

The Rural Slums

'You Can't Blame One Group'

By PINCHER LEAVEN

(This is the second of a three-part series describing the work of Project REACH, in Steuben County, and the lives of those with whom it comes in contact.)

Bernard Votipka is a man who grows potatoes and hires migrant labor to harvest them. He owns a farm just outside of Wayland, and sells his produce for "chipping" to the Schuler processing plant.

For the past eight years, Votipka has gained recognition as a good grower, that is, the same people return year after year to work his fields. His crew-chief is respected, and the migrants are able to sense that here is one man among many who is truly concerned about their condition.

He points with pride to the fact that his labor force is "just like a family" to him. "The same folks come up from the South every harvest time," he says. "I know that some day I'll have to buy a harvester. There have been a lot more in the area in the last few years, and I figure by 1971 I'll have to buy one too; and that means I won't hire migrants any more." It is simple economy, but it hurts Barney Votipka nonetheless. In the heart.

Many migrants are not so fortunate as to work for a man like Barney. Father Timothy Weider, who coordinates the efforts of the volunteers for Project REACH, in Perkinsville, tells of finding men beaten because they were too sick to work in the fields, and tells of women subject to gross abuse to please the whims of crew-chiefs and growers.

On top of the pyramid which migrant labor supports is the consumer, and beneath the consumer, the processor. This is the firm which reads, packages and wholesales the product which finally reaches the table. It has two ceilings: the price which the market will bear and the costs of its own operations.

"To look at the whole system (migrants, crew-chiefs, growers, processors and consumers)," says Father Tim Weider, "keeps you from thinking there's a simple answer. You can't just blame the crew-chiefs, or the growers, or any one group, for that matter. You have to get everyone talking about the problem."

To clarify the issues, the migrant priest convened a panel discussion in Perkinsville. Those present were representatives from the growers, the migrants, the unions and the State Legislature.



Father Tim Weider: "This is Project REACH, the American people on the move."

The representative from the Legislature, Sen. William Smith from Big Flats, N.Y., rose during the discussion and said: "This really isn't my field. I don't know what the problems are. I am sure that we are doing all we can to alleviate the problem, and will continue to do so, but, as I say, I can not give you any examples." To two questions from the floor, he repeated his opening remark.

Father Weider recognizes that before any truly effective, concerted work can be done on behalf of the rural poor, two situations must be immediately remedied.

This first is the unawareness of most people, even in the same region, of the conditions their fellow Americans are forced to live in. The second is the unawareness of the migrants themselves to the options available to them to help themselves.

Project REACH concentrates most of its efforts on the second problem, through three programs. The first is medical and dental aid at a clinic, and individual instruction in hygiene. The most frequent medical

complaint is severe ulceration of the shins. The migrant works on his hands and knees to harvest potatoes, and subjects his legs to constant abrasion. In time, deep running sores develop.

Registered nurses, volunteers, wash and dress the ulcers and teach techniques for their prevention. The patient is then referred to one of the volunteer doctors.

The second program is tutorial. In the afternoons and evenings, children and adults receive academic instruction ranging from reading and writing to homework help in high school subjects.

The third program is being conducted with volunteer help from Alfred University and capital from the Farmers' Loans Corporation. Called The Self-Help Housing Project, it attempts to show the migrant and the grower that low-cost housing for the migrant and the rural poor can be both readily available and attractive. Building trade students on the state campus will prefabricate the homes

in sections and the people themselves, with the students, will do the final construction.

Even with the wide variety of programs which Project REACH directs, Father Weider sees that much more needs to be done.

"REACH is based on the belief that poverty is a human problem; that American citizenship is a responsibility assumed, not a luxury enjoyed; that service does not begin with induction and end with discharge, but rather begins with birth and ends only with death; that there is something each individual can do to bring America closer to the greatness to which it aspires. This is Project REACH, the American people on the move."

(Next week: "The American People on the Move"; the volunteers of REACH.)

Dorothy Day to Speak At St. Thomas More

Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker Movement and publisher of the monthly "Catholic Worker" newspaper, will discuss the problems of the poor at 8 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 27, at St. Thomas More School auditorium, Brighton.

She will speak on "The Other America," the title of a book by Michael Harrington about the poor, the homeless, the racially isolated and the deprived.

Miss Day, who was committed to the search for social justice as a Socialist before her

conversion to Catholicism and her inauguration of Houses of Hospitality in 1933, was one of the observers at Vatican II Council.

She has lectured around the world, and has spoken often over the years at St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, 402 South Ave., Rochester, where indigent men are given free meals and clothing daily.

Miss Day attended the recent "Catonsville Nine" trial in Baltimore. Her visit here is sponsored by the religious education committee of St. Thomas More Church.

Whalens to Extend Service in Mexico

Daniel and Margaret Whalen of East Avon are getting ready to break new ground in Mexico and extend the health service they started a dozen years ago.

They will leave in November for Guadalajara expecting to establish a new aid station like the St. Martin de Porres Dispensary they have built up in a Monterey slum. The old one can do without them now, Whalen said.

From its original room at the back of a church, the dispensary has grown to fill a new building, where two doctors, a nurse and a receptionist take care of 50 or 60 patients a day, Whalen reported. Prevailing disabilities are brought on by nutrition and tuberculosis is common, he said.

The Whalens customarily spend the months from November to April in their Mexican social work, after a quick campaign for funds to help them through the season. Their address is 1549 Rochester Rd.

Balloons Adopted As Road Signals

Area motorists will now be able to obtain free of charge the new "Highway Emergency Vehicle Kit" adopted as the State Motor Department's official signaling procedure for highway emergencies.

Kits contain color-coded balloons which the motorist may display outside his car without leaving the vehicle.

A red balloon indicates a call for medical assistance, a green for police aid, and a blue for mechanical trouble.

State Sen. Thomas Laverne announced that free kits may be obtained by writing his Rochester office, 711 Executive Office Bldg., 36 Main St. W., Rochester 14614, or by telephoning 332-6436 or 454-3680.

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Hornell—Seventy-eight years of continuous service was noted last Sunday when James Mercy Hospital's new wing was opened for special prior to admittance patients.

More than 700 persons were conducted on tours by Sister members of the Women's Board and hospital personnel.

Sister Mary Rene, administrator, said that only the third floor will be opened to patients this week, but that other areas will be pressed into service soon as completed.

"We are expanding to meet the community's needs and must alleviate the crowded conditions in our north and east wings as quickly as possible," she declared. "We've been operating to overflow capacity many times being forced to limit patients to beds in halls."

"The availability of 44 extra beds in the new wing will provide better patient care. The third floor is finished; all systems are 'go.' Our pack center, the core of services connecting the hospital conveyors, pneumatic tubes; a cart system, is operating, well as the central supply department."

The third floor extra care rehabilitation area has beds for patients who no longer need specialized care but provided round-the-clocking care. This unit has a low

Auburn

Auburn—This community tribute Wednesday to one of former illustrious residents Bishop Patrick A. Byrne, M. who lost his life through Communist cruelty in Korea on 25, 1950.

Bishop Byrne spent 10 hood years here from 1895-1905, attending Holy Family School and two years at Auburn High School.

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Detroit H Lauded I

Detroit—(RNS)—The Archdiocese of Detroit has jolted with a Negro neighborhood group to launch what Fed. Housing Secretary Robert Weaver calls a new hope: lower-city poor to receive low cost housing they can and can afford.

Project Phoenix—its 17 units of hundreds plan are now under construction Detroit's East Side Neighborhood is a joint project the Catholic archdiocese, the Positive Neighborhood Action Committee.

Secretary Weaver's "The test here will be on new construction method I can cut costs, give variety and individuality and prove housing that people can only afford but housing truly want."

The secretary noted the project has had the "positive, interested and wholehearted concern of the neighborhood residents," adding "We have here one of first cases of important active citizen participation a novel, technical, urban experiment."

A planned price of \$7, exclusive of land—has been wiped out by inflation in year that the project has been in the planning stages. It is hoped the price will "well under \$10,000 a unit."

The basis of the new unit is the Mitchell Fram

White Racism Scored At Interracial Meet

"You've got to start yesterday," in doing away with white racism, Mrs. Alma Green warned 125 persons last Sunday at the second in a series of six "dialogue-seminars" sponsored by the Catholic Interracial Council.

Mrs. Green, former CIC president and present vice president, called "ownership of the black community" the primary goal of the black revolution. "When the black community can build its own homes, own its own factories and elect its own candidates, then we'll sit down and talk about the possibly adverse effects of the black power movement," she said.

Referring to white America's "sickness," Mrs. Green charged that "whether or not the militant and even violent overtones will explode is dependent upon the white community's doing

away with the elements of racism."

A film and discussions followed the talk. Next Sunday's meeting (Oct. 20) which will start at 7:30 p.m. in St. John the Evangelist's School hall, Humboldt Street, will feature Raymond Hensler speaking on "Employment and Underemployment of Black Americans — what should we do about it?"

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CAPT. DUEMMEL

Rochester Native Honored by Air Force

Air Force Capt. John W. Duemmel, a former Rochesterian and graduate of St. Bernard's Seminary and College, has been awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal. A veteran of more than eight years service, Capt. Duemmel has among his awards and decorations the Airman's Medal, Bronze Star, Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters, and the Vietnamese Armed Forces Medal of Honor.

Capt. Duemmel is married to the former Francine Deveney Garcia of Lille, France. They have a son, Paul, 2, and live near Anchorage, Alaska.

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