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The Honorable James A. McClure
United States Senate

Dear Senator McClure:

As you requested on July 30, 1973, we have inquired into allegations regarding the activities of the Idaho Migrant Council, Boise.

Our work was performed in close coordination with your offices in both Boise and Washington, D.C., and concentrated on areas agreed upon with your offices. We discussed the allegations with State and county officials and with private citizens to whom your Boise office referred us. We also talked with Council officials, other knowledgeable private citizens, and Federal officials and reviewed selected Council records.

On November 7, 1973, we briefed your Washington office on the information we obtained. As agreed, we have summarized this information in the enclosure.

We trust that this information will satisfy your needs. We plan no further distribution of this report.

Sincerely yours,

[Deputy]

Comptroller General
of the United States

Enclosure

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INFORMATION ON ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING
THE IDAHO MIGRANT COUNCIL

ALLEGATION 1

The Idaho Migrant Council (IMC) publishes a Spanish language newspaper which contains racist and inflammatory statements.

FINDINGS

According to the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), IMC published five issues of a newsletter entitled La Voz Mexicana, which did include comments that could be interpreted as racist or inflammatory and one issue contained a full-page partisan political advertisement for a U.S. Senate candidate. OEO internal correspondence showed that the publication was discontinued well over a year ago, after IMC was advised that the contents violated OEO directives. The IMC Executive Director said no other newsletters are published in its place.

ALLEGATION 2

IMC is awarding a contract to the Executive Director's brother to operate a day care center which may never become operational.

FINDINGS

The Executive Director stated that IMC had negotiated a contract with the Weiser Parents Policy Board for child care and development services at a child care center in Weiser, Idaho. He acknowledged that his brother was the center's director and had managed it for about 2 to 3 years of its 4-year existence.

The Executive Director stated that, before this year, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) had funded the center through the Western Idaho Community Action Program. He said that HEW had requested IMC to act as the agent through which the center would be funded this year because of some concern over whether the Community Action Program would be re-funded.

An official of HEW's Seattle regional office confirmed the Executive Director's statements. The Executive Director of the Community Action Program also confirmed that the present director is the same person who directed the center when his organization funded it.

ALLEGATION 3

IMC used racist tactics in discharging the Anglo Administrative Director of Community Health Clinics, Inc. (CHC), and replacing her with a person of Spanish descent.

FINDINGS

IMC has a contract with CHC to provide health care services to migrant workers and their families using funds IMC receives from HEW.

The IMC Executive Director said the relationship between IMC and CHC does not authorize IMC to determine whom CHC will employ. He told us that this authority rests solely with the CHC Board of Directors.

The CHC Administrative Director told us that (1) racist tactics were not involved in the situation, (2) she was resigning her position, effective October 1, 1973, and was not being discharged, (3) to her knowledge, IMC did not have any authority to determine whom CHC employs, and (4) she understood this authority rested solely with the CHC Board of Directors. The contract provisions support these statements.

ALLEGATION 4

IMC sponsored the picketing of campaign appearances of Idaho Congressman Steven D. Symms, including providing transportation for picketers.

FINDINGS

None of those we contacted, including the IMC Executive Director and two members of Congressman Symms' staff in Idaho, could tell us whether the alleged IMC-sponsored picketing took place. The IMC Executive Director denied that IMC sponsored any picketing or authorized providing any

transportation for picketers. He and a member of the Congressman's staff understood that followers of a farmworkers' union had organized the picketing of Congressman Symms' campaign appearances.

ALLEGATION 5

An OEO official had characterized IMC as "the second worst Council in the country."

FINDINGS

Efforts to identify this official, his connection with the migrant program, and his knowledge concerning IMC operations proved fruitless. However, OEO officials most recently connected with the program advised us that, though IMC had had some problems, these have been cleared up and operations are being conducted generally according to OEO guidelines.

ALLEGATION 6

Some migrants have rebelled against IMC policies.

FINDINGS

We discussed this matter with some of the migrants who raised the policy questions and with private citizens knowledgeable about the situation. There appears to be a contest between certain IMC groups for control of IMC as well as differences of opinion between some IMC members and the Executive Director. Some of those contacted stated it was more a matter of questioning the management approach being used to solve migrant problems than it was a question of IMC policy. The consensus of opinion of the individuals contacted was that the present management approach had not substantially limited the effectiveness of IMC programs.