THE SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS PROGRAM IN ONTARIO: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF JAMAICAN MIGRANTS

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ABSTRACT

THE SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS PROGRAM IN ONTARIO: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF JAMAICAN MIGRANTS

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The phenomenon of offshore migrant labour in Canada poses an interesting challenge to the literature dealing with unfree labour relations in capitalist societies. This thesis uses in-depth interviews with Jamaican migrant labourers in Ontario, along with supporting statistical data to further our understanding of the subjective domain of labour relations in agriculture. According to the literature The Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program constitutes a system of unfree labour, and many employers in the Ontario agricultural sector benefit from this system. Jamaican migrant workers do not necessarily share this view of unfreedom. While recognising the definite restrictions as defined in the contract, these migrants accept the conditions of employment as a trade off for the opportunity of material advancement not available to them in Jamaica. This discrepancy over the definition of unfree labour reflects the disparities between the North and the South, and needs to be addressed.

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CHAPTER ONE

AN INTRODUCTION

The central concern of this thesis is to provide an analysis of the meaning that migrant workers attach to their participation in a system of unfree labour in Ontario agriculture. More specifically the aim is to explore the most important aspects of migrant labourers' experiences in Ontario in the Seasonal Agricultural Workers program, using the starting point of the concept of unfree labour from the literature (Miles 1987, Satzewich 1989, 1991, Wall 1987). The concept of unfree labour is a useful one in the sense that it accurately depicts the situation of Caribbean (or Mexican) migrant labour in Ontario as not the having basic freedoms that Canadian labour enjoys. Migrant workers may not circulate freely on the labour market and they may not settle in Canada permanently, therefore the state is not responsible for the worker or the worker's family in the off season. In another sense the concept of unfree labour is deceiving as it implies a relationship of indentured labour or slavery, in other words a lack of agency on the part

of the migrant. It is as though the migrant has been acted upon, rather than being an actor in his or her own right. This structural analysis fails to recognise that the migrant labourer has made a choice to migrate based upon individual and collective realities. If I may go one step further, what is purported to be unfreedom in the literature from the North, may be a source of freedom to those from the South (freedom to travel, freedom from economic hardship, freedom from unemployment). However, it is precisely because of the disparities between North and South that a discrepancy between what is free and what is not free may exist.

Migrating to find work is not a new phenomenon in Jamaica. It can be attributed to macro-level problems such as a shortage of productive land, high unemployment and underemployment, as well as individual incentives such as the desire to travel. This thesis attempts to provide the Jamaican migrant worker with a voice, something largely absent in the literature on this migrant labour program and uncommon in migration literature in general. By emphasizing the agency of the migrant worker the thesis will examine the constraints and decisions of this group of workers: what are their concerns, what are their issues, and how do they define their freedom or unfreedom in Canada? In the process of this thesis I will describe the experiences of Jamaican migrant labourers in Ontario and the role of the state in structuring these experiences. I will explore employer-employee relations, the influence of the North - South disparities, and ultimately I will acknowledge the agency involved in the choice of the labourers to migrate.

Gardner (1995) writes that a major problem with studies of migration is that they operate at two different levels of analysis: individual and structural. Often only the

structural level is discussed, and such a discussion fails to acknowledge the meanings that individuals and their communities give to migration that directly affects them (Gardner 1995:3). In this thesis I will provide both a structural and individual, as well as theoretical and personal analysis of migration.

In Canada, little is known about these men and a small number of women who come to Ontario every year to work in the agricultural sector. I have decided to do qualitative research to acquire a subjective account of the migrant labour program, something Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:1-2) loosely call ethnographic methodology. Ethnography attempts to understand how people make sense of their world in everyday life. I recognise that my particular lenses influence how I interpret individual voices as well as how I interpret the roles of other actors and structures involved in the migrant labour program. I am female, white, Canadian, an academic. Those are my obvious identities. As well, I was raised on a farm, experienced first hand the challenges of securing reliable labour, and later worked for another farmer for four seasons along side Jamaican migrants (and made some good friends). These perspectives have contributed to the empathy that I have for farmers, many of whom work very hard to remain competitive in the global market and ultimately survive as farmers. I am also sympathetic and empathetic to the migrants whom I have worked with. I have listened to stories about their families and homes, sympathizing over their homesickness, and ultimately learning about rural Jamaican culture. Therefore, this research has a personal component to it, as Gardner (1995) pointed out, one must own up to the subjectivity of her role as a researcher.

The state has structured a program that allows for a situation of "unfreedom" for migrant workers. It may be accurate to say that the situation is only possible within the context of the North - South disparities, where one group of people are disadvantaged such that they will contract out their labour power according to a very specific, narrow contract. At the individual level it is important to acknowledge the self-determination of these migrants and discuss the choices being made. However, it is also imperative to discuss other factors that come into play in limiting and defining individual choice.

COST - BENEFIT ANALYSIS

I have provided a cost-benefit analysis of the foreign agricultural labour program here in the introduction so the reader may have an overview of the main players in this program: the state (both Jamaican and Canadian), the liaison service, the employer, and of course the migrant labourer. This cost-benefit analysis is not an overly penetrating analysis of the issues involved in the program; however, it will be adequate to introduce the topic and in subsequent chapters the discussion will move towards a more in-depth analysis.

Who benefits from this program and how?

The Canadian Government benefits from the migrant labour program as during low season (winter months), and in retirement the state is not responsible for maintaining this transitory labour force. Satzewich (1991) calls this labour force maintenance and renewal. As well, the state has solved a labour shortage in the agricultural sector and appeased

farmers who have been lobbying the federal government for decades over this matter.

The Jamaican Government, on the other hand, benefits from the foreign currency coming into the country from the migrants. Additionally, this program temporarily releases population pressure and unemployment problems.

The Ontario employer (mostly farmers, but also owners of nurseries and fruit and vegetable canneries) appears to benefit a great deal from this program, judging from the unanimous endorsement I received from farmers in the southern Ontario region to whom I spoke. To farmers in Ontario, migrant labour from Jamaica (and other countries) provides a reliable workforce, as these migrants have a reputation for being dependable, hard workers who stay the entire season and offer little complaints. The alternative to Caribbean and Mexican migrant labour is Canadian workers who, in the past, have not offered the farmer the same reliability.

The migrant labourer benefits from this program as it provides him or her with employment, an opportunity he or she may not have at home. This employment is paid in Canadian dollars, a preferred currency in Jamaica, and many Jamaicans whom I interviewed called the wages that they earn in Canada 'fast money'. This money allows the migrants to buy desirable Canadian goods such as electronics, bicycles, water pumps, and other commodities that are either more difficult or more expensive to obtain in Jamaica. As well, this program offers Jamaicans the opportunity to travel abroad, as many workers indicated to me this was an important incentive.

What are the costs?

This program is not a significant cost to the Canadian Government, although it has had to deal with criticism. In light of the high unemployment rate, the government fields criticism from segments of the public who argue that this program gives away Canadian jobs. As well, this program has been charged with being based upon discriminatory immigration policy (Satzewich 1991) that restricts personal freedoms of migrant workers (Satzewich 1991, Wall 1987).

The farmer's costs are not substantial in light of the benefits. According to the farmers I spoke with, this program costs more (in actual dollars) than if they hired local workers, however, in terms of productivity the Caribbean and Mexican migrant workers are superior. With this program the farmer is responsible for paying for more than half of the airfare of each worker, the farmer is responsible for the transportation of the workers when in Canada, and the farmer provides housing and utilities free of charge.

The costs to the worker are significant. Firstly, the migrant is leaving his/her family for an extended period of time, to live and work in a situation foreign and sometimes unfriendly. The migrant does not have the same opportunities to settle permanently in Canada as do other labour groups, and therefore does not benefit from the social welfare state (although contributes to it). Additionally, the migrant goes through an unpleasant and undignified recruitment process in Jamaica.

It is the issue of costs and benefits to the migrant which will be an important focus in this paper. There are very convincing and accurate analyses of the "unfreedom"

of Caribbean migrant workers in the literature (Satzewich 1991, Wall 1992). I will use the concept of unfree labour as a starting point, and move from an analysis of the state to catch a glimpse of the everyday reality of the migrant workers while in Canada. These Jamaican migrant workers are coming from very distinct social, political, economic structures derived from their own particular history, and it is very important to consider their perspectives when analyzing the migrant labour program.

Part One of the thesis introduces and orients the problem. Chapter two will provide a background for the thesis. I will discuss the long history of out-migration in Jamaica and the Caribbean, as well as a brief account of the history of farm labour in Ontario, and finish the chapter with some of the specifics of the migrant labour program. Chapter three will provide theoretical issues relating to this migrant labour program, aimed at both the structural and individual levels. The second half of the thesis, Part Two, provides the practical orientations: the data and analysis, linking the observations to the theory. Methodology and related issues will be explained in the fourth chapter. Chapter five presents the migrants' views and an analysis of the role of the state as well as living and working conditions. The sixth chapter discusses migrants' perspectives of their freedom and social life. Chapter seven analyzes how the migrants make sense of their economic situation. The final chapter is a concluding one.

PART ONE

PROVIDING THE FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

HISTORY OF OUT-MIGRATION IN THE CARIBBEAN

Out-migration from the Caribbean is not a new phenomena. Because of a shortage of productive farm land as well as high unemployment and underemployment, migration has historically been a survival strategy for the people of the Caribbean (Davison 1962, Richardson 1983, Richardson 1992, Pastor 1985). Richardson (1992) writes that the people of the Caribbean (and Jamaica is not an exception) have migrated to find work and a better life since emancipation from slavery in the 1830s. This strategy has come about as a response to a lack of resources (including land) and opportunities at home. Land has been an important issue to Jamaicans and ownership of it represents power. The coastal area of Jamaica was and continues to be monopolized by plantations, and much of the interior is owned by foreign bauxite companies (Richardson 1992:189).

By the late 1600s the British were importing a large number of slaves to work on

the sugar plantations in Jamaica (Beckford and Witter 1980). In use was the infamous triangular trade route with merchant ships from Europe taking manufactured goods to sell in Africa, from Africa slaves were brought to the Caribbean, and the Caribbean sent raw materials such as sugar cane to Europe (Richardson 1992:38). Following emancipation of slavery in the 1830s the plantation economy continued to dominate the region (Richardson 1983:6). Some freed slaves went to the hilly interior while others continued to work on the plantations for subsistence wages. Some freed slaves were able to buy land although most of the land was owned by the white planter elites (Beckford and Witter 1980).

Beckford (1972) and Richardson (1983) argue the legacy of the plantations has survived to the present day. Beckford discusses four general phenomena that may be found today in plantation societies. These are (1) concentration of capital in the form of land; (2) high unemployment (rural and urban) alongside expressed shortage of labour for plantation work; (3) increased mechanization of plantation field operations wherever this is technically feasible; and (4) high rates of emigration, particularly rural people, from plantation areas within a particular country and from the plantation economies to metropolitan countries (Beckford 1972:86). It is the second and fourth point that is of interest here, and fits the description of Jamaica.

In the land that was available following the emancipation of slaves, small villages sprung up in the Caribbean as thousands of former slaves moved to the idle land. These settlements represent an escape from direct plantation control. Specifically in Jamaican the hill side settlements represented freed workers, however there was still this dependence on the plantations for seasonal labour or markets to sell produce (Richardson

1983:6). Most of the interviews I conducted were with people who lived in the rural hill side settlements. Most of these people were small scale farmers who did not work on the plantations (but possibly used these markets to sell their produce). Perhaps out-migration has enabled these men to be independent of plantation work.

In the era immediately following slavery, productive land was in short supply so it was then that migration became more common. Encouraging the rate of emigration was the advent of steamship travel. Those who could not afford to pay fare on the steamship worked as deck hands (Richardson 1983:17).

Between 1850 and 1855 it is estimated that 5000 Jamaicans went to South America to work on a railway project in Panama. Together, with Chinese migrant labourers these Caribbean migrants built the railway across the isthmus of Panama, a project funded by the U.S. Government and the New Granadian (Colombian) Government (Richardson 1992:136-137).

Richardson (1983:19) reports that by 1884, 35 000 Jamaicans had travelled to Panama as labour on the Panama Canal. Conditions there are described as gruelling, hazardous, and unhealthy. Ferguson (1990:17) provides the estimate that 25 000 people out of 83 000 Jamaicans and other Caribbean migrants died from accidents and disease in the construction of the Canal.

Another source of migratory work for Jamaicans in the 1800s was in Costa Rica on the American owned banana plantations. It is believed that around 1700 Jamaicans or more went to Costa Rica (Richardson 1983:19, Proudfoot 1970:14-15).

Emigration from Jamaica up until the early decades of the twentieth century was

mostly to nearby territories in the Americas and was relatively small (Smith 1981, Proudfoot 1970). In the period surrounding the Great Depression in the 1920s and 1930s Jamaica witnessed little out-migration as Jamaica and the rest of the world faced unemployment crises (Smith 1981). During World War II Jamaica suffered high unemployment rates, whereas Britain had a shortage of labour (Smith 1981), therefore the 1950s saw a mass emigration to the United Kingdom. It was largely unskilled labour that was needed to repair the war-torn country, although some carpenters, masons, plumbers also migrated. Generally the males in the family went first, established themselves and then sent for the family. The numbers of migrants in the 1950s is estimated at 230 000 to 280 000 (Peach 1968 in Richardson 1992), although difficult to document because many Caribbean migrants travelled with British passports (Richardson 1992:142).

Migrants from the Caribbean experienced alienation, discrimination, poor living conditions, and poor wages in Britain. These migrants often found themselves in situations of unemployment, low social status and a lack of assimilation (Richardson 1983:22). In the 1960s the British government implemented restrictive immigration laws to curb Caribbean migrants. Richardson (1992:143) reports that in the early 1990s approximately 650 000 black citizens lived in Britain, most of them were migrants (or their children) who came from the Caribbean shortly after the war.

Richardson (1983) writes that overall Caribbean migrants fared better in North America. Today there are substantial Caribbean communities of Haitians, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Jamaicans in New York, Miami and elsewhere (Ferguson 1990:19). Richardson (1992:145) suggests that over five million people of Caribbean descent live in the United

States. Before 1952 the U.S. had no restrictions on Jamaican entry and approximately 1000 Jamaicans per year migrated to the U.S. in the 1940s. In 1952 the McCarran-Walter Act greatly limited this flow, causing protests in both Jamaica and the U.S. that this policy was discrimination against coloured West Indians (Smith 1981:153).

In North America, thousands of West Indians have been working in agriculture for decades. Specifically, the U.S. farm labour program has been a source of employment for Jamaicans since 1934 (Smith 1981:160). In the 1960s there was a great deal of pressure from Jamaica and the rest of the West Indies for North America to open its doors wider to migrants from their countries. This was in an effort to relieve some of the populations pressures at home (Smith 1981:162). One author writes that the U.S. has been the main receiver of West Indian migrants as temporary contract workers, professionals, and even illegal migrants (Cohen 1992:164). Currently Jamaica is still experiencing a high rate of out-migration for work. (I discuss Canada's role in Jamaican migration below).

The Caribbean people that have emigrated to Europe and North America have maintained ties with family in their homeland. "Very few of these recently emigrated peoples have lost touch with the places they have left behind, and the probable majority of them send money and material goods back to the Caribbean as a matter of routine" (Richardson 1992:133).

THE HISTORY OF FARM LABOUR IN ONTARIO

In the nineteenth century Upper Canada, what is now Ontario, was settled largely by British immigrants. It was many of these first settlers who cleared the land to make

it into farm land. Parr (1985) writes that even in those days farmers hired labourers to help on the land. By the twentieth century sons and daughters were leaving the farm as better paid employment could be found elsewhere, taking their places as labourers were migrants, usually landless (Parr 1985:92). Wall (1995:6) reports that already in the early 1900s one thousand workers were brought in from Mexico to work in the sugar beet fields in southwestern Ontario.

From the late 1800s until the 1960s the government has controlled immigration based upon race (Avery 1979, Satzewich 1991, Smith 1981). In an Immigration Act of 1885 the Chinese were limited from entering the country. Avery (1979:7) writes that the main difference between European workers and what Avery calls Oriental or Blacks was the latter group was thought to be unable to assimilate, and would always be hard labourers. Smith (1981:152) essentially says the same thing about Jamaican immigration to Canada, "...as black persons were held to be inadmissible unless they fell into certain preferred classes such as agricultural labourers and domestic servants". Selection of immigrants based upon race, colour, religion was officially absolved in 1966 with the Canadian Government's White Paper. In 1967 a points system was implemented that favoured professional and skilled labour over less skilled labour (Smith 1981:161).

The occupation of immigrants and the numbers permitted to enter the country has also been based upon demand by the economy. Before the 1920s the need was for farm labour and domestics. In 1922 a new regulation stipulated admissible classes for the first time which were agriculturalists, farm labourers and female domestic servants (St.John-Jones 1981:51). The 1930s witnessed economic depression, widespread unemployment

and little immigration into Canada (St.John-Jones 1981). During this time new technology in the agricultural sector (threshers and combines) also decreased the demand for labour (Wall 1995). Following the Second World War the economy improved and once again farmers were requesting a steadier supply of labour.

In the post-war years farms became more intensified or capitalist. As Winson (1996) writes, small-scale farms have become capitalist enterprises where there is a greater need for wage labour than there was with the smaller, mixed farming operations. Even with increased mechanization, the demand for wage labour did not decrease as certain commodities (such as tobacco and fruit trees) still use mostly human labour rather than machinery during harvest. Therefore, although there are fewer farms, those farms have become larger, and the demand for labour has also increased (Ghorayshi 1986, Parr 1985).

Government response to post-war labour needs was to target European immigrants, such as Polish war veterans to work for a certain period of time before they could become Canadian citizens (Parr 1985, Satzewich 1989, Wall 1995). According to Satzewich (1991) a second group of immigrants targeted to work on Ontario farms after the Second World War was Displaced Persons, mostly from eastern Europe. The Canadian Government also attempted to target the unemployed populations of Canada by providing free bus fares to potential workers from the Maritime provinces or Quebec to travel to southwestern Ontario (Parr 1985, Winson 1996).

The other program pursued by growers in Ontario was the Caribbean Seasonal Workers Program. Satzewich (1991:168) writes that farmers pressured the Canadian

Government for nearly twenty years before approval was finally given to negotiate the terms of a contract with the Jamaican Government (see Satzewich 1991 for a detailed account of these negotiations).

In 1966, 264 Jamaican workers came to Canada to work in various agricultural commodities (Ganaselall 1992). In 1967 the program expanded to include Trinidad-Tobago and Barbados. By 1974 the Canadian Government had negotiated a contract with Mexico and in 1976 Grenada, Antigua, Dominica, St.Christopher-Nevis-Anguilla, St.Lucia, St.Vincent and Montserrat were all involved with sending migrant labourers to Canada. Currently included in this list is The Grenadines (FARMS, 1996). See table 1 for the breakdown in 1994, 1995 of migrants by country.

Table 1: Breakdown of migrant arrivals by country in 1994, 1995

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	1994	1995
Barbados	581	581
Eastern Caribbean	367	398
Jamaica	4319	4592
Mexico	3857	3825
Trinidad and Tobago	800	872
TOTAL	**9924**	**10268**

FARMS, Employer Information Package, 1996

The program has grown from 264 migrant workers in 1966 to 4428 workers in 1983, to over 11 000 migrants per year from 1989 to 1991. In 1995 the numbers decreased to 10 268, 4592 of which were Jamaicans. Jamaica remains the largest single

group (Human Resources Development Canada, "Year-to-Date Reports"). (See Appendix A for a break down of the total number of workers per year since 1983, and the total number of Jamaican workers in this time period.)

Authority and administration of this program has fallen under various government departments. Before implementation of the program the Department of Labour and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration shared decision-making power about foreign migrant labour. From 1966 to 1987 the Department of Manpower and Immigration and the Canada Employment Commission administered the program (Satzewich 1991:146-147). Since 1987 administrative duties have fallen under the direction of FARMS (the Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Service). Although authorized by Human Resources Development Canada, FARMS is a non-governmental organization made up of a board of directors who represent growers of the different commodity groups participating in the program (see Appendix B for a list of commodity groups).

SPECIFICS OF THE PROGRAM

As mentioned above, FARMS administers The Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program. The service is funded entirely by growers who pay a user fee each year. In 1996 the user fee was $35 per worker arrival (FARMS 1996). In 1995 there were 1444 growers participating in the program and as mentioned above, over 10 000 workers arrived in Canada that year (Human Resources Development Canada, "Year-to-Date Reports").

FARMS has adopted the Canadian Government's policy of 'Canadians first' referring to the philosophy that whenever possible a Canadian worker will be hired before

a foreign worker. Employers, in fact, have to prove to the Canadian Employment Centre in their area that they have need for foreign labour (that there are not enough available Canadians to work) before they may enter the program. Once on the program growers do not have to continue to display need, however, if there was a supply of reliable Canadians the foreign worker applications would not be processed (interview with Gary Cooper, Board of Directors of FARMS).

There is public criticism that with chronically high unemployment rates in Canada workers should not be imported, instead Canadians should be hired. FARMS has responded to this criticism by emphasizing that there are not enough reliable Canadians and without foreign labour Ontario loses a great deal of money. FARMS proposes that foreign workers actually generate jobs, as once the product is harvested (usually this is where the foreign labour comes in), it has to be packed, stored, transported, wholesaled and retailed. If the crops are not fully harvested because of a lack of reliable labour, then no one benefits and the farmer loses (interview with Gary Cooper). The following is an example of the promotional work FARMS is doing to convince the public of the importance of this program.

> The Ontario horticulture industry provides direct employment for approximately 99,876 people per year. Most of these jobs are seasonal, with an average duration of ten weeks. All of these jobs are offered to Canadians and would be filled by Canadians, if enough Canadians were available. As it stands, approximately 90% are filled by reliable Canadians, including landed immigrants. That is approximately 90,000 jobs for Canadians. For the balance of 9,876 jobs, RELIABLE Canadians cannot be found. That is the experience of HRDC and the horticulture industry. That critical 10% of the workforce is filled by seasonal workers from the Caribbean Commonwealth and Mexico. (FARMS, 1995)

New employers on the program have the preference of the place of origin of their

workers (i.e., Jamaican, Mexican, or another participating Caribbean island). As well, employers may indicate gender of their workers. Most farmers I spoke with said they preferred men for the hard physical work and would also hire women except then they would have to supply separate housing. Another option for employers is that they may specifically request a worker by name, as well as specifically request that a certain worker is not sent back to their farm. The farmer takes on an added responsibility by requesting a worker. If the worker has to return home early for personal reasons or a breach of contract the employer must cover the cost of the airfare, otherwise the worker has to pay for it.

According to the Canadian Government this program is of a premium cost to the employers. The grower covers the cost of flight and other ground transportation, pays user fees and visa fees, provides accommodation free of charge. The flights are a set amount each year for all growers (in 1996 the airfare was $354.00 from Jamaica to Toronto, and return, Toronto to Jamaica was $399.00) set up by a single travel agency, CanAg Travel Services Ltd., operating out of Mississauga, Ontario. The employer recovers the cost of airfare at a rate of $2.65 per working day of each employee, to a maximum of $318.00 per worker in 1996, not quite half of the total cost of airfare (FARMS, 1996). Employers must also pay a visa fee per each worker, which they are refunded once the worker has arrived in Canada. In 1996 this fee was $125.00 that goes to the Human Resource Centres of Canada (HRCC).

Every year employees and then employers sign a contract of employment that stipulates conditions of lodging, payment of wages (including the mandatory remittance

of 25% of wages back to the home country), obligations of the employer, and obligations of the employee. The employer's obligations include an agreement that none of his/her employees may work for another employer without written consent from the proper authorities. The third and fourth stipulations under the 'Obligations of the worker' are of particular interest, the third one states: "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." The fourth one is as follows: "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." Other significant obligations include properly maintaining the living area. The contract also deals with reasons and procedures for premature repatriation, financial undertakings, and what to do in case of death of the worker (from the "Memorandum of Understanding", 1995).

As a part of the agreement between Canada and Jamaica (as well as the other countries on the program) the Jamaican Government appoints agents in Canada, called liaison officers, to ensure the smooth functioning of the program. The liaison officers are to act in the interests of both the employees and the employers (from the "Memorandum of Understanding", 1995). There are currently six Jamaican liaison officers serving over four thousand employees, and approximately 540 employers.

Another aspect of the agreement is that the Jamaican government must recruit and then set up medical exams every year for the potential migrants. Workers have to pass Canadian health requirements and be capable of doing agricultural work (from the

"Memorandum of Understanding", 1995).

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Generally theoretical work on migration is at the structural level to the exclusion of individual subjective description (Gardner 1995). This first section in the theoretical framework will discuss the state's role in structuring the migrant labour program and creating a situation of unfreedom for the migrant workers. This section will also discuss how the employer benefits from this unfree labour force. The second section will look at the social and economic situation in Jamaica, and while still at the structural level it is an attempt to come to a better understanding of these workers' individual incentives to migrate. In an effort to respond to Gardner's (1995) criticism that analysis at the structural level views migrants as passive actors, I will discuss theoretical issues that describe the individual experience of a migrant worker while in Ontario.

THEORY AT THE STRUCTURAL LEVEL

THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN STRUCTURING UNFREE LABOUR

This section of the theoretical framework will provide an analysis of the state and its role in structuring and implementing the situation of unfreedom of migrant agricultural workers in Ontario. The Canadian state has traditionally as well as currently given more power to the farmer than the worker (Parr 1985, Satzewich 1991:64, Wall 1995:7), whether they are Canadians or foreigners. This is illustrated by looking at the Canadian farm labourers who are not fully protected by labour legislation.

Wall (1995) writes that the Employment Standards Act ensures that employees are treated fairly with respect to issues such as wages and benefits, however in most cases farm operations do not have to follow this. A specific section of the act discusses standards for employees in fruit, vegetable, and tobacco that covers the minimum wage rates, piece work rates, and the amount charged for lodging (Wall 1995).

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act industrial workers are protected from a hazardous working environment, however, farm work is excluded under this act. This is despite the acknowledgement that agricultural work is rated as dangerous. "This means that farm workers are denied the right to work in safe conditions, to form safety committees, and to refuse unsafe work" (Wall 1995:9). Not only do farm workers do heavy physical labour and use machinery, but they also are in contact with hazardous chemicals (Wall 1995). Exemptions from this act I would assume reflect a different time when farms were mostly family-run operations.

Farmers in Ontario have historically had difficulty securing reliable employment.

Parr (1985) writes that this is because farm labour is at the very bottom of the rural hierarchy. Farm work is physically demanding, conditions are often unpleasant and even dangerous, work can be unsteady and is seasonal, and wages are comparatively low. This is how Parr describes farm labour in Ontario:

> The conditions of work remain arduous. The most difficult farm tasks are often the least easy to mechanize. The combination of machine work with hand work in the production process only accelerates the breakneck pace established by fear of rain or frost. Chemical fertilizers and sprays make farm produce more attractive, and farm work more dangerous. (Parr 1985:103)

Parr's conclusion is that workers in the agricultural sector (historically as well as current locals and migrant labourers) view their employment as temporary, a means to an end. Farm work is not a job they wished to do for too many years.

The Canadian Government, then, has responded to the labour shortage in agriculture by structuring the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program, of which the Jamaican migrant labourers are a part. This transitory labour force benefits the state as the state is not responsible for something Satzewich calls labour force maintenance or renewal (1991:37). In other words, as families are left in Jamaica the state does not have a role in their health care, education, and economic situation. As well, in the low season and in retirement the Canadian government is not responsible for looking after the migrant workers in the form of employment insurance or a state pension plan (as it does for Canadian workers). Additionally, the program appeases farmers who have been lobbying the government for decades to implement such a program that would solve the problem of a shortage of labour in the agriculture sector.

The state both protects and controls the migrant workers. The protection is with

the implementation of minimum wage rates (see Appendix C for the rates), housing inspections, and a liaison officer to act as advocate. The workers are controlled as they may not switch employers while in Canada and they may not settle in Canada permanently. The controls placed upon migrant workers have ensured that these workers will remain a 'captive labour force', to borrow Griffith's (1986) term, as well as continue to provide an adequate supply of labour.

Having outlined how the state protects and controls the migrant labour force it is important to recognise how the employer benefits. As stated above, the state has historically worked in the interests of the farmer over the farm worker. Griffith (1986), writing about temporary British West Indian workers in U.S. agriculture, suggests that these workers are a captive labour force. These workers, who are mostly Jamaican, are not able to unionize and are "...easier to control (and perhaps cheat) than domestic workers..." (Griffith 1986: 881). Furthermore, the West Indian labour force is considered reliable and willing by American farmers in much the same way Ontario farmers view the Jamaican migrants. According to Griffith (1986) apple and sugar growers in the U.S. find domestic (American) workers often quit before the harvest is over, risking crop loss. Griffith suggests the following about the temporary West Indian workers:

> Instead they are a product of disparities between rich and poor nations in wages, working conditions, standards of living, worker expectations, etc. Coming from poor nations where it may take as long as ten years to earn what they earn in the U.S. in five or six months, West Indians constitute a willing, reliable, and highly docile labor force. (1986:881)

Clearly there are striking similarities between conditions surrounding the temporary West Indian labour force in the U.S. and the Jamaican migrants in this study.

Aspects of these similarities will be discussed later in the paper. The following section will discuss this situation of unfree labour.

The Concept of Unfree Labour

> The condition of unfreedom derives from the inability to circulate in a labour market (indeed the absence of a labour market), the inability to determine to whom one must provide surplus labour and the inability (or lack of necessity) to enter the market to purchase commodities for the reproduction of the capacity to work. (Satzewich 1991:42)

As the quote above indicates, unfree labour to this author refers to an individual who does not have the opportunity to choose his or her employer, nor to freely change employers. As well, the labourer is permitted only temporary entry in the country, without option of permanent settlement (Satzewich 1991:107). Satzewich (1989) points to the state as playing a major role in creating unfree labour illustrated in labour relations such as slavery, indentured servants, contract labour, and convict labour.

Both Satzewich (1991) and Wall (1992) agree that the temporary migrant labour program in Ontario agriculture fits the concept of unfreedom. Satzewich (1991:107-110) describes the Caribbean migrant workers as unfree labour because they are only permitted temporary entry into the country, they have no right of permanent settlement or citizenship, and they do not have the right to freely sell their labour to other farmers. Wall (1992) confirms, Caribbean migrant workers in Ontario agriculture may not change to another employer while in Canada unless authorization by the specific government agency is obtained.

The concept of unfree labour has been derived from the writings of Karl Marx.

Marx uses the terms free labour and wage labour interchangeably, both refer to the freedom of the worker to sell labour power to whom he/she chooses (Satzewich 1989:90-91). Marx writes that the owner of capital meets with the free labourer in the market and treats this free labour as just another commodity to be bought and sold. The labourer is free in two ways writes Marx, "...that as a free man he can dispose of his labour-power as his own commodity, and that on the other hand he has no other commodity for sale, is short of everything necessary for the realisation of his labour power" (Marx 1977:166). (Marx uses gender exclusive language, throughout his work I will assume he is referring to any worker or owner of money - either male or female).

What is perceived as an ideal situation, what Marx (1977:167) calls "a very Eden of the innate rights of man", is a situation where the buyer and seller of labour power are free agents who meet as equals on the market. They come to an agreement and make an equal exchange, each working with one's own best interests in mind. In reality, Marx does not think that such a relationship exists, he writes:

> He, who before was the money-owner, now strides in front as capitalist; the possessor of labour-power follows as his labourer. The one with an air of importance, smirking, intent on business; the other, timid and holding back, like one who is bringing his own hide to market and has nothing to expect but - a hiding. (1977:172)

One of the implications of using the concept of unfree labour is the connotation of the inverse, free labour, is deceiving. Free or wage labour may not be as attractive as the name would suggest. Satzewich writes that there is still room for coercion in free labour relations (1989:91). Although not tied to any one particular employer, free labourers are still tied to the capitalist class because they need the wages to survive. As

Marx writes, "But the worker, whose sole source of livelihood is the sale of his labour power, cannot leave the *whole class of purchasers, that is, the capitalist class,* without renouncing his existence" (1967:21-22). Granted, the freedom to switch employers (depending on availability of employment, of course) is a subtle advantage - being tied to the market is better than being tied to a specific employer. This is the point that the above authors are making, no one employer may abuse her power or exploit her labourers any more than the next employer. If she abuses her power she will lose her employees to the next employer who may treat his employees better. I argue that this is a crucial difference between free labour and unfree labour.

It is important to note however, that free labour is still exploited by capitalist owners. One way of making a profit is to lower the cost of labour power. Marx writes that the wages the employer exchanges for labour power is only a portion of what the labour power is actually worth.

> The ever repeated purchase and sale of labour-power is now the mere form; what really takes place is this - the capitalist again and again appropriates, without equivalent, a portion of the previously materialised labour of others, and exchanges it for a greater quantity of living labour. (Marx 1977:547)

The presence of a state implemented contract with wage stipulations (as is the case for Caribbean and Mexican migrant labour) is an "unfreedom" Marx would probably have argued, as the presence of a non-negotiable contract deviates from a free labourer's rights. However, in certain circumstances the presence of a contract drawn up by the state controls the exploitation of wage rates by employers, particularly in the case of a relatively powerless group of workers.

To further illustrate this concept of unfree labour, I will discuss Satzewich's

(1989) use of this term with respect to Polish war veterans. The use of these war veterans was another response by the Canadian state to labour shortages in the agricultural sector in Canada following World War II. This population was soldiers who had fought with the British army and refused to return to communist controlled Poland. Canada agreed to accept some of these veterans into the country, but with particular stipulations. The contract gave the war veterans little freedom to circulate on the labour market and only offered citizenship after five years living in the country. It was only after that five year period that the Polish men could bring their families over to Canada. The contract was enforced with threat of deportation. (Satzewich 1989)

Griffith (1986) discusses unfree labour, or captive labour as he calls it, with respect to migrant labour in agriculture. This author argues that farmers in the United States should be hiring domestic labour (U.S. citizens) instead of hiring British West Indian temporary migrants. Griffith writes that farmers prefer the migrants, particularly Jamaicans, because they are a captive labour force in that they do not have the freedom to move to another employer. Griffith points out that the U.S. economy holds no responsibility in looking after the families of migrants, or for the migrants themselves in the off season.

The concept of unfree labour is an important one in terms of this study on migrant workers from Jamaica. The concept accurately reflects the reality that there are different rules for different people and it is important to question this inequality. As well, the concept is a starting point for analyzing other issues that arise out of a situation of unfreedom - relations with employer, economic realities, etc. On the other hand, the

concept of unfree labour fails to recognise the agency or self determinism of the individual migrant worker. The concept implies a situation of enslavement where the migrant has no choice, and has not made an informed decision based upon his/her personal situation.

My proposed resolution to this conflict between unfreedom and encouraging agency is to discuss the concept of unfree labour and the role of the state, but bring this discussion to the personal, individual level of the migrant worker. I will discuss the constraints and restrictions on the migrant worker, based largely on the social and economic conditions in Jamaica (therefore at the structural level) but in the context of how these restrictions shape the decisions of migrant workers.

THE ECONOMIC REALITIES OF JAMAICAN MIGRANTS

The following section is about the economic realities that Jamaicans face in their country and how these realities encourage people to emigrate for work. Canadian farmers' need for labour in low wage, seasonal agricultural work has provided many Jamaicans with a relatively attractive employment opportunity. It is partly because of the divergence in wealth between the two countries that a situation has emerged where the employees have less power in their work setting than is usually found. This is to say that financially the work in Canada is very important to the migrant workers, and the potential (and sometimes actual) threat of being sent home, or not asked back on the program goes a long way. To illustrate these economic realities I will discuss the employment crisis in Jamaica, issues surrounding remittance payments, as well as other problems associated

with out-migration.

Unemployment and Underemployment in Jamaica

The main reason for such vast out-migration from Jamaica for over a century is the shortage of suitable employment for the population. This section will look at the unemployment problem in Jamaica and how this problem has been addressed in the recent past.

Since the post-war period policy makers and governments in Jamaica have attempted to address the chronic unemployment and underemployment problems. Depending on the ideology of the government in power various agendas have been followed. Policies such as import-substituting industrialization have been adopted with the hope that industry would grow, which in turn would create employment (Panton 1993, Bray 1987, Huber and Stephens 1992). During the Democratic socialist government from 1972 to 1980 policies such as a minimum wage, equal pay for women, and free education were adopted (Panton 1993). The unemployment rate remained high during this time (averaging 24.5%) as private investment went elsewhere, and the policies failed to impact upon the informal sector, the importance of which is discussed below (Panton 1993:96).

From the 1980s to the present, policies have promoted a liberalization of the economy, emphasizing export-led growth, free zones, and an open economy to expand the manufacturing sector, which in turn would create employment (Panton 1993, Robinson 1994). From 1980 to 1989 the unemployment rate did not fall below 25%, and Panton (1993) writes that the liberalization policies decreased the worker standard of living with

the devaluation of the Jamaican dollar and increases in prices.

In general, the various policies implemented since the Second World War have done little to alleviate the employment crisis, with the unemployment rate hovering around 25% throughout this period (Panton 1993:96). As well, the standard of living in Jamaica has declined and disparities between the wealthy and the poor have increased (Robinson 1994, Ghosh 1992). There are specific reasons for the failure of any one of the above policies, however Panton (1993) below points to a few common oversights.

Panton (1993) criticizes the Jamaican Government for making policies that do not take into consideration the unique labour structure of the country. Panton argues that not only does policy have to be aimed at the formal employment sector (usually either capital intensive or labour intensive firms) but also the informal sector should be targeted. The informal sector, in fact, employs more Jamaicans than the formal sector at 46.6% of the working population according to the Planning Institute of Jamaica, 1989 (Panton 1993:115). Employment in the informal sector is often associated with illegal or unreported economic activity such as higgling (buying and selling of goods) and marijuana production. Panton (1993) reports marijuana is the most productive informal enterprise and possibly more productive than any single formal industry.

Panton (1993) suggests that unemployment rates are under-represented as a large number of individuals are underemployed and work seasonally in tourism or cash crop cultivation. Those who remain in the country often attempt to supplement their formal labour with work in the informal sector, thereby obscuring the magnitude of the unemployment crisis (Panton 1993:103).

Another issue discussed by Panton (1993) and is associated with the employment crisis is the shortage of skilled and educated labour in Jamaica. Partly this is because of high rates of out-migration of skilled labour, which in turn results in a shortage of such people to train others. Furthermore, organization, planning and management of educational and training programs has proven to be inadequate.

In sum, unemployment and underemployment remain critical problems in Jamaica today. The International Labour Organization (1993) reports the unemployment rate was 15.4% in 1991. The World Bank Group (1996) claims unemployment is 16% of the labour force, and this is decreasing due to emigration and creation of new jobs mostly in the informal sector. The World Bank Group reports that the quality of education has declined and the country relies on a high level of remittances from abroad. However, employment growth has increased slightly over the past decade mainly in the tourist industry and related services and construction.

Remittances

Remittance is the portion of a migrant's wage sent back to the family remaining in the home country, either through formal channels or informally. In Jamaica remittance money has for decades been an important source of foreign currency for the island (Beckford and Witter 1980:53). There appear to be two conflicting schools of thought on the benefits of out-migration, and more specifically the benefits of remittance payments to a country (Keely and Tran 1989, Ghosh 1992, Russell 1992). The positive view is that remittances help to sustain a country and alleviate unemployment. The opposing view is

that heavy reliance on remittance payments increases a country's dependency, widens the income distribution, and overall offers only a temporary solution to a larger problem, that of unemployment and poverty. I will first outline the benefits of migration and remittance payments, and then offer a more critical analysis.

Remittances remain the largest contribution of Caribbean migration. "From the earliest phase, emigrants have sent back cash remittances to support and educate children, maintain dependent relatives, and improve housing conditions" (Blackman 1985:267-8). Richardson also supports the view that remittances provide vital support for families at home (1983:26).

The Caribbean people who have emigrated to Europe and North America have in most cases, maintained ties with family left at home. It appears to be a matter of routine that money is sent home to help sustain these families, and often migrants who know they will return invest in land or housing before they return (Beckford and Witter 1980:53, Blackman 1985, Richardson 1992). Increased investment in property, housing, and other material goods tends to stimulate the economy. Prestige is also associated with earning foreign wages, as Richardson (1983:26) writes, individuals improve their social standings at home with increased resources, investments, and business ventures.

It is obvious that international migrant labour helps to alleviate unemployment in Jamaica. As Panton (1993:106) writes, emigration and employment to the United States acts as an important safety valve for Jamaicans. Beckford and Witter (1980:53) go beyond the conclusion that migration is merely a 'safety valve' for problems of unemployment. The authors write that migration is an escape from poverty, it is a form of resistance and

a response to oppression.

The following authors were much more critical of the value of remittance payments. Russell (1992:269) writes that migration and therefore remittance payments are volatile, if a country depends upon this income and somehow the migration route is no longer available, the dependent country will suffer. Developing countries do rely heavily on remittances from migrants in more developed countries, as a substantial amount of foreign currency transferred from the North to the South is in the form of remittance payments (Russell 1992).

Ghosh (1992) uses the term 'asymmetric development approach' to describe the negative aspects of migration and remittances. This approach suggests that often remittance payments are not put into the economy for development purposes. Without investing wages, the worker will in fact become dependent on this source of income. To further complicate matters Ghosh (1992:424) writes that only certain sectors of the population benefit from migration opportunities, often the skilled or educated classes, therefore creating or maintaining income disparities within the country.

Griffith (1986) looks at the money Jamaican migrants make in farm work in the U.S. and has come to the conclusion that this money does not contribute to long-term economic development but instead is put towards maintaining a certain standard of living. Money earned is often spent on consumer goods, rather than invested, and the material goods attainable in the U.S. are in fact, a draw for migrants to enter the program (Griffith 1986: 887-888).

Most of the Jamaican migrants on the temporary labour program in the U.S. are

from the Jamaican peasantry (small rural producers of agriculture and petty commodities) (Griffith 1986). It is because they are peasants, Griffith argues, that they can leave their home and job for periods of time to harvest crops in the U.S. Also because they are peasants (and have something to fall back on) they can survive year to year on this temporary waged work. Peasant households can absorb these workers in times of unemployment and raise and train future labourers (Griffith 1986).

A further cost of migration is the possible disruption in the family that occurs when one individual, often the male head of the household, leaves the country for extended periods of time (McKee and Tisdell 1988). The fact that often the young and strong depart to work overseas, leaves those too old or too young to work, therefore dependent on someone else (Pastor 1985a:414). Typically, it is the female head of the household who is responsible for these dependents, creating for her extra work and responsibility. Potts (1990) writes that women's roles in the migration literature are seldom discussed. Their workload is often increased and they have had to produce the means of subsistence. "Women were thus more important to the world market for labour power as producers and reproducers of labour power than through their incorporation into capitalist commodity production" (Potts 1990:215). This is possibly part of the reason that the migrant workers on this labour program are predominately male.

Additionally, migrants often have to endure discrimination and poor working conditions in the receiving country. The situation in the United Kingdom was particularly hostile for Caribbean migrants. Labour conditions in Costa Rica and on the Panama Canal were terrible, to the extent that lives were lost (Ferguson 1990, Richardson 1992).

Migrants from the South moving to work in the North creates the potential for a situation of exploitation as the migrants have less power due to their relative poverty.

Perhaps the most important conclusion from this section is migration is not a viable solution that will result in long term development. Vast out-migration is a reflection of the deeper problems in Jamaican society. High unemployment rates, an inadequate skilled or educated class, and little investment are all problems associated with Jamaica. Migration is a survival response to these problems, but it is not a cure. However, upon saying that I must qualify that until Jamaica can alleviate some of the unemployment and underemployment in the country, migration, either temporary or permanent offers an important safety valve for the people of Jamaica.

THEORY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

THE SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF A MIGRANT'S EXPERIENCE

Describing the social aspects of a migrant labourer in theoretical terms was somewhat of a challenge. The existing literature does not fully describe the social conditions of migrants from their individual perspectives. This is largely because there is very little research that has been done on migration from a subjective point of view - the perspective of the migrants themselves. The research that has explored migrants' personal experiences is not overly theoretical (this includes Cecil and Ebanks 1991, Friedland and Nelkin 1971). The research done by Friedland and Nelkin is a wonderful description of seasonal migrant labour in the United States based upon participant observations by sixteen university students who became migrants and joined the migrant labour camps for several weeks. Unfortunately, despite it being an interesting insight into the world of a migrant labourer in the United States, it is not a theoretical piece. The following theoretical description in this paper will then necessarily draw from a wide range of literature, some of it directly relevant to the topic at hand, while others having related aspects that will be used to illuminate certain dimensions of migrants' social experience.

The importance of exploring the social situation of migrant labourers was to get a sense of the amount of freedom they had while in Ontario. It was important to establish whether their "free" time was controlled, but as well, it is important to determine what sort of social conditions migrants experienced while in Canada, in an effort to obtain a better sense of their everyday reality in the migrant labour program.

Cecil and Ebanks (1991) discuss this migrant labour program in Southwestern Ontario as being derived from the plantation system, and the authors draw parallels between the structures of both. The authors claim that both systems operate under a paternalistic authority figure - either the white planter elite or the white Ontario farmer. Deviations from the plantation model are also apparent. As these authors are quick to point out the social and cultural system provided by the plantation system is not present in the contemporary migrant labour program. Additionally, the migrant labourers receive wages, contrary to the traditional plantation system.

This article by Cecil and Ebanks (1991) provides an overview of the reality of migrant workers while they are working in Ontario. The information in this article is based upon a study of interviews with 300 migrant labourers and 25 farmers in Southwestern Ontario (one of the few studies interviewing this migrant labour group). The researchers explore the working and living conditions of the migrants. They claim the working conditions have a number of "protective" or "paternalistic" features that are in the interests of both the farmers and the workers. The living conditions are summarized as being adequate and functional, the farmer providing the housing separate from the family's accommodation, and the workers living in relative autonomy.

Isolation

My general sense before interviewing the migrant workers was that they would feel fairly ostracized in the small towns of Ontario where they make weekly visits to do their shopping. Particularly since having been in rural Jamaica where people appeared to

be especially vocal and social - and everyone's personal business was in fact community business, the lack of integration of migrants in Ontario would be noticeable to them. Since I did not speak to the local people in Ontario about their impressions of the presence of the migrant labour force, I will draw upon an interesting study done by Barrett (1994). This anthropologist did research in a rural Ontario community to determine how locals accepted newcomers, particularly ethnic minorities, into the community. Barrett discovered that the natives were likely to display ethnocentric attitudes towards the ethnic minorities. Ethnocentrism reflects a lack of understanding or appreciation of another's culture, rather than a hatred or superior ranking of one's group or culture that racism often includes. I suspect that ethnocentrism (rather than racism) is at work in many of these small rural towns where visible minority migrants find themselves on 'town night'. However, whether ethnocentrism or racism it is apparent that migrants have not been accepted into the larger communities in which they work and live. Granted, migrants are not present throughout the entire year, but many of them have been returning to the same farms and the same towns for years, even decades, and come to know the shop keepers and bank clerks.

Cecil and Ebanks (1991) present a similar picture. They establish that the human condition of the West Indian migrant labour is a function of the conditions imposed on them by the people in rural communities where the migrants work and live temporarily. Cecil and Ebanks present a picture of the migrant's world as one of isolation while in Canada as the local population refuses to accept the migrants as part of their community. "The surrounding communities, belonging to the greater Canadian realm, which purports

to be multicultural, make no special effort, and establish no special services to welcome these guests that appear annually in their midst" (Cecil and Ebanks 1991).

The majority of the above article is taken up with describing the human condition of these West Indian migrants while in Ontario. The main conclusions that Cecil and Ebanks (1991) came to are as follows. The migrant workers are not integrated into the rural communities of Southwestern Ontario, rather they are viewed with hostility, fear or indifference. Instead the migrants must rely on other West Indian migrants for social interaction. As the authors state:

> The human condition is not bad, but the workers' total humanity is not expressed in Ontario. At this time, the social aspect of their lives can only be fulfilled, unfortunately, in the spaces, and within the socio-cultural warmth of their home islands. Ontario offers a peaceful, reasonably decent working environment with economic opportunities but, even after more than twenty years, the workers are collectively strangers in a land where many spend a good part of their lives. (Cecil and Ebanks 1991:410)

The Relationship With the Employer

Another important aspect of the social situation of migrants impacting upon their personal freedom, is the relationship they have with their employers. Wall (1992) and Cecil and Ebanks (1991) write that this relationship often is paternalistic in nature, something Wall (1992) calls personal labour relations. Wall writes that personal labour relations have lessened the likelihood of workers, particularly nonresidents and ethnic minorities, from exerting control over their situation.

In cultivating personal labour relations Wall (1992:268) writes that housing provided for by the employer is an important means of control for the employer. Wall

researched labour in the tomato industry in Southern Ontario, and the main labour group was Mexican Mennonites who are different from the Caribbean and Mexican workers in that they are free labourers. They are free in the sense that they are not on a contract and may change employers of their own free will, as the market allows. (Some Mexican Mennonites are illegal immigrants, these individuals have less freedom and no legal or political rights.) However, for purposes of this paper, Wall includes Caribbean offshore workers in her analysis of the housing situation for nonresidents. Wall (1992:268) writes that labour groups who live in a dwelling owned by their employer are limited in their freedom because the employer knows what their actions are, and has the power to evict (and according to Wall sometimes uses this threat) if the individuals are not doing their jobs properly. With the Caribbean migrants, eviction is not a threat because the farmer has no choice but to house the migrants. Instead of eviction, the worker faces the threat of being sent home if there is a major problem.

Wall (1992:268) writes that living in housing provided for by the employer, workers are more likely to establish these personal labour relations. Often the migrant workers rely upon their employer for services outside the normal employee-employer relationship (such as transportation, filling out government forms). Formally (although not always strictly enforced), the migrants are not to leave the farm without permission from their employer, as according to the contract farmers are responsible for their workers' safety both during and after work. (This is what Wall writes in a footnote, and the farmers I spoke to confirmed it). According to the contract, if a worker dies during his/her term of employment, the employer is financially responsible for the burial costs (i.e.

sending the body back to Jamaica).

Following from Wall it is necessary to explore this concept of paternalism in greater detail. Newby et al (1978) did research on farmers and farm workers in England. They argued that traditional authority relationships are paternalistic in nature when there is a need to justify a power difference between individuals or groups. This is to say, paternalism legitimizes the power of the farmer over the worker. "Paternalism is therefore a method by which class relationships become defined, and grows out of the necessity to stabilize and hence morally justify a fundamentally inegalitarian system" (Newby et al 1978: 28-29). Paternalistic relations are often contradicting, these authors suggest the following contradictions: 'autocracy and obligation', 'cruelty and kindness', 'exploitation and protection' (Newby et al 1978:29).

Such paternalistic relations develop with close personal ties. Newby et al (1978) question whether or not all farmers are involved in paternalistic relationships with their employers on contemporary farms. Because the farm is becoming more business-like and less family oriented, it may be deduced that the relationships between employee and employer are becoming more business-like as well (Newby et al 1978:30).

Newby (1977) discusses the issue of housing provided for by employers in England, something called 'tied cottages'. Tied cottages are often part of the terms of employment that farmers use to attract agricultural workers who pay very little if any rent, and in exchange must work for that particular farmer. Farmers benefit from this arrangement as basically the worker is on call at all hours, which may be particularly important on a farm with livestock (Newby 1977:181).

Those against the existence of tied cottages in England, largely the agricultural trade union, argue that this type of housing ties workers to the land making them dependent upon the farmer, who in turn has a great deal of power with threat of eviction. As well, the worker and the family have little privacy and leisure time is restricted. Newby (1977) argues that the tied cottage debate is a heated one because of the presence of close personal relationships that naturally emerge in such a farm work setting. The lines become blurred between work and personal lives when people work together, live in close proximity, and the families of the employer and employee know each other. Here Newby (1977:201) creates a picture of traditionalism where dependency and 'personal, pervasive relationships' are cultivated between a worker (staying in a tied cottage) and the employer. This relationship may lead to traditional authority (see description from Weber below). "Even when farm workers do not identify with this traditional authority, their powerlessness is such that they will have little option other than to abide by it" (Newby 1977:202).

Weber's definition of traditional authority is that domination is legitimate based on the belief that what has always happened should continue to happen, in other words custom prevails. The most important domination is patriarchalism which is the authority of the male head of household, "...the rule of the master and patron over bondsmen, serfs, freed men; of the lord over the domestic servants and household officials,..." (Weber 1963:296). Wall (1992) writes in a footnote that according to Weber (and Marx) legal rights to labour power belonged to others such as masters and manor lords in non-capitalist modes of production (in a capitalist mode the labour power belongs to the free

labourer). These master and manor lords that Wall is referring to represent forms of traditional authority. Such rule is irrational according to Weber because it is based upon personal relations rather than functional relations. Obedience is unquestioningly given to the authority figure, not because of any rational set of rules, but because of an irrational loyalty of the subordinate to the patriarch (Parkin 1988). The patriarch then, rules with discretionary and arbitrary powers often based on custom and not necessarily conforming to laws (Parkin 1988:80).

Rules based upon impersonal and functional relations is legal authority. Legal authority is created through rational laws, norms, and could be in the form of labour laws or a contract (Weber 1963). What is of interest here is Weber points out that authority or domination could have both rational and irrational traits. I propose that the offshore labour program is based upon both rational and irrational forms of authority. The program is rational in the sense that it is consolidated with a detailed contract outlining conditions of employment, minimum wage, and obligations of both employer and employee. On the other hand, the irrational authority is the relationship that many of the migrants have with their employers, that of a close and personal nature. Cecil and Ebanks (1991:391) state, "[n]aturally, such relationships are a function of the personalities of the individuals involved".

In Kleinig's (1983) discussion of paternalism, the argument is based upon liberal philosophy, drawing heavily upon J.S. Mill. Paternalism thrived in earlier centuries where people saw themselves in predetermined roles, in subordination to the all-powerful patriarch. It was not until liberal society emerged and individuals were regarded as

'rational' beings rather than 'relational'. Paternalism then, is a relationship that is familial in character. The paternalistic actor is an individual who believes that he/she knows what is best for the other (the one being acted upon). Such a relationship is often insulting to an adult because they are not respected as a capable being, they are treated more as a child (Kleinig 1983: 3-4).

In conclusion to the theoretical model it is important to emphasize that it is a tool to put into context the data that I will present later in the paper. The information on the state and the information on the economics of Jamaica represent structural level analysis, whereas the theories on the social situation of migrants while in Ontario operate at a more individual level, although still theoretical.

PART TWO

PRACTICAL ORIENTATIONS: THE VOICE AND INTERPRETING THE VOICE

The following chapters are a very important part of the thesis as I am arguing the need for subjectivity in studies of migration. Part One has represented my orientations of the migrant labour program drawing from the literature, now I will report on what was said to me by the migrants. In Part Two I will attempt to interpret and analyze how these people made sense of their situation by using the theory from Part One.

Wherever practical and possible I have left these men's words in their original form, although I have separated each individual interview into themes so as to provide some sort of continuity for the reader and for myself. I tend to agree with Barrett (1996:233) who suggests combining the data and analysis sections together, as even in the presentation of data there is interpretation. I first discuss methodology and related issues in chapter four. In the following chapters my observations are presented first and -

then I bring in certain aspects of the theory and attempt to apply the theory to the migrants' words. The organization is as follows: chapter five discusses the state, and what impact the state has on the migrant workers' experiences including descriptions of working and living conditions. Chapter six presents the migrants' views of their social lives and freedoms while in Ontario. Chapter seven discusses the migrants' perspectives of their economic situation, and the final chapter is a concluding one.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY AND THE FIELD WORK EXPERIENCE

GOALS

One of my main goals for this project was to act as a "voice" for Jamaican migrant workers, as their voice is largely absent in the literature on temporary migration to Canada. As I re-read through the post-modern and feminist anthropology on methodology I realize that I have been ambitious. There is a great deal of criticism from anthropologists such as Abu-Lughod as to whether or not one can speak for another, or as she says 'the other'. Abu-Lughod (1991) argues that 'letting the other speak' has not eliminated the power difference between researcher and researched as the researcher controls the writing and interpretation. I have tried to avoid speaking for the Jamaican migrants, instead I provide direct quotes of what was said to me, wherever practical and possible. I believe there is a definite need in the literature on migration for individual experience or subjectivity, and have therefore risked the criticism of speaking for another.

Particularly in the case of the Jamaican temporary migrants to Ontario, I believe that these men are not in a position to fully express their criticisms of this program, for fear of losing their jobs. Perhaps I have provided at least one vehicle to express opinion.

My methodology has been influenced by both postmodernist and feminist ethnography. Postmodernists assert that an ethnography has many authors, the authority of the researcher is challenged and such authority should be avoided (Barrett 1996: 151-2). Feminist researchers prefer qualitative methods and also attempt to retreat from the power and authority of the traditional researcher - subject relationship. Instead they aim for a dialogue or exchange (Barrett 1996:164). One particular book that has influenced my work is I, Rigoberta Menchu, edited by Elisabeth Burgos-Debray (1984). Burgos-Debray took the role of listener and recorder for a Guatemalan Indian woman, Rigoberta Menchu. Burgos-Debray transcribed the interviews as a monologue and presented herself as an editor. I have aspired to follow this technique, however I will comment below on some of the difficulties I had.

A concern at every stage of my research has been the issue of a power differential between researcher and researched. This power differential was compounded by the racial politics prevalent in Jamaica. The interviewees are black and I am white, something that I was continually reminded of by the Jamaican people. In some cases my identity was mistaken for a government agent, either coming to check up on individual workers, or recruiting workers for employment. The implication of this distrust on the part of the migrants is that they were perhaps more cautious of what they said to me and perhaps less critical of the program. On the other hand, the migrants' endorsement of the program

(even if it is done out of fear of reprisal) illustrates the importance that these people place on this labour opportunity. I am not sure that I could have avoided this power differential unless I spent several months with these people to gain their trust. I dealt with the situation by explaining my research, and describing my personal experience working in farm work with Jamaican migrant workers.

Having said the above, I feel secure in the validity of migrants' responses (even if less critical) as they correspond to many casual conversations that I have had with migrants who work on this program. These informal conversations have occurred over the years, sometimes over a few drinks where we sat and talked as equals (hence, no power differential, instead there was a certain level of trust between us).

In the course of the fieldwork I structured the interviews with questions and occasionally prompted individuals if they were unclear what I was asking, possibly taking away from their 'voice' (please see Appendix D for my outline of interview questions). My questions and prompts, however, have been informed through numerous discussions with the migrants I worked with, people I visited in Jamaica during the first trip, observing relationships on the farm, and talking with farmers and coworkers who work with offshore migrants.

In my modest attempt to provide these workers with a voice, I have left the interviews in their original form, with Jamaican slang and colloquialisms. I believe that transcribing the interview word for word has allowed for a certain authenticity to the observations, having the reader read the words as I heard them. All of the workers spoke to me in English (as opposed to Jamaican patois, the dialect they use amongst

themselves). Their accent was difficult at times, however my knowledge of Jamaican "talk" has come from three summers working with these men, as well as a two week visit to their country in 1995.

THE RESEARCH DESIGN

I chose to research Jamaican offshore labour in Ontario for several reasons. Firstly, the Jamaican program is the largest of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program, employing around 4500 Jamaicans annually. (The next largest program is the Mexican one.) As well, Jamaica was the first country to enter into the contract with Canada in 1966. Finally, and probably the most important reason I chose the Jamaican program is because of my personal relationships with a few Jamaican migrants.

My research actually started in December of 1995 and January of 1996 when I spent two weeks in Jamaica with a girlfriend, who was also a co-worker on the farm and the daughter of my employers. It was during this first trip to Jamaica that I became used to the transportation and communication of the island, the lingo, and overall tone of rural life in Jamaica (which in many respects is very easy going). It was while visiting Jamaican coworkers during this first trip that I was able to establish contacts with men who migrated to Ontario for work.

I started interviewing farmers in Ontario in late August and early September of 1996. This was to get a feel for their perspectives of the program, as well as to inspect the accommodation of migrants (commonly called bunkhouses) and speak to migrants while they were in Ontario. I randomly selected farmers to interview based on a list

supplied to me by the Jamaican Liaison Service of all farmers in the County of Haldimand-Norfolk who hire Jamaican workers. I interviewed people from ten different farming operations. I chose Haldimand-Norfolk because it is my home area, hosts a variety of crops, and is an area with a large number of employers of foreign agricultural workers. As well, due to budget limitations interviewing in my home county saved on travel costs. Although I did take some home addresses of the Jamaicans from the ten farms I visited, I did not end up interviewing or getting in contact with these people once I went to Jamaica. It became clear to me that if any of the migrants I interviewed wished to be critical of the program, they would feel less trustful of me keeping their confidentiality if I knew who they worked for. It is for the same reason that I did not interview any of the people I worked with, as not only do I have personal ties with these people but their employers were my employers and my friends as well.

I decided to interview migrants while they were in Jamaica, rather than in the rural communities in Ontario as I felt these workers would be more comfortable and perhaps open about their experiences when in their own environment. As well, I wanted to see how these people lived, to get a sense of their lives in Jamaica.

The research was such that I had a few contacts set up before I went to Jamaica, either through people I had met in Ontario or people I met in Jamaica the previous winter. In an effort to protect the confidentiality of those I interviewed, I will not divulge any more specifics. Once I arrived in Jamaica finding individuals to interview was much easier than I had expected. Employing a snowball sampling technique I interviewed one individual who referred me to the next individual, and so on. It ended up that word got

around in the small hamlets where we stopped and at one point I had people lined up waiting to see me. With this method I would interview several people in that area and then move on to the next contact's address. I ended up doing interviews with individuals from seven different hamlets in five parishes: St.Catherine, Westmoreland, Manchester, Clarendon, St.Elizabeth (see Appendix E for a map of the island).

In one area we travelled to I did not have a contact set up. But after a day and talking with some of the locals I had my contact and ended up doing four interviews in this area. It appears that partly because the communities are so small and closely knit, and partly because those who travel to Canada on the farm work program are well known (possibly carry a certain status or prestige), these men were not difficult to locate. Instead it was the women who were difficult to locate. The women who migrate to Ontario on this program make up fewer than 2% of the total number of workers according to the Jamaican Liaison Service. Due to my limited stay in Jamaica (only three weeks the second visit) I did not have the time to track them down.

I ended up doing thirty interviews with Jamaican migrants, employing in-depth interviewing (see Appendix D for the interview outline). The sample consists of thirty male migrant workers who worked all over Ontario. These men ranged in age from 27 to 54 years, the average age being around 40 years old. Most of those interviewed had completed primary education and two migrants reported being in school until they were 18 years old. I had gone to Jamaica with the intention of seeking out a percentage of individuals according to commodity. For example, workers in apples makes up 18% of the workers on this program, therefore, I attempted to have 18% of my sample as apple

workers so that I would be covering the commodity groups as represented. The numbers turned out close to this, although probably more by chance than my manipulations (see Appendix B for a break down of number of workers by commodity, and a break down of those interviewed by commodity).

With respect to employment in Jamaica, nineteen workers were either involved in small-scale farming or the fishing industry, two were seasonal farm workers in Jamaica, one drove taxi, one in the tourist industry, two where involved in some type of trade, and five had either sporadic work or no employment.

The generalizability of the findings to the larger population of Jamaican migrants was not a concern in this research, as it represents one of the few subjective studies done on this particular migrant labour program in Ontario. In this sense then, the research is exploratory, an attempt to discover what the crucial issues are for migrant workers and how they have defined their migrant work situation. The findings have been arranged into the themes that I have interpreted as important aspects of these people's lives, relating to their migratory work experience.

GAINING ACCESS

As I have already mentioned above it was not difficult to find migrants in the community. Once having met the interviewee I obtained permission from him to tape the interview. Most of the people appeared to feel comfortable with this, particularly after I explained that I was not linking their name with the tape, and it saved me from taking notes. Only four of the thirty interviews were not taped. What seemed to be a greater

deterrent was asking these individuals to sign a consent form. After having explained my research intentions, describing who would read the finished report, and promising confidentiality, I would then ask for a signature. It is not surprising that I was met with suspicion. A consent form is requested by the University to both protect the interviewee (making certain he/she was fully informed about the research) and to protect the University. At any rate asking for a signature made many of the respondents tense and suspicious.

As already alluded to, the best way that I found to gain access was to emphasize my student status, and my ties with other Jamaican migrants. Some of these men had worked with Canadian students before and understood the idea of a research project.

PRACTICAL CHALLENGES IN THE FIELD WORK SETTING

My sister travelled to Jamaica with me the second visit. I cannot emphasize enough what a relief it was to have her along. Most people in the rural areas treated us with respect and we were given some wonderful hospitality, of which I am very grateful. However, it is not hard to imagine that two young, white women travelling alone in a predominately black countryside would attract a great deal of attention - more attention than we were comfortable with (particularly when Jamaican people were continually warning us to be careful). Without my sister I would not have travelled like we did, renting a vehicle and navigating through difficult terrain. The rural roads were characterized by potholes, narrow paths, washouts, with few road signs to guide the way. As well, we were faced with the challenge of driving on the left-hand side (opposite to

what I am used to), and meeting up with aggressive drivers.

Another challenge was accommodation. It was often difficult to find a guesthouse in the remote areas we were travelling (not many tourist guides cover the interior of Jamaica) and we tried to avoid travelling too far after nightfall, which was around 6:30 pm. We found accommodation by word of mouth or friends put us up if we were close enough to them.

Personal safety was another worry that I have alluded to above. Jamaica has a fairly high crime rate and being white, female, and travelling alone we felt vulnerable. In the rural areas we felt somewhat safer, particularly when we were in the company of a trusted acquaintance or friend. Overall, the rural Jamaicans received us with respect, interest and friendliness. I am grateful to all who showed us hospitality and kindness.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE STATE AND LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS

This chapter provides observations as well as analysis of the state and living and working conditions of migrant labourers. The latter two categories fall into this chapter as it is the state, to a certain extent, that structures these aspects of a migrant's experience in Ontario agriculture.

THE STATE

The Liaison Officer

It is part of the agreement between the Canadian Government and the Jamaican Government that one or more agents from Jamaica are to be appointed to work in Canada. The agents (liaison officers) are to ensure the program functions smoothly for both employers and employees. As well the liaison officers are to provide Canadian officials with information on worker arrivals, repatriation, worker transfers, persons absent without

leave, and medical health information of workers (from the "Memorandum of Understanding", 1995). There are currently six liaison officers for the Jamaican program. They are Jamaicans who live in Canada with their families, although they must go back to Jamaica for recruitment periodically. The Jamaican Liaison Office is in North York, Ontario.

When questioned about the liaison officers, almost all of the migrants agreed that these individuals were trustworthy, that is to say if a problem arose the migrant would not be afraid to call their liaison officer. However, the migrants made it clear that if there was a problem, calling the liaison officer would be a last resort. A number of the men interviewed made it clear that they did not have problems, therefore they had never had the need to call. I asked the following worker if he would call the liaison officer if he had a problem. "Yeah, can call him. Well, me don't really have no problem, so me don't call dem. Well, if me have a problem, me can deal wid de case." I then asked the worker what sort of problem would he take to a liaison officer? "Alright, it problem like dis, we get a little paper, if no can read or write, no problem dere is a liaison officer who can read it and say exactly what on it."

I asked this migrant what the liaison officers did, "Well, dey come by de camp and check out if we ok, you know. If de workin' is goin' on good and so. If we have any problem can call dem. [We don't call] because we don't have any problem. Tings run smooth." I then asked this man for what sort of problem would he call the liaison officer.

> It depends on what happen, you know. It would be something have to happen for you to call dem. You have to have good cause to call de liaison officer, you have to. You don't call him for no reason, unless he have to come around and give us a check. Regularly he check de camp, you know and he find out from us if

everting alright.

The following worker also confirmed that he would not bother the liaison officer if it was not necessary. "If de problem is not great, you know you can talk it over. It much better dat way, de man don't have to keep on coming all da way. Everybody know dere work, everybody know what to do."

Another worker described the liaison officer's job as such. "He come around, he come to make sure we have good batroom, good kitchen, good beds. He come down to see what goin' on wid de workers." I then asked this worker if he trusted the liaison officer. "Yeah probably because de udder day, udder time one of our guys, was havin' a problem, he come down and convince him he shouldn't be like dat." The farmer may also use the liaison service. "You mean my boss. Yeah, if he got a problem, he can call. If like he want us to work early and we don't want to go early, and we try to ruin his crop, he can call him."

One man described the role of the liaison officer as that of lawyer or protector, here is what he said:

> If you have a problem, you can call him anytime night and day and he come down. If dere's a problem between you and your employer he deal it out and sort it out, then if de employer is wrong wid you and he don't call you back because of dat, well you contact him [liaison officer] who send you some place else, if you not wrong, you know what I mean?... Don't let him [the farmer] mess up your contract. Cause if a guy should go up dere and you don't call me back, you just mess up my contract, and have to start all over again, so you have a lawyer dere, a protector, understand? See if we don't have dem, tings may get out of hand, like I told you before, some people don't like some people, dey just use dem because of man power.

I asked one migrant if workers were afraid to call the liaison officer because of any sort of repercussions. "No, dey're not afraid. It depend on de matter. You seldom call

dem on a small matter, don't botter wid dat". He added later, "Dey tell us at de airport if we have a problem we can call dem. No matter what it is. But sometime we don't botter wid certain little tings". Another man who had joined us said,

> If you want, you call him and he will come and sort dat out, if de boss won't call you [back on the program], you look like a sucker because he's wrong wid you and you can't even talk, and he try to have you off de system, dat bullshit.

This migrant is saying that if a worker has a problem with an employer and the liaison officer determines that it is the employer who is the problem (and the employee is a good worker), then it is within the liaison officer's power to put the worker with another employer.

The following migrant confirmed that he would trust his liaison officer with a problem. He then described the liaison's role as follows,

> He come around sometime, any problem he come around, like any trouble, any fight, or sickness, or so on. Once in awhile, you know, once in awhile he hop around, not too regular. Any problem if I have, dey is dere, dat's his job, you know. Yes, dey call him if any problem, any fight, and if dey want to come home, all dose tings.

Here is another description from a different worker.

> If anyting is wrong, he can come in. If anyting is not right, like what you don't like, you can call de liaison officer, or you can tell de boss or de owner dat you have to fix dis.

I asked the following migrant worker if he trusted the liaison officer and if he would not be afraid of being sent home if he went to them with a problem.

> If I have a problem up dere, someting is not right, I would call. Pfew, no, I wouldn't be afraid. Let me tell you someting, if me up dere right now, if I want to come home tomorrow mornin' I can call de liaison officer and say I want de earliest flight to Jamaica.

Most of the migrants interviewed claimed to have seen the liaison officer at least

once a season. However, a few men maintained that they only saw the liaison officer at the airport, as there had not been any need to have them come out to the farm. A majority of the migrants mentioned that they had the liaison officer's telephone number posted in the bunk house in case they needed to call. "Sometime dey come around and give us a check, and our boss too. Well sometime dey don't come, like if we don't have any problem."

"He visit each one of us once in awhile to see if everting is ok, to see if de house is alright, stuff like dat."

"Their job is to see that we get proper protection, proper pay, proper house facilities, clean building, and dose things... Dat's right, you can call dem with any problem and dey come and sort it out." He also said that he did not have to call the liaison officer because everything was "quite ok", and he got along well with his boss.

I asked one worker if the liaison officer visited the farm regularly, "No, no dey check on us, like when we go, de check us at de airport. And like if dere is anyting wrong at de camp we just phone dem and dey will come."

"When I was dere I only saw one time. For de six weeks, only one time. I never have any problem and dey said if dere is problems you can call. Well we didn't have any." This worker confirmed that he had the liaison officer's number posted in the bunkhouse and he said he would call him if there was any problem. However he added, "never have any, though. We get along wid our boss".

One individual responded to my questions about the liaison officer as follows.

> Well, de liaison officer, now, I don't hardly see dem. Because we don't have any problem like for dem to come around. We only see dem at de airport. [If you have

> a problem] you can just phone dem... if you phone dem, dey will come. But we don't have de problem like to call dem. Because everyting goin' on steady. So we don't have to use dem to get into our business dere. Can deal wid de boss and its ok.

Although most of the men questioned did not admit to ever needing to get in touch with a liaison officer, they did have an idea what sort of problems their coworkers took to the officers. The most common problem mentioned was a shortage of money, in other words being underpaid by their employer. One migrant labourer did mention, however, if workers had a hard time with their employer, and perhaps the employer was not a good person, they certainly would mention it to the liaison officers. In this case the worker would not be afraid of repercussions in the way of losing his job or being in trouble with the liaison officer or his employer. This is what this man said:

> Good farmer, we have no bad report to give. Bad farmer dey ask us and we will tell dem, understand, so dey will keep dere eyes on dem, dey pay stubs and so forth because dey shorten people sometimes. But like I say, you have good farmer, you have bad farmer, you have good worker, you have bad worker. So every year you go, you have good and bad. If you have a team of guy who good, I don't tink dey should say it ain't right. If it right, dey should say it is right, if it ain't right, it just ain't right, ok?

Another worker confirmed that he would go to the liaison officer with a complaint about their employer. "Well suppose you and de boss don't get along, den you can call him. But dat only if your boss no good, our boss nice."

This following quote is from a worker who claimed that most people do not call the liaison officers unless they are looking for employment and want to get on this program.

> Yeah, he [liaison officer] give us a card and he say if we have a problem we can call him. You see his phone number on de card... many people call him when most of de guys are not workin'. So dem call him to get dem a job... Well, me no

get no job, I was callin' him, but he no send me back, but lots of guys go back.

"He [liaison officer] responsible for us. Dere is six of dem. Six of dem responsible for us. We tell dem we want dat fixed, we want dis fixed, like dat."

Money appeared to be another common problem that a migrant labourer would bring up with a liaison officer. There were several workers who said that if it appeared they were short money in their wages they would call their liaison officer.

> Money is a problem, it looked low. It didn't work out. I should make more money for de vegetable, more money for de apple. I talk to him [liaison officer] about it still. He say I sign a contract for dis. Once I seen de work, I tink I should get more. Work hard. Lemme tell you someting, de money - too much tax, Canada Pension, Unemployment, and dose tings, dey charge too much money for dem. Then we don't get no money.

"Well de liaison officer's job is like dis, if you have any problem, you have to call de liaison officer to work something out between de boss, but I didn't have any." I then asked him what kind of problems would be reported?

> Like you de farm worker say dat I de boss don't treat you right. Or de money's not right, with dis you cannot call de boss, you call de liaison officer. Or if you had a fight between you and your friends who working together - I didn't have any so, I didn't need any liaison officer.

Recruitment

Recruitment of farm workers in Jamaica is the responsibility of the Jamaican Government. Reports from the men I interviewed varied as to who did the actual field recruiting. Some mentioned a friend got them on the program, some said their member of parliament, and others said a leader in the community. These people may in fact be one and the same, or possibly the recruitment followed different procedures at different points in time. Whoever it was doing the recruiting, the system appears to be the same.

First the potential worker is handed a card which is a pass to see a liaison officer stationed in Jamaica to do the preliminary hand test. This hand test is a visual test to determine the roughness of the individual's hand. If the hands show evidence of physical labour, then the person has passed the test. The prospective migrant then goes home and will later be summoned by telegram to go to Kingston to have a medical test. The following are personal accounts of how these workers got on the program.

"Well a friend introduce me to it you know. He sign up my name, an' dey send back for us, so we go and do de hand selection. Afta dat we do de physical."

"Well, I get a card. From a official... dey get my name from a lady, a friend of mine."

> I get a card from a lady, she gave me a card, dere was a selection and den I go from dere. It all come trough de government. I go for de interview and I go to do selection - hand test and stuff like dat, and den from dere I went to Kingston for medical. Everyting was ok so I go to Canada.

"I just getta card, my I.D. and everyting, I go to de place, hand test and everyting, register, and go back down here 'til dey send me a telegram to go to Kingston for medical."

"Well, I got a ticket - a farm ticket from a community leader who give it out, you know." I asked him if they only give this ticket out to certain people, and what was the criteria. "Not all the men, they have to see that you are a good worker, and that you haven't done any crime, then you will get it."

"Dey come around Jamaica. You have to apply for it, do a hand test. And den dey have to check your hand and your fingers... go to Kingston for de medical tests, and wait dere for a few days to get results." I asked this man if they had to pay for this

themselves, "No, we don't pay, dat's why I tink de government take five per cent of what we earn up in Canada."

The Ministry of Labour in Jamaica has a permanent station to do the medical tests of migrants going to Canada. Every year the migrants heading up to Canada have to first pass their medical test, even if they have been on the program for many years. Conditions at this medical are not ideal. The migrants have to wait in line sometimes days for their turn, or for the results of the tests. Because most of these men are not well off they end up sleeping at the facility on the floor, or the luckier ones have family or friends in Kingston with whom they may stay.

This is how one migrant describes his experience. "Ya, I was standing dere for a couple of hours, waitin' in the sun, burnin' for a card I get. I was standing dere soldiering for a few hours."

A number of the migrant workers spoke about waiting for a few days for the tests or the results.

> After dat you get a telegram that takes you to Kingston. Dere you take your blood, urine, pressure (blood), and all tings. [Have to wait] usually tree days... we have friend up dere where can sleep, and sometime we have to sleep just in de room.

Here is another description of the recruitment process.

> I have some card that dey give around in Jamaica. So a lady give me one. I go to de agriculture house in Mandeville. Dere I deal wid de liaison officer. From dat now, in Mandeville, I go to Hanover Street, and go trough de necessary tests. Everyting, from blood, x-ray, your hands too, your feet. Check dat everyting ok about you, no scars, if you have a scar like dis one. Dat means you have to strip, understand? Den blood, Den x-ray. Every farm worker does it you know, have to have a good test.

I asked the following migrant why they had to wait for their medical for so long

in Kingston,

> Because dey have plenty of people to deal wid and it take time. Dey have to test your blood, if it good, your peepee, your pressure, your heart, you have to go on de x-ray ting to check your chest. Dey make sure dat you have de healty worker. You have to do some tests, and den wait for de result. You can stay up dere tree days, but sometime you can go back home. Sometime you don't go trough in one day because a lotta farm worker from odder part of de country. De come from all parishes, fourteen parish. From Westmoreland, St. Elizabeth, Manchester, it a big program anyhow. It bring foreign exchange back to Jamaica.

I asked this migrant if he had to stay over in Kingston for his medical. "Yes, everybody just camp at de Ministry of Labour. But you have a rough night, you know, everybody have to sleep on de floor."

I had spoken to an interesting character near the beginning of my field work. He was a Jamaican, probably in his late fifties who had lived and worked in England for a number of years. He strongly criticized the migrant labour program in Canada, calling it slave labour. Even though he was not part of the program, I include him in this description as his viewpoint provides an alternate perspective, one that would not be hampered by fear of reprisal in way of being fired. The following is a quote from him about the medical in Kingston.

> The Ministry of Labour in Kingston do the medical and the men have to sleep on hard floors, sometimes have to wait for two days in line. And they do an unnecessary rectal exam. How would you like it in Canada if you had to sleep on hard cement floors? Ok then, it is humiliating.

Once a worker was on the program there was a chance that the employer would not ask for that specific worker back to his or her place of employment. There are various reasons for this and I will cover this aspect more thoroughly later in the paper. For purposes of the state, it is interesting to note that individuals could possibly get back on

the program by going through the liaison officer, although I met many people who did not have success with this. It appeared that there was no real organization in this matter, or perhaps I was not getting the full information from the men with whom I spoke. The following is an example of someone who was having difficulty getting back on the program. "Well, me no get no job, I was callin' him [liaison officer], but he no send me back, but lots of guys go back. I go up to de ministry once dis year take a ticket and leave my number, and I don't hear noting."

The above quote raises another issue about the Jamaican government and the FARMS program. I heard from more than one individual that the workers did not always get their telegrams in time which carried the details of their flight up to Canada. In fact some people told me that they made sure they kept in contact with their employer in Canada to know when their flight was leaving, because there was a chance they may not be forewarned in time. As it was the migrants were given sometimes only twenty-four hours to be ready and at the airport to fly to Canada. One man described to me how he missed his flight and another man took his place at the airport so he lost his opportunity to come to Canada. He blamed this on the jealousy of the mail deliverer who held the telegram back until the flight had left.

LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS

Living Conditions

Living conditions are controlled to an extent by the Canadian Government. The Ministry of Health checks each dwelling in Ontario annually to ensure the

accommodations are adequate. The dwellings that I saw (about ten of them) were clean and sparsely furnished. Some of the dwellings had separate bedrooms, some had shared bedrooms, and some had bunks or beds arranged in a communal space. All of the dwellings that I visited in Canada, as well as everyone I questioned, claimed to have a television in their dwelling. There was little criticism from the workers about their living arrangements. I believe that in comparison to the homes in Jamaica, the dwellings in Canada are adequate. The homes of migrant labourers in Jamaica were fairly small, and I heard of two accounts where the home did not have electricity, and a number of them did not have indoor plumbing.

In general, migrants had little or no complaints about their living arrangements in Canada. The following are a few quotes from the migrant labourers which are typical of most responses to questions about the living conditions in Canada. "Well, de living arrangements are alright, you know. We are comfortable at home anyway we have a nice couch, livin' room. De facilities alright."

"Well, out dere, it not bad - I livin' in a bunk more dan one guy and... what I'm sayin' is it no problem. Livin' in dere have no problem."

"Well de accommodation is good, very good. I no complain about dat, you know. We have everyting dere for facilities: television, we have two fridge dere, two stove dere. Our sleeping accommodation ok." The migrant labourers are responsible for buying their own groceries and preparing their own food. This is one of the reasons that many of the farmers I spoke to preferred the Caribbean offshore labour, as they did not have to prepare food for them unlike some labour groups hired in the past. Most of the migrants

I questioned shared cooking duties, sometimes with the entire gang (in this case always a small gang), and sometimes two people would pair up and take turns cooking. Less common was a gang where everyone cooked for themselves. One worker made an insightful comparison of migrant labour to students in Canada. "Maybe two or tree guy cook togedder. You know what I mean, you go to school up dere, you share everyting."

One migrant worker mentioned that it was difficult to get certain foods in Canada, for example he did not like the type of rice available in the grocery stores. In the following quote he mentions the peddlers who travel in some areas of Ontario from farm to farm to sell their goods to offshore labour. In this case he is speaking of a Jamaican individual who caters to the Jamaica migrant labour market.

> You know you have plenty more food out here [Jamaica] dan dere. Normally when we sometime see dis - dere are some people from Jamaica livin' in Canada, sometime dey go around de farm and dey sell stuff like dat come from Jamaica. So sometime we get dat. But sometimes we don't get it, so we just have to use what we have dere, like potatoes not yams.

As well, I have noticed in stores in the Tillsonburg area that more goods catering to the offshore labour have begun to appear in supermarkets. For example, Jamaican patties are a relatively new item.

A modern convenience that is present in the living quarters of the migrants is the television. Almost every dwelling had one, and many had video cassette recorders (vcr) as well. It appeared that in some cases the vcr had to be purchased by one of the workers, however the televisions were supplied by the employer. One worker describes the television at his lodging, "Sometime the t.v. not wonderful. Him [the employer] say it old. No channels. I go to buy one, but de time get short."

The presence of laundry facilities depended upon the employer. This is what one migrant worker said after stating that they had the use of two washing machines. "Yeah, my boss - I don't know about odder bosses - he try to make it easier for us. When we done de crop and on our way home de boss give us a little extra, you know." Another man said that he did not have the use of a washing machine so he took his dirty clothes to a laundry mat, he said this about laundry, "Well some guy do dere own, some guy go to laundry mat. I a lazy, every week I go to de laundry mat, mostly we take de company vehicle - we have a company vehicle".

The number of people living in a dwelling varied with the size of the working operation. Of the migrants interviewed, most dwellings housed between five and eight men, the range being two to thirty individuals living in the same space. Around one in six of the migrants interviewed had separate bedrooms, around half of the migrants asked claimed to share a room with one or two other persons, and around one third of the migrants shared a communal sleeping space where they had separate bunks or beds. The number of individuals living in a dwelling often varied according to the time of year, for example often harvesting time requires more labour and additional migrants are brought up.

The following are descriptions from two migrants about their living arrangements.

> Yes, I live on de farm, in a bunkhouse, tree or two until it comes time to prime, den dere is eight. On de first year we did live wid just a partition between us and de boss, we live in de same building... We [the migrants] share de batroom, kitchen. You know how we live, us few guys who work together, we cook together, we eat together, each man go to de batroom when dey are ready, we have separate beds, even if two of us in one room, we have separate beds. We have a t.v.

Here is another account,

> Share a bunkhouse wid eight guys. Share a room, we don't have bunkbeds. Dere is an upstairs and a downstairs, and a big room where you have dis guy here and dis guy dere. Two batrooms, we can use de laundry in de boss' house, t.v. and video, every little ting.

Working Conditions

Working conditions include issues of safety, weather conditions, hours worked per day, extent of hard physical labour. There was much agreement among those I interviewed, that Jamaicans did not like working in the cold, and many also mentioned dislike for the rain. There was less consent on hours of work. Many said they prefer long hours because they are in Canada to work, and wanted to do as much as possible in as short a time as possible, so they could get home to Jamaica. Other migrants felt that the hours were too long. I suspect the number of hours worked would vary by employer, although the contract stipulates that the employer had to guarantee the workers a minimum of forty hours per week and not less than 240 hours a season.

There are few worker protections, either for offshore workers or for permanent residents. I suggest, however, that a situation of few labour laws is more critical for migrant labourers than for Canadians. Perhaps local help would walk away from working conditions that are hazardous or unpleasant much sooner than these migrant workers who believe they risk being sent home if they are perceived as uncooperative. However, if a worker dies on the farm, it is the responsibility of the farmer to cover the expenses of shipping the body home to Jamaica.

All in all these people work very hard on Ontario farms, nurseries, and processing

stations. Often the hours are long, usually seven days a week, working in various weather, and possibly sometimes under hazardous conditions. It is perhaps relevant to point out here that agricultural workers in general, be they locals or international, are not well protected under labour laws. This is to say that Canadian agricultural workers work under the very same conditions: weather, long hours, seven day work weeks, etc.

When describing their working conditions a few workers claimed that the work was boring, in the sense of being repetitive, mindless work. Here are what two individuals said:

> It bore me you know, but you have to do it, can't dwell, just work and forget about it. Have to have time to have a beer, you know. It really boring to work uhm, eight o'clock until sometimes five-tirty, and just one break. A half an hour off for break.

I then asked this man what he preferred (he had worked at both picking apples and priming tobacco).

> Well really, I prefer [tobacco] more dan de apple, you know. Sometime it like borin', like goin' out dere and it gettin' hot and you are far away from de kiln being full. It borin' but you just work to get all of it. You just joke, cheer up de people... Well you know sometimes work is like you have to complain, and de next time it is ok. You know when you are comin' to de end of de kiln, it always get borin' - you get tired.

The next migrant I asked what he found the hardest part of his job. He said, "Well, to me everting dere is hard, mon, very hard. It borin' and hard physical. You have to work very hard for de money."

Out of all the migrants I interviewed, only four said that the work in Canada is not hard work. One man said, "Well I didn't really feel it hard work, you know. I used to it, I am definitely a farmer, that's what I do. I'm not an office man, so no pretty pin,

no white shirt (laughs). I didn't feel I have to work hard, it come to me very quick." A few did not comment on the difficulty of the work, however, sixteen migrant workers said they found the work very difficult. Here are some examples of how they responded.

The following migrant labourer was asked what he thought of the work in Canada, and what he found to be the hardest part of his job.

> Well, everybody know dat it very rough and cold, but if you want to work, you got to work. Dat's it and noting more... De hardest part of de job - well every job is very hard. Get up out of bed and go to work, to take de cold and to take de job. But no problem, you just workin', just workin' - I no problem, no problem for me. I don't know about udder guys.

The following migrant picked apples. This is an account of his experience in picking apples.

> De hardest part is de apple. De weight, hurts (points to his stomach). I don't like de apples but I don't want to lose my job. [We work] twelve hours a day. Make good money. Ya have to do it. You no prefer to do it, but you have to do it. Not on any farm, some farmers give eight hours. We sign a paper that say we supposed to work eight hours a day. If you want extra money, you have to go extra time.

I asked the same man if he had a choice to work these long hours or not. "No, we don't have a choice. It don't make sense to not [work] if dere is work to do we just go and work."

His friend, who was also on the program, said, "If you want extra money, you have to do extra hours."

The following are shorter quotes that answer the question about the nature of the work, (i.e. is the work difficult?).

"Yes, it is very hard work, but once you kin do it, you know it and it no hard agin, you know what your doin', you know."

"Yeah, it hard work. We get a half hour lunch time."

"All of [de job] hard, de hardest part is to come trough wid de crop, like finish it out. Never back down, you know. Like some guys give up on workin' and just go straight home."

Interestingly, in answer to the question, "What is the worst part about your work in Canada?", fifteen of those interviewed said the worst part about Canada is the cold. One migrant said, "It cold where I am, mon. It burn like fire it so cold." Another said, "Well like wid tobacco, you have to get up in de early mornin' when it is really cold, dat's de hardest part of it."

Working Hours

Many of the migrants felt that they worked long hours, and many felt this was a beneficial thing as they were in Canada to make money. Often workers do not have weekends off, particularly in peak harvest season. The following are some comments on the subject of long hours.

"Yeah, like sometimes when we just go up for work we used to work seven 'til seven, but now we normally work seven 'til six when dere is a lot of work to do."

One migrant compared his work in Canada to that in Jamaica. He said that the work was not necessarily more difficult in Canada, just the hours were longer. Here is his description of one place where he worked in Canada. "Yeah [long hours], like de last camp I go to, I up by four o'clock, and by five, five-tirty into de field." The day ended when the tobacco kiln was full, which this worker claimed was sometimes four o'clock

in the afternoon.

Another migrant who worked at a nursery had very long hours, particularly in the spring.

> Sometimes we work to eight o'clock at night, nine o'clock, it a long time out dere. And sometime we work in de rain. We start at seven o'clock in de mornin' and work until ten o'clock in de evenin' March, April, like early on we have long day.

The following are one migrant's comments on working hours.

> You have different varieties of fruits and vegetables. Some guys get apples, six days a week, six and a half, some seven, some non-stop. And den again like I said, some people do overtime work. Like if one man won't go out and do overtime work, if dere six man, or eight man, I don't care how much man, the whole team have to go. It don't look good if five of us go and one man, he don't want to work, he bleachin', you know what I mean? So guys get togedder and say, lets go and do de work and get it over wid so we don't have to do it tomorrow. If he [the farmer] have tings dat spoil he gonna blame de man who don't want to go, so you just have to know how to cooperate. You don't go up dere and tell dem you not workin', you gonna quit. We don't go up dere and try to control de man and what we want to do, because if you don't want it, don't go up dere.

Work experiences

This migrant worked in planting and harvesting cucumbers and planting tomatoes.

> Well, de hardest part is to get de pickles. You on your knees, have to pick by hand. We get paid by shares, like if de boss get a hundred dollars, dere's seven of us pickin' - if he make a hundred dollars, dat's foreign (meaning Canadian dollars), say if he make ten thousand... But you have to work, though. You have to work to make dat money. You have to work on your knees. You in pain you still have to go out. Like in cucumbers we work, we work out dere and de boss don't come out. [When we are finished picking] if we want we can take it to de factory, we can take it so we see what he makes. Yeah, and in de evenin' we have a sheet and it show de amount of money he make, we check it up and cut it in two, share half between seven of us and half for him. Only problem is sometime de heat, in de heat it hard work. It hard, but you have to make up your mind to do it. If you want to go home and de boss want you to stay, it ok [meaning you

will stay and work].

In this case the employer is paying these men differently than is stipulated in the contract. The workers are actually gettin a cut of the profit, rather than an hourly wage. The worker to whom I was speaking felt that this was a better deal for himself, and it was incentive to work quickly.

The following includes descriptions by workers about their jobs in Canada. The first migrant worked in potatoes. "I load dem on a scale and unload on a skid. We just unload it on a scale, other people in de factory deal wid de scale, den we unload it on a skid." I asked this man if it was hard work. "Yeah, you liftin' up a lot, liftin' a load, seven hundred bag we have to unload. We had to work six in the mornin' until six in the evenin' and sometimes over time, like after supper."

I asked the following worker what his work was like in Canada. He worked for a tomato cannery.

> Yeah, we peel tomatoes, we peel dem wid a knife, and uh - I forgot de word, where I go sometimes - dey put me in de place with a hose and we take all of the cardboard off of de cans. We work right beside de chain line. I like to pack de box de best. You see when you peel you need to know, and if I have one little cut on my hands, my skin goin' to sting and den dey take me to de coffee room for a half hour. Now if you are workin' at de can, you have it better.

The following is an account of a strategy one employer used to motivate his employees to work faster. This is how the migrant worker describes it.

> When we workin' we have to work hard. We have some competition. We line up - one, two, tree, four. Everybody want to finish dere row before - a competition. De boss he use some strategy. One day he come to me and he say, I want you to keep score. He chose me de foreman, so I say "Why? We not givin' you enough work?" and he say, "yeah, but you need some competition". I know dat.

This following is an account by one migrant about the treatment he received on

a farm in Ontario.

> De hardest part was de picking, take it out of de field, right? Take it out of de field to de kiln yard. Everyting else is ok. De problem was wid de foreman,... he didn't treat our men good. Five brothers owned de farm, not all of dem [treat us bad], well, one of dem, he always come up on my back. He just want us to do what he wanted us to do. De men in de field, dey is teachin' me to do what dey do, right? Everyting is going all right, and one morning de white guy, de bad brother he come out to de field, and somehow he break his arm, and dat white man he blame it on de coloured man.

This is a quote about break times:

> Also, we take break at one o'clock, we have until two o'clock. But by one-tirty he is back, wanting us to go out to the field. Yeah, we don't make lunch in the mornin', don't have the time to do dat. And we can't be a minute over, not a minute.

Injuries

One migrant worker came to visit me one evening when I was staying over night in a community. He had been up in Canada working when he injured his back on the job. He had quite a lengthy account about his injury, however, I will condense this and give the basic outline. This man hurt his back during the 1996 season, working in the apple orchards. He had worked at the same farm for thirteen years, but his injury may have made it impossible for him to work again. He received one compensation cheque, and was telling me that he could not live on this as now he cannot work to provide for his family. He was a farmer, but his back is in bad condition, and therefore he cannot do the physical labour. I asked this man if he only received one cheque - he had, and he did not know if they would send him more.

Another migrant worker was injured when he was picking apples and fell off of

a ladder. He was out of work for ten days, so the farmer sent him home. He had never received any compensation for this, nor was he asked back on the program. (I mention this incident when discussing racism.) This migrant worker wanted to get back on the program. I asked this man about the farm he worked on, what sort of a place it was to work. "Yeah, it a good place to work... Well, it no good for me, [but] I would like to go back, I like de work you know. I gotta find work, you know. For de money, dat's why we go."

MAKING SENSE OF THEORY AND OBSERVATIONS

The State

It was a need for labour in the agriculture industry of Ontario, and a supply of labour in Jamaica that prompted the Canadian and Jamaican Governments to structure this particular labour program. The Canadian Government, in consultation with the Jamaican Government, controls this labour situation by implementing a number of provisions in the contract (minimum wage rate, housing inspections, liaison officers) as well as defining the role of the employer. The state has put the employer in control of the migrant workers, making them responsible for the migrant's safety, shelter, and well-being and therefore giving the farmer a great deal of power and responsibility in the employer-employee relationship. The state's role then, has been to both protect and control the migrant worker.

The first topic discussed under the observations of the state is the liaison officer. The liaison officer fits nicely in with the theory that the state acts both to protect and

control the migrant workers. The purpose of the liaison officer is to deal with problems between employee and employer if there is a discrepancy over wages, if there are complaints about working conditions or accommodation, if a worker leaves and does not come back, if a worker wants to go home, or if a farmer wants to send a worker home. There are six liaison officers (who are Jamaican) that operate out of North York, Ontario and both home and work telephone numbers are given to the migrant workers and posted in their accommodation.

In one sense the Canadian Government has made a provision for a Jamaican liaison officer so that the government is not involved in these front line labour problems, but in another sense the liaison officer is a source of protection for the worker, an advocate or lawyer as one of the men interviewed said. It is important to determine if this source of protection is working, because if it is not, the worker is fairly powerless when in Ontario (and possibly more open to exploitation). The liaison officer could potentially be a very crucial tool to argue on behalf of a relatively powerless group.

Most workers to whom I spoke were very quick to say they trusted their liaison officer and would contact him if there was a problem. Almost everyone qualified this statement by saying they had never had a problem, so there was no need to call. There appears to be a certain amount of hesitation or reluctance on the part of the migrants to voice a complaint, possibly for fear of being known as a trouble maker or complainer. I believe that an appeal to the liaison officer is in most cases reserved as a last resort - when the migrant cannot resolve the situation and can no longer put up with whatever is the trouble. Judging from the responses, being underpaid by the employer was the most

common complaint taken to the liaison officer.

Having acknowledged the protective role of the liaison officer, I believe he also acts to control the migrant workers. Just the fact that migrants had a certain level of hesitation to call their liaison officer indicates this. As well, certain comments came up in the interviews that suggested the liaison officer worked on the farmer's behalf as well as the workers. The farmers to whom I spoke also indicated this - if they had a problem with a worker (such as he was refusing to work) they would call the liaison officer who would come down and talk to the worker and inevitably clear the issue up. It makes sense that the liaison officers respond to farmers. They recognise that the smooth functioning and therefore continuation of the program depends, to a large extent, upon the complacency and hard work of the migrants. If there are too many complaints, too many cases of AWOL, farmers may no longer want Jamaican help, and to fill the gap workers are available from Mexico and other Caribbean islands.

Another issue with the state concerns the concept of unfreedom in the literature. Migrants may not choose their employer nor freely switch employers (which is partly why the liaison officer's role is so important). If a situation is particularly bad, either relationship between worker and employer is poor or working conditions are dangerous, the employee cannot quit and try to get work elsewhere. If migrants quit, most likely they will be sent home although they could appeal to the liaison officer. Workers did indicate to me that they could request a farm change, although I did not hear of it happening too often - perhaps migrants are afraid of losing their contract to Canada, or perhaps there has not been a great need for this.

Drawing upon theory, Marx writes that the capitalist and the worker meet freely in the market to make an equal exchange of labour power for wages. Judging from the migrants' interviews I have the sense that they feel they have entered into this contract freely, and although they give up some of their personal freedoms, they believe this is an acceptable trade off. These workers are required to give up more than most Canadian workers in exchange for employment. Canadian workers may switch employers (as the market allows) and of course have permanent citizenship and all of the health and social welfare benefits that this entails. From the perspective of the migrant, this is still an acceptable trade off, as although they give up a bit more than a local Canadian, perhaps they stand to gain more. As unemployment, underemployment are chronic problems in Jamaica, this migratory labour program offers a temporary release to the population pressure (this is discussed in greater detail under the economic section).

Another aspect of unfree labour is the restriction of migrants immigrating to Canada. Most of the migrants indicated to me that they had no desire to live in Canada all year around. There were, however, enough individuals who indicated interest in moving to Canada with their families to be a significant amount. This aspect of unfreedom also ties into the fact that the state plays no role in the reproduction of this labour force. Families are not cared for as Canadian families are with health care and social welfare as I mentioned above. As well, the migrants are contracted out for their labour power but not compensated for their health or care in old age, particularly an issue since agricultural labour is very hard physical work with a history of accidents. In this particular migrant labour force (being 98% male), it is women who remain in Jamaica

who shoulder an extra burden being responsible for the maintenance and renewal of this labour force.

Migrant workers are aware of this inequality. Several mentioned to me that taxes were too high and they do not benefit from them. The government responds to this complaint of taxes by making the distinction with Employment Insurance, it is the "work" being done in Canada that is insurable, not the worker (FARMS). One Jamaican made the point that he had been working in Canada for nineteen seasons and paying into the Canada Pension Plan, and he should be eligible to claim it when he retires. Another common complaint was that wages could be higher, particularly because of the hard physical labour the migrants do, as well as the fact that this seasonal employment has to last some of them for the entire year.

A final consideration under the state is the role of the Jamaican Government. This government is responsible for recruitment of the workers and administering the medical exam. It appears that there is a lack of organization in Jamaica that in some ways lends to the powerlessness of the migrants. Some people had not received their telegrams summoning them to Canada in time, so they missed their flight and possibly lost their place in the program. Judging from the accounts of those I interviewed, once one is off the program (for whatever reason) it may be very difficult to get back on. This is another example of issues a worker would take to a liaison officer (who seems to have a role in the recruiting process), however, it does not seem to be of great help. There is such a high interest in this labour program I expect the Jamaican Government can afford to be disorganized, because they have a large pool of potential migrants in reserve.

The contract with the Canadian Government stipulates that every year each worker must take a medical test before they come to Canada. The test itself is both tedious and humiliating. Migrants must travel to Kingston of their own cost, stand in line for hours, sleep over night on a cement floor to wait for the results. In some ways they are treated more like cattle than people. The recruitment policy of a hand test is something else that alludes to buying livestock, not hiring people for employment.

In extension to the medical, if workers have a health problem in Canada that was apparent before they left Jamaica, they would not be treated in Canada, but sent directly home. This is another example of the Canadian state ensuring that it does not play a role in the maintenance of this labour force.

Living Conditions

Accommodation is provided for by the employer and inspected by a representative of the Ministry of Health. There were no criticisms of the housing itself (the physical structure) as workers appeared to find accommodation acceptable. In many of the bunkhouses (as they are often called) migrants had to share bedrooms, possibly there were times when tensions were high as happens when many people share the same living space. However, it appears that this also was an acceptable part of the contract - housing was free.

Working Conditions

The state structures the working conditions by setting a minimum wage rate,

minimum number of hours to be guaranteed to employees (240 hours), and placing the responsibility of the workers' safety in the hands of the employer (if the worker dies, the farmer must pay for the body to be shipped home). These are controls that protect the worker, however, drawing upon the literature the state has traditionally protected the employer more than the employee (Parr 1985, Satzewich 1991, Wall 1995). Agricultural work is often physically demanding, dealing with machinery and chemicals are an added risk, and unsafe equipment or buildings are potentially hazardous aspects to this type of work. In addition, often work entails long hours, seven days of the week, particularly if threat of frost or rain is present. The pay is comparatively low and there are fewer labour laws to protect the worker (than you would find in an industrial work setting).

Parr (1985) had attributed the farm labour shortage to the poor working conditions and poor pay in agriculture labour in Ontario. Farmers, to whom I spoke, attribute the labour shortage to lazy Canadians who can fall back on employment insurance and welfare. Either way one looks at the situation, Jamaica supplies a willing and reliable labour force who will work under these conditions.

Farmers feel constrained by Canada's cheap food policy as farmers compete with growers in the United States and Mexico. FARMS (1995) writes that Canadian consumers buy produce from Mexico, handled by Mexican workers, consumers buy produce from the U.S. handled by Mexican workers, why not buy produce from Canada handled by Mexican and Caribbean workers. The underlying point here is that Canadian farmers have to compete with farmers globally, who have access to a cheap labour supply (Satzewich 1991), and it becomes difficult when Canadians cannot even harvest their crop because

of a lack of reliable labour.

Wall (1995a) proposes paying farm workers more money, suggesting that a ten or twenty per cent increase will have little impact on the number of farms operating. Wall (1995a) reports from the Whole Farm Survey data base that 27.39% of all farms in Ontario have a net income of less than $1.00 and 66% of Ontario farms have net incomes below $20,000. 14.45% of farms have net incomes of over $50,000. By increasing farm labour wages, these numbers will change slightly, with more farms in the lower income categories.

Having said this, migrants feel that if possible they should be paid more money. Some migrants acknowledged that farmers can only pay so much, as they have to make a profit as well, but most migrants did mention that they work very hard for not a lot of money.

The migrant workers confirmed, for the most part, the hard physical work that Parr (1985) describes. A common comment was that the work was very boring as well as "rough and cold". It was almost like a mind game, that the work was so boring but one just had to make up their mind to do it; they are there to work, so they just had to work. The Jamaican migrants whom I interviewed especially disliked the rain and the cold.

It was interesting to discover that many of the migrants preferred the longer hours. They wished to work as much as possible while in Ontario and then get themselves home. It is almost as though here in Canada is not a part of their real life. The migrants are just putting in time to make money so they can get back to their real life in Jamaica. Since life is on hold here in Canada, a person may be better able to put up with uncomfortable

working conditions (rain, cold, long hours) in this mind frame. If this work is like a mind game - hot or cold, boring work, physically demanding - these pains have to be blocked out and as one migrant said, "It hard, but you have to make up your mind to do it".

The heavy physical work takes a toll on the body, particularly for migrants who return for many seasons. The state, however, has taken no responsibility in the long term maintenance of these bodies - that is Jamaica's problem. Additionally, it appears from the interviews that injuries sustained by migrants are not always taken care of by Workman's Compensation. The injuries are shipped home.

CHAPTER SIX

FREEDOM AND SOCIAL LIFE OF MIGRANT WORKERS

Freedom is discussed in this thesis from the perspective of the migrant labourer. It is influenced by the state and relations with the employer. I tried to analyze this concept of freedom by determining the restrictions placed upon the workers by the state (in their contract) and by the individual farmers. I think in this case it is important to allow the individual workers to define for themselves their situation of freedom or unfreedom. For example, a number of those interviewed indicated that they did not have a great deal of free time, or freedom to do as they wished, however, they seemed to feel this was a fair and acceptable trade off defined by the nature of the contract work.

FREEDOM

Migration and Immigration

The first aspect of freedom that I will look at comes from the concept of

unfreedom in the literature. Migrants who work on the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program do not have the opportunity to settle in Canada, their contract specifies the length of time they are in the country, and then they are sent home as soon as the work is finished. I asked each worker if they wished to have the opportunity to immigrate to Canada to live. Twelve individuals claimed they had no desire to live in Canada, and six expressed an interest in settling in Canada. One problem associated with immigration is what has been termed AWOL (a military acronym: absent without leave). Migrant labourers have been known to leave the farm and not come back, it is believed that they make their way to Toronto where they are able to get documents illegally. (This info comes from talking to farmers.) The AWOL statistics as reported by HRDC are recorded in table 2.

As the table illustrates, the number of AWOL workers has fluctuated a fair bit in the past decade. It would be interesting to discover why this is. In 1995 there were 144 AWOL migrants, 102 of which were Jamaicans. 102 AWOL out of 4592 arrivals is approximately 2.2%. In 1989 the percentage of Jamaican AWOL workers was approximately 7.4%.

One farmer had recently had a worker AWOL. He claimed that the liaison officer came down to the farm and spoke to the other migrants privately in the bunkhouse. According to a migrant, the liaison officer interrogates them to see if anyone has any information about the person who left. Another farmer said that she heard that the liaison officers know where to look to find these men in Toronto.

Table 2: AWOL Statistics, 1986 - 1995

YEAR	ARRIVAL	AWOL	JAMAICAN ARRIVAL	JAMAICA AWOL
1995	10 268	144	4 592	102
1994	9 924	136	4 319	73
1993	10 206	171	4 449	134
1992	10 096	128	4 414	98
1991	11 086	222	4 878	181
1990	11 578	359	5 041	274
1989	11 302	431	5 234	386
1988	8 047	340	3 870	281
1987	6 124	202	3 450	187
1986	5 007	127	2 990	105

(Human Resources Development Canada, compiled from "Year-to-Date Reports, 1986-1995.)

The following are quotations from migrants who would stay in Canada all year. This individual claimed he would live in Canada, "Ahh, yeah, but in de town. Where I lived it was borin', borin' to stay in de bunkhouse at night." Out in the countryside, where many of these migrants work on farms, they are quite isolated, and there is little entertainment, unless one has transportation to drive to town.

Many of the migrants felt that it was too cold to stay in Canada for the winter, but those who said they would brave the weather had comments such as this, "Yeah, when it too cold you got some clothes to put on."

The following is a quote from one worker who wished to live and work in Canada all year round. This is what his father said, "It all depend. Suppose his farmer dat he

work wid, say, I want you to stay wid me. Dat is a way for him to leave de farmin' and go and work in Canada." His son had a different idea, he would like to work for himself.

> Well, I would like to live dere, but I don't have... you know? It very tough. Yes, I would work in Canada, if I got de land in Canada, I would work my tobacco and harvest it. Yes, I would do it. Once I'm workin' for myself still. I would do it. I would even plant de tobacco and strip it too, wid my own hands. I would work for myself in Canada, you see de farmin' dere too. I know about dat job, I used to it, and I have no problem wid it.

Many of the migrants I spoke to said they would not live in Canada all year around because of the cold. "Too cold mon, it too cold. I have two datter up dere you know? One is a nurse, de odder work, too. One datter in Toronto, and one in Montreal... But it too cold up dere for me, mon."

Another man said, "Well in summer it good, but de winter... too cold mon, too cold."

His friend added, "I know you don't believe it but most Jamaicans come back down here in de winter. Runnin' away from de weatter, January, February. Some of dem can't take de indoor life, you know."

A final quote, "I don't like Canada, I wouldn't live dere because it too cold. I would never live dere, no, I just want to go and work and come back home, noting more."

One migrant I spoke to alluded to the fact that he could have stayed in Canada if he wished (i.e. AWOL), but he did not have the desire to do so. "I never had dat feelin'. I never have dat on my mind. If I did from de first year I go, I have friends dere, I could run but I don't."

The problem of Transportation

A lack of transportation appears to be a large factor limiting a migrant's freedom. These workers are often on a farm in the rural areas, and cannot get out anywhere. Many of them have bicycles and are able to visit friends locally (usually other migrants working on neighbouring farms). This is how one migrant describes limits to his freedom, "...we have freedom in a way, but de only ting is dat we don't have a frequent ride to take us to and from de city. You know we can go, we can call a cab but it quite a lot of money."

I asked one migrant if his employer took him to town every week. "Yeah, he take us to town to get our groceries. And if we want he will take us somewhere... we pay our transportation. Two dollars and someting every day we work goes to our transportation." This man is saying that it is part of the employer's contract to provide these workers with transportation, whether every employer follows through on this remains to be seen.

The Opportunity to Travel

Many of the workers I interviewed claimed that coming to Canada provided them with an opportunity to travel. However, migrants expressed disappointment that once here they did not have the opportunity to see much. Here is an example.

> You see in Jamaica, people who got good jobs, I don't tink dey would bother wid contract. But just because you have ambition, you want someting in life, or... you know what I mean, you do it. Dere's lots of us down here who don't really do farmin', but its just because we want a job, or we want some experience, you want to go over dere and see odder places. But when you go over dere, you don't go anywhere, you just stay on de farm places. From de farm to town.

The migrant worker above is saying that one who works on this program has made a choice to go, that person has a certain ambition and not every Jamaican would go to

Canada on a migrant labour contract. This exemplifies the self-determination of the workers. The worker is also saying that on this program one does not get to see much of Canada, although this is one of the reasons people take the contract.

The following are similar quotations from migrant workers about why they decided to come to Canada to work. People claimed the opportunity to travel was the reason they came, almost as frequently as they said it was for the money (see economics).

"Really, what you want is to go out, not even really work, but you want to go out and have some experience. And you leave here and reach Canada, you go to farm work, you have to work. Just work, lotta work, just work."

"Well I tell you someting, each Jamaican like to travel abroad. And it fine for us right now to leave. It don't matter what you have, each Jamaican like to travel abroad, understand? Just like you (meaning me, the researcher) come to Jamaica." Another migrant said something similar, comparing himself to me.

Relationship with the Employer

It was one of my hypotheses before doing my fieldwork that the relationship that the migrants had with their employer would have an impact on their experience in Canada. I found these dynamics very difficult to uncover, however. The following are examples. "Its like de farmer, who you work for dem give for you more, you know. Like we went to town now, some people go for some longer time, you have to do by de farmer." This migrant is saying that the amount of free time or freedom is dependent upon the employer.

Another worker talks about the relationship he has with his employer, I asked him if he felt he had much freedom in Canada.

> Yeah, because my boss say if we want to go to a place near by, we can go and come back. If we want to go some place it ok, as long as we're not busy workin'. Dey treat us good, dey buy us beer... dey treat us good. I don't have any bad tings to say about my boss. He give us tings. Everting ok. If he say go and pick up dat row for us, I would go and move it for him, it take an hour, he give it for me [will pay me for it].

Restrictions in Jamaica

Some migrants I spoke to believed that they had the same restrictions in their job at home as they had in Canada. Other migrants claimed that their job in Canada was stricter than their job in Jamaica. I asked the following individual if he had the same rules and restrictions at home as he had in Canada in his job. "Like at work? No, not same. We have more freedom anytime [in Jamaica]. Come and go as we like. Work and den break."

Another man said that he did not have the same sort of rules and regulations in Jamaica because he is self employed. This man made furniture, however I suspect the farmers from Jamaica would have the same reality in that they are their own boss.

The following migrant described his work in Jamaica:

> You just go to work and you come home, and you get paid on Friday. You supposed to be to work at seven tirty, you be like twenty-five minutes after seven. Dat give you time to put your work clothes on for de job. Exactly seven-tirty is your time, dats no problem. And if you can't go to work today, you just get a doctor certificate and rest, get paid de same. If de doctor say you unfit to work for a month, you get paid de same way. Your salary comes in. You see in Jamaica, people who got good jobs, I don't tink dey would bother wid contract.

The main idea that I had of work in Jamaica was that it was less restrictive. One migrant said this, "You do what you like here, if you want to work, you work."

The Contract

Many of the workers point to the contract as a limitation of their freedom, however they seem to feel this is an acceptable dimension of their employment. Here is how one migrant makes sense of his situation.

> Well, de ting is we leave here and go dere to work, so we just know dat as long as we leave here and go dere to work, we have to work. If dere's no work we can go where we'd like. Yeah, its a contract, you know you have to go and do dat. You can't put udder tings before dat.

I asked another migrant if he felt he had freedom when in Canada. This is how he replied:

> Well, we don't really have dat freedom, you know. You have to concentrate on de work. You don't have no freedom and dat, you go down dere on contract, you don't have no freedom. Sometime you can go to town, if you need to, but you have to be on de job in de mornin'. Suppose you go out on de street, go to town and anyting happen to you, dey don't response. Only when you damaged on de farm.

I then asked the same man if there were specific rules that he had to follow. "Yeah, we have certain rules we have to follow. You can't say you no work. If you refuse to work dey can send you home. Dey will deport you back to Jamaica. You have to stick up to dat job because you go dere on contract." I asked him if there was a job he did not want to do, would he risk being sent home. "Yes, and if you're sick, dey watch you for tree days, and if you don't get better by den, dey send you to a doctor, and if you don't recover by tree days, you got to come home."

What most of these migrant workers were conveying to me was that they are free, however they are in Canada to work, so they have to work. I asked this migrant if he had much freedom in Canada. "A little bit, not much because we always workin'. We don't

have no time to go out. We come in from de job at seven o'clock, have to get someting to eat, don't have no time to go out."

The following quote comes from a migrant worker who appeared defensive when I questioned him about freedom and his job in Canada.

> We walk freely, anytime we go downtown we walk freely, no problem. We just go into a store and buy tings. Boss have a friend dere who have a store my boss a good guy, not a chicken, ok? So I can identify myself anytime, I don't fraid to tell dem my identity. You can check out everyting, I am a free Jamaican, freely Jamaican. I don't have no transport and I don't have no occasion to leave de farm. 'Cause there is not fun for you, after you go inside, you don't supposed to come back out 'til Friday when you go into town. If anyting happen and you go on de road like you go outside, you on your own.

I asked this man if he had a bike he could use.

> No, I don't have no bike, I don't like bike. I tell you I don't go places I don't know. I been goin' up for seven years, go right back in de camp, we play music, watch t.v., noting more. Guys have to come back by nine o'clock, so no problem.

Another migrant had a similar idea about his freedom in Canada.

> I freedom up dere. You don't go up dere as a slave or a refugee or noting. I get out. I got to, because if I was dere it would be like I was a slave lock up in de house all day. You know up dere de weekends are intense, so you have to go all about.

I asked the same man about rules he had in Canada. "I have every rule up dere like you. Its the same free for me as you. I can go anywhere up dere like you, do anyting like you."

The following is another quote that depicts the migrants' priority of work over socializing when in Canada. I asked this individual if he had freedom to come and go as he pleased.

> Out dere? No, no, you cannot do dat. In de evenin', afta work. We have a store and a gas station near us. So you can leave and go to de store and buy ice cream

> in de evenin', but afta you have to be home by a certain time. Hafta work... you're strict up dere. Dem say dat when you go up to do de work, we don't go to idle. So you have to listen what de boss say. First time I want to come back, I don't make no money. You have to listen, you have to listen to de boss.

The above quote raises another issue. A number of the migrants mentioned that the rules of the contract were mainly those that were dictated by the employer. It was common to hear, "have to go by de boss rule", or "we have no fun like, just there to work, and we just have to obey".

One worker alluded to the implicit rules, "Yes, but our boss don't give us no rules to follow provided we don't break any. So everyting was running quite ok. I really didn't have any problem."

I asked other migrants about the rules that they had to follow (they are separate accounts from different people):

> Sure, like you know that you go to work and you just stick to where you are, you don't go up and down, you just stick to your work. You go out now, it depends on de person who you workin' wid who take you out. But you just don't go out on your own like dat.

> Yeah. Well, dey tell you de rules when you at de airport. Dey tell you de rules and you have a contract sheet to follow. So dem tell you de rule is just de rule, if you don't want to go by de rule, just leave. Right, so when you goin', just go by de rule, no problem. De rule on de contract is just like what per day you should get paid, or what a hour. Like if you doin' piece work, dey tell you what a day, and if you doin' hour, dey tell you what a hour. Yeah, for what a kiln, or like you doin' plantin' or apples, how you do it by bushel or by de bins. And dose rule is set, so if you want to go by it, its ok. But if you don't want to, you leave, you don't come on de program.

> Ok, you to work on time, de rule dat you get twice break a day. Work seven days a seek, some guys work five days a week, some guys work six days a week, it depends on where you go. Tobacco you work everyday you know, unless you don't have toppin' or primin' to do, and inclimate weather.

> Yeah, we have a lot of freedom while we're not working, you know? You have

> rules you have to follow. Like you cannot drink on the street. Yeah, and you cannot, the boss says you cannot call out to a girl. And you cannot urinate on the street. You have to follow those rules, you know.

I asked this man if he had to ask permission to leave the farm and he said he did, but he was allowed to visit friends on a neighbouring farm after work.

Several of the migrant workers I interviewed mentioned they had a curfew imposed upon them by their employer. A couple of people said they had to be back to the farm by nine or ten o'clock in the evening, while another individual said one or two o'clock in the morning. The following migrant worker said that he could come and go as he pleased as long as he was not working, but if he went to town, he had to be back no later than nine in the evening. The following individual did not have as rigid a curfew, however he was not permitted to bring women to the bunkhouse. Here is his description of the rules he had to follow in Canada.

> Yeah, like you can't drive on de road. And de trailer, de trailer if we go to de field, we can't ride on de trailer. Dey give us a van to ride in. And you can't bring any girls dere to de bunkhouse. Yeah, family and udder friends can come and see us. [I asked if he had a curfew.] Yeah, like two o'clock, if you comin' in after two, you have to tell dem. Like sometimes you have a party and you want to go and come in at like tree o'clock. But normally we come in at one o'clock we can talk, and sit around havin' a drink or someting.

In contrast one migrant I spoke to on this topic claimed that he had a lenient employer and no curfew. This is what he said, "No, dere no rule, dere no rule. De boss, he not strict like. If we want to go and stay 'til tomorrow mornin', as long as we to work back in time."

The last two quotes that I will add to this section exemplify the self determination of the migrant worker. These quotes show the Jamaican people as having choices, albeit

constrained choices because of their relative poverty and high unemployment. To fail to acknowledge the self determination of these people is to also fail in recognizing their pride and dignity. I asked the following migrant why he is on the FARMS program. "Someone say someting about dis program, so I go up and check it out. I had to tink about it, you have to get good food, and money... here I'm not workin' now. Up dere I'm workin' and I spend money on my wife and kids."

I asked another worker a similar question, he replied quite simply, "I like how it feel, you know. I choose to go to Canada."

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Small town Ontario has changed in the last few decades. In agricultural areas Friday night in the summer has become town night, and the locals have witnessed a new racial ethnic mixing, that of Caribbean and Mexican people, the migrant labourers in town for harvest. I asked each of the Jamaican migrant labourers what they thought of the social life they lead while in Canada. I asked the migrants what they did in their free time, I asked them to compare their social life in Canada to that in Jamaica, and I asked each of them if they felt there was discrimination in Canada.

As may be imagined, social life is influenced by the amount of freedom the worker has while in Canada. This is to say, if the migrant does not have the opportunity to leave the farm very often, he/she will not be able to visit friends, or hang out in the town. Many migrants do visit others from the Caribbean on neighbouring farms, either by bicycling or walking. The farmer is required by the contract to ensure the workers go

to town once a week to buy groceries and supplies. Often the farmer drives the workers to town, however some farmers have one of the Jamaicans with an international driver's licence chauffeur the group.

It is interesting to discover the links that these people make while in Canada. In town the migrants meet other people from Jamaica as well as neighbouring islands in the Caribbean. I did not get the sense that they made much contact with Mexican migrants. Language would certainly be one barrier in this case. The Jamaicans also reported having white or Canadian friends. Often these relationships emerged between coworkers - that is locals working with the migrant labourers. Sometimes the Canadian friend had a vehicle where they could drive the Jamaicans places, providing them with greater freedom.

Most of the migrants interviewed claimed that they did not have a great deal of fun in Canada. Here are some typical responses, "Well, we don't hardly have any fun up dere, just weekends we go to de club and such".

"We don't have any fun dere. We don't get de opportunity to go out to party or anyting."

"Well, we don't have a lotta fun dere, no, not too much. We work also on Sunday, you know? De only fun we have is when we eatin' and watchin' television" (he laughs).

Many of the migrants described their day in terms of working, eating, washing and then sleeping. This is what one man said when asked what he did in Canada for fun, "Nothing really, just work and cook, and dominoes in de camp, nowhere far from dere". Another individual answered the same question in the following way.

> We don't have entertainment up dere, we just work and come in and bathe and get someting to eat, and bed. Back to work in de mornin'. De only time we have time is when we take in our pay to de bank in town. [In town] just buy little tings and have two beer at a club and come back home.

It would appear that most of the migrants' social life happened on Fridays (usually Friday, although some farmers take their workers into town a different day of the week, which I always thought was unfair to the migrant, as he/she would miss the social visitations with other offshore labour). Here is how some workers describe their town night. "We go to town once a week, we just do some shoppin' and go home."

"[We go to town] just for food - groceries and back. Dat on Friday. We don't hang out dere, we are in de country part, we have no ride to get to town, so it difficult."

"Once a week I go to town, about five and come back around nine o'clock. De boss have a lotta guys who go to town, we go on a bus."

"We just pick up what we need at de store, pick up what we need and go home. You know, sometime we work so hard, when we come in we - don't do much to go out. We just get some rest."

The following individual describes his social life. It would appear he has a good relationship with his boss. He has been to Canada nineteen seasons, and the farmer he works for takes Sundays off, "De first ting we don't work on Sundays, my boss don't work on Sundays - he's Dutch." Not many of the men I talked to had a regular day off every week.

> I tell you de first ting, we can - if we said to de boss we working until tree o'clock on Saturday dat's ok, understand? We don't work on Sundays so we have de whole day, we go where we want to go. If you want to call a taxi, or whatever it might be. And I had a friend, a lady friend. She have a truck, that lady bring us anywhere we needed to go provided she have de time. She work wid us.

Not every farmer drives the workers into town once a week. Sometimes a Jamaican with an international drivers licence will take the work gang to do the shopping in the boss's vehicle.

In town some of the migrants would look up friends from Jamaica, or socialize with other offshore labourers. This is what one man said about meeting other Jamaicans in town. "Yeah, udder guys from Jamaica. Sometime we don't really know dem but you know dey are Jamaican so we have to visit wid dem, you know?" One worker told me that he tries to look up his friends in town.

> Dat's just when I see dem, you know like dere is five of us dat leave from here, we each go to a small farm, when we go to town we look for dem, meet up wid some of dem when we go shoppin'. Udder dan dat we don't see dem at de camp. At dat time we are workin'.

During the week some workers had the opportunity after work to visit other offshore labour on neighbouring farms, usually by bicycle. This is one migrant worker's description of his social life during the week.

> Well, I say it again you know, because you are contracted to your employer, you don't have de facility to go out as you should. But, after work you can just ride around de place, you got your bicycle at de camp, you know. Dere's a few of us. Ride down by de park, dere is a park by our way, we always go down dere. Now, we can have a party, have a drink and watch de dish and so forth. We can ride around de place and come back, [the farmer] don't really say anyting about dat, you know. Sometime he don't mind if we take a ride to town and come back.

Others did not have the same freedom, either they worked long hours or did not have the transportation.

Migrants often have family in Canada, and sometimes they take the opportunity to visit them when they are here. I was assured by individuals who had done this that it was no problem to set this up, one just had to inform the farmer and the liaison officer,

and visit when it was not a busy time at work.

Some of the migrants frequent a bar or club when they go to town. "Maybe go downtown at night time, just having two beer and come back again, noting more."

Others do not like to go to bars. "No, don't go to any club. I don't do no sportin' business. It just a contract to go on farm work."

"No, no concentrate on de work, you know. You go dere to work, you don't go dere to sport."

One man mentioned church:

> Well, de only place I go about is Church. I tink it is Mennonite. Normally [we go] every Sunday evening. Yeah, dey start it up in May, I tink, sometime in May. Dis year dey close it down in July because dey say we not comin' in dat day because we have to pick de fruit, sometime dey don't get much of de guys because we workin'.

I had heard about a United Church group in Simcoe, Ontario setting up a program for offshore labour. The Church encouraged the workers to attend services and even offered rides to workers living within a certain radius of the town. This particular Church has an alliance with a church in Kingston, Jamaica.

Comparing Social Life in Canada to the "Sporting Business" at Home

I asked people to compare their social life in Canada to their "sporting business" in Jamaica to get a feel for the differences between the two countries from the migrants' perspectives. (Sporting business is the phrase the Jamaicans use for social life or entertainment.) The following provides a description of what these workers have to adjust to when coming to Canada. My sense of Jamaica is it is a very social country, for

example it is not uncommon for strangers to hail strangers, and in small communities people seemed to always take the time to chat and exchange gossip. One migrant described Canada as, "...a fast movin' country, it is really more developed than Jamaica. People more... doin' things more than just sittin' and relaxin' as we do here".

Another worker said that in Jamaica you always know "what's goin' on, you want to know de trut, you don't want to hear no lie". I got a sense from many of these people that they feel isolated in Canada, working long hours on a farm in the countryside where many of them rely on their bicycles for transport. The following is a quote from a worker that describes this. I asked him to compare his social life in Canada to that in Jamaica, and what he would do to improve it in Canada.

> Well it's more fun here because you can move around freely, but in Canada now, you just have one place. Because de farm is so far, and to bike is long. To change it I would have a better ride, I would have transportation to move around.

Another man said something similar. He has been to Canada nine times. "Well, you never know, like here, much better off you know? Shops, open both night and day and see if I went to town now, I can talk to people, can talk wid dem".

A few of the migrants questioned mentioned that they miss their families when in Canada. When one was asked how he compared his social life, he replied, "Well, you would find it much better here you know, because here is home and over dere your just - well, you miss your family and tings. Yeah, but it doesn't bother me dat much - to go away and come back."

The most common response to my question on a comparison of social life, was "we don't have no fun up dere", "in Canada we go to work, we just work".

I asked one worker what was the worst part about his experience in Canada (he had only been up one season), this was his reply, "De worst part in Canada is no sport. Like we don't get no time, no time for sport, we are working."

The following worker has been to Canada twice, he emphasized the restrictions to one's social life due to work. He answered the comparison question in the following way,

> Some people go to bars [in Canada], when you have to go to work in de mornin' some don't bother to go out on like a sportin' business. Here [Jamaica] you have de time you do de sportin' business, when we think about de work we don't worry, can go out to de bar, have a drink.

One man, who had worked in Canada for seven seasons, assumed social life would be similar in both countries, except that the migrants did not have the time to participate when in Canada. They are on a contract to work.

> Well probably because I don't do any sport dere, but whatever sport you have here in Jamaica you have in Canada, because - I will say it again - because of de contract you are on, you don't really have your way to go on de sport, like you want to. Here sometime we play a little cricket, and we do boxin' usually. We play football, too.

Another veteran worker had been to Canada fifteen seasons, he was thirty-seven, he described the social life as follows.

> Yeah, more fun in Jamaica because when we not workin' we can go any place and do de sportin' business, we have more facility here, when you go up dere you go on contract to work, if you get a day off, it your time. You on a contract, you don't go dere to have fun unless you have a day off. Here you have more facility, you can go to a match, a dance party, over dere de only party you can go to, a farm party. But if you have to work tomorrow you can't go to a party because you might over drink, or you know what I mean - stay out, and de boss won't like dat. Here you have more fun because can go out in de night, we have day off, half day off.

This worker has emphasized that going up to Canada is based upon a contract that

is for work and any sort of sport or social is an added benefit if it happens, but should not be expected. Social life is limited in Canada even if the worker has a day off. There is not as much opportunity to do social things, probably this is because of a lack of transportation. As well, this worker is alluding to the powerful position that the farmer has in this relationship. This man is concerned that the boss will be unhappy if the workers go out and drink when they have to work in the morning. (Such a concern is not necessarily limited to migrant workers only, however, farmers did complain to me that other work gangs such as those from Quebec or locals often did not show up for work on the weekends, or showed up for work hung over.)

Other workers responded to the comparison question in a less critical manner. One man described Canada as a nice country. "Well, de environment is clean, you know. It nice, Canada is a clean country. It drug free." Another migrant also described Canada as a clean country.

One worker even said that he was happier in Canada. "You pick up fast money dere..., but in Jamaica you have de sunshine."

The following worker had been coming to Canada since 1974 and he admitted to Jamaica being livelier, however he did say that Canada is "alright", it is "very friendly".

Discrimination

Before setting out on my field trip I had thought a bit about discrimination and racism. It was my belief that these men would have felt hostility towards them because of the racist attitudes that appear to exist in parts of white, small-town Ontario. However,

I have also seen the opposite, local people chumming with the Caribbean workers, so it was difficult to guess what I would discover. From the interviews I found examples of both racist attitudes as well as friendliness. Many migrants reported having white friends in Canada, and a few also had stories to tell of problems they attributed to racist attitudes. Perhaps there are more stories that have not been told as a question about racism is a delicate one to have to answer, particularly to a stranger who is white when you are black.

The following is a typical reply. "You say if I have a problem wid de mixin' of de whites and blacks? No, nosir." I then asked him if he thought there was racism in Canada. "I tink so. But I feel welcome up dere. Dey lovin' and dey nice."

Another man said this to the presence of racism, "No, you see, maybe, ahm maybe, when I move amongst... you can see certain things, but you can't really say yes."

The following worker says that he finds both racism and acceptance.

> Well, you find it [racism], you find some. You know, not everybody is a racist. Some like to come and share wid us. Just like when I walk people call to me. Well we are all nice, neat people and we share what's on our mind, more people will talk to you.

In Jamaica I noticed that everyone hailed everyone while walking down the street, so I would guess that it is a bit of a shock when arriving in Canada and when hailing a passer-by it causes the one hailed fear, confusion, or embarrassment.

The following people were fairly definite in their reply that they did not encounter racist attitudes in Canada.

> Well no, normally I don't because you see I don't bodder with any group, nobody would discuss anyting about dat. I don't have any problem wit anyone. I like to go to town, you just go and do what you have to do and you back home.

"I don't really hear, de only time I hear about dat is like on t.v. or someting, yeah dey talk about it."

Someone else said, "No, no, no I'm alright wit dat. You have to learn to adjust yourself, have to live togedder."

This man was particularly adamant, "No, no, no, no, no, no, no, you can take it from A to Z. That is why I want to give you my boss name. You should tape my boss name".

The following three people had similar experiences: "No, no, we didn't. Dere a lot of white folks and we can share a good time".

"Yeah, its possible, but I never did see it, none of us have a problem wid dat".

"No, no we don't have any problem in town. I don't know about de rest of de guy, but me don't have any problem in town. I didn't have any". Below is an account that hints at the relationship between the family that employs the migrants and the migrants themselves.

> No racist, no, no. Everybody was just people, we are just people. Whether your black or white, we are just people. Yeah, de boss have a little girl, she was Susie and she come and she say, "Hello, how're you doin'?" We cooked food and she eat it - fried dumpling and - she love it. She liked fried dumpling.

The following is another description that shows the positive relationship this individual had with his boss. I asked him if he had encountered racism in Canada.

> No, no not to me, not to me. I really.... like my boss, now, my first boss, his fadder, his fadder hand over de farm to de son. Well, we know him for a long time, we just like brodders, one family, understand? Yes, and we didn't have any problem.

Other migrants did not feel the same way about racism. "Everywhere you have

racism. Some people no love black and some who no love white. You see dat everywhere."

Here is another account. "Well, we communicate wid each udder, don't have any problem about dat." Then I asked him if he though there was racism in Canada. "Well, dat's what I heard but since I been goin' dere I don't really see dat".

Another man who I had met earlier, joined the interview and he said, "You don't see dat, but in Kim heart she know dat it exist".

The first man said, "In my year I don't really see dat". And the second man said,

> Maybe you don't mix up wid de certain society to know. But you know still dat dere is racism. Like right now here, wid us and de Indians. Its right here, you understand. Its all over de world, but you just have to live clean and don't tink about dat, because dat's ancient day tings. So you can live on tinking about what bygone is bygone.

The following is an account from two migrants about an incident that occurred in Canada to one of them. The other was blaming what came out of this accident on racist attitudes. "Alright dis guy, he in trouble in Canada - he don't work dis year. Him go up every year to work. Someting happen to him last year, den no call for him".

I then questioned the man who had something happen to him. "Well, I get a sick last year and fell off a tree, you know. Yeah, I miss some work, around ten days. I injured my knee, and I don't get anyting up to now" (by 'anything' he meant compensation or at least offered a job back).

At that point the first man interrupted, "You understand, he get injured, den dey just don't call him back, he is a liability, so dey just don't call him back." The man who was injured said to me that he did not attribute this to racism.

MAKING SENSE OF THEORY AND OBSERVATIONS

Freedom and Social Life

The freedom of the worker is influenced by both the state and the employer. The state structures terms and conditions in the contract that determine the extent of the worker's freedom. The state also places the responsibility for the worker in the hands of the employer. The employer in turn controls workers' free time with rules about who may visit, and where and when workers may leave the farm. What becomes important then, is the relationship the worker has with the employer. In the interviews the migrants made few criticisms about the employers.

Before migrants leave the airport they are prepped to "obey the employer", as it is written right in the contract. Workers know that if they refuse to do a job or are sick for too long, they will be sent home. The implication of this rule to obey the farmer leaves a great deal of power in the hands of the employer. Some employers imposed curfews on their workers, others would not allow females in the male bunkhouses, and some workers recognized they should not "overdrink" or their boss would be angry. On the other hand, many migrants reported having good relationships with their employer - where they were just like brothers, or did not have curfews imposed upon them. It therefore becomes an individual issue, depending on the specific employer and that employer's relationship with the workers.

Drawing upon the literature, the idea of paternalism refers to a familial relationship where one actor makes decisions affecting another person, under the belief that he/she knows what is best for the other person. Relationships between employer and employee

are unique in the instance of this migrant labour contract because the state has placed responsibility and authority of the migrants in the hands of the employer. In a sense the state, working in the interests of the employer, has set up a paternalistic relationship between employer and employee by saying to the farmer: do not allow the migrants to run away, house them, provide them with a certain amount of employment, pay them a certain wage, and keep them safe.

Having set the stage above for a paternalistic relationship between employer and employee, I must add that this is not so with every relationship. Judging from the interviews many of the workers had good relationships with their employers (i.e. employers did not feel the need to exert control over the workers and impose curfews). Even in some of these healthy relationships I had the sense that there are personal labour relations (see Wall 1992). Wall (1992) cautions against these relationships as workers will be less likely to exert control over their situation. I think, however, that personal relations are not always negative, and in fact are preferable to the alienation experienced by many workers in an industrial labour setting. Having good personal relations with the employers may benefit the employees and make their stay more pleasant.

The issue of housing is relevant here. Newby (1977) suggests that housing provided for by the employer creates a situation of dependency of the worker upon the employer. Housing of this nature offers the worker very little privacy and ensures that the worker is on call all hours of the day and night. Indeed, a farmer in Ontario indicated to me that is was beneficial to have these workers on the farms at all times in case they were needed for a specific job at an odd hour. One of the workers' concerns was getting

paid for all the little jobs that he did. Some said their boss was very good in that they were paid for everything they did.

According to Wall (1992), housing provided for by the employer creates a situation where the farmer has the power of eviction. With respect to the migrant labour, eviction is not an option, instead the threat is to be sent home. The only way to get around the issue of housing would be to have these workers stay in accommodation not provided for by the farmer, however, this would be more costly and then there is the issue of transportation - getting the workers to and from work every day.

Isolation is a great factor in influencing the structure of the migrants' free time. Migrants blame their isolation on a lack of transportation. In the rural areas of southern Ontario, it is often difficult to get around without a vehicle. Many of the migrants have bicycles when they are up in Canada and depending on the flexibility of their employer, after work they may ride to the corner store or visit other migrants on neighbouring farms. The employer is responsible for taking the workers to town once a week to buy groceries, so once again the employer has control over when the workers go, where and for how long. Of course not every employer would exert totalitarian control and workers have some choices on where to go and for how long. In fact, some employers have a Jamaican with an international drivers license drive the work gang into town.

Cecil and Ebanks (1991) discuss how the community fails to accept these migrant workers and I think this is true to an extent. There are several Church groups that have encouraged migrant labourers to join their congregations, sometimes even scheduling a service at a time more convenient for the migrants to attend. As well, migrants spoke of

Canadian or white friends that they had in Ontario, and who would drive them places. Overall however, it appears that the migrants are not accepted into the larger community.

One interesting response from migrants as to why they participated in this program, was for the opportunity to travel. This response underscores the agency of the individual. Arat-Koc (1992) writes that so often certain negative aspects of a job are legitimized with the belief that migrants from the South really need this employment and therefore it is a favour to them. Seldom is it viewed that people from the South want an international job for the opportunity to travel (as a Canadian might view a migrant worker from Europe). The problem with this program is once migrants arrive in Canada they do not have much opportunity to sightsee. Migrants are just there as labour power in the eyes of the state, and therefore, the state makes no special provisions for them to see the country; they work and are then sent home. It is up to individual farmers to provide any sort of excursions - once again employers are responsible for the workers. One exception is migrants are able to visit family who live in Canada during a slow time at work.

A few men took offence to my questioning about freedom and free time. It was as though I was insulting their independence, and implying slavery. Most workers seemed to be saying that they have this contract and work comes first, once the work is finished then there is social time. At another level, there seemed to be a certain understanding that one trades freedom for the employment, at least the type of freedom and social life they would experience at home. Perhaps once again, there is this idea of time-out from real life in Jamaica to come to Canada and make some money.

Overall, migrants were indicating to me that life in Canada was not much fun.

Most of their time was spent working and after work often they were too tired or without transport to do any "sporting business", but once again this is the trade off.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ECONOMIC REALITIES

It is the Jamaicans' socio-economic conditions at home that has contributed to this large out-migration for work. This migration trend has been evident since post-emancipation in the mid-nineteenth century. Additionally, it is Canada's relative wealth, and resulting need for labour in low wage, seasonal work, that has provided some Jamaicans with a relatively attractive employment opportunity.

Judging from the interviews that I had with these migrant labourers, as well as some individuals who were looking to get on the program, this labour opportunity appeared to be very important to them. Employment opportunities in Jamaica are dismal, the unemployment rate hovers around 16% (World Bank Group 1996), and I suspect the percentage of under-employed is even greater. Most of the men I spoke to were small scale farmers (19 out of 30), selling a bit of their produce on the market and growing to provide their families with food. One of the men I interviewed said to me that Jamaicans

may be poor but will never starve in Jamaica because all the food they need is growing in their backyards. What this program provides, according to many migrants, is an opportunity to advance in life, make a bit of money to build a better home, or to send their children to college, or buy luxuries they would not normally afford.

Some of the migrants I spoke with did not have work in Jamaica, or at best the work was sporadic (5 out of the 30 individuals interviewed), and this program provided them with much needed employment. Some of the migrants said the money was better in Canada, I heard more than once it described as 'faster money' meaning one could earn more in Canada in a shorter period of time than they could in Jamaica. Others criticized the money, either because the work was very hard for the wages they received, or they did not get enough work while they were there.

Employment

This first section describes the migrants' need for this job. It is a collection of quotes from different people interviewed that depicts the disparity of their economic situation.

"Well, compared to home it's money, because it's kinda difficult out here, so you go dere, you work, you get da money, and come back and it help you to get on wid whatever you are doing."

"Oh, tings is rough here, mon. I didn't have a permanent job. I needed some money, so...I enjoy comin' to Canada you know. Money is very important, widout de money you can't achieve nottin'."

I asked one migrant if he thought the FARMS program was a good program. "Yeah, so far cause it help a lotta people, it sure help me, so I can speak for myself, it help me, I am grateful." I asked him if he will continue on the program. "Yeah, I tink I will make a try a couple more times. Although de money is cheap, can't give up because what am I goin' to stay here and do?"

I asked someone if they could suggest any changes to improve the program. "I wouldn't want it to be changed. If it work out that I can go again I would like to go again. No problem in dat, just work. You just go to work - work you must have to do." His answer depicts the idea that the program is there, he needs the money so he has to work. I asked another migrant whether he felt he is paid enough money in Canada, he said, "Some people say dat, but you have to go and work because you need it, you need de money."

Other migrant workers were questioned about why they go to Canada to work. "Money. I go up for the money, yeah, dat is true. If it wasn't because of money I wouldn't go!"

"We need some money out here, understand? I not get work out here more than some."

Some people conveyed to me that the money is not that good, that they could make the same here in Jamaica. I asked one person about this,

> Oh, no, I don't tink so because when I work here in Jamaica I don't make as much money as up in Canada. But you have to work, though. You have to work to make dat money. You have to work on your knees. You in pain you still have to go out. Like in cucumbers we work, we work out dere and de boss don't come out.

It appeared that a number of individuals thought the money was satisfactory, but the work was very difficult. One worker said that he came up to Canada for the experience as well as the money. "Work, I want de experience, too. Its de money, need more money but it rough, de cold work, de outdoor work, it rough."

The migrant, who spoke about the cucumbers above, told me that his farmer gives the workers a cut of what he makes, rather than paying them by the hour.

> Yeah, and if we want we can take it to de factory, we can take it so we see what he makes. Yeah, and in de evenin' we have a sheet and it show de amount of money he make, we check it up and cut it in two, share half between seven of us and half for him. Only problem is sometime de heat, in de heat it hard work. It hard, but you have to make up your mind to do it. If you want to go home and de boss want you to stay, it ok.

On the merit of this program one migrant said, "Well, de program has helped a lot of people and I hope it continue in the future to do better, it will do better."

One worker said the following about this program. "It give you someting to do when you got noting to do. I never farm, I have six monts, five monts, when cane is not on, I don't have noting to do, you know. I finish me work down here and go up dere to work." During the Canadian winter he is cutting cane for the sugar and rum factories. Therefore the rest of the year he would be unemployed without work in Canada.

The Benefits of Work in Canada

The following section contains quotes from migrant labourers on the benefits of travelling up to Canada to work. Such benefits include better wages and a high exchange rate on the Canadian dollar. As well, many men take advantage of the accessibility of Canadian goods such as televisions, stereos, bicycles.

"You know, I need to be in Canada workin' because Jamaica not like over dere, when you workin' in Canada you can see someting, but out here de dollar very small. You get good money up dere."

The following is a quote about one man's experience coming to Canada.

> Well, I learn a lotta good tings. It much different from down here, you know. Tings you wish were as easy down here like in Canada. You have more machinery to do de work. [Money] much better dan down here. Much better de dollar. Like when you went dere early, tings more cheap, but while de farm work keep on comin' in, de make de price go up. Even de clothes dat we buy right in de store, one price tag, when you go again, two, and maybe by de end of de month, you see four or five.

I asked one migrant what he liked about Canada. "A lot of the time it a little more better than out here, money wise." Another worker agreed, and went on to talk about the goods that one may purchase in Canada. "De best thing about Canada for me is you can buy tings, you know. Tings that I can afford after a short time in Canada I can't afford it in Jamaica. Like t.v., appliances and some other tings."

The following is an account of one worker expressing why he wished to remain on the program.

> Well, the only thing I maybe would like say, uhm, I would like to get another chance.... to keep on going, to go and come. You know, it is rough out here. When you come over dere and work, you know, and you get money it helps you here. You can buy a t.v. and a tape and so on. And clothes for my wife and children. That's why I am really glad to make a breakthrough.

Another migrant worker also expressed his desire to remain on the program. "It a good program, you know, it really is very good and helpful to poor people. I would like it if de boss call me back next year to go, you know. If I pass, I have to get tests and so on."

The following is a similar account.

> You know, in Jamaica not so fast. I mean not so fast wid de money. And certain tings you like to buy over dere, you have to wait long here. Like if you want a t.v., or a vcr, or you want a radio, you have to wait a long time to get one.

The following are a number of quotes from different workers about why they go up to Canada to work. "Well, de dollar comes in a little faster, and I can buy tings dat I don't have. Here dey don't carry everting, it hard to buy."

"De best ting for me, is tings I have now, I never had before. Tings I got from Canada."

"Yes, the money too. I like de job you know, and when I come back to Jamaica, and de dollar and de exchange, we get a little more,... you see you're workin' and whatever you see that you'd like you can buy it, understand?"

"To get some money, you know, to get some foreign exchange. You get betta earnings, fasta money. One day in Canada betta dan a mont out here."

This man's father had joined us, he had this to say, "What he can earn eight weeks in Jamaica, he can't earn dis in a year."

The son added, "De exchange faster, de currency, you know, it stronger."

The father, "Because Canada you know, is 24 to 1, sometime it reach 25 to 1. Dats 25 Jamaican dollar to 1 Canadian dollar. It help him a lot you know." The son said the following about the program:

> Yeah, it help me a lot to be on farm work program, you get certain privilege, too. You can carry back seventy pounds free. You can carry home a tape, and so on. Yes, like a little tape recorder, a bicycle, a television. Yeah, it cheaper. Let me tell you someting, one hundred dollars worth of tings in Canada, I want to give you a example, one hundred dollars worth of groceries in Canada, would last five of us for de week.

When I asked one migrant if he earned better money in Canada he had this reply. "No, better money is here but I don't have de skill to... Dere better money here but de type of job, I don't have de skill, or de schoolin' to do it. Dere better money in Canada because of de schoolin'."

Hard Work, Little Pay

This section contrasts with the one previously as it contains complaints about the money made in Canada. Many workers say that it is not a great deal of money for the hard work that they do on Ontario farms. I will cover in greater detail the working conditions in another area of the paper, however, I will mention here that these men do work very hard while up in Canada - Canadians and foreigners alike work hard in agriculture, and often in unpleasant weather.

> Well if I thought of it all, like we work to fill a kiln of tobacco, you fill a kiln for de same money, and empty for one price, which is like dat, we should get someting for it. Work every year, maybe put a little bit on like ten cents and fifteen cents, sometimes dey don't put anyting. De dollar....it not really dere, like you go to de store you have to look and see. Like de money don't last - it move so fast.

I asked one person what he thought about the program. "Well, de program is ok...sometime you would tink about de wages dat dey could be a bit better. Yeah, de wages could may be bit better, but if dere is no better, we have to continue wid it."

I asked the following labourer about the money earned in Canada. "Not bad but more tax, mon. De tax you up dere and when you come back you have to pay here." I asked this man about the remittance money that is taken out of his paycheque. "Dey send it out here and take out five per cent and give us twenty."

The following is one man's idea on the money.

> Yeah, I tink de money should be more for de type of work, you know, that we have to do. I tink de money should be more because by de time you work sixty hours, eighty hours, you have to pay income tax, Canada Pension, stuff like dat. Once you get a little bit and den you have to buy your own food, and den you have de shopping to come home, so we should be gettin' at least twenty bucks, or even more. (he laughs)
>
> Well, I heard about de program, and I say I want to give it a try, you know. I really love it, but one ting I still say is dat de wages could be better. If I have a permanent job out here I wouldn't botter to go. Why would I leave? De program is good odderwise, you know. You have some good experience about de country, you know what I mean.

Someone else, "Yeah, higher wages would be better. It hard work, you know, very hard."

One migrant worker had a different sort of complaint. "When we up dere and not workin'. I don't like dat. I'm dere to make some money so I like to keep workin'." He disliked being idle when up in Canada because it meant he was not getting paid.

The following are similar statements made by migrants claiming they would like to stay up in Canada longer, or work longer when they are up there to make more money. (Part of this is also covered under working conditions).

"I like when I go to Canada, like here you stop work for one week, two weeks, I like when I go to Canada I get paid, and we work. I don't want to sit in de house for a week, understand?"

I asked the following migrant worker what he thought would improve the program.

> Well plant more, improve what is dere, and plant more and more, you know. So you know you get to stay longer. Suppose you plant tirty acre dis year, and plant fifty next year, you get a longer stay. I work wid a small farmer.

A similar opinion, "Alright, de farm work program, I would make it longer. I

would like to go for eight month."

And another worker, "I would like a longer stay when I go. I would like to stay six monts." He went for six weeks last season.

The Importance of the Money

A number of migrants claimed that the money was important to them to make a good start or advance in life. The following is a quote from a farmer in the hills. I asked him for the reasons he went to Canada to work. "I just... want to make a start, and here I just make my little start. I can experience tings and here I make a better start from dere. Dis is my place, de house and everting, but not de land." He was motioning to the house behind us.

Another farmer from a different area spoke openly to me about his financial problems. He said that it was difficult to get ahead, it always seems like it is hand to mouth, even with working in Canada. He put the money he earned towards his house, building on to the existing structure if there was money to do so at the end of the year. As it was, the house had two rooms, a bedroom for the four children and a bedroom for the parents. The kitchen was attached to the bedrooms with a roof over but it was all open. An outhouse was located a short walk away, and beside it stood a generator run by gasoline, the house's only source of power. The house had a few electrical lights, but most were kerosene, and a television was located in the master bedroom. The appearance of a television did not surprise me as I do not remember one house in which I had visited thus far that did not have this modern convenience. A large part of this man's earnings

went to his children's education, college schooling being an expensive undertaking, and he was also saving his money to extend the electricity to reach his house. This man and his family farmed citrus, yam, coffee. His account was one of continuous struggle, the struggle of poverty.

An indication to me that this employment was important to at least some Jamaicans was the number of people who approached me to help them get back on the program. For various reasons they had not been asked back by their employer, and were quite earnest about going back to Canada to work for another farmer. The area where the most people approached me to present their case was probably one of the most deprived areas in which I conducted interviews. Homes were tiny, brown clay. The area was far in the hills, very rural and perhaps more isolated than places closer to the large cities. Apparently gainful employment here was limited and usually meant the time consuming commute to the city, (an added expense and that relied upon independent taxi drivers and roads that were in treacherous condition, particularly in the rain). Mostly people grew their own food for subsistence and sold some of their produce on the market. These people indicated to me that they wished to go back to Canada to work. Here is what one man said to me:

> Yeah, when a guy up dere is workin' he supposed to get de chance to be makin' some money for his family. And den like me, I don't get de chance to come up, I don't like dat. Everyone need a chance, especially when de know de can do it.

MAKING SENSE OF THEORY AND OBSERVATIONS

Unemployment and underemployment are chronic problems in Jamaica. Out-

migration for work has been a response to this population pressure since post-emancipation of slavery in the 1800s. Remittance payments are an important source of foreign currency for the Jamaican economy. Migrants who work in Canada on the temporary labour program have a mandatory remittance of 25% of their wages and of this, 5% is taken by the Jamaican Government for administrative costs. In the literature Ghosh (1992) expresses a concern that these remittance payments and wages are not invested which will in turn cause dependency of the migrant on this labour source. It is interesting to discover how migrants used their money, and if they were, in fact, thinking long term investment.

Some migrants claimed that they spent their money on stereos, televisions, bicycles, and other goods that were more accessible and less expensive in Canada. On the other hand, one migrant indicated his house that he had built with his money, another was educating his children and building on to his house, and still another had a thriving farm. Perhaps the length of time that these men have been on the program is an indicator that it is difficult to get ahead (the average number of times to Canada of the men I interviewed was 8 and the range was 1 to 22). Wages are low, as the migrants claim, and possibly a season in Canada (depending on length of stay) simply helps individuals and their families survive until the next season.

Many migrants indicated to me that they found the wages too low for the hard work they do on Ontario farms. Related to this was the suggestion that farmers should extend the migrants' stay so they have the opportunity to earn more money. It is possible that with the low wages and temporary work season, many migrants are making only

enough to last them until the next season - without being able to get ahead financially. Griffith (1986) comes to a similar conclusion on the economic benefits for Jamaican temporary farm labour in the U.S. Griffith states that Jamaican earnings are used for consumption, not long-term economic improvement, and in fact the economic situation of households changes little over the migration experience. Griffith suggests that the wages are low enough so that migrants become dependent on this source of wage labour. That is to say the wages are high enough to entice workers, but not enough to improve their long-term economic situation.

In conclusion, migration is not a long term solution to the problems of unemployment and underemployment in Jamaica. Perhaps it is not so much that the money in Canada is 'good money', but rather it is a job, whereas at home they have none. This migrant labour program then, acts as an outlet for population pressures in Jamaica.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

The main actors in this migratory work program are the state, both Jamaican and Canadian, the employers, and the employees. The Canadian Government in consultation with the Jamaican Government has structured an unfree labour situation where migrants are contracted to an Ontario employer without the freedom to switch employers. Wage rates are set in the contract and the migrant has no option to settle permanently in Canada - workers are used for their labour power and then sent home. Maintenance of the workers (i.e. health, education, unemployment, retirement) and reproduction of the labour force (children, the family) are the responsibility of Jamaica and the households of the migrants, often headed by women.

The main concern of this thesis has been to discover how Jamaican migrant workers define their participation in a system of unfree labour. In the literature on this migrant labour program, and in the literature on migration in general, there is little discussion of individual experience. This absence of migrants' voices has resulted in a

situation where these people do not have agency. It fails to recognise the choices these migrants have made, or their priorities, concerns, and social and economic realities.

According to Jamaican migrant labourers the main incentive for them to participate in this program is for the money. First and foremost then, this program offers them a job where one did not exist (or was temporary) at home. As well, the program is an opportunity for poor Jamaicans to travel, and a source of material goods that are either not available or are costly in Jamaica.

However, it is not to say that migrants are unaware of the unfreedom and restrictions in their contract. As workers cannot freely circulate on the job market it leaves them in a situation where they risk being sent home if things do not go well - in Griffith's (1986) words, a captive labour force. Migrants recognise this lack of power as they recognise their need for the liaison officer to act as an advocate on their behalf. Migrants cannot settle in Canada permanently, although several of the Jamaicans expressed a desire to do so - it is a rule sometimes resisted by AWOL attempts.

The migrants in this study felt that the unfree labour situation was a trade off: the freedom and social life migrants have in Jamaica is given up for the employment opportunity in Ontario. It is as though life is on hold for these migrants, they are here for a temporary time period (in my sample it was one to eight months, with an average length of stay of three months), they cannot bring their families, and they work long hours. At the end of the day the migrants were often too tired or without transportation to do much in the way of socializing. Most of the migrants did not complain about these lack of freedoms or shortage of quality social time, as they claimed they were in Canada to work

- not for the "sporting business". To many migrants, the more hours they worked the better. These men suggested to me that they wanted to make as much money as possible here in Canada and then go home, hopefully having provided the possibility of a better life for themselves and their families with the wages earned.

The main complaint or concern from migrants was that wages are low. Working, living and social conditions are secondary concerns to the migrants as long as they feel they are getting proper remuneration for this hard physical labour. This is illustrated by the fact that concern over having been underpaid by the employer is one of the main problems that a migrant will take to the liaison officer.

It is an important question whether or not migrants have made a significant improvement in their lifestyles with this labour opportunity. Griffith (1986) writes that either migrants do not have money left over or they do not use their wages for long-term economic investments. For most migrants the wages they earn in Canada help to sustain their households in Jamaica for the year, until the next season. As one migrant said, "It is hand to mouth, with little money left over at the end of the year". Griffith (1986) has made a convincing argument that subsistence level incomes of a segment of the Jamaican population has ensured the continued availability of a labour group to work in the United States agricultural sector. The same may be said for Canada and the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program.

Along the above line of argument, the prevention of permanent settlement in Canada of Jamaican farm workers has also ensured that there remains a willing and reliable labour force in Jamaica for farmers in Ontario. If migrants were permitted to

settle in Canada it is likely that they would not stay in this sector of employment, as higher wages and year round employment are available elsewhere (the reasons farmers have difficulty securing Canadian labour).

The abundant availability of migrant labourers to work on this program stems from Jamaica's unemployment and underemployment problems. Those who are unemployed and those who do temporary and sporadic work are looking for ways to supplement their income, and this labour program provides such an opportunity. On the other hand, this is not a long-term solution to Jamaica's employment problems. The Jamaican Government has to address these issues (as governments have tried in the past) and take into account the large informal sector of the Jamaican economy, as well as the large numbers of unskilled and low educated people.

Ontario farmers have traditionally had difficulty securing reliable farm labour that will show up for work everyday and remain in employment until the end of the season. This problem for farmers continues to the present day. The difficulty lies in the fact that many Canadians will not do this type of work. Farm work is dirty, hard physical labour, working sometimes in poor weather conditions, and with comparatively low pay (compared to unskilled labour in some industrial sector jobs).

Canadian farmers compete with Mexican and American produce farmers, where the latter two groups have access to a large body of cheap labour and can therefore produce cheaper commodities. Therefore, if Ontario farmers have access to a reliable labour group, they will use it. Although not necessarily a cheap labour supply (the program usually ends up costing the farmer more than if local labour was used), these

workers are favoured as they have a reputation for being hard workers and reliable. I suspect that farmers would even pay a bit more to these workers because of the greater productivity of Caribbean and Mexican migrant workers.

Looking at this situation from an international development perspective, to improve Jamaican migrants' socio-economic situation, it would help if they received higher wages. Wall (1995a) makes an argument that increasing wages of farm workers will not overly affect the number of farms operating in Ontario. Lifting the restriction of a worker's right to settle in Canada would help individual households, but not the Jamaican economy as a whole. Allowing migrants more freedom to switch employers would eliminate some of the power and paternalistic authority that farmers may wield over their employees. Additionally, migrants pay into the social welfare state but they do not collect on Canada Pension Plan or Employment Insurance. I propose migrants be exempt from paying into these benefits unless they are permitted to collect them.

Change to this program will have to come from the state, as migrants are not in a position to rally for higher wages or other changes, and it is not in the interests of farmers to do so. Pressure may come from the Jamaican Government or from within Canadian society. It is a state structured program, and the state has the power to increase wage rates or change conditions of employment. I see the government playing an instrumental role in controlling the exploitation that has the potential to occur in such a situation.

As I am representing migrant workers I have been careful in making recommendations to avoid something that may jeopardize the program. The Jamaican

migrants were very adamant that they needed this employment and if changes to the program make it no longer worthwhile to farmers, individual migrants will suffer.

In conclusion, migrants want this work because they are poor. Farmers in Ontario need this labour force because they cannot find workers in Canada who will do farm work. This program is a symptom of the North - South disparities. The situation is perpetuated because migrants make enough money to survive until next season, but there is little money left over for investment in long-term economic improvement. In the final analysis, Jamaican migrant farm workers have made the decision to migrate based upon their personal circumstances, out-migration for work is their response to poverty and unemployment.

It would be interesting in future research on this topic to look at the experience of female migrant workers on The Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program. As women make up a small percentage of all migrants, I suspect they would have a different story to tell than the men. In this research it would be important to question why there are so few women who participate in this program, as according to the Jamaican Government, there is a willing supply of women who would participate. It may be interesting to compare the experiences of female domestic workers from the Caribbean to the experiences of female migrant farm workers in Ontario.

Another interesting study would be to interview women and families left at home as the male of the household migrates for work. This is another area under-represented in the literature on migration according to Potts (1990). In this research it would be important to outline the role that women play in reproducing a labour force for North

American employers.

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Appendix A

Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program

Arrivals, Contract Completions, Employer Totals from 1983 - 1995

Year	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Arrivals	4 428	4 368	4 872	5 007	6 124	8 047	11 302
Contract Complete	--	--	--	4 697	5 540	7 389	10 532
Employ Total	864	821	823	816	966	1 256	1 631
Jamaican Arrivals	--	--	2 934	2 990	3 450	3 870	5 234
Jamaican Complete	--	--	2 775	2 835	3 160	3 488	4 751

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Arrivals	11 578	11 086	10 096	10 206	9 924	10 268
Contract Complete	10 849	10 581	9 328	9 734	9 532	9 805
Employ Total	1 651	1 594	1 505	1 482	1 456	1 444
Jamaican Arrivals	5 041	4 878	4 414	4 449	4 319	4 592
Jamaican Complete	4 652	4 583	4 215	4 233	4 134	4 363

Source: Human Resources Development Canada, compiled from "Year-to-Date Reports", Dec 1983 - Dec 1995.

Appendix B WORKERS BY COMMODITY, 1994

	TOTAL # WORKERS	%
Fruits	1 653	15.3
Vegetables	1 977	18.3
Greenhouse Veg.	502	4.6
Tobacco	3 719	34.4
Nursery	267	2.5
Processing	534	4.9
Apples	1 947	18.0
Ginseng	221	2.0
Total	10 820	100.0

Source: Survey of Producers and Commodity Associations, in FARMS (1995), Annex C.

	SAMPLE OF JAMAICAN WORKERS	% /30
Fruits	2	6.7
Vegetables	8	26.6
Tobacco	16	53.3
Apples	11	36.6
Other*	3	10.0
Total	40	

(Total is more than sample total as some migrants worked in more than one commodity.)

*Includes greenhouse vegetables, nursery, processing and ginseng.

Appendix C

1996 PREVAILING AGRICULTURAL WAGE RATE

AND APPROVED EMPLOYMENT PERIODS

COMMODITY	WAGE	TERM
TOBACCO - FLUE	$68.00/KILN (includes emptying) $6.90/HR (includes planting and all hourly paid duties)	July - November (workers allowed in Ma for planting if at least 2 hrs. of work is guarante
TOBACCO - BLACK	$8.23/HR (harvest) $6.90/HR (planting)	July - November
CANNING/FOOD PROCESSING (Fruit and Vegetables)	$6.90/HR	July - November
NURSERIES	$6.90/HR	April - November
VEGETABLES (Includes ginseng and mechanically harvested tomatoes)	$6.90/HR	April - November
GREENHOUSE VEGETABLES	$6.90/HR	February-Septembe
FRUIT (includes apples)	$6.90/HR	April - November

Reprinted from the "Employer Information Package, 1996" put out by FARMS (Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Services), Mississauga, Ontario.

Appendix D: Interview Outline

A. Background Questions:

How long have you been going up to Canada?
What crops did you work in?
Approximately how long do you stay in Canada per year?
How long were you in Canada this past season?
What year were you born in?
What level of schooling do you have?
Are you married?
How many children do you have?
What do you do in Jamaica for a living?
How did you become involved in this program?

B. Working Conditions:

Tell me about your work in Canada
- What jobs do you do?
- What is the hardest job?
- How do you rate the work, is it difficult?
- What part do you like the best?

C. Social Life:

Tell me about the social life in Canada
- What do you do for fun?
- How often do you go out?
- Do you have many friends other than those you work with?
- How often do you go into town?
- What do you do in town? (groceries, bar)
- Compare between Jamaica and Canada, what is the difference in social life?

D. Living Conditions:

What are the living arrangements like in Canada?
- How many people to a bedroom? How many share a shower? Toilet? What are the cooking facilities like? Do you have laundry?, a t.v., music?

E. Role of the liaison officer:

What is the liaison officer's job?
Do you trust your liaison officer to go to for help if you have a problem?

F. Racism:

Have you ever felt discriminated against in Canada?
Do you think there is racism in Canada?

G. Perception of Freedom:

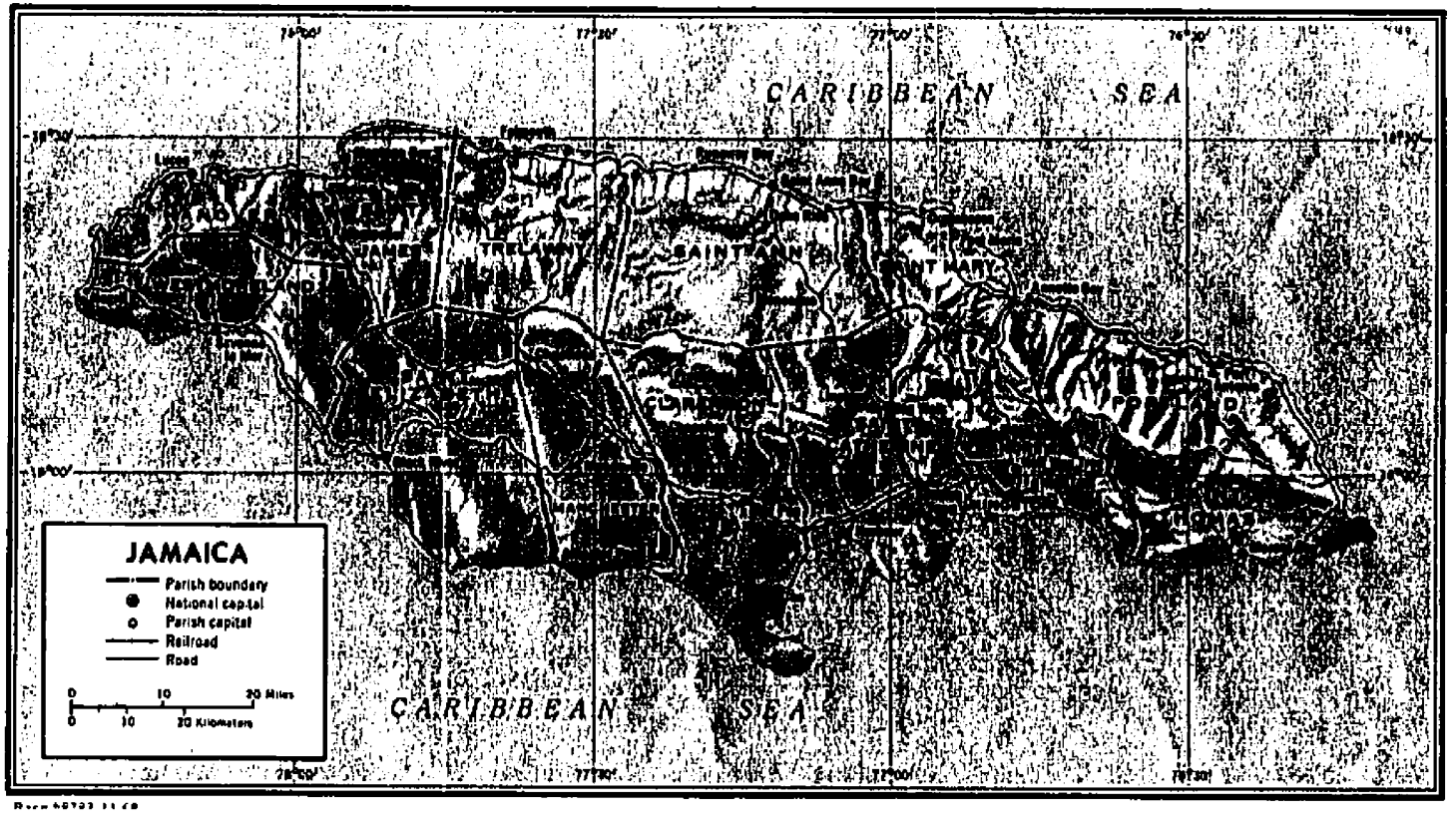
Do you feel you have much freedom when you are in Canada? (different from Jamaica)
What rules must you follow according to your contract? How are they enforced?
Would you ever want to live in Canada all year around?

H. General:

What made you decide to come to Canada to work?
What is the best thing about Canada for you?
What is the worst thing about Canada?
What changes would you like to see of this program?

Is there anything you would like to add?

Appendix E **Map of Jamaica**



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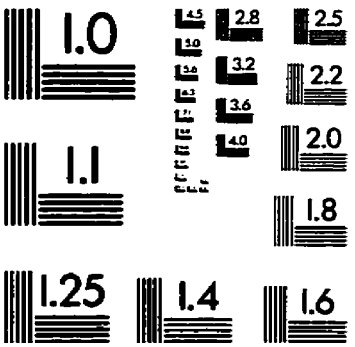

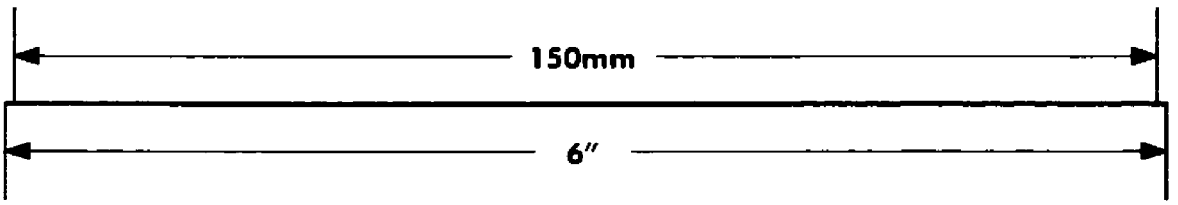

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