

TEAMSTERS GAIN CALIFORNIA FARMS

Growers Shift From Chavez —Boycott Threatened

INDIO, Calif., April 15 (AP) — The International Brotherhood of Teamsters announced today it had won contracts from growers previously signed with the United Farm Workers Union led by Cesar Chavez.

The announcement brought a strike threat and a boycott call by Mr. Chavez.

Ralph L. Cotner, a spokesman for the Western Conference of Teamsters, told a news conference here that his union had signed contracts "with 85 per cent of the growers" in the Coachella Valley, which produces three million boxes of table grapes a year.

Mr. Cotner displayed a stack of petitions and contended that they carried signatures in favor of the teamsters from 4,000 of the 5,000 workers seasonally employed in the country.

Mr. Chavez disputed the figures, saying that only 1,800 workers were now employed in the valley, with about 1,000 more during the peak harvest season.

Walkout Planned

Mr. Chavez, whose organizing efforts led in 1970 to the first farmworker contract in United States history after a two-year table grape boycott, told a rally in Coachella that he planned to renew the boycott and call a walkout tomorrow at fields owned by growers who had signed with the teamsters.

William Kirchner, a director of organization for the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, told the rally that his group, which represents Mr. Chavez's union, would back the U.F.W.U.

"Just 15 minutes ago I was speaking on the telephone with A.F.L.-C.I.O. President George Meany. He asked me to tell you that the success of workers at building their union has always rested on solidarity. On behalf of all the A.F.L.-C.I.O. and all its members, George Meany pledges his solidarity with you in your struggle," Mr. Kirchner said.

Mr. Cotner said his contracts provided for an immediate raise for field laborers to \$2.30 an hour. The contracts that the growers held with the U.F.W.U. until their expiration at midnight yesterday, provided pay of \$2 an hour.

Mr. Cotner said the rate would rise to \$2.70 during the teamster contracts' four-year life. Bonus rates also will rise, he said.

Contract Not Made Public

The U.F.W.U. has been negotiating with 55 growers employing field workers in the valley for an immediate pay raise to \$2.70 an hour, a union spokesman said.

Mr. Cotner declined to release copies of the new teamster contracts to newsmen and would not identify the growers who had signed. His announcement came after several days of private negotiations at Palm Springs.

Mr. Chavez said at the rally that he hoped to get field workers out of teamster-contract fields.

"When the organizers of U.F.W.U. go to the fields with a paper signed by Cesar, they [the workers] will then walk out of the field, and try to bring everybody with them," Mr. Chavez said.

"The only way you can liberate yourself is by a strike and then by a glorious boycott."