

OFFICE OF MIDDLE AMERICAN AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FILES

Oct. 28, 1951.

V. Harwood Blocker

BRACEROS: Call from Mr. Rubottom regarding the re-listing of Marked Tree, Poinsett County, Ark.

Dick Rubottom called from Washington at 1:00 P.M., today advising of a recent meeting in Washington, D. C., which was attended by a number of the leading citizens of Marked Tree, Poinsett County, Arkansas, as well as by the Senators and several Congressmen from Arkansas and by Mr. Robert Creasey of the Department of Labor, with regard to the recent re-listing of the town of Marked Tree and vicinity in the list of localities considered by the Mexican Government not eligible to contract Mexican agricultural laborers.

The citizens of Marked Tree admit that discrimination has been practiced in that town; however, the officials and leading citizens of the town have made every effort to clean up the situation and are determined that every vestige of discrimination will be stamped out. They are reported to have closed up one establishment which allegedly practiced discrimination. Moving pictures favorable to Mexico have also been shown in the Community.

Mr. Creasey, accompanied by a group of the leading citizens of Marked Tree, will shortly leave Washington, D. C., to call upon the Mexican Consul in Memphis, Tenn., in an endeavor to prove to the Mexican Consul that discrimination definitely no longer will be countenanced in Marked Tree. They feel that they are in a position to prove to the Consul beyond any doubt that discrimination in Marked Tree has ended. However, the period of ten days in which to reach a joint determination, as provided for in Article 7 of the Joint Interpretation, initialed by representatives of the United States and Mexico on October 9th, 1951, will expire on October 24th, 1951, and the Department of State would appreciate it if the Ministry for Foreign Relations would be good enough to grant an additional period of ten days before ordering the cancellation of the contracts of the 1200 Mexican workers at Marked Tree, so as to permit Mr. Creasey of the Department of Labor, and the citizens of Marked Tree, to present their case to the Mexican Consul in Memphis.

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It is believed that this would only be fair to the growers concerned, since the Mexican Consul and the USES made the first joint inspection on October 8th, 1951, at which time discrimination was found to exist. However, it was only on October 15th, that the USES announced that the Contracts of workers in that locality would be cancelled. The growers were given no advices whatever between the dates of October 8th and 15th, and they are blaming the USES for not notifying them on October 8th.

It appears that positive measures are being taken this, the third time, to remove Marked Tree from the ineligible list. Dick was informed that the Embassy would take the matter up with the Foreign Office at once, and that we would advise him of the Ministry's reaction. However, it was pointed out to him that the Ministry most probably would take no action in the matter of removing Marked Tree from the ineligible list until the Mexican Consul in Memphis had submitted a favorable report and recommendation to the effect that the town be removed from the list. He understood the importance of this and stated that every effort would be made to have the Mexican Consul submit such a report at the earliest moment.

V. Harwood Blocker
American Consul