

Governor of Oregon Vetoes Bill Regulating Farm Labor Unions

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SALEM, Ore., July 2 — Gov. Tom McCall vetoed today a bill regulating farm worker unions, two days after he was threatened with a nationwide boycott of Oregon agricultural products if he signed it.

The Governor said that the bill did not guarantee effective collective bargaining rights and that Attorney General Lee Johnson had said that it was probably unconstitutional because, in his opinion, it would stop workers from ever holding a valid election.

The veto was a major victory for the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, which had waged a nationwide campaign of pressure on the Governor.

Mr. McCall, who had received telephone calls from as far away as Toronto urging a veto, said that he had never seen such pressure against a measure in 22 years as a state official and political commentator.

Labor Board Proposed

The bill would have established an agricultural labor relations board, required farm labor organizations to register, allowed growers or the union to invoke binding fact-finding or arbitration and delayed strikes pending certification, negotiations and binding arbitration.

Robert Davis, administrative assistant to the Governor, said: "There never was going to be a strike under this legislation because the workers would have gone on to the next field by the time the prescribed procedures had been carried out."

The bill was drafted by William Lubersky, attorney for the Oregon Farm Bureau and the Oregon Agricultural Association.

Agriculture is the state's third largest industry, with

more than 25,000 migrants harvesting berries, beans and potatoes every summer.

Cesar Chavez, president of the farm workers committee, warned the Governor earlier in the week that "a boycott against all Oregon products" would begin immediately if Mr. McCall, a Republican, signed the bill.

Mr. Chavez told 500 followers on the steps of the State Capitol that "if this law is adopted I am serving notice that we will commit civil disobedience against it because it is not a just law."

Organizing Curb Seen

Mr. Chavez and other opponents charged, that the bill was designed to keep farm workers from organizing. However, representatives of 51 farmer organizations that had urged the Governor to sign the bill said that it followed the language of the National Labor Relations Act, while also recognizing the perishability of food products.

"This is not an antilabor bill," said State Representative Walter Collett, Salem Republican who is manager of the Oregon-Washington Growers Association. "It merely seeks to have democratic procedures followed," he added.

Growers expressed disappointment over the veto. E. Reed Garrison, administrator of the Oregon Potato Commission, called it "truly a setback for Oregon agriculture" and predicted labor unrest in Oregon.

However, Jerry Cohen, an attorney for the Chavez union, told workers gathered on the steps of the Capitol after the veto that the growers would not find the union uncooperative. "It's in our interest that the grower make a profit," he said.