

HOW THE BORDER PATROL, MEXICAN NATIONALS, AND VALLEY GROWERS PLAY

THE WET BACK GAME

Researching this immigration story, the El Malcriado reporter also found out that bad housing conditions can also exist on unionized ranches, too.

See that report on page 10.

Friday afternoon, August 7, the Fresno County Border Patrol started a series of five raids -- "immigration checks" -- on the Frank Coit Ranch outside Mendota, California and caught approximately 43 illegal Mexican workers in four days.

FOREMAN PLAYS PAUL REVERE, THEN CONCEALS ILLEGALS

According to witnesses, Carlos Gonzales, a Coit foreman, drove through the camp shouting, "The Border Patrol is coming, the Border Patrol is coming." Some seven workers jumped into the pickup, and Gonzales drove away. He returned about 10 minutes later and the truck was empty.

FALSE-BOTTOM CABIN

Another witness said he saw 50 or 60 men scurrying around one part of the camp, apparently running and hiding from the Border Patrol. Illegal workers caught by the Border Patrol were found hiding in the fields or in the camp (some of them were in a secret basement in a camp cabin), and



Farm worker operates a tomato harvest machine on Coit's Ranoh, near Mendota.

some of the workers were in the Coit fields working.

Another "surprise" immigration check occurred at 8 the next morning, followed by three more raids within the next two days.

ALIENS OUTNUMBER LEGALS

The 43 illegal workers caught on the five raids was just barely "scraping the surface of the illegals on the camp," a witness from the first raid said. A Coit worker said at one time prior to the raids there were more illegals in the camp than legal workers.

Informed sources report that of Coit's 75 irrigators, all of them were illegally in this country. All but five of 25 tractor drivers were illegals. Chief Deputy Herb Walsh of the Border Patrol stated that a total of 94 illegal workers were caught in the July "routine check" and the August raids. During this same period, 1104 illegal workers were picked up in the six surrounding Fresno counties.

STRIKERS TOLD: GET OUT, GO TO WORK, OR GO TO JAIL.

Events leading up to the latest raids started August 3 when 75 melon pickers went on strike for a wage increase. Police were called into the men's camp where the strikers were and told them to "go to work, get out, or go to jail." One worker said a policeman grabbed his brother by the



collar and told him to get to work or get out of the camp. Strikers were thrown out of the camp without being allowed to pack their personal belongings.

CRLA LAWYERS LEND A HAND

The striking workers brought their complaint against Coit to the California Rural Legal Assistance in Madera, and Friday, August 7, CRLA attorneys went with 15 strikers to the camp so the workers could pick up their belongings when Gonzales drove through the camp announcing the raid.

Anonymous sources tipped off the Border Patrol about the illegals at the Coit Ranch and more raids followed because the Border Patrol was aware that a number of illegal workers had eluded them during the first "immigration check."

ALIEN SMUGGLING NETS \$300 A HEAD

Walsh stated that it depends on local Patrol agents' discretion as to the number of routine immigration checks to various ranches, his overall knowledge of the area, and the information he's receiving on illegal workers. Anyone who's found guilty (a felony charge) of "aiding, abetting, and harboring aliens" is subject to a maximum \$2000 fine and up to 2 years in prison for EACH "alien". Illegal workers pay between \$250-\$300 to a smuggler to bring them across the Mexican border to a designated place of employment in the United States, according to Walsh.

EL MALCRIADO SAYS: The salve labor, the trafficking in human flesh, the miserable working