

him in improving his way of life and we do not see how it could be of benefit to the farmer. The union would profit, through swelling their financial coffers.

Further, the so-called farm labor problem today is more a social one than agricultural. We are sympathetic to the churchmen who support the bill but see no connection between a sincere and earnest desire to improve living conditions, for example, of the migrant worker, and the forcing of these workers into labor unions. It is our belief that unions would not solve the social problems involved and would endanger the processes of harvesting the country's food supply.

The American farmer is desirous of eliminating the causes of today's farm labor work force shortage. He is providing housing that is not required of the industrial employer in his obtaining and retaining of workers at a cost of millions of dollars in the face of a diminishing need for field labor; he is spending huge sums in the recruitment of labor from far distant states; he is faced with a work reservoir consisting in too uncomfortable a degree of inexperienced hands, city unemployed, elderly, women and youths. We repeat, the farm labor problem today is not one of wages, it is a basic general shortage of men capable of, and most important, interested in performing agricultural labor. Research has steadily proved that only a fraction of the working men in this country would do farm labor by choice.

Mr. Frank Potter of the Department of Labor has stated that in his opinion passage of this legislation would not solve the farmer's labor shortage problems, observing that agricultural labor is in truth "unattractive". Higher wages would attract some workers—but as anyone knowledgeable of the farm labor situation today knows any farm worker who chooses to can earn a daily return comparable with industrial wage rates. These workers are sought by all growers.

We are opposed to this bill because of difficulties in adapting labor union membership to a floating work force and the vagaries of nature. Agriculture cannot be compared to the construction industries if for one reason alone: construction can be turned off and on; crops must be harvested on the terms of nature alone. Farm workers move from crop to crop, area to area, and the administrative problems of union membership would be enormous. It must be shouted again in clear tones: the agriculturalist is concerned with perishables, produce in field and orchard that waits for no human being.

We are opposed for the same basic reasons that guided the Congress for 32 years in exempting agriculture under the NLRA; to the placing of production of what we eat, the exposing of our food sources to the mechanics of strikes and the drawn-out strategies of the labor unions—outside the NLRA. We cite the inability to adapt the industrial concept to farming as the reason Congress has not acted in 32 years, not as the result of a political trade as claimed by Mr. Meaney.

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STATEMENT OF BERNARD J. IMMING, SECRETARY, THE UNITED FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE ASSOCIATION

The United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association, with headquarters in Washington, D.C., represents all factors in the production and marketing of fresh fruits and vegetables. Its 2,700 member firms handle fully 75% of all the commercial marketings of fresh fruits and vegetables in the United States.

This Association believes that H.R. 4769, which would make the provisions of National Labor Relations Act, as amended, applicable to agriculture, totally disregards the nature and special requirements of agriculture, including the fresh fruit and vegetable industry. This statement will be limited to a few comments on the special nature of agriculture, and is intended to emphasize the detailed presentations of other organizations opposing this bill in direct testimony before the Subcommittee or in written statements filed for the record, as well as to state this Association's own opposition to H.R. 4769.

While it is true that changes in our national economy and in industrial production have been phenomenal, there simply can be no change in the fundamental nature of agriculture—fruits and vegetables must be grown, for example, and the nature of their growth to maturity is essentially seasonal. There is no change in the fact that crops mature at certain times—a process which fundamentally is beyond the control of man—and that they must be harvested when ready. It is not possible for the grower to speed up the harvesting, to delay it, or to spread it out beyond a certain extremely limited period of time, depending on the crop.

It seems quite clear, then, that the farmer would be in the most vulnerable bargaining position imaginable if he were forced to operate under the provisions