

Pentagon Accused By Chavez for Rise In Grape Purchases

WASHINGTON, Sept. 28 (AP) —Cesar Chavez said tonight the Defense Department and big agricultural interests was keeping alive the California grape pickers' strike.

Speaking from the pulpit of the Washington National Cathedral, the 42-year-old Mexican-American told 2,000 supporters the four-year-old strike would end almost immediately if the Pentagon would stop buying grapes.

Mr. Chavez said sale of table grapes had decreased 30 per cent since the strike began in September, 1965.

"What's happening to that 30 per cent?" Mr. Chavez asked. He said more grapes were going into fruit cocktail, more were being used as raisins, and the Defense Department was buying more than 40 per cent more than it used to.

Mr. Chavez said the strike centered on the issues of wages and health safety measures for the pickers.

Senator Walter F. Mondale, Democrat of Minnesota, chairman of the Migratory Labor subcommittee, told the crowd the strike and accompanying consumers' boycott of grapes represents "a revolution against powerlessness, and the anomaly of poverty in our rich land."

Mr. Chavez said he had met earlier in the evening with Mrs. Robert F. Kennedy, who, as did her late husband, supports the grape pickers' strike.

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