

Chavez Seeks a Halt to Nation's 'Worst' Influx of Illegal Aliens

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FRESNO, Calif., July 22—

Cesar Chavez, president of the United Farm Workers of America demanded here last week that the Border Patrol crack down on illegal alien workers.

Mr. Chavez contended in a telegram that the illegal aliens were playing an instrumental role in breaking strikes called by the farm workers union. The union is boycotting grapes, iceberg lettuce, and Gallo wines.

The telegram said that the farm workers had proof through 49 signed declarations that more than 2,200 aliens were working on ranches in this area in the heart of the fertile San Joaquin Valley.

Mr. Chavez said that the current influx of illegal aliens was

"the worst" in United States history. He added, "The lack of action to solve this problem makes us believe there is a conspiracy between the Nixon Administration, through the Justice Department's Immigration and Naturalization Service, and agribusiness to make sure this flood of desperately poor workers continues unchecked."

Lewis Bartlett, chief border patrol agent for six counties in this area, said Mr. Chavez's charges about collusion were "ridiculous." But he said the border patrol had only 10 agents to cover the area and "we need three to four times as many men as we have now to do the job properly."

Mr. Bartlett said he had made "numerous requests to Washington" for more agents

to no avail, noting that the entire Immigration Service was currently understaffed.

Last year, The Fresno Bee estimated that 50,000 illegal aliens had worked in this area during the peak of the summer harvest season. Mr. Bartlett, who has worked here since 1967, did not quarrel with that estimate and said the number of illegal aliens in the area was now "higher than ever."

Through June, Mr. Bartlett said his office had arrested 6,300 illegal aliens in the six-county area he covers, up 20 per cent from last year.

Meanwhile, John Giumarra Jr., a spokesman for the growers, charged in Bakersfield this week that an "organized campaign of arson and destruction" had ruined hundreds

of thousands of dollars worth of San Joaquin Valley crops and farm properties this summer.

All 11 of the incidents described in a report by Mr. Giumarra were at farms that are being struck because of grower refusals to renew contracts last year with the United Farm Workers. Many growers signed with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters in 1973. Mr. Chavez has charged

that the pacts are "sweetheart deals" and there is litigation pending on some of them.

Loren Fotewn, chief deputy sheriff of Kern County, said though "there is nothing we can attribute to the United Farm Workers. Nothing to my knowledge has been determined to connect any incident to the farm workers union. We're just trying to find the culprits," he stated.

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