

MOST REV. JOSEPH F. DONNELLY, D.D.

December 7, 1973

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

FROM: BISHOP DONNELLY, CHAIRMAN
Bishops' ad hoc Committee on Farm Labor

It has recently come to my attention that Frank Fitzsimmons, President of the Teamsters' Union has circularized the Bishops with a copy of a telegram which he sent to Cardinal Krol a few days after our November meeting and in which he claims to state, "the true facts" on the dispute between the Grower-Teamster combination and the Farm Worker Union.

Mr. Fitzsimmons's recital of, "the true facts" is in my opinion a bit dreamy. The Teamsters have consistently resisted UFWA requests for free elections. The Supreme Court in California found that thousands of farm workers were under Teamster contracts without any choice. The boycott of the UFWA, which is not under the NLRA, is not illegal. Nor is it immoral. The recent agreement in the Farm Worker-Teamster controversy is the third time the Teamsters promised to get out of the jurisdiction of the UFWA. In August of 1970 they told representatives of the Bishops' Committee that they would be "out of the fields in 10 days."

To help you evaluate, "the true facts" I am sending you a copy of a statement of the facts by AFL-CIO President George Meany which was published on November 24, in the AFL-CIO News. On November 30, President Meany prepared and sent to all AFL-CIO affiliates in the country a 2,000 word statement of the facts, as he states, "to keep the record straight and to keep you fully informed of the developments." We can send a copy of this too to any who might want more of the facts.

The resolutions passed by the Bishops in November were directed toward defending the right of farm workers to free elections to determine whether or not they want a union, and if so what union they want to represent them. The resolutions were protesting the injustice of Growers and Teamsters in refusing farm workers the free exercise of this right which Vatican II called a, "basic human right." To make the protest effective the Bishops expressed support of the UFWA boycott until free elections are held. The boycott covers head lettuce