

FARM UNION PEACE IS SEEN ON COAST

Gov. Brown Gets Agreement on Bill He Says May End Lettuce-Grape Dispute

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FRESNO, Calif., May 7—Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr. sent to the Legislature today a farm labor relations bill that he said would provide the machinery to end the bitter, often violent 10-year-long dispute between the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and the United Farm Workers in the vineyards and lettuce fields of California.

After a 100-hour negotiating session that began last Friday, Governor Brown announced in Sacramento at midnight an agreement on a compromise bill that he said had the support of Cesar Chavez, leader of the United Farm Workers, and most of California's agricultural business leaders. Thus far, the teamsters have not given their support.

If the bill passes the Legislature, which it is expected to do, it could become a model for farm labor relations legislation nationally, according to a spokesman for the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare in Washington. Farm workers are not now covered by Federal labor relations laws.

Farm workers now have no way to express their will except

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Farm Union Peace Foreseen on Coast Under Agreement on Labor Relations Bill

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by striking or boycotting farm products. They cannot vote for union representation.

In 1973, grape growers formerly under contract with the United Farm Workers signed contracts with the teamster union, contending that their workers wanted to switch unions. Mr. Chavez labeled the teamster pacts "sweetheart contracts" more beneficial to the growers than to the workers.

If Governor Brown's proposal becomes law, these workers would be able to express their union preference in secret-ballot elections.

Late today the Industrial Relations Committee of the State Senate approved the bill by 5 to 1, moving it along to the Finance Committee.

The Governor's press secretary said Mr. Chavez had said that while the bill was imperfect, the farm workers could "live with it provided there is no change."

James Eller, legislative representative for the California Farm Bureau Federation, said, "The industry position is in support of the Governor's bill as long as there are no more amendments of any kind."

Key provisions of the pro-

posed act would do the following:

¶ Establish an agriculture labor relations board to supervise secret-ballot elections for both seasonal and permanent farm workers during the peak of the harvest period. The elections would be held within one week of the time workers petitioned the labor relations board.

¶ Restrict the use of secondary boycotting to those farms where a union had won an election but had not been able to bring an employer to contract terms.

¶ Authorize the board to create one industrial bargaining unit per farm.

¶ Allow the workers now employed on farms under teamster or United Farm Workers of America contract to petition the board for an election that could result in decertification of a union as bargaining agent and nulification of a existing contracts.

¶ Allow the board to establish eligibility to vote in a union certification election for those grape and vegetable workers loyal to the farm union who went out on strike in 1973 when growers switched from that union to the teamsters.

Originally three bills were introduced, one on behalf of

Mr. Chavez, one on behalf of the teamsters and agribusiness and one by the Governor. The authors of both the Chavez and the agribusiness-teamster bills were said to have agreed to withdraw their legislation.

The compromise Brown bill was radically amended during the 100 hours preceding the announcement last midnight of a successful effort to bring about agreement.

The sequence of events that led up to that announcement, according to aides of the Governor, went like this:

During the last month Mr. Brown met with all of the interested parties, and he won the support of liberal and church groups, including the California Bishops Committee.

A dozen of the major agribusiness organizations, including the California Farm Bureau, agreed to form an ad hoc committee to stand ready to meet with the Governor when he had completed his proposed amendments.

The Assembly Labor Relations Committee was to have started hearings last Monday on all three farm labor bills. In an effort to head off this hearing and to get his amendments introduced into the Assembly before this hearing

generated a fight, Mr. Brown and his staff worked around the clock from last Friday through Sunday, hammering out compromises.

At 7 P.M. Sunday his staff summoned farmers from all over California. They arrived for a meeting that started at midnight and lasted through 3 o'clock Monday morning. While the farmers could not commit their organizations, they said they were optimistic that a compromise had been reached.

From 3 A.M. until 6 A.M. Mr. Brown and his staff telephoned legislators, lining up support for a move to cancel the Assembly hearing—it was canceled—and to put his amendments into the compromise bill.

Yesterday the farmers ad hoc committee members reported back to the Governor that they could accept his compromise. At 10:30 Mr. Brown had his package together, and, with the farmers in the meeting room, he called Mr. Chavez on the telephone.

Mr. Chavez, from his headquarters near Bakersfield, was on the telephone plugged into the Governor's desk phone speaker. Mr. Brown then conducted a meeting between Mr. Chavez and the growers, going through the compromise points in his amendment, getting the

growers to state their support.

He then asked Mr. Chavez if he could support the bill. Mr. Chavez said that he could.

Mr. Brown then made contact with M. E. Anderson, head of the Western Conference of Teamsters, but Mr. Brown could get no commitment from Mr. Anderson other than a

promise to look over the amendment.

James Hansen, spokesman for the Agriculture Division of the Western Conference of Teamsters, said this afternoon, "We oppose that section of the bill that would invalidate our contracts."