UNION CONTRACT BENEFITS FOR MANAGEMENT

But what if the workers vote for union? Will not the employer be hurt then?

The answer is "No."

Obviously, organization will mean higher wages, a grievance system, fringe benefits, et cetera, all of which will cost the employer money.

But it does not mean perpetual warfare, loss of their operation, and all the other bugaboos which growers imagine. In hundreds of industries, in perhaps millions of enterprises, collective bargaining relationships have resulted in a normalized, fairly cooperative relationship. Why should it not in agriculture?

Consider just these two benefits to growers from a contractual labor-management relationship:

> A labor-management contract in agriculture would probably run 2 or 3 years. It would state specifically what wages and benefits workers would receive. As a result, companies would be able to do long-range labor-cost planning for the first time. It would take one major factor out of the "variable" category. That would be a boon to farm management.
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> The growers have screamed long and loud about difficulties in obtaining adequate and effective labor. We believe that this problem—if it does exist—is due to the incredibly poor wages and working conditions. But once these factors are adjusted in a labor-management contract and if in the unlikely event problems of obtaining labor still remained, a union would share in the responsibility of obtaining workers. A union hiring hall, like those of the building trades or maritime industry, for example, would be very helpful to agriculture.

During World War II, when a tremendous shortage of farm labor hit Seabrook Farm and the rest of eastern agriculture, our local 56 worked out an arrangement with the Southern Tenant Farmers Union to bring southern farmworkers to New Jersey. In the years the program operated, some 10,000 workers came north in non-Jim Crow railroad cars—then an oddity.

Currently, retail meatcutters are in short supply in some communities. About a half dozen of our local unions have joined with the Federal Government and retail management in their areas to train unemployed workers under the manpower training program. Also, the union helps to bring skilled meatcutters from areas of oversupply to areas where jobs are available.

Obviously, adjusting to the new relationship will have its difficulties and its costs for agricultural management. But, contrary to their present fears, they will also find some distinct advantages, as managements in other industries have.

PLEA FOR NLRA COVERAGE LEGISLATION

Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, we are grateful to you for allowing us to bring these facts and views before you.

We hope and respectfully urge that you will quickly approve H.R. 4769, legislation to bring farm labor under the coverage of the National Labor Relations Act. We hope the House of Representatives will shortly thereafter act favorably upon your recommendation.