

than Walter Reuther wants to run the automobile makers out of business. But if an employer simply refuses to pay decent wages, if he simply insists upon treating his labor force like so many domesticated animals, then the Nation will be better off if he is run out of business.

The grower's right to have his crops harvested and put on the market is no more basic than the worker's right to withhold his labor if offered impossible working conditions—and the further right to withhold that labor on an organized basis, and to advise other working people that a strike is in progress.

The frightening pictures we have drawn for us of growers going out of business, and crops not getting harvested, and the housewife being denied her avocado salad or her cocktail hour artichoke—all these frightening pictures assume that the farm employee has some kind of "duty to the public" to perform his labor at whatever is offered him. But I never hear the growers suggest that they have any corresponding duty to offer the kind of wages that are necessary to let the employees rise out of serfdom. If the farmworker has some moral obligation not to strike, then the farm employer has a corresponding moral obligation to improve the conditions under which the worker exists.

The pending bill, Mr. Chairman, will not enforce these moral obligations, nor will it bring the hand of Government into the relationship between employer and employee by such devices as wage scales, Government hiring halls, licensing, or the rest. What it will do will be to bring the employer-employee relationship out of the 15th century and into the 20th, and it will equip both sides equally to engage in honest collective bargaining, starting from a plane of equality. This right—and it is a right, Mr. Chairman—has been recognized for other segments of the labor force for nearly 30 years now. It is time that the food on our tables had the blood and sweat of generations of exploited workers scrubbed from it. It is time to pass H.R. 4769.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you, Congressman Holland, for appearing before this subcommittee.

STATEMENT OF HON. JEFFERY COHELAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. THOMPSON. Our next witness will be Congressman Cohelan. Mr. Cohelan represents the Seventh Congressional District of California. We will be glad to hear your testimony at this time.

Mr. COHELAN. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your invitation to testify on this very important legislation, which would extend collective bargaining rights, under the National Labor Relations Act, to agricultural workers. As you know, I have been deeply and actively concerned for a number of years with efforts to improve the lot of those Americans who toil in the fields of this country. There is no more honest and honorable work than farm labor; yet no group of workers has so regularly and systematically been discriminated against and exploited.

One of the most important steps we can take to correct these past injustices is to include agricultural workers under the National Labor Relations Act. I have been sponsoring legislation to this effect since 1963. I hope that it will receive the favorable consideration of this committee and the Congress this year.