

"And as the gross continues to soar to record heights, the net income per farm is also rising, since the number of farms continues to drop as it has over the past decades with the movement from rural to urban life.

"The net income, which is the amount the grower realizes after deducting costs of production and taxes, was actually up 14 percent in 1966 over the 1960-64 average on a per farm basis."

Mr. Chairman, the profitability of big agriculture is helped by big inputs of non-rural capital in addition to government subsidies. The prize-winning subsidy is given by the American taxpayers to the Kern Land Company and other agricultural giants. Low-cost, government-financed irrigated water, provided in direct violation of the 160-acre limitation is another big factor in heavy profits reaped by California and Arizona agricultural combines.

4. *What Will Happen to People Whose Jobs Are Eliminated By Farm Mechanization?* There is a recurring theme among critics of protective legislation for farm workers. Employment of field workers is sometimes regarded as akin to public charity. Some witnesses before congressional committees have indicated much stoop labor in the fields is done by workers who might otherwise be unemployed.

Mr. Charles Creuzinger, President of the Vegetable Growers Association of America, told the Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor:

"The supply of qualified agricultural labor is far below our industry's needs. To get the crops harvested, we must employ many people considered by many as unemployable; the unskilled, the young, the aged, the lazy, et cetera, who are neither capable or willing to work hard enough to earn even the present minimum wage. . . . Such individual as a marginal worker does not have the motivation in the first place to produce in the same manner in which a normal individual produces and thus, it will have a tendency to increase the relief rolls again."

The relentless mechanization on both large and small American farms is taking its toll in reducing the farm population, especially hired farm workers.

Supporters of farm labor unions and higher incomes for farm workers must recognize that great social upheavals will occur. This is happening at the present time in the Delta region of Mississippi.

A private report to the Office of Economic Opportunity tells how human misery is accelerated by farm mechanization:

"The employment problem in Fayette County (Tennessee) is acute. One farmer who last year employed eighteen families for example, this year has one family working for him. The rest of the workers have, in most cases, been permitted to remain on the land but they have no income. This is typical, and since the County already has the unfortunate distinction of being the fourth poorest County in the country, new employment opportunities must be created fast."

This tragedy is repeating itself over and over again in every part of America with a large rural population. For many poorly paid farm workers, there is little hope for them to stay on the land. They need special adult reading courses, special training, and other emergency assistance—to make up for years of educational and social neglect. There is useful work for them to do. The answer to their troubles is not to stay crouched like animals at the edge of huge farms, living off scraps of food, their children denied schooling, tossed from place to place like human flotsam, living at the very bottom of human existence.

Job opportunities to stoop, to hoe, to pick, to cut crops in the fields are diminishing—and unionization and mechanization will undoubtedly hasten this trend. The answer must be remedial catch-up education as part of the war on poverty.

A new day for the rural poor must dawn—and unionization of farm workers may accelerate the pace. We must see the problems clearly and do something to help those whose lives are dislocated.

5. *Will Unions Be Willing to Organize Farm Workers?* The question is often raised that once the National Labor Relations Act is changed to permit unionizing farm workers—would any unions be will to organize such workers, who are paid little, move frequently, and work for short periods of time?

Speaking as President of the Industrial Union Department and of the United Automobile Workers, I can say we have resolved long ago to help organize the working poor. We have every intention of continuing to do this. When the grape workers struck in Delano, the IUD and the UAW were the first major labor organizations to respond to their call for help. As a result their cause did not falter and they scored an unprecedented breakthrough in union recognition for farm workers and eventually negotiated a union contract.