WAGES NOTISSUE IN CHAVEZ STRIKE

Growers Opposed to Hiring Half-Giving Strike Held Over All Jobs

By EARL CALDWELL

LÁPICE, California—Hardly anybody, in this small farming town on the northern edge of the Salinas Valley, thought there was much to worry about when the grape farmers there announced they were going on strike. The townsfolk were content with their jobs in the rich farmland that has long been a mainstay of California's agriculture.

Now, however, the workers are in a bind. Since the strike began last week, wages have declined, crops have been damaged, and the season's fruits are swelling in the fields. The workers, who are mostly Mexican immigrants, have been without work for more than a week, and they are beginning to feel the pinch.

The strike was called after negotiations broke down between the growers and the United Farm Workers Union, the union that represents the workers. The growers have refused to negotiate, saying they cannot afford to give the workers more than they do now.

The workers, on the other hand, are determined to get a better deal. They have been picketing outside the growers' offices and at the workers' camps, where they live in tents and trailers.

The strike has caused widespread concern among the growers, who are already facing a tough season. The grapes are ripening faster than usual, and there is a danger that they will spoil if they are not harvested soon.

The growers, however, are not willing to concede to the workers' demands. They say they cannot afford to give the workers more than they are already getting, and they are determined to keep their costs down.

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