and will be made by an agent of the Canadian EMPLOYERS who will notify the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission of such arrangements; and
 - (b) will be subject to the prior approval of both parties to this Memorandum of Understanding and will be made so as to cause the least inconvenience possible to the WORKERS.
5. The present Operational Guidelines may be reviewed and amended annually through consultation between officials designated by the parties to the Memorandum of Understanding.

Done in two copies in the English, French and Spanish languages, each version being equally authoritative.

APPENDIX E

MANITOBA FARM WORKERS' ASSOCIATION PREAMBLE AND PROPOSED CONSTITUTION

Source: Marcoux (1976)

PREAMBLE

We, the farm workers of the Portage District have laboured in the fields, sown and harvested the crops. We have assisted in providing food for people in our cities and in our province, but we have not had sufficient food for ourselves.

Industrial workers have organized, have joined together and have grown strong. We have been isolated, scattered and hindered from uniting our forces.

We are the inheritors of constant economic exploitation, social injustice and suffering. Our fathers and their fathers were victims of the same inheritance.

Despite our isolation, our sufferings, our social and economic oppression, we remain fulfilled with a desire to build our association as a bulwark against future exploitation.

Our rights to organize ourselves into a strong united voice are undeniably inscribed into the Canadian Bill of Rights.

We will take our rightful place in Canadian Society and in our Community, we will make our demands known and respected.

We believe in the dignity of tilling the soil and tending the crops.

We reject the notion that farm labour is but a step along the way to a job in the factory and life in the city.

We will build our association into a truly representative force for all farm workers of the Portage District.

We will take all the necessary steps to ensure our rights are protected by legislation.

We will struggle as long as it takes to reach our goals.

We pledge to treat all men as equals, to respect their rights and uphold their dignity.

We believe that all men should act towards each other in the spirit of Brotherhood.

We believe that Mother Earth is our source of dignity, respect, pride and honour.

PROPOSED CONSTITUTION

NAME: The Association shall be known as the Manitoba Farm Workers Association and identified by the initials, M.F.W.A.

HEADQUARTERS: The headquarters of the Association shall be in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

JURISDICTION: The jurisdiction of the Association shall be all farm workers in the district known as the Portage C.F.L.P. District.

STRUCTURE: The structure of the Association shall consist of the Convention, Board of Directors, and Special Committees of the Association.

ASSOCIATION SEAL,
INSIGNIA AND FLAG: The Association seal, insignia and flag shall bear the design of two hands shaking with Indian beadwork on the sleeve of the hand on the right side of the seal. The initials M.F.W.A. may also be included. Green shall serve as the official colour of the Association.

OBJECTS OF THE
ASSOCIATION: BETWEEN WORKERS

- (a) to unite under its banner all individuals employed as Agricultural workers regardless of race, creed, sex, nationality, marital status or political belief;
- (b) to promote the development and maintenance of health, well being and on-the-job safety practices and such educational training programs amongst its members as would best affect a full knowledge of their rights, responsibilities, well being and interest;
- (c) to promote, foster, develop and advance the skills, efficiency and working knowledge necessary of such workers;

BETWEEN WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS

- (d) to protect the moral and legal rights of agricultural workers, to exert appropriate influence on any resisting employers by using non violent and legal activities;
- (e) to promote industrial peace and develop and more harmonious relationship between employees and employers;

BETWEEN ASSOCIATION AND CONSUMERS

(f) to secure recognition by employers and the public of agricultural workers' right to organize for their mutual benefit;

OBJECTS OF THE
ASSOCIATION:

BETWEEN WORKERS AND GOVERNMENT

(g) to engage in legislative activity to establish, promote, protect and advance the physical, economic and social well being of the workers.

COMMITMENT TO
NON-VIOLENCE:

The above stated purposes and objects shall be accomplished only be and through totally non-violent means. Every member of this Association is pledged to reject the use of violence in any form for any Association activity.

MEMBERSHIP:

Any person regardless of race, sex, creed, nationality or political belief who is employed or actively seeking employment as a farm worker in the Portage C.F.L.P. District shall be eligible for membership providing that he/she is over 16 years of age. Membership fee shall be \$1.00 until December 1978.

THE BOARD OF

DIRECTORS:

The table officers shall be elected at the Convention, and be composed of President, Secretary, Treasurer and 5 sitting members. The Past President shall be recognized as a sitting member for one year.

GENERAL POWERS

OF THE BOARD:

Administer the affairs and property of the Association, interpret the Constitution, change it if need by subject to ratification at annual Convention, administer the Association's money and carry out the objectives of the Association. The President shall be solely responsible for all negotiations and representation of the Association unless he/she delegates the responsibility.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE: The Committee shall meet at least 3 times a year and be composed of all Chiefs and Band Administrators, appointed representatives of the M.I.B.-D.O.T.C., M.M.F., and the Past President of the M.F.W.A.

CONVENTION:

The Convention shall be held once a year, plus four months, anywhere in the C.F.L.P. District of Portage. The date of the Founding Convention shall establish the future convention dates. Conduct during the Convention shall be according to Roberts' Rules of Order.

APPENDIX F

JOB CLASSIFICATIONS (1991)

**Source: Agricultural Employment Services
(Portage la Prairie, Manitoba)**

7181-110: Farm Worker, General

Performs general duties related to growing crops and raising livestock or poultry.

Operates tractor, plow, combine and other machinery to cultivate soil and to plant and harvest crops. Services machinery and makes minor repairs. Repairs farm buildings and fences, using hand and power tools and tractor-powered auger. Drives truck or tractor-drawn wagon to haul feed for livestock and to transport produce to market. Observes condition of poultry or livestock to detect disease or injury. Puts vaccine in drinking water of poultry and injects serum into cattle, using hypodermic needle, to immunize animals; Carries and distributes feed to animals and poultry. Operates mechanical devices to feed cattle, hogs or poultry, and to clean stables and pens. Cleans and disinfects poultry pens and houses to prevent disease. Cleans barnyard buildings using pitch fork and shovel.

7183-122: Farm Worker, Vegetable

Plants, cultivates and harvests vegetables:

Operates farm machinery to cultivate and fertilize soil. Mixes greenhouse soil with nutrients to prepare it for planting. Operates machinery and uses garden tools to plant seeds and seedlings in fields and greenhouses. Thins, weeds and hoes row crops. Mixes chemical solutions and operates tractor-drawn and manual sprayers to spray vegetables to control insects and to prevent plant diseases. Irrigates soil and maintains irrigation system. Erects supports for climbing vegetables and for protection of plants. Prunes and thins plants to promote growth. Operates farm machinery and uses hand tools to harvest vegetables. Operates shelling machine to shell vine crops. Trims, washes and sorts vegetables by hand or using mechanical equipment. Bunches, bags or packs

vegetables for marketing. Services and makes minor repairs to machinery and equipment. Maintains and repairs farm buildings.

7197-114: Farm Machinery Operator

Operates tractor-drawn or self-propelled farm machinery to plant, cultivate and harvest crops.

Hitches implements to tractor, drives tractor, and operates controls on implements to plow, fertilize, cultivate, spray and harvest crops. Adjusts speed of cutters, blowers and conveyors, depth of digging blades, and height of cutting head of harvesting machine, using hand tools. Services machinery and makes minor repairs.

7098-112: Farm labourer, General

Assists in planting and harvesting crops, and in care of livestock, fur-bearing animals and poultry:

Plants seeds in fields or greenhouses and transplants seedlings, by hand or using mechanical aids. Assists in spraying and irrigation operations. Weeds, thins and hoes row crops, and assists in harvesting field and row crops. Picks fruit and nuts from trees, pulls or cuts grapes from vines, and picks berries from plants or bushes. Debeaks chicks and trims their wings. Assists in shearing and docking sheep, branding and castrating livestock, grooming horses and herding livestock. Feeds and waters livestock, fur-bearing animals and poultry. Cleans stables, pens and enclosures, by hand or using mechanical equipment. Loads and unloads supplies, produce and animals from truck. Assists in erecting, maintaining and repairing buildings and fences.

APPENDIX G

RECOMMENDED HOURLY WAGE RATES (1991)

Source: Agricultural Employment Services
(Portage la Prairie, Manitoba)

<u>Average</u>		<u>Top End</u>	<u>Low End</u>
7181-110	Farm Worker, General \$5.94	\$9.00	\$4.70
7183-122	Farm Worker, Vegetable N/A	N/A	N/A
7197-114	Farm Machinery Operator \$6.12	\$8.50	\$5.00
7198-112	Farm Labourer, General \$5.55	\$6.00	\$4.70