

A.F.L.-C.I.O. to Expand Drive for Bargaining Rights for Farm Workers

By DAMON STETSON

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CHICAGO, Aug. 5—Plans for an expanded drive to win collective bargaining rights for farm workers throughout the nation were jointly announced today by the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations and by the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee.

George Meany, president of the federation, and Cesar Chavez, director of the farm group, disclosed the plans at a news conference in connection with the meeting of the federation's executive council. The announcement follows the farm workers' recent successes in negotiating contracts with the majority of grape growers in California.

Mr. Meany reported that 85 per cent of the California grape

growers are now under contract and that the organizing committee would begin negotiations Monday with the remaining 15 per cent, concentrated in the Lodi area north of Sacramento.

"I am hopeful that within 10 days we will be able to announce that the grape boycott is over," Mr. Meany said.

Grape Boycott Hailed

Both Mr. Meany and Mr. Chavez termed the nationwide boycott of table grapes, in which organized labor as well as many other groups cooperated, a major factor in bringing the grape growers to the bargaining table.

The federation began a campaign to organize California farm workers in 1960 with the establishment of the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee. This group began a

strike in the grape fields in Delano, Calif., in 1965, and was joined by an independent organization headed by Mr. Chavez shortly thereafter. Four years ago the two organizations were merged and the A.F.L.-C.I.O. chartered the new group as the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee.

Since 1959, Mr. Meany said, the federation has contributed \$2,060,000 to the organizing effort in California, including \$635,000 since 1966.

The federation's executive council, at the final session of its summer meeting at the Drake Hotel here, announced that the organizing committee and the federation intended "to jointly map, mount and win—on a crop-by-crop basis—collective bargaining rights for farm workers throughout America."

At the same time, the council emphasized its determination to continue the legislative fight in Washington to assure farm workers of the same rights under Federal statutes that are held by other workers. Present labor laws, providing for representation elections and prohibiting specified unfair labor practices, do not cover agricultural workers.

Mr. Chavez said that the next

organizing efforts of his committee would be concentrated in Texas, Arizona and Florida, but that steps would also be taken in other states with large numbers of farm workers.

Both Mr. Meany and Mr. Chavez expressed hope that a confrontation between the organizing committee and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters could be avoided in the Salinas Valley in California,

where the teamsters recently announced an agreement covering vegetable farm workers.

The executive council named Alexander J. Rohan, president of the International Printing Pressmen's and Assistants Union of North America, to fill the vacancy in its membership created by the death of Herman Kenin, president of the American Federation of Musicians.

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