

# California Farm Elections Proving a Seesaw Battle

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Special to The New York Times

DELANO, Calif., Sept. 11— the teamsters, would be accepted by the state board. For a while this morning, as the sun cut through the ground haze that baked the farmlands of the San Joaquin Valley, Cesar Chavez was basking in the warm glow of the results of the first week of farm labor elections in California.

His United Farm Workers Union has scored decisive victories in 12 of 17 elections, and Mr. Chavez was claiming victory in yesterday's challenged contest at the Gallo Winery in Livingston.

"We are taking about 79 per cent of the total vote," he said at his Delano headquarters.

But the picture changed somewhat before noon, with the news that the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the U.F.W.'s bitter rival, had picked up five victories in farm elections around the Delano area, and the U.F.W. vote total— although insignificant in deciding individual elections— had fallen to 55 per cent.

That's how it has been going for most of the week in the critical test of the new state law that has provided secret elections for the first time in the fields and vineyards of California.

Mr. Chavez has seen the early trend as proof that his union is on the way to becoming the dominant labor power in California agriculture, a claim that many observers could not dispute as a number of farms previously holding teamster contracts fell into the Chavez camp.

But the teamsters have demonstrated an ability to hold on to a number of existing contracts that Mr. Chavez predicted would be swept away by the U.F.W. if the workers were given the protection of the secret ballot. Those contracts were once held by the U.F.W.

"The reason is very obvious," said Pete Baclig, a teamster organizer. "The people here have experienced Cesar Chavez. The U.F.W. held contracts here for three years, and the people knows what it's like."

The results of 15 other elections conducted under California's new farm labor law have been tied up by legal complications, challenges to the eligibility of some voters and numerous allegations of other irregularities.

The outcome of the important vote yesterday at Gallo, for example, will probably not be known for at least a week as the state board regulating the elections screens the eligibility of many of those who cast ballots.

The initial tally gave the teamsters 223 votes and the U.F.W. 131. But 169 other votes were challenged, so the outcome of the election will not be decided until these votes are accepted or rejected, a process that could swing the result either way.

Mr. Chavez claimed victory in the Gallo contest. He said that he had no doubt that 12 of the challenged ballots, which were cast by U.F.W. sympathizers who went on strike against Gallo in 1973 when the company signed a contract with

He said that 35 other challenged ballots, however, had been cast by company security guards and clerical workers and would be ruled ineligible for inclusion with farmworkers seeking representation.

"We're taking the big elections, while the teamsters are picking up a few small ones," Mr. Chavez said in his office this morning.

"There's no question about the Gallo vote," he said. "The law is very clear about letting the striking workers vote. But there's no provision for accepting votes of security guards and nonfield workers."

## Assertion Disputed

Teamster officials disputed Mr. Chavez's assertion and indicated confidence that the challenges against the 123 U.F.W. sympathizers would be upheld by the state and their votes thrown out.

Regardless of what the state officials decide in the matter, it is expected that the union that loses will appeal the decision and seek a new vote.

The jurisdictional struggle at Gallo has been important to both unions beyond the number of the workers involved. The winery, the nation's largest vintner, buys most of its grapes from other growers and employs only 450 workers in its own vineyards.

The U.F.W. held the contract at Gallo until the teamsters ousted it in 1973. This led to a U.F.W.-inspired national boycott of Gallo products.

The teamsters' position may improve over the weekend before votes in a number of U.F.W. strongholds are tallied next week. Two important elections, involving 2,000 workers, are being held today and tomorrow at large vegetable growers in the Delano area. Teamster victories in these contests could have a psychological impact on succeeding tests of strength between the two unions.

Meanwhile, the U.F.W. may have been denied an important edge when the results of elections at large farms elsewhere went untabulated because of a variety of disputes between the unions, the growers and the state regulating board.

"We are very confident about the way things are going," Mr. Chavez said this morning, "but we have a lot of hard work ahead of us before this thing is settled."

## Teamsters Win at Egg Ranch

SACRAMENTO, Calif., Sept. 11 (UPI)—The Teamsters union continue to represent workers at the nation's biggest egg producing ranch.

Art Chavarria, secretary-treasurer of teamsters local 186, said the vote at Egg City was 186 for his union and 114 for the United Farm Workers. One ballot was for no union at all.

Egg City near Moorpark in Ventura County produces three million eggs a day. The workers there had been represented by the teamsters.

## Canadian Fiscal Chief Quits

OTTAWA, Sept. 11 (Reuters)—Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau has accepted the resignation of the Finance Minister, John N. Turner. Charles M. Drury will serve as Acting Minister.

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