

Shuman Calls For United Farm Workers To Prove Commitment

American Farm Bureau president Charles B. Shuman this week challenged Cesar Chavez and the leadership of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee to "proveout their professed commitment to non-violence" and do all in their power to spare the grape-growing areas of California from "an apparent return to violence."

Shuman noted police reports in and around Delano, California that establish a possible pattern of arson and vandalism in vineyard installations and packing sheds. Most severe was a \$200,000 fire that destroyed the packing sheds of Bruno Disputo Company in Delano. Delano police report evidence of arson. Two months earlier a similar fire destroyed a box shed of the Elmco Vineyards in nearby Ducor, inflicting damages to property and machinery estimated by the Tulare County Fire Department at \$104,000. The Department's chief arson investigator Euel Goldsmith reports the fire was deliberately set. Other Delano area growers reporting substantial fire and vandalism damage to properties within recent months are, John Giumarra, Antonelli Farms, Patti-Bono, and M. Caran. Two attempts to burn the Blanco sheds in Delano have been discovered in time to prevent major damage. Delano police chief James Ailes says he finds this pattern "more than just a coincidence."

"Whether or not these are tactics of desperation by those driven by the failure of the boycott to bankrupt grape growers," Mr. Shuman said, "these acts must be condemned by all parties to this controversy — and they must be ended."

"Now is the time," he said, "for the repeated pledges of non-violence on the part of Chavez, UFWOC, the California Migrant Ministry, and other ministerial organizations who support the boycott to assert themselves strongly in the tensions of the grape controversy."

Mr. Shuman said that, while final returns are far from in, "the boycotters are losing their boycott." He noted the increasingly free movement of California table grapes into the major markets of North America — some of them newly created by the necessity of the boycott. Only in Boston and Toronto are combined numbers of chain stores still holding out against the sale of grapes, he said, "— while independent stores and smaller cooperative merchants are enjoying a record business in the sale of grapes." He predicted an end to the chain store holdouts in those cities in "the very near future."

Shuman conceded that opposition from UFWOC and its allies in the clergy and among a few industrial unions is still formidable, and that "we may expect some last-ditch resistance in areas where boycott organizations have become well-entrenched." He named Chicago and St. Louis as cities where boycotters

are re-grouping for an intensified push against chain stores handling grapes.

"But between September, 1968 and September, 1969, a full year's exposure and understanding has separated much of the truth about the boycott from much of the distortion that covered it," he said, "there is far greater public understanding to-

day of the gross misrepresentation of the boycotters, and of farmers who produce California grapes. "This operation has provoked the boycott imposes the threat to consumer freedom in the marketplace." A great deal of the credit for this, said Mr. Shuman, must go to Farm Bureau Freedom to Market Committees in 38 states who have worked to change public mis-conceptions about the boycott, and to keep markets open and expanded for farmers who produce California grapes. "This operation has provoked the boycott imposes the threat to consumer freedom in the marketplace." A great deal of the credit for this, said Mr. Shuman, must go to Farm Bureau Freedom to Market Committees in 38 states who have worked to change public mis-conceptions about the boycott, and to keep markets open and expanded for farmers who produce California grapes.

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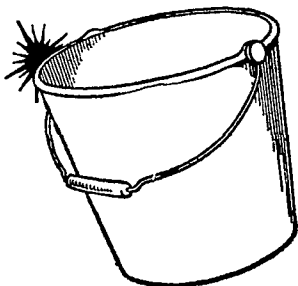
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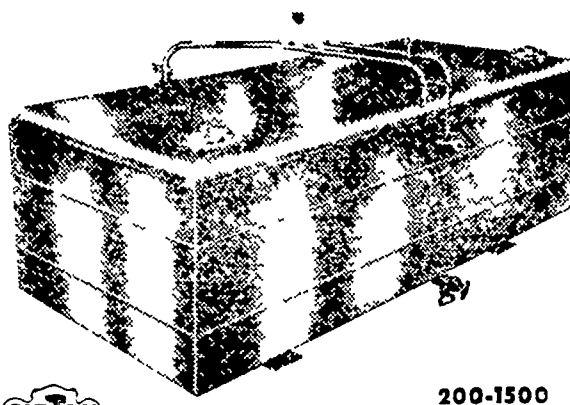
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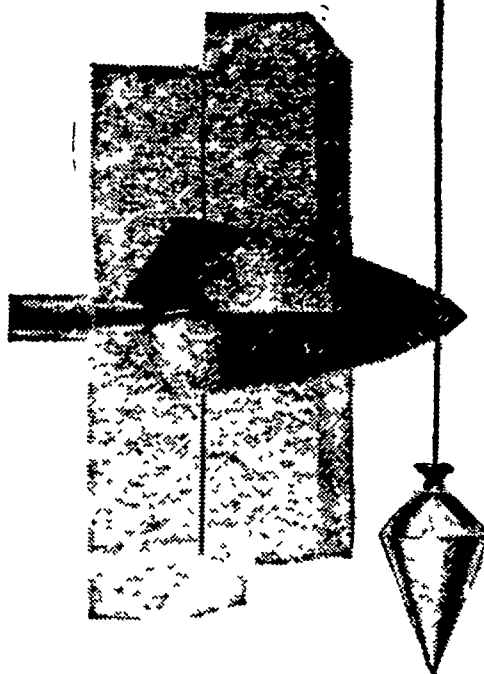
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