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## AGRICULTURAL STRIKES

*From Speech of Sam Darcy, Organizer, California District*

**I** WISH to speak on our agricultural strike, on the point that Comrade Toohey raised, that the question of unity between the workers and poor farmers, which at first looks almost insurmountable, isn't so at all. We can give you an example of this: On a small farm six workers were working, when the assessors' deputy officers came down to shut off the water because the farmer hadn't paid his water bill. The farmer came down to the workers and said, "I am very sorry but I'll have to let you go because I have no more water." The workers said, "The hell you say, we'll turn

your water on and we'll have our jobs back." And they went down and turned it on. And in actuality this bridge between the farmers and workers was made through an identity of interest. The poor farmer who has four or five laborers during the short harvest season has no difficulty in granting an increase of 5c an hour because he makes it up by getting his crop to the market early instead of being delayed by a strike; our struggle is against the rich farmers.

### **We Organize and Lead Agricultural Strikes**

And finally, concerning the agricultural workers' strikes during this year, for the first time the Party and Union led a majority of the agricultural workers who struck in California. In previous years spontaneous strikes broke out all over but our Party came after the strike was organized. This year we had 9 strikes ranging from 250 in the small ones to 3,000 workers in the big strike. In 7 of the strikes we organized them, led them, concluded them, and formed our local union in the course of them. In two we didn't. In one of these two the Mexican Consul walked off with the situation because the American comrades stood in one group and let the Mexicans, excepting the youth, stand separately. The comrades came out and spoke in the name of the Party group but in the eyes of the workers it was the American workers who misled a few Mexican youngsters speaking to the Mexican strikers, and this gave the excuse to the Mexican Consul, who was a slick demagogue, to take the situation out of our hands.

In another strike 300 workers struck spontaneously and were led by the Philippine fakers. We were not able to get a fast hold.

One last word about the question of forces in our agricultural fields; we have the same cry that some districts have about forces; they say, we have no forces. We had a meeting in Santa Clara County of the Agricultural Workers Union. The Section Committee and the comrades said, "These Mexican workers, they sit around and won't speak up; how can we lead strikes with them?" But while these Mexican workers didn't talk in the committees, you should have seen them on the picket line. They were the most militant and effective of the leaders. Later on we said, "Why don't you recruit these workers into the Party" and the comrades said "they are not prepared enough or solid elements enough." A few days later 46 of our strikers were arrested and kept in jail for a week and tortured, the police tried to get information from them and they wouldn't say a word or budge an inch. Yet when we spoke to those comrades and asked why we didn't recruit these workers into the Party, they said they are not prepared! Needless to say, we held our recruiting, partly in jail, and got 24 of them into the Party.