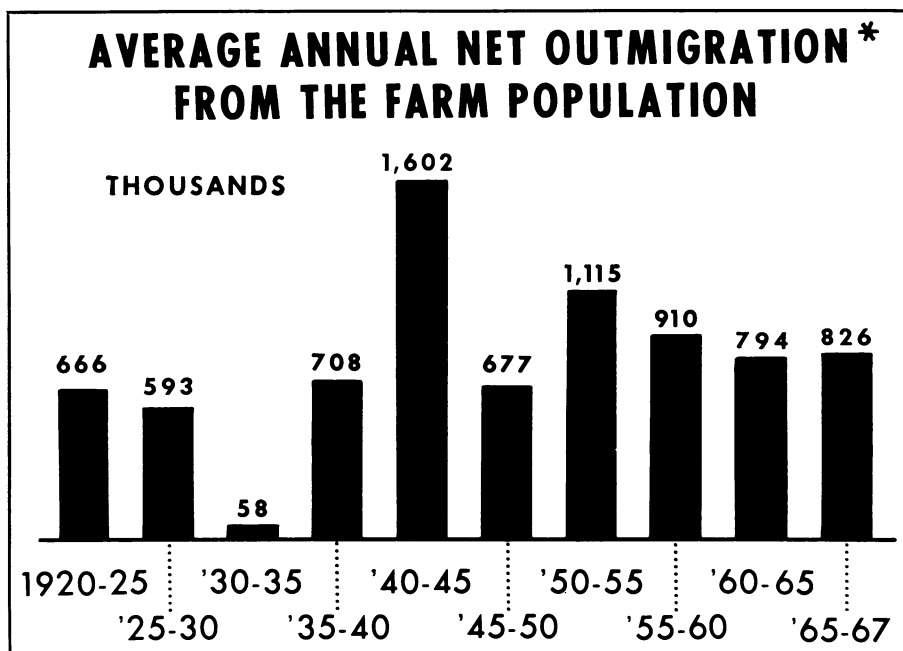


Breeding a national standard



U.S. Department of Agriculture

Dropoff in migration determines impact of the decision on residency.*Finch: Now Federal standards.*

Out of the Dustbowl of the 1930's and the pages of John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath" they came—the Okies—moving inexorably over the face of the continent toward their El Dorado in the West. They were the rootless provincials who fled their blown-away topsoil, and their odyssey became the most poignant chapter of the American chronicle of those hard times before the war.

But it was precisely that war, with its bringing of military industries to Southern California, which enabled the Okies and their kin to grasp the first rung on the ladder of rising income. They had come to the right place at the right time.

For the multitudes who began the

great northward trek out of the rural South at about the same time, however, the story has no such happy ending. Between 1940 and 1960, some 20 million Americans left the land and came into the big cities of the North and Middle West. More than two-thirds were from the South, and many were the black heirs to that region's legacy of separate and unequal schooling.

In 40 states of the Union, and in its capital as well, they faced residency requirements designed to prevent them from receiving public welfare support, which they sought in the absence of the Okies' job opportunities. In many states they had to wait as much as a year. That wait is now over: a fortnight ago, the U.S. Supreme Court, by a 6-3 vote, with Justice William J. Brennan writing for the majority, invalidated the residency statutes. "It is constitutionally impermissible," Justice Brennan wrote, for a state to impose a residency requirement for "the purpose of inhibiting migration by needy persons into the state."

In the past, some local welfare officials, especially in states where there was a relatively generous payment, have believed that migrants were motivated to move there largely by the prospect of increasing their welfare income. California's Governor Ronald Reagan declared the decision a disaster for his state, where welfare payments are high.

Nevertheless, the court's decision is not expected to have any profound effect on the migration of displaced farm workers from the rural South to

the cities of the North and West. According to Columbia University's professor of social welfare Frances Piven, the migration of blacks from the rural South was mostly completed before 1960.

Although a small number of people may cross the border from a state with low welfare to a neighboring one with a higher payment, social scientists seem generally agreed that the court's ruling will not motivate any considerable population movement.

Prof. Piven, for instance, argues strongly that the most compelling reason for migration has been economic deprivation: People do not come to the urban areas to get on welfare rolls, but to find better jobs.

Her view is shared by Dr. James Sundquist, former deputy undersecretary of agriculture now at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. Dr. Sundquist, who was a co-author of the influential Brookings report on the Nixon Administration's priorities (SN: 12/14, p. 590), says that his observations confirm the view that people don't come to cities for welfare, but to seek greater economic opportunities.

Studies in New York City show that numerous persons now on welfare did not apply until they had lived there for several years. Dr. Sundquist speculates that if these people had come solely for welfare, they would have tried to get on the rolls immediately.

If the court decision will not affect migration, it will affect the rate of emergence of a national welfare standard. Such a standard has long been desired by many academicians and government officials, including the one with the most direct control over the Federal programs, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Robert H. Finch. The court's ruling, says Finch, now makes a national minimum welfare standard inevitable.

Welfare payments vary widely, with Mississippi's \$8.50 per person each month to families with dependent children at the bottom, and New York's \$71.75 at the top.

The Administration's projected minimum, according to HEW officials, may be about \$40 per person each month. Finch and his aides are now reappraising their whole welfare program in light of the court's decision, which could have the effect of adding as many as 200,000 people to welfare rolls across the country, at a cost of \$175 million each year.

It is expected that any national minimum welfare standard proposed by the White House will be part of a comprehensive approach, which may also include some form of income supplement (SN: 11/16, p. 497), as well as numerous procedural modifications

aimed at cutting the estimated 20 percent administrative overhead on welfare programs. Even so, the price tag could be as high as \$5 billion a year.

"If we get a national standard now," says Prof. Piven, "it will make life a little easier for those who have stayed in the South, many of whom are old or sick, but it won't affect migration much."

Prof. Piven believes that there is now enormous pressure on the financial structures of northern cities and states in welfare expenditures, and that the Federal Government will have to relieve them in some way. Mike Monroe, assistant to Presidential urban affairs adviser Daniel Patrick Moynihan, acknowledges that the problem is under intense study. "I expect some pretty dramatic developments in the next couple of weeks," he says. ◇

HALOTHANE

Side effects again

The once controversial anesthetic, halothane, is back in trouble again.

It has been popular because it is nonexplosive, allows easy control of consciousness during an operation and induces little nausea in the wakened patient.

Because it is chemically similar to dangerous substances such as chloroform and carbon tetrachloride, halothane has been carefully scrutinized for dangerous side effects.

After a massive study by the National Academy of Sciences examined 856,000 patients in 34 hospitals over a four-year period, the anesthetic was pronounced safe.

Now, however, new evidence—including the illnesses of an anesthetist—throws doubt on the substance. In a few patients halothane damages the liver.

The anesthetist, who suffered from hepatitis whenever he gave the anesthetic, is a 44-year-old physician with a history of hay fever and asthma. After repeated admissions to Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, he was referred to Yale-New Haven Hospital for investigation, and a second examination revealed cirrhosis of the liver. After changing jobs to a hospital where it would not be necessary to administer halothane, he no longer became ill.

Physicians say his hepatitis attacks were attributable to hypersensitivity. His history of allergy before he became an anesthetist may have possible importance. Each time he was at home or hospitalized, the hepatitis cleared.

Drs. Gerald Klatskin of the Yale University School of Medicine and Daniel V. Kimberg of Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons report in a recent issue of the *NEW ENGLAND*

JOURNAL OF MEDICINE that "additional strong evidence that halothane induces liver damage is provided by reports in the literature of at least eight cases in which recurrent episodes of jaundice have appeared after separate exposures to halothane."

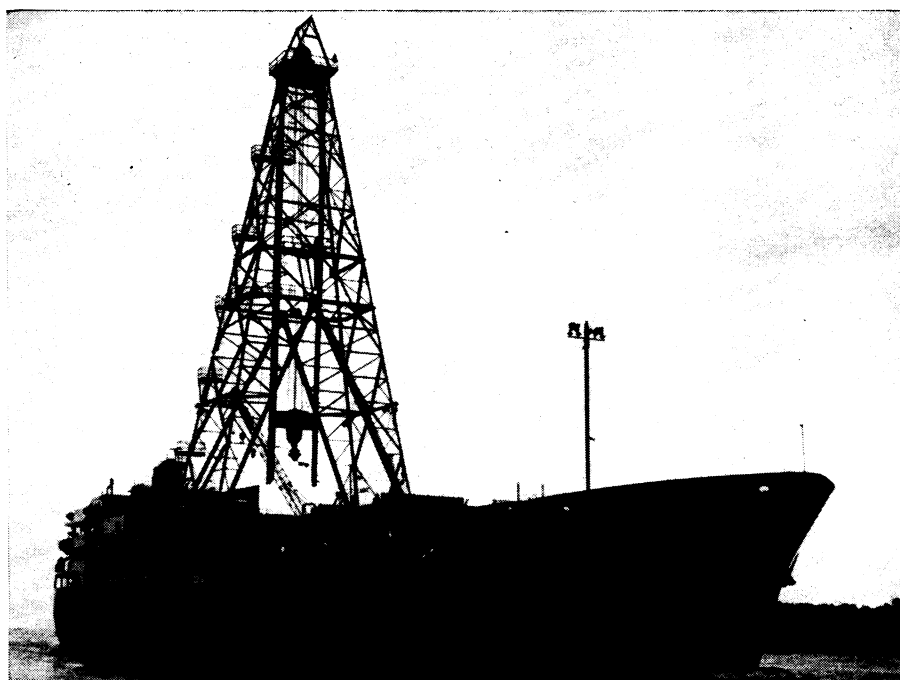
The researchers say the current status of halothane liver damage has gone beyond the question of whether it exists. "It is now necessary to obtain information about the frequency of this

complication" and its overall contribution to post-operative illness and death. They believe liver damage is undoubtedly higher than published mortality figures indicate.

Drs. Klatskin and Kimberg point out that danger from an occasional exposure to halothane may not be limited to anesthetists but may include surgeons, other operating room personnel and industrial workers who manufacture and package the anesthetic.

CONTINENTAL DRIFT

Time for a theory



Global Marine, Inc.

The Glomar Challenger: Evidence of sea-floor spreading from deep drilling.

Hypotheses of a continental drift were first put forward 50 years ago by scientists who noticed how well certain continents would fit together. They got some support from paleontology, which found fossils of the same animals in different continents (SN: 3/23, p. 280), and from geology, which found structures and mineral deposits on different continents that fitted together like lines in a jigsaw puzzle.

But the idea went into disfavor because it was hard to imagine what would generate the large forces that would cause such motion. Another objection was that if such large forces were operating within the earth, they would have damped the earth's rotation and brought it to a stop by now.

The forces are still hard to imagine, and this appears to be an area that needs extensive study. Nevertheless, the evidence that the motion is going on is building up to convincing levels.

It is time for hypotheses of sea floor

spreading, continental drift and plate tectonics to be accepted as a basic theoretical model in geophysics, says Dr. Lynn R. Sykes of Lamont-Doherty Geological Observatory. He finds it as well established today as continental glaciation was in the 19th century when it was accepted.

The theory of continental drift was once very highly debated, he says, "but we now have a great deal of evidence from several disciplines, and we are beginning to have a fairly complete picture of major displacements on a global scale."

Until recently, Dr. Sykes feels, geophysicists were in a data-gathering stage, trying to sort out what was happening from masses of measurements. Now, he says, a model is emerging, a model that can and should be used to make predictions, even possibly predictions of earthquake activity.

Nowadays people generally use the term plate tectonics to describe the