

the whims of nature, the fact that agricultural work is highly mobile, only increases the need of the workers involved to have a collective-bargaining relationship with their employers.

When we look at the record it is clear what some of the consequences of this denial have been.

Over the last 10 years farmworker earnings have risen only half as rapidly as their gains in productivity,

Since the end of World War II the gap in pay and other benefits between industrial and agricultural workers, relatively and absolutely, has grown greater,

In my own State of California only 31 percent of the male workers—based on 1964 data—between the prime working ages of 30 and 50 earned more than the poverty-line minimum of \$3,000 per year.

My only criticism of this proposed legislation, Mr. Chairman, is that it is too limited. Under the National Labor Relations Board's current jurisdictional standards it would affect only that 3 percent of our Nation's farms whose interstate shipments amount to more than \$50,000 a year. Fortunately, this would benefit a significant portion of our hired farm laborers, but like minimum wage and other guarantees, its benefits should be broadened to include more workers.

Despite this limitation, I strongly urge this committee to report this measure and to press for its passage. Farmworkers should have the same rights to negotiate their terms of employment that workers in other industries have long enjoyed. Clearly they cannot redress the present inequities of their situation, clearly they cannot enter the mainstream of the American working force without this basic employment protection.

Mr. THOMPSON. Congressman Cohelan, it has been a pleasure to hear your testimony. Thank you for appearing here today.

Our next witness is the Honorable Henry B. Gonzalez. Congressman Gonzalez represents the 20th Congressional District of Texas. Congressman, will you have a seat at the witness table.

STATEMENT OF HON. HENRY B. GONZALEZ, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Chairman, I consider it an honor and a privilege to appear before you in behalf of H.R. 4769 and similar bills, including my own H.R. 6928, which would extend the benefits of collective bargaining under the National Labor Relations Act to agricultural workers.

All through our history, the hewers of wood and the drawers of water have served as the very root and foundation of the growth and strength of our Nation, and their contribution has been acknowledged. But recognition in history books does not conceal the fact that these people, who today are farmworkers, have been left far behind in the benefits that the growth and wealth of our country have given to virtually all our citizens. The agricultural worker has the least security in his job; he has the least wage for his work; he has the least hope of obtaining compensation if he is hurt on the job; and worst of all, his plight is hidden because he is out in the country, where few people see his burden, and fewer still care.