

3. Applied to farm laborers, this principle justifies their membership in any legitimate organization of their own choosing. Those who seek to organize farm laborers are not to be looked upon as outside agitators.

4. Such organizations must be protected by law, and where necessary, criteria and procedures established to determine the legitimacy of particular efforts to organize such associations.

These excerpts taken from Bishop Donohoe's March 16, 1966, statement delivered before a U.S. subcommittee in Delano, Calif., signed by all Roman Catholic ordinaries of California, underscored by the fact that it was made in the midst of the strife and turmoil of the grape-pickers strike. These excerpts, I repeat, are clearly within the traditional teaching of the Roman Catholic Church since the 1890's. Pope Leo XIII, Pius XI, John XXIII, and Paul VI have stated over and over again that society must allow, safeguard, and protect the right of any group to organize legitimately and within the concern for the public welfare.

For our present purposes we respectfully submit that this right of the farmworkers to organize is being frustrated and that there is no legislative machinery to protect the farmworkers or even the farmers themselves if the claims of unions to represent the farmworkers are untrue.

Farmworkers have been excluded from the benefits of the National Labor Relations Act. To my knowledge the United States is the only country in the world where this exclusion has been deliberate and calculated. In an era of enlightenment and concern for the poor it seems indefensible that such an exclusion should continue. In our poverty program we insist that the poor be given an opportunity to help themselves. In California, Texas, and Florida and with beginnings in several other States, farmworkers, all of them poor, are attempting to help themselves—strictly on their own, with no help from poverty programs. Yet the law of the land to which they pledge allegiance and for which they fight does not touch them as they seek to involve themselves in the American mainstream.

Without legislative assistance, without inclusion under the NLRA, the struggle of farmworkers "is going to take a lot more time; it is going to take a lot more money; and it is going to cause a lot more bitterness," as pointed out by Mr. William L. Kircher, director of the AFL-CIO Department of Organization. He continues "* * * without legislation, strikes and boycotts, struggles and strife become necessary, inextricable parts of developing a union."

In Texas, too, in the face of bitter strife the Catholic hierarchy of that State have spoken out in the same vein. Having stated clearly the right of both growers and farmworkers to organize, Archbishop Lucey of San Antonio and all the other Texas bishops—

urge that governmental bodies, especially the National Congress, be more attuned to the needs of both of these groups and recognize the essential contributions they make to the common good of our nation. It would seem reasonable that legislation similar to the National Labor Relations Act, which has proven beneficial to the economy as a whole, would also be appropriate in the field of agriculture with modifications taking into account the special characteristics of this segment of the economy.

In a followup to this all-Texas statement Bishop Humberto S. Mai-deiros of Brownsville, Tex., where strife at present abounds, urged his