

# Arizona Grower Offers Rebuttal to Chavez at Riverside Church

By GEORGE DUGAN

The Riverside Church gave Floyd Hawkins, president of the Arizona Farm Bureau Federation, "equal time" yesterday to answer a previous plea by Cesar Chavez for a boycott of nonunion iceberg lettuce.

Mr. Chavez, who was the organizer of an earlier grape boycott that won union recognition for pickers in California, spoke from the pulpit of the church on Nov. 29 before he was jailed in California for re-

fusing to obey a court order to end the lettuce boycott.

Mr. Hawkins, speaking to 100 persons at a meeting after the regular service, called the boycott a "weapon" used to force agricultural migrant workers to join a labor union against their wishes while forcing the producers, or growers, to sign a contract that the workers did not want.

The farm bureau executive disputed Mr. Chavez's insistence that his organizing efforts were non-violent.

"Violence comes in many forms," he said. "It can come

in curses, in threats, in slicing tires and in telephone threats to the wives of Mexican workers."

Mr. Hawkins described himself as a small farmer engaged in raising alfalfa, sugar beets, grains and registered Black Angus Cattle on 180 acres.

He said he came to New York on Saturday "reluctantly," but at the request of friends who wanted some one to rebut Mr. Chavez.

Mr. Hawkins insisted that he favored the rights of workers to make up their own minds without coercion. He said the

time had come for Federal legislation to protect agricultural workers, growers and consumers equally.

## A Cool Reception

It was apparent during the question-and-answer period that his audience was largely hostile. When Mr. Hawkins pleaded ignorance of the plight of migrant workers in the East, some of his questioners voiced dismay.

There was also disbelief when the grower said that workers in the Arizona lettuce fields earned from \$4 to \$4.50

an hour and made about \$5,000 a year.

He again emphasized that he was referring only to agricultural migrant workers in the West, the only group with which he said he was familiar.

"There are no migrant labor camps in my area, there is no starvation and the agricultural workers all drive good cars and live in modern homes," he said.

Mr. Hawkins lives in Phoenix, where he is chairman of the board of trustees of his local Congregational Church. He has been active in farm bureau affairs all of his adult life.

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