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NIXON ATTACKS BOYCOTT

By Dick Meister

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Richard Nixon denounced the California grape boycott here yesterday and urged Hubert Humphrey to withdraw his endorsement of "this form of illegal economic pressure."

Nixon, raising a new issue in the presidential campaign, said the stand of the two candidates on the boycott "illustrates another sharp difference in our basic philosophies."

Nixon said the boycott is illegal and unnecessary because "we have laws on the books to protect workers who wish to organize... a National Labor Relations Board to impartially supervise the election of collective bargaining agents, and to safeguard the rights of organizers"...

Humphrey and union leaders have noted, however, that farm workers are not covered by these laws and the Labor Board procedures, and that growers have refused to allow elections or to bargain with farm union officials. They cite this as a main reason for the boycott.

But Nixon did not advocate either voluntary union bargaining by growers or extension of the bargaining laws to farm workers, as have Humphrey and other boycott sponsors, who say this is the only way to end the grape dispute.

Nixon suggested, rather, that the dispute can be settled without changing current laws, without a boycott, and without the participation of union leaders.

"It can only be resolved by the farmers and farm workers discussing mutual problems in good faith and always within the framework of law that protects the individual interest and the public interest," Nixon declared.

Nixon, in a statement issued at the St. Francis Hotel here, attacked the industrial unions that have joined the boycott by picketing and otherwise trying to convince food markets to quit stocking California grapes.

These unions are covered by labor laws and thus, Nixon charged, they are engaging in an illegal secondary boycott.

He said, "it is to be condemned with the same firmness with which we condemn illegal strikes, illegal lockouts or any other form of lawbreaking

"I say the law must be applied equally to all; once you begin playing political favorites to knuckle under to power brokers in law enforcement you abdicate your responsibility to all the people.

“The dispute in California cannot be resolved by a descent into lawlessness... by political candidates paying off political debts.

“To maintain consistency in support of law enforcement, Mr. Humphrey should immediately withdraw his endorsement of the illegal boycott.”

Another highly placed Republican spoke out yesterday against the boycott – Allan Grant, who heads the State Board of Agriculture and the California Farm Bureau.

Grant successfully urged the State Board, including Democratic members, to unanimously oppose the boycott.

He also announced that the National Farm Bureau would not hold its 1972 convention here because of Mayor Joseph Alioto’s stand on the boycott “and other matters related to the purchasing of non-union made goods.”

Grant complained, in a letter turning down an invitation from the Convention and Visitors Bureau, that Alioto is “giving aid and comfort” to the boycott, in part by calling for an ordinance that would prohibit City agencies from buying non-union products.

Alioto has not endorsed the boycott but has been trying to bring growers and workers together. He was disappointed, an aide said, that “the Farm Bureau would rebuff his efforts to settle the dispute peacefully.”