

The Delano experience is an exceptional case. Without any basic law or machinery to protect unions among farm field workers, the prevailing situation in the United States resembles guerrilla warfare. Farm worker unions launch a campaign here or there. The massive power of large farmers and their wealthy allies can break the will of most farm worker unions lacking any legal standing.

What has happened over the years in canneries and processing plants is a fair indication of what we can expect among farm workers. Many of their operations have short seasons. While many cannery and processing workers are recruited locally, their contracts are like the kinds of agreements which might be negotiated for farm workers.

The recently-negotiated contract at DiGiorgio in California, demonstrates that organizing of farm workers is possible, that practical contracts can be written and agreed upon, and that farm workers have a genuine desire for union membership.

The auto industry before the days of the UAW had short work sessions and workers were treated with total disregard. In those days we heard the same dismal predictions about the impossibility of ever unionizing auto workers. Today auto employment is stable, wages are higher and workers have won substantial fringe benefits and yet the auto industry is more profitable than it was 30 years ago.

6. *The Need for Congressional Action.* Farm workers are living on the thin edge of human existence. An eloquent and moving portrayal of their abject poverty was recited by an American Friends Service Committee worker who lived among migrants along the eastern seaboard. A trained accountant with a sensitive grasp of human problems, Mr. Scott Neilsen told a Senate subcommittee how machinery and animals on large commercial farms got better treatment than workers and their families:

"At the grader shed where I spent 2 weeks the farmer had at one time animals and they had cups for cows to drink water out of, and on the grader machine itself they had water to wash the potatoes but they had no running water for the humans."

Farm workers degraded this way get an average income of between \$1,100 to \$1,500 a year. The right of farm workers to organize, join and belong to labor unions with the full protection of federal law is a fundamental part of the help they need.

Two Republican U.S. Senators, George Murphy and Paul J. Fannin, expressed the growing view this year that "the principle of collective bargaining is the heart and soul of American labor relations" in their dissent to the 1967 report of the Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor. While they disagreed with the hiring hall approach as the way to represent farm workers, they nevertheless stated "these questions are not insoluble."

Americans of all political creeds have a moral obligation now to grapple with the dire poverty which condemns thousands of their fellow Americans who work in the fields. Many farm operators who resist the very thought of unionizing their own workers would be better off if federal laws provided a floor of decency below which no other farm operator could fall. The right of farm worker unions to function on a par with other unions will accomplish this goal. At one time sweatshop conditions were widespread in the garment industry. Various things were done—minimum wages, unionization of the industry, among others—to drive the sweatshops out of business and to reform them. Employers who pay good wages, who provide good housing, and who treat their workers well, need protective legislation as much as workers do.

Congress must fill the legislative gap which deprives thousands of farm workers from partaking of the fullness of American life. As it has in every other industry and occupation it touches, membership in labor unions with the full protection of federal law can enable farm workers to improve their lot, enhance their lives, and offer their children the opportunity they have been so long denied.

The hour is late and justice has been denied too long. It is urgent that Congress act now to right this wrong by providing agricultural workers the legal protection, organization, and the right to bargain collectively so that they may achieve a sense of human dignity and economic benefits of first-class economic citizenship. I urge you to enact H.R. 4769 to help achieve these goals.

Mr. THOMPSON. I notice that our colleague, Mr. Scherle, of Iowa, a member of the full committee, is here. You are welcome to come up and participate, if you like.

Mr. SCHERLE. Thank you.