

GROWERS SCORE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Coast Group Says Pressure Was Used to Help Union

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SAN FRANCISCO, June 11—

The use of unfair pressures was charged to the Roman Catholic Church by a California agricultural group this week. The church was accused by the Council of California Growers of trying to force farmers to recognize the National Farm Workers Association as the sole bargaining agent of their field hands.

The new development is a corollary of a fight of the workers' organization, an unaffiliated group led by Cesar Chavez, to win recognition in the grape growing areas of the San Joaquin Valley.

A 25-day march of "Delano grape strikers" to Sacramento, ending with a rally in front of the Capitol on Easter Sunday, dramatized the long strike and the association's demand for recognition. Catholic priests and Protestant ministers took part in the procession.

During the march, the Schenley Corporation, which had been the target of a nationwide boycott by the Chavez organization, suddenly announced recognition of the association as sole bargaining agent for its field workers.

The Christian Brothers, a leading wine producer, followed soon afterward.

Efforts to bring about a bargaining election of employes of DiGiorgio Corporation, the largest of the San Joaquin Valley grape growers, have been stalemated.

Teamsters Approached

Meanwhile, telegrams and letters from Catholic priests and laymen were sent from around the country to the Western Conference of Teamsters here saying the Teamsters Union should cooperate with Mr. Chavez's association.

Einar Mohn, the conference director, reporting this situation earlier in the week, made public a letter he had written to seven of the California's eight Catholic bishops announcing that the Teamsters would suspend a campaign to organize DiGiorgio workers.

He also wrote to the Most Rev. John P. Cody, Archbishop of Chicago. Mr. Mohn resented an implication that the Teamsters were trying to undercut the Farm Workers.

Mr. Chavez, indeed, shortly after the Schenley announcement was made, had credited Jack Goldberger, an international Teamster representative, with having played an important role in the Schenley matter, although the Chavez organization had had the financial backing of the United Automobile Workers in their strike.

Three days after Mr. Mohn made his letter to the bishops public, the growers issued its criticism, accusing the church of using "brazen tactics to thwart free Democratic practices" by siding with the Chavez union.

Growers Aroused

The growers were aroused specifically by a move of the San Francisco archdiocese's commission on social justice to persuade Napa Valley suppliers of altar wines to recognize the Chavez association without a vote of vineyard workers.

The Rev. Eugene J. Boyle, chairman of the commission, had written to several of the wineries:

"It is our strong recommendation that your firm follow the commendable step of Schenley Corporation and Christian Brothers in recognizing the National Farm Workers Association as your sole collective bargaining agent for your vineyard employes."

A church spokesman said he and his colleagues were acting solely because of a deep concern "that principles of social justice be applied in labor-management relations."

A representative of the Council of Growers replied, "Most growers are shocked that the church would use such pressure to bring about recognition of the union group. The workers, not the church or the employer, should do the choosing."

The Teamsters Union has announced that it has organized 2,000 workers employed by eight growers and labor contractors but that all are outside the vineyard area. Farm workers organizing activities have been carried on for some years, without notable success, by the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee.

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