

shown much eagerness for an impartial election on whether the workers wanted the U.F.W.U., the Teamsters or no union.

Fortunately, some of the opposition to letting the workers vote seems to have receded in recent weeks. The exclusion of migrants and other agricultural workers from the election procedures of the Taft-Hartley Act rules out direct assumption of control by the National Labor Relations Board. But that handicap could be overcome if growers and unions joined in a plea for an N.L.R.B. vote in the lettuce and grape fields after the board had satisfied itself that a fair choice would not be prevented by coercion from either side. Obviously, a necessary preliminary to any such determination must be court action on the accusation of illegal conspiracy between the growers and the truck union. The sooner that charge is investigated and any necessary prosecutions completed, the sooner elections can be held.

Picket lines in front of distribution centers and supermarkets represent no valid basis for deciding an issue that belongs to the men, women and children who sweat out their lives raising the produce for America's tables. Sweetheart contracts are an even less valid basis.

## Voice of the Migrants?

Consumers all over the country are being asked once again to take sides in the running battle between Cesar Chavez and the mammoth International Brotherhood of Teamsters over union representation for California farm workers. The A.F.L.-C.I.O. has put its resources behind the Chavez union in this unequal war, but now a troublesome new dimension has been added by a Chavez charge that farm owners have been making illegal payments to Teamster officials to help smash their beleaguered rival.

Farm laborers represent the most underpaid and under-protected group in the national work force; and we have long admired the courage and dedication of Mr. Chavez's efforts to raise the living standards and dignity of grape and lettuce pickers by enrolling them in his tiny United Farm Workers Union. The clear favoritism the growers have always shown for the powerful Teamsters has made us doubly sympathetic to the Chavez drive.

However, the important consideration in any union organizing drive is not what outsiders think but rather what the workers immediately involved consider best in terms of their own self-protection. Until recently none of the groups representing either employers or labor have