

# Chavez Scores Grape Growers on Pesticide Use

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 29—Cesar Chavez, the leader of the California grape boycott, accused growers today of "systematic poisoning" of field workers with pesticides.

Appearing before the Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor, the 42-year-old director of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee said that owners of the vineyards were using poisonous pesticides in increasing quantities. He said thousands of workers were becoming ill after breathing and touching the pesticides.

Since 1965, led by Mr. Chavez, the committee has been locked in a bitter struggle for union recognition with California grape growers. Most of the field workers they hope to represent are Mexican-Americans, as is Mr. Chavez.

Adding that farmers have refused to discuss the issue with union leaders, he stated:

"They see this as an extension of the collective bargaining process, which they are not prepared to accept."

The hearings, which are the occasion of Mr. Chavez's first extensive travels outside of California since a debilitating

fast early in 1968, were called at the request of Senator George Murphy, Republican of California.

The subcommittee is part of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare.

He charged that "the union has raised the pesticide issue in an effort to harass the grape industry." Specifically, he said that evidence presented by the union last month was apparently misleading.

The evidence consisted of a laboratory report of a sample of grapes taken from a Washington chain grocery store. The report showed poisonous resi-

dues of aldrin—a chlorinated hydrocarbon used to control field pests—that were 180 times above the level of accepted human tolerance.

In testimony this morning, Dr. Herbert L. Ley Jr., Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, questioned the results of the laboratory report.

He said that the F.D.A. had subsequently conducted exhaustive tests of table grapes from food counters in four metropolitan areas, including New York, and that none had revealed residues of aldrin.

Under questioning from Sen-

ator Walter F. Mondale, Democrat of Minnesota, Mr. Ley said he could not categorically state, however, that the tests taken in Washington, were inaccurate.

Mr. Mondale, chairman of the subcommittee, also asked if the F.D.A. had investigated the accuracy of a laboratory test corroborating the finding of aldrin in grapes sold locally.

J. K. Kirk, associate commissioner of the F.D.A. for compliance, explained that no investigation was made because "we didn't have any question but that our own results were right."

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