

150 Grape Workers Start 25-Day March In California Strike

DELANO, Calif., March 17 (AP)—One hundred fifty men and women, carrying sleeping bags and paper sacks of clothing, began an improvised 300-mile, 25-day march to the state capital today to protest wages and working conditions in the grape fields.

The marchers, most of them Mexican-Americans, encountered trouble at the start in this grape center in California's agricultural heartland, 130 miles northeast of Los Angeles.

But after an hour-long dispute with the Delano police over a parade permit, the marchers passed on toward Ducor, the first night's stop, 18 miles away on the way to Sacramento, the capital.

They carried an embroidered silk tapestry of Our Lady of Guadalupe and a wooden sign engraved with the Spanish word "huelga" (strike).

They had no food and no plans for shelter, hoping that farm laborers would aid them on the march, which is to end Easter Sunday.

For six months Delano has been the center of a bitter strike by grape pickers. Two farm labor unions are seeking to represent them.

The employers have rejected collective bargaining, saying the unions do not truly represent the workers.

The strike began Sept. 8 with demands for a \$1.40 hourly wage, 25 cents a box in incentive pay and recognition of the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee and the National Farm Workers Association, an independent union. The present wage is \$1.20 to \$1.25 and 10 cents a box.

Their leader, Cesar Chavez, executive director of the independent union, said they planned to use back roads and minor highways.

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