

## Delano Employees Seek Raise

DELANO, December 13--The employees of the city of Delano, represented by the Kern County Employees Association, have filed requests for salary hikes and improved fringe benefits, it was reported this week.

Fred Ward, an official of the Association, said the city employees have requested a wage increase of 2-1/2 percent, plus improved sick leave benefits, longer vacations and a review of Delano's pension plan.

Ward said a few city employees who are required to stand by in their homes for possibly emergency duty presently receive no pay at all, though they cannot leave their homes or entertain friends. He said the Association is asking for \$5 per shift payment for workers on stand-by duty.

Ward said the city granted a pay increase of 2-1/2 percent on July 1, but that the cost of living index has risen 4.8 percent during the previous year. He said a pay increase retroactive to January 1 would bring employees' earnings up to their real value during mid-1967 in terms of the cost of living.

Delano's pension plan provides "meager" benefits in comparison with those provided by most California cities, Ward said. About 76 percent of the cities in California contract with the State for retirement programs, which results in much better benefits. Delano is among the 24 percent which handle their pension plans independently of the State.

City Manager Gerald Minford declined to comment on the Association's demands, but said the matter would go before the City Council on Monday night, January 20. He said he would not make any recommendations to the Council on the substance of the demands, but that he would advise councilmen on procedures.

Ward said the County Employees Association was an "unaffiliated" labor union. "Police Captain Al Es-

pinoza, who is also reportedly a partner in a farm labor contracting firm and a produce trucking company, heads the Delano City employees section of the County Association.



*PROSPERITY? Prosperity, something the workers never had, is something the growers may lose. It's time to negotiate to end the strike and boycott, and guarantee through contracts that workers and growers alike share the prosperity of the grape industry.*

a reminder from the  
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## Elsa Students Victorious!

ELSA, TEXAS--31 Mexican American students expelled from Elsa Edcouch High School (Rio Grande Valley, Texas) were readmitted to school after Judge Reynaldo Garza of the Federal District Court in Brownsville determined recently that the expulsion of the students was unconstitutional.

In mid November last year some 150 Mexican-American students prepared a list of demands to present to the school board. The students walked out of school after their demands were not considered by school officials. At that time, 99 of the participating students were suspended and 31 were expelled.

The ruling by Judge Garza declared that the school board regulations prohibiting demonstrations on campus is unconstitutional, ordered the board to re-admit the expelled students, and ruled that the expulsion must be removed from the students' records, and that actual and nominal damages be paid by the board.

The majority of the students participating in the walkout were Mexican-Americans. They had charged the school administration with discrimination and had received support in their efforts from State Sen. Joe Bernal of San Antonio and the Catholic Church in the Rio Grande Valley, which moved to accept many of the expelled students into Catholic schools.

Attorneys from the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALD) filed a suit against the school board immediately after the expulsion, seeking reinstatement of the expelled students and the payment of damages.

Gerald Lopez, staff attorney for the MALD commented "all we wanted  
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## NEWS FROM THE VALLEY

### TEXANS PROTEST POVERTY

MCALLEN, TEXAS--More than 50 farm workers from Rio Grande City staged a demonstration in front of the McAllen office of the Texas Employment Commission recently, to protest the chronic unemployment which farm workers who live in the Lower Rio Grande Valley suffer.

Reynaldo de la Cruz, a farm worker leader from Rio Grande City, read a list of 23 demands which he hopes would solve the situation if acted upon by the Employment Commission. De la Cruz said that "1969 offers no future (for the farm workers) but the repeated seasonal unemployment, migration and pathetic pool wages."

Richard Stolle, manager of the McAllen office of the Texas Employment Commission, admitted after the demonstration that the unemployment rate in the Valley is greater than anywhere else in Texas. He added that his office would release a statement after they received the demands from the demonstrators.

In the meantime, rallies were held or planned in other towns in Texas. In Brownsville, some 50 farm workers attended a rally at which "grape boycott" literature was distributed.

Salomín S. Marroquin, acquisition officer of the Federal Urban Renewal Agency in Mission, commented recently on the farm workers' economic condition in the Valley.

"They make enough money during their summer's work up north to come back to the Valley and live comfortably," he said, "without working for the remaining seven or eight months of the year--much as the winter tourists who come down here every winter from Minnesota and Iowa.

Farm workers seemed to think otherwise. One UFWOC member



Reynaldo de la Cruz pointed out that, according to the 1960 census, almost a third of the 3,339 families living in Starr County, near the southern tip of the state, had annual incomes of less than \$1,000. About 70 percent earned less than the \$3,000 "poverty point" for a family of four, and the average per capita income in 1960 was \$534 for county residents.

Nile Texans of Mexican descent have completed an average of 6.7 years of school. In California, the average is 10.8 years of schooling.

Five years ago, wages in Texas hovered around 40 cents an hour. Today they are usually around \$1 an hour.