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They just wanted to keep order. The men assured them that our Union has taught us to do everything peacefully. They gave their word that there would be no destruction of property or personal harm done by the workers.

When the police officer returned he asked a representative to go to the phone to speak with Ken Weller and his lawyer. They insisted that they could not meet with us before Thursday at 3:00 p.m. When we asked about our Union recognition the lawyer said, "That is no problem." So a law student who had been assisting the migrant work-



ers wrote up a union recognition statement from one of the contracts signed by our union in California. We gave this to the police officer and asked him to tell Weller that we would all leave his office as soon as he signed it. When the officer left we discussed the likelihood that he would refuse to sign since he seemed not to take our plea for union recognition seriously. One young organizer for the United Farm Workers asked the priest if we could pray right then. All the workers who were waiting outside were called in and we prayed that God would

touch the heart of Ken Weller with his grace so that he would act justly towards his workers and recognize their right to bargain collectively. The priest reminded us all of Jesus' words: "If two of you on earth agree to anything and you ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you". Everyone prayed in his own words our load. The officer returned with the document signed, then signed it as a witness. We praised and thanked God, and left rejoicing.

Cesar Chavez sent Rev. Jim Drake and Jose Reyes from California to assist with negotiations on Thursday at 3:45 p.m. Ken Weller and his brother the lawyer met with worker representatives and assistants at the municipal building of Crosswell. The only thing Ken Weller had to say was that there is work in Wisconsin and the workers should go there. When we showed him the agreement he signed promising to negotiate with the United Farm Workers, the lawyer said it did not mean anything. So once again Ken Weller had lied to his workers. The lawyer concluded the negotiations not only by turning down the union's bid for \$1.90 per hour and 10¢ per bucket, but by saying he was unwilling to let the men go back to work at the minimum legal wage of \$1.45 an hour while negotiating a retroactive contract. In effect he said he would not negotiate.

The workers met Thursday night and decided to have a march from St. Patrick's Church to the Pickle Company on Friday at 4:00 p.m. There we would await word from Weller. Would he have the courage to tell his workers face to face that he had reneged on his agreement to negotiate? Would his conscience have bothered him through the night so that now he was ready to bargain in good faith? We stood in front of the factory and offices 150 strong to hear from Weller.

He slipped out the back way so he would not have to talk to us. He left us no alternative but to march to his home in Lexington. When we arrived at his plush lake-side estate, the Sheriff's Department informed us that they had sent him away. After picketing in front of his drive for 20 minutes, we sat down on the grass to wait for him. The priest read the Sermon on the Mount to us in English and Spanish. "Blessed are the sorrowful, for they shall be comforted," seemed to have more meaning than ever before.

The workers took a vote and decided to return to the pickle factory and keep a picket line all night. The police told us that they would trust us not to enter the factory, and we assured them that we would see to it that no one would. They had come to understand that our purpose is simply wages and conditions, and that our methods are both just and peaceful.

As we stood guard through the night, one farmer told us that Weller has been cheating the growers by claiming that 1/2 the price due to them for their pickles went to field labor. Now that they are paying their own labor, he has only increased the price on #1 pickles from \$8.00 to \$11.00 a hundred pounds, instead of \$16.00. He said that the farmers regard him as a crook. I guess he would have to be to do what he has done to both farmers and farm workers. By his own admission, Weller has simply eliminated 65% of this year's crop for the farmers this year, 100% of the migrants' work for this year.

And the Lord has made this the best year for pickles in a long time!

On Saturday, Weller

"OUR PURPOSE IS SIMPLY WAGES AND CONDITIONS, AND OUR METHODS ARE BOTH JUST AND PEACEFUL."

"It seemed to his workers that Weller wanted slaves or no workers at all."

went to the picket line and told the workers he had received their note left with the sheriff's deputies at his home, stating if he continues to refuse to negotiate, his workers will sue him in court for breach of contract. He said he was not refusing to negotiate, he was now trying to get a labor lawyer so that we might negotiate Monday. He asked that the picket line be removed, since we would negotiate. The workers voted to stay on the picket line day and night until negotiations actually began. They know they cannot trust him.

Later that same day (Saturday, August 8th), the farm workers decided to end the picket line at 5:00, in order

to return to the camps to do their washing, and get a night's sleep. That evening, a message was left at the home of J. Kenneth Weller stating that he should call us by phone by 12 o'clock noon, Sunday, to give us a specific time when he would begin negotiations on Monday, or the picket line would be renewed on Monday morning. Mr. Weller called us Sunday morning and informed us that negotiations would take place at 4:00 p.m., Monday, August 10th.

"HE TOLD THEM TO EITHER PICK BY PIECE RATE OR LEAVE."

Rev. Jim Drake returned to Crosswell to assist with the negotiating team composed of a representative from the migrant camps maintained by Weller. When Mr. Weller came to the "negotiations" session, he did not bring a labor lawyer -- again, his brother assisted him. He also brought a court reporter to "get everything on the record." The Weller brothers informed us that there was need for workers in Ohio and in Berrien County in Michigan, and that the workers should go there to work. He further stated that as of that night, THE WELLER PICKLE COMPANY WAS CLOSED. He blamed the closing of the pickle company on a "strike" and "boycott" which never existed, since, (1) the workers who were trying to negotiate with them had all been fired (some 200 to 300); and (2) we had not been able to find any stores that sell Weller pickles so that we might even talk about a boycott.

Now there are 200 to 300 migrant workers in Michigan who know "La Causa" is their hope for a better future. They are willing to sacrifice to get a union contract wherever they work in Michigan, Texas and Florida.

"Jail would be more comfortable than their camp shacks."