

# U.S. Patrol Halts Border 'Invasion'

## Operation Wetback Success Noted on First Anniversary

EL CENTRO, June 16—  
One year ago tomorrow the  
U.S. government started an  
all-out counterattack against  
what it termed "history's  
greatest peacetime invasion"  
of this country.

Today the main result of  
Operation Wetback—the big  
push against illegal Mexican  
aliens—is far-reaching. It is  
that the Mexican wetback has  
been virtually erased from the  
American scene.

### Problem Solved

For the first time in the con-  
troversial history of the wet-  
back problem, there is hardly  
any problem left.

The reason for this unusual  
development traces back to  
an announcement made at a  
special press conference June  
16, 1954, the eve of the drive.  
Harlon B. Carter, chief of the  
U.S. Border Patrol, declared:  
"This is one drive that won't  
blow over."

The next morning a tripled  
patrol force using jeeps,  
planes and two-way radios  
fanned out over the Southern  
California border and worked  
northward, arresting wet-  
backs. The campaign contin-  
ued into Texas and as far  
north as Detroit.

### Drive Maintained

As mass deportations and a  
scurrying wetback retreat cut  
illegal aliens in California by  
80%, many employers of  
"wets" waited for their men  
to return as they had after  
previous campaigns by the  
border patrol.

But the drive didn't blow  
over.

Along 1600 miles of U.S.-  
Mexican border a force tri-  
pled to 750 patrolmen kept  
tight control of the boundary.

The crackdown is still con-  
tinuing.

Today the border patrol dis-  
closed that the wetbacks in-  
flux into the United States has  
dropped nearly 88% as a di-  
rect result of the campaign.

### Crime Decreased

In Calexico, Police Chief Joe  
Goff cites a 63% crime drop  
and credits it to Operation  
Wetback.

Imperial County Welfare Di-  
rector Russell Gray reports  
there are now fewer cases at  
the County Hospital.

Even the farmers, tradition-  
ally accustomed to wetback  
labor, are now generally  
pleased with the change to  
a stable labor supply under  
the U.S.-Mexico Farm Labor  
Agreement, which is function-  
ing more smoothly than ever  
before.

Walter Francis, manager of  
the U.S. Labor Department's  
reception center, says a record  
90,000 legal contract workers  
will have crossed the border  
here by the end of the year.