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WORKIN' ON THE CONTRACT:
ST LUCIAN FARMWORKERS IN ONTARIO
A STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION

by

Sherrie N. Larkin

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

McMaster University

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WORKIN' ON THE CONTRACT: ST LUCIAN FARMWORKERS IN ONTARIO

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (1998)
(Anthropology)

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TITLE: Workin' on the Contract: St Lucian
Farmworkers in Ontario, A Study of
International Labour Migration

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the seasonal round of St Lucian contract workers who travel to Ontario every year for temporary employment in the Foreign Agricultural Resources Management Service programme (FARMS). The study's focus is divided among Ontario growers as employers, St Lucian agricultural workers as employees, residents of a rural town in Southwestern Ontario, and governmental departments that influence the FARMS programme in Canada and in St Lucia. The main argument of the dissertation is that labour migration has been an integral part of St Lucian history since emancipation on the island. It is both an economic strategy and a symbol of the freedom emancipation promised. While factors external to the island, such as the need for agricultural labour in Ontario and a long history of connections between Canada and the British West Indies influence where St Lucians travel, the propensity of these men and women to leave the island and return can only be explained in terms of St Lucia's history as a British colony. Within this history, labour migration emerges in conjunction with other strategies of enduring yet resisting the plantation economy that characterized the island for centuries. Although "workin' on the contract" in Canada is

used by St Lucians for individual social and economic goals, it derives its meaning from the shared cultural beliefs and values of the island's society.

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I dedicate this work to those St Lucians who come to

Canada to work, and who shared their experiences with me and allowed me to learn from them, to the men and women on Canadian farms who took the time to answer my many questions, and to those residents of Simcoe who described their reactions to the presence of West Indians in their town.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

For almost 20 years, men from the Eastern Caribbean island of St Lucia have been coming to Canada to work in the fields of Ontario farms. Some arrive as early as April to prepare the ground for planting vegetables. Others come in May and June to weed and hoe the vegetable fields and to begin harvesting strawberries, rhubarb and other early produce. By August, they are picking peaches and pears, and beginning to prime tobacco in the sandy soil along Lake Erie between Simcoe and Leamington. In the fall, still more arrive to harvest apples, and those who were priming tobacco are often transferred to apple orchards, where apple growers are anxious to get their crop off the trees before the winter storms begin.

St Lucians join the ranks of other British Caribbean and Mexican international labour migrants who can be seen at work in the fields throughout southwestern Ontario during the growing and harvesting season.¹ The West Indian and Mexican workers enter Canada through the "Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Services" (FARMS), an

organization that Ontario growers created, fund and control to serve their labour needs, which they say cannot be met by the Canadian labour force. After the harvest is in and the jobs are finished, the "temporary" farm workers return home until the next season begins.

"WORKIN' ON THE CONTRACT

When St Lucians refer to their journey to Canada, they do not talk about migration or international labour migration. They talk about their jobs in Ontario, which they call "workin' on the contract." The contract is an agreement that has been drawn up between representatives of Canada and those of the Eastern Caribbean and must be signed by both Canadian employers and Caribbean employees. The terms of the contract stipulate the conditions of employment. Employers are responsible for providing lodging and facilities for meals, paying wages, and making travel arrangements for their employees. Employee responsibilities include completing the job for which they are hired, paying any debts incurred while they are employed, and working for only one employer per season, unless they have permission to change. From the perspective of St Lucians who work in Canada on a regular basis, "workin' on the contract" means an annual cycle of leaving home, travelling to Canada, living and working in rural Ontario for anywhere from six weeks to ten months, and returning home again. Between 1979

and 1992, 349 St Lucians have taken part in this seasonal round, and when all of their incomes are added together, they grossed over four and a half million Canadian dollars.²

This dissertation focuses on the FARMS programme and on the St Lucian experience of "workin' on the contract." The study attempts to explain why Canadian farmers need to import labour from the British West Indies and why West Indians come to Canada to work. It describes how West Indian employees use the FARMS programme to suit their individual needs and goals, whenever possible, and how Ontario growers have attempted to structure and restructure the programme to solve their labour problems. The study also describes how West Indian FARMS employees are received in rural Ontario, and what travel to Canada means in St Lucia. The story within this dissertation is a re-telling of the stories told to me by 31 Ontario growers, 87 St Lucian FARMS employees, and 38 residents of Simcoe, Ontario. It takes place in three locations: on farms and in a town in rural Ontario, and on the island of St Lucia in the Eastern Caribbean.

I argue that labour migration has been an integral part of St Lucian history since emancipation. It is both an economic strategy and a symbol of the freedom emancipation promised but did not deliver. While factors external to the island, such as the need for agricultural labour in Ontario,

significantly influence where St Lucians travel, the propensity of these men and women to leave the island and return can only be explained in terms of St Lucia's history as a British colony. Within this history, labour migration emerges in conjunction with other strategies of enduring yet resisting the plantation economy that characterized the island for centuries.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The conceptual framework I use in this study to explore the issues involved in "workin' on the contract" consists of viewing the FARMS programme from different vantage points. In Ontario, the core of FARMS contains Ontario growers as employers and West Indians as employees. The two sides of this basic employer-employee relationship provide contrasting views of the programme from the inside, and include issues of interests, costs and benefits, and cultural values. Beyond the core of the employer-employee relationship, a view of FARMS from the outside involves other kinds of issues. As long as Caribbean workers remain on the farms, they interact only with the families of growers, or with immediate neighbours. When these workers leave the farms, they come into contact with a much larger segment of Canadian society, and the third set of issues concerns the reception of West Indians by residents in a rural town.

The seasonal round of working abroad means that St Lucians will leave home and then return with money they have earned and with material goods they have purchased while they were in Canada. In addition to material possessions, the islanders will bring home experiences of living and working in a different country. "Workin' on the contract," then is more than just a job, it is a social and cultural experience as well as an economic one. There is also a political dimension to FARMS. The contract is a bilateral agreement, called "A Memorandum of Understanding," between Canada and St Lucia and involves the island's Department of Labour in the administration of the programme. Therefore, the final set of issues concerns the effects of the FARMS programme on St Lucians and on St Lucia.

With these four vantage points in mind, specific questions guided my research. Why do St Lucians leave home and travel to Canada to work? What are the costs and benefits of this experience? Why do Ontario growers import farm workers from abroad when there are unemployed Canadians at home? What are the roles of the Canadian government and the St Lucian government in the FARMS programme? How are black West Indian men accepted in the predominantly white communities of rural Ontario? How does the FARMS programme compare with other temporary international labour programmes?

To answer these questions I have gathered information

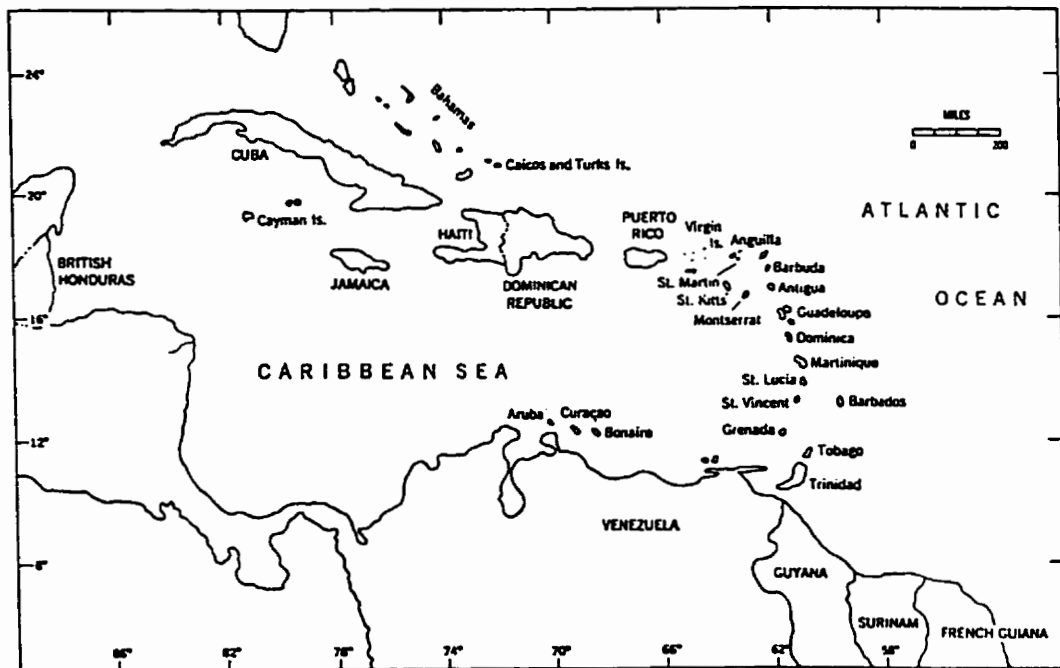
and data from a variety of sources including the academic literature and my own ethnographic research in Ontario and in the West Indies. I consulted the literature on the general topic of international labour migration and on the more specific histories of Caribbean migration, Ontario agriculture and Canadian immigration, the connection between Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean, and the migration of African Americans to Simcoe, Ontario. I began fieldwork in Ontario in 1988 by looking at the employer-employee relationship as it is expressed on a day-to-day basis. I asked growers to tell me stories about their experiences with their West Indian men and to evaluate how well the FARMS programme works for them. I asked West Indian employees to describe their experiences on the farms where they live and work, and to explain why they came to Canada. I recorded the interviews on tape and transcribed them to produce a written record of what growers and workers told me. In addition to interviews on the farms, I devoted Friday nights to participant observation in Simcoe, Ontario. I chose Simcoe as the field site for this part of my research because its residents experience a large number of West Indian shoppers on Friday nights and it has a long history of contact with migrant workers, as well as with people of African ancestry. At first, I simply joined the shoppers and observed the interaction between West Indians and Canadians. Then, in the summer of 1992, I conducted

informal interviews with people who live in Simcoe, and with residents who have businesses that are frequented by West Indian workers.

In order to learn about the effects of the FARMS programme on the West Indies, I had to decide upon a field site in the islands. The FARMS programme involves importing employees from eleven West Indian countries: Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, and the Eastern Caribbean countries of Antigua and Barbuda, Montserrat, St Kitts and Nevis, Dominica, St Lucia, St Vincent, and Grenada.³

MAP 1

THE CARIBBEAN



Although I had talked with workers from several of these islands while they were in Canada, I now had to narrow my

focus to just one country. I chose St Lucia for three reasons. First, I followed the advice of Hector Deloungé, the director of FARMS, who had visited the island and recommended it as a good example of how FARMS benefits sending countries. Second, very little has been published about St Lucia. As a tiny island in the Eastern Caribbean, it is included within studies of the area, but has never been the subject of an entire book or an ethnography. Finally, I had already met several St Lucians during my interviews with FARMS employees and established further connections by exchanging Christmas cards with them during the winter.

Methodologically, my research objectives were to produce a description of the FARMS programme as it is experienced in different ways by different people, and to situate those experiences within their historical contexts. The structure of the dissertation reflects these objectives, and is based on my organization of what I learned about FARMS and "workin' on the contract" from people who are directly involved.

REVIEW OF CHAPTERS

Throughout this dissertation, I ask two basic questions about international labour migration: What does "workin' on the contract" mean? and How is the FARMS programme used by people who are directly involved? Chapter two provides an

overview of previous research that explains the generation, persistence, and effects of international labour migration. In this chapter, I briefly summarize economic, social, political and cultural approaches to the topic and discuss the ways in which all four dimensions can be synthesized. This chapter clarifies the issues and questions that will be the focus of remaining chapters.

In chapter three I ask: why do St Lucians migrate and why do they come to Canada? My search for answers to these questions involves tracing the historical connections between Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean, and examining conditions in St Lucia when labour migration first began at the time of emancipation. The first part of the chapter describes labour migration as one of many exchanges that take place between two former British colonies, while the second part explores the historical development of labour migration as a cultural expression of opposition to the plantation form of British colonialism.

In chapter four I ask what are the global trends that have led to the increase of temporary international labour migration throughout the world and what are the local conditions in Canada that have made the global phenomenon applicable to rural Ontario? To answer these questions, I examine two other labour importing schemes that involved St Lucians: the guestworker programme in Britain and the BWI program in the United States. Then I trace the history of

how the Canadian FARMS programme developed, and I provide a comparison of the ways in which the Canadian example of international labour migration is both similar to and different from the others.

In the next two chapters, I narrow the focus to descriptions of FARMS from two different geographic locations; Ontario (chapter five) and St Lucia (chapter six). In Ontario, I ask questions about the costs and benefits of importing "off-shore workers" for growers, as employers, and for rural communities. In St Lucia, I ask the same questions about "workin' on the contract" for St Lucians and St Lucia.

Chapter five describes labour migration to Canada on the farms and in town. I begin in 1966 with the initial replacement of transient workers by Caribbean migrants, and I move to the inside of the FARMS programme to explore the employer-employee relationship, using the work histories of growers who employ St Lucians. I expand these histories with details of what growers told me about their day-to-day experiences of living and working with the "off-shore guys" they import from the West Indies. Then I move from the farms to a rural community and describe a view of the FARMS programme from the outside by discussing the reactions of Canadians to the presence of West Indians in the town of Simcoe.

Chapter six approaches the FARMS programme from the

vantage point of St Lucia. In this chapter, I describe "workin' on the contract" through a combination of employment histories gathered from the St Lucian Department of Labour and accounts FARMS employees on the island gave of their experiences in Canada. The chapter follows the seasonal round of those who work in Canada, beginning with the selection process by which individuals are initially recruited. It documents the economic details of working in Canada for individuals as well as the social and cultural effects of working abroad on the country as a whole.

In chapter seven I summarize the conclusions of the previous chapters and discuss their implications for understanding the effects of international migration on growers in Ontario, residents of Simcoe, and St Lucian employees. I extend these implications to the concept of "development" as it applies to St Lucia and St Lucians.

ENDNOTES

1. The term "British Caribbean" is used here to include those former British colonies that share similar plantation histories: Barbados, Jamaica, the Leeward islands, the Windward islands, and Trinidad and Tobago. The "Leewards" include Anguilla, Antigua-Barbuda, St Kitts-Nevis, and Montserrat. The "Windwards" include Dominica, St Lucia, St Vincent, and Grenada. I use two other terms throughout the dissertation, "West Indies" and "Commonwealth Caribbean" to refer to the same area.
2. St Lucians actually began working in Canada on the contract in 1976, but the Labour Department in St Lucia did not have records for the period before 1979.
3. Montserrat is still a British colony. The rest of the islands involved in FARMS are independent countries.

CHAPTER TWO
ISSUES, QUESTIONS AND THEORIES

While St Lucians refer to their jobs in Canada as "workin' on the contract," the academic literature on the phenomenon of crossing national boundaries for employment uses the term "international labour migration." The study of this phenomenon involves questions about the causes of labour migration, about the roles of governments in the sending and receiving countries, and about the effects on both countries. International labour migration has many dimensions and this is reflected in the literature. The subject is approached from one, or a combination, of economic, social, political and cultural perspectives, each using one or more units of analysis that range from the individual migrant to the all-encompassing world system. Theories that attempt to account for the prevalence of labour migration vary from explanations of why individuals choose migration as a "rational" solution to their particular economic circumstances, to why migration "flows" are an inherent factor in the globalization of capitalism and the subsequent development of a global labour market.

Despite the use of intermediary units of analysis, such as households, communities, nation-states, and regional migration systems that place individuals within the global structure, the synthesis of which grand theories are constructed has yet to emerge.

Perhaps this is as it should be. "Human migrations, like all social phenomena, are social processes which are historically conditioned" (Stern 1988:29), and thus vary across time and space. All instances of international labour migration involve particular combinations of circumstances that arise from specific historical contexts which are neither isolated from the rest of the world nor completely determined by it. For example, the FARMS labour programme developed in Ontario during the 1960s and involves employers and employees in a relationship that is unique to the Ontario-British Caribbean situation. At the same time, FARMS shares common features with other labour migration policies throughout the world. The Canadian programme restricts West Indian labour migrants to temporary employment in Ontario in ways that are similar to labour importing schemes in all industrialized countries (Cornelius, Martin and Hollifield 1994). Like other labour migration programmes, FARMS imports workers to fill jobs that permanent residents will not do, jobs that involve relatively low wages and low status. When those jobs are finished, the workers are required to leave.

The circular nature of all seasonal labour programmes means that the effects of migration involve both sending and receiving societies. Labour migrants leave their families and communities for a period of time, and they travel to other places where they interact with other families and other communities. When they return home, they bring part of the other place with them in the form of experiences, material goods, and cash which they use according to local values. International labour migration cannot adequately be explained in terms of one dimension. It is a social process within which economic issues are conditioned by cultural definitions of the meaning and purpose of working abroad. The anthropological study of international labour migration, then, involves placing the particular within the general (Hastrup 1995)¹, the local within the global (Kearney 1995), and microanalysis within macroanalysis, using combined units of study and fieldwork that are "multi-sited" (Marcus 1995).

While the construction of grand theory may not be a realistic goal for studies of international labour migration, a synthesis of issues and dimensions is badly needed to guide research design and to allow comparisons of particular migration studies both historically and geographically. In what follows, I will review the economical, social, political and cultural dimension of previous international migration studies and attempt to

synthesize the issues, questions, and theories that will allow this dissertation to situate the particular example of the Canadian FARMS programme within the general trends and patterns of international labour migrations that are taking place throughout the world.

ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

By definition, labour migration involves working for wages and is an economic endeavour. Research approaches the economic dimension at both micro and macro levels of analysis. Microanalysis within migration theory focuses on individual migrants and on the process by which they make "rational choices" about the costs and benefits of labour migration (Schultz 1962; Sjaastad 1962). In the classic equilibrium models, negative factors, such as overpopulation, unemployment or low wages, in the poorer sending countries are said to "push" migrants away from their homes. At the same time, attractions, such as jobs and higher wages, "pull" migrants toward the wealthier countries (Gregory 1991). Underlying these models is the assumption that labour demand and supply will always tend toward equilibrium, and therefore differences in economic advantages, especially differences in wages, are postulated as the main cause of migration (DeJong and Fawcett 1981:22).

Adherents of the equilibrium model view the effects of international migration on sending countries in positive

terms (Friedlander 1965; Griffin 1976). The transfer of population from poor to rich nations and the counterflow of migrants' remittances and savings to sending societies function to redistribute global resources more equally and to promote economic growth (Rose 1969). Positive results for sending societies include the reduction of overpopulation, relief of unemployment, accumulation of foreign exchange, and the exposure of migrants to industrialized economies (Hume 1973; Spengler and Myers 1977).

The macroeconomic perspectives that challenge classic microeconomic theories are historical-structural models which focus on the world-system as their unit of analysis. These models posit a centre-periphery relationship between sending and receiving countries within a global division of labour and a global capitalist system (Amin 1974; Petras 1981). Using Marxist political economy, researchers within these approaches argue that international labour migration can only be understood within the context of the expansion of the global capitalist system, which is destroying or transforming traditional economies in peripheral areas at the same time it is expanding the market for cheap labour in the core areas. The historical-structural approach is guided by two underlying assumptions: "the expectation that the most disadvantaged sectors of the poorer societies are most likely to participate in labor migration" and "the belief that such flows arise spontaneously out of the sheer

existence of inequalities on a global scale" (Portes 1991:76). As a result of this macro focus, the historical-structural perspective is able to address a wide range of issues that are relevant to the study of international labour migration: the connection between labour migration and development (Pastor 1985); the role of labour migration in industrialization (Castles 1986); inequality in the international division of labour (Sassen-Koob 1980); the function of migrant labour in lowering the cost of maintaining a labour force (Castells 1975; Portes 1978); and the relationship between migrant labour and racism (Miles 1982).

From this macroeconomic perspective, international labour migration produces negative results for sending societies. It induces the most productive members to leave; it increases consumption of foreign imports, thereby using up what foreign exchange it creates; and it leads to a lack of interest in local society by creating an ideological dependence on the receiving society (Castles & Kosack 1973; Sassen-Koob 1978; Weist 1979). In the extreme version of this negative evaluation, international labour migration is viewed as cheap labour used to serve the needs of the core industrial countries and it constitutes another way in which the "Third World" serves to further the development of the "First World" and the underdevelopment of itself (Rubenstein 1983).

One of the core questions asked by historical-structural theorists is: What are the characteristics and structural features of international migrant labour that make it valuable to core countries (Burawoy 1976)? In general, the answer has been that by importing labour on a temporary basis, receiving countries avoid the costs of reproduction (Meillassoux 1972, 1981). In Appleyard's terms, they are "increasingly buying man-hours" and avoiding social problems that may result from increased permanent immigration (1988:11). In an anthropological study of the BWI program that imports West Indian workers for the Florida sugar industry, David Griffith (1983:15-16) suggests that "many of the impacts of the British West Indies Temporary Alien Labor Program can be expanded by a model drawn from the terms of structural dependency." Designating Jamaican BWI workers as "peasants in reserve," Griffith (1986) argues that the Jamaican peasantry constitutes a large reserve labour pool for the Florida sugar growers and that temporary labour migration increases Jamaican dependency on the United States.

The literature on the relationship between the United States and the Caribbean supports the historical-structural argument of dependency (Deere 1990; Ferguson 1990; Hein and Manigat 1988). To my knowledge, however, no one has established a similar dependency relationship between Canada and the Caribbean. Political scientist, Ralph Paragg

(1988) argues quite the opposite. Despite the large amount of aid that Canada gives to the Caribbean, the targets of those donations are areas that help to foster independence and self-reliance, such as agricultural diversification and infrastructural improvements. This implies that the dependency aspect of macroeconomic approaches to studies of international labour migration may not be as helpful when applied to the FARMS programme.

SOCIAL DIMENSIONS

Studies of international labour migration that combine economic and social factors are able to address a wider variety of issues within a single model. For instance, Mitchell (1969) suggests that economic factors may be the necessary conditions for migration while social and life-style factors are sufficient conditions regulating migration, and Goldscheider (1971:323) argues that economic factors may help young people migrate, that is, they may be "facilitating factors", but they do not provide the main motivation.

Anthropological studies of labour migration have been less concerned with migrants' motivations than with the effects of migration on social structures and social institutions in sending countries. Crane (1971) uses the history of emigration from the Dutch island of Saba to study its impact on social organization at the local level, in the

economy and in education. She concludes that the most lasting effect of emigration on social organization is the decline of the white population, and rising tensions between whites and blacks as blacks became the majority and strove for upward socio-economic mobility. Relationships between education, employment and migration in Saba are similar to those in the British West Indies. Taught to value education, Sabians find little employment on the island for those who advance beyond secondary levels or who have special technical training.

Philpott (1973) and Hill (1977) show that labour migration has become institutionalized in the Commonwealth Caribbean. Philpott examines the effects of migration in three contexts or units of analysis: Montserrat's total society (its "social, political and economic hierarchies"), two local communities, and households within the communities (1973:181). He concludes that migration to the United States and Britain both changed local society and acted as a conservative force. At the level of the total society, migration altered the traditional 'colour-class' system by facilitating the upward mobility of lower-class blacks, and, through remittances, contributed to the rise of union leaders who were instrumental in bringing about the collapse of plantation agriculture and its socio-economic hierarchy (Ibid). At the level of the community, Philpott concludes that migration is so thoroughly established as a socially-

valued experience and as the basis for status differentiation, that even the massive exodus to Britain during the 1950s brought about little change (Ibid:181-182). Finally, at the household level, Philpott suggests that "continuity appears more significant than change," because working abroad has a long history of incorporation within the "form and organization of the domestic group" (Ibid:182). Hill (1977) describes for Carriacou a situation that is similar to Montserrat. In Carriacou, migration has been an agent for both conservatism in local society, by preserving the traditions that have been created to support migrants while they are abroad, and change, by introducing new visions of the outside world.

The conclusions of Crane, Philpott and Hill establish labour migration as socially acceptable behaviour, and legitimate its value among the working classes as a way to improve individual social status. Philpott and Hill also demonstrate the value of combining units of analysis that join individual migrants to larger social segments and to society as a whole.

POLITICAL DIMENSIONS

Political approaches to international labour migration research highlight the need for more mid-range studies using units of analysis that connect local communities to the world system. These approaches begin with the state and its

role in the maintenance of national boundaries (Mitchell 1989; Petras 1978; Zolberg 1981) and as a filter and regulator of labour supply (Cohen 1987). The single unit of analysis can then be extended to include "state-to-state dealings" (Mitchell 1989), and "regional political economies" (Cohen 1987). This allows migration theory to account for "the relationships among the economic, social and political forces that operate at a global level, across national boundaries." It also allows an account of "how much mutual autonomy exists among the interdependent economic and political structures" (Mitchell 1989:685).

One way to place the local within the global is to reduce Wallerstein's world-system approach to smaller units such as a "regional political economy" (Cohen 1987). An example of one of these units would be the United States and its Caribbean and Mexican periphery. Within each unit the state plays a significant role in structuring the division of labour, in creating the conditions for free and unfree workers,² in recruiting and regulating imported workers, and in controlling frontiers (Ibid:26). Cohen suggests that within a regional political economy, the state's ability to regulate migration may be somewhat modified by the actions of those who employ migrants, particularly in the case of illegal migration:

On the one hand, the state is charged with the responsibility of enforcing or relaxing border controls in the interests of the dominant classes as a whole. On the other hand, it is apparent

that the sectional interests of many employers do not correspond with the hegemonic and collective interests of their class (1987:175).

In the United States Cohen argues that policing the U.S.-Mexican borders is sporadic at best and depends very much on fluctuating political and economic climates. Having added the role of employers as a crucial element in analyzing a "regional political economy," however, Cohen limits this role to enticing illegal migrants across the United States - Mexican boarder in contradiction of policies created by the state. This approach relegates employers to the position of shadowy figures in the background rather than that of crucial actors in the phenomenon of labour migration. I will argue in this dissertation that Ontario growers, as employers, have played a significant part in instigating and perpetuating contract labour migration from the British Caribbean.

CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

One of the ways anthropological research has approached international migration is to focus on the effects of cultural conflict, as migrants leave home and attempt to adjust to new definitions of identity in host societies. Midgett (1975) investigates the notion of identity among West Indians living on the fringes of British society, and he concludes that ethnic categories based on village or island origin, or even the category "West Indian," have

little meaning especially among West Indian youth in London (1975:76). An identity founded on "blackness" is emerging instead, and it is evolving from positive aspects of colour "which blacks themselves define" (Ibid:78). Constance Sutton (1987:15-30) looks at Caribbean migrants in New York City, where she describes the presence of a "Caribbean transnational cultural system;" a system that involves the circular migration of West Indian peoples between the Caribbean, England, the United States, and Canada. Sutton argues that this transnational circular movement, over time, has resulted not only in British and North American influence in the West Indies, but also in the "Caribbeanization" of the countries which have historically been the recipients of West Indian migrants. In London, New York, and Toronto, Caribbean music, food, literature, drama, and public performances such as carnival, have become integral parts of these cities. Frances Henry (1994) is more pessimistic about experiences of West Indians in Toronto. She investigates the effects of West Indian cultural traits on the ways in which migrants become "differentially incorporated" into Canadian society, and concludes that some of the cultural patterns West Indians bring with them (especially those related to marriage, relationships between men and women, and methods of family organization), function to inhibit West Indian integration.

Other anthropological studies address the effects of

emigration on West Indian sending societies. Philpott (1968, 1973) coined the term "migrant ideology." He defines this as "the cognitive model which the migrant holds as to the nature and goals of his migration" (1968:474; 1973:69). This cognitive model is considered to be ideological by Philpott because Montserratian migrants behave as though their departure is temporary, whereas Philpott argues that no more than twenty per cent will actually return. "Migrant ideology," or at least the behaviour that Philpott calls ideological, is widespread in the Caribbean: Crane (1971) documents the same "ideology" in Saba; Hill (1977) finds it in Carriacou, an island dependency of Grenada; and Rubenstein (1979) describes the same values for St Vincent.

There is general agreement among those who study Caribbean migration that a "migration culture" has evolved in the island societies (Richardson 1983, Thomas-Hope 1992). Evidence of such a culture comes from a well developed code of expectations about the rights and obligations of migrants and non-migrants. Those who leave are to maintain contact with the ones who stay behind. Frequent letters, money sent to help with costs, and return trips home for visits assure that migrants will not be forgotten, and that they will be accepted upon return (Richardson 1983). Philpott (1973:128-153) describes Montserrat as a "migration-oriented" society that has adapted its social institutions to facilitate migration. These include mobilizing passage money along

lines of kinship, child fosterage with relatives, and the care of elderly persons left behind by migrants. As a valued activity within "migration culture" working abroad is a way to gain prestige. In Providencia, for instance, where social status is inherited from one's mother and remains stationary no matter how much a person may change, the only way to move up the social ladder is to go away and come back a new man or a new woman (Wilson 1973:68).

There is disagreement, however, on whether or not migration culture rests on ideology or "false consciousness." Rhoades (1979:1), for instance, suggests that anthropological studies, typically set in a single community for a short period of time, often miss the magnitude of return migration. Based on oral histories of thirteen men and women who left Barbados and returned, Gmelch (1992:263) found that although most migrants expected to be away for five years, the average length of time spent abroad was fourteen years. In an earlier survey of 135 returnees in 1982-83, he found that although 60 per cent thought they would be home in five years, the average length of absence from Barbados was 15.3 years (Ibid). In other words, it was not always the case that the migrants failed to return, simply that they often stayed away longer than they anticipated. Gmelch argues that there is no "typical Barbadian migrant story" although there are "patterns" in the migrants' experiences. In all thirteen oral histories,

the travellers "left Barbados with the expectation that they would find better opportunities for themselves abroad," and the expected benefits were not purely economic. While finding a job was a major consideration, the experience of living in another country was equally important (Ibid:261).

Olwig (1993) demonstrates the complexities of "migration culture" and the difficulties in conducting anthropological fieldwork that is "multi-sited." Following migrants from the island of Nevis to England and the United States, Olwig complains that "Nevisian culture always seemed to be where I was not" (1993:x). She calls this an "absentee culture" in which Nevisians on the island are "preoccupied by cultural elements from the United States and Europe" while those abroad "cultivated the culture of their home island" (Ibid). Using the term "non-localized community" to describe the social organization of the Nevisian migration system, Olwig argues that transnational societies are formed by "networks of socioeconomic relations between individuals living in the Caribbean as well as in other parts of the world" (Ibid:9), and the strength of these family relations is symbolized by the possession of material goods which migrants provide for members who remain at home (Ibid:204-205).

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION SYSTEMS

Thirty years ago Manners (1965) advocated the use of a

"social field" for anthropological studies of migration in the Caribbean. A "social field" includes both the home and the destination of migrants. Manners' concern was that anthropologists need a "research mechanism which will conform with the realities of modern interdependency patterns" (1965:180), thus connecting micro and macro socioeconomic issues. Manners' suggestion that anthropologists look beyond a closed social system to envision each location of research as "one in a chain of interlocking systems" (Ibid:184) anticipated the future trend of migration theory to move increasingly toward combining single units of analysis into systems of analysis. Frucht (1968) followed Manners' suggestion almost immediately and applied the concept of a social field to emigration, remittances, and social change in Nevis. Based on his assumption that Nevis has always been part of England's social field (Ibid:195), Frucht argues that migration and remittances do not, by themselves, produce social change. Rather they are effects of the decline in the world market for cotton (a main export from Nevis), the labour demands of the U.K., and inefficient production techniques in the island (Ibid:194).

The concept of a "social field" as the space that migrants use (Manners 1965), and the more recent popularity of "transnational" societies, cultures, and families (Kearney 1995; Olwig 1993), leads anthropological research

out of a preoccupation with local communities and into areas that connect communities to the wider world (Marcus 1995). The trend of the 1990s in international migration studies is the use of systems that integrate the different dimensions of labour migration. Theoretically, the notion of "system" captures the interaction of labour migrants, "capital, technology, institutional forms, and cultural innovations" as they "criss-cross the world" (Portes and Borocz 1989:626). Methodologically, a systems approach provides an outline of the various "sites" of "multi-sited" fieldwork, conceptually as well as geographically.

The foremost advocate of a systems approach to the study of international migration is Mary Kritz. Almost ten years ago, Kritz argued that "Inequalities - economic, social, political - between and within nation-states may shape international migration, but they do not explain why some countries rather than others become prominent within certain flows" (Kritz 1987:46). To remedy this situation, Kritz suggests that it may be more productive to consider the micro and macro processes that link nation-states, rather than concentrating on differences between them (Ibid). In 1992 Kritz joined with Lim and Zlotnik to further her argument, refine her concept of international migration systems, and publish an edited volume of studies that demonstrates how a systems approach can be used in such diverse settings as Africa (Makinwa-Adebusoye), Asia and

the Middle East (Arnold; Singhanetra-Renard) the Caribbean (Simmons and Guengant), Europe (Garson; Hammar; Wilpert), South America (Balan), and the South Pacific (Bedford). Kritz and Zlotnik argue that traditional theories and approaches to the study of international migration fail to account for the importance of temporary migration in recent times and for the "growing linkages between migration policies and other state objectives" (1992:1). These authors build on the work of others who have looked at the rapid increase in international migration, in conjunction with technological advances in transportation and communication, and the growing number and size of transnational institutions that have facilitated increased flows of capital and goods across countries. The crucial point for Kritz and Zlotnik is that "international migrations do not occur randomly but take place usually between countries that have close historical, cultural, or economic ties" (Ibid).

The historical perspective within this systems approach allows research to "identify the pattern of interactions between migration and, on the one hand, structural conditions in the countries of origin and destination within a system and, on the other, economic and political linkages between those countries" (Kritz and Zlotnik 1992:4). These linkages may become an organizing basis for migration systems and often include colonial ties and shared colonial

histories. Kritz and Zlotnik also stress the need to look at "both conflict and cooperation between different actors at the national and international levels" to understand the forces that shape policies (Ibid:15).

Economic, social, political, and cultural dimensions of international migration systems interact. Although the economic theory of free markets and exchange stipulates that all factors will move around until an equalization of price is reached, "in today's interconnected global economy, there is a relatively free flow of goods, capital, technology, and knowledge, but not of labour" (Lim 1992:139). Unlike other factors of production, the movement of people across national boundaries "has not only economic but also humanitarian, political and cultural implications that often bring domestic and international interests into conflict" (Ibid). The welfare of migrant workers is a consideration that does not apply in the same way to other global flows, and people are active forces in ways that other factors are not: "migrants can make choices and take initiatives that influence their own destiny" (Ibid:143). Lim's commentary on the exclusion of people from the relatively free flow of other exchanges points directly to the need for an examination of trade agreements in relation to migration policies between countries of a regional migration area. Immigration policies, for example may be influenced by "the impact of national myths and self images" (Mitchell

1994:47), particularly when potential migrants are perceived by host societies to be very different from the majority of permanent residents and citizens.

The main advantage of a systems approach to studies of international migration is its methodological framework. Within this framework, individual labour migrants are connected to their local histories as well as to the histories of employers and international policies. Points of investigation include sending and receiving societies as well as the global context within which both are contained and influenced by outside political implications. For instance, the historical connection between Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean influenced the present exchanges of capital, goods, money, and people. This connection was formed within the larger context of a colonial sphere that included Britain and the United States.

A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO "WORKIN' ON THE CONTRACT"

"Workin' on the contract," is a particular example of international labour migration within the general context of increasing population mobility on a global scale. As the result of an agreement between Canada and countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean it is inherently political. At the same time, "workin' on the contract" is an economic strategy that is defined in social and cultural terms both in Ontario and in St Lucia. Each of these four dimensions interacts

with the other three in ways that vary throughout the history of labour migration in the West Indies and in Canada.

In the chapters that follow I will use a systems approach to describe the place of international labour migration among other exchanges between Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean (chapter three). I will describe Ontario employers as political actors motivated by economic considerations (chapter four) that have social implications and result in cultural conflict (chapter five). From the vantage point of St Lucia, I will discuss the political dimensions of labour migration as an economic strategy used by St Lucians to resist planters' attempts to keep newly freed people of African ancestry tied to the plantations, and the development over time of labour migration as a cultural symbol of freedom (chapter three). This will provide the historical background for the employment records of FARMS workers on the island and an interpretation of how the symbolic value of "workin' on the contract" influences the ways in which FARMS workers use their earnings at home (chapter six). The picture of FARMS that emerges from a systems approach is one in which international labour migration can be seen as a dynamic process that includes both conflict and cooperation.

ENDNOTES

1. Kirsten Hastrup contends that the backbone of anthropology is "straddling the gap between the particular and the general" (1995:x).
2. A free worker is one who is able to enter the labour market with no restrictions. An unfree worker is one who is restricted to one employer or one job.

CHAPTER THREE
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

International labour migration does not occur randomly; it takes place between countries, or among a group of countries, that have historic, economic, or cultural ties (Kritz and Zlotnik 1992:1). In this chapter I will discuss the historical connection between Canada and the Caribbean that St Lucians follow when they "work on the contract" and the historical background within which the St Lucian cultural practice of temporary labour migration was established. I will argue that while the colonial connection between Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean determines where St Lucians will migrate, it is the history of the island as a plantation colony that determines why St Lucians migrate.

CANADA AND THE CARIBBEAN: THE COLONIAL CONNECTION

Caribbean labour migration to Canada follows the paths of historical connections that include not only a shared Commonwealth heritage, but economic exchanges and political negotiations as well. These paths are well worn and extend

in both directions. From the Caribbean to Canada music, food, sugar, literature, students, and tourists have all travelled north. From Canada to the Caribbean, saltfish, timber, business investments, aid, security, tourists, technology, manufactured goods, remittances from migrants, and students doing research have all travelled south.

As part of the "New World" in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Canada and the Caribbean were both sought by Britain and France for the resources the colonies had to offer and both were scenes of heavy European fighting. Historians Norrie and O'ram (1991:20) describe for Canada a situation that applied equally to the Caribbean: "Canadian economic development in the century and a half after 1608 was, to a large extent, a product of the imperial rivalries of that time". Although they were each populated in very different ways, Canada by Europeans who maintained settlements in order to harvest the fisheries and the fur trade and the West Indies by African slaves who were forced to work the plantations by a few European plantation owners, both populations depended on Europe and the American colonies, and even to some extent each other, for their survival.

The relationship between Canada and the Caribbean from the arrival of the Europeans through the nineteenth century consisted entirely of trade, as each was part of a huge European trading system that was the rationale for their

importance to Europe in the first place. Prior to the middle of the eighteenth century, trade between Canada and the Caribbean was mostly indirect and involved the French Acadians of the Canadian Maritimes, the New Englanders of the Thirteen Colonies, the French and British merchants and both the French and British West Indies. At the outset of the Seven Years War in 1755, the Acadians were deported and their lands taken over by British farmers and trade between Canada and the Caribbean was limited almost entirely to the British West Indies.

Until the American Revolution, Canada played only a minor part in supplying the West Indies with provisions and the sugar products from the islands were mostly traded north from New England or west from Britain. After the Revolution, Britain tried unsuccessfully to use Canada to replace the United States as the main supplier of provisions to the West Indies. The connection between Canada and the Caribbean continues, despite several failed attempts at political union and a racist Canadian immigration policy that tried to keep Canada "white" until 1962 (Hawkins 1991). Canada has invested more in the Caribbean than any other third world region, and development assistance to the area has continued since 1958. During both World Wars, Canada sent troops to some of the West Indian colonies to reinforce British security, and after the Second World War, West Indian women came to Canada as temporary domestic workers.

After 1962, West Indians began migrating to Canada in increasing numbers and by 1991, the Canadian Census registered 232,530 Caribbean-born residents of Canada, living mostly in Ontario.

EXPERIMENTS IN TRADE

The American Revolution marked the beginning of what is often called a "special relationship" between Canada and the Caribbean (Tennyson 1990). Britain forbade all trade between the American and British colonies and planned to use Canada as the replacement in its reduced trading system. Britain began in 1774 to attempt to supply the West Indies with provisions from Nova Scotia, but there were some major problems that would need to be overcome. The Canadian colonies had very little surplus grain and Britain's navigation laws were not set up to facilitate direct trade between the Canadians and the West Indian colonies; for instance, the Quebec Revenue Act, passed in 1774, made West Indian rum cheaper when it was imported from Britain. Still, Britain kept its colonial ports closed to American ships until 1822 when it finally opened some of them to American produce. In 1831, Britain abolished all import duties, but by then the market for sugar had begun to fall and slavery was being abolished in British colonies (Newman 1988:107-110). By the middle of the nineteenth century, the United Kingdom was the main market for West Indian sugar and

the United States was the main source of West Indian imports. Even though Canada and some of the West Indian colonies continued their efforts to negotiate trade agreements, none were successful until 1912.

After Confederation, Canada courted the Caribbean in the hope of establishing alternative trading partners should trade agreements with the United States fail, and this became part of the Macdonald government's National Policy. By 1889, three cargo ships were providing regular service from Halifax/St John to Cuba, Bermuda, and British Guiana, stopping at other islands along the way (Tennyson 1990:15).

During the Laurier years, a conference between Canada, British Guiana, Barbados, St Lucia, Antigua, St Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad resulted in the appointment of a Royal Commission "to investigate and report upon the measures that may be taken for the promotion of closer trade relations and for the development of mutual trading facilities between Canada and the British West Indies" (Tennyson 1990:23). The recommendations from the Royal Commission became the basis for the 1912 trade agreement which was to last for ten years and include preferences to Canada on meat, dairy products, cereal, flour, fish, agricultural machinery, furniture, and paper products. The West Indies gained preferences on raw sugar, molasses, cocoa beans, lime juice, and arrowroot (Ibid:31). Four ships capable of carrying 5,000 tons of cargo each were equipped with refrigeration and

accommodation for passengers, and provided fortnightly service between Halifax and nine Caribbean islands (Ibid). The agreement favoured Canada: Canadian exports to the islands rose "from \$2.8 million in 1912 to \$4.9 million in 1915;" West Indian exports to Canada declined "from \$5.7 million in 1911-12 to \$4.4 million in 1913-14" (Ibid:32).

The outbreak of World War One led to an increase in Canadian-Caribbean trade which was to last approximately another fifteen years. By 1920-21, Canadian exports to the West Indies had reached \$18 million and imports from the West Indies were \$23.9 million. Flour and sugar were the most important items of trade. Flour accounted for half of the West Indian imports from Canada and sugar was 85 per cent of the value of Canadian imports from the West Indies (Tennyson 1990:38). Relations between Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean improved to the point that in the next trade agreement of 1921, the West Indian colonies agreed to pay part of the subsidy for the shipping service (Ibid:39). Canada agreed that bananas, fresh limes, coconuts, arrowroot, ginger, and some other spices would be allowed to enter the country duty-free, and the West Indies doubled its preference on Canadian flour. In 1925, the Canadian government established the Canadian National Steamship Limited and by 1928 the first of five "Lady boats" made its maiden voyage to the West Indies, but by the end of the first year, Canadian National steamships had lost \$1.1

million and the next two years registered similar loses.¹ Trade between Canada and the West Indies fluctuated during 1925 and 1932 and then fell drastically (Ibid:47-48).² In 1952, the Lady boats were withdrawn from service, and Canadian-West Indian trade continued to decline.³

While trade negotiations between Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean have been predominantly of an economic nature, they periodically developed political implications. Talk of actual political union accompanied suggestions for improved economic trade, particularly during the times when either Canada or Caribbean colonies were unsure of trade agreements with the United States.

POLITICAL UNION

Within approximately the last 100 years (1883-1987), there have been three periods of publicized discussions concerning political union between Canada and the British West Indies. The first period, 1883-1885, occurred during the years of the Macdonald government in Canada and consisted of a series of suggestions made by Canadian individuals and planters in Jamaica and Barbados that these islands join the Canadian confederation in order to better West Indian economic circumstances. In 1912, a second period of interest came from the Bahamas and in 1916, the Borden government, at the height of Canada's imperialistic era, entertained the idea of annexing the entire British

West Indies. The final period was confined to two proposals put forth by the Turks and Caicos, first in 1974 and again in 1987. While the driving force behind West Indian suggestions for political union with Canada was unquestionably economic, Canada's brief considerations of union were both economic and imperialistic, and its rejections were based, in part, on issues of race.

The first publicised suggestions of political union came from three fronts: Canadian business, absentee planters in Britain, and the Agricultural Society in Barbados. The West Indian requests for political union were not representative of general opinion in the colonies. They came only from planters and merchants who belonged to the white elite class, and they were part of a political game aimed at securing better trade agreements with the United States or Canada, or both. They did not represent any longing by the general public of the West Indian colonies to become part of Canada. By 1882, sugar prices were falling due to increasing competition from European beet sugar, and planters on the islands were not above playing Canada and the United States against one another. What the planters really wanted was a reciprocal trade agreement with the United States. Canada was their second choice because it meant a smaller volume of trade, but they were confident that neither Britain nor Canada would want to see the British West Indies fall into the hands of the United States

(Tennyson 1990:9-10). When a West Indian delegation approached Macdonald with a proposal, it did not receive a definitive answer. Macdonald's reaction was mixed: "while commercial union would be valuable, he dreaded the problems which a political union would raise with respect to the black population" (Ibid:11). The two main drawbacks to political union with the West Indies were economic and racial. Economically, Canada stood to lose "something like two million dollars in customs revenue" (Stewart 1988:169), and would be required to take on the added expense of defending the colonies. Socially, political union was certain to mean an influx of people with African ancestry, a condition the present white Canadian population was not prepared to tolerate (Hawkins 1991). The matter was dropped for the next twenty-five years and did not resurface until new trade negotiations began in the early 1900s.

Laurier set the tone for closer relations between Canada and the British West Indies at the beginning of his administration. In 1902 he claimed that he would support a commercial union with the islands if there was any evidence that it would result in profitable trade for the Canadian Maritime provinces (Tennyson 1990:22). In 1908, the Balfour Royal Commission was appointed to survey the state of British West Indies-Canadian trade and to recommend ways of enhancing this trade. A conference was set up to discuss trade relations and to consider a reciprocity agreement. St

Lucia was one of the colonies most interested in the talks because its planters were still producing sugar, and officials of the island signed the resulting agreement in 1912 (Samaroo 1988:197).

By this time the Borden government was in power and Canada was at the peak of its imperialistic era, looking about the world for expansion possibilities. In 1916, Borden set out his thoughts on political union with the British West Indies in a communication to the High Commissioner in London. There were, as he saw it, four clear advantages: the extension of Canadian territory would increase population; the addition of the tropical West Indies would give Canada the variation in climate that the United States enjoyed; the responsibilities involved in "governing subject races" would broaden Canada's experience; and Canada and the West Indies would each provide a market for the products of the other (Wigley 1988:227).

There were also disadvantages to political union, the main one being the "negro question" (Wigley 1988:230). As Borden's administration saw it, there could be no question of affording full rights to the black population of the islands. The islands would come into the Dominion as "territories, with limited powers of self-government" and with strict qualifications on voting privileges:

The question of the franchise would have to be very carefully considered when the time came to make the experiment. There should be a property qualification...to begin with, and an educational

standing as well, high enough, at the outset, to exclude a very considerable proportion of the black population (Ibid).

Even with these qualifications, political union between Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean failed to gain support in Britain and Canada. The Colonial Office rejected the proposed union and refused to hear any further appeals. Borden's aspirations did not fit Canada's Department of Immigration policies either. The Canadian government's immigration department had been systematically trying to prevent West Indians from entering the country on the grounds that blacks were "unsuitable to the climate and requirements of Canada" (Hawkins 1991:17), a notion that has been used frequently to discourage blacks from permanent settlement in Canada and would be an official stand for another fifty years.

The last period of publicized discussions concerning political union between Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean did not include St Lucia; it was confined to two proposals submitted by the Turks and Caicos Islands in 1974 and 1987. While both of these proposals met with some favourable public opinion, neither was seriously considered at the official level of Canadian government (Chodos 1977:15). After the rejected proposals for political union in the early 1900s, Canada still maintained economic and political ties with the British West Indies. These ties consisted of the loan of Canadian troops during both World

Wars for security, Canadian investment in the islands, and Canadian aid for development.

SECURITY, INVESTMENT, AND AID

Canada sent troops to St Lucia during World War I to protect the island while British troops were busy elsewhere. The main purpose of the Canadian troops was to defend the coaling station at Castries against possible attack by the Germans. The soldiers saw no action while they were on the island, but five men died of malaria over the five year stay. In March of 1918, some of these troops were sent to Antigua where a riot had broken out. During World War Two, Canadian troops were sent to Jamaica, the Bahamas, Bermuda, and British Guiana. All of the troops came home in 1946, and the total number in the Caribbean was 1,150 (Murray 1988).

In terms of business capital, "Canada has invested more in the Commonwealth Caribbean than in any other developing country in the world" (Tennyson 1990:54). Canadian financial interests in the Caribbean include banks, tourism, manufacture, insurance, agriculture, and mineral extraction (Barry, Wood, and Preusch 1984:221) . The most obvious Canadian presence in St Lucia is banking. The capital city of Castries, contains the Royal Bank of Canada, the Canadian Bank of Commerce and the Bank of Nova Scotia. Each of the smaller urban centres on the island, Vieux Fort and

Soufriere, also have a Canadian Bank of Commerce. The only visible Canadian business in Castries is Bata shoes, which has a store on a main street.

Canada was involved in the development of tourism in St Lucia, and responsible for building a Holiday Inn on the island. According to Tennyson (1988:18):

The eastern Caribbean Holiday Inns are owned by a company called Allied Innkeepers (Bermuda) Ltd, which in turn is owned in equal parts by Canadian National Railways, by Great Britain's quasi-governmental Commonwealth Development Corporation, and by Commonwealth Holiday Inns of Canada Ltd, a large Canadian hotel chain that owns several Holiday Inn franchises in Canada and elsewhere.

The Canadian owned Windjammer Hotel, located on the west coast, between Castries and Gros Islet, is one of the largest and most luxurious tourist spots in St Lucia.

Development assistance from Canada to countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean began in 1958 with a pledge of \$10 million to the West Indian Federation in grants over a five year period. A significant amount of those grants (\$5.8 million) was spent to provide two ships which carried passengers and cargo between the various islands (Paragg 1988:325). In 1966, Canada pledged \$75 million (and actually spent over \$100 million) to the Commonwealth Caribbean, \$5 million of which went to support the University of the West Indies and to assist the Caribbean Broadcasting Service. Although initially Canada insisted that 80 per cent of its aid dollars be spent on Canadian products, it recently reduced that requirement to 66.7 per

cent (Preston 1988:310).

Canadian assistance to the Caribbean continued to grow: "Between 1958 and 1978 over \$230 million in the form of grants and loans were disbursed to Caribbean recipients" (Paragg 1988:32). The majority of Canadian aid is extended to the Leeward and Windward islands, and has been applied to four areas of development: water resource management and development, air transportation, education, and agriculture. Canada invested about \$10 million in water resources in Antigua, St Kitts and St Vincent, and supported storage and treatment facilities in St Lucia, Dominica, Montserrat and Grenada (Guy 1990:281). Canada is currently financing the construction of a new water system in St Lucia and Canadian aid funded the building and expansion of runways in Antigua, Nevis and St Lucia. Since 1970, the Canadian government has included agriculture as one of its targets in the Caribbean. In the fiscal year 1974-75, Canada created a fund of \$6.1 million which was administered exclusively by the Caribbean Development Bank, and it added an extra \$5 million for loans (Paragg 1988:327). Canadian assistance in the agricultural sector "has included dairy, livestock and fisheries development" (Ibid:333). This willingness of Canada to assist in these sectors is quite remarkable, given that it is a "major supplier of foodstuffs including meat, fish, milk products and flour to the Caribbean" (Ibid:334). Furthermore, CIDA which was established in 1968, has

announced that it is increasing the portion of aid for agricultural development from the present 9 per cent to 25 per cent of its total assistance (Ibid).

Canadian aid to St Lucia and the West Indies joins other economic and political connections that serve to establish and maintain ties of information and recognition between Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean. Regardless of whether economic or political negotiations succeeded or failed they were often publicly discussed in the media. People in St Lucia learn about Canada through public discussions and through the Canadian products that are imported. Social ties between the two countries follow the same paths as economic and political ties and they too have met with both success and failure.

MIGRATION: PEOPLE, MUSIC, FOOD, AND FESTIVALS

It has been two hundred years since the arrival of the first West Indians to Canada. In 1796 the British shipped Jamaican Maroons to Halifax. This was an uncommon occurrence, and with the exception of several Barbadians who "came to Sydney, Nova Scotia to work in the coal mines and steel mill," few West Indians migrated to Canada before the First World War (Barratt 1990:59). Those who did migrate came in through the "back door of the Maritimes" on trading ships returning from the islands (Schultz 1988:259). Officially, Canada's front door was closed to black West

Indians, and the goal of keeping Canada "white" was shared by every prime minister from "Sir John A. Macdonald at Confederation to Louis St. Laurent in the 1950s" (Hawkins 1991:22). This immigration policy continued until 1962 when the Regulations of the Canadian Immigration Act "removed racial discrimination as a major feature of Canada's immigration policy" (Ibid:39).

One of the ways West Indians entered Canada before the 1962 Immigration Act was through the Domestic Worker Scheme that allowed females to work as domestic servants. The scheme required women to be between the ages of 18 and 35, unmarried, and possess at least the equivalent of a grade eight education. Those who qualified were issued Temporary Employment Visas to work as domestics for one year. After the year was up, the women were entitled to landed immigrant status within Canada, and after five years they could apply for Canadian citizenship (Silvera 1983). The Canadian government limited the Scheme to 100 West Indian women the first year, and 280 for subsequent years, until the 1970s (Henry 1968). After 1962, West Indian women were able to enter Canada independent of the Scheme, but they had to meet full immigration requirements.

Table 3.1 shows the Caribbean proportion of the total number of immigrants to Canada between 1967 and 1989, by year. 1962 signalled the first time West Indians were able to enter Canada as independent migrants, subject to criteria

based on education, skills, or training.

Table 3.1
CARIBBEAN PROPORTION OF TOTAL CANADIAN
IMMIGRATION: 1967-1989

Year	Per Cent	Year	Per Cent
1967	3.8	1979	7.9
1968	4.1	1980	6.7
1969	7.4	1981	8.9
1970	8.1	1982	9.8
1971	8.9	1983	11.2
1972	6.7	1984	8.6
1973	13.2	1985	10.1
1974	12.8	1986	13.0
1975	11.9	1987	11.5
1976	12.2	1988	7.7
1977	12.5	1989	7.4
1978	12.3		

Source: Anderson 1993:61

These criteria were applied universally to all potential immigrants, and signalled the end of overt discrimination (Anderson 1993:41). The total number of West Indians who entered Canada between 1946 and 1966 was 29,979, or about 1.1 per cent of the total immigration during those years. Between 1967 and 1989 the effects of the changes in Canada's immigration policy brought the total to 301,361 (Ibid:57-61).

According to the 1991 Census, there are presently 232,530 West Indians living in Canada. Table 3.2 shows that Ontario is overwhelmingly the most popular site of settlement, containing two-thirds of all West Indian immigrants. These figures also show that the historical trade connection between the Maritimes and the West Indies

did not stimulate West Indian migration to the Maritime provinces.

Table 3.2
LOCATION BY PROVINCE OF WEST INDIANS IN CANADA

Province	Number	Per Cent
Ontario	153,830	66.15
Quebec	56,970	24.50
Alberta	8,480	3.65
British Columbia	6,690	2.88
Manitoba	4,325	1.86
Nova Scotia	840	.36
Saskatchewan	790	.34
New Brunswick	225	.11
Newfoundland	165	.07
Northwest Territories	95	.04
Yukon	60	.03
Prince Edward Island	30	.01
TOTAL	232,530	

Source: 1991 Census Focus: Changing Immigrant Population

Only 1,095 or about 0.5 per cent of West Indian immigrants currently reside in the Maritimes. Of the total number of West Indians living in Canada, 1,780 came from St Lucia. Table 3.3 shows that St Lucians, as well, prefer Ontario and avoid the Maritimes. St Lucian preference for Ontario is even higher than the West Indian average. Over three-quarters of the St Lucian immigrant population settles in Ontario compared to two-thirds of all West Indians. It is curious, however, given the French influence in St Lucia that so few St Lucians have chosen to settle in Quebec. St Lucians, in fact, immigrate to Quebec less often than the West Indian average; just slightly over 12.5 per cent compared to 24.5 per cent of all West Indians.

Table 3.3
LOCATION BY PROVINCE OF ST LUCIANS IN CANADA

Province	Number	Per Cent
Ontario	1,345	75.57
Quebec	225	12.64
Alberta	95	5.34
Manitoba	60	3.37
British Columbia	35	1.97
Saskatchewan	10	0.56
Nova Scotia	5	0.28
Total	1,780	

Source: 1991 Census Focus: Changing Immigrant Population

One of the reasons so few St Lucians settle in Quebec may be language differences. St Lucian patois is very different from Quebec French, and while most St Lucians speak English, few of those in the lower class are fluent in formal French.⁴

Students contribute a significant proportion of temporary migrants from the Commonwealth Caribbean to Canada. Table 3.4 summarizes the numbers and kinds of West Indian students in Canada's education system. Between 1987 and 1991, 12,183 students from ten English-speaking Caribbean islands came to Canada. They enrolled in elementary and secondary schools, in colleges and trade schools, and in universities. The larger countries, Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad & Tobago, send the largest number of students to Canada (78 per cent). Based strictly on population, the over-representation of Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago make sense. Together these two countries constitute over 82 per cent of the population in the ten

islands.⁵

Table 3.4
WEST INDIAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN CANADIAN
EDUCATION BY COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP, 1987-1991

Country	Elementary & Secondary	College & Trade	University		Total
			Under Grad	Grad	
Antigua-Barbuda	79	84	159	17	339
Barbados	271	532	548	125	1476
Dominica	119	194	83	15	411
Grenada	254	240	78	33	605
Jamaica	791	1194	434	186	2605
Montserrat	0	0	30	2	32
St Kitts-Nevis	42	61	61	12	176
St Lucia	170	285	155	31	641
St Vincent	157	240	67	14	478
Trinidad-Tobago	1352	1452	2259	357	5420
TOTAL	3235	4282	3874	792	12183

Source: Statistics Canada (1995a).

Of the remaining seven Eastern Caribbean countries, St Lucia sends the most students to Canada.

Canada also awards Canadian Official Development Assistance (ODA) to students and trainees in the ten West Indian countries. Table 3.5 summarizes the number of students and trainees that were sponsored by ODA from 1988 to 1991. The three largest countries, Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad & Tobago still send almost half of the students and trainees sponsored by ODA, despite the fact that they are considered to be the most developed countries in the Commonwealth Caribbean. St Lucia again ranks fourth. ODA only partially pays the cost of international students and trainees from other countries.

Table 3.5
WEST INDIAN STUDENTS AND TRAINEES SPONSORED
WITH ODA AND STUDYING IN CANADA BY COUNTRY
OF CITIZENSHIP, 1988-1991

Country	Students	Trainees	Total
Antigua-Barbuda	56	94	150
Barbados	56	63	119
Dominica	168	64	113
Grenada	184	82	153
Jamaica	120	215	335
Montserrat	34	24	58
St Kitts-Nevis	40	69	109
St Lucia	86	77	163
St Vincent	60	94	154
Trinidad-Tobago	155	125	280
TOTAL	959	907	1634

Source: Statistics Canada (1995a).

During 1991 and 1992, St Lucia sent 25 trainees and 52 students to Canada under ODA sponsorship. ODA paid 39.5 per cent of the total cost and the St Lucian government paid the remainder.⁶

In addition to exporting people, the Caribbean has been a major exporter of music, food and festivals. Caribbean music led the way to international fame. Jamaican reggae went to Britain with the migrant workers and gained international popularity as a major vehicle of Third World protest with the performances of Bob Marley. Even without the political relevance of reggae, it can be found almost everywhere: "Today, reggae is being produced by local musicians in such unlikely places as Sweden, Germany, Japan and Java. There is even an Australian Aboriginal reggae band" (Bilby 1985:214). Jamaican reggae and Trinidadian calypso can be found in record shops in most Canadian

cities.

Wherever Caribbean migrants go, their food follows. Toronto, St Catherines, Hamilton, and London all have West Indian specialty shops that import fruits and ground provisions from the islands. All four Canadian cities have West Indian restaurants and West Indian clubs that feature island cooking. In Simcoe, Ontario, West Indians have purchased the frame of a fold-out camping trailer and they serve island food cooked in the traditional way on Friday nights to the FARMS workers and anyone else who wants to purchase it.

The most spectacular export of Caribbean culture has been the carnival festival. Celebrated in the Roman Catholic islands just before lent, in Barbados, after the harvest, and in many protestant islands on the anniversary of emancipation, carnival has spread to Knotting Hill, England, Brooklyn, New York, and Toronto, Ontario. Carnival was introduced in Toronto in 1967 as part of a Canadian Centennial celebration and christened Caribana. It is held on the Canadian holiday weekend in August, which coincides with the West Indian emancipation anniversary, and is a blend of a West Indian celebration and a Canadian expression of multiculturalism (Nunley and Bettelheim 1988).

To summarize the discussion thus far, this brief examination of historical ties between Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean suggests that cultural and economic

exchanges may produce complex results when considered in relation to migration. Britain and France used Canada and the Caribbean as pieces of property which had value only when they produced commodities needed to fuel the trading system of each colonial power. By the time Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean were able to negotiate trade between themselves, the United States had replaced Britain as the major intervening power, and after a short period of experimental trade agreements, both Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean found it more profitable to trade with the United States than with each other.

Politically, the sporadic attempts at union between Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean were heavily influenced by economic considerations which were also conditioned by the presence of the United States. The requests for political union from those with business interests in the islands of the Commonwealth Caribbean were forthcoming when trade negotiations with the United States were uncertain and were withdrawn or ignored when trade was strong. An additional factor was Canada's immigration policy. Until 1962, this policy reflected overt racist concepts that were used by Canadian Prime Ministers and heads of governmental departments in an attempt to keep Canada racially "pure." After 1962, Canada began to remove the racial barriers in its immigration policy, and St Lucians who wished to leave the island could now add Canada

to their list of options. Despite the failure of economic and political negotiations, West Indians had learned about Canada, and they had experienced Canadian-ness through imports and the media.

For the remainder of this chapter, I will shift the focus from Canada to St Lucia, where temporary labour migration is both an activity that has economic benefits and a valued part of the island's culture. Although "Workin' on the Contract" is an economic strategy, it has political roots in the struggle of Africans to gain access to land in the Caribbean where many of them were born, but could not call "home."

THE HISTORY OF LABOUR MIGRATION IN ST LUCIA

"Workin on the contract" is the most recent example of an historic tradition within St Lucia. This tradition of leaving the island to work abroad has characterized St Lucians of African origin for almost 160 years, and is directly related to the colonization history of the island. Nicknamed "Helen of the West," because of its strategic location between French and British colonies in the Eastern Caribbean, St Lucia holds the record for changing colonizers fourteen times. This had important implications for its African population. Because large sugar plantations did not have a chance to develop until the island finally came to rest with the British in 1802, the economy remained

diversified, and the slave population small. By the time the British slave trade ended in 1807, St Lucia was just beginning to produce sugar for export, and by the time emancipation granted the Africans freedom in 1834, planters were just beginning to realize the huge profits that would be made if they could only keep workers tied to the plantations and away from marginal lands where peasantries might grow. The planter class was able to secure the backing of the Colonial Office in London to keep the newly freed Africans separated from St Lucian land for awhile, and the history of the island's African population is one of struggle against the plantation economy.

A peasantry grew in St Lucia, despite planters' efforts to stop it. As Sidney Mintz (1985a:131) argues:

The fact is that Caribbean peasantries, practically without exception, have always grown in the crevices of their societies - before slavery, or after slavery, or in places where the plantations failed, or in places where the plantation never came.

This resistance to the plantation economy characterized migrations both within the island and abroad. At the same time as ex-slaves became small farmers or peasants in areas of St Lucia that were not cultivated by plantations, others left St Lucia in search of jobs off the island. The development of peasantries and international labour migration were both strategies of opposition to the plantation regime which controlled St Lucia well into the twentieth century.

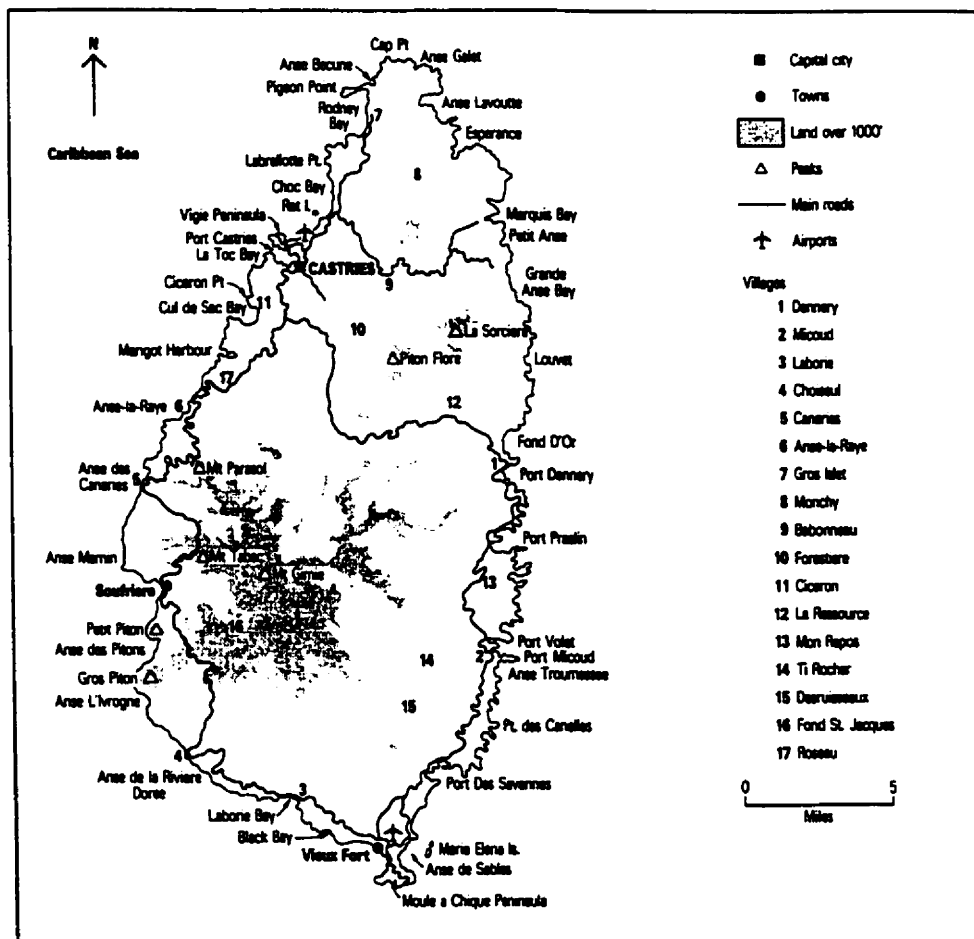
Very little has been published about St Lucia's history. With the exception of Henry Breen's account of his time spent there (1844), Rev. Jesse's overview (1986) and Woodville Marshall's papers on peasantries in the Windward Islands (1965, 1969, 1972, 1985, 1989, 1993), I have had to collect bits and pieces from general histories of the Eastern Caribbean. Michael Louis's (1981) unpublished Ph.D. dissertation on the early relationship between freedmen and land was extremely helpful and I refer to it often.

Description of the Island

St Lucia is one of the tiny countries of the Eastern Caribbean, a chain of islands that extends north from the coast of Venezuela in two parallel rows. The island is actually a volcanic peak on a mountain range that lies below the surface of the ocean, along a fault-line where the Atlantic crust is gradually forcing its way under the Caribbean plate and causing periodic eruptions of lava. Located between 60 degrees 53' and 61 degrees 05' West longitude and between 13 degrees 43' and 14 degrees 07' North latitude, St Lucia is only 28 miles long and 14 miles wide, and has a wide range of soil types and landscapes. The average rainfall varies from 138 inches (3,500 mm) in the mountains to 60 inches (1,500 mm) in the low-lying areas. Cactus grows at the very northern tip of the island, while tropical vegetation covers the central regions, and

vegetation more typical of a North American prairie can be seen in parts of the south. The island's central mountain spine crests at Morne Gimie at a height of 3,117 feet and falls away to sea level slowly in some places, leaving soft slopes, and quickly, leaving sharp cliffs, in others.

MAP 2
ST LUCIA



(Brock 1976:vi)

The population of St Lucia in 1993 was 139,908, producing a density of 227 persons per square kilometre. Due to the island's participation in plantation sugar production and slavery, the ethnic composition of this

population is overwhelmingly African-Caribbean, with Chinese, East Indian, Syrian, Lebanese, and European minorities. The island became self-governing in 1967 and was granted independence on February 22, 1979. St Lucia is still a member of the British Commonwealth with an elected Parliament after the Westminster model, and is presently governed by the United Worker Party under Prime Minister Vaughan Lewis. As a member of CARICOM, St Lucia has been a strong advocate of economic and political integration within the Eastern Caribbean region. Since May 1987 it has favoured political union with the other Windward and Leeward Islands. Although Antigua and Barbuda opposed such union in 1988, the leaders of the four Windward Islands (St Lucia, Dominica, Grenada, and St Vincent) established the Regional Constituent Assembly in 1992, which is committed to economic and political union.

The official language of St Lucia is English, and a patois mixture of French and English is still spoken by a large majority of the population. The Roman Catholic Church has a long history in the island and approximately 82 per cent of St Lucians claim to be Roman Catholics, although the Anglican Church has an equally long history, and Methodists, Seventh Day Adventists, Pentacostals, and Baptists are also represented.

The island has a total of 149,120 acres of land. Even though only about half is considered to be cultivable, if

geographical criteria such as "soil type, degree of slope and susceptibility to erosion" are used (Marshall 1989:27), 87,375 acres, or slightly more than half, were planted in crops and divided among 13,008 farmers in the 1960s (O'Loughlin 1968:103). This farm land is not divided equally. Of the total number of farms, the overwhelming majority, 80 per cent, consist of very small plots of less than 5 acres, and involve only 15 per cent of the total acres in farms. A much smaller proportion, 19 per cent, of the farms range between 5 and 50 acres and represent 33 per cent of the total acreage in farms. Only 1 per cent of the total number of farms controls 53 per cent of the acreage in agricultural production, divided into plots that are 50 acres and over (Ibid).

Sugar was the largest export on the island until the 1950s. Banana production began in 1923 and by 1925 the fruit was being exported. In the 1950s, the Colonial government mandated a switch from sugar to bananas as the major export and farmers began to sell their bananas, through the St Lucia Banana Growers Association, to Geest Industries, a multinational company based in Britain. At one time Geest owned 40,000 acres of farmland on its two estates in the island (Thomson 1987), and, although it has relinquished most of its land, Geest still bought the country's entire banana crop until December 1995 when WIBDECO (Windward Islands Banana Development and Exporting

Company) and Fyffes (an Irish distributor) purchased the banana interests from Geest.

Agriculture is an important part of St Lucia's economy and the first impression I had when I arrived was that the lush tropical green-ness of banana leaves seemed to cover the entire island. In addition to banana crops, a wide variety of fruits and vegetables are grown for local consumption. Live stock on the island includes horses, cattle, pigs, goats, sheep, and chickens. Local produce is sold at the market in Castries six days a week, and one day a week in other towns and villages. Cashew nuts and coconut products are also grown for export. Industry on the island includes some processing of agricultural products, the assembly of electronic components, garments, plastic products, paper products, packaging, beer, rum and soft drinks. One of the ways St Lucia is connected to the rest of the world is through trade. In 1992, 51.4 per cent of the country's exports went to the UK, the USA received 21.4 per cent, and other CARICOM countries, principally Trinidad and Tobago, received 15.5 per cent. In the same year, St Lucia imported food stuffs, basic manufactures, machinery, and transport equipment from the USA, Japan, Canada, other CARICOM countries, and the UK.⁷ Between 1989 and 1993, St Lucia's GNP per capita rose from US \$1,810 to \$3,040. The external debt at the end of 1993 was US \$101.2 million and the unemployment rate in 1991 was 16.7 per cent (Europa,

vol. 2:1995).

Unemployment and poverty are two of the "push" factors used to explain Caribbean migration. Although I will cite research later in this chapter to show that causal theories based on economic considerations alone are inadequate, I will first examine the historical context within which working abroad became an important part of St Lucian culture.

"DISCOVERY" AND COLONIZATION

"Columbus did not discover a new world; he established contact between two worlds, both already old" (Parry, Sherlock, and Maingot 1987:2). The first documented inhabitants of St Lucia were a peaceful group of Indians known as the Arawak who were migrating north from South America. When the Europeans arrived, the Arawak were already gone from the Windward Islands, having been either exterminated or assimilated by an invading warlike group known as Caribs, who followed the Arawak along the same route north from South America. The Caribs named their island Hewanorra (Jesse 1986), and they defended it successfully against Spanish, British, and French intruders well into the middle of the eighteenth century.

The first recorded European attempt to establish settlement on St Lucia occurred in 1605 when a British ship, the "Oliph Blossome" or "Olive Branch," was blown off course

on its way to the Guianas and came upon the island by accident. The sailors anchored off shore and were greeted by a party of "Carebyes" who paddled out to the ship in their periagoes (canoes) with "great store of Tobacco, Plantains, Potatoes, Pines, Sugar Canes, and divers of other fruits, with Hens, Chickens, Turtles, & Iguanas" (Nicholl 1966:65-67). Curious about the natives, sixty-seven sailors went ashore taking "trade goods and stores, their muskets and a small cannon" with them (Burns 1954:179-180). The remaining crew sailed away leaving those ashore to set up camp and trade with the Caribs for food. After a few short weeks, the Indians killed all but nineteen of the Englishmen and those who survived made one last purchase - a canoe which they immediately paddled to South America (Nicholl 1966:67).

A second attempt at settlement was made by Captain Judlee in 1639. Having obtained a commission from Sir Thomas Warner in St Kitts, the Captain arrived with three to four hundred men, recruited from Bermuda and other colonies, and managed to survive at the present site of Vieux Fort, on the southern tip of the island, for eighteen months before being wiped out by the Caribs (Jesse 1986:18). In 1650, the French West India Company claimed ownership of three of the islands in the area, Martinique, St Lucia, and Grenada, which it sold to du Parquet. Within a year of his purchase, du Parquet sent forty men to the site of present day

Castries to establish a colony. The governor of the tiny community married a Carib woman, and for awhile it looked as though the French would succeed where the British had failed, but upon the governor's death, the Caribs resumed their attacks on the European settlers. To make matters worse, the British attacked the colony in 1659, claiming that the island still belonged to them, even though they had abandoned settlement twenty years ago. The French held their colony, but most of their time in residence was spent fighting with the Caribs (Ibid:19-20). In 1663, a group of Caribs sold Hewanorra to Barbados. Having what they considered a valid deed, the British sent 1,000 Barbadians and 600 Caribs from Dominica to take over the island. The French either evacuated or fled to the mountains and the British settled in. Within the next three years, sickness and death depleted the colony, and in 1666, the British left. The French returned, and were driven out again by the governor of Barbados (Burns 1954:302).

During the next 150 years of warfare between the French and the British, the island continued to change hands. At the Peace of Breda in 1667, it was awarded to France and made a dependency of Martinique in 1674. In 1722, the Duke of Montague was granted the propriety and government of St Lucia. He sent two ships with 180 British settlers aboard and escorted by a warship to set up a colony in the northern part of the island. When the French learned of this, they

sent 1,500 men from Martinique to reclaim their possession (Sheridan 1974:424). In 1723, all of the Windward Islands were declared neutral, but the French stayed on St Lucia and, with a small number of slaves, started to plant sugar, which they traded illegally with the New Englanders in North America for "lumber, horses, frames for houses and all kinds of provisions" (Pitman 1967:308). The British took the island again at the end of the Seven Years' War in 1762, and the Treaty of Paris returned it to France in 1763.

After the Treaty of Paris, a brief period of peace allowed the French to begin substantial sugar production, and by 1765 the first sugar establishment appeared in Vieux Fort (Louis 1981:12). Slaves were imported and the population of the island rose to 12,000. Peace was short-lived and the British took the island again in 1778. In 1780, a hurricane struck St Lucia and did such extensive damage to the sugar estates that some of the colonists simply abandoned them. The Treaty of Versailles returned St Lucia to the French in 1783 (Jesse 1986:29).

The French and Haitian Revolutions had a profound effect on St Lucia. When the slaves learned that slavery had been abolished for the French colonies, they stopped work and left the plantations. Even though the British captured both Martinique and St Lucia in 1794, the slaves would not go back to work. The period between 1794 and 1797 was called the "Reign of Terror" and the slave revolt

against returning to the plantations stopped sugar production for almost a decade. In 1795, the British evacuated the island and did not return until the following year (Jesse 1986:30-36). In 1799, George Prevost, the Lt. Governor, described the conditions on the island as "almost unparalleled for cruelty and excesses," and he complained that the African slaves were reduced to "one half of their original number" between 1796 and 1798 because they abandoned all cultivation (Louis 1981:12-13).

In 1802, the Treaty of Amiens returned St Lucia to France and the following year the British took it back. For the next ten years St Lucia was officially French and occupied by the British (Jesse 1986:32). By 1803, the population of the island had risen to about 17,000. Of that total, 1,200 were European, 14,000 were African slaves and 1,800 were free coloured (Ibid:36). In 1807, the slave trade was abolished, and in 1814 St Lucia was ceded to Britain in the Treaty of Paris, bringing French rule on the island to a final end.

One of the consequences of the ten year slave revolt and continual fighting between the British and the French was that by 1815, when other British West Indian colonies were well established as sugar economies, St Lucia was almost in last place.⁸ Land tenure among property holders during the fighting was so insecure, that planters "restricted their cultivation mainly to the minor crops of

tobacco, ginger and cotton" (Louis 1981:72). Coffee, cotton, and cocoa were all as important as sugar. It was not until the 1830s, when emancipation was announced, that the tendency for sugar to become a monocrop was evident. Cotton was gone, cocoa production was stagnant, and coffee production was dwindling. Only cocoa made a comeback in the 1850s and continued as second to sugar (Marshall 1989:28).

Another consequence of St Lucia's stormy beginning was the size of its African population in comparison to that of other British sugar producing colonies. Table 3.6 shows the population densities of eight British colonies.

Table 3.6
POPULATION DENSITY OF SLAVES IN EIGHT
CARIBBEAN SUGAR ISLANDS, 1834

Colony	Slave Population	Square Miles	Slaves per Square Mile
Barbados	83,150	166	500
St Kitts	19,780	63	314
Antigua	29,121	108	269
Grenada	23,638	133	177
St Vincent	22,226	140	159
Jamaica	311,070	4,207	74
St Lucia	13,291	233	57
Trinidad	20,657	1,754	12

Source: Green 1976:193

By 1825, the segment of the population made up by free people of colour doubled, while the European and the African population had decreased slightly, and at Emancipation the density of 57 slaves per square mile in St Lucia was one of the lowest in the Caribbean. Ten years after Emancipation, St Lucia's plantocracy was consisted of small estates,

scattered throughout the island with no central mills. Only one thirteenth of the land was cultivated (Louis 1981:13), and there was land available for slaves to grow their own food on provision grounds and to sell the surplus at markets. These conditions laid the foundations for the development of a strong peasant sector with the potential to complement the growth of the sugar estate sector. The possibility of a peasantry would be stifled after emancipation, however, by planters who were just beginning to realize the immense profits that could be made with the island's almost virgin lands at a time when the older plantation colonies were beginning to decline.

The Emancipation Act in 1834 freed 13,285 slaves in St Lucia. Of that number, 8,725 were fieldworkers and 1,600 worked as domestics or craftsmen on the plantations. A further 1,960 children and 1,000 elderly and infirmed persons were included. Although 2,797 "people of colour," who had been free during slavery, were already involved in the economy as merchants, shopkeepers, and tradesmen (Louis 1981:20), only a small proportion of the ex-slaves had any employable skills other than working in the fields of the sugar planters. What the newly freed did have was experience growing their own subsistence foods and selling the surplus at markets. In other words, they already had experience as "protopeasants" (Mintz 1974:151-152) that could help them make the transition from slavery to freedom.

All they needed was access to their own land. From the viewpoint of the newly-freed population in St Lucia, land was the key issue. As Michael Louis argues: "by the first decade of emancipation, the attitude of the peasantry suggested that their notion of freedom and the possession of, or the right to own, land were inseparable" (1981:82).

Land was a key issue from the planters' viewpoint, as well, because they recognized its potential as the means by which workers could become independent of the estates. Emancipation was a difficult time for planters; it signalled the loss of the labour force they had controlled, that they had, in fact, owned. In the older British sugar colonies, such as Barbados, Antigua, and St Kitts, the threat of labour loss was minimal, for there was little else the newly freed population could do except work on the plantations under the arrangements the planters offered. The economies of these islands were almost exclusively devoted to sugar production and the lands suitable for agriculture were planted in sugar cane. In other colonies, conditions were different and planters faced the possibility that the freedmen would simply abandon plantation work and take up subsistence farming on their own. In Jamaica and British Guiana, there were mountainous regions, unoccupied marginal lands, and a population of Maroons who had already escaped the plantations. In Trinidad and the Windward Islands, the sugar plantation economy was fairly recent, the ratio of

slaves to plantation was small, and there were still virgin lands not planted in sugar cane. St Lucia fit both categories. Mountains and uncleared bush characterized much of the island, and it had just recently been ceded to Britain. Sugar was only one of the products grown for export, and the ratio of slaves per plantation was very low. Clearly planters had to come up with a scheme to keep St Lucians on the plantations, and this scheme had to include control over land that was not in cultivation.

During the period of Apprenticeship that followed the declaration of emancipation in 1834, the planters of St Lucia began a campaign to keep workers on the estates which lasted far beyond the four year period when full freedom was to be granted. While emancipation changed the legal aspect of the system that kept slaves tied to the plantations, it did not change the system itself. The planter class still monopolized the labour, and the lives, of the working class by controlling the land. One of the ways planters kept freedmen and their families tied to the plantations was through control of the provision grounds that had been set aside for slaves to grow their own food. These grounds had always been the slaves' domain, although they were legally owned by the planters. They consisted of tiny plots separated from the estates and tended by entire families. The provision grounds also represented the slaves' only means of obtaining cash, as they were the place where a

surplus of produce was grown to be sold. After emancipation, provision grounds became weapons used by the planters against the free workers in the form of eviction if freedmen tried to work elsewhere.

The transformation from slave labour to wage labour was another point of conflict between planters and plantation workers. After 1938, work stoppages on the plantations were frequent. Employees insisted on higher wages, and when these were not forthcoming, they refused to work. The local newspaper, the Palladium, reported that "two-thirds of the labouring population" was involved (Louis 1981:25). By 1842, people had begun to leave the plantations and migrate into the city of Castries. According to Stipendiary Magistrate Drysdale, these people were "flying from what they considered the degrading toil of cane cultivation" (Ibid:15).

The planter class on the island was not alone in its struggle to keep newly freed workers tied to the estates. The Crown Colony government in St Lucia and the Colonial Office in London shared the planters' belief that fortunes could be made in sugar production. This agreement between planters and the colonial government resulted in both financial assistance and the freedom to pass legislation which served planters' interests. A modern mortgage office was installed on the island so that capital could be made available to planters and legislation was passed to block

ex-slaves' access to land. Few ex-slaves had the capital to purchase land outright and so the most immediate option for most was simply to set up subsistence farming on vacant land. However, all land that was not privately owned in St Lucia was considered to be Crown Land. This included a large proportion of the island as only 45,000 acres, or 28 per cent, was privately owned. The rest belonged to the Crown (Louis 1981:220). Legislation that forbid "squatting" on Crown Lands and restricted the alienation of Crown Land (until the 1870s) was soon passed. Designated as "illegal cultivators" (Ibid:219), the so called "squatters" could be evicted at any time, losing all they had invested. In 1859, the colonial government reinforced its conviction that ex-slaves would not be able to "squat" on empty lands by reannexing all abandoned estates to Crown Lands and then auctioning them off to adjoining privately owned properties for whatever price proprietors would pay (Ibid:223).

Another way in which the St Lucian government helped planters discourage the growth of peasantries was taxation. A Cultivated Land Tax was imposed in 1838 to deter labourers from purchasing even "remote plots of ground" (Louis 1981:53). The immediate effect of the land tax was to encourage leasing, since it was the owner who had to pay the tax. Further taxes were charged on the products that were produced on land that was separate from the estates. Taxes were also imposed on houses, and even on animals kept by ex-

slaves. In addition, export duties were charged on "charcoal, cocoa and wood" and licence fees were required of hucksters and persons who kept fishing boats (Ibid:53-54).

In the 1840s, the Colonial Office helped finance the immigration of 6,000 indentured workers from Africa, India, Syria, Lebanon, and Barbados to provide labour for the plantations. Unfortunately, these indentured workers left the island shortly after they arrived (Marshall 1989), and when it became obvious that importing more and more people to the island was not going to solve the labour problems, the plantocracy devised a way of keeping labour tied to the sugar industry by reviving the metayage, or "half-and-half," system from the earlier years of French occupation of the island (Marshall 1993:64-65). Metayage was a method of sharecropping in which planters supplied land and the materials necessary to grow sugar and metayers provided the labour. In return for his labour, the metayer received half the sugar produced on his land. The costs of cutting and transporting the cane were shared equally between planter and metayer. Planters were responsible for the manufacture of sugar and for the provision of stock, carts and machinery used in the manufacturing process, and usually kept the molasses and rum (Ibid:67).

A final form of assistance given by the Colonial Office in London to planters in St Lucia was the granting of subsidies to construct central factories that could increase

the processing of sugar cane. The first central factory was constructed at Cul-de Sac in 1874-75, and two additional centrals were built by the 1880s (Marshall 1989:30-31).

All of this help from the Colonial Office brought St Lucia from last place among the other Windward islands in sugar production at the beginning of the nineteenth century to first place by the latter part of the century. While sugar production on the other islands began to decline after emancipation and never regained pre-emancipation levels, it reached its peak in St Lucia in the 1880s, representing 80 per cent of the value of exports (Marshall 1989:28-29).

The success of the sugar producers in St Lucia was ultimately built upon the suppression of the peasantry. Table 3.7 shows the slow progress in the increase of freeholdings in St Lucia up to 1861.

Table 3.7
GROWTH OF FREEHOLDERS
IN ST LUCIA, 1845-1861

Years	Freeholders
1845	1,345
1846	1,390
1847	1,331
1848	1,848
1849	1,920
1850	2,180
1851	2,280
1852	2,398
1853	2,343
1857	2,045
1861	2,185

Source: Louis 1981:57;
Marshall 1963

Although some of the freedmen were able to purchase marginal

lands and abandoned estates, many more remained dependent on the sugar industry for their livelihood. This was exactly the result planters had in mind when they devised ways to keep ex-slaves separated from lands of their own.

Dependence on plantation wages meant increasingly less money. Rather than increase wages, during 1847 and 1848, planters decreased them due to the depressed sugar market. This led to lower prices on local produce, but taxes remained the same. In 1849, a further tax was imposed on all cultivators, "regardless of whether or not they were land holders" (Louis 1981:80).

Other employment options were equally dismal for ex-slaves in St Lucia during the first few decades following emancipation. Louis summarizes a list of occupations in the 1861 Census on the island. While 11,497 (43 percent) persons were listed as labourers, another 10,535 (39 percent) were engaged in "domestic duties," unemployed, or unspecified. Only 1,260 (5.4 per cent) had specified occupations: 800 domestic servants, 268 laundresses, 135 fishermen, 35 hucksters, and 22 store porters (1981:167). For those who had no employable occupation, or were not able to become freeholders, metayage offered the only alternative.

Although metayage was introduced in 1857 as a temporary solution, it persisted and sharecropping became a well established feature of rural St Lucia. The effects of

metayage on ex-slaves were mixed. As a compromise between independence from the plantations and residence on the estates, metayage decreased the number of freeholders. It allowed freedmen who could not purchase land of their own to gain some measure of independence within the plantation system. Metayers usually received one carre, about 3.3 acres, and they divided it into two sections: one for subsistence and surplus production, and the other for the planter's cash crop (Louis 1981:30). However, it created a tenant-employee system that left metayers unprotected from the whims of their landlord-employers. As in the first years after emancipation when ex-slaves could be evicted from their provision grounds, metayers, too, could have their lands reclaimed by the planters at any time (Marshall 1993). So while metayage gave the newly freed access to land, and some control over their own labour, it did not allow them to purchase their own land or to become independent from the plantation economy.

A COUNTER PLANTATION CULTURE

During all of the schemes directed at them by the Colonial government and the planter class, those who had gained their freedom only a decade ago in St Lucia did not remain passive victims. In 1849 they submitted a petition to Lieutenant Governor Charles Darling requesting that the latest tax be rescinded because it was more than they could

pay. When the petition was ignored, a large crowd gathered at the site of the Legislative Council in Castries and when members of the Council went outside to investigate the commotion, they were greeted with angry shouts of "moi pas car payer piece" (I will not pay at all) and pelted with stones and bottles. The protest spread north from Castries into Chock Estates, Grande Riviere, and Gros Islet and developed into a full scale riot. By the time it was over, eight labourers had been killed and several estates burned (Louis 1981:65-71).

More important than periodic violence, from a long-term perspective, ex-slaves in St Lucia developed a "counter plantation system" that was at the same time dependent on the plantation economy and in conflict with it (Acosta and Casimir 1985). This relationship between plantations and peasants was a general feature throughout the British Caribbean during the nineteenth century. As Mintz (1985a:131) explains it:

Even where and when plantation and peasantry flourished together, they usually seemed to remain locked together in some odd struggle with each other, at once interdependent (as when peasants both farmed their own plots and sold their labor during the cane harvests) yet in conflict (as when the plantation sought to acquire peasant landholdings for its own use by seizure, legal manoeuvre, or the use of governmental pressure.

Within the counter plantation system, the peasantry in St Lucia created three social instruments which they used to set themselves apart from, and against, the Colonial

government and the planter class: a separate language known as patois, a separate method of land tenure known as the "Community Property System" (Acosta and Casimir 1985:39), and temporary labour migration off the island.

Patois, the language of the local peasantry, excluded colonial authorities who could not speak or understand it. St Lucians used patois among themselves in their daily lives and to gain the upper hand in negotiating conflicts with colonial authorities:

The colonial authorities could limit the range of relations carried out in patois, but they had no mechanisms to interfere in these relations let alone to arbitrate conflicts developing from them, unless invited by the St Lucians and to the extent permitted by them (Acosta and Casimir 1985:39).

As a form of resistance, the use of patois in these negotiations allowed the working classes to define the issues they wished to discuss, and require that outsiders accommodate to local circumstances (Ibid).

In addition to their own language, which excluded British authorities, St Lucian peasants also devised a means of removing their land from colonial control. By 1878, the prohibition on alienation of Crown Land had been lifted and some of it was divided into small lots and sold to the labouring class. Having gained access to their own land, these small farmers were not about to let it get away. The notion of family land, as something that had to remain within the family and could neither be divided nor sold, was the basis of the Community Property System. All who

inherited family land had the right to build houses on it and to farm it, but they could not sell it, unless the entire family agreed (Acosta and Casimir 1985:39-40). This system became so widespread that the St Lucia Five Year Development Plan in 1966-70 estimated approximately 20,000 acres may have been involved (Ibid:40).⁹

MIGRATION AS STRATEGY AND SYMBOL

The third social instrument used by the counter plantation culture was temporary labour migration. Bonham Richardson (1983:6) argues that on the smaller islands of the British Caribbean, a "migration adaptation" was functionally analogous to a "village adaptation:"

Migrating away for wages, although the earliest destinations were often other plantation islands, was an assertion of independence. It was not a complete escape from the larger plantation sphere, but neither did it represent a docile willingness to accept local conditions dictated by former plantation masters.

Temporary labour migration supported village adaptation and a counter plantation culture. Those who travelled away from St Lucia were able to maintain and improve living conditions for those at home, and to move a little further toward partial independence from the local plantocracy.

The first temporary labour migrations took place as soon as the legal ties between slaves and plantations were cut. Between 1835 and 1846, St Lucians were among the 19,000 people from the Eastern Caribbean who were solicited

by agents of planters in Trinidad and British Guiana to work on sugar plantations for wages that were much higher than those offered by planters at home (Marshall 1987:19). These jobs were short-term and seasonal, beginning in June and ending in December. Although the work was still plantation labour, the migrating St Lucians could now separate "home" and "work." They could earn a living independent of the local plantocracy and use their earnings to purchase land in areas outside the estates. If the labour migrants had access to family land they could use these earnings to build houses and to increase agricultural production. The seasonal aspect of these early contract migrations meant that a traveller would be home by Christmas, in time to harvest his own crops and increase his income still further by selling the surplus.

Not all labour migration was limited to agricultural work. In the 1870s, St Lucians went to Venezuela to work in mining; in the 1880s, 1,710 St Lucian men went to Panama to work on the canal; and in the 1890s, they went to French Guiana to work in the gold fields (Fraser 1990:25-26). By this time new legislation allowing Crown Lands to be divided and sold had been passed and the earnings from labour migration could be used to purchase the small plots.

From 1885 to 1920, people in St Lucia increasingly moved to foreign territories within the Caribbean Basin. These included Cuba and the Dominican Republic, to work on

sugar plantations; Central America, to work on banana plantations and railroad construction; Bermuda, to take part in the construction of naval dockyards; and Panama to work on the construction of the Canal (Richardson 1989:209). The first wave of migration to the United States took place in the early part of the twentieth century. Between 1901 and 1924, 102,000 West Indians entered the United States. Many were veterans of the Panama Canal labour force, but a high proportion were also members of the middle-class at home. While the majority of these early West Indian migrants settled permanently in the eastern United States, an estimated one-third eventually returned home (Anderson 1993). In 1924, over 10,000 Caribbean migrants were admitted to the United States, but new immigrant quotas introduced that year brought the flow to an abrupt halt. Only 308 Caribbean persons were granted immigrant status in the United States in 1925 (Richardson 1989:214). To make matters worse, the state of the sugar market deteriorated during this time period and cane cutters were no longer needed in the Greater Antilles.

From the late 1920s to 1940, opportunities for labour migration in the Caribbean were limited to the oil refineries of the Netherlands Antilles where labourers from the Dutch and British Caribbean built "factories, warehouses, roads, piers and barracks" for the Royal Dutch Shell refinery on the islands of Curacao and Aruba

(Richardson 1989:215). In general, the decade of the 1930s was one of return migration and unrest. Returned migrants increased unemployment and decreased remittances, at a time when the effects of the Great Depression were already being felt. In St Kitts an estate workers' dispute turned into a riot, and in St Lucia coal carriers demanded higher wages, as did oil field workers in Trinidad. In each case, veteran migrants were involved (Ibid).

The advent of World War Two brought some short-term relief to the employment problems of the West Indies. The United States built or reconstructed military bases on several British Caribbean islands in 1940, and jobs in Trinidad, Antigua, British Guiana, St Lucia and St Thomas included extending air runways, fortifying harbours, constructing military barracks, and working as messengers, cooks, and maids. Still, once the basic construction was finished, conditions in some of the smaller islands were even worse than during the depression.

Relief came from the need in the United Kingdom to reconstruct the country after the war. The British Nationality Act of 1948 granted all Commonwealth citizens the same legal rights as British citizens (Thompson 1990:41) and St Lucians joined West Indians from all of the British colonies in the Caribbean in the trek to England. Estimates of the numbers of British West Indians who left home to work in the "Mother Country" between 1951 and 1961 vary between

230,000 and 280,000. On some of the smaller islands, the exodus was massive. Montserrat, for example, lost over 30 per cent of its population to Britain during the 1950s. In St Lucia, 7291 or 8.5 per cent of the population left for Britain between 1955 and 1961 (Peach 1968:15).

One of the most popular "causal" theories used to explain the prevalence of migration in the Caribbean is that overpopulation "pushes" people out. Yet soon after the exodus from the British Caribbean to the "Mother country," Ceri Peach published a study in which he concludes that this could not possibly be the case for the British West Indies. Table 3.8 shows the rate of population increase in ten British West Indian colonies during the period just before migration to Britain and the percentages of the populations that migrated.

Table 3.8
MIGRATION AS A PER CENT OF POPULATION, RATE OF NATURAL INCREASE, 1946-60, AND PER CENT OF POPULATION INCREASE, 1921-46 IN TEN BRITISH WEST INDIAN COLONIES.

	Migration as % of Population	Rate of Natural Increase 1946-60	% of Population Increase 1921-46
Montserrat	31.5	1.74	18.3
Dominica	13.3	2.42	28.5
St Kitts	13.2	2.53	21.0
Jamaica	9.2	2.34	54.0
Antigua	8.7	2.29	40.3
Grenada	8.6	2.73	9.2
St Lucia	8.5	2.56	36.1
Barbados	8.1	1.93	23.0
St Vincent	5.3	2.97	38.7
Trinidad & Tobago	1.2	2.67	52.5

Source: Peach 1968:18-19

If the overpopulation theory is correct, then one would expect to find the largest population increases in those colonies that experienced the most migration. Instead, Montserrat, overwhelmingly the largest contributor of migrants to Britain in proportion to its size had the second lowest rate of population increase before the exodus to Britain. Whereas Trinidad and Tobago, with only 1.2 per cent of its population leaving for Britain, had the highest rate of population increase prior to the 1950s.

Peach also shows that migration was unrelated to population pressure on crop land. Table 3.9 compares migration rates with population density and population per acre of crop land.

Table 3.9
MIGRATION AS A PER CENT OF POPULATION, POPULATION DENSITY
AND POPULATION PER ACRE OF CROP LAND IN TEN BRITISH WEST
INDIAN COLONIES, 1960

	Migration as % of Population	Population Density per Square Mile, 1960	Population per Acre of Crop land, 1960
Montserrat	31.5	369	1.5
Dominica	13.3	205	1.4
St Kitts	13.2	366	2.6
Jamaica	9.2	365	2.4
Antigua	8.7	501	3.1
Grenada	8.6	666	1.7
St Lucia	8.5	362	1.8
Barbados	8.1	1,398	3.4
St Vincent	5.3	538	2.9
Trinidad & Tobago	1.2	417	2.6

Source: Peach 1968:18; 21

Again there is no correlation between migration and population pressure on land. Even if one attempted to argue

that Montserrat has the second lowest population density per acre of crop land precisely because it had such a high rate of migration, this would not explain the fact that St Kitts and Trinidad and Tobago have exactly the same population per acre of crop land (2.6) and still rank third and tenth, respectively, in descending order of migration as a per cent of population.

In a more recent study based on interviews with 750 Jamaicans, 450 Bajans, and 300 Vincentians, Thomas-Hope (1992) finds no significant relationship between migration and job-satisfaction, occupational status, educational background, or age. Those who migrated from all three islands tended to live in the most accessible areas, represented all social classes, had varying levels of education, and were, for the most part, employed. Thomas-Hope also dismisses "pull" factors within equilibrium theory as reliable motivators of labour migration, and she argues that while these factors may explain the "pattern of migration, they do not explain the process" (Ibid:163).

Theoretical perspectives of international labour migration in the Caribbean cannot sustain causal explanations independent of research into the historical roots of labour migration that are ultimately connected to the struggles of the working class to become independent of the planter class. The more important connection between migration and land in the Caribbean is not the land's

capacity to carry its population, rather it is that temporary labour migration was the means by which working class St Lucians were able to secure their own land, build their own houses, and establish visual proof of permanence in their society, independent of the planter class.

The importance of land, of belonging to the land, and of having the land belong to the person are documented within the literature on Caribbean cultures. Richardson (1983:32) captures these sentiments in a local saying in Nevis: "if you buy land, you someone," and Peter Wilson (1973:45-46) explains the importance of owning land in Providencia:

Living on and owning part of Providencia is what makes a person different from everyone else and at the same time identifies those who are like oneself. To own a piece of land is regarded as a birthright, particularly for a man. It ensures a source of livelihood and acceptance by a community - a place to lay one's head in peace. When living overseas, where he does not belong and where he is often not accepted, this knowledge that he owns a piece of land on Providencia is perhaps the single most important factor in the preservation of a man's identity.

Owning land or establishing a house on family land is a prerequisite to improving one's position in the class system in Providencia and in St Lucia.

Migrating away from the island developed as part of a strategy to gain the freedom that was promised by emancipation in St Lucia. Even though emancipation proclaimed freedom in theory, in practice the reaction of planters on the island to the loss of their labour force, at

a time when St Lucia was ready to enter the sugar market with distinct advantages, resulted in legislation that made freedom impossible. Leaving the island in order to improve life at home was one of the ways St Lucians countered the continuing efforts of planters to keep them tied to the plantations. Wages earned abroad supported families at home and in some cases allowed migrants to purchase land and to build homes of their own. While labour migration did not bring about complete freedom for St Lucians of African ancestry, it was an experience that exemplified the meaning of freedom and it came to symbolize freedom's properties.

David Lowenthal (1992:27) argues that in Caribbean island societies "Working away is a normal part of the life cycle, no less a rite of passage than baptism or marriage." In St Lucia, a young boy who was just learning how to become a man had to do so within a social climate that devalued his struggle to become independent. When he left the island, he physically separated himself from the plantation society and when he came back he had experienced growth outside that society. A young male who left the island and returned with money to purchase land or build a house, demonstrated that he was now a man, able to assume responsibility, and his departure and return symbolized the potential of all working class St Lucians to gain some of the freedoms that emancipation promised.

The importance of labour migration as a cultural value

explains why St Lucians are willing to leave the island. West Indians have migrated anywhere they were allowed to enter, taken whatever jobs were available, and have stayed for brief periods or permanently. Historically, the Caribbean experiences "...the deepest and most continuous impact from international migration of any region in the world" (Segal 1987:44). It is the only region to send people to three continents: South America, North America, and Europe. The Caribbean has more simultaneous emigration and immigration than any other region; it has consistently been supported by home governments; and its people have been "...quick to seek integration abroad, while yet rejecting assimilation" (Ibid:44-47).

Kritz and Zlotnik (1992) emphasize the importance of historic economic and cultural ties that pave the way for exchanges of people. In the case of the FARMS Programme, the historic connection between Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean accounts for migration between the two areas and for the economic and cultural exchanges that both precede and accompany labour migration from St Lucia to Canada. In the next chapter, I will examine the role of employers in temporary international labour migration. The creation of FARMS, as the current example of seasonal migration, came directly from employers in Canada, and grew out of the labour problems they were experiencing in the 1960s.

ENDNOTES

1. \$1.4 million and \$1.3 million (Tennyson 1990:47).
2. Canadian exports to the West Indies amounted to: \$17.2 million in 1925-26, \$20 million in 1928-29, and \$17.8 million in 1930-31. West Indian exports to Canada were: \$18.8 million in 1926-27, \$20.6 million in 1928-29, and \$18.7 million in 1930-31 (Tennyson 1990:47).
3. In 1992, St Lucia's imports from Canada total US \$10,146,000, but no exports to Canada are listed in St Lucia's external trade accounts (Europa 1995:2614).
4. Two St Lucian men who had been to Quebec told me they could not understand Quebec French and French speakers could not understand them.

5. The populations of the ten islands in 1990-1993 are as follows:

Jamaica	2,374,193	Grenada	94,806
Trinidad & Tobago	1,260,000	Dominica	71,183
Antigua-Barbuda	62,922	Barbados	257,082
St Kitts-Nevis	50,000	St Lucia	136,041
St Vincent	109,000	Montserrat	12,661

TOTAL 4,427,888
(Source: Europa, 1995).

Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago combined have a population of 3,891,275, while the four Windward Islands, Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia, and St Vincent, have a combined population of 411,030, and the three Leeward Islands, Antigua-Barbuda, Montserrat, and St Kitts-Nevis have a total population of 125,583.

6. The amounts paid for students and trainees under ODA sponsorship were as follows:

	1990	1991	Total
Trainees	347,339	288,069	635,408
Canada	102,127	110,101	212,228
St Lucia	245,212	177,968	423,180
Students	692,818	700,169	1,392,987
Canada	216,963	371,629	588,592
St Lucia	475,855	328,540	804,395

Total 1,040,157 988,238 2,028,395
 Canada 319,090 481,730 800,820
 St Lucia 721,067 506,508 1,227,575
 (Statistics Canada 1995a)

7. St Lucia's imports come predominantly from the United States, but other countries contribute substantially. The following list is in US \$ million: United States, 105,935; United Kingdom, 43,038; Trinidad and Tobago, 28,646; Japan, 19,374; Canada, 10,146; France, 9,460; Barbados, 8,510; St Vincent, 6,893.

St Lucia's exports go to the following countries:
United Kingdom, 63,097; United States, 26,268; Italy, 7,690; Dominica, 5,005; Barbados, 4,214; Trinidad and Tobago, 2,354; Jamaica, 2,154; Grenada, 1,861; St Vincent, 1,748; Antigua, 1,670 (Europa 1995).

8. St Vincent was producing 12,117 tons; Antigua, 8,346; Barbados, 11,622; Grenada, 10,880; St Kitts, 6,050; St Lucia, 3,415; Dominica, 2,089 (Green 1976:246).
9. Acosta and Casimir suggest that this may even be higher because "the system by nature defies official records" (1985:40).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FARMS PROGRAMME IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

In the small village of Aux Lyon on the island of St Lucia, Patrick Estephane packs his suitcase, bids goodbye to his family and friends, and travels to the international airport at the southern end of the island. It is Saturday, May 16, 1992, and he is on his way to the Rzeszutek farm in Ontario where he will work in tobacco production for six months, along with six other FARMS employees from St Lucia. When Patrick boards the Air Canada jet, as he has done every spring since 1980, he becomes one of 70 million people throughout the world who leave home temporarily to live and work in another country.¹

Currently, temporary and contract labour migration is a global phenomenon. It takes place in the Middle East, Asia, Europe, Africa, the South Pacific, Latin America, the Caribbean, and North America. Although it has recently become "the stuff of high politics" (Rogers 1992:33), international labour migration is not a new product of the twentieth century. The migration of people between countries has been an "enduring feature of the socio-

economic geography of human affairs" (Stahl 1988:9), and the "modernization paradigm" that describes migration as a recent development, distorts the historical record (Nugent 1992:36). What is new is the expansion of temporary international labour migration that has resulted from the increasing interdependence and integration of the world (Diaz-Briquets and Weintraub 1991:2), and the growing similarity of immigration policies in industrialized countries to restrict the permanent settlement of temporary labour migrants (Cornelius, Martin, and Hollifield 1992:3).

Historically, St Lucians participated in three temporary international labour programmes outside Latin America and the Caribbean: the "guestworker" scheme in Britain, the British West Indies Temporary Alien Labor Program in the United States, and the FARMS Programme in Canada. Today, only the Canadian programme remains. The British Nationality Act of 1981 ended all St Lucian migration to Britain except family reunification, and the BWI program in the United States stopped importing workers from the Eastern Caribbean in 1990.

In this chapter I will discuss some of the issues surrounding the development of the FARMS programme in Ontario. These issues include the historical connection between agriculture and immigration in Canada, the labour problems that plagued Canadian farmers, and the resistance by the federal government to Ontario growers' requests for

West Indian workers. Very little research has been done on the FARMS programme and a study conducted by Vic Satzewich (1991) on the role of the Canadian state in organizing and regulating farm labour migration since 1945 provides a large proportion of the resources used in the following discussion of the twenty-year battle fought by Ontario growers with officials in the Canadian government.²

Before I discuss the development of the FARMS programme, I will briefly describe the British "guestworker" scheme and the BWI program in the United States in order to provide the background for comparison with the FARMS programme in Canada. The goal of this comparison is to situate Canadian employment of St Lucian farm workers within the broader context of West Indian temporary labour migration in other parts of the world.

BRITAIN'S GUESTWORKERS

The most famous temporary international labour migration programmes are those of Western Europe following World War II. People from the Caribbean travelled to the metropolises of their colonizers in Europe. Migrants from Saba went to The Netherlands, those from Martinique and Guadeloupe went to France, and British West Indians went to Britain. The issues involved in these population movements have become legendary and have had a significant impact on the designs and policies used by temporary international

labour programmes that followed, particularly Canada's current programme. The European experience challenged the meaning of the term "guestworkers" and was "the source of the aphorism that 'there is nothing more permanent than temporary workers" (Martin 1991:40), in reference to the large populations of "guests" who did not go home.

West Indians went to Britain as Commonwealth citizens. They did not need work permits and could enter and leave whenever they wished. Some New Commonwealth citizens were recruited by London Transport or the British Hotels and Restaurants Association, while others simply travelled to Britain in search of work (Castles, Booth, and Wallace 1984:42). These West Indian labour migrants filled job vacancies that white British workers did not want because of low pay or bad working conditions: "the railways, road passenger services, and the rubber industry" (Peach 1968:75). By 1961 there were over two million labour migrants working in Britain, one quarter of which were New Commonwealth workers. The Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 put an end to the unrestricted entry of New Commonwealth citizens and required that those who wished to work in Britain now had to obtain permits. In 1968, a second Act placed restrictions on New Commonwealth visitors and a further Act in 1971 restricted the number of dependants who could join those already working in Britain. After 1973, anyone entering from New Commonwealth countries

on a work permit had to renew it every year. After four years, however, many of the restrictions were lifted, and after five years, New Commonwealth workers could apply for citizenship (Castles, Booth, and Wallace 1984). With the British Nationality Act of 1981, British immigration policy became even more discriminatory and New Commonwealth members were treated as foreigners. While family reunification is still allowed, the 'family' has been redefined for the West Indian category to include only "a spouse and children under 18." At the same time, the definition of 'family' for other EEC members includes "children up to the age of 21, dependent parents and grandparents, and other relatives living under the same roof" (Castles, Booth and Wallace 1984:46).

In retrospect, much of the discriminatory legislation in Britain was unnecessary and even accelerated West Indian migration. The news that restrictions were on their way had the initial effect of creating a rush among West Indians who feared that if they did not travel now, they would never have another chance. The increase added further evidence to support British fears that something had to be done to stop the "invasion" (Peach 1968). By the early 1970s, a reverse trend in West Indian migration to Britain had already begun: "Between 1971 and 1973, 9,000 West Indians entered Britain while 14,000 left" and in 1974, there were 2,000 more departures than arrivals (Thomas-Hope 1986:25). While

family reunification increased arrivals during the 1980s, the most recent figures in show that departures in the 1990s are beginning to surpass arrivals.³

THE UNITED STATES' BWI PROGRAM

The British West Indies Temporary Alien Labor Program (BWI) began after the Second World War, at about the same time as the temporary labour programmes in Western Europe. It was initially designed as a temporary-contract type of labour recruitment to allow Florida sugar planters to import agricultural workers from the British West Indies to replace the black American labour force that moved north to work in war related industries. An original agreement negotiated with the Bahamas was expanded to include five West Indian countries: Jamaica, Barbados, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, and Dominica until 1990 when the three Eastern Caribbean countries were dropped. This labour recruitment program is available only to the Florida sugar cane industry and the East Coast apple growers; and the agreement that maintains the international relationship is conducted between the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association and U.S. Sugar Corporation and The British West Indies Central Labour Organization (McCoy and Wood 1982:9).

The United States Department of Labor developed some strict qualifications to prevent American employers from disregarding the domestic labour force. Potential employers

must demonstrate that there are no domestic workers available to do the job for which they propose to hire West Indians. In addition, employers must pay a guaranteed hourly wage, known as the "adverse wage rate," to West Indian workers. Twenty-three per cent of the money earned by the workers is deposited in a bank in the workers' home countries and this, coupled with an eight month maximum on the limit of the temporary work visas, is designed to guarantee that the men will return home when their contract is finished.

The BWI Program is very much a contract agreement. Once the applicants in the five sending countries have passed their medical testing and fulfilled other migration requirements set by the United States Department of Immigration, they form a "labor pool" from which representatives of United States employers, temporarily stationed in the West Indies, select employees based on the applicants' previous work experience, and the physical inspection of such features as the men's hands, eyes, and teeth (Griffith 1983:54). The sugar cane workers are transported from the West Indies to West Palm Beach in Florida by chartered air craft, and if a worker completes 50 per cent of the contract period his transportation costs are paid by his employer. Once the West Indian men are in the United States, they live in camps on or near the sugar plantations or the apple orchards. These camps in Florida

may house as many as 1,000 men who work for one grower. Meals are provided at a daily fee and many of the camps have their own medical facilities, commissaries and limited recreational facilities.

By 1970, the British West Indian Temporary Alien Labor Program began to attract the attention of labor unions in the United States and for at least the last fifteen years, new growers who apply for workers have had to sue the Department of Labor for the right to import the West Indian men. At the heart of these suits is the question of whether there is actually enough domestic labour to fill the positions that are being awarded to the West Indians. Although statistics "...clearly demonstrate an abundance of unemployed domestic labor..." (Griffith 1986a:877), the simple existence of an unemployed domestic population is not enough to deny the farmers access to imported labour. It is more a question of "reliability." Every year the United Farm Workers attempt to gather evidence against the sugar and apple farmers to convince the courts to grant injunctions preventing the import of 'foreign' labour, but so far the growers have managed to continue the program on the grounds that domestic labour is neither as efficient nor as reliable as the West Indian workers.

THE STRUGGLE OF ONTARIO GROWERS

The Canadian FARMS Programme began in 1966, later than

either the Guestworker scheme in Britain or the BWI program in the United States. Similar to employers in Britain and the United States, Canadian farmers experienced labour shortages after the Second World War, but Ontario growers had to struggle against immigration and labour officials within the federal government for nearly two decades before the programme was approved. This resistance to importing West Indian farm workers by Canadian officials is somewhat perplexing, given the historical connection between agriculture and immigration in Canada. Before Confederation, Upper Canada was settled by farming families from Europe and the United States who were solicited by the Colonial Office in Britain. After Confederation, the immigration branch of government was housed in the Department of Agriculture until the mid-1890s (Dirks 1995:11). More recently, the federal government accepted Polish war veterans, Eastern Europeans, and Dutch farmers after the Second World War on the condition that these labour migrants work on Canadian farms.

Several questions, then, surround the development of the FARMS programme in Ontario. What were the conditions in agriculture that led to the labour problems experienced by growers in Ontario? Why was the Canadian government reluctant to allow Ontario growers to import West Indian farm workers at a time when temporary labour programmes were becoming increasingly more popular throughout the world?

To answer these questions, I will begin with a discussion of family farming in Ontario, move to a focus on the problems experienced within the Canadian agricultural sector, describe the labour problems reported by Ontario farmers, and summarize the long process Ontario growers went through in order to employ West Indian workers.

Agriculture and Immigration

Vernon C. Fowke (1978:4), a Canadian political economist, argues that Canadian agriculture has historically been used as "an instrument of commercial and political empire building". The establishment of family farming in Ontario was the work of the Colonial Office in Britain before Confederation. Officials of the Office actively sought, and assisted the passage of, persons it deemed suitable to become Canadian farmers. Once developed, agriculture in Ontario has continued to be guided by the federal and provincial branches of the Canadian government, and according to the farmers I interviewed, as well as the authors I discuss below, many of the problems faced by the growers in this province are the result of government manipulation.

Structurally, Canadian growers occupy the middle space between agribusiness and agricultural labourers. Added to this is the Canadian government's policy of promoting "cheap food" (Shields 1992:246-247). As a result growers have had

little control over much of their production and their means of livelihood. Continually caught in a cost-price squeeze, farmers must pay increasingly more for machinery and other supplies they need, while the return on the products they produce remains relatively constant. Unable to compete with wages offered by other industries, labour shortages have been an enduring problem.

The decline of the rural population of Canada in general, and of Ontario in particular, has been matched by an even more significant decline in the number of farms. When the first census of post-Confederation Canada was taken, slightly more than 80 per cent of the population lived and worked in rural areas. By the turn of the century, emigration from Canada's rural areas was under way and more than one-third of the country's population lived in urban areas. By 1921, the population was divided almost equally between rural and urban at 50.5 per cent and 49.5 per cent respectively. The depression of the 1930s accelerated the exodus from the rural sectors until the early 1970s when the rural population reached a low of 24 per cent and remained fairly constant ever since (Hay 1992:17). The distribution of Ontario's population has followed the same trend. The rural proportion presently constitutes about 18 per cent, and only 2.2 per cent of the provinces population is actively involved in farming (Ontario Agricultural Census, 1991).

The Family Farm and the Canadian Government

The family farm has been one of the building blocks of Canada. As a country of immigrants, Canada built its population by actively encouraging migrants who had experience as farmers and a desire to continue farming or were willing to work in agriculture in Canada. From its beginning, the development of Ontario by farmers involved government sanction and support. At the close of the Revolutionary war in 1776, American United Empire Loyalists of British, German and Dutch origin were offered a sanctuary in what was to become first Upper Canada, then Canada West, and finally Ontario. In Upper Canada, acres of land were given to families who would clear them and grow crops to feed their families and to sell to the British for export.

These farming communities became the foundation of Upper Canadian society, and the members of the farm families considered themselves to be the founders of the new colony: "At the root of the family farm was the ethic of individual ownership, the control over land and labour and the ability to make and implement decisions" (Fuller 1985:7). Despite the decline in the number of farms since the Second World War, from 178,200 in 1941 to 72,700 in 1986 (Hay 1992:25-27), the role of the family in the history of farming in Ontario has remained constant. According to Statistics Canada: "in 1986, 99.1% of the farm operations were classified as 'family farms', whether they were individual

holdings, partnerships, or family-owned corporations" (Basran 1992:5). By the 1991 Agricultural Census, family-operated farms still accounted for 98 per cent of all farms in Canada. What has changed, however, is the need for outside labour at the time of harvest. During 1985, 21,353 Ontario farmers reported paying wages totalling \$195,168,630 to family members. At the same time \$336,468,029 was paid by 26,476 farmers in cash wages to non-family members who were hired to work on Ontario farms (Ontario Agricultural Census 1986). By 1991, 28,927 farms reported paying wages to 1,709,431 agricultural workers, or an average of 59 per farm (Ibid 1991). Table 4.1 shows how wage labour on Ontario farms has increased between 1971 and 1991.

Table 4.1
NUMBER OF WEEKS ONTARIO FARMS HAVE HIRED
WAGE LABOUR, PER CENT OF FARMS PAYING WAGE
LABOUR, AND AVERAGE PAID WORKERS PER FARM

Year	Number of Farms	Number of Weeks	Per Cent of Total Farms	Average Per Farm
1971	36,383	1,509,412	38.4	41
1976	28,702	1,283,292	32.3	45
1981	34,023	1,721,178	41.3	57
1986	36,941	1,920,119	50.8	52
1991	28,927	1,709,431	42.1	59

Source: Ontario Agricultural Census, 1991

According to Ontario farmers, finding Canadians who are willing to perform the short-term and seasonal work needed on the farms has been a significant problem since the Second World War.

THE PROBLEM OF FARM LABOUR IN ONTARIO

The negative aspects of farm labour are well known: "the nature of the work has tended to be seasonal, transitory, low-paying, and dependent on 'marginal' domestic and/or immigrant workers" (Shields 1992:217). Farmworkers in Ontario are excluded from the Labour Relations Act which regulates such things as "the industrial minimum wage, overtime pay, vacations and vacation pay, public holiday pay, and overtime regulations" (Ibid). This exclusion is justified by the growers I interviewed on two basic grounds: first, if the same regulations that apply to other industries were applied to agriculture, food costs would rise; and second, because of the perishability of crops and the variability of weather, overtime regulations cannot apply to agricultural work. Since the Second World War, securing labour at the crucial times of harvest has been a major problem for farmers in Ontario. The number of Canadians working in agriculture has declined steadily since the 1940s. In 1941, 28.6 per cent of the Canadian labour force was employed in agriculture; by 1968, the percentage had dropped to 7.2.

Historically, the Canadian government has attempted to provide labour for agriculture in Ontario by recruiting workers among the unemployed in nearby urban areas and by importing workers from other regions. During the Second World War, agriculture was one of the "essential industries"

designated by the state to keep men working at home. In 1941 the Ontario Farm Service Force was created "to organize the recruitment of farm labour in Ontario to ensure that the production of food in Canada would be sufficient to feed the European allies (Haythorne 1960:70-78). In addition, the Federal Department of Labour paid the costs of recruiting and transporting workers to farms during the times of harvest. In 1943, the Dominion Provincial Farm Labour Programme was created to find and recruit workers in farming areas that were experiencing shortages (Ibid:65-66). For the duration of the War, German prisoners, Japanese Canadian internees and conscientious objectors were made available to farmers by the federal government, but these workers were released after the war.

The Ontario Farm Service Force continued to assist farmers until 1953. Its main task after the war was to recruit student and adult workers in urban areas such as Toronto, and Hamilton for a labour pool. Farmers drove to control points in these areas, transported the workers to their fields, and returned them at the end of the day. After 1953, the Force was replaced by the National Employment Service which operated under the Department of Labour. Although the federal government continued to help with the costs of recruitment and maintenance of temporary labour, the size of its contribution was reduced under the new Service (Satzewich 1991:77-80).

In 1964, 255 aboriginal peoples from northern Ontario were provided with transportation by the Department of Labour to southern Ontario to work in the fruit and vegetable harvest. If the workers completed the harvest, their transportation home was also paid. In 1965, the number of imported northern aboriginals increased to 549, but in 1966 it dropped to 162 (Ontario Regional Report on Agricultural Placement Activities 1965/66).

Foreign Farm Labour

There is also a long history of immigrant labour provided by the federal government to work in Canadian agriculture.⁴ Shortly after the Second World War Canada accepted Polish war veterans, Displaced Persons, some Dutch farmers, and immigrants who came under the Assisted Passage Loan Scheme, on the condition that these people would work in Canadian agriculture for a specified amount of time. The Polish war veterans included those who had fought with the British, but who, as anti-communists, did not want to return to Poland. There were, however, strings attached to Canada's hospitality. The veterans had to agree to work on Canadian farms for at least two years before they could apply to become permanent residents (Zubrzycki 1956). Displaced Persons were people, primarily of eastern European descent who, like the Poles, did not want to return to the Soviet bloc after the war. Those persons who had relatives

in Canada were free to choose their own employment, but a large portion of Displaced Persons did not meet that requirement and became contract workers on Canadian farms. The Department of Labour paid their transportation costs and the foreign farm workers were bound to their contract for one year. Between 1947 and 1954, 7,016 Displaced Persons were placed on farms in Ontario through this programme (Rawlyk 1962:290). In 1947 the Canadian and Dutch governments entered into an agreement whereby the Dutch government recruited farmers and their families for emigration to Canada (Petersen 1955:66-68). The Assisted Passages Loan Scheme began in 1951, and within five years had channelled about 4,700 workers to Ontario farms (Corbett 1957:49-58).

Temporary agricultural workers were also recruited from outside Canada. These included tobacco workers from the United States, Mexican Mennonites, University students from western Europe, and day workers from Detroit. Tobacco workers were imported from the United States to work, on a seasonal basis, on Ontario farms. At first, Canadian officials went to the United States to recruit workers, but after a while, Ontario employers did their own recruiting. This was especially true of returning workers who were notified by their employers when they were needed (Satzewich 1991:108-110).

From 1946 to 1953, Canada admitted over 25,000

immigrants under contracts which stipulated that the newcomers must work as paid labourers on farms for periods of one to two years. It was not easy to keep European immigrants on farms in Canada; a large proportion of the newcomers either moved to the urban centres when their contracts were finished, or used Canada as a gateway to the United States (Nugent 1993). Those who remained in agriculture in Canada often managed to secure farms of their own and some even added to the number of farmers who needed to find wage labour.

By the late 1940s, the temporary measures of war-time labour were fading. European immigrants had either honoured their "contracts" and left the agricultural labour force or moved away from rural Ontario. Ontario growers needed a new source of labour.

Caribbean Farm Workers

The Canadian federal government's public response to the pressures from Ontario growers for farm workers from the Caribbean took place in three phases. The first phase, 1947-1963, was characterized by the federal government's denial that there actually were labour shortages in agriculture. The second phase, 1963-1964, consisted of the government's attempt to blame the growers for their labour problems. The third phase, after the 1964 harvest, was distinguished by the Department of Citizenship and

Immigration's identification of labour shortages as a structural problem rather than simply a farmer's problem (Satzewich 1991:146-147).

In 1947, two independent sources, the Labour Commissioner for Barbados and a representative of the United Kingdom High Commission in Ottawa, approached the Canadian government requesting that it consider the possibility of employing Barbadian and Jamaican workers on a temporary basis for fruit and vegetable harvest in Ontario. Again in 1952 and 1954, the Jamaican Minister of Social Welfare and the colonial government of Barbados put forward proposals for a temporary labour programme. In all four cases, the Department of Labour and the Immigration Branch officials refused the requests and denied that there were shortages of labour, despite the fact that in 1954 Canada admitted over 3,000 tobacco workers from the United States and over 3,000 immigrant workers from Europe (Satzewich 1991:147-149).

In 1957, vegetable growers in Ontario formed the South-Western Ontario Field Crops Association (SWAFCA) to create a collective strength, as they had done at the beginning of the century. Aware that Caribbean workers were being used to harvest fruits and vegetables in Michigan, the association, with the support of the Dominion Sugar Company, tried to convince Canadian authorities to allow Caribbean workers temporary employment in Ontario. Again in 1958, Canada and Dominion Sugar Company proposed a scheme to bring

fifty Jamaicans from Florida to work in sugar beets in Ontario. The Company agreed to pay the workers' transportation from Florida to Ontario and from Ontario to Jamaica. They were again turned down by Canadian officials (Satzewich 1991:149-152).

After the passage in Britain of the Commonwealth Immigration Act (which put an end to free entry into Britain by West Indians seeking work) in 1962, pressures on Canada to admit migrant workers were renewed by Caribbean governments. These requests were accompanied by increasingly strong pressures from Ontario farmers who were experiencing crucial labour problems due to a period of economic growth in Canada that was to continue through the 1960s until the economic crisis of 1973. This situation ultimately reduced unemployment and raised wages thus intensifying the cost-price squeeze faced by farmers (Satzewich 1991:153). An organization of Ontario farmers, the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association (OFVGA) combined their efforts with the Jamaican High Commission in Ottawa and began a campaign to convince growers of the value of Caribbean labour and to continue pressure on the Canadian government. The result was another proposal submitted to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration in 1964 which was again turned down (Ibid:154). This time, not only was the labour problem defined as "relative and not absolute", but the farmers themselves were blamed for their problems.

According to the Chief of the Settlement Division of the Department of Citizenship, labour shortages resulted from:

the almost complete lack of accommodation provided by the employers; the reluctance of growers to provide transportation; instability of wages and the lack of arrangements to assure continuity of employment from one grower to another (quoted in Satzewich 1991:158).

The implication of the Department's statement was that if farmers would only change their ways, labour supplies would increase.

After the 1964 harvest, the Farm Labour Committee of the Niagara Peninsula Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association argued that despite assurances given them by the National Employment Service that enough workers could be provided by internal migrants (i.e., from Quebec, Maritimes, Toronto urban unemployed) they still faced labour shortages. They formed the Niagara-British West Indies Employers Association and conducted their own survey to show that there would be severe shortages of agricultural workers in the upcoming harvest. Armed with the results, the Association petitioned the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. This time, they met with some success. The Department of Citizenship and Immigration drafted a list of conditions under which it was prepared to admit workers from the Caribbean if approved by the Department of Labour. Those conditions included wages for workers and standards for working conditions; an assurance that workers would be imported only when no Canadians could be found for the jobs;

and a stipulation that growers form an association which would accept the legal responsibilities associated with importing workers (Satzewich 1991:1963).

The Ontario Department of Agriculture also agreed to help growers, offering "a grant of \$150.00 per farm employee 'to construct clean comfortable housing' for Caribbean workers, and suggested that the federal government match this figure" (quoted in Satzewich 1991:170). Still, the Department of Labour rejected the proposal. The Department of Labour's position makes little sense when groups of Danish and Norwegian farm workers, as well as European University students, were already being allowed to enter Canada to work summers on farms in Western Canada.

By the autumn of 1965 "shortages of labour from within Canada were so severe that the state was forced to recruit day labourers from Detroit, Michigan, for work in fruit and vegetable harvesting and processing in southern Ontario" (Satzewich 1991:166). Between September and October of that year the Department of Citizenship and Immigration sent vans, equipped with loud speakers, to drive up and down the streets of Detroit advertising job openings in Ontario, and approximately 300 workers per day were recruited (Ibid:166).

The final breakthrough for the growers came as the result of a reorganization in federal government agencies early in 1966. The Department of Labour assumed responsibility for industrial relations and disputes, and

the Department of Citizenship and Immigration merged with the Department of Labour to become the Department of Manpower and Immigration. On 15 March 1966, Ontario growers were finally granted permission to import Caribbean workers for agricultural labour. A Task Force on Seasonal Farm Labour was commissioned by the new Department to confirm the fact that Ontario growers would be faced with real labour shortages at the next harvest and approval was given on 31 March 1966, after almost twenty years of pressure, and negotiations between the Department of Manpower and Immigration and Ontario growers began (Satzewich 1991:167).

The recommendations of Task Force included the following conditions under which Jamaican males over the age of eighteen could be admitted to Ontario for temporary agricultural employment: growers must (1) offer a wage-rate of \$1.50 per hour; (2) guarantee a minimum weekly wage of \$50.00 per worker; (3) furnish satisfactory meals and lodging at a cost to the workers which would not exceed \$20.00 per week; (4) offer employment for not less than eight weeks nor more than 12 weeks; (5) make sure the hours of work did not exceed the "normal and usual hours prevalent in agriculture in the area, except under the consent of both parties"; (6) paid the return transportation costs of the workers (Satzewich 1991:168).

Most of the negotiations between the Department of Manpower and Immigration and Ontario growers concerned the

issues of wages. The recommendation of the Department was that wages exceed those average growers paid to local labour. In 1965 "better growers" had paid \$1.25. The extra \$.25 per hour was recommended because Caribbean workers were believed to have more agricultural experience than Canadian farm workers and would, therefore, be more productive. Growers reacted negatively to the terms set out by the Department. The growers' argument was based on the grounds that Caribbean labour would be so expensive they would not be able to afford it. First, growers objected to the stipulated wage on the grounds that the minimum wage in Ontario for 1966 was \$1.25, an amount they felt was sufficient, and if the hourly wage included the cost of food and lodging, Caribbean labour would, in fact, be costing growers between \$1.35 and \$1.40 per hour. Second, the growers objected to the requirement that workers be paid not less than \$50.00 every week. They were concerned that bad weather or other unforeseen circumstances could mean that workers might be limited to only one or two days some weeks. As an alternative, the growers offered to guarantee an average of \$50.00 per week over the whole season. Finally, the growers objected to the recommendation that they pay return transportation. They argued that they should only be responsible for transportation one way, like the American growers, not both ways (Satzewich 1991:169).

Based on the Department's acceptance of their counter

offer, the growers submitted an estimated need for 750 workers for the 1966 season. The Department agreed to the first two revisions suggested by the growers, but held out on the last one, the Department's reasoning being that if Caribbean labour were more costly, growers would make more effort to hire Canadians first (Satzewich 1991:170).

The role of the Canadian government, then, in terms of its control over both the agricultural sector of Ontario and immigration, has been complex and historically inconsistent. At first, federal departments of labour and immigration tried to block the attempts of Ontario growers to import temporary labour from the Commonwealth Caribbean, although farm workers from the United States and Europe were being allowed to work temporarily in Canada. When these federal branches of government finally surrendered to pressure from growers and from Caribbean officials, they designed stipulations that would guarantee the departure of the Caribbean labour migrants when harvest was finished.

THE FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SERVICE

The Canadian Farm Labour Programme finally began in 1966 with an agreement between the Canadian and Jamaican governments to provide Ontario growers with temporary labour during the time of harvest. That year 264 Jamaican workers were brought to Ontario to harvest fruits and vegetables for a maximum of four months. In 1967, the program was extended

to include workers from Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, and the total number reached 1,077. And in 1976, when workers from the Eastern Caribbean countries were added, the number of West Indian workers temporarily in Canada rose to 4,875 (Whyte 1984:2-3). By 1982, 782 growers employed over 3,000 workers from Jamaica, 754 from Barbados, 519 from Trinidad and Tobago, and 542 from the Eastern Caribbean.

In 1987, the Canadian government decided it was spending too much of the taxpayers' money on the administration of the Canadian Farm Labour Programme, an undertaking which benefitted only a small portion of Canadians. The government formally announced its decision to discard the program in the "Neilson - White Paper." Convinced that they could not operate without off-shore help, the tobacco, fruit and vegetable growers took over the programme and renamed it the Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Services (FARMS). By 1988, according to FARMS, 843 Ontario growers provided 7,380 jobs for 5,947 West Indian men.

As a temporary-contract program, FARMS stipulates that a West Indian employee in Canada must be hired by a specific grower for a specified job. There is a twelve month limit on each work visa and each year West Indian workers who seek to return as migrants must leave Canada and be re-admitted the next season.

Growers may request either named (someone who has been

there before) or un-named (someone selected by the representative of the sending country) workers. If a grower specifies a named worker and there are problems which lead to the dismissal of that worker, the farmer will be responsible for sending the man home and replacing him with someone else. On the other hand, if an un-named worker is selected, FARMS assumes the responsibility of replacement for a trial period of fourteen days.

There are some differences in the kinds of work done by the West Indian men, the number of hours required each week (and thus the amount of time off) and the manner and rate of pay. These variations depend on the particular type of farming in which the worker is employed. Tobacco growers pay their workers by the kiln and by the day. The men are expected to work in the tobacco fields each day until they have harvested enough leaves to fill one kiln. The men who harvest fruits and vegetables are paid by the hour. The 1994 agricultural wage rates paid to FARMS workers were as follows: Tobacco growers paid \$6.87 per hour for flue tobacco and \$8.23 per hour for black tobacco for harvesting the crop, and \$6.70 per hour for planting; farmers who operated nurseries paid \$6.70 per hour, as did vegetable and fruit growers. In 1994, tobacco growers employed the largest portion of FARMS workers in (35 per cent) and fruit growers employed the second largest portion (32 per cent). The rest of the FARMS workers were divided between food

processing (5 per cent), greenhouse operators (4 per cent) nursery operators (3 per cent) and Ginseng growers (2 per cent).

The Liaison service provided by the sending countries plays an important role in the agreements between the Ontario growers as employers and the West Indian men as employees. The Eastern Caribbean countries maintain one liaison service which represents them as a group. This officer handles complaints from either growers or workers during the time the men from his countries are in Canada. It is the liaison officer's responsibility to meet the men at the airport and provide assistance with customs and immigration procedures if necessary, and generally, to oversee the organization of the Programme.

It is the growers' responsibility to provide transportation for the workers to Canada and back home, if the worker fulfils the contract. The standard transportation cost paid by the growers is the return air fare between Kingston, Jamaica and Toronto, Ontario. This means that workers from St Lucia must pay any transportation costs which exceed the amount allowed. Farmers who have men working in Canada during the summer may make arrangements with apple growers to transfer men when the apple harvest begins in the fall, provided the men are willing to stay and the arrangements are made ahead of time and approved by FARMS. Under these arrangements, the transportation costs

may be shared by the two employers.

The Department of Labour in St Lucia maintains responsibility for contacting and recruiting workers in St Lucia, and arranging for medical examinations and up to date visas and passports. Each season, growers send requests for named and un-named workers. The named positions are filled with the particular worker identified by the employer, and un-named positions are filled by workers who make up a pool of individuals who have been selected by the Department.

Once the West Indian men begin their work, twenty-five per cent of the gross earnings is withheld from the wages of each worker. Six per cent is used to pay the liaison service and the remaining nineteen percent is available to pay the travel costs incurred from the worker's home to the designated departure point and back again when he returns. If the worker fails to remain in Canada for the duration of his contract, his entire transportation cost may be deducted from this amount. During some years, Visa and other fees involving government regulations have been deducted and growers have collected unpaid telephone charges and cleaning bills from the mandatory savings. Other deductions from the workers' wages in Canada include Workers' Compensation, Canada Pension, and a weekly fee charged by the growers for transportation to and from a nearby shopping facility.

After all of the Canadian deductions are made, the money left over is returned to St Lucia where it is

converted into Eastern Caribbean currency and the St Lucian Department of Labour takes two per cent to help cover some of its costs. The remainder is then returned to the workers, in the form of compulsory savings, sometime between December and the beginning of the next working season.

COMPARISONS

The three temporary international labour programmes of Britain, Canada, and the United States are similar in some respects and different in others. All three labour schemes imported West Indians at one time, although only Canada and the United States currently employ West Indians and only Canada currently employs St Lucians. All three programmes were directed toward solving "temporary" labour shortages by importing labour for jobs that permanent residents would not do. The British guestworker approach differs from the other two most significantly in its lack of employment restrictions. Whereas the BWI and FARMS programmes were created precisely to control the duration of time temporary labour migrants could stay in the United States or Canada, and had separate immigration policies for long-term or permanent immigrants, the British guestworker plan was built on the assumption that labour migrants would simply go home when they were no longer needed. Furthermore, unlike FARMS or the BWI program, Britain's guestworkers were not legally bound to their employers. Britain's doors were open to

Commonwealth citizens, and once inside the migrants were not restricted to a particular job. In other words, Britain's guestworkers were free as opposed to unfree migrants, meaning that no contracts were involved and West Indian workers were able to leave one place of employment and move to another whenever the opportunity was present. This is not the case in the United States or in Canada where "workin' on the contract" means working for one employer.

Canadian Differences

The differences between the Canadian FARMS programme and the British guestworker and United States' BWI programmes have important implications for the employment experiences of the West Indian men. Differences between Canada and Britain include the ways in which immigration policies have controlled, or not controlled, temporary international labour migrants and how West Indians were perceived by the white populations of each country. In a study comparing immigration policies of Canada and Britain, Jeffery Reitz (1988:117) argues that "non-white" immigration took place under different conditions and for different reasons in Britain and Canada:

For Britain, non-white immigration occurred in the context of the obligations of a declining imperial power to former colonial territories. For Canada, non-white immigration was a trend within the context of a long-term program of national development.

In Britain, no controls were placed on the entry of New

Commonwealth citizens from the West Indies, and what was expected to be short-term temporary labour turned out to be long-term, if not permanent. In Canada, however, very tight controls were in place on immigration from all sources, and only a certain number of immigrants were allowed each year.

Reitz argues further that the differences in the institutional structures of immigration in Britain and Canada led to differences in how West Indians were perceived within the host societies:

As a result of attendant differences in institutional structure, immigrants in Britain were perceived negatively as representing the growth of a vast and burgeoning welfare problem, whereas in Canada, the institutional structures suggested that immigrants were being screened to ensure a positive contribution to Canadian society (1988:125).

As evidence supporting his thesis, Reitz compares the results of Gallup polls in Britain and Canada which show differences in "racial attitudes" held by white British and Canadian citizens toward black West Indian immigrants. In 1968, 78 percent of British respondents "wanted to stop colored immigrants," while 19 per cent disagreed. In 1975, 27 per cent of Canadians interviewed "were in favour of immigration restrictions based on origins," while 63 per cent disagreed (1988:119). Because Canada began accepting West Indian immigrants later than Britain, Reitz contends that Canada experienced the effects of its growing black population later, and therefore the difference in the dates of the Gallop polls are appropriate.

The United States differed from both Canada and Britain in how West Indians were perceived by the domestic population. In the United States, the African-American population that was already present had the effect of absorbing incoming West Indians. Based on a study of Vincentians and Grenadians in New York City, Linda Basch suggests that: "Because of their shared racial characteristics and African cultural heritage, West Indians were assigned by the dominant groups - i.e., whites - to the same sociopolitical space as Black Americans" (1987:169).

There are also differences between the employment and living conditions in the Canadian FARMS programme and the American BWI plan. The British West Indies Central Labour Organization stipulates that sugar cane growers may request the return of only sixty per cent of their workers by name. This automatically means that, for forty per cent of the employees, it will be impossible to develop lasting close relationships with their employers; while growers in Ontario have been able to request the same employees as often as they like. The conditions of West Indian employment also differ between the United States and Canada. In Florida, sugar production takes place on corporate farms which are large impersonal businesses, oriented almost exclusively toward the goal of making money. In Canada, the family farm is still the backbone of agriculture and these differences in the site of day-to-day life for West Indian employees

have important implications on the relationships that are formed between employers and employees in the two countries. In the United States, the ratio of employees to employers is very high, and according to Alec Wilkenson (1989), a journalist who conducted research among cane cutters in Florida, most West Indian employees never even meet their boss, much less interact with him on a daily basis. In Ontario, the employee-employer ratio is very low. With an average of seven workers per farm, the farm family and its West Indian employees interact on a daily basis and form relationships that go beyond simply employer and employee.

Canadian Similarities

At another level, the Canadian FARMS programme is similar to the other contract programmes mentioned earlier in this chapter. For instance, both FARMS and BWI employers met with opposition when they attempted to import West Indians to work in agriculture. In a study which examines the immigration policies of nine industrialized labour-importing countries, Cornelius, Martin and Hollifield (1992:3) argue that there is a growing similarity among the countries in terms of two factors that are relevant to FARMS: (1) "the policy instruments chosen for controlling immigration;" and (2) "general-public reaction to current immigrant flows and evaluations of government efforts to control immigration".⁵ Although Canada is reported by

Cornelius et al to fare better than the other eight countries on both points, it still shares the common goal of controlling who may enter the country, how long individuals may stay, and what temporary workers do while they are within its borders. The fact that Canada's labour importing programme uses a contract to ensure that temporary West Indian migrants do not become permanent immigrants suggests that Canadians have some concerns about the size of ethnic or racial minorities within the country. Cornelius, Martin and Hollifield (1992:5) contend that in all nine countries foreign workers are increasingly becoming "unwanted as a permanent component of the population, often for noneconomic reasons (e.g., low tolerance for cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity; fear of crime; over-crowding in major urban areas)." West Indian experiences of racism in Europe have been well documented.⁶ In this, Canada has yet to prove whether it can establish a better record than the rest.

ENDNOTES

1. Rosemarie Rogers (1992:33), quoting a draft prepared for the World Bank based on a 1987 publication, estimates that "conservatively some 80 million persons are currently resident outside their nations of citizenship", and Nasra Shah (1994:3) estimates the figure in 1992 to be about 100 million, of which 70 million are labour migrants. Martin (1992:162) estimates that in 1990, 25 to 30 million migrant workers sent home at least \$67 billion in remittances.
2. I consulted two other studies. The first, an unpublished MJ thesis (journalism) by Edward Alexander (1985) contains interesting and informative materials on the FARMS programme. The second, a paper by Irving Andre was less helpful.
3. In 1990, 7,000 West Indians arrived in Britain and 4,000 left; in 1991, 3,000 arrived and 2,000 left; in 1992 and 1993 2,000 West Indians arrived each year and 3,000 left (Europa 1995).
4. According to Dirks (1995:12), "Since Confederation, constitutional responsibility for immigration has been divided between the federal and provincial levels of government... In practice, however, for much of Canada's history the federal government dominated this policy area with only occasional objections from provincial authorities."
5. These include the United States, Canada, Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Spain, and Japan.
6. See, for instance, Brock 1986; Cross 1986; Cross and Entzinger 1988; Castles, Booth & Wallace 1984; Castles and Miller 1993; Davison 1966; Gilroy 1987; Gilroy & Lawrence 1988; Gmelch 1992; Layton-Henry 1992; Midgett 1975; Miles 1982, 1992; Rex & Tomlinson 1979.

CHAPTER FIVE

LABOUR MIGRATION IN ONTARIO: ON THE FARM AND IN TOWN

Far from being shadowy figures in the background of temporary international labour migration, Ontario growers, as employers, fought for twenty years to be able to import West Indians to work on Canadian farms. These farmers do more than simply employ "off-shore workers".¹ Because the growers are required to provide housing for their imported employees on the "family farms," they and their families must live in close contact with West Indians for the duration of the contract.

People in the towns and villages of rural Ontario also come into contact with the West Indian FARMS employees. Every Friday night, the workers leave the farms and come into Simcoe to shop for weekly supplies and for goods to take home. Other days of the week, especially at the beginning and the end of the season, a much smaller number of West Indians on nearby farms come into town when they are finished working for the day. The ways in which residents in rural towns, such as Simcoe, welcome or ignore the FARMS employees plays a significant part in how the West Indian

"guests" experience Canada.

In this chapter I will describe the FARMS programme from two vantage points in Ontario: those of Ontario employers, and those of residents in Simcoe. In the first part, I will review the history of FARMS and present my understanding of what growers told me about the programme. The chapter is based on the following: information gathered from the Simcoe Reformer; records from the Department of Labour in St Lucia; and interviews conducted between 1988 and 1995 with 36 growers in Ontario who employ West Indian farm workers from Antigua, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and Trinidad and Tobago.² Although the employment histories for Ontario growers were constructed only for growers who employed St Lucians, the issues presented below involve all West Indian employers in Ontario. Throughout the chapter, I use direct quotes taken from interviews with Ontario growers during fieldwork.

In the second part of the chapter I will move from the farms into the town of Simcoe and present my interpretation of what residents told me about FARMS workers. I will combine what I believe to be residents' views with my own experience of shopping in Simcoe. This part of the chapter is based on a review of literature and on interviews I conducted with residents in Simcoe. The literature consists of the history of African American migrants and refugees in

Simcoe and their relationship with residents. I use the research on racism in Canada to interpret what I experienced during my fieldwork in Simcoe. This fieldwork included informal interviews I conducted between June and October of 1992, with 38 residents of Simcoe, ten men and women who have businesses that are frequented by St Lucians, two representatives of a local church, and one police officer.

In the last chapter I discussed how the FARMS programme was created by Ontario growers against opposition from the Canadian federal government. In the first part of this chapter, I will begin quite literally at the beginning of the programme with a description of its first years and of the transitional problems that accompanied its inauguration. When the FARMS programme started in 1966, the West Indian men were imported into an agricultural labour sector in Ontario that included three kinds of workers: those imported from outside Canada; transient farm workers from other parts of Canada including the Maritimes, Quebec, northern Ontario and Indian reserves; and local people including housewives, students, and unemployed persons who needed a temporary job.

THE CANADIAN FARM LABOUR PROGRAMME

During 1966, the first year of the Canadian Farm Labour Programme, Ontario growers imported 264 Jamaican workers for a maximum of four months to harvest fruits and vegetables,

but the huge tobacco industry in southwest Ontario, which estimated its labour needs at 50,000 seasonal workers, was left out. The allotted acreage, set by the Tobacco Board, in 1966 was 128,000, estimated to produce between 210 and 230 pounds of tobacco, and Great Britain had just signed a contract to purchase 55 million pounds of the Canadian crop.

As always, the beginning of a new season was fraught with uncertainty. Acreage allotments were a matter of balance: too little tobacco would mean that domestic use and export commitments might not be filled; too much would mean that the price would fall and growers would lose profits. Weather was another gamble: just enough sun and just enough rain would mean success; too much rain or hail that ripped leaves and often destroyed an entire crop could mean the end of a grower's career. The biggest fear of all was that there would not be enough labour to harvest the crop. The Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church and the Delhi Belgium Club promoted the temporary services of 300 students. In addition, 2,000 workers were to come from the United States for the harvest. Locally, housewives and high school students were recruited to help and Simcoe and Delhi students were given an exemption from attending classes for up to ten days in September. Open camps for transient farm workers at Delhi and Langton expected 2,300 men who would be fed three meals a day and housed in tents during the period of time between their arrival and the beginning of harvest.

These camps were operated by the Ontario Tobacco Workers Committee and financed by Norfolk municipalities, provincial and federal grants and the Ontario Flue-Cured Tobacco Growers Marketing Board.

On August 4, 1966, something of an insurrection broke out at the camp, and one of the local newspapers, The Simcoe Reformer, featured the event for several days. About 200 workers staged a demonstration demanding tent warmers and hot meals three times a day. Residents in the region were unhappy about the presence of so many "foreign" men who were not yet employed and had no money until their jobs began, and the demonstration fuelled the local fears that the "drifters" were dangerous to the surrounding communities. That year, the local high schools excused students from classes until September 16, but there were conflicting opinions about the advisability of continuing this practice. The Simcoe Reformer reported on September 13, 1966 that two-thirds of all high school drop-outs worked in tobacco. Tobacco growers managed to survive the 1966 season in good shape, and the average gross earnings per grower amounted to \$1,303 an acre (The Simcoe Reformer March 27, 1967).

In 1967, the Canadian Farm Labour Programme added Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago to the off-shore labour scheme, and 1,077 Caribbean workers were employed for the season. Tobacco growers still imported 1,500 students from England, Austria, Germany, Belgium and France, but the

Tobacco Board announced it would no longer advance bus fare for workers from the southern United States. The 1966 demonstration proved to be the end of transient worker camps. In 1967, the Tobacco Board tried to build a permanent labour camp in Courtland, which they assured residents in nearby communities would "be completely sealed off from the surrounding town by a fence, with just one opening onto Highway 59". The Board also guaranteed that "police from the Simcoe OPP would be at the site 'all the time, day and night'." In protest against the proposed camp, 225 of Courtland's 436 residents signed a petition. Courtland, itself, had no police force and a statement by an area official summarized the feeling of the community: "Our children wouldn't be safe in the streets" (The Simcoe Reformer July 6, 1967). There were no transient labour camps in 1967 and the headlines in the Simcoe newspaper on July 14 read "MEMO TO TRANSIENTS: COME WHEN CALLED". Growers had to accept workers when they arrived, regardless of when they would actually start to work.

The Canadian Manpower Service announced in August, 1967 that the plan of putting responsibility for transients directly on farmers was working well: "petty crime has been cut" and there were "fewer cases of people here early and finding themselves broke and hungry" (The Simcoe Reformer August 9, 1967). The Delhi police, however, reported transient workers stealing meat from a grocery store and

siphoning gas from a truck (The Simcoe Reformer August 8, 1967). Despite the problems with transients, Ontario growers were slow to change from employing transients to importing West Indians. The Simcoe Reformer reported on November 3, 1967 that: "a lot of farmers didn't bother applying for Caribbean workers because there was a lot more red tape required to get them than in the case of European students". That year, a total of 1,180 students from France, Belgium, Austria and West Germany were brought in for harvest as well as 1,100 from the southern United States.

In 1968, the total number of Caribbean workers (1,158) was greater than the number of European students (789) or workers from the southern United States (500) brought in for harvest, but troubles with transient workers did not go away. In The Simcoe Reformer (October 29, 1969), Police Chief David Freeman said trouble with the transients started in June:

at that time about 100 transients came to Simcoe and they had very little or no money....They resided in box cars for a month and then another type came into town. This type was more militant. We were feeding about an average of 100 or more a day at the Salvation Army. They had no respect for other's property...there was looting and petty thefts...The unfortunate part is we need these people. Farmers need them.

In the same issue of the Simcoe paper, Delhi police chief Carl Johnson reported "his department picked up an average of 16 to 20 a week for stealing." Still, the number of

Caribbean workers was only 1,449 for the 1969 season.

By 1973, the number of Caribbean workers in Ontario had risen to 3,048 and in 1974 it reached 5,297. Once the FARMS programme was firmly established, the Caribbean employees replaced the majority of transient farm workers, and according to a spokesman from the Simcoe police department, the result is a big improvement. In his words, there are "very few problems with the Caribbean workers and they are, in fact, good for the community."

ONTARIO EMPLOYERS

A total of 68 growers have provided 1333 jobs for St Lucians in the last fourteen years, not counting transfers from initial contracts to subsequent ones which involve apple harvest. Table 5.1 shows the number of years these growers have participated in the FARMS Programme.

Table 5.1
NUMBER OF YEARS GROWERS HAVE PARTICIPATED
IN FARMS

Years	Number	Years	Number
14	2	6	5
13	3	5	2
12	2	4	8
11	2	3	11
10	2	2	11
9	3	1	16
7	1		

Source: Department of Labour, St Lucia;
Fieldwork 1993

Slightly more than sixteen per cent have taken part in the programme for ten to fourteen years; another sixteen per

cent have employed St Lucian workers for five to nine years; and 67.6 per cent for one to four years. Three of those who have participated in FARMS for only one year began in 1992 and three others were apple growers who normally transfer employees from tobacco growers, but decided to hire one or two men for the whole season.

Growers who employ West Indian workers say they do so because they are not able to find "reliable" labour in Canada. As one grower described the labour problem: "...if you go into the work force, like Canada Unemployment ...you get the riff-raff that wanna' put in their six weeks, collect pogy and then they're gone..." Many of the farmers I interviewed remember the problems they had when the government was bringing farm labour into Ontario from outside the province. One grower summarized his experience with help imported from Newfoundland in the following way:

A Newfoundlander, he can leave tomorrow on ya, then what are you goin' to do? Then You gotta wait for the government to bring in more. Well this was a hit -and-miss program....the Newfoundlanders...most of them were fishermen...and they knew damn well they could work a couple weeks and then go back....So they played the game like that. Couldn't depend on em. When you got a crop out there, you gotta have people there. It's all over within 8 weeks or 6 weeks, whatever the weather conditions, and then you close the door. But they don't understand it up in Ottawa.

Farmers in Ontario are used to working with foreign employees. One grower estimated that:

95 per cent of all the apples in Norfolk county are harvested by people from outside Canada.

Basically what's going on in this county is apples in the trees are being harvested by people from the foreign worker program and grounder apples are picked up by the Mexican Mennonites.

West Indian workers provide an excellent solution to labour problems, as another grower explained:

They're there every day and the kind a people you can trust. You can send them out to do the job you wanted to get done and you can always go and do whatever else you have to do...

There is general agreement among farmers I interviewed that West Indians are a "reliable" source of labour. Growers consistently reported that having these West Indian workers is the only way they can stay in business. Statements such as: "I couldn't do without 'em." "I wouldn't wanna farm without 'em...", and "We would be out of business, absolutely!" were repeated frequently throughout each interview.

The "reliability" of West Indians is further enhanced by the return of trained workers. Growers say that one of the biggest costs of labour is losing trained employees. The process of training takes time and workers who are in training are not yet performing up to their potential abilities. Therefore, the FARMS policy of naming return workers cuts labour costs and helps growers maintain an efficient, well-trained work force.

Table 5.2 presents a summary of the employment histories of growers who have employed St Lucians through the FARMS Programme for at least four years. The data in

this table include the number of years an employer has imported labour from St Lucia, the total number of St Lucians who have worked on that farm during those years, and the number of workers who were employed at least two years on the farm as a percentage of the total number of workers.

Table 5.2
EMPLOYMENT HISTORIES OF 29 GROWERS PARTICIPATING IN FARMS

Growers	Years in FARMS	Total Employed	Total Jobs	Longest Employment	Returned Workers	
					#	(%)
Farmer A	14	17	53	1 = 11	11	(64.7)
Farmer B	14	34	93	1 = 13	20	(58.8)
Farmer C	13	20	71	1 = 13	12	(60.0)
Farmer D	13	30	83	1 = 9	16	(53.3)
Farmer E	13	32	63	2 = 9	11	(34.4)
Farmer F	12	10	24	1 = 9	4	(40.0)
Farmer G	12	61	102	2 = 9	19	(31.1)
Farmer H	11	27	53	1 = 6	13	(48.1)
Farmer I	11	51	119	2 = 8	23	(45.1)
Farmer J	10	7	18	1 = 5	5	(71.4)
Farmer K	10	7	12	1 = 6	1	(14.3)
Farmer L	9	16	33	1 = 5	9	(56.3)
Farmer M	9	2	15	1 = 9	2	(100)
Farmer N	9	20	45	2 = 5	11	(55.0)
Farmer O	7	9	20	1 = 6	7	(77.8)
Farmer P	6	6	16	1 = 5	4	(66.7)
Farmer Q	6	15	25	2 = 4	4	(26.7)
Farmer R	6	7	19	1 = 5	4	(57.1)
Farmer S	6	7	11	1 = 4	2	(28.6)
Farmer T	5	25	66	6 = 5	14	(56.0)
Farmer U	5	14	28	1 = 5	5	(35.7)
Farmer V	4	22	39	6 = 3	11	(50.0)
Farmer W	4	3	8	1 = 4	2	(66.7)
Farmer X	4	5	20	5 = 4	5	(100)
Farmer Y	4	12	32	4 = 4	11	(91.7)
Farmer Z	4	6	7	1 = 2	1	(16.7)
Farmer AA	4	1	4	1 = 4	1	(100)
Farmer BB	4	14	25	1 = 4	6	(42.9)
Farmer CC	4	3	6	1 = 4	1	(33.3)

Source: Department of Labour, St Lucia; Fieldwork 1993.

The summary shows that 17 out of 29 growers (59 per cent) have a history of employing returned workers at least half of the time. The overall average of returned workers is 54.6 per cent, and the range, of 14.3 to 100 per cent, shows a significant amount of variability. Given the value of trained employees, one would expect to find a much higher percentage of returned workers and much less variability. Both the percentages of returned workers and the variability in the employer work histories are affected by employees who do not finish their contract, as well as by two beliefs expressed by growers that directly oppose the value of returning workers. FARMS defines four kinds of unfinished contracts. The first, called "Breach of Contract" includes all employees who refuse to finish the season and are repatriated. The second, called "Domestic" includes workers who must return home due to family problems. The third type of unfinished contract, called "Medical" concerns workers who become ill and must return home. In all of these cases, the cost of the worker's flight home is always higher than the average because no prior arrangements have been made, and it is deducted from his mandatory savings that are held by FARMS. The fourth type of unfinished contract is called "AWOL" and refers to workers who do not return home. In some AWOL cases, workers do finish their jobs, but do not collect the balance of their mandatory saving at home. Between 1979 and 1992, 31 men have been repatriated for

Breach of Contract, 6 have returned home early due to Domestic problems, and 2 have remained in Canada illegally.

Two other beliefs that growers expressed directly oppose the value of returning trained workers. These beliefs extend the benefits of "reliability" beyond the individual worker to include the entire West Indian work force. The first belief is that after a few years, West Indian employees become "Canadianized." This means that as the West Indian men grow more accustomed to working in Canada, they begin to expect the same benefits that Canadians have, particularly time off for relaxing and socializing with Canadians friends they have made. Once West Indians make friends with Canadians, growers who expressed this belief said workers become less "reliable" because they are more interested in socializing than in working. For this reason, these growers say it is better, in terms of work efficiency, to change workers every few years. The second belief is that the West Indies is a site of an unlimited supply of labour. This means that a grower does not have to worry about putting up with an employee who may not work up to the standards of the grower. Even if the problem is not serious, workers can always be sent home and new ones imported. FARMS guarantees the replacement of unnamed workers, at no cost to the grower, for a period of fourteen days after employment begins. After fourteen days, the grower must pay transportation costs if a worker is

repatriated. All three values held by farmers, together with unfinished contracts, contribute to the employment histories of Ontario growers who employ St Lucians, and they account for the variability noted in table 5.2. A more detailed discussion of several work histories may help to clarify this point.

Two growers have return rates of less than 20 per cent. The first, Farmer K imported a total of seven St Lucians between 1983 and 1992. For six years, this grower requested the return of the same man. In 1988, this St Lucian met and married a Canadian woman, emigrated to Canada and left farm work. The following year, 1989, Farmer K hired a St Lucian who did not finish his contract and was sent home for breach of contract. A new worker was sent to replace him. In 1990 and 1991, Farmer K hired new men, who finished their contracts, but did not return the following season. In 1992, Farmer K imported two St Lucians, both of whom did not complete their contracts because of domestic reasons. The example of Farmer K suggests that individual long-lasting relationships may develop between employers and employees, even though employers are not satisfied with the majority of their workers. The second grower who returned less than 20 per cent of his work force is Farmer Z. This grower began the programme in 1980. He employed the same St Lucian man for two years, then he stopped importing St Lucians until 1991 when he hired three men. In 1992, he employed two new

men, both of whom finished their contracts.

Two other growers have return rates less than 30 per cent. Farmer Q employed four St Lucian men for the first time in 1981. The following year, 1982, he imported five different men, but this time he was more satisfied and requested three of the five for three more years, 1983 to 1985, and a fourth man who changed farms after 1983, but returned in 1985. The last year he was in the Programme, 1986, Farmer Q again hired all new men.

Problems with St Lucian employees plagued Farmer S throughout his participation in FARMS. Farmer S hired two St Lucians in 1979. One did not finish his contract and was sent home early. Farmer S imported two new employees in 1980 and another two new men in 1981. One of those hired in 1981 remained with Farmer S for the next four years, and the other returned in 1982, but not in 1983. In 1984, Farmer S's last year, he hired one more new man.

One grower, Farmer G, was very unpopular with most of the men and those who had not worked for him heard about him from others. Several men who worked on farms in the same area told me that Farmer G's men would still be working in the fields hours after all the other farms had quit for the day. A tobacco grower, Farmer G participated in FARMS for eleven years. Although he employed one man for nine years and another for eight years, by far the majority of his employees only lasted one year. These figures show a

definite dissatisfaction on the part of both employer and employees. It is difficult to sort out how many men refused to return to the farm and how many Farmer G refused to request. I talked with five St Lucians who said they would never go back to that farm. On the other hand I also talked with three St Lucians who wanted to go back but were not requested. In 1989, eight employees refused to finish the season and were repatriated under Breach of Contract. In 1990, Farmer G employed only four men, in 1991 he employed only two, and in 1992, he decided to import Mexicans instead of St Lucians.

There is also evidence of long-term commitment and job satisfaction on the parts of both employers and employees in the records of grower participation in the FARMS Programme. Farmer X, a tobacco grower, has employed the same team of five men for the duration of her participation in the Programme. Farmer M has employed the same man for nine years. Six years ago, this farmer hired the wife of his employee and the couple are the only husband and wife team in the Programme. The employee, who has worked in Canada for fourteen years, was also employed by Farmer AA for four years. Farmer T, a tobacco grower who regularly imports fourteen St Lucian workers each season, has employed the same six men for the entire five years he has participated in the Programme and he has employed a further four men for four years. I was told by two of his employees that he is

considered to be one of the best employers in Ontario.

Farmer O shows a trend that applies to many other growers who import West Indian employees to work on their farms. These growers have one employee who stays with them throughout most or all of their participation in the Programme. Farmer O had one St Lucian man who worked for him six of the seven years. Despite the fact that Farmer O employed only two men for just one year, none of his other employees worked on his farm for more than two years.

Farmer Y has a core of four men who have worked for him during the four years he has participated in FARMS. He began in 1989 with eight St Lucian men and requested seven of those eight to return in 1990, along with one new man. In 1991, he requested four of his original workers plus four new men. In 1992, he requested the return of everyone from the previous season.

Over the years, many growers and West Indian workers have become good friends and a relationship of mutual respect continues to exist between these employers and employees. Farmer C has grown to depend on the same man for the entire thirteen years of his participation in the Programme, and Farmer B has employed the same man for thirteen of the fourteen years he has been importing workers from St Lucia.

The employment histories of growers who import workers from St Lucia indicate that employer-employee relationships

vary significantly among individuals. Three Ontario growers have always requested the same St Lucian employees, and one employer has requested the return of eleven out of twelve employees. All 29 growers summarized in table 5.2 have requested the return of at least one St Lucian employee throughout their histories as employers. These instances of long-lasting employer-employee relationships are based on mutual trust and respect. Although Farmer G epitomizes the view of the West Indies as an unlimited supply of labour by employing the record number of 42 St Lucians for only one year each, even this grower has returned two St Lucians for nine years and another for five years.

TAKING CARE OF THEIR "BOYS"

All growers who employ Caribbean workers must accept some responsibility for their employees, and the notion of responsibility was interpreted differently by individual growers. Housing and transportation must be provided by all employers, but some of the farmers extend their idea of "responsibility" for their workers to include establishing curfews and discouraging all social interaction with women in Canada. The wife of one tobacco grower talked about her "moral duty" to establish rules for the married St Lucian men employed on her farm because she knew they had families to support at home.

The topic of social and sexual interaction between West

Indian men and Canadian women (provided these women did not have West Indian ancestry) was an emotionally charged issue with many Ontario employers, but it was also contradictory. Part of what made the issue contradictory was the way in which employers who discouraged male-female interaction prefaced their opinions with a statement disclaiming "prejudice" or "racism". Even though the presence of West Indian men in rural Ontario is generally known to be "temporary," these growers say that when the West Indian workers begin socializing with Canadian women, it means that the men are trying to stay in Canada permanently. Most of the farmers who claimed to be free of "prejudice," strongly disapproved of any intimate socializing between West Indian men and Canadian women. They described this as "the biggest problem" with the program, and they forbid women to visit workers in the bunkhouse.

The farmers typically gave reasons other than racial "prejudice" for discouraging social or sexual relationships between the West Indian men and Canadian women, and these reasons usually concerned the interference the relationships would have on farm work performance:

Oh I think it causes trouble...with your work force...if they get really involved.... With this kind a business, you have to work on the weekends once we start harvesting, and then you get into that old Canadian custom where nobody's gonna work on weekends.... They don't wanna work Saturdays or Sundays, if they don't have to. So these women are free and the guys get feelin', well, they should be able to take these girls out on the weekend.... So the women do add a problem....

Many farmers monitored and enforced a rule that forbid women in the bunkhouse. One grower told me he dealt with the "problem" in the following way:

When they first come up, we kind a read 'em the riot act.... 'Don't bring anybody up in here. Nobody else is allowed to stay in that place. You alone!' I remember this one guy...I pounded on the door and I told him if she wasn't out a here in ten minutes, I'd drag her out down the road.

When the West Indian men did become sexually involved with white Canadian women,³ growers who considered this to be a "problem" typically saw the relationship as one in which the West Indian men were "used" by the women for money. In this scenario, growers described the women as "prostitutes" or as very "ugly." In the words of one grower: "these women can't get a Canadian man, so they take up with these guys." When the West Indian men married Canadian women, the farmers usually saw the marriage as an example of white Canadian women being "used" by West Indians to gain permanent admission to Canada:

I've noticed now that increasing numbers are getting married...and I kept track of two of the situations on my particular farm...and the marriages very quickly broke up. Matter of fact, when the guy came around, he was talking to some of my other employees who later spoke to me, and they said that...the guy was joking that it was a farce, that he had married to get dual citizenship, which I'm sure is the case.⁴

One farmer even talked of an arrangement between two West Indian men and Canadian "prostitutes" in which the women exchanged holiday accommodations for marrying these men.⁵

There are, however, exceptions among farmers who

employed St Lucian men. One tobacco grower who is particularly fond of his St Lucian workers told his employees "Be a man at night (party all you want) but be a man the next day (you still have to put in a full day's work)." Another grower, who currently employs three St Lucians from the end of May until the end of October encourages his employees to socialize with Canadians because he believes they will feel more at home if they have Canadian friends, regardless of whether these friends are men or women. No one works on Sundays on this particular farm and when I visited, I found that the neighbours knew the St Lucian men almost as well as the grower who employs them. One neighbouring family often includes the three West Indian men in social outings. Members of the Canadian family are familiar with the families of the St Lucian men and refer to them by name during conversations about current news from home.

Growers who employ West Indian men also reported that, in isolated cases, people in the surrounding communities object to having Caribbean workers in their area. One grower talked about receiving racist calls asking him "What are you doing with you niggers today?" Another told of an incident in which some Canadian men drove by some West Indian men working in a field, stopped the car, got out and threatened to beat the Caribbean men if they did not go home and stop taking jobs away from Canadians. One of the

growers I talked with was sensitive to the "racial" problems faced by Caribbean men in rural Ontario, and he described the following situation in which he defended his men against white Canadians:

...like when they sit down in a night club or somethin', they feel very uneasy, and there always seems to be a few girls around that like to pick on em', they'll ask one to dance or somethin', and...they're actually cruel to 'em.... I had a few words with a few of 'em....

When this grower socializes with his employees in public, he tends to be selective about where he takes them.

The day-to-day business of running a farm and coping with what one grower called the "over-friendliness" of his West Indian employees was also described as a problem. All of the growers interviewed felt that it was important to maintain a well-defined employer-employee relationship with the West Indian men. This relationship often meant that farmers actively refrained from becoming "too friendly" with their temporary off-shore employees in order to avoid problems:

Oh yeah, we've had problems. Maybe some a the problems are why we don't socialize a whole lot.... You have to kind a keep things on a business relationship and it's sort a easy to get yourself into a situation where maybe you can be manipulated or somethin' like that....

In other words, the growers rarely spent time in the bunkhouse socializing with the West Indian workers, and in no instance did a growers' family and the workers eat their evening meal together for more than one or two special

occasions during the season.

In direct contradiction to the carefully maintained distance within the employer-employee relationship, growers often reported instances of closeness with their West Indian employees. At least three growers in Ontario who employ St Lucians have visited St Lucia during their holidays and contacted their employees while they were there. A few of the growers described their West Indian employees as almost part of their family, as in the following example:

It's just almost like a family after awhile
...especially if they're...good honest working
people.... They'll go home...we kind a feel sorry
they're going away.... Sometimes we write, they
write letters back and forth. They send us
Christmas cards. We do the same thing....

Others described them as good friends:

We're good friends.... They're not scared a me and
I'm not scared a them.... I don't yell at 'em....
The relationship we have on this farm is good....

The closest relationships between growers and West Indian employees involved the sons of farmers who had grown up with West Indian workers. One farmer talked about the friendship that had developed between his sons and West Indian men over the years:

They were the ones that, once they got their
licence, would take them to town shopping and get
their groceries. And ...some a them would go and
they would have supper together. That was their
night out, and then they would meet at a certain
place and then come back. They did a lot a
things. They would go in my son's house with his
new wife and they would watch TV, which they had a
TV of their own....

And this was also true of daughters:

I had three daughters that grew up with 'em...and when the fellahs first started comin' here, some a my daughters were in their early twentys and late teens...and they were good lookin' girls...but I never had any problem...and my daughters all worked on the farm when they were young...and they're still very good friends with the fellahs....

Growers distinguish between a "good" worker, one they would request to return, and a "bad" worker, one they would not request and might even send home before the season is finished. The good worker wants to put in as many hours and make as much money as possible while he is in Canada. Time-off means less money, and so "good workers" will do any kind of work a grower requests and will take fewer breaks. This same standard of "good" work is used to determine what constitutes a "bad" worker, and when several other traits are added they show that the standard includes more than simply working hard:

Then you've got a few that are out here for a good time. They don't save any money and they don't have any money when they go home, and they're never gonna have any money. But chances are they won't be back here because they probably would have done enough things that aggravated us during the course of the season.... Like they're out drinkin' and have people around and one thing and another.... And if they're doin' a lot a socializin', then almost for sure there's a certain amount of drugs involved in what's goin' on. And as a rule, like no drugs on the farm...and I mean we don't just go kind a around lookin' for trouble or anything like that, but...you know that there are certain guys that are smokin' marijuana and stuff like this.... We don't say anything, but we know who.... You have to...tend to weed people.... They might be a good worker, but maybe they're just too much of a good-time guy. They set a bad example.

Evaluations of workers as "good" or "bad" in growers' descriptions are directly related to the assumptions many growers have about the West Indies. One farmer, who had never been to St Lucia described its people as backward and poor:

This island is one a the poor islands down there and they have their hands full ridin' a bicycle. But they're all right, they have the little primin' machines and they can handle them all right, like ya start 'em for 'em...and if they did get run over, it wouldn't hurt 'em.... Mechanically ...everything down there's manual labour....

Another grower explained that West Indian men are better workers because their life at home is much harder and they would not survive if they did not learn how to work hard:

If they don't come up here and work, they...don't eat.... They're not afraid to bend over...and get calluses on their hands.... They know what it's like to...work long hours and build their own house out of nothing.... If you can give them a good environment to work in, where they're not...risking their self, like they're not going to get hurt, the guy'll put out a hundred and ten per cent for ya everyday....

The West Indian workers, then, play conflicting roles in the Ontario farmer's accounts of the benefits and problems of the FARMS Programme. As "reliable" employees, these workers are the farmers' solution to the labour problems which threaten to destroy family farming in Ontario. As "foreign black" men who become involved with "white Canadian" women, the West Indian men are said to be the cause of major problems by some growers.

Growers use the standards of their definition of a

"good worker" to decide which employees should return the following year. These standards contain an underlying assumption that the only reason "responsible" West Indians would come to Canada is to make money and better themselves financially, and so a "good worker" is the one who remains committed to that goal. Given this apriori assumption, growers often define the "bad worker" as the one who wants time-off, spends money on socializing, and creates the possibility that he might be too tired to work the next day. There is, however, a wide range in the application of these "good" and "bad" labels among the farmers who were interviewed. A few of the farmers actually encourage their employees to socialize during free time, as long as these men are able to work when they are needed.

THE CARIBBEAN PRESENCE IN RURAL ONTARIO

All West Indian workers leave the farms and go into nearby towns at least one night a week. When they do, they constitute a collective visible Caribbean presence in the rural communities. The FARMS programme is structured to 'control' this Caribbean presence; employees are not to leave the farms on which they are employed without the permission of their employers.⁶ Furthermore, the Caribbean men are not immigrants who will settle in and around the rural villages and towns. They are instead temporary labour migrants who will 'do their job' and then go home.

For the rest of this chapter, I will explore the reactions of Canadians in Simcoe, Ontario to the presence of West Indian FARMS employees in their area. I will also discuss issues of racism and labour migration in both an historical and a contemporary setting, as these issues apply to the rural community of Simcoe, and I will compare my findings in Simcoe with some of the academic literature on racism in the rest of Canada. One of the main questions I will attempt to answer is whether or not the FARMS programme is based on a racist premise, in other words, does the FARMS contract place immigration restrictions on Caribbean labour migrants because these men are defined as phenotypically "black," or do the restrictions reflect concerns within Canadian immigration policy which are more economic or political in nature?

From their first experience with a group of Jamaican Maroons who were sent to Nova Scotia in 1796,⁷ Canadians have expressed mixed feelings about the presence of West Indians in Canada.⁸ Even though West Indian workers represent the only current solution to labour problems in the agricultural sector, it is common among Ontario growers to restrict their West Indian employees to the farms. In other words, while growers acknowledge the economic value of the Caribbean men, few are willing to adopt a similar stand in reference to the social value of adding West Indians permanently to the Canadian population.

The town of Simcoe has a population of 15,539. Located inland from the shores of Lake Erie, midway between Hamilton and London, Simcoe is situated in the heart of some of the best agricultural land in Canada. As an agricultural district, it became the destination of immigrants who were solicited as settlers because of their abilities to farm. The area around Simcoe has also been the destination of transient farm workers from other parts of Canada and of temporary migrants from the United States and Europe. The West Indian FARMS employees are the latest addition to this long history of importing labour during the growing season in rural Ontario.

There is another long history in Simcoe which is seldom featured in accounts of how Ontario was "settled" by British Loyalists after the American Revolution, and by white European farmers throughout the years of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. This is the history of people with African ancestry who came to Simcoe from the United States and lived and worked in the town for over a century.

BLACKS IN SIMCOE

The West Indian FARMS employees are not the first people of African ancestry to live in and around the town of Simcoe. In his history of Simcoe, David Judd points out that "Black people were among the first residents of the settlement even before it was called Simcoe." There is also

a possibility that slavery was part of the town's early history. David Judd (1985:48) writes:

Local historians have for years sought information regarding Simcoe's early black residents, reluctant to suggest without solid evidence that these persons might have been slaves. Recently an article written by Henry Johnson and published in the Simcoe Reformer has come to light....This article quotes a prominent Toronto lawyer, Charles Durand, son of James Durand, who...recalled that his father possessed a black woman, an apprenticed slave, who cared for the children.⁹

Aaron Culver, one of the earliest founders of Simcoe, had an unrecorded number of black persons living and working on his farm. The corner of Culver's property where these "servants" and "apprenticed slaves" lived was called "Buttermilk Hill" (Ibid).

The official Census of Simcoe shown in table 5.3, fails to acknowledge the black population until 1871, and it records 106 as the highest number of black residents.

Table 5.3
POPULATION OF SIMCOE, 1861-1921

Year	Total Population	Black/African
1861	1,858	0
1871	1,856	93
1881	2,645	106
1901	2,627	15
1911	3,227	5
1921	3,953	5

Source: Judd 1985:46.

According to Judd, these population figures are "appallingly inaccurate," and he argues further that in addition to being among the earliest residents of the town, these black

settlers "remained for over a century and their number well exceeded the recorded 106." Judd's explanation for the errors in the census is that "the white enumerators either had not considered black residents to be a part of the community, or had not cared to venture into the black sector of town" (Ibid:48). In either case, the black pioneers of Simcoe became invisible in the official accounts of the town's history regardless of whether these people were free settlers, semi-slaves or actual slaves.

There was a legal basis for slavery in Ontario's history. Loyalists who fled to Canada after the American Revolution settled in Upper Canada, and the Imperial Act of 1790 allowed all prospective settlers to bring "negroes, household furniture, utensils or husbandry or clothing" with them (Silverman 1985:4). In addition to slaves who were included among the possessions of Loyalist immigrants, free blacks emigrated to Canada during the first half of the nineteenth century to avoid escalating racial violence in the northern United States (Ibid:53).¹⁰

The community at Buttermilk Hill eventually outgrew the Culver farm and moved to the southern part of town, between Head and Metcalfe streets, where more black emigrants from the United States joined them. By the 1850's, Judd estimates the black population in Simcoe to be about 300. Some of these migrants may have come through the underground Railroad, but Judd suggests they were more likely to have

been free-coloured travellers migrating north because they were "attracted by the professed attitudes of white Canadians" who were generally opposed to the practice of slavery (1985:48). This was probably a reasonable assumption on the part of these migrants because the Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, John Graves Simcoe, for whom the town was named, had taken a stand against slavery, and persuaded the British Cabinet to abolish it in 1793 (Judd 1985; Silverman 1985; Winks 1971).¹¹ Judd, Silverman and Winks all argue, however, that it was more a matter of dislike for Americans than positive attitudes toward people of African descent that motivated Canada's position on issues of slavery, particularly as "anti-American" prejudice in Simcoe was so strong that "American maps were not allowed in the classrooms of the schools" (Judd 1985:48).

The immediate hostilities between Canadians and Americans during the first half of the nineteenth century directly involved black immigrants and refugees. Known as "Yankee Sneaks" in Simcoe, Americans came into the area to retrieve "run away slaves" and often kidnapped members of the town's black population regardless of whether these people had been slaves or free before they migrated. As Judd explains:

These raiders could not openly take black fugitives back to the United States. They did, however, lure their prey to the Life Henry Tavern ... There they 'treated' their quarry to too much

liquor, carted them to Port Dover, and shipped them to the States (Ibid:49).

When this happened, whites in Simcoe came boldly to the rescue of the black victims, but when blacks were not under attack by Americans, they were segregated in their own part of the village. They were neither allowed to worship with the rest of the townspeople nor attend 'public school'. As a result, the black American immigrants built their own place of worship and their church was the first in Simcoe.

Black children would have to wait for fifty years after the first "public" school was built in Simcoe to attend, and again it would have to be a school of their own (Judd 1985:49). The Separate School Act of 1850 stipulated that if five or more black families resided in an area they could petition their local council to establish a separate school for them. When eleven black families in Simcoe submitted their petition to the Municipal Council, it was ignored. The petitioners then contacted Edgerton Ryerson and either he, or someone else equally as powerful, intervened on their behalf and the first separate school for black children in Simcoe opened in 1852 (Ibid:49-50).

With or without education, job opportunities for black residents in Simcoe were very limited. By far the majority held menial jobs. Women were employed as maids, cooks, and laundresses in the homes of white families, and men were "seldom able to rise beyond duties such as errand boy" (Judd 1985:51). The few exceptions included: Allen and Isaac

Dorsey who had been able to lease a farm from Judge Salmon; "Old Man Diggs" who was an accomplished plasterer and was responsible for creating beautiful ceilings in the homes of the wealthy; and several barbers, the most notable of whom was Harrison Hall who also transported Royal mail pouches and was known to be a poker player of great skill (Ibid).

Much like the poor white population of Simcoe in the nineteenth century, the social life of the black population was centred on their church and each year, the celebration of Emancipation Day in the British West Indies was a major event. Held on August first, this festival occasion included picnics and music and drew visitors from nearby villages and cities. Increasingly over the years, Simcoe whites took part in these celebrations and eventually began to play prominent roles (Judd 1985:51).

In 1863, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation went into effect, and when the American Civil War ended in 1865, blacks began to leave Canada in large numbers (Silverman 1985:157). From a recorded peak of 40,000 in 1859, the number of blacks in Ontario fell to fewer than 15,000 in 1871 (Ibid:159). Simcoe's black population followed the same trend, and by the first World War, only a few black people remained in the town. Although Judd does not offer a specific explanation for this exodus from Simcoe, he does speculate that some of the black migrants returned to the United States to become reunited with their families, while

others may have moved to Chatham (1985:51). Judd's main theory for why Simcoe's black community left the town is based on the overall treatment these people received from the white population:

No dramatic incident occurred which induced the blacks to leave. There appeared to be little of such bitterness and anger as would prompt the blacks to flee. One can only conjecture that it might have been, in part, an overall indifference toward black people, that caused them to recognize no ties to Simcoe, to realize that they were in no way needed as part of the community (Ibid).

It would be another one hundred years before black people would be needed in the area of Simcoe, but this time the individuals of African ancestry would be West Indians instead of Americans, they would be almost entirely males instead of families, and they would be temporary contract workers instead of settlers. They would again be treated with indifference, although this time they would be actively solicited by growers in the area and, because they were employed, they would contribute to the economic prosperity of the town's business sector.

WEST INDIANS IN SIMCOE

The fieldwork I conducted in Simcoe, Ontario spans eight years, from 1989 to 1996. I visited the area almost every week-end during the growing season for four years. In 1992, I conducted informal interviews with thirty-eight residents who were chosen randomly, using the telephone directory as a sampling frame.¹² When I returned from St

Lucia in July of 1993, I visited the town on weekends through the remainder of the season, and I have continued this practice through 1996. While the number of interviews I conducted in Simcoe is not large enough to represent the entire population, when added to the fieldwork and historic research I conducted in the town, the information gained from the interviews adds clarity to the issues I discuss in this chapter.

What follows is the result of my participant observation and my interpretation of the thirty-eight informal discussions. Ten of the Simcoe residents I interviewed live in the immediate area of the main shopping district. Two residents live close to an outlying mall which is not heavily frequented by West Indian shoppers, although some of the FARMS employees do go there. The remaining twenty-six people I talked with live in residential areas at varying degrees from the town centre. Eight of the men and six of the women I interviewed are retired, four women are full-time homemakers, and three men were unemployed at the time. Two of the men work in Brantford and one was currently employed in Hamilton. The remainder work in and around the Simcoe area.

Those residents of Simcoe who were interviewed generally tolerate the West Indian men with few complaints. They acknowledged the labour problems expressed by farmers in the area, and by far the majority (twenty-four out of

thirty-eight) claimed they really had nothing to do with the West Indian men. Overwhelmingly, people who lived only a few blocks from the core shopping area of town gave such statements as "They don't bother me" and "I hardly ever see them," even though estimates of the number of Caribbean men in Simcoe on a Friday night ran as high as 800.

At both extremes, there were area residents who were very much against the programme, and those who were especially enthusiastic about it. Two of the people I interviewed thought the programme should stop. They both admitted they simply did not like or trust black people, and they cited instances of rude behaviour and shop lifting to justify this position. One man who was very vocal about his dislike for West Indians instructed his wife to stay away from town when the "Jamaicans" were there:

I told the wife stay away from there on Friday nights, you got all week to do shoppin'. Those bastards are out to get white women and they don't care if they're married or not. They're so damn poor down there, they'd do anything to get up here. That's what they want women for. They don't care if they're fat or got three heads. They're lookin' for a free ticket. She doesn't have any business in there.

On the other hand, four individuals were very much in favour of the programme. They expressed the belief that the West Indian workers had actually saved agriculture in Ontario, or at least had slowed its demise. All four agreed with the farmers that Canadians will not work on farms any more for the wages farmers are able to pay. As one of the men told

me:

I know what it's like for farmers around here. I got a son who won't work. He took a job primin' tobacco last year and he worked only about one week. He'd sooner lay around here bored. If farmers didn't have these Jamaican guys, Canada wouldn't have any agriculture. It would all rot. These guys're good for us.

Two of the four who favoured the programme said they found the West Indian men "interesting to talk to," although no one reported having had any social interactions with the workers beyond short conversations when the men came into town to shop.

In general, Simcoe residents who were interviewed accept the presence of the black farm workers in their town on a temporary basis as a necessity, but they rarely go out of their way to mix with them socially. Still, it was not the case that residents of the area stayed away from town on those Friday nights when the workers come in to shop. In my eight seasons of wandering around the shopping district of Simcoe on Friday nights, I have always observed interactions between white Canadians and black West Indians and, until the 1995 season, there had always been a large number of local Canadians in town on those nights. I have also observed both male and female Canadians enjoying a beer in the local bars with West Indian men.

There did, however, seem to be less white shoppers in Simcoe's town centre the last two seasons I visited the area. During the summers of 1995 and 1996, the main grocery



West Indian shoppers in Simcoe on Friday night.

store was filled almost exclusively with West Indian men, although the rest of the stores in the mall where the grocery store is located did not appear to share a similar fate. At the end of the 1994 season, the liaison officer told me that residents of Simcoe had complained about the difficulty of shopping in town on Friday nights with such large crowds of West Indian men. To my knowledge, the 1994 complaint was an isolated instance, but in view of the fact that there was a visible absence of white shoppers in the

grocery store in 1995 and 1996, the complaints may represent a more general feeling that is developing in the community.

While the presence of hundreds of West Indian FARMS employees in the town centre of Simcoe on Friday nights may cause some inconvenience to residents of the area, it has positive implications for the town's business sector. Economically, the West Indian men contribute a significant amount of money to Simcoe businesses. One businessman estimates that the seasonal workers constitute over thirty per cent of his yearly sales, and three business proprietors reported that West Indian shoppers account for about 25 per cent of annual sales. All ten shop keepers I talked with said West Indians are good for business and three of these proprietors assured me that a large proportion of the money earned by these men remains in Canada. These businesses included a large grocery store, a restaurant, a camera shop, a jewelry store, a fabric shop, two hardware stores, a shoe store, a clothing store, and a general store which sold clothing, appliances, televisions, and stereos. One hardware store in particular is a favourite place to shop among the Caribbean men. The owner, a friendly man who can be seen talking to his Caribbean shoppers as though they are long-time friends extends them credit, in the form of lay-a-ways which he holds for them even if they have a bad week and cannot always pay the required weekly amounts. With only one exception, clerks I observed were quite friendly

and helpful to the Caribbean shoppers. The exception was an elderly woman who, at the time I observed the incident, had her small store filled with Caribbean men asking questions all at once. She suddenly stopped trying to answer them and announced that they were all "dirty and sneaky." She then accused them of trying to distract her so they could "steal" from her.

While Simcoe area residents generally tolerate the presence of the West Indian men on a temporary basis, one problem that kept surfacing during conversations was the occurrence of what were perceived by residents to be sexual relationships which develop between the black West Indian men and white Canadian women. There was general agreement among residents and growers that this should not happen. On the Friday nights I was in Simcoe, I always observed social interactions between Canadian women and West Indian workers, particularly in the Army and Navy building which offers West Indian music and a place for the men from all of the farms in the area to socialize every Friday night during the harvest season. I was told by six of the growers and three residents, however, that many of these are not local women, but rather "followers" from Toronto, Brantford, Hamilton, and even as far away as Windsor, who, in the words of one grower "can't get a Canadian man and come to Simcoe on Friday nights to pick these guys up."

Over the years I have spent in Simcoe, I have talked

with women who come into the Army and Navy on Friday nights. One woman who lives in Hamilton visits regularly and brings friends with her. She has been to various islands in the Caribbean for holidays every winter for the last fourteen years, and enjoys West Indian people and Caribbean music. This woman is single and has what she described as a "good job" in Hamilton. When I told her about the growers' descriptions of Canadian women who seek out West Indian men, she laughed and replied:

Yeah, I hear that every so often. It's too bad, you know; people in places like this are so prejudice. They're not like that in Hamilton or even Brantford. My sister and I go to a lot of Caribbean do's (parties), and Simcoe is really bad for that.

This woman hardly fit the growers' descriptions of "followers" who "can't get a Canadian man."

Public reaction to Canadian-Caribbean social relationships, when they involve white Canadian women and black Caribbean men, in Simcoe generally reflects that of the growers. It seems to be perceived as stepping over the boundaries of what some Canadians in Simcoe are willing to tolerate. For St Lucians, courting white Canadian women is something akin to courting disaster in southwestern Ontario. Two of the St Lucian men I talked with said they had been sent home because of relationships with Canadian women, and five others believed this to be the reason they did not receive a request to return. Only eleven of St Lucian men I talked with said they had formed social relationships with

women in Canada, other than the ones who work with them on the farms, and one man told me he had a child in Canada who was born after the 1989 season. Eight other St Lucian men said they stay away from Canadian women as part of their strategy to avoid trouble.

Avoiding trouble when they are in town is an important element of the "training" and advice seasoned men pass on to new employees. One St Lucian man told me that older workers always tell first year men to be careful and "watch yourself" in town: don't be too friendly and don't stay in one store too long. In one general store that I frequented every Friday night because it was always filled with West Indian shoppers, I overheard the manager instructing his employees to stay close to the West Indians and watch them carefully. The men were not allowed to carry packages through the store and these previous purchases had to be left in a pile just inside the entrance. This same treatment was not applied to white shoppers. I, for instance, often carried packages about the store.

RACISMS

During the 1989 season in Simcoe I began to hear rumours of white-supremacist groups in the area. None of those I interviewed in Simcoe knew anything specific about these groups, but five people had heard the rumours and one man warned me that I should be careful about associating

with the West Indian men. When I asked him what he meant, he simply replied that he knew "some people" who were very angry about how the "niggers" were taking over the town and causing "all kinds of problems." He predicted there would be "trouble" because, in his words, the people of Simcoe were "getting fed up with the way Jamaicans were so bold". This particular man assured me, however, that he was not "racist," he was only repeating what he had heard.

It was quite common for residents of Simcoe to refer to all West Indian FARMS employees as "Jamaicans".¹³ This may be because Jamaica was the first British West Indian country to send agricultural workers to Ontario, but men from other British Caribbean countries have been travelling to the Simcoe area every year for over twenty years and the stereotyping of all Caribbean farm workers as "Jamaicans" continues. This bothers St Lucians because they say they are very different from Jamaicans, and several men told me that the reason some Canadians do not appreciate them more is because Jamaicans have established a "bad reputation" for all Caribbean people in Ontario. One St Lucian man even told me that the reason he did not experience racism in Ontario was because Jamaicans had not worked in the area where he was employed, and Canadians knew he was St Lucian. When I asked this man if he was "racist" toward Jamaicans, he replied "No, because they black like me."

Issues of racism are difficult to define and the study

of racism in Canada includes a wide variety of approaches. Stanley Barrett (1987, 1991) looks at how racism works in white supremacist groups in Canada. Frances Henry (1994) studies the effects of discrimination on West Indians living in Toronto. McKague (1991) edits a volume that includes the experiences of racism by black Canadians, Chinese Canadians, Native people, and Jewish Canadians. Anthony Richmond (1994) approaches racism at the global level and describes the policies instituted by Canada, the United States and wealthy white countries of Europe against refugees and migrant workers as "global apartheid." Vic Satzewich (1992) looks at problems with immigration, multiculturalism and racism in '90s Canada.¹⁴

The study of racism is also a less than desirable topic to pursue, and I agree entirely with Stanley Barrett who, in the Preface of his 1987 publication Is God a Racist?, warns that conducting research on racism is "debilitating" and "soul-destroying" (1987:viii). This has been especially true as it applies to the experiences St Lucians described to me. For example, one St Lucian man told of an incident in which he and his friend actually feared for their lives:

Last week...my friend and I, we was going down on the bike.... A couple guys in a car...saw us comin' and they say 'Fuck off you, fuck off'. And I felt bad, you know...I didn't think we could do anything because we are in a strange place and it's dark, and they want to do something, they could just jam us and put us aside, and nobody know....I mean this is looking...really bad...and they know our purpose here....

Another St Lucian who had travelled to Ontario for an average of seven months of the year for the past five years did not want to talk about racism and he told me that although he experienced times when Canadians would treat him in ways that he considered to be racist, he thought it was, in his words: "their problem, not mine."

The most vivid statements I heard about the effects of racism in Simcoe came from Jamaicans during the 1989 season of interviews I conducted in bunkhouses. One man explained to me that:

...the white doesn't like us and they feel like we doesn't like them because in the past...when slavery was, right. So I think them say that we carryin' a revenge for them. But we forget what we revenge.... Don't know anything about it...only history in a book. You see, if we did believe in the past, we wouldn't be here, for we come here and work so hard, we will say the same thing goin' on.

Another man told me that he thought Canadians treat West Indians badly because of fear:

I say because we are black and they are white and they are afraid of us. We just doesn't know if they're afraid of us or they hear some bad thing about us or something like that....

A third man blamed the portrayal of the West Indies in the media for the way Canadians reacted to FARMS workers:

What I notice, it seems to me they been at a show or something about Jamaica: show these kids growin' up like say we just savages, eat persons or some damn thing. I don't know.

While these explanations reflect West Indian experiences in Simcoe, in some ways the opposite seems to be the case.

Both the history of blacks in the town and the contribution to agriculture made by the FARMS employees are ignored when Simcoe celebrates its pioneer beginnings and the end of its harvest seasons. This conclusion is based on two celebrations I attended in Simcoe: a week-end celebration of the town's pioneer beginnings and the Norfolk County Fair at the end of the harvest.

The first weekend in August, the date of West Indian Emancipation, is still celebrated in Simcoe. Sometimes the FARMS employees conduct their own celebration of Emancipation Day in the town centre's mall. Here they play Caribbean music and offer Caribbean food. Nowhere is the connection made to the same celebration by American blacks over one hundred years earlier. Although these black people were Americans, they were celebrating the same West Indian Emancipation Day. In August of 1995, a celebration was held in the park in Simcoe throughout the holiday weekend. Included in this festivity was a recreation of pioneer days, and again, no mention was made of black pioneers. Similarly, the Norfolk County fair held in early October at the fairgrounds, includes hundreds of agricultural exhibits from nearby farms. No mention is made of the thousands of Caribbean FARMS workers who have harvested these crops for over thirty years, although many of the West Indians are still working in Ontario during this time of year, and many of them attend the fair.

Based on my observations of interaction, or non-interaction, between residents of Simcoe and FARMS employees, I would conclude that they are characterized more by indifference than by overt racism. Racism is indeed a difficult topic to define. As Stanley Barrett (1991:85) points out:

The gap between attitude and behaviour, norm and act, and belief and action is a constant problem for the social scientist. However, with regard to the topic of racism, there is a further difficulty. Not only is it possible that a discrepancy exists between a person's racial attitudes and the degree to which he or she acts out these attitudes, or between prejudice and discrimination, but racial attitudes themselves are frequently unconscious, unvocalized, nondeliberate. Thus, they remain partly inaccessible to attitudinal survey research.

None of the people I talked with in Simcoe claimed to be racist. Even the two who stated a clear dislike for black people based their judgements on "experience" not on racial prejudice. Another nine Simcoe residents expressed views that lumped all Caribbean FARMS employees into one homogeneous category of people who were portrayed as poor and backward. In two rare instances I came upon people in Simcoe who were interested in hearing about the cultures of the FARMS employees. They described long conversations with some of the FARMS workers about the kinds of foods they ate, about what these men did when they were at home, and about what the islands looked like. However, even these instances were limited to initial curiosity.

Still, I observed what appeared to be genuine

socializing between white Canadians and black West Indians every weekend I spent in Simcoe, and fifteen St Lucians told me they had made friends in Ontario. Forty-eight of the eighty-seven St Lucians I interviewed said they thought Canadians were friendly most of the time. This St Lucian perception of Canadian friendliness is slightly lower than the responses given by 297 FARMS employees in the survey conducted by Cecil and Ebanks in which 65.7 per cent of West Indian farm workers said "Yes: Canadians are friendly," 24 per cent answered that "Canadians are friendly sometimes," and only 10.3 per cent said "No: Canadians are not friendly" (Cecil and Ebanks 1991:394).

The question, then, becomes: Is the reaction of residents in Simcoe representative of rural Ontario, or do the residents in some areas accept the FARMS employees more easily than others? My data suggest the latter. I have visited farms in Tillsonburg, Delhi, Blenheim, Newmarket, and in and around the Niagara Peninsula. In addition, I participated in Friday night shopping in Brantford, Tillsonburg, Delhi, and Blenheim where I observed interactions between West Indians and Canadians. I also visited the town of Exeter where West Indians work in a large canning factory, as well as in the fields. In Exeter, the fifteen Jamaican workers I interviewed live in a huge apartment above a restaurant on the main street of town. They work in shifts and are not limited to shopping on

Friday nights.

My observations of interactions between West Indians and Canadians in Brantford, Tillsonburg, Delhi, and Blenheim were similar to what I observed in Simcoe. Canadians did not stay away from the shopping centres on Friday nights and they were not visibly abusive to the West Indians. In all four places, I observed instances of black West Indian men socializing with white Canadians,¹⁵ although these instances were limited in each location.¹⁶ The descriptions the fifteen men gave of the interactions between West Indians and Canadians in Exeter were very different from what I had observed in Simcoe and the other areas I had visited. In Exeter, FARMS workers told me they thought Canadians were very hostile. As one man put it:

First thing, they don't deal with us. They don't talk to us. They are afraid of us. They see us out there on the sidewalk; they walk on the other side....They comin' down and see us, they turn back and go around. They mostly come down, laugh at us.

The reports by St Lucians who work in other areas of Ontario include observations that would appear to describe conditions that are quite different from what Jamaicans reported in Exeter or what I observed in Simcoe. For instance, Tony, who works in Wainfleet, near St Catherines, describes Ontario as his second home. He is able to leave the farm at his own discretion, has the use of a vehicle, and socializes with the neighbours frequently. He does not believe that Canadians are racist in any way. Likewise,

Thomas and Juliette, who work in Beamsville, Ontario, have made many Canadian friends and do not consider Canadians to be racist. Thomas considers himself to be a Canadian-St Lucian and in fact spends eight to nine months in Canada and only three or four months at "home" in St Lucia.

Descriptions of experiences by FARMS employees in and around Simcoe differ as well. Nine of the St Lucians who work in the Simcoe area assured me that Canadians are not racist in that town, they are only "reserved," "too busy to be friendly," "haven't gotten to know us," or "have never come to St Lucia". Two others, like the man quoted above, have encountered blatant threats of violence based on race.¹⁷

The literature on racism explains some of what I have described. Gilroy (1987:11) suggests that racism "does not...move tidily and unchanged through time and history. It assumes new forms and articulates new antagonisms in different situations." Goldberg (1990:xi) argues that it is no longer adequate to assume that "racism is singular and monolithic, simply the same attitude manifested in varying circumstances." Racisms are neither ahistorical nor unchanging. Winks (1971), Judd (1985) and Silverman (1985) posit a direct relationship between the growing number of blacks in Canada and the development of racist attitudes during the late 1700s and the first half of the 1800s. This may still be a factor in how West Indians are treated by

white Canadians. Thus, it may be that in places where the concentration of black FARMS employees is small, Canadians are less threatened by their presence. Conversely, where large numbers of black FARMS employees are very visible, such as Simcoe, Canadians are most likely to react in negative ways.

There does appear to be some historical consistency in the formation and maintenance of a white self-image in Simcoe. From their refusal to count black American immigrants as people who lived in Simcoe in 1861 to the absence of any reference to the FARMS employees in the annual celebration of harvest, the people of Simcoe have collectively and publicly ignored the accomplishments of the town's black population.

Adrienne Shadd, a fifth-generation black Canadian, writes:

It always amazes me when people express surprise that there might be a "race problem" in Canada, or when they attribute the "problem" to a minority of prejudiced individuals. Racism is, and always has been, one of the bedrock institutions of Canadian society, embedded in the very fabric of our thinking, our personality (1991:1).

In this, Simcoe is quite typical of the rest of Canada.

Racism and Migrant Labour

The relationship between migrant labour and racism is questioned by Robert Miles (1982) in his study of the construction of 'race relations' as a 'problem' and a

political issue in Britain after the arrival of thousands of West Indian labour migrants during the 1950s and 1960s.

Miles argues that: "the sociology of 'race relations' has been constituted as a phoney and misleading field or focus of study" (1982:2). Instead of emphasizing "blackness" analysis should focus on "the place of migrant labour in capitalist relations of production and thence upon the place of racialised migrant labour in political and ideological relations" (Ibid:5). In this argument, migrant workers are socially devalued because they take jobs that even lower classes in Britain refuse, and racism is a by-product of class.

In Simcoe, nine people who were interviewed repeated versions of a scenario in which "Canadians" have become "lazy" and will not work on farms for low wages any more, so migrant workers have to be imported in order for farming to continue. In this scenario, the presence of migrant workers is something Canadians have "brought upon themselves" and it is the only solution to the labour problem at this time. The fact that the FARMS workers are "temporary" and that most only visit the town one night a week allows the majority of those I interviewed to deny any interaction with the Caribbean men, or to claim that they do not know anything about these workers.

The concept of "race" was used, but not questioned by anyone I interviewed. West Indian FARMS employees

dismissed the biological meaning of race by claiming that "We all same blood," and they described the social effects of racism, without venturing past the theory that Canadians were "afraid of them." The terms used to identify residents and FARMS employees varied. Simcoe residents referred to the FARMS employees as "Jamaicans" or "Caribbean guys," rarely calling them "black," "coloured," or "Negro". Growers most often called them "boys," but never confused nationalities, in other words, they never used the generic "Jamaicans". The FARMS employees almost always referred to themselves as "black," with only four exceptions who used the terms "negro" or "coloured",¹⁸ and they consistently used the term "Canadians" to refer to people who lived in Canada, without adding terms of colour.

The connection between race and migrant labour was not made in any explicit way by the people I interviewed in Simcoe. "Migrant workers" were one thing and "blackness" was another. The fact that these two concepts were combined in "Jamaicans" did not seem to produce the "problem" that Miles describes for Britain. People who live in the Simcoe area have a long history of experience with migrant farm workers, and the Caribbean men are just the latest addition. If anything, the "temporariness" of the black "migrant workers" has lessened the negative effect of "blackness" in Simcoe.

Miles highlights the dilemma of studies, such as those

concerning international labour migration, which attempt to include the effects of racism as a contributing factor on the unit of analysis. He rejects the concept of 'race' on the grounds that it has no analytical value, but he admits that 'everyone' acknowledges that Britain has a 'race relations problem' (1982:3). While 'race' as a biological construct has been discarded (Gould 1981; Rose, Lewontin, and Kamin 1984), 'race', or more accurately 'racisms', as sociological and cultural constructs seem to defy dismissal. At an empirical level the most convincing argument for rejecting race as a biological concept, according to Lewontin (1973), is that:

biological race as a subspecies is not an efficient or accurate way to summarize human diversity because 85 percent of human variation is found within human populations rather than between the major populations traditionally labelled as races.

Furthermore, Lieberman and Jackson (1995:233) point out that in physical or biological anthropology, "Nothing is gained by the use of race that the term population cannot serve equally well," but according to Harrison (1995:48) the anthropological position on the fallacy of race has not been "adequately followed up by research designed to answer the simple question: Why does racism continue to exist if there are no races in the natural world?" Based on my review of the literature, the answer is both simple and complex.

The concept of "race" is firmly established in the "common sense" understanding of the "natural world" in

Canada. Arguing that racism is alive and well, Anthony Richmond (1994:111) describes its effects in Canada in the following way: "In Canada, as in other countries, racism ranges from stereotyping and prejudice, through explicit discrimination in the labour force, to violent confrontations between the police and 'Black' youth."

Elliott and Fleras (1992:52) define racism as "a doctrine that unjustifiably asserts the superiority of one group over another on the basis of arbitrarily selected characteristics pertaining to appearance, intelligence, or temperament."

These authors also substantiate the difficulties in assessing behaviours and attitudes that qualify as "racist," and they conclude that "an incident should be defined as racist and discriminatory only when victims are harmed, ignored, or suppressed through acts of commission or omission" (1992:54).

According to Vic Satzewich (1991:123-124) in his study of immigrant labour in Canada, 'Canadian identity' has historically been defined in terms of race, as an "imagined community" that is "white." Satzewich also argues that race, rather than the issue of whether or not West Indians would "take jobs away from Canadians" is the reason behind the structure of the FARMS programme which requires FARMS employees to leave Canada as soon as their contract is finished (Ibid:179). Still, the history of blacks in Canada shows that there were times when Canadian doors were open to

American slaves and free blacks. Winks (1971:143) describes the attitudes of white Canadians toward blacks as much more complex. He argues, for instance, that "Prejudice rose as the number of Negroes rose," and that white Canadians had trouble sorting out their beliefs about blacks:

White Canadians wished to see the Negro free, and if the Negro so wished it, resettled; but if resettlement were to be carried out on a massive scale in British North America itself, they were less certain of their liberal sentiments.

Winks also posits an economic element to Canadian attitudes toward blacks. Until the 1840s Negroes were needed as labour in the frontier areas of Canada West; once large numbers of Irish arrived who were willing to do the same kinds of work the labour value of Negroes declined. By the 1850s many of the stereotypes used against blacks in Canada in the twentieth century were already in place:

Throughout British North America blacks were thought, by some, to be responsible for 'all the outrageous crimes, and two thirds of the minor ones'; chicken coops and laundry lines were said to require special protection where black men were about; and their women were blamed for an alleged rise in prostitution (1971:248).

Winks contends that Canadian prejudice against the growing number of blacks varied across Canada West and that the differences resulted, at least in part, from local economic conditions. In the eastern areas, such as Hamilton and Toronto where semiskilled and unskilled labour were needed because of the prosperous economy, systematic prejudice was mild, while in the western areas across the boarder from

Detroit where the economy was less able to absorb the black migrants, racial prejudice was much stronger. Still, Winks cautions that "Prejudice, always individual, was also a matter of the moment, the place, and the market, however, for discrimination was widely practised in St Catherines, despite this geographical generalization" (1971:251).

Located somewhat in the middle, but closer to the east than the west of Winks' "geographical generalization," Simcoe was another exception. Simcoe has experienced both good and bad economic times. Although it began as a tiny settlement based on clearing the land for agriculture, it was relatively prosperous during the century that it was inhabited by African-American immigrants. Two factors contributed to Simcoe's prosperity. In 1836, the town was named the District capital and its population jumped from a few hundred to 1,500. Land speculators began buying up property, streets were laid out, a courthouse was built, and a post office established. The Norfolk Observer reported on April 17, 1841 that at least one hundred buildings were scheduled to appear in the next six months. By the midpoint of the nineteenth century, about the time the blacks in Simcoe were awarded their own school, Judd describes Simcoe as "a highly organized society boasting churches, schools, taverns, sports, newspapers, a courthouse and jail, and a variety of industries, stores and services" (1985:28).

The second factor which contributed to the prosperity

of Simcoe was the coming of two railroads in the 1870s. The Great Western Air Line which ran from Detroit to Buffalo reached Simcoe in 1872, and the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway which ran from Port Dover to Woodstock and then to Owen Sound arrived in 1874. This, according to Judd, signalled an "economic boom" for the town. In 1881, at the peak of the black population in Simcoe, W.P. Innes founded a canning factory which processed locally grown fruit, vegetables, poultry and meats. It also provided jams and jellies and produced its own cans. The factory required a large amount of manual labour, much of it seasonal, and "workers were mainly from the lower class and included for the most part housewives and children" (Judd 1985:60).

During the time that African-American immigrants began leaving Simcoe, Innes was transporting immigrants from Hamilton and Buffalo, as well as people from the Six Nations Indian Reserve near Brantford, to work in his factory. In order to house these workers, Innes built large barracks behind the factory, which were called "Titanics" because they looked like ships (Judd 1985:60). It would seem that Innes went to an awful lot of trouble and expense to import non-black workers rather than retain the black potential workers who were leaving Simcoe in search of a better life elsewhere.

Canadian Immigration Policy and Racism

There is no question that early Canadian immigration policy was racist. As Freda Hawkins (1991:17) explains, "White Canada" defined and maintained itself through an Immigration Act which was designed to:

Prohibit or limit in number for a stated period or permanently the landing in Canada...of immigrants belonging to any nationality or race...deemed unsuitable having regard to the climatic, industrial, social, educational, labour or other conditions or requirements of Canada...

By 1947, Mackenzie King announced the removal of at least the overt forms of discrimination in Canadian immigration policy, and with an amendment to the Immigration Act in 1962 and White Paper Recommendations of 1966 and 1967, discrimination on the basis of race was explicitly banished from official immigration policy (Anderson 1993:40-41).

While Satzewich argues that the FARMS Programme is designed to prevent West Indians from gaining permanent status in Canada because they are black, the statistics on other temporary workers in Canada do not support his conclusions. For instance, "more foreign workers are now being brought to this country as migrants (temporary transient labour) rather than as immigrants (permanent settler labour)," and "professional workers are a significant part of this temporary transient labour force" (Bolaria 1992:226). Table 5.4 presents the number of immigrant workers and non-immigrant workers admitted to Canada from 1980 to 1988, and the percentage of professional

non-immigrant worker authorizations that were approved during that time period. The figures in this table show that migrant workers vary in terms of skill and education.

Table 5.4
LANDED-IMMIGRANT WORKERS, NON-IMMIGRANT
WORK-AUTHORIZATIONS, AND PERCENTAGE OF
PROFESSIONALS AMONG NON-IMMIGRANT WORKERS,
1979-1988

Year	Immigrant Workers	Non-Immigrant Workers	Professional Non-Immigrant Worker Authorizations (Percent)
1980	63,403	108,871	57.78
1981	56,978	126,583	59.76
1982	55,482	125,901	56.77
1983	37,119	130,717	56.33
1984	38,500	143,979	50.81
1985	38,459	177,165	44.51
1986	48,200	205,747	39.00
1987	76,712	231,576	34.22
1988	76,350	267,076	35.47

Source: Immigrant Workers and Non-Immigrant Workers, Bolaria 1992:215; Professional Authorizations, 1992:218.

Until 1985, migrant workers with professional education and skills were the most prominent among Canadian authorized temporary work permits, although that trend seems to be decreasing steadily since 1985. According to this evidence, the FARMS employees are not being treated differently than other labour migrants, and they constitute only a tiny proportion of the temporary workers who are admitted to Canada each year. Furthermore, the FARMS employees are testimony that neither lack of skill nor lack of education are being used to prevent temporary labour migration within

Canada.

Table 5.5 summarizes the unemployment rates in Canada and Ontario and the number of St Lucians who have travelled to Canada between 1979 and 1992.

Table 5.5
UNEMPLOYMENT RATES IN CANADA AND ONTARIO,
AND NUMBER OF ST LUCIAN FARMS EMPLOYEES
1979-1992

Year	Unemployment Rate in Canada	Unemployment Rate in Ontario	Number of St Lucian FARMS Employees
1979	7.4	6.5	54
1980	7.5	6.9	95
1981	7.6	6.6	97
1982	11.0	9.7	88
1983	11.9	10.4	73
1984	11.3	9.0	79
1985	10.5	8.1	83
1986	9.6	7.0	70
1987	8.9	6.1	86
1988	7.8	5.0	130
1989	7.5	5.1	165
1990	8.1	6.3	117
1991	10.4	9.6	93
1992	11.3	10.9	103
Average	9.3	7.7	95

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada 1995b:218;
Ontario 1995b:244; St Lucian Employees:
Fieldwork 1993.

These figures suggest that neither the unemployment rates in Canada nor those in Ontario have had a direct bearing on the number of St Lucians imported to Canada each year. Both the highest number of St Lucians employed by FARMS, 165 in 1989, and the lowest, 54 in 1979, took place when unemployment rates in Canada were almost identical, 7.5 and 7.4 respectively. Despite the expectation that during times of

high unemployment in Ontario more people would be willing to work at jobs, such as agricultural labour, than would be the case when unemployment rates are low, St Lucian employment has not been directly dependent on unemployment rates, although there is a slight trend for the number of St Lucian employees to be more than the average number (95) during times when unemployment is lower than average and less than 95 when unemployment is higher.¹⁹ Comparison of tables 5.4 and 5.5 shows that there is no correlation between the overall number of non-immigrant workers admitted to Canada each year and the Canadian unemployment rates. The number of non-immigrant workers has increased steadily despite fluctuations in the country's unemployment rates.

The FARMS programme is a response to factors other than employment statistics. According to the growers I interviewed, a high unemployment rate in Ontario does not mean that Canadians are any more willing to perform agricultural labour than they are when unemployment rates are low. Wage labour on farms has historically been something Canadians avoid: it is hard physical work, the hours are long, and the pay is minimal. Growers in Ontario have solved the problem of insufficient Canadian farm labour by importing immigrants from Europe, the United States, and the British Caribbean to harvest fruits, vegetables, and tobacco since the Second World War. As employers of West Indians, Ontario growers have played a vital role in the

establishment and perpetuation of temporary international labour migration between Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean. Not only did these growers initiate the programme which brings St Lucians and other West Indians to Canada, but they have expanded the job opportunities far beyond the original number, and since 1987 they have administered the scheme.

Employing West Indians is not like employing local workers. West Indians do not go "home" when they are finished working for the day. They live and work on the farms of their employers, sometimes for eight or nine months of the year. The farm is their "home," and they are the "responsibility" of their employers for as long as the contract lasts. In addition to living with their employees, Ontario growers also act as mediators between the West Indian workers and Canadian society. When growers restrict their employees to the farm, and prevent them from interacting with Canadians, then the West Indian men become simply labour that the grower is importing. Conversely, when growers are aware that their employees need time away from the farm, and do not apply restrictions to what the men do when they are not working, then "workin on the contract" becomes something more than just a job.

When West Indians leave the farms, residents of rural Ontario react in a variety of ways. Although residents in Simcoe express attitudes that are racist in nature toward

the Caribbean presence in their town, these attitudes do not seem to be the result of the temporary migrant labour status of the FARMS employees. They seem, instead, to be modified continuations of an historical behaviour that has characterized white Simcoe since its settlement. Migrant labour does not appear to be connected to notions of "race" within Canadian Immigration policy; nor do education, job skills of applicants, and unemployment rates in Canada and in Ontario have a direct bearing on international temporary labour migration in any of the research that I conducted or that I reviewed in this chapter.

The ways in which people in rural Ontario use concepts of race, or physical criteria, as a means of categorizing others who differ in social and cultural attributes, is difficult to sort out. In my research, Simcoe residents expressed views of the FARMS programme that were ambiguous. The programme is described as a valuable contributor to the economic sector of the area, at the same time it is portrayed as potentially dangerous to the social and cultural order. While the residents of Simcoe are willing to accept West Indians as temporary workers, they are less prepared to accept these men as more permanent members of Simcoe society.

ENDNOTES

1. Ontario growers do not use the phrase "workin' on the contract". When they refer to their West Indian employees they call them "off-shore workers," or "off-shore guys."
2. During 1988-1989, I talked with 26 growers who employed West Indians from other countries as well as St Lucia (Larkin 1990).
3. When I first visited Simcoe, I noticed a few black West Indian men in the company of white women. This seemed totally reasonable to me because I had not seen any black women in the area, and I did not think of it as something that needed to be explained. Then I started talking with growers and found that it was a "problem" for many of them.
4. I could neither verify nor disprove these statements made by growers and residents in Simcoe. I did talk briefly to four white Canadian women who had married former West Indian FARMS employees. All four couples had children during their relationship, and three were either divorced or in the process of legal separation. Three of the four Canadian women had married Jamaican men and the fourth had married a man from Barbados. It is the Canadian-Bajan marriage that has survived. The reasons these women gave for the failure of their marriages tend to support the grower's claims. All three of the women who were divorced or separated said they felt that they had been "used" by their Caribbean husbands as a vehicle for gaining Canadian citizenship.
5. I was not able to find any "prostitutes" to interview, despite the assurance from a Simcoe grower that they were everywhere. My general belief about growers' accounts is that they are examples of the body of myth that supports racist claims. According to this myth, people with African heritage are more sexually active and less intelligent than people with other heritages. Unfortunately, this myth has academic support in the work of Phillipe Rushton (1994) who claims to document the inferior intelligence and superior sexuality of people who are "phenotypically black." Growers who subscribe to this myth apply its logic to the social behaviour of West Indians in Canada and conclude that a black-white union which produces children is wrong; therefore, black West Indian men should not be allowed to associate with non-black Canadian women. If Canadian women do enter into a relationship with black

West Indian men, these women are considered by growers to be of low moral character (hence prostitutes) or physically defective in some way.

6. In the study conducted by Cecil and Ebanks (1991:395), less than ten per cent of the 297 FARMS employees interviewed said they went into nearby villages or towns more than once a week.
7. The Jamaican Maroons numbered about 500. They stayed in Nova Scotia for approximately three years and then many of them left for Sierra Leone (Bolaria and Li 1988:190). Clairmont and Magill (1970, 1974) present a more in depth study of blacks in Nova Scotia and of the settlement called Africville.
8. On the one hand, slaves were encouraged by the British during the American Revolutionary War to desert their masters and join the efforts of the British. For their efforts these Black Loyalists were promised the same treatment and rewards as the White Loyalists, and did receive small plots of land in Nova Scotia. On the other hand, Canada's first race riot took place in 1784 almost immediately after the Black Loyalists settled in Nova Scotia. During the riots, the blacks were attacked by unemployed white residents of Shelburne and Birchtown (Bolaria and Li 1988:190).
9. Upper Canada was the only province to legislate against slavery, but it did not do so in a direct way. While slavery still existed, it was unpopular and ambiguous. Those who were slaves in 1793 could remain legally bound to their masters until their death, but no one could become enslaved after that date (Winks 1971:98). Technically, then, those persons who were brought into Upper Canada by their masters were legally still slaves, unless they had been granted "free" status, but it was not considered to be politically advantageous to call them "slaves" and the use of the terms "apprenticed slaves" or "servants" probably reflected an attempt to reconcile the formal stand against slavery with the fact that it still existed.
10. Although Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut had abolished slavery by 1784 (Winks 1971:46), people of African descent still lacked many of the same rights as those of European descent. Protests against this unequal relationship often escalated into violence in these states.

11. Winks writes that Upper Canada's act to abolish slavery did not actually free any slave. It rather prevented slavery from being introduced into Upper Canada. According to Winks, the Act was a compromise between officials, such as Simcoe, who took an antislavery stand, and slave owners who had brought their slaves with them and did not want to lose their property. Winks speculates that had anyone chosen to challenge the Act, it might not have been legal, in that it contradicted the Imperial Act of 1790 (1971:97).
12. I originally chose 100 possible interviewees, numbered each one and put the numbers in a box. During the three months that I conducted interviews, I drew one name out at a time. If I was unable to contact that person, I simply drew out another name. This insured that if I was unable to reach the entire 100 residents, the sample would still be random.
13. I did not record the exact number of times this term of identification was used.
14. This is by no means a complete list. It represents only those publications I have looked at for this study. In addition, McKague (1991) and Satzewich (1992) are edited volumes containing papers by authors I have not included in this citation.
15. I determined the nationality of Canadians by their speech.
16. I visited Brantford three times; Tillsonburg, eight times; Delhi three times; and Blenheim, four times. In each location I saw at least one white person in the company of black West Indians.
17. In one instance this took place on the farm where the St Lucian man was employed and involved an argument with family members of his employer. The second instance took place while the St Lucian man was working alone in a field, and involved shouts by motorists passing by.
18. The West Indian men also identified themselves in terms of nationality. For instance, when I asked FARMS employees where they were from, they always answered "St Lucia," "Barbados," "Jamaica," and so on. They never answered the "Caribbean" or the "West Indies."
19. If the numbers of St Lucians employed by FARMS each year are arranged from highest to lowest, there is a trend toward increased St Lucian employment when

Canadian and Ontario unemployment rates are lower than average and decreased employment when rates are higher.

Year	St Lucians Hired Avg 95	Canadian Rates Avg 9.3	Ontario Rates Avg. 7.7
1989	165	7.5 -	5.1 -
1988	130	7.8 -	5.0 -
1990	117	8.1 -	6.3 -
1992	103	11.3 +	10.9 +
1981	97	7.6 -	6.6 -
1980	95	7.5 -	6.9 -
1991	93	10.4 +	9.6 +
1982	88	11.0 +	9.7 +
1987	86	8.9 -	6.1 -
1985	83	10.5 +	8.1 +
1984	79	11.3 +	9.0 +
1983	73	11.9 +	10.4 +
1986	70	9.6 +	7.0 -
1979	54	7.4 -	6.5 -

However, if Ontario unemployment rates are arranged from highest to lowest and the deviation from the average rate of 7.7 is calculated, the following comparison between the number of St Lucian employees that would be expected and the actual number that were hired eliminates that trend.

Year	Ont Rates	% of Avg.	Number of St Lucians Employed	
			Expected	Actual
1992	10.9	141.6	135	103
1983	10.4	135.1	129	73
1982	9.7	126.0	120	88
1991	9.6	124.7	119	93
1984	9.0	116.9	112	79
1985	8.1	105.2	101	83
AVG	7.7			
1986	7.0	90.9	87	70
1980	6.9	89.6	86	95
1981	6.6	85.7	82	97
1979	6.5	84.4	81	54
1990	6.3	81.8	78	117
1987	6.1	79.2	76	86
1989	5.1	66.2	64	165
1988	5.0	64.9	62	130

CHAPTER SIX

"WORKIN' ON THE CONTRACT:" THE SEASONAL ROUND

"Workin' on the contract" involves living part-time in Ontario and part-time in St Lucia. As one man who has worked in Ontario for fourteen years described it: "I know when it's time to travel. I feel it in my body. It's time to move." This man's description of his anatomical clock is typical of those who have travelled the seasonal round for many years, and it is especially applicable to the ones who have taken jobs off the island through most of their working lives.¹

The focus of this chapter is the seasonal round of travel between St Lucia and Ontario. Its purpose is to view FARMS from the vantage point of the island and to describe the implications of participation in the programme for St Lucians and St Lucia. The chapter contains a mixture of quantitative data from records kept at the Department of Labour on the island and qualitative data from the interviews I conducted with FARMS employees in St Lucia. It represents my attempt to understand, St Lucian experiences of "workin' on the contract" as they were explained to me.

Beginning with an overview of St Lucian participation in the FARMS programme and the process by which employees are chosen to work in Canada, I describe the work histories and the financial aspects of seasonal travel, and provide my interpretation of what "workin' on the contract" means to St Lucians. Throughout the chapter I suggest that although the FARMS programme was initiated by Ontario growers and formally controlled by the growers as employers, St Lucian workers, aided by the Department of Labour on the island, are able to use the programme in ways that serve their own interests. Before I present the data to support this premise, I will briefly describe how I obtained my sample and how it compares with the total number of FARMS employees in St Lucia.

DESCRIPTION OF MY SAMPLE

The Department of Labour in St Lucia provided the resources for my contacts with FARMS employees. I was given access to an office in the building and to all of the records for the programme. The records allowed me to construct detailed employment histories, and the office became a place to work as well as to conduct interviews with FARMS employees who came in to register for the season. The interviews I conducted with FARMS employees in St Lucia varied from short conversations at the Department of Labour to several hours when I travelled to villages. The short

conversations in my office were usually conducted on an individual basis and were confined to information concerning work histories. Whenever possible, I asked people I met at the Department to introduce me to other FARMS employees in their village. Interviews in the villages usually included three or four employees and were group conversations that I tape recorded. These were especially productive when members of the group compared their experiences of working in Canada. In addition to interviews, I frequently talked with the men who lived in the community where I stayed, and as I became more familiar with the island, I met FARMS workers on my travels to different areas. Each time I met someone new, I asked about others who worked on the same farm, or lived in the same village, and one employee introduced me to another.

The following two tables summarize the number of times St Lucians in my sample travelled to Canada and where they live when they are home. Table 6.1 shows the number of years FARMS employees have worked in Canada. Although I included people who had travelled to Canada only once or twice, my sample is weighted heavily towards those who have worked on the contract for at least four years. In the total population of St Lucian FARMS employees, this segment constitutes 42.7 per cent, while in my interview sample it amounts to over 80 per cent.

Table 6.1
 NUMBER OF YEARS ST LUCIANS
 WHO WERE INTERVIEWED HAVE
 WORKED IN CANADA

Years	Number	Per Cent
14	2	2.3
13	6	6.9
12	2	2.3
11	7	8.1
10	4	4.6
9	2	2.3
8	5	5.8
7	2	2.3
6	5	5.8
5	16	18.4
4	18	20.7
3	8	9.2
2	3	3.5
1	7	8.1
TOTAL	87	

Source: Fieldwork 1993.

A demographic account by geographic area of the FARMS employees I interviewed is presented in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2
 GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF ST LUCIANS
 WHO WERE INTERVIEWED

Location	Number	Per Cent
Gros Islet	12	13.8
Babonneau	7	8.1
Dennery	8	9.2
Micoud	10	11.5
Vieux Fort	11	12.6
Soufriere	14	16.1
Anse La Raye	7	8.1
Castries	18	20.7 ²
TOTAL	87	

Source: Fieldwork 1993

Because I was most interested in talking to St Lucians who

had at least four years of experience in Canada, providing a representative sample of FARMS employees in terms of where they lived on the island was secondary. I did try to include people from as many areas as possible, and I interviewed those who lived in the urban region around Castries, as well as those who lived in remote areas of the countryside. I also talked with eighteen men who had stopped travelling to Canada.

OVERVIEW OF ST LUCIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE FARMS PROGRAMME

St Lucians first began "workin' on the contract" in 1976, but because the Department of Labour on the island did not have records for the first three years, this study is limited to the fourteen year period between 1979 and 1992. The following overview of St Lucian participation in the FARMS programme includes four statistical descriptions: the number of St Lucians who travelled to Canada and the number of Ontario growers who employed them each year; the number of years St Lucians have returned to Canada; the age, sex, and number of children of the 1992 employees; and the geographical distribution of workers by districts on the island.

Employers and Employees

A total of 68 growers have provided 1,333 jobs in Ontario for 349 St Lucians through the FARMS programme

between 1979 and 1992. St Lucian participation in FARMS over those fourteen years is summarized in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3
FARMS PROGRAMME: NUMBER OF WORKERS BY YEAR

Year	Number of Workers	Per Cent Increase or Decrease	Number of Employers
1979	54		21
1980	95	+76.0	29
1981	97	+ 2.0	26
1982	88	- 9.3	22
1983	73	-17.0	20
1984	79	+ 8.2	20
1985	83	+ 5.0	19
1986	70	-15.7	18
1987	86	+22.9	19
1988	130	+51.2	28
1989	165	+26.9	26
1990	117	-29.1	22
1991	93	-20.5	19
1992	103	+ 9.6	20

Source: Department of Labour, St Lucia; Fieldnotes 1993

The programme grew rapidly during its first three years. Between 1979 and 1981, the number of St Lucian employees increased by 78 per cent. Through the next five years the total number of employees remained relatively stable, ranging from a high in 1982 of 88 to a low in 1986 of 70. The following four years, however, were very erratic. Rapid increases in 1988 and 1989 were followed by a sudden drop in 1990 and a further decrease in 1991. The number of employees in 1989 was almost twice that of 1987, while the work force decreased by about 30 per cent in 1990 and 20 per cent in 1991. In 1992, there was a small increase of 9.6

per cent. The overall average number per year is 95.

Number of Years "Workin' on the Contract"

Approximately half the total number of FARMS employees in St Lucia (46.1 per cent) have travelled to Canada only once or twice. Table 6.4 provides an account of the number of years farm workers have spent in Canada.

Table 6.4
NUMBER OF YEARS ST LUCIANS HAVE
WORKED IN CANADA

Years Worked	Number of Workers	Per Cent
14	3	.9
13	6	1.7
12	5	1.4
11	10	2.9
10	10	2.9
9	4	1.2
8	8	2.3
7	6	1.7
6	16	4.6
5	39	11.2
4	42	12.0
3	39	11.0
2	63	18.3
1	97	27.8
TOTAL	349	

Source: Department of Labour,
St Lucia; Fieldnotes 1993

Another 23 per cent have been active in the programme for three or four years; 20.9 per cent for five to nine years; and 9.7 per cent for ten years or more. The average number of times St Lucians have travelled to Canada to work is 3.8,

and only seven men who began "workin' on the contract" in 1979 were still active in the programme in 1992. The experienced Canadian farm workers, those who have travelled the seasonal round for at least four years, then, amount to 149 St Lucians, or 42.7 per cent of the total number.

Age, Sex, and Number of Children of the 1992 FARMS Employees

St Lucian FARMS employees are generally mature adults: almost half (47.9 per cent) of those employed in 1992 are at least 40 years old. Table 6.5 shows that the range in ages is 24 to 56 years, and the majority are between 30 and 49. The average age is 39.6.

Table 6.5
AGES OF FARMS EMPLOYEES IN 1992

Age	Number	Per Cent
50-59	12	12.8
40-49	33	35.1
30-39	33	35.1
20-29	16	17.0
Total	94	100.0

Source: Fieldwork 1993.

Only one FARMS employee in St Lucia is female. Juliette was hired by the same grower who has employed her husband for nine years and she has been "workin' on the contract" for the past six years. She and her husband are the only St Lucians on that farm. FARMS limits its employees to males and, to my knowledge, Juliette is the single exception.

The majority of St Lucian FARMS employees in 1992 (87.4

per cent) have parental obligations. Table 6.6 summarizes the number of children per St Lucian FARMS employee.

Table 6.6
CHILDREN OF 1992 FARMS EMPLOYEES

Number of Children	Number of Employees	Per Cent
0	12	12.6
1 - 2	25	26.3
3 - 4	19	20.0
5 - 6	22	23.2
7 - 8	10	10.5
9 -10	4	4.2
11-14	3	3.2
Total	95	

Source: Fieldwork 1993.

Over half (53.7 per cent) of the workers have between three and eight children, and the average number is four.

St Lucian FARMS employees differ from the general population of West Indian workers in two respects: they are older and they have more children. In a survey of 297 FARMS employees from all the islands, the average age is 31.8 and only 18.5 per cent are 40 years old or older. The average number of children per West Indian FARMS employee is 2.32. (Cecil and Ebanks 1988).

Geographical Distribution of Workers at Home

Geographically, St Lucia is divided into eight sections, called quartiers. The term "quartier" was first used by the French to refer to the divisions they made in the island, beginning in 1745. When the British secured the

island, they retained the pattern of division as the basis of local administration (Brock 1976:29).³ Table 6.7 shows that workers have been recruited from each of these quarters.

Table 6.7
GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF ST LUCIAN FARMS EMPLOYEES

		POPULATION		FARMS EMPLOYEES	
		Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
I	Gros Islet	5,696	4.9	27	8.2
II	Babonneau	8,624	7.4	20	6.1
III	Dennery	9,893	8.5	40	12.1
IV	Micoud	10,868	11.2	37	11.2
V	Vieux Fort	14,142	12.1	55	16.7
VI	Soufriere	15,372	13.1	44	13.3
VII	Anse La Raye	6,426	5.5	33	10.0
VIII	Castries	46,119	39.4	74	22.4
Dispersed Population		8,000			
UNKNOWN ADDRESS				19	
TOTAL		125,138		349	

(Population figures based on 1983) ⁴

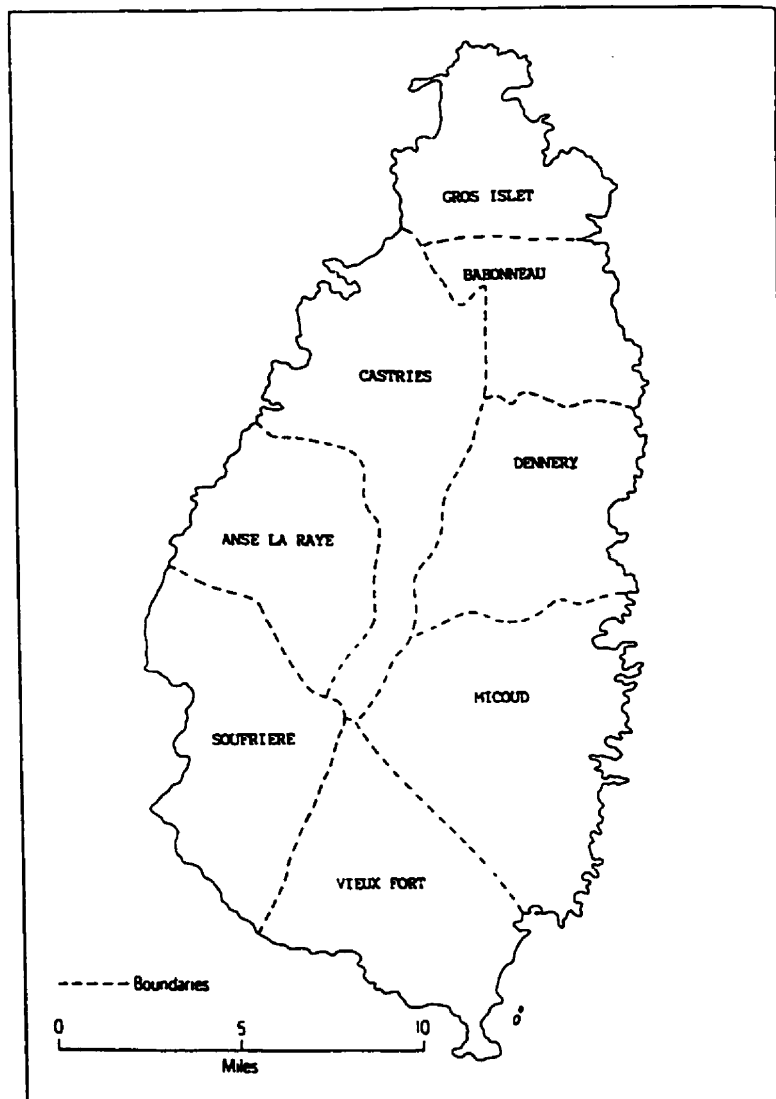
Source: Department of Regional Development 1988:4

The Castries quartier contains the capital city of Castries, and is the most urbanized region of the island. Two other cities, Vieux Fort and Soufriere, provide urban centres in their respective quarters. The tourist industry is concentrated on the west coast of the island between Soufriere and the northern tip, and the area between Castries and Gros Islet has become an "urbanized strip" connected to the city of Castries. With the exception of Vieux Fort and Soufriere, the rest of the island is

predominately rural with small towns and villages providing centres of commerce.

MAP 3.

ST LUCIAN QUARTIERS



The distribution of Canadian workers does not correspond exactly to the distribution of the population on the island. There are fewer workers, proportionally, drawn

from the quartier of Castries, than from any other. Although the quartier of Babonneau is slightly under represented, the other six are over represented. The Department of Labour in St Lucia attempts to maintain a representative proportion of workers from each region in its recruiting process and in the maintenance of its worker pool, but the system of named-workers practised by Ontario farmers interferes with the distribution. The under-representation of the more urbanized areas of Castries and the over-representation of the more rural areas reflects Ontario growers' preferences for workers who have agricultural experience at home. As the next section will show, the selection process is shared by growers in Ontario and members of the Department of Labour in St Lucia.

TRAVELLING TO CANADA

Preparations for travelling to Canada begin in late January or early February each year. FARMS employees from previous years know the routine: medical exams, forms to fill out, and at least one or two trips to the Department of Labour in Castries. Some of the employees have been in contact with their employers and know for sure they will travel this year. Others are not so sure and they wait for growers to determine the number of St Lucians they will need for the season and to set the dates for travel.

The Selection Process

"Workin' on the contract" begins with a request from an Ontario farmer, for a certain number of workers. This request is sent to the liaison officer from the Eastern Caribbean who resides in Toronto. The liaison officer forwards the order to the Department of Labour in St Lucia, where one man is responsible for recruitment and organizing the paperwork necessary to meet the requirements of FARMS. If the request is made for a named worker, someone the grower literally names, an officer at the Labour Department contacts that person by phone, or the person's name is announced on the radio, and he or she is directed to appear at the Department. If the Canadian farmer requests an unnamed worker, the St Lucian Labour officer selects someone from a reserve pool of potential employees. The pool is a list of men who have applied to the Department of Labour to work on the contract as soon as a position becomes available. They may be people who have never worked in Canada before, or veteran workers who were not named by an employer. Usually, people who have not been named this year for some reason, but who have proven themselves to be good workers are selected to fill unnamed positions first. In St Lucia, a man is placed on three different farms before he is dropped from the pool. If there are no "seasoned veterans" left, then a new applicant is chosen from the pool. Factors that may influence the choice include seniority and

geographic location (applicants who have been on the list for several years and live in areas which are under-represented in the geographic distribution of workers throughout the island).

The Contract

Once FARMS employees are selected they must undergo medical exams and sign the contract prior to their departure. The purpose of the medical exam is to ensure that there are no physical or medical conditions which will hamper an employee's ability to perform his work in Canada, or cause him to be sent home before his work is finished. FARMS employees must also have a current passport and must sign the "Agreement For The Employment In Canada Of Commonwealth Caribbean Seasonal Agricultural Workers," better known among St Lucians as "the contract." A copy of this four page document is located in Appendix One. The contract is an agreement between parties who are called "The Employer" (an Ontario grower), "The Worker" (a St Lucian), and "The Government Agent" (the liaison officer responsible for the Eastern Caribbean, Mr. Burns Bonadie). This agreement defines all of the conditions under which employment of St Lucians by Ontario growers will take place. It includes the formal rules and regulations on the following topics: scope and period of employment; lodging and meals; payment of wages; deductions of wages; insurance

for occupational and non-occupational injury and disease; maintenance of work records and statement of earnings; travel and reception arrangements; obligations of the employer; obligations of the worker; premature repatriation; financial undertakings; and governing laws.

After the medical exam is completed and the paper work in order, the chosen workers wait until the Ontario farmer is ready for them. The names of departing workers and the times of their flights to Canada are again announced on the radio. If the workers have telephones, the officer at the Department of Labour may contact them by phone. Those who are leaving assemble at the international airport in Vieux Fort, and the flight to Toronto takes just under six hours.

Arrival in Canada

Once St Lucians arrive in Toronto, they are met by their employers and driven by car or bus to the farm where they will live while they are in Canada. For first-time travellers, arrival can be pretty exciting. A man who has worked in Canada for thirteen years, remembers how he felt when he first saw Toronto, and the following is a transcription of his exact words:

When I hear the pilot said I am in Toronto now and the plane travel almost three quarters of an hour and the plane don't land yet, and only one thing I see...light, light, light, light, and I say Oh my God, this a country.

When the plane land in Toronto, and I see Toronto, I said I lost!

When I see inside the terminal, we have to take a bus, the farmer don't come and take us in Toronto, and travel from Toronto to Delhi.

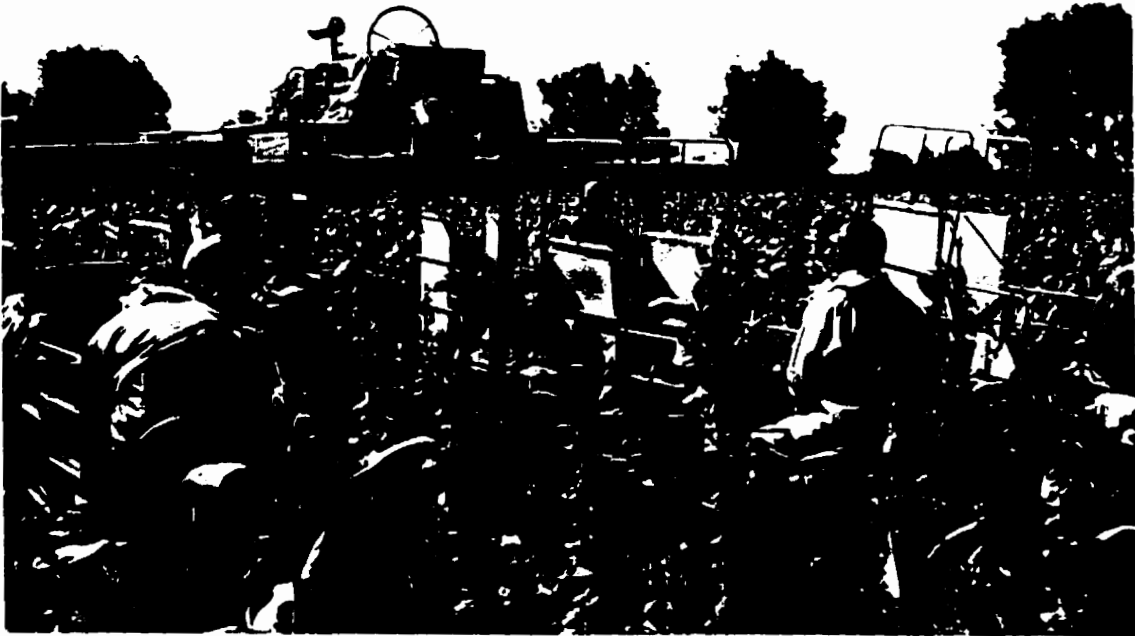
When I reach in Delhi, the farmer take us in Delhi and bring us in the farm and I see the bus run, the bus run, the bus run. I say Oh my God today I dead!

Two and a half drivin from Toronto to Delhi, and from Delhi to the farm and I have to travel another hour again. Today I dead.

That very, very, very, very big country. I can't understand that. And the people workin every day, all night in the street. Taxi run all the time, bus, all the time, train, all the time. Oh yoy! The road almost full all the time. The cars in and out, in and out, all the time - big traffic (Exact translation of a tape-recorded interview with a FARMS employee in St Lucia, April, 1993).

Depending on the type of farm that employs them, St Lucians may begin work right away, or they may enjoy a few days to settle in. This varies among farms. For instance, one man recalls landing in Toronto at two O'clock in the afternoon and starting work in the field two hours later. Others complain that sometimes they wait for days before beginning to earn money. New employees need time for orientation and job instructions. The initial training may be carried out by a fellow St Lucian who has worked on the farm before, by a foreman, who may also be a St Lucian, or by the grower.

Suitable clothing for work in Canadian fields is the first thing new employees must acquire. A set of rain gear and rubber boots are basic requirements for most farm jobs. Although work in the fields may be suspended during heavy



St Lucians harvesting tobacco on the Morrison farm.

periods of rain, light drizzle and early morning dew make protective clothing necessary. In addition, sweaters, socks, mitts or gloves, and hats are important items for people who are used to the warm tropical temperatures of the Caribbean. Growers often loan money to new employees for the purchase of clothing and other necessities the men will need before they receive their first pay. All farmers provide lodging equipped with bedding, towels, cooking and eating utensils, televisions and radios. These are considered necessities for anyone in Canada. Beyond those

basics, it is up to individual workers to purchase whatever they would like for recreation time. A popular item is a bicycle, and West Indian men riding along the highways is a common sight in rural Ontario during the summer.

New farm workers say that the first few weeks on an Ontario farm are difficult times. Life in rural Ontario is very different from St Lucia, and the bunkhouse-type of accommodations which are standard on the farms, are foreign to the men. In St Lucia, a man can come and go as he pleases, whereas in Canada, a FARMS employee may not leave the farm without the grower's permission. In many cases, Ontario farms are quite isolated and workers need transportation in order to leave the farms. For some of the men I interviewed, confinement to the farm was very uncomfortable and disappointing. As one man lamented: "I travel to Canada to see the country, and all I see is one bunkhouse, one set of field." Another man said: "I am a big boy, so long as I do my work I should be able to do whatever I want on my time off. When I am in Canada, I have to go out and see things." A third man told me about the differences between two growers who employed him. On one tobacco farm, the men could leave after they were finished work for the day. At the beginning of the harvest season, when they picked "sand leaves" (the large leaves at the bottom of the plant) they were finished by ten in the morning, and they often went to another farm to visit men

they knew. If those men were still working, the visitors might help them finish. When this man changed farms, things were very different. He was not allowed to leave the farm except on Friday nights, and his employer waited for the men to finish shopping and brought them home immediately. The only social experiences St Lucians had on this farm were a couple of parties organized by the women who worked in the "table gang."

Isolation is less of a problem when a farm is located near a town, or when farmers are sensitive to the culture shock St Lucians may experience. During interviews, St Lucians identified three employers who believe their employees need a change of scenery several times a week and are quite willing to drive them into town or to some other location. A man who worked for the same tobacco grower for thirteen years said his employer will take him anywhere he wants to go: "If there is a sale somewhere, if you want to go hear a singer, he will bring you, or Canada Wonderland, CN Tower, to see fireworks in Toronto." Twenty-two other St Lucian men report having the use of a vehicle while they are in Canada, and they can leave the farm whenever they are not working, provided someone with a valid drivers licence agrees to drive them. One man who has worked at the same farm for four years said the wife of his employer encourages the men to leave for the whole week-end, especially during the early part of the season when they are not busy. Two

other men who have relatives in Toronto were able to spend three week-ends with them during the 1992 season.

As St Lucians become accustomed to life in rural Ontario, some of the strangeness and feelings of isolation disappear. Several men told me they consider their employers to be friends. In two cases, men said they would not want to work in Canada if they had to change farms. Most of the workers call their employer by first name and demonstrate extensive knowledge about the entire family on the farm. St Lucians who return to the same farm year after year and have seen the children of the family grow up express a feeling of belonging to the farm. After four or five years in the same place, employees become familiar with the area and the people. One man who has worked on the same farm for ten years visits the immediate neighbours on a regular basis and knows many of their friends. He is also familiar with people in the larger community, as a result of his attendance in church over the years. Another man has returned to the same farm for eight years and his wife, Juliette, joined him six years ago. Thomas worked on the farm alone for nine months each year. After two years, his employer came up with the idea of hiring Juliette for four or five months each season. The grower built the couple a house, provides them with their own van to drive, and trusts them to run his farm while he goes away on holidays.

This special relationship between employer and employee

is, however, quite rare. Relationships between Ontario growers and St Lucian workers depend very much on the individuals involved and on the length of time a worker returns to the same farm. As the following section on work histories shows, lasting employment relationships characterize only a small proportion of the total number of St Lucians who have worked on the contract.

WORK HISTORIES

The work histories I constructed through the records at the Department of Labour and through interviews with St Lucians who have travelled to Canada describe the ways in which FARMS has been used by different people in different ways and for different reasons. Growers in Ontario, officials in the St Lucian Department of Labour, and employees in St Lucia all agree on one thing: the programme should continue and should be expanded. Ontario growers initiated FARMS as a solution to their labour problems, and continue to guide the functioning of the programme in directions which appear to give them complete control. Those members of the St Lucian Department of Labour who have been responsible for recruiting workers on the island are very much in favour of the programme because it provides employment as well as Canadian currency.

Returning to the Same Farm

Ontario growers determine the number of St Lucians able to travel to Canada each season and one of the foundations of the FARMS programme is the concept of the returned or named worker. Table 6.8 shows that returned workers do indeed form the core of the programme.

Table 6.8
DESCRIPTION OF FARMS EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION, 1979-1992

Year	Number Of Workers	Return From Year Before		Return From Other Years	Total Return		First Year	
		#	(%)		#	(%)	#	(%)
1979	54						54	
1980	95	46	(85.2)		46	(48.4)	49	(51.6)
1981	97	68	(71.6)	2	70	(72.2)	27	(27.8)
1982	88	55	(56.7)	8	63	(71.6)	25	(28.4)
1983	73	69	(78.4)	3	72	(98.6)	1	(1.4)
1984	79	60	(82.2)	12	72	(91.1)	7	(8.9)
1985	83	60	(75.9)	9	69	(83.1)	14	(16.9)
1986	70	63	(75.9)	2	65	(92.9)	5	(7.1)
1987	86	55	(78.6)	3	58	(67.4)	28	(32.6)
1988	130	61	(70.9)	3	64	(49.2)	66	(50.8)
1989	165	111	(85.4)	6	117	(70.9)	48	(29.1)
1990	117	101	(61.2)	2	103	(91.6)	14	(8.4)
1991	93	85	(72.6)	4	89	(95.7)	4	(4.3)
1992	103	78	(83.9)	18	96	(93.2)	7	(6.8)
TOTAL	1333	912		72				

Source: Department of Labour, St Lucia; Fieldnotes 1993.

In 1980, 1984, 1989, and 1992, 80 per cent or more of those employed by the FARMS programme returned the next season. In all other years except 1982 and 1990, which were times of drastic decreases in employment, percentages of return remained at 70 per cent or higher. When the relationship

between returned workers and new workers is considered, returned St Lucians (including those who returned from years other than the previous season) constitute 80 per cent of the total number employed in 1985, and 90 per cent or more of that total during 1983, 1984, 1986, 1990, 1991, and 1992. Only in 1980 and 1988, years in which there were sharp increases in the number of employees, did the percentage of returned workers drop below 50.

These figures, then, show that of the 1333 jobs in Canada, most (73.8 per cent) were filled by returned workers. The term "returned workers" is deceptive, however; while some of these workers returned to the same farm, others changed their place of employment to different farms. The next section explores the implications of changing employers within the FARMS programme.

Changing Farms

When I began to collect work histories in St Lucia, I had several questions in mind that I hoped would elicit information on the extent to which St Lucians were able to manipulate their participation in the programme to suit their own needs. These questions were: Can St Lucians change employers once they are in the programme? What happens to an employee when an employer stops importing St Lucians? Can an individual drop out of the programme for a year or two and then return?

Ontario growers, as employers, maintain the FARMS programme and continue to control its structure in order to maximize its benefits and minimize its costs. As was discussed in the last chapter, one of the most important costs of labour is losing trained employees. Therefore, when a grower requests the return of a trained worker, he or she expects that worker to arrive in Canada at the designated time. St Lucian workers, however, do not always comply with the wishes of the growers, and have interests of their own which may include changing farms, even though they have been requested by a previous employer.

Table 6.9 shows how extensive the practice of changing farms is, despite growers' efforts to discourage it.

Table 6.9
RETURNING TO THE SAME FARM AND CHANGING FARMS

Year	WORKED ON SAME FARM		CHANGED FARMS	
	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
1980	33	(71.7%)	13	(28.3%)
1981	48	(70.6%)	20	(29.4%)
1982	39	(70.9%)	16	(29.1%)
1983	56	(81.2%)	13	(18.8%)
1984	50	(83.3%)	10	(16.7%)
1985	54	(90.0%)	6	(10.0%)
1986	34	(54.0%)	29	(46.0%)
1987	38	(69.1%)	17	(30.9%)
1988	44	(72.1%)	17	(27.7%)
1989	64	(57.7%)	47	(42.3%)
1990	68	(67.3%)	33	(32.7%)
1991	63	(74.1%)	22	(25.9%)
1992	65	(83.3%)	13	(16.7%)
TOTAL	656	(71.9%)	256	(28.1%)

Source: Department of Labour, St Lucia; Fieldwork 1993.

In some cases, employers may be responsible for causing

changes by dropping out of the programme or by not naming workers from the previous season. When a FARMS worker is not requested because his employer has dropped out of the programme, or out of farming all together, and the St Lucian man is known to be a good worker, the recruiting officer at the Department of Labour places him on another farm at the first opportunity.

Table 6.10 shows the number of farms and jobs lost each year, the number of St Lucians who were able to change farms the next season or in following seasons, the number who dropped out of the programme, and the number of new farms and jobs that were added each year.

Table 6.10
RESULTS OF THE LOSS AND GAIN OF FARMS AND JOBS

YEAR	FARMS LOST	JOBS LOST	CHANGED FARMS	RETURNED LATER	DID NOT RETURN	FARMS GAINED	JOBS GAINED
1980	1	1	1			9	25
1981	7	8	4	2	2	4	8
1982	8	19	1	11	7	4	10
1983	4	7	4	0	3	2	3
1984	2	3	2	0	1	2	3
1985	2	3	0	0	3	1	1
1986	3	8	6	0	2	2	8
1987	1	4	3	0	1	2	3
1988	2	4	2	0	2	11	44
1989	7	17	15	0	2	5	28
1990	7	42	17	6	19	3	16
1991	4	16	7	2	7	1	3
1992	2	6	4	0	2	3	13
TOTAL	50	138	66	21	51	49	165

Source: Department of Labour, St Lucia; Fieldwork 1993.

Throughout the fourteen years of the programme, the St Lucian Department of Labour has attempted to keep FARMS

employees with good records active in the programme. One of the ways the Department does this is by placing workers who have completed their previous contracts, but have not been requested by their previous employers, on other farms. For instance, in 1990 seven growers dropped out of the programme leaving 42 St Lucians without jobs in Canada. Two new growers joined the programme and one returned after dropping out for the 1989 season. Together, they provided 16 new jobs. The Department of Labour placed 17 workers on other farms (only two workers went to new farms), while 25 workers did not return to Canada that year. Six St Lucians did return later, two in 1991 and four in 1992, while 19 had not returned by 1992. Comparison of Tables 6.9 and 6.10 shows that of the 256 times St Lucians changed employers, only 66, or 25.8 per cent of those changes were the result of an employer dropping out of the FARMS programme. This means that in 74.2 per cent of the cases workers changed employers for other reasons.

The reasons why St Lucian FARMS workers change employers depend on the interests that motivate individuals to work on the contract. One of the most common reasons employees give for changing employers is to extend the amount of time spent working in Canada each season. As the next section will show, the longer one works in Canada each season, the more money one makes. For those St Lucians who work on the contract primarily to make money, changing

employers in order to work longer suits their needs. For other St Lucians who work on the contract to gain experience in another country, or to leave the island for awhile, changing employers may not be a priority. For example, although seven of the men I interviewed expressed the desire to change employers so that they could work longer in Canada each season, more than half were satisfied with six to eight weeks,⁵ and two men even changed from working on vegetable farms, which employed them for six to eight months, to tobacco farms, where they worked only six to eight weeks.

Dissatisfaction with employers is another common reason St Lucian men change farms. The most serious example of dissatisfaction is the complaint that particular growers "cheat" on the calculation of wages. It is commonly believed, among FARMS workers, that one tobacco grower habitually worked his employees far beyond filling the one kiln for which he paid them. With the exception of two men who have returned to this farm for nine years, St Lucians rarely work for this employer more than one or two seasons.

When viewed from individual work histories, changing farms is very common among St Lucians. Table 6.11 shows that it is, in fact, rare for an employee to work for any length of time without changing employers at least once or twice. Only 33 St Lucians (22.1 per cent), out of 149 who have worked in Canada for four years or more, have remained with the same employer.

Table 6.11
NUMBER OF EMPLOYERS AND YEARS IN PROGRAMME

YEARS	NUMBER OF EMPLOYERS								TOTAL
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
14			1		1			1	3
13	2		2	2					6
12		2	2	1					5
11		4	1	1	4				10
10		5	2		2		1		10
9	1		2			1			4
8	1	3	2	2					8
7		2	4						6
6	1	5	9	1					16
5	9	15	11	1	3				39
4	19	13	8	2					42
3	11	22	6						39
2	26	38							64
1	97								97
TOTAL	167	109	50	10	10	1	1	1	349

Source: Department of Labour, St Lucia; Fieldwork 1993.

Twice as many, 67 (45 per cent) have worked for three or more employers. The difficulty with using this data to support the argument that St Lucians are able to change farms whenever it suits their needs is that, in many cases, I have no way of knowing whether the farmer initiated the change by not requesting the worker to return, or whether the worker refused the grower's request and was able to convince the St Lucian recruitment officer to place him on a different farm.

The work histories of St Lucians who have travelled to Canada provide a partial answer to the third question I had in mind when I began research for this study: Can an individual drop out of the Programme for a year or two and

then return? Table 6.12 shows the number of years 69 individuals skipped before returning and how often returning workers went back to the same farm or changed farms.

Table 6.12
DROPPING OUT OF THE PROGRAMME AND RETURNING

YEARS SKIPPED	NUMBER	RETURNED TO SAME FARM	CHANGED FARMS
1	44	11	33
2	18	1	17
3	5	0	5
4	3	0	3
5	1	0	1
6	1	0	1
TOTAL	72	12	60

Source: Department of Labour, St Lucia; Fieldwork 1993.

Although workers skipped years 72 times, three men did this twice. While these figures are not especially impressive, they do show that 69 farm workers out of 349 (20 per cent) have been able to return to Canada after they stopped "workin' on the contract" for at least one year. In 21 of the 72 instances, workers were not requested because their employers stopped importing St Lucians.

Gathering information on the ability of workers to remain home for a year or more and then become active again was a difficult task, and the problems I encountered were similar to those I experienced trying to sort out whether changing farms was initiated by St Lucians or by Ontario growers. Ten St Lucian men told me they skipped one year of travel to Canada for personal reasons which included

sickness or death of parents, the need for a break, problems on their own farms, or the offer of a temporary job at home. In two of those ten instances, the recruitment officer at the Labour Department said the men had not been requested by their employers.

Returning to the same farm, changing farms, and staying home for a year or two are not completely controlled by St Lucian workers. These options depend partly on the actions of Ontario growers and partly on decisions made within the Department of Labour in St Lucia and by the Liaison officer in Toronto. When St Lucians are able to make their own choices, they do so for individual reasons that reflect their interests in "workin' on the contract." If travel and experience are the main reasons individuals leave the island, changing farms may increase the amount of different things a man may discover about Canada, or it may not be important at all. Staying home for a year or two in order to "rest," take care of family problems, or take advantage of a job opportunity on the island, may fit these interests perfectly. When making money is the main interest, St Lucians may change farms in order to increase earnings, and they may not want to miss a year of travel.

CANADIAN MONEY

Canadian money is valued by St Lucians for reasons that are both economic and symbolic. One Canadian dollar is

worth approximately two Eastern Caribbean dollars. The exchange rates over the fourteen years that St Lucians have been "workin' on the contract" have been as high as 2.30 and as low as 1.89, averaging 2.13. Symbolically, Canadian money represents both the value of travel and what St Lucians describe as the "honesty" of the Canadian government as opposed to the "dishonesty" of officials at home. Despite repeated attempts by employees at the Department of Labour to explain to FARMS workers that most of the deductions from their wages are taken out in Canada, St Lucians persist in believing that the St Lucian government is to blame. In this section, I will summarize the earnings of St Lucian FARMS employees, the deductions made in Canada and in St Lucia, and how the money is spent in Canada.

Earning the Money

Economically, working in Canada is very profitable for St Lucian FARMS employees. Table 6.13 shows the average wage for each year. In 1992, the average wage for "workin' on the contract" was EC \$10,630, down some from 1991 when it was EC \$12,022. In 1992, the highest gross earning was EC \$27,937. Eleven men grossed over EC \$20,000, and thirteen grossed between EC \$15,000 and \$19,999. The amount of money a St Lucian earns varies directly with amount of time he spends in Canada in one season. Those who earned between EC \$10,000 and \$11,000 spent ten to fifteen weeks in Canada

during the 1992 season.

Table 6.13
AVERAGE GROSS EARNINGS BY SEASON,
1979-1992

Year	Earnings	
	(Cdn \$)	(EC \$)
1979	2,020.81	4,597.83
1980	2,405.15	5,267.24
1981	2,445.08	5,428.07
1982	2,563.64	5,460.52
1983	2,925.85	6,202.74
1984	3,083.86	6,136.88
1985	3,105.24	5,868.96
1986	3,494.96	6,710.33
1987	3,666.91	7,464.73
1988	3,788.85	8,373.36
1989	4,337.66	9,586.24
1990	4,700.82	10,821.16
1991	5,439.96	12,022.29
1992	5,038.39	10,630.40

Source: Department of Labour,
St Lucia; Fieldnotes
1993.

Vegetable farmers typically request employees in the spring and keep them until fall. These men consistently earn the most money each year. Tobacco farmers and apple growers, on the other hand, request most of their employees for the six to eight week peak harvesting season, although even these farmers usually send for one or two men in the spring for planting and other tasks prior to harvest as well as after.

Table 6.14 summarizes the total amounts St Lucians have earned "workin' on the contract" between 1979 and 1992. When the total gross earnings for all the years St Lucians have been employed in Canada are considered, almost half the

total number of St Lucians, 167 (47.9 per cent), have earned between \$10,000 and \$50,000, 44 (18 per cent) have earned between \$50,000 and \$100,000, and 19 (7.6 per cent) have earned over \$100,000.

Table 6.14
TOTAL GROSS EARNING FOR ALL YEARS WORKED
(EC \$)

Amount	Number of Workers
\$200,000 - Over	1
150,000 - 199,999	3
140,000 - 149,999	3
130,000 - 139,999	2
120,000 - 129,999	3
110,000 - 119,999	1
100,000 - 109,999	6
90,000 - 99,999	2
80,000 - 89,999	6
70,000 - 79,999	14
60,000 - 69,999	12
50,000 - 59,999	10
40,000 - 49,999	21
30,000 - 39,999	27
20,000 - 29,999	43
10,000 - 19,999	76
1 - 9,999	110
Data Missing	10
TOTAL	349

Source: Department of Labour, St Lucia;
Fieldwork 1993

Thirteen of those whose gross earnings total in excess of \$100,00 have worked in Canada for ten years or more, one has worked for six years, and two have worked for five years. This shows that there is no direct relationship between the number of years a FARMS employee works in Canada and the total amount of earnings he or she will accumulate. Among the three men who have worked in Canada for fourteen years,

only one has earned over \$100,000, and only five of the twenty St Lucians who have worked on the contract for ten to eleven years have grossed over \$100,000. Eight of the FARMS employees who have total earnings between \$50,000 and \$99,999, have worked in Canada for five years and five have only worked on the programme for four years. Again, the more important factor is the length of each season a worker is employed in Canada.

During my interviews with St Lucians who worked in Canada, I consistently encountered the belief that not enough of the mandatory savings (25 per cent of total earnings) were being returned at the end of the season. Moreover, every person believed the St Lucian Government was keeping the bulk of these funds. Tables 6.15 and 6.16 show that this common belief was, in fact, grossly unfounded. The 6 per cent deduction in Table 6.15 represents the administrative costs involved in running the FARMS programme.⁶ The deduction for return airfare is the result of the growers' insistence on paying transportation costs to Kingston, Jamaica only, because this was the agreement made with Jamaica when the programme started.⁷ When all of the deductions made in Canada are totalled, they constitute from 11.0 per cent to 15.9 per cent of the Canadian gross.⁸ Several other deductions are made from the workers' wages in Canada before the mandatory savings are withdrawn. The Canadian government deducts both Canada

Pension⁹ and Unemployment Insurance.

Table 6.15
CANADIAN DEDUCTIONS FROM MANDATORY SAVINGS,
AVERAGE PER WORKER, 1979-1992 (Cdn \$)

YEAR ¹⁰	25% MANDATORY SAVINGS	6%	AIRFARE	TOTAL DEDUCTIONS
1979	505.20	122.82	100.00	237.22
1980	601.29	147.88	162.50	316.43
1981	611.27	146.49	185.00	332.44
1982	640.91	152.22	248.00	401.42
1983	731.46	175.68	286.00	465.75
1984	770.97	185.31	217.00	401.87
1985	776.31	185.83	215.00	400.83
1986	873.74	209.50	214.00	423.50
1987	916.73	219.80	194.00	421.07
1988	947.21	228.29	200.00	436.59
1989	1,084.42	435.94	204.00	691.34
1990	1,175.21	279.66	215.00	518.83
1991	1,359.99	326.18	220.00	658.90
1992	1,259.52	302.04	256.00	608.96

Source: Department of Labour, St Lucia;
Fieldwork 1993.

In addition, most Canadian growers deduct a weekly fee for transporting their workers to shopping facilities on Friday nights. In 1992, this fee was as high as \$18 per week, and was a bone of contention with many of the men. The fee is deducted from the men's wages even if they do not go into town, and it is regarded as unfairly high, especially in cases where the shopping destination is only a few miles away.

Table 6.16 shows the deductions made once the balance of the mandatory savings reaches St Lucia. The amount deducted in St Lucia each season is a fraction of what has been taken out in Canada.

Table 6.16
 ST LUCIAN DEDUCTIONS FROM
 MANDATORY SAVINGS, 1979-1992
 AVERAGE PER WORKER BY YEAR, EC\$

YEAR	2%
1979	13.42
1980	13.29
1981	14.05
1982	10.12
1983	12.72
1984	15.47
1985	15.53
1986	17.30
1987	21.27
1988	24.23
1989	22.43
1990	30.64
1991	31.57
1992	29.32

Source: Department of Labour,
 St Lucia; Fieldwork
 1993.

For instance in 1992 the average deduction taken from a worker's wages in Canada was Cdn \$608.95 compared to the average of EC \$29.32 (equivalent to Cdn \$13.22) taken by the St Lucian government. The St Lucian Department of Labour provides medical exams and most of the paperwork involved in meeting the requirements set by the Canadian Government at no expense to FARMS employees.

Spending The Money in Canada

The FARMS contract stipulates that growers must provide shelter for their employees, but workers are responsible for the rest of their living expenses while they are in Canada. The St Lucians I interviewed estimate they spend from \$25 to

\$40 per week on items such as food, laundry and personal supplies. In addition, men who have children send money home each month to the "child mother" for the care of the child, and men who have more than one "child mother" usually send money to each.¹¹ Men who still live in their mother's household commonly send money to these women as well, to help meet expenses in their absence.

Every FARMS employee I interviewed reports spending some money on items to take back to St Lucia. Men who have children bring clothes, shoes, toys and school supplies such as pencils, pens, calculators, and notebooks. Although clothing is not necessarily cheaper in Canada, men buy clothes for themselves, their children, and their wives and/or girlfriends because the styles are different. Most of the men also return with souvenirs, and one man told me that he would not be allowed to enter his house in St Lucia if he did not bring something from Canada for his wife and children. During my fieldwork in Simcoe, I witnessed FARMS workers buying freezers, stoves, refrigerators, sofas, and even entire bedroom and dining room sets. One St Lucian man reported bringing a motorcycle home from Canada, and a second man told me he has been looking for a motorcycle for the last two years.

The most common items bought in Canada during the first three years are small appliances, televisions and stereos. Not only are these items less expensive in Canada, the men

say the quality is much better. There is the general belief that imported electrical items from North America and Britain are inferior and often defective, with useless guarantees. Those FARMS employees who had businesses of their own or were trying to start businesses that involved the use of machinery reported buying equipment in Canada whenever the prices, plus the cost of shipping, were good. Men bought saws, generators, and tools of all sorts.¹²

"WHEN I REACH BACK IN ST LUCIA"

When I asked FARMS employees how they use the money at home, I received a variety of answers. Everyone reports spending at least part of their earnings for everyday living. The most common use of earnings for large purchases is for housing and/or land.¹³ Everyone I talked with said that using their money for housing is very important, and those who had not already finished building houses were either in the planning stage or in one of the various stages of construction. Men who are building houses typically go as far as they can with the money they save each season, and wait until the end of the next season to continue. Estimates from a St Lucian man who works as a mason when he is home place the cost of a two bedroom wooden house with indoor plumbing at Canadian \$10,000, not including land. There is general agreement among the workers I interviewed that one has to work in Canada for four or five years before



"Wall" houses and wooden houses in St Lucia.¹⁴

enough money can be accumulated to build a house or to purchase large items such as land and vehicles. The first year or two are generally spent accumulating smaller consumer goods such as electrical appliances, televisions and stereo systems. Only one of the men I talked with was able to buy land after just three years in Canada, and this individual transferred from a tobacco farm to an apple farm each season. All of this was in addition to his work in construction on the island. One man who has worked in Canada for only four years has invested in a

clothing/variety store which his partner runs during his absence. Another man purchased a van which he uses as a taxi when he is home.

Still it is not the case that all St Lucians make more money working in Canada than it is theoretically possible to make working at home.¹⁵ Well over three-fourths of the men I talked with said they can make as much or more money working in St Lucia, when they are employed. For those men who have skills, the wage rates for jobs in the island suggest that this is possible if they are employed full-time for a significant part of the year.

Table 6.17 shows the average wage paid for some of the jobs held by the men I interviewed.

Table 6.17
Some Sample Jobs in St Lucia, 1990

JOB	WAGES \$/EC
Cabinet Maker	\$275 per week
Wooden Furniture Finisher	100 per week
Auto Mechanic	950 per week
Welder	340 per week
Electric Light and Power (Worker)	5.50 - 5.87 per hour
Dock Worker	8.20 per hour
Bricklayer	8.00 per hour
Cement Finisher	8.00 per hour
Construction Carpenter	8.71 per hour
Plasterer	8.00 per hour
Building Electrician	8.45 per hour
General Worker in Construction	4.62 per hour

Source: International Labour Organization, World Labour Report, 1993:28.

The major problem with jobs in St Lucia is that many of them are not "regular jobs," jobs that last from one year to the

next. Unemployment is high, 20.1 per cent in 1990, and many of the men who work in Canada are not skilled in a high-demand trade. Even when a man is a skilled worker, problems with importing construction materials may interfere with reliable employment, as the following example shows. Tony, a man in his late forties, who has worked in Canada for thirteen years, is also a skilled mason in St Lucia. He began working in Canada because he wanted to see the country and because he could not rely on being employed on a steady basis at home. While I was in St Lucia, Tony showed me examples of his work which included commercial buildings, private homes, and stone walls. The second week after he returned home from the 1993 season, he was offered a job on a project at one of the big hotels on the island. The project was set to begin as soon as the construction materials cleared customs. Tony worked for two days on some preliminary construction, and then he waited for the materials. Weeks went by and still Tony waited. When I left, two months later, Tony was still waiting.

A second advantage of working in Canada, according to the FARMS employees I interviewed, is that it is easier to save money and return home with a lump-sum of cash. When combined with earnings in St Lucia, money saved from Canada is more likely to be applied to a particular goal such as the large purchases mentioned above. The men I talked with explained that it is difficult to save money at home. When

they socialize in St Lucia, they go to rum shops or gatherings outside their homes and they must spend money on their friends or lose face. On the island, the social obstacles to accumulating savings are impossible to avoid.

The amount of savings that is returned to St Lucia varies from year to year. Table 6.18 presents the total balance of savings for each year and the yearly average for individuals.

Table 6.18
TOTAL BALANCE OF SAVINGS FOR EACH YEAR AND
THE AVERAGE FOR WORKERS BY YEAR, 1979-1992

Year	Total Balance of Savings EC\$	Average Per Worker EC\$
1979	33,168.67	650.37
1980	54,894.14	616.79
1981	59,143.25	687.71
1982	34,360.23	497.97
1983	41,763.61	623.34
1984	55,337.68	758.05
1985	55,555.38	761.03
1986	56,789.31	847.60
1987	86,501.35	1,042.18
1988	143,658.93	1,187.26
1989	145,080.51	1,099.09
1990	168,766.31	1,506.84
1991	140,775.57	1,546.98
1992	140,799.74	1,436.73
TOTAL	1,216,594.68	

Source: Department of Labour, St Lucia;
Fieldwork, 1993.

The total amount of savings returned to St Lucia depends on the number of FARMS employees who work in Canada each year, and on the wages paid by growers each season. Those wages have risen consistently, on par with Canadian wages. The

amount of savings also varies from individual to individual.

Table 6.19 summarizes the total amounts, in excess of EC \$4,000, that have been returned to individual employees over the duration of employment.

Table 6.19
ACCUMULATED BALANCE OF SAVINGS

Amount (EC\$)	Number of Employees
30,000 +	1
24,000 - 25,999	1
22,000 - 23,999	2
20,000 - 21,999	3
18,000 - 19,999	2
16,000 - 17,999	5
14,000 - 15,999	5
12,000 - 13,999	4
10,000 - 11,999	7
8,000 - 9,999	17
6,000 - 7,999	12
4,000 - 5,999	35
TOTAL	85

Source: Department of Labour,
St Lucia; Fieldwork
1993.

The highest total amount returned to a St Lucian FARMS employee is \$30,259, over a period of fourteen years. This amount is very unusual, and only 30 (8.6 per cent) St Lucians FARMS workers have total returned balances that amount to \$10,000 or more.

Few St Lucian FARMS employees receive balances of savings in excess of EC \$2,000 in one season. Table 6.20 summarizes the exceptions. Based on a total of 1333 jobs in Canada, 153 (11.5 per cent), held by 53 FARMS employees,

have resulted in balances of savings amounting to \$2,000 or more in one season.

Table 6.20
NUMBER OF TIMES ST LUCIAN FARMS EMPLOYEES HAVE RECEIVED
EC \$2,000 OR MORE IN ONE SEASON

Year	Balances			
	\$2,000-2,999	\$3,000-3,999	\$4,000-4,999	\$5,000+
1983	2			
1984	6			
1985	1			
1986	7			
1987	9			
1988	13	7	1	
1989	18	1		
1990	17	11	4	1
1991	18	7	3	
1992	16	8	3	
TOTALS	107	34	11	1

Source: Department of Labour, St Lucia; Fieldwork 1993.

The largest balance of savings returned to a St Lucian employee for one season was \$5,512. Eleven employees have averaged \$2,000 per year in savings during their employment.

Tables 6.18 through 6.20 indicate the potential of St Lucian FARMS employees to use their savings for large purchases, to create or expand small businesses, to begin or continue building houses, or to improve their farms. How FARMS employees use the money they have earned in Canada depends on individual goals as well as cultural values.

Perception of The Programme in St Lucia

The general perception of the FARMS programme, as it

was expressed to me by St Lucians who have worked in Canada, is that it is very good for St Lucia as a country as well as for individual workers and their families. One of the most common reasons given for this positive evaluation is the belief that young men must leave the island and experience the outside world in order to grow into men. As one father, who was himself a FARMS employee for five years, explained about his son:

When you're in St Lucia, it's the same thing that you're seein' every day. But when you're away, seein' different subjects, different things, your brain workin' very hard on what you does see. It's good for a man. I have a son here.... When he was here, he was troublesome like hell. If you have to be a man - you have to use your brain to be a man - that kind a life will be better for you. And from that time, he change. They go away and when they come back, they're developing good.

This view of labour migration as a rite of passage is shared by other West Indians. For instance, a young man from Grenada told me:

On your own you become self-reliant.... You have to study for your own now...OK, back home you may be able to help yourself by getting a work, try to develop yourself, but if you get any opportunities to travel, you will faster develop...because out here is much faster than back home.

Another common value assigned to working off the island is simply that it is good to travel, regardless of how old a man or woman is. Furthermore, people help each other travel by loaning money, clothing, suitcases, or anything else that travellers need. Mothers, sisters, and friends willingly look after the children of women who travel, even if the

journey is only to Venezuela, Barbados, or Martinique for a few days. I witnessed this cooperative travel behaviour, particularly among women, many times while I was in St Lucia, and I learned, first hand, that it is one of the most important things one does as part of a friendship. Several articles of my clothing and my leather duffle bag went to Venezuela within days of my second visit to St Lucia. While travel is important for women, it is considered to be a necessity for men, and working in Canada means that men can travel even if they do not have money to leave the island as tourists. This view is accepted by both men and women, and it was a woman who first explained it to me.

FARMS workers also told me that "workin' on the contract" is good for St Lucia as a country because it establishes connections between Canada and St Lucia. As one man put it: "Canada and St Lucia helping each other: Canada giving money; St Lucia helping Canada with food." Another man said that St Lucians in Canada tell Canadians about their island and this helps tourism. One man arranged inexpensive accommodation for two women who worked with him in Ontario, introduced them to his friends at home, and acted as a tour guide for their two week holiday.

When asked what specific goals they had when they first decided to work in Canada, St Lucians gave a variety of responses. The most popular was that "workin' on the contract" meant travelling to another country, but the men

also talked about economic goals: "I want to build a house," "There were no jobs here," "I wanted to help my mother and father," "I just needed money to live," "I wanted to buy machinery for my business." Although money was important to almost all of the workers, at least half of those interviewed said that the experience of working in another country was equally as important: "I wanted to get off the island for a while and see how other people work and live." "It sounded interesting," "My father worked in Canada and I wanted to try it." "I wanted to see my sister in Toronto." The value placed on "experience" was also shared by other West Indian FARMS employees I interviewed. One man from Dominica explained: "To know a big country.... To see the workmens in the country, see how the operation is and see us going in and out."

Several of the men interviewed said that working in Canada had caused problems in their relationship with their wife/partner. In two instances, these problems ended the relationship, but in three other cases, when the relationship was threatened by work in Canada, the men either changed farms so that they worked a shorter season or stopped "workin' on the contract," sometimes for a year or two and sometimes permanently.

I talked with fourteen women in St Lucia who had husbands or partners working in Canada. When I asked women how they felt about their partners travelling abroad, they

all said they were "accustomed to it." Although one woman said she wished her partner would stay in Canada longer, it was more often the case that women said they missed their partner, but believed that working off the island was a necessary and good thing to do whenever the opportunity came along, at least for a few years. Responses from these women ranged from reports of finding life easier when a partner was gone (less laundry, less cooking, more free time) to finding life more difficult (extra chores, especially when the woman was left with a farm to look after). Two of the women said their partners were going to stop travelling after this year, and both said they were happy about this.

STAYIN' HOME

In 1992, 246 St Lucians who had worked on the contract were no longer travelling to Canada. While it is impossible to tell how many of these men chose to stop for reasons of their own and how many were dropped from the pool because they did not meet the standards of their employers, the work histories do provide some clues. In thirty-one cases, workers refused to finish their contracts and were repatriated. In four cases, the men remained in Canada: two simply disappeared and were designated AWOL, and two married Canadians. A further two men died: one in 1984 and the other in 1992. In twenty-seven instances, workers had changed farms at least three times, and the officer in the

Department of Labour dropped them from the pool. In another forty-eight cases, employers withdrew from the St Lucian segment of FARMS. The biggest loss of jobs in Canada took place in 1990 and 1991 when the number of St Lucians "workin' on the contract" decreased drastically. During those years, seventy-four men lost their jobs and had not returned by 1992.

Toward the end of my stay in St Lucia, I began to talk with men who had stopped working in Canada. My purpose was twofold: to find out why they had stopped, and to learn what effect this had on their lives. Table 6.21 lists the last years these men travelled to Canada. For six of them, 1991 was their last year; six other men travelled to Canada to work for the last time between 1988 and 1990; and a final six men had not travelled to Canada within the last five years.

Table 6.21
LAST YEAR EIGHTEEN FARMS
EMPLOYEES WORKED IN
CANADA

Year	Employees Interviewed
1984	2
1985	1
1987	3
1988	1
1989	4
1990	1
1991	6
TOTAL	18

Source: Fieldwork 1993

Those who last worked on the contract in 1991 may have only skipped one year, and all except one did want to return. However, FARMS has initiated a new rule disqualifying men over the age of 45 unless they are requested by a previous employer. Only one of the six who did not return in 1992 is young enough to meet the qualification and this is the man who does not want to travel any more.¹⁶ Out of the total of eighteen men, nine said they did not want to return to Canada, eight said they would like to return, and one was undecided. Those who did not want to return included the four men who last travelled in 1989, the man whose last year was 1988, two of the three whose last year was 1987, and one of the two who had not travelled since 1984.

The reasons men gave for not "workin' on the contract" were as varied as those which induced them to travel in the first place. Some men said they left the island to work abroad because they did not have a "regular job" in St Lucia, and a number of the men I interviewed did, in fact, stop "workin' on the contract" once they were able to secure permanent employment at home. Others stopped travelling simply because they were tired of it and wanted to "settle down." Still others found that after one season in Canada, they did not like the work and did not return, even when they were requested by farmers who found their work satisfactory or very good (some even quit before the contract was complete). Two of the men who did not want to

return to Canada owned rum shops in their communities, and another had his own construction business, although this man was undecided in the sense that he told me he thought about returning every so often. Several of these men had permanent jobs: one was an electrician, another worked for a construction company in the southern part of the island and had been employed steadily, as was a man who worked in construction in the Bexon area. A man in Mon Repos had found steady employment in the building trade, had built a large house and married since he last travelled to Canada. Two other men were farmers, one had increased his acreage and managed to secure an outlet for his produce with one of the large grocery stores on the island and with one of the tourist hotels.

Three FARMS employees who were still travelling to Canada, told me they were ready to stop. Juliette explained that she does not really like to leave home for so long, but her husband is gone for at least nine months of the year and she agrees to "work on the contract" from June until October so she can spend that time with him. Each year she threatens that it will be her last. One man said he would work one more year and then he would be ready to begin construction on a tourist shop with two of his sons. The third man told me he was beginning to be bothered by the cold in Canada, and he had promised his employer to work one more season training his replacement.

The information I gathered from people who no longer travel to Canada or are ready to stop highlights some of the ways in which working in Canada, on a temporary basis, is used by St Lucians. Along with other part-time employment, these workers use their jobs in Canada to create income during times when they are building homes, trying to establish their own businesses, improving their farms, or looking for more permanent jobs.

"WORKIN' ON THE CONTRACT" AS STRATEGY AND SYMBOL

Since emancipation, people in the Commonwealth Caribbean have combined a number of economic strategies in order to make a living. In St Lucia, these economic strategies form a complex of jobs for wages, as well as activities that do not involve wages but put food on the table or serve as barter for goods and services (Koester 1986). Activities such as farming, shop keeping, construction work, building trades, and self employment in the informal sector are often combined with "workin' on the contract." Among the 87 FARMS employees I interviewed, 32 list farming as one of their primary occupations at home. For ten of these farmers, masonry and construction are additional primary occupations. Two FARMS employees list fishing as a primary occupation, two others own rum shops (one of those farms as well), and one man is a baker and a mason when he is home. "Workin' on the contract" is part

of a set of economic strategies that include many other pursuits in a variety of combinations.

St Lucians have a saying that summarizes the idea that a person must be flexible and ready to take advantage of opportunities: "mantche shien, pwen shat," "if you lose the dog, grab the cat." Charles Carnegie calls this "strategic flexibility," a term he uses to describe St Lucian values of "adjusting rapidly to whatever comes along," as well as "the actual building of multiple options, potential capital as it were, to hedge against future insecurity" (1987:32-33). As an economic strategy, "workin' on the contract" has this flexibility. It is an opportunity that can be used when available, but it is rarely an end in itself or a job in the sense that Canadians might define a "career." As Carnegie explains:

It is commonplace to have several sources of income and systematically to maintain each one, even if some may bring in very little cash. Together they allow the household to meet its many obligations and to meet sudden and unexpected changes in economic conditions. In addition, people are always looking ahead to see what other occupational possibilities they can develop; to predict changes in consumer demand for new products and services; and to explore new training opportunities (1987:38).

Beginning with contract work in Trinidad, British Guiana, and Venezuela, leaving the island for wage labour and returning again has been a consistent theme in St Lucian history. This approach to surviving the unknown has served St Lucians well and given them at least some measure of

self-sufficiency that has helped them endure bad economic times, historically as well as in the present.

"Workin' on the contract" is the most recent form of temporary labour migration in St Lucia. As an economic strategy, it has produced millions of Canadian dollars for FARMS employees. Money and goods are not the only things that are exchanged by St Lucians and Canadians during the agricultural season in Ontario. In addition to the material possessions St Lucians collect while they are in Canada, they also bring home experiences of living and working in a different country. These experiences range from participating in a rite of passage - leaving the island and learning to survive in the larger world - to making lasting friendships with employers and their families or other Canadians they have met.

Working temporarily abroad is described by St Lucians in terms that resemble van Gennep's (1909) concept of a rite of passage. There is a phase of separation when participants leave the island and their places in society, a middle phase when they travel to another place and occupy different social positions, and a third phase of reincorporation when people return to St Lucian society as changed persons. In the middle phase, FARMS employees, especially first-time travellers, occupy a state of liminality in which they are "betwixt and between," "neither here nor there" (Turner 1969:95). During the liminal

stage, St Lucians occupy a status outside the social norms of their culture, and outside the norms of Canadian culture as well. At home they were fathers, husbands, farmers, proprietors, construction workers, and most of all persons who could leave their place of residence at will. In Ontario, they become a homogenous collectivity of "workers" and "boys," in most cases confined to the farms where they are employed. Structurally, they occupy the position of children within the Canadian social system, but unlike Canadian children, they are not expected to "grow up" one day and assume the rights and obligations of Canadian adulthood. Once they return home, St Lucians become something more than they were when they left. If they travelled for the first time, they have proven their ability to survive in the world outside the island. Each time they travel, they become more "experienced" in the larger world, and they gain more prestige.

Making friends enhances the prestige travellers gain from working abroad, and the St Lucians I interviewed described positive interactions with at least one or two Canadians. Several of the growers who employ St Lucians have visited the island for holidays, and other employers and employees or friends send Christmas cards or letters during the year. Talk in the rum shops in St Lucian villages is often filled with stories of what happened this year in Canada, and talk in the bunkhouses among men from

different parts of St Lucia is often filled with what happened in St Lucia during the winter because many of these men only see each other in Canada. "Workin' on the contract," then, is more than just a job to many of the St Lucians who travel back and forth between Canada and the Caribbean. It is a social and a cultural experience as well as an economic one.

"Workin' on the contract," for the St Lucians I talked with is most often one job among other periodic episodes of employment. Only twelve of the men I interviewed who travel to Canada are full-time farmers when they are home. Juliette farms with her husband and sells some of the produce at the market in Castries. The others who farm, combine farming with temporary wage work when the opportunity comes along. These men are often construction workers, masons, electricians, carpenters, fishermen and rum shop proprietors, as well as FARMS employees. It is this use of "Workin' on the contract," as one strategy among others, that best describes St Lucia's participation in the FARMS Programme.

Attitudes towards working off the island are part of the culture of St Lucians. These attitudes are historically constituted and represent a core value that is prevalent throughout the Commonwealth Caribbean. Money is not the most important issue, it is simply one of many. Travel is considered to be necessary for the development of adulthood,

especially for males, and travelling away to make money that can be invested in a house is doubly valued because it fulfils both the economic and the symbolic functions of working abroad. Using one's savings from "workin' on the contract" continues the tradition of leaving the island, gaining experience in another country, and using the money to establish a partial independence from the dominant economy that began at emancipation over 150 years ago. It is an example of living the freedom that emancipation promised, but did not deliver.

END NOTES

1. Ten of the 87 men I interviewed had worked in the US before they changed to the Canadian FARMS programme. Another 24 men had worked temporarily in the Virgin Islands, Trinidad, and/or Barbados.
2. Not all of the Castries section of the island is urban, even though it contains most of urban areas. The following are rural communities and the number of FARMS employees I interviewed in each: Bexon (8); Ciceron (1); Goodlands (1); Odsan (1); Sarot (2).
3. In 1985, the St Lucian government began to redefine the administrative boundaries as part of its "Decentralization Project." These boundaries still divide the island into eight regions, although two quarters have been changed. Babonneau was separated from Gros Islet to become an independent region, and Choiseul was combined with Soufriere.
4. At mid-1992 the official estimate of St Lucia's population was 138,151. The main settlement areas included: Gros Islet 13,996 (10.1%); Dennery 11,574 (8.4%); Micoud 15,636 (11.3); Vieux Fort 13,618 and Laborie 7,763 (15.5%); Soufriere 7,963 and Choiseul 6,637 (10.6); Anse La Raye 5,217 and Canaries 1,865 (5.1%); Castries 53,882 (39%). Babonneau was not listed as a separate settlement area and was included within the region of Gros Islet. (Source: Ministry of Finance, Statistics and Negotiating, St Lucia).
5. 19 of the men I interviewed had worked for 6-8 weeks during the 1992 season, and 12 of those said they did not want to work longer.
6. The six per cent deduction for 1989 actually amounted to ten per cent.
7. Standard airfare is given for each year. Exceptions due to unfinished contracts include:

1979	\$349.00; \$351.00; \$378.00.
1980	\$486.93; \$394.93; \$167.50.
1983	\$583.00.
1987	Two men were charged \$494.00.
1988	Three men were charged \$519.00.
1989	Seven men were charged \$528.00; three men were charged \$610.00; others were charged \$1,026.00, \$992.00, \$893.00, \$577.00, \$524.00, \$510.00

1991 \$550.00.
 1992 Four men who did finish their contract were charged \$399.00; two others were charged \$458.00 and one was charged \$714.00.

8. The percentages for each year are as follows:

1979 =	11.7	1986 =	12.1
1980 =	13.2	1987 =	11.5
1981 =	13.6	1988 =	11.5
1982 =	15.7	1989 =	15.9
1983 =	15.9	1990 =	11.0
1984 =	13.0	1991 =	12.1
1985 =	12.9	1992 =	12.1

9. St Lucians will be able to collect Canada Pension when they reach age 65.

10. The number of St Lucians on the payroll for each year is as follows:

1979	54	1986	67
1980	93	1987	86
1981	97	1988	127
1982	69	1989	152
1983	73	1990	115
1984	77	1991	92
1985	81	1992	103

11. Cecil and Ebanks (1992) asked 243 FARMS workers how much money they sent home each month and the results were as follows: 0 = 12.4 per cent; \$20-\$100 = 44.4 per cent; \$101-\$200 = 27.8 per cent; \$201-\$300 = 10.3 per cent; \$301-\$400 = 4.7 per cent; over \$400 = 0.4 per cent. I did not repeat this question during my interviews.

12. The St Lucian government has traditionally approved of these purchases and has suspended duty on items which are classified as tools.

13. Given that Cecil and Ebanks (1992) asked 297 FARMS workers how they planned to use their earnings back home, I did not repeat their survey question. I concentrated more on what kinds of purchases they made and how they used their money to build or repair their homes. I did not do this systematically, however, if I asked about building homes and the respondents changed the subject, I did not push the issue. Cecil and Ebanks report the following uses for earnings: Purchase consumer items = 33.0 per cent; Either build or repair home = 25.4 per cent; Invest the money = 19.3

per cent; Save the money = 18.2 per cent; Educate children = 4.1 per cent.

14. A "wall house," as opposed to a wooden house, is built of cement blocks and is considered by St Lucians to be of superior quality. It also more expensive to build than a wooden house.
15. Although St Lucians made this statement to me, I believe it was not meant to be taken as a reference to what had actually happened that year. According to the records kept by the Department of Labour in St Lucia, weekly earnings for 1992 ranged from \$Cdn 211 to \$Cdn 518 per week. The exchange rate for Canadian currency in St Lucia in 1992 was 2.11. This means that the range in weekly earnings in Eastern Caribbean currency would be \$445.21 to \$1,092.98. According to Table 2.13, the theoretical possibility of earning that much per week does exist in St Lucia, but only one man, a banana farmer who earned \$Cdn 367 per week in Canada, told me that he actually earned more money per week in St Lucia during 1992. I have no way of verifying his statement.
16. This man is 32 years old and a full-time farmer with three children and another one on the way. He worked in Canada for four years, three of which kept him away from home for six months each season. He used his significant savings to extend and improve his farm, and he told me that although he enjoyed his time in Canada, it was time to stop travelling.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Cecil and Ebanks (1992:26) suggest that: "Colonial powers once mapped and earmarked their overseas holdings as solid economic parts of their domains. Today, the situation is somewhat reversed; West Indian islands are able to map and earmark part of Ontario as adjunct economic spaces." This ability of West Indians to extend the boundaries of their environment beyond the tiny islands of the Caribbean and to become active agents within that environment is the result of "workin' on the contract" and of the creation of FARMS by Ontario growers. Thus far in the dissertation, I have described the FARMS programme from four different vantage points: from Ontario employers and West Indian employees who form the core of the programme; from residents of Simcoe who come into contact with West Indian workers in town; and from the island of St Lucia. In this chapter, I summarize the conclusions reached so far in the dissertation. Then I discuss the broader implications of these conclusions for understanding international labour migration and its impact on St Lucia in terms of improving

quality of life on the island.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of this dissertation have emerged through an exploration of "workin' on the contract" as both an economic strategy and a symbol of freedom. As an economic strategy, "workin' on the contract" is a job and a source of money that can be used to finance daily subsistence as well as specific economic goals. As a symbol of freedom, "workin' on the contract" gathers up the various meanings of independence, autonomy, and sovereignty as they apply collectively and individually to people of African origin who were once denied basic human rights. The ability to physically leave the island and return, to earn one's livelihood independent of the island's dominant classes, to mature independent of the colonial mentality that has survived in St Lucia, to purchase land and build a home, and to make choices about how one's children grow up and are educated are all themes of freedom that lie beneath the reasons St Lucians told me they leave the island to work abroad.

Chapter three situates "workin' on the contract" within other exchanges that take place between Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean. People from the West Indies who work and live in Canada follow the same path as economic and cultural exchanges, all of which began during a colonial

history that placed both areas within the French and British struggle for expansion. I argue in this chapter that the St Lucian experience of that colonial history accounts for the propensity of islanders to leave, while the connections between St Lucia and Canada, established while they were both British colonies, partially explains why St Lucians come to Ontario. For those who are employed by FARMS, this explanation is only partial because they are not able to work in Ontario as free labourers and they must return home each year.

The creation of the FARMS programme was the result of Ontario growers' search for a reliable source of labour and the willingness of West Indians to work on Ontario farms. The conclusions of chapter four place FARMS within the global context of increased temporary labour migration and also highlight its particular uniqueness. FARMS is similar to the British guestworker scheme and the United States' BWI program in its "temporary" nature and its need to replace indigenous workers with foreign labour because of changes in the structure of the labour market. The Canadian programme differs from the other two, most significantly in the relationship between employers and employees that takes place on family farms in Ontario.

The conclusions of chapter five describe the employer-employee relationship as ranging from long-term friendships based on mutual respect to short-term experiences in which

either employees refused to return or growers terminated employment. Day-to-day interactions between growers and workers reflect the expectations each has of FARMS and are governed by cultural values of what "workin' on the contract" and importing "off-shore labour" mean. To St Lucians, "workin' on the contract" is a chance to experience a different way of life and a different culture. To growers, importing "off-shore labour" means employing a "reliable" labour force that will be there, ready to work when needed. At times these interests coincide and both growers and workers are able to realize their expectations. At other times the interests of employers and employees clash, as is the case when St Lucians want more time for social interactions off the farms and growers interpret this as "bad" working habits. The ways in which growers treat their employees determine how much of Canada St Lucians are able to experience, and the most successful employers (the ones who keep their trained employees year after year) understand that "workin' on the contract" is a social, as well as an economic, endeavour.

Chapter five also describes what happens to West Indians when they leave the farms and go into town. Much like the West Indian experience in Britain and the United States, these black FARMS employees encounter racism as they enter predominantly white societies. The conclusions of chapter five suggest that "racism" is not a uniform

attitude, and that, in Simcoe, it is not necessarily associated with migrant workers. Attitudes toward blacks, in Simcoe, were formed long before West Indians replaced transient migrant workers, and current reactions to black West Indians appear to be a continuation of the historical treatment American blacks received in that town. In other locations, St Lucian FARMS employees report different reactions by Canadian residents, and this leads to the conclusions that there are different degrees of racism and that they may have more to do with the concentration of black West Indians within a particular area than with their position as migrant workers.

The conclusions of chapter six describe FARMS from the vantage point of St Lucia. The seasonal round of travelling back and forth between the island and Canada has become a way of life for about one third of all those who have worked on the contract during the fourteen years that I was able to collect work histories. The most important points that were raised during my interviews with St Lucian FARMS employees are, first, that "workin' on the contract" is one economic strategy among many and is combined with other ways of making a living on the island, and second, that leaving the island to work is, in and of itself, a socially valued behaviour regardless of its economic aspects. The employment histories of those who work in Canada show that some of the time FARMS employees are able to manipulate

their participation in the programme to suit their needs; they can change employers and drop out of the programme for awhile and then return, without losing their jobs permanently. The employment histories also show that the Department of Labour in St Lucia has some control over who travels to Canada and where workers are employed.

The picture of FARMS that results from a combination of vantage points is one in which both conflict and cooperation coexist. Growers say West Indian workers are more "reliable" than Canadians because the West Indians are always there. The organization of FARMS guarantees growers that workers who quit before harvest is finished can be replaced immediately, and so it is FARMS that provides "reliability," not individual West Indian employees. St Lucians say they travel to Canada to work in order to make money and gain experience. The economic aspect of "workin' on the contract" is a point of cooperation between employers and employees. Both agree that money is important. On the other hand, the social aspect of working in Canada is often a point of conflict. Most growers use the economic dimension of "workin' on the contract" to contest West Indian social interests and define those workers who pursue social goals as "bad workers." From the vantage point of Simcoe residents, the same two-dimensional conflict emerges. Economically, residents of Simcoe value the FARMS programme because it benefits the business sector of the town and it

has contributed to the survival of agriculture. Socially, however, the FARMS programme is responsible for bringing thousands of West Indians into the area and Simcoe residents generally react by ignoring the workers.

"Racial" conflict is a factor in how Simcoe residents describe the FARMS programme, and it is also a topic of study that has been neglected in rural Ontario. The FARMS programme will continue to bring more black West Indians into rural areas that are populated predominantly by Canadians who consider themselves to be phenotypically "white." According to FARMS statistics, each year about five per cent of its employees remain in Canada illegally and some settle in small towns like Simcoe. The research I conducted in rural communities was just a beginning and the issues of conflict I discuss should be treated more as questions for further research than as final answers or results.

IMPLICATIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING LABOUR MIGRATION

As a social process, that is "historically conditioned" (Stern 1988:29), the FARMS programme is a local example of a global phenomenon. Attempts to understand international labour migration without considering its social dimensions or its historical contexts are bound to produce incomplete conclusions. The classical equilibrium perspective focuses on migrants' "rational" decisions as the economic unit of

analysis and is limited to micro-economic explanations of social phenomena. Similarly, macro-economic models attribute labour migration to the larger rationality of capitalism and the development of a global division of labour in which individual workers and individual employers either play no active part or are reduced to statistical descriptions. The concept of an "economic strategy" that is a product of labour migrants' historical experiences is more useful in describing how individuals negotiate local and global labour opportunities that have social and cultural implications.

Methodologically, a systems approach to the study of international labour migration highlights the interconnections of economic, social, political, and cultural dimensions. "Workin' on the contract" is an economic strategy that is used by St Lucians to reach material goals such as purchasing land, building houses, financing small businesses, increasing farm size and production, and accumulating manufactured items from Canada. These material goals gain meaning through the symbolic value of the cultural tradition of "workin' on the contract," which developed in opposition to the plantation economy and the lingering control the upper class maintains over working classes on the island. As a symbol of the meaning of freedom, "workin' on the contract" is a repository of cultural values that endow travelling abroad with the

properties of a secular ritual. It not only marks the transition from one stage of life to another, it is, itself, part of the process.

A systems approach emphasizes the importance of history in understanding international labour migration. Within anthropological research, historical contexts are essential (Trouillot 1992:31-32). Following Wolf and Mintz, I have attempted to construct segments of "cultural history" in which the goal has been "not to subsume local histories within global processes but to understand the formation of anthropological subjects ('real people doing real things') at the intersections of global and local histories" (Roseberry 1988:163), and to challenge the split between "our" history and "their" history (Wolf 1982:19). Mintz (1985b:xxx) argues that while anthropology should not become history,

without history its explanatory power is seriously compromised. Social phenomena are by their nature historical, which is to say that the relationships among events in one "moment" can never be abstracted from their past and future setting. Arguments about immanent human nature, about the human being's inbuilt capacity to endow the world with its characteristic structures, are not necessarily wrong; but when these arguments replace or obviate history, they are inadequate and misleading. Human beings do create social structures, and do endow events with meaning; but these structures and meanings have historical origins that shape, limit, and help to explain such creativity.

The FARMS programme is the point at which four cultural segments of history converge: the value of labour migration

in St Lucia; the growth and decline of farming in Ontario; the colonial connection between Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean; and the long presence of blacks in Canada. Where they meet, a new cultural segment of history is being created. The effect this has on growers in Canada seems to be positive. In providing the solution to labour problems, FARMS employees have become allies in the growers' struggle to preserve the family farm as a way of life in Ontario. The effect on residents in Simcoe appears to have both positive and negative aspects. While the people I talked with in Simcoe are prepared to accept West Indian employees as temporary workers, I found no evidence that they wanted to encourage a permanent Caribbean presence in their town.

"MAKING ST LUCIA A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE"

When labour migration is discussed by anthropologists in the academic literature, it is most often combined with development and the assumption is made that migrant workers are leaving conditions of poverty and unemployment (Kearney 1986). The general conclusion among those who studied labour migration in the Caribbean during the 1970s and 1980s is that it does not result in economic development for sending countries. Scholars complain that labour migrants use their earnings abroad to purchase luxuries instead of investing in more worthwhile, development-producing sectors of their economies (Martin 1991).

Remittances, the money labour migrants send home while they are working abroad, have become the focus of a large number of studies.¹ Although remittances have been said to reduce balance-of-payments deficits, provide foreign exchange revenue, accelerate capital formation, and increase rural incomes, the literature on migration in the West Indies shows that most remittances are used to purchase land, to build, repair, or furnish a home, or simply to supplement subsistence (Rubenstein 1983:298). However, the connection between labour migration and economic development has by no means been established: Papademetriou (1988) calls it "The Uncertain Connection" and Papademetriou and Martin (1991) call it "The Unsettled Relationship." Furthermore, while economic development was once thought to reduce international labour migration, the most recent research suggests that labour migration increases with economic development, at least in the short-term (Maingot 1991, Thomas-Hope 1992). Even the definition of "development," as it is described by international agencies, appears to be in flux. Both the World Bank and the United Nations discuss development in "human" terms rather than "economic" ones. For instance, the UN Development Programme's Annual Report focuses on "poverty" which it defines as "a denial of choices and opportunities for living a tolerable life" (1997:2), and it states that "the process of widening people's choices and the level of well-being

they achieve are at the core of the notion of human development" (Ibid:13).

I do not intend for this section to constitute an in-depth discussion of "development." Although I included investigation of the possibilities that workin' on the contract in Ontario might result in the transfer of technology, via the experience FARMS employees gained while they were abroad, and some diversification of agriculture by means of new or different varieties of fruits and vegetables brought back to St Lucia from Canada, I did not conduct research on "development" beyond those questions. On the other hand, I did ask FARMS employees if they thought working in Canada benefitted St Lucia, and I also focused on the ways these employees combined their Canadian jobs with other jobs or economic strategies at home. In this section, I will briefly discuss some of the issues that pertain to the uses of migrant's earnings. Based on my research in St Lucia, I will argue that several of the improvements St Lucian FARMS employees envision for their homeland can be facilitated by "workin' on the contract," particularly when it is combined with self-employment or irregular wage employment at home.

The most obvious economic benefit of the FARMS programme for the country of St Lucia is the foreign currency which can be used to pay foreign debts. In the last five years, \$335,308.90 in Canadian currency has been

remitted to the St Lucian government in the form of mandatory savings for the farm workers. This represents only part of the possible total that was brought into St Lucia because it does not include the money sent home each month or the Canadian cash FARMS employees bring with them when they return at the end of the season.

Improved housing is a second obvious benefit of working abroad. A study conducted in St Lucia in 1980 revealed that "73.62 per cent of houses were still constructed entirely of wood" (Potter 1993:106). Very few houses have been built by the National Housing Corporation, and the national and commercial banks exclude low-income groups from obtaining housing finance (Louis 1986). Building a new house or renovating an older one are high priorities for FARMS employees who return to Canada for several seasons.

Workin' on the contract also has the potential to provide the financing for small businesses in St Lucia. In a study of medium to long-term economic development performance and prospects of Caribbean Community countries, Compton Bourne (1988) concludes that one of the most pressing needs of the area is to increase the number of small businesses or entrepreneurs, rather than large scale industries. The advantage to small business enterprises is that they involve activities with which migrants are at least somewhat familiar (Rogers 1991:248). They also involve the potential for host and sending countries to

create programmes that promote and assist migrants in starting enterprises that are geared to the use of their savings and remittances (North & Whitehead 1991; Pessar 1991).

Both the Caribbean Development Bank and the National Development Foundations finance development projects in the Caribbean. The National Development Foundations disburse loans and credit to small businesses. Because small business applicants generally lack collateral and do not have credit histories which can be verified, conventional bank loans are generally difficult to obtain (Lalta 1991:175). In St Lucia, The Caribbean Association of Industry and Commerce Small Enterprise Assistance Project disbursed 68 "Micro-enterprise" loans, during 1987. The average size was US\$2,333 or EC\$6,299 (Ibid:178).

Between 1987 and 1992, 27 FARMS employees earned enough money in Canada to receive over \$EC 2,000 each year in the balance of their mandatory savings (chapter six). This means that for those who accumulate EC\$ 2,000, it would take only three years to save an amount equivalent to the average loan disbursed by the Small Enterprise Assistance Project. When the accumulated balances of savings were totalled over the fourteen years, 41 FARMS employees had earned a sufficient amount of money working in Canada to match the EC\$ 6,000 value of Micro-Enterprise loans.

Based on what I observed in St Lucia, small businesses

may begin with the purchase and resale of a few basic items in the home or yard. At this stage, it hardly qualifies for a "business" at all. In the neighbourhood where I lived, three such establishments were in the process of developing. One woman, sold soft drinks and beer to the immediate neighbours for a few cents more than the established places in the centre of the village. Another stocked some dairy products, fresh creole bread and miscellaneous articles. A third woman had basically the same combination of goods for sale, but was located further from the village than the first two. If profits are reinvested and inventories grow larger, these places begin to take on the appearance of actual small businesses.

For tiny businesses like these, small amounts of investment can increase stock or allow the building of an actual 'store' separate from a house. While these small businesses may not bring in large amounts of money, they do provide some income and they are a source of social prestige. Three FARMS employees that I talked with had built small businesses in this way. All three had wives or friends who took care of the businesses while the men travelled to Canada. Two of the three have stopped travelling, and now combine their rum shops with farming. The third man still works in Canada and is using his earnings to build a house and increase the size of his variety store.

When I first wrote the proposal for this research project, I was anxious to determine the potential of the FARMS Programme to assist in the process of agricultural diversification in St Lucia. Some of the farmers I talked with in Ontario reported sending seeds of new or especially hardy varieties of fruits and vegetables home with their workers. In addition, I wanted to see if any of the technology learned on Canadian farms was transferable to farming practices in St Lucia. Three of the men I talked with have been able to make use of their experience in Canada on their own farms in St Lucia by planting new varieties of vegetables and using Canadian techniques for fertilizing, but in all three cases the growers say this benefit is limited by the lack of an export market through which to sell their produce. One man is able to sell vegetables to a local grocery store and to one of the island's hotels, and the daily market in Castries is available to farmers for selling their produce locally.

At present, St Lucia's agricultural sector is dominated by bananas. Ironically, farmers changed from growing and exporting sugar cane to bananas as a move toward breaking out of monocrop dependency. Banana growers were able to realize important benefits, but the banana industry has done nothing to reduce the country's reliance on monocrop export (Welch 1994:125). St Lucia is still dependent on a preferential market in order to sell its bananas. If banana

growers were forced to sell their fruit in a free market, they would have to compete with three American-based multinationals, Del Monte, Chiquita, and Dole, which already control two-thirds of world trade. Needless to say this is an impossible task. Several farmers expressed their fears about what will happen to them once the North American Free Trade Agreement becomes fully effective and the last Lome Convention expires in 2000. Although many different varieties of fruits and vegetables can be grown in St Lucia, as long as the European buyers keep their ships in the harbour and pay cash for bananas every week, farmers who now grow this fruit are going to continue. Farmers say it would be foolish for them to put very much effort or money into agricultural products that cannot be sold.

When I asked people if working in Canada was good for the development of St Lucia, I invariably received a "yes," but few could tell me why. When I asked, instead, what would make St Lucia a better place to live, there was never any hesitation: More jobs for unskilled workers; better roads in the countryside; processing industries that make use of the agricultural products that rot on the ground; external markets for agricultural products; and a way for people who live in the country side to benefit directly from the tourist industry. All of these suggestions point in the direction of improving the quality of life for those who occupy the lower socio-economic strata of the island. Then

when I asked if working in Canada could help make life better in St Lucia, I was told: "of course, it's a job," "the money I make there helps me to make money here," "when we go away to a different place, we get a chance to see how different people do things," "we can tell Canadians to come to St Lucia for their holidays and get to know us better," "I can buy things cheaper and there's more to choose," "In Canada, farming is a business."

For some academics who study and write about development, there are specific ways in which activities such as investment, and concepts such as self-reliance, must become "productive" rather than simply "reproductive." For St Lucians this does not make sense; reproductive investments are the one sure way they can measure their progress. While a few have decided to invest in small businesses that can be extended as funds become available, none of the FARMS employees I talked with even considered large investments that may not bring immediate results. "Workin on the contract" is a job and a source of money that can be used in the same way as money earned at home. Similar to the economic behaviour of Canadians, St Lucians use their earnings for day-to-day subsistence, educating their children, building or improving their homes, and increasing their material possessions. These things, according to St Lucians I interviewed, make St Lucia a better place to live.

ENDNOTES

1. See, for instance, Abella 1993; Appleyard 1989, 1992; Diaz-Briquets and Weintraub 1991a, 1991b; Frucht 1972; Ghosh 1992; Griffith 1985; Henry and Johnson 1985; Maingot 1991; Papademetriou 1989, 1991; Papademetriou and Martin 1991; Pastor 1985; Patterson 1987; Rivera-Batiz 1986; Rogers 1985; Russell 1992; Simmons 1982; Stinner, DeAlbuquerque and Laporte 1982; Wood and McCoy 1985; Zimmerman and Merkle 1992. All discuss some aspects of migrants' remittances.

APPENDIX ONE

THE CONTRACT

"AGREEMENT FOR THE EMPLOYMENT IN CANADA
OF COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN SEASONAL
AGRICULTURAL WORKERS"

AGREEMENT FOR THE EMPLOYMENT IN CANADA OF COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

THIS AGREEMENT made on the _____

between _____
(called throughout "THE EMPLOYER")

and _____
(called throughout "THE WORKER")

and _____

having been duly authorized by the GOVERNMENT of _____

(hereinafter referred to as "The GOVERNMENT") to act on its behalf

(called throughout "THE GOVERNMENT'S AGENT")

WHEREAS the EMPLOYER, the GOVERNMENT, the GOVERNMENT OF CANADA and the WORKER desire that the WORKER shall be beneficially employed in Canada in agricultural employment of a seasonal nature.

THE PARTIES AGREE as follows:

The particulars in respect of the WORKER are as follows:

WORKER'S Identity Card No. _____

WORKER'S Address in Canada: _____

I SCOPE AND PERIOD OF EMPLOYMENT

The PARTIES agree as follows:

1. The EMPLOYER will employ the WORKER assigned to him by the GOVERNMENT AGENT as approved by the CANADA EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION COMMISSION clearance order, and the WORKER will serve the EMPLOYER at the place of employment subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter mentioned until _____ (termination date) provided however, that such period of seasonal employment be not less than 240 hours in a term of six weeks or less.
2. 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 misconduct or refusal to work during that trial period.
3. The EMPLOYER shall provide the WORKER and the GOVERNMENT AGENT, with a copy of rules and regulations of conduct, safety, discipline and care and maintenance of property as the WORKER may be required to observe.

II LODGING AND MEALS

The EMPLOYER agrees to:

1. Provide adequate living accommodation to the WORKER, without cost. Such accommodation must meet with the approval of the appropriate government authority responsible for health and living conditions in the province where the WORKER is employed. The accommodation must also meet with the approval of the GOVERNMENT AGENT.
2. Provide reasonable and proper meals for the WORKER during periods of transportation and employment, at a cost to the WORKER as agreed in Clause IV-2 and, where the WORKER elects to prepare his own meals, to furnish cooking utensils, fuel, and facilities without cost to the WORKER.

III PAYMENT OF WAGES

The EMPLOYER agrees:

1. To pay the WORKER at his place of employment weekly wages in lawful money of Canada at a rate equal to:
 - i) the wage for agricultural workers provided by law in the province in which the WORKER is employed;
 - ii) the rate determined annually 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 province in which the work will be done;
or
 - iii) the rate being paid by the EMPLOYER to his regular seasonal work force 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 III - 1.(iv) above, 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 rate for agricultural 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. . .
2. To allow the CANADA EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION COMMISSION or its designate access to all information and records necessary to ensure contract compliance.

The GOVERNMENT AGENT and both PARTIES agree:

That in the event the EMPLOYER is unable to locate the WORKER because of the absence or death of the WORKER, the EMPLOYER shall pay any monies owing to the WORKER to the GOVERNMENT AGENT and the WORKER or WORKER'S lawful heirs shall have no further recourse against the EMPLOYER for any such monies paid to the GOVERNMENT AGENT.

IV DEDUCTIONS OF WAGES

The WORKER agrees that the EMPLOYER:

1. Shall remit to the GOVERNMENT AGENT 25% of the WORKER'S wages for each payroll period at the time of delivering the pay sheets as required by clause (VI). The WORKER further understands that pursuant to the supplementary agreement between the WORKER and his/her government that a specified percentage of the 25% remittance to the GOVERNMENT AGENT shall be retained by the GOVERNMENT to defray administrative costs associated with the delivery of the program.
2. 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.
3. Will 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.

V INSURANCE FOR OCCUPATIONAL & NON-OCCUPATIONAL INJURY AND DISEASE

The EMPLOYER agrees:

1. 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 acceptable to the GOVERNMENT AGENT to provide for such compensation to the WORKER.
2. To report to the GOVERNMENT AGENT within 48 hours, all injuries sustained by the WORKER which require medical attention.

VI MAINTENANCE OF WORK RECORDS AND STATEMENT OF EARNINGS

The EMPLOYER agrees to:

Complete and deliver to the GOVERNMENT AGENT within seven days of the completion of each payroll period, copies of pay sheets indicating all the deductions in respect of the WORKER'S wages.

VII TRAVEL AND RECEPTION ARRANGEMENTS

The EMPLOYER agrees to:

1. Pay to the travel agent the cost of two-way air transportation of the WORKER, as between Kingston, Jamaica, and Canada by the most economical means.
2. Make arrangements to meet or have his agent 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 all such transportation will be with the prior knowledge and consent of the GOVERNMENT AGENT.

The WORKER agrees to:

1. Pay to the EMPLOYER on account of transportation costs referred to in Clause VII(1) by way of regular payroll deduction, the sum of \$2.20 per working day beginning on the first full day of employment and the aggregate payment in any event is not to be greater than \$298.00.

The PARTIES agree:

4. That the EMPLOYER, on behalf of the WORKER, will advance the Visa Fee and will be reimbursed by the GOVERNMENT AGENT 30 days after the WORKER'S arrival in Canada provided the EMPLOYER submits payrolls.

VIII OBLIGATIONS OF THE EMPLOYER

The EMPLOYER agrees:

1. 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 AGENT.

The EMPLOYER agrees and acknowledges:

2. That the WORKERS approved under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program are authorized by their employment authorizations only to perform agricultural labour for the EMPLOYER to whom they are assigned.
3. That any person who knowingly induces or aids a foreign worker, without the authorization of the CANADA EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION COMMISSION, to perform work for another person or to perform non-agricultural work, is liable on conviction to a penalty up to \$5,000 or two years imprisonment or both. Immigration Act s.94(1)(m).

IX OBLIGATIONS OF THE WORKER

The WORKER agrees:

1. To proceed to the place of employment as foreseen in Canada when and how the GOVERNMENT AGENT shall approve.
2. To work and reside at the place of employment or at such other place as the EMPLOYER, with the approval of the GOVERNMENT AGENT, may require.
3. To work at all times during the term of employment under the supervision and direction of the EMPLOYER and to perform the duties of the job requested of him efficiently.
4. To obey and comply with all rules set down by the EMPLOYER and approved by the GOVERNMENT AGENT relating to the safety, discipline, and the care and maintenance of property.
5. That he:
 - i) shall maintain living quarters furnished to him by the EMPLOYER or his agent in the same state of cleanliness in which he received them; and
 - ii) realizes that the EMPLOYER may, with the approval of the GOVERNMENT AGENT, deduct from his wages the cost to the EMPLOYER to maintain the quarters in the appropriate state of cleanliness.
6. That he shall not work for any other person without the approval of the CANADA EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION COMMISSION, the GOVERNMENT AGENT and the EMPLOYER.
7. To return promptly to the place of recruitment upon completion of the authorized work period.

X PREMATURE REPATRIATION

The PARTIES agree:

1. That following completion of the trial period of employment by the WORKER, the EMPLOYER, after consultation with the GOVERNMENT 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; where
 - i) the WORKER was requested by name by the EMPLOYER, the full cost of repatriation shall be paid by the EMPLOYER;
 - ii) the WORKER was selected by the GOVERNMENT and 50% or more of the term of the Agreement has been completed, the WORKER shall be responsible for the full cost of repatriation;
 - iii) the WORKER was selected by the GOVERNMENT and less than 50% of the term of the Agreement has been completed, the WORKER shall be responsible for the full cost of repatriation and shall also reimburse the EMPLOYER for the monetary difference between the actual cost of transportation of the WORKER to Canada and the amount collected by the EMPLOYER under Clause VII 3, actual cost being the net amount paid to the Carrier plus the Travel Agent's Commission at the International Air Transportation Association Approved Rate;
2. That if, in the opinion of the GOVERNMENT'S AGENT, in consultation with the EMPLOYER, personal domestic circumstances exist in the island of recruitment which make repatriation of the WORKER desirable or necessary prior to the expected date of termination of the Agreement, the GOVERNMENT'S AGENT shall cause the WORKER to be repatriated, and where,
 - i) the WORKER was requested by name by the EMPLOYER, the full cost of repatriation to Kingston, Jamaica, shall be paid by the EMPLOYER;
 - ii) the WORKER was selected by the GOVERNMENT and 50% or more of the term of the Agreement has been completed, the EMPLOYER shall pay 25% of the cost of reasonable transportation and subsistence expenses of the WORKER in respect of his repatriation to Kingston, Jamaica;
 - iii) the WORKER was selected by the GOVERNMENT and less than 50% of the term of the Agreement has been completed, the WORKER shall be responsible for the full cost of repatriation.
3. Where the WORKER has to be repatriated due to medical reasons which are verified by a Canadian doctor, the EMPLOYER shall pay the cost of reasonable transportation and subsistence expenses except in instances where repatriation is necessary due to a physical or medical condition which was present prior to the WORKER'S departure in which case the WORKER will pay the full cost of repatriation.

XI FINANCIAL UNDERTAKINGS

The PARTIES further agree:

1. That any bona fide debt to the EMPLOYER voluntarily incurred by the WORKER in respect of any matter incidental or relating to his employment hereunder shall be repaid by him to the EMPLOYER.
2. For the purpose of securing the recovery of any amount payable by the WORKER under this contract, the GOVERNMENT shall be entitled to set aside all monies remitted to the GOVERNMENT AGENT under this Agreement until an amount representing the cash equivalent of \$200.00 (Canadian currency) has been accumulated, and to retain such amount during the period in which the WORKER is employed in Canada and for a period not exceeding six months after the date of his repatriation. Subject to any order of a court of competent jurisdiction and to bankruptcy notice under any law relating to bankruptcy, the GOVERNMENT shall apply such amount to the payment of any sum not exceeding the cash equivalent of \$200.00 (Canadian currency) as may be properly payable to the EMPLOYER or to the GOVERNMENT in respect of any matters referred to in this Agreement upon demand being made for payment thereof.
3. That any expenditure incurred by the GOVERNMENT'S AGENT in repatriating the WORKER by reason of his employment being terminated under this Agreement shall be repaid by the WORKER to the GOVERNMENT.

XII GOVERNING LAWS

All provisions of this Agreement affecting the obligations created:

- (i) between the WORKER, the EMPLOYER and the CANADA EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION COMMISSION or the GOVERNMENT AGENT, the EMPLOYER and the CANADA EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION COMMISSION shall be governed by the laws of Canada, and of the province in which the WORKER is employed, and
- (ii) between the WORKER and the GOVERNMENT, shall be governed by the laws of the sending country;
- (iii) the French and English version of this contract have equal force.

XIII MISCELLANEOUS

1. If the WORKER dies during the period of employment, the EMPLOYER shall notify the GOVERNMENT AGENT and upon receipt of instructions from the GOVERNMENT AGENT, provide suitable burial.
2. The WORKER agrees that the following personal information held by the Federal GOVERNMENT of Canada and the GOVERNMENT of the Province in which the work is performed may be released to the WORKER's EMPLOYER and to the Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Service:
 - (i) information held under the Unemployment Insurance Act (including the WORKER'S Social Insurance Number); and,
 - (ii) any health insurance number, social service or accident compensation related information, including any unique alpha-numerical identifier used by any province.

NAME OF EMPLOYER: _____ ADDRESS: _____

CORPORATE NAME: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ FAX NO.: _____

PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OF WORKER IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE: _____

EMPLOYER'S SIGNATURE: _____ WITNESS: _____

WORKER'S SIGNATURE : _____ WITNESS: _____

GOVERNMENT AGENT'S SIGNATURE: _____

APPENDIX TWO

ST LUCIAN FARMS EMPLOYEES WHO WERE INTERVIEWED

ST LUCIAN FARMS EMPLOYEES WHO WERE INTERVIEWED

	Total Years	Address	First Year	Last Year
1.	4	Patience, Micoud	1989	
2.	4	Bexon, Castries	1989	
3.	4	Bexon, Castries	1988	1991
4.	6	Bexon, Castries	1987	
5.	14	Bexon, Castries	1979	
6.	4	Millet, Anse La Raye	1988	1991
7.	9	Patience, Micoud	1979	
8.	6	Anse La Raye	1987	
9.	14	Babonneau	1979	
10.	4	Choiseul, Soufriere	1988	
11.	4	Bocage, Castries	1989	
12.	4	Micoud	1989	
13.	8	Grande Riviere, Gros Islet	1979	1987
14.	2	Mon Repos, Micoud	1988	1989
15.	1	Gros Islet	1990	1990
16.	4	Soufriere	1988	
17.	5	Castries	1988	
18.	5	Choiseul, Soufriere	1988	
19.	10	Castries	1982	
20.	11	Boguis, Babonneau	1981	1991
21.	5	Patience, Micoud	1988	
22.	7	Morne Cayene, Vieux Fort	1980	1987
23.	10	Vieux Fort	1982	
24.	4	Dennery	1989	
25.	3	Morn D'Or, Anse La Raye	1988	
26.	13	Aux Lyon, Dennery	1980	
27.	3	Aux Lyon, Dennery	1990	
28.	11	Marisule, Gros Islet	1982	
29.	5	Choiseul, Soufriere	1988	
30.	5	Monchy, Gros Islet	1979	1984
31.	8	Saltibus, Vieux Fort	1985	
32.	4	Saltibus, Vieux Fort	1989	
33.	3	Bexon, Castries	1988	
34.	3	Dennery	1989	
35.	4	Choiseul, Soufriere	1988	
36.	11	Belle Vue, Vieux Fort	1982	
37.	3	Belle Vue, Vieux Fort	1988	
38.	4	Millet, Anse La Raye	1989	
39.	6	Bexon, Castries	1987	
40.	5	Dennery	1987	
41.	3	Sarot, Castries	1989	1991
42.	5	Dennery	1988	
43.	2	Castries	1980	1985
44.	13	Millet, Anse La Raye	1979	
45.	11	Micoud	1982	

	Total Years	Address	First Year	Last Year
46.	4	Choiseul, Soufriere	1989	
47.	4	Babonneau	1988	
48.	12	Choiseul, Soufriere	1980	
49.	2	Sarot, Castries	1988	1989
50.	11	Choiseul, Soufriere	1981	
51.	13	Choiseul, Soufriere	1980	
52.	5	Mon Repos, Micoud	1988	
53.	5	Belle Plain, Soufriere	1987	
54.	12	Babonneau	1981	
55.	11	Laborie, Vieux Fort	1982	
56.	3	Laborie, Vieux Fort	1990	
57.	13	Marisule, Gros Islet	1979	
58.	5	Ciceron, Castries	1987	
59.	5	Gros Islet	1979	1984
60.	6	Grande Riviere, Gros Islet	1987	
61.	1	Micoud	1992	
62.	4	Dennery	1988	
63.	7	Grande Riviere, Gros Islet	1986	
64.	6	Belle Vue, Vieux Fort	1987	
65.	13	Fond St Jacques, Soufriere	1980	
66.	8	Millet, Anse La Raye	1984	1991
67.	4	Goodlands, Castries	1989	
68.	1	Dennery	1992	
69.	4	Babonneau	1989	
70.	5	Grande Riviere	1988	
71.	13	Marisule, Gros Islet	1979	
72.	9	Sarot, Castries	1984	
73.	5	Soufriere	1987	1991
74.	8	Grande Riviere, Gros Islet	1982	1989
75.	1	Odsan, Castries	1989	1989
76.	10	Vanard, Anse La Raye	1982	
77.	5	Mon Repos, Micoud	1988	
78.	5	The Morn, Castries	1987	
79.	3	Garrand, Babonneau	1988	
80.	4	Micoud	1989	
81.	1	Vieux Fort	1987	1987
82.	5	Babonneau	1988	
83.	1	Bexon, Castries	1992	
84.	11	Fond St Jacques, Soufriere	1980	
85.	1	Marisule, Gros Islet	1988	1988
86.	10	Fond St Jacques, Soufriere	1982	
87.	8	Vieux Fort	1985	

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