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Nixon Administration Reported Working On Farm Workers Collective Bargaining

A major legislative goal of the Nixon Administration in 1971 is to extend collective bargaining rights to the Nation's farm workers, Under Secretary of Labor Laurence H. Silberman said recently.

chaotic farm labor scene that now exists by giving agricultural workers organizational rights similar to those long enjoyed by workers in other industries."

"We think that inclusion of farm workers under a scheme similar to the National Labor Relations Act, with special provisions that recognize the unique nature of agricultural employment, is most crucial," Silberman said.

In an address before the National Council of Agricultural Employers in Atlanta, he said a bill that will meet the "vital needs" of agricultural workers and employers is now being drafted.

"While we do not know what the final shape of the bill will be, we do know that it will protect the fundamental rights of workers, employers and the American public."

The Administration's goal, he said, "is to bring order to the

For instance, agricultural workers should have a right to strike, for this right "is basic to the process of free collective bargaining," the sub-Cabinet official said.

But Silberman said that "reasonable and orderly procedures will have to be developed to protect both the farmer and the consumer against strikes in critical seasons, especially during harvest times."

The agricultural setting "demands" this kind of special consideration, he asserted, "because of problems such as perishability."

"When there's a strike in manufacturing or construction, the materials and goods remain intact until the workers return to their jobs," he explained. "But if the crops aren't harvested at the appropriate time they

will be lost forever at great loss to both the producer and consumer."

Under Secretary Silberman urged members of the farm employers' group to give their "wholehearted" support to the Administration bill that emerges.

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