COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN AGRICULTURE

1. HIRED FARM WORKERS—BACKGROUND


Background papers which attempt to relate agricultural manpower policy to national manpower policy and to general economic goals. General dimensions of the farm labor problem are discussed by the editor, characteristics of the hired farm labor force by Gladys Bowles, adjustment to changing technology by B. M. Farmer and G. S. Tolley, the relation of skills to earnings by T. W. Schultz, occupational mobility by Dale E. Hathaway, farm manpower policy by Varden Fuller, and manpower development programs by C. C. Allen.


The author analyzes the economics of the agricultural labor problem, traces the history and explains the functioning of the labor contract system. The final chapters deal with wage fixing by employers associations and the government.


Information on the number and cash earnings of hired farm workers.


This report contains papers prepared for the Commission. Part IV, Agriculture and Natural Resources, includes a presentation by Rex F. Daly on growth and change in agriculture, a discussion by Varden Fuller on hired farm labor in the West. Olaf F. Larson covers the migratory agricultural worker in the Eastern seaboard states. James T. Bon-

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**Items from this list should be ordered directly from the publisher. Addresses are given in connection with each reference.
ner analyzes the distribution of benefits from selected farm programs. The effects of the Department of Agriculture’s programs on income distribution are examined by Vernon C. McKee and Lee M. Day. The impact of government credit programs and of the Farm Home Administration are explored by William M. Herr.

2. History of Organizing Efforts


An analysis of the Hawaiian plantation economy and of the forces which led to the breakdown of the paternalistic approach to labor relations after World War II. In 1945-46 the ILWU organized the workers in the sugar and pineapple industries and secured the enactment of the Hawaii Employment Relations Act which recognized the right of agricultural workers to organize.


Concludes that collective bargaining and unionization efforts have been unsuccessful because of the lack of protective labor legislation and the imbalance of organized power of the farm employer organizations. More important has been the abundant supply of labor which lacked a strong industry or area identification.


An account of the unsuccessful attempts to organize the dairy and strawberry farmers and workers in the sugarcane fields in the early 1950’s.


The author finds that the problem of organizing farm workers is more complex than in industry because of the shifting nature of the work force, the administrative and financial problems of maintaining a union, and the lack of legislative protection. Agricultural laborers are more likely to organize when they are concentrated in a fairly limited area, have some homogeneity as a group because of language or background, and have an awareness of the common nature of their problems.


Outlines the reasons why farm labor was excluded from coverage under the NLRA, the abortive attempts of the Southern Tenant Farmers
Union in the thirties and the success of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union in organizing the workers in the sugar and pineapple plantations in Hawaii. Emphasis is on the situation among the workers in California.


This comprehensive study by Stuart Jamieson of the origins, development, problems and accomplishments of unionism among farm workers is an invaluable source of historical information.

3. CURRENT SITUATION AND PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE


The report summarizes the testimony of witnesses representing all sides of the farm labor dispute controversy. Recognizing that the existing machinery for settling agricultural strikes was ineffective, the Committee recommended the establishment of a conciliation and mediation service within the state Department of Agriculture.


A sympathetic, colorful account of the strike and boycott by the grape workers which lead to the recognition of the National Farm Workers Association by the Schenley distillery and the Digiorgio vineyards at Delano.


Explores the legislative history of the exclusion of farm workers from national labor legislation from the 1930's to the present. The author attributes congressional failure to extend protection to this group to the political power of the farmer-employer, the supposedly unique character of farming as opposed to industry, administrative difficulties, and lack of public support.


Karen S. Kozisra in "Collective bargaining on the farm," pp. 3-9, concludes that unionization of farm workers is inhibited by the lack of an organized labor tradition in agriculture, the seasonal and casual nature of employment, and the persistence of labor contractors. "La Huelga Delano and after," pp. 13-16, by Irving K. J. Cohen, suggests the emergence of a new concept of unionism characterized by religious over-
tones, nonviolence, and patterned after the civil rights movement. Mark Erenburg shows how an independent union, United Workers, worked through the existing legal machinery of the comprehensive Wisconsin labor relations law to gain recognition, raise wages and improve working conditions. This experience is described in “Obreros Unidos in Wisconsin,” pp. 17-23. In “Organization in Salinas,” pp. 24-27, Judith Chamin Glass points out that technological changes in the California lettuce industry altered the structure of work force making unionization possible.


Reviews decisional law defining agricultural labor and recent court decisions relating to trespass on agricultural land, picketing and boycotts by farm labor organizations.


Among those testifying in favor of the bill to grant farm workers the right to organize and bargain collectively under the National Labor Relations Act were George Meany, AFL-CIO, Walter Reuther, UAW, Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, and Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz. Representatives from the American Farm Bureau, the National Council of Farmers Cooperatives and other farm operator groups opposed the legislation.


The Committee reported favorably on the bill and recommended its enactment. The bill was rewritten in Committee to limit coverage to those employers who had more than 12 employees at any one time during the year or who had a direct wage cost of more than $10,000 during the preceding year.


In this report, which describes the many problems of the migrant worker, special emphasis is given to the need to extend the protection of the NLRA to agricultural workers.