

TAPE ARC -15, TC 7:00:00

ABC NEWS, REEL 207: "CESAR CHAVEZ STORIES"

[Series of aerial shots of fields, workers picking grapes, singers perform at park]

CESAR CHAVEZ, speaks at park:

7:14:48 CHAVEZ: (in Spanish)

Muchisimas gracias companeros.

Cesar thanking several people.

7:15:35

Cesar Chavez: ... Y la ley es simple res una ley que dice que la finalidad de la ley es para que el campesino pueda organizarse, asi es la ley. Porque ya organizado el campesino reconocido el campesino, reconocido su sindecato pueden formular contratos. Ya formulando contratos pueden tener beneficios, y deso vamos a hablar. La ley campesina dise primeramente reconoce que el trabajador tiene el derecho de el hacer su propia determinasion sin interferencia, sin ??? de nadie, tanto de la union como los rancheros. Que esta campania, esta es una campania de convencimiento, es una campania de hablar con el campesino para pedirlo que lo haga, si es que lo quiere hacer, pero no por obligarlo. So lo que tambien al otro lado, los rancheros siempre an tratado de almagar al trabajador y asustarlo, so lo que la ley para evitar eso dice claramente,

(Cut in tape at 07:16:32)

en campo o el ??? patron porque eres miembro de sindecato. Es contra la ley que te corran del trabajo porque abagos por el sindecato. Sera contra la ley que te despidan del trabaja o que te corten el sueldo, que te corten las horas o que te den otro trabajo inferior contra (?) sus trabajadores a destruir la ???, ??? preguntas, pedir respuestas, hacer criticas del patron y en fin. La ley entonces es amplia, era una ley como todas las cosas no trabajas un solo pedaso de papel simple, para que la ley trabeje, el trabajador tiene que usarla. Tiene que hacer uso de ella para que la ley entonces

(Cut in tape at 07:17:12)

07:17:18

Chavez: ... o por gobernador, es (can't hear the rest of his speech)

07:17:53

B-roll of Chavez being applauded as he walks off.

07:18:33

B-roll of Chavez shaking hands with people.

07:19:40

MR. LAWRENCE, grower(?), talks to reporter:

7:20:31 LAWRENCE: ...to find out exactly what the workers wanted, the results of the secret ballot. And the growers have asked for a National Labor Relations Act law for many years and it's never came about, and so finally California's passed a law. [Q: Do you think it's a good law?] ... No, I don't. I think it's very loosely drawn, I think they're trying to put it into effect too fast, I

think it's not geared to protection of workers' rights. The workers have certain rights under federal law that they do not have under this law. I just don't believe that it's a good law.

7:21:05 REPORTER: There is talk in some quarters that the growers much prefer, if they have to have a union on their ranches, they prefer the Teamsters to the Farm Workers, is that true?

7:21:19 LAWRENCE: We have objections, the objections are the ones that the workers have because it's their union. And the objections the growers may have had came from the workers.

7:21:24 REPORTER: What about the belief that the growers and Teamsters are working hand in hand, that the Teamsters have almost become a company union for the farm worker?

7:21:35 LAWRENCE: I think it's absolutely ridiculous, in fact with the workers, we don't communicate with them, they represent the workers, as far as when we negotiated with them, uh, on this ranch, about 85% of them requested by petition to be represented the Teamsters Union, and every grower in this area would not sign with the Teamsters unless there were more than 50% on each ranch that were represented by the Teamsters. As far as we're concerned, they spoke what they wanted at that time, and we signed and negotiated a contract with the Teamsters. We have nothing to do with them, or with the UFW, all that we're interested in is seeing that our employees are happy, and are represented by the union, or non-union that they want to be represented by.

7:22:21 REPORTER: Isn't it true that the growers would prefer that there were no unions on the farms?

7:22:26 LAWRENCE: Well, I think you can ask that of any businessman and he would probably prefer no union, but still, there are unions all over the United States, people work with them, and if that's what the employees want, then we will have to abide by it.

7:22:37 REPORTER: Now you say that the law is at the moment somewhat confused, the rules have not been officially promulgated, do you think that in the long run, that this is going to work out well and that it will work to the benefit of the growers and the farm workers?

7:22:52 LAWRENCE: Well, I think it's going to be up to us to make it work, uh, whether the law is good or bad, you have to work with it, and we're going to have to see that it works.

7:22:59 REPORTER: You do expect elections on your ranch?

7:23:02 LAWRENCE: Yes, I do. The rules, the way they're drawn, there's no challenging a petition, if it's presented to the Board, so I, they're getting petitions signed by people that don't even work on the ranches. The Board has indicated that they want the interpretation to be very liberal as far as the workers indicating if they want a union, or an election, and you can't challenge it until after an election is over. And under those rules, I think you're going to have an election.

7:23:29 REPORTER: Do you think that organizers should be able to come onto your ranch to try to organize the workers?

7:23:36 LAWRENCE: I do not. They have that right with no other company that I know of, and we're out here trying to do a job, it's private property, and our people have the right to come here and work, to earn their wages, and during their breaks to be peaceful and quiet and get their relaxation.

7:23:52 REPORTER: Mr. Lawrence, would you address yourself to this point, I think many Americans when they think about farm workers, go back to the days of the 30's and The Grapes of Wrath, they think of terrible working conditions and very low pay. What has changed about that? What are the current conditions and what is the pay scale of the average farm worker?

7:24:14 LAWRENCE: Well, at our ranch last year the average pay scale was right at \$3.00 an hour for the whole year, for everyone that worked on the ranch. During harvest time it's around \$4.00 an hour. And that was the overall average last year with their benefits and everything else.

7:24:29 REPORTER: What about working conditions?

7:24:30 LAWRENCE: Well, I think they're a lot more federal laws governing work on the ranch, the same as there is in any other company, as far as sanitary facilities, water in the field, you can't push workers around as you could maybe 15, 20, 30 years ago, and if we don't treat them right on our ranch they'll find another one and go to work. The workers are in demand on various ranches.

7:24:51 REPORTER: I gather though, you think the federal laws were sufficient and the California law is unnecessary?

7:24:57 LAWRENCE: Well, we would have preferred that there would be an inclusion of the farm workers under the National Labor Relations Act which would have given them more protection, but it doesn't look as if that Act is going to be passed.

7:25:11 REPORTER: Do you think the time is coming soon when you're, when all of this is going to be settled, and there will be labor peace on the farms in California?

7:25:19 LAWRENCE: Well, I'm hopeful, but not overly optimistic.