

justice that other workers share, and we believe that they could not achieve that measure of social justice unless we bring them under the law so that they can enjoy the rights of collective bargaining.

I would like to read into the record several short paragraphs that came in a long 12-page letter that I received the other day from a farmworker in New York State.

They had read some of the material that we had put out, because we are making an effort to try to mobilize the American labor movement, to do a more meaningful job of organizing agricultural workers, and it was in response to that public appeal that we made that this woman, who works in the fields of New York State, wrote these words, and I quote:

We are among something like 3,000 unorganized workers in this Upstate county. There are 40,000 of us scattered throughout New York State. We are mostly all of us Puerto Rican and Negro farm workers. Agriculture has devoured us. We work for \$0.67 to \$1.35 per hour.

In Dunkirk vicinity, we are fighting on the one hand for an additional ten cents per hour, on the other hand for the protection of bare life itself.

We are housed in camps with leaking gas, faulty electrical installations, kerosene stoves, and deadly radiant heaters, with polluted drinking water and sometimes with no water at all.

We are housed as though we were hoes, wagons and tractor parts.

And she continues:

We need organizing, God knows we need it here on the farms. We work a 14, 15, 17-hour workday, and we work seven days a week. Time and a half is unknown. Holiday pay is unknown. Holidays are unknown. In a word, the relationship between work and rest has gone crazy, where farm labor is concerned.

The long hours are accepted as a fact of nature, like thistle and the leaf mold. Almost no one has observed that they stand straighter than the thistle, the facts of low base pay.

Tacawa County is a part of the Concord grape belt. Fantastic care goes into the cultivation of the vines, our care and our toil. Painstaking work, our work, goes into the preparation of the soil, that is to bear tomatoes or string beans or other major crops.

The ground is worked patiently, tenderly, it is worried over, it is turned over, spaded and hoed. It is braced with minerals, it is weeded, loosened, dusted with chemicals, sometimes irrigated. A fantastic amount of care, skilled labor, our labor, goes into the preparation of the ground and tending the crops.

By contrast, the lives of the men and women who work the land are left a wilderness. No care or worry is lavished upon us. No one calls upon modern science to protect us against disease and over-exhaustion. No one takes the trouble to investigate our needs for nutrition or find out whether we are growing straight or crooked.

We are like the needle that clothes everyone and yet is naked unto itself. We are treated as accessories to the grapes and tomatoes. We are used, then trampled. That is the tragic and terrible condition, in Tacawa, in Genesee County, where the pebbles are cherished, but the field of human workers is left to wither.

This is the tragic story all over this abundant land of ours. Workers who make possible increasing agricultural abundance are denied their measure of economic and social justice.

And when you look at their hourly rate that only tells part of the story, Mr. Chairman, because as we know, these workers do not work a full year.

Last year, Congress took what we consider to be a long-overdue, but relatively small step. You included, roughly, 390,000 workers under the minimum wage law. That was a small beginning, and we would urge very strongly, with the greatest sense of urgency, that the