

COMPULSORY COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Guest Editorial

Union officials — not farmers — would run America's farms if legislation were enacted bringing agriculture under the National Labor Relations Act or similar federal labor law.

All the proposed farm labor bills would compel a farmer to bargain with a union agent over wages, hours, and "all other conditions" of employment, once a union signed up a bare majority of his employees. "All other conditions" could cover virtually every farming operation from the number of fields planted to the distance between water fountains in the fields. The farmer's right to run his own farm would be drastically curtailed.

Federal labor law promotes this transfer of decision-making from management to union agents, as demonstrated by industry's experience during the last 40 years under the National Labor Relations Act.

The NLRA as it has been amended and interpreted requires an employer to bargain with the union "representing" his employees over wages, hours, pensions, sick leave, vacations, and fringe benefits. He must not go directly to his employees with an offer of economic improvements without first submitting the offer to the union. The National Labor Relations Board held the General Electric Company's innovative communications program to be inconsistent with good faith bargaining because it "created the impression that the employer rather than the union is the true protector of the employees' interest." The individual employee thus loses his right to engage in face-to-face negotiations with his employer over his wages, status, or any other conditions of his working life.

The NLRB, backed up in many cases by the courts, also has held that employers must bargain with unions over rents charged for company housing, the granting of Christmas bonuses, and even the hours of operation of company cafeterias. Valuable time and expense have been lost in negotiations over such "conditions of employment."

Even basic operational decisions are subjects for mandatory collective bargaining under federal labor law. Although the NLRA and the courts have held that management has the right to decide on its own to shut down an unprofitable plant, they have ruled that the "effects" of that decision must be bargained. In one recent case, an NLRB Administrative Law Judge ruled that a company must re-open a plant which had been closed for economic reasons, and must award back pay to all employees idled by the closing. The full NLRB modified that decision, but still required the employer to offer the employees jobs at other plants, and to pay their relocation expenses if they accepted these jobs.

Other industrial employers have been charged with unfair labor practices for failing to bargain over such matters as subcontracting work and changing outmoded work rules. Such rulings seriously restrict a manager's right to operate his business efficiently, and jeopardize the jobs of his employees.

Mandatory collective bargaining has served to tie industrial management to its current methods of operations, putting stumbling blocks in the path of new technology and more efficient production. It shares a large part of the blame for the declining growth in productivity of American industry.

American agriculture, on the other hand, has used its freedom from government interference in farm labor-management relations to build a record of efficiency and productivity which is the envy of the world. Taking away the farmer's basic right to run his own farm by imposing compulsory collective bargaining through federal law would put the food-producing sector of the nation's economy in the hands of labor union officials intent on increasing their own monopoly power at the expense of productivity. Farmers, their employees, and consumers all would suffer.

"Inside The State Capital"

By James L. Emery

The office of Assemblyman James L. Emery (R-Geneseo) announced his schedule for the week beginning May 28, 1975.

Saturday, May 31st. — Assemblyman Emery will be attending a Reception and General Fund for the Nunda Chamber of Commerce, 15th Annual Nunda Fun Days Events.

Also, Assemblyman Emery will be meeting with Councilman Conable, State Office of Agriculture, to discuss the development of a new farm program in the State of New York.

Assemblyman Emery will be attending a meeting of the Agriculture and Markets Committee, New York State Legislature.

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50 YEARS AGO

May 12, 1925

J. H. Baskin, Mayor

The city of Andover has a long and rich history. In 1925, the city was celebrating its 50th anniversary. The mayor, J. H. Baskin, gave a speech at the city hall, praising the city's growth and progress over the past half-century. He mentioned the many improvements made to the city's infrastructure, including the construction of new schools, hospitals, and public buildings. He also highlighted the city's strong economy and the hard work of its citizens. The speech was well-received, and the mayor concluded by expressing his confidence in the city's future.



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