

NEWS LETTER FROM DR. BEN YELLEN

Brawley, Calif.

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What is a Union?

When 2 or more persons unite to achieve a certain purpose, a union is created. The purpose may be social, religious, political, for business, charitable, scientific or educational. But the essential feature of a union is that two or more people unite.

Therefore, you can see that a partnership is a union. So is a club. Persons uniting in a company, corporation, association, farm bureau, society, syndicate, church, medical association, and bar association, are all creating unions. Of course, workers uniting also create unions.

In the French and Spanish languages, the word syndicat is used to indicate a union of workers. Yet when an American uses the word syndicate, he means a union of wealthy persons united for a certain business purpose. In French, many big corporations are called Unions. In the Belgian Congo, where all the trouble is now going on, there is a big copper mining corporation but it is called Union Miniere meaning the "mining union!" What one calls these groups of united persons does not mean much. The purpose for which the union was organized, has the great significance.

In Imperial Valley, 70% of the farmland is owned by big landowners who live outside the Valley. 20% of the farmland is owned by local wealthy people. Only 10% is owned by local little farmers. The absentee landowners and the local wealthy people are united in keeping the assessed valuation of farmland down to the lowest value possible. Many city people own homes worth about \$10,000. These homes have an assessed valuation of \$3,500. Yet many of these absentee landowners and also local wealthy people have pieces of farmland worth \$10,000 dollars, yet the land is given a valuation of only \$800. This means that the local town taxpayer has to pay 4 times the property tax that the big landowners do and most of these landowners do not live in the Valley.

In Imperial Valley, there is the I.V. Farmers Assoc., the Imperial Co. Farm Bureau, the I.V. Cotton Growers Assoc. and the I.V. Beet Growers Assoc. and other similar organizations composed of farmers. I can assure you that the big farmers control these unions of farmowners. Through political pressure, low assessed valuations are put on farmland. Altogether 300 persons and corporations own 90% of the farmland and get low property taxes. The other 70,000 people who actually live in the Valley have to pay high property taxes amounting to 4 times that which the absentee landowners pay.

Now these unions of big farmowners want cheap labor so they got U.S. Public Law 78 passed by which they bring in 500,000 Mexican peons. American and Mexican-American farmworkers can not get work. They and their families have to go on home relief for which you the 70,000 people of Imperial Valley have to pay more taxes. The American farmworkers can not get jobs at decent wages because the Mexican peon has the job at wages as low as 35 cents per hour. The American farmworkers like the city people have no unions and can not protect themselves from the big farmowners unions.

These Mexican peons do not have families with them and earn very low wages so of course can not be customers to local merchants and businessmen. So many merchants have lost business and many closed their stores. The merchants and businessmen have no unions to protect them.