Family-Type Farmers Unite In Co-operative

HAMMOND, LA.-Over 3,500 farmers, comprising all of the fruit and vegetable growers in this southeastern Louisiana area, have organized a union affiliated with the AFL National Farm Labor Union and are pioneering in an experiment that may result in wedding the family-type farmer to the industrial worker and halting the trend to largescale, corporate farming.

that are sold on the markets. acter.

The development was different from anything farming groups have initiated be-small farmers were going

Through the work of their | fore. It marked the first organization - Local 312 of time that small fruit and the Louisiana Fruit and vegetable growers became as-Vegetable Producers Union sociated diirectly with the -farmers in this section are American labor movement. receiving a fair share of the Local unions of dairy farmprofits from their products ers are of a different char-

> Union Men Lead Way Before organizing, the

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getting rich and the consumer was paying high prices family farmers were driven out of business, the number dropping from 10,000 to 3,-500 in the last 7 years.

Following a few unsuccessful attempts by small farmers to organize and head off bankruptcy, certain farmers who had been trade union members took the reins and established the union despite bitter opposition from produce buyers.

tion of Labor, the AFL the southernmost point of Southern organizing staff, Jewish ancient territory and the National Farm La-"from Dan to Beersheba." It bor Union.

of the farmers here by doing everything else. three things: Selling produce co-operatively; buying co- Arabs left, there was pracoperatively, and financing co- tically nobody in Beersheba.

broke, the middlemen were Unions Are Financing at the grocery store. Many Israel Woodworking Mill

(Special Correspondence) CHICAGO.-On a recent Saturday evening, at the Covenant Club in Chicago, something happened of importance to the carpenters of Israel, to wit, a banquet sponsored by Carpenters Local 504, AFL, of Chicago.

paid \$50 a plate to attend. mill in Beersheba. The The object was to raise mon- Philadelphia carpenters are ey to put up a woodworking paying for the machinery, mill in Beersheba, where the Chicago carpenters for door frames and window the building. sashes are a scarce commonity right now.

They received help from Beersheba is the place the Louisiana State Federa- mentioned in the Bible as is an old city in name and The union meets the needs location, but a new one in

> Four years ago, after 3,500 Today there are 18,000-from Bulgaria, Romania, Poland -French Morocco, etc.-but nobody from Local 504 of Chicago or Local 1073 of Philadelphia.

> But Locals 1073 and 504 proposed to finance the buildoperatively through a credit

Seek 100 Per Cent Union

Utilizing trade union methods and techniques, a solid marketing organization was created.

The union, with headquarters here in the strawberry capital of the United States. has anchored itself firmly by securing written agreements with every handler of fresh produce in the area. Agreements with all the canneries provide that these companies buy produce only from union members.

The small farmers, seeing the benefits of union organization, are making plans to organize other family-farm operators in other Southern states. Plans also are being laid to make all the rural parishes (counties) in Louisiant 100 per cent union.

The union is co-operating with Labor's League for Political Education, Seccretary-Treasurer George Forstall said the members realize the champions of labor are the champions of all the plain people, whether they earn a living off the land or in stores and shops.

About 500 banqueteers ing of the first woodworking

Ted Kenney, president of the Carpenters District Council of Chicago, is chairman (Continued On Page 7)



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