Teamsters Gaining
In Bid to Organize
Lettuce Workers

By WALLACE TURNER
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BURLINGAME, Calif., Jan. 16—The Teamsters announced signif-
ificant improvements today in its
contract with agricultural workers
in an area where the teamsters are
in competition with Cesar Chavez's
United Farm Workers Union.

This week, the teamsters
began organizing an drive among
lettuce workers, using the con-
tract improvements as their strongest
paramount. While the teamsters contend that 30,-
000 workers are covered by their
contracts, union officials will not say
how many are members of the International
Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Early this month, the farm
workers sued the teamsters in
Federal court. The two suits charge
that the teamsters had "sweatheart
contracts" signed by growers who
want to break the farm workers' union.
The suits focus on whether the
growers have selected the teamsters as
their weapon.

At a news conference today in
a hotel at the San Francisco
Airport, William Grani, director
of field organization for the
Western Conference of Team-
sters, maintained that the farm
workers' suits were lacking
substance, and described them as
"propagandaoundsuits.

Wage Spread

Mr. Grani said the contracts
covered about 170 employers who
over 100 employees. The grow-
row workers had been improving
the wage spread for fringe
benefits that are not in the farm
workers' contracts.

The wage spread included
a wage of $2.30 an hour for fieldworkers $3.05 for skilled machinery op-
erators, and $3.60 for both.

Fieldworkers now get $2.08
an hour. When the initial con-
tract with the teamsters' union
went into effect in August,
fieldworkers were paid $1.65 an hour. Further in-
crease is expected when the
fieldworkers are worked at the
rate of $2.415 next July, and

Mr. Grani said the farm workers' contract calls for much less.

According to his analysis, the farm workers' contracts will
result in a wage of about $2.33 an hour; this would increase to
$2.33 an hour next September.

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