FARM UNIONS SET ON THE COAST

Teamsters and A.F.L.-C.I.O.

Vie in Tuesday Election

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SAN FRANCISCO, Aug. 27 — The stage was set this week- end and rehearsals were completed for a drama of major proportions which many expect will decide the fate of the strife-marked farm labor history.

The question to be witnessed next Tuesday is a performance that may go far in determining whether or not the time is finally at hand for long-oven intelligent organization of the army of fieldhands in the state’s agricultural valleys.

Against a background of increasing bitterness between the American Federation of Labor Congress of Industrial Organiza- tions and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, on the one hand, and the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee of the Delano area of the sun-baked San Joaquin Valley, will vote in a collective bargaining vote.

Committee Chartered

To present a united front against the teamsters the A.F.L- C.I.O. Executive Council, meet- ing in Chicago, last night, chartered a new merged organizing committee to resist the drive of the James R. Hoffa un- ion, representing 30,000 to 40,000 workers in the Delano area, and thousands to its already varied membership.

At the A.F.L-C.I.O. session, which was taking place, Elmer O. Mohn, director of the Western Conference of Teamsters, was conducting negotiations with the San Francisco Press Club voicing confidence in a teamster victory.

Later, on his return from Chicago to Delano following the council meeting, William L. Kir- cher, national director of organization for the A.F.L-C.I.O., de- clared in a telephone interview: “Under normal circumstances, where we would have the National Labor Relations Board and the law acting in such an election, we would lose easily. But this election is a lit- tle harder to predict. There is a growing desire to keep the historically anti-labor company from its love match with the teamsters.”

What Mr. Kircher referred to was a situation in which the teamsters’ union has been called a “company union” and in which the Delano company, bossed by Mr. Giorgio, president of the big Di Giorgio Corporation, has stated publicly that “the best interests of its employees and the company can be served by teamster affiliation, if the majority of its employees wish to affiliate with a union.”

The election is being conducted by the American Arbitration Association, at whose office in the gantleted yes or no” vote, the 2,200 eligible employees will vote on Wednesday.

The Di Giorgio workers, who favored the teamsters in a June election that was boycotted by some of the anti-teamster groups, will be able this time to vote for “no union” or for the teamster or for the A.F.L-

C.I.O.

The earlier election was voided and a new one agreed upon after Gov. Edmund G. Brown brought in Prof. Ronald Haugh- ton of the University of Michigan to investigate.

The federation, which spent $1.5 million in the late 1950’s trying to organize California farm laborers and has continued allocating funds to its Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, has approved a merger of this committee with the National Farm Workers Association.

This is the family association, led by 39-year-old Cesar Chavez and consisting largely of Mexican-Americans, that participated in a strike that began last Sep- tember in the Delano area vine- yards. It sponsored a 25-day, 300-mile pilgrimage ending on the Capitol steps at Sacramento with an Easter Sunday rally.

The Chavez organization, consoli- dated with the committee, now has been chartered as the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee.

Conflict ideas were expressed by spokesmen for the new organization and the team- sters toward their unionization drives.

At his San Francisco press conference, Mr. Mohn declared that much of the farm land be- ing planted and harvested was under ownership or lease by the big corporate growers with which the teamsters’ union al- ready has canning, packing and freezing contracts. Once the Di Giorgio fight was settled, these other growers would be ap- proached, he promised.

“It is going to be very diffi- cult to organize agricultural workers and those engaged in processing,” he said.

Mr. Giorgio took the position that could the teamsters take over California’s farm labor, “the farm workers would be simply a small grain of sand on the beach at Miami when the teamsters hold their conven- tion.”

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