

Joint Conference
of
Mexican-Americans

May 20, 1967

To: Mexican American Joint Conference Committee

File
From: George I. Sánchez, Chairman

Attached are the resolutions adopted, unanimously, at the Laredo meeting. Copies will be disseminated widely, to the press and so on. Our Secretary, Lupe Zamarripa, has made several news releases on our meeting.

After our meeting, some of us attended the labor rally sponsored by VIDA that night. A number of us spoke, all to the effect that we deplored the miserable conditions that exist for the common man in Laredo and in Rio Grande City. A fine keynote speech was delivered by Hank Brown, President of the Texas AFL-CIO. My remarks (written for the sake of brevity) were as follows:

Compañeros,

Es un gran privilegio para mí estar aquí esta noche. Los felicitamos por su ánimo, su sinceridad, y su valor en gritar, para que todo el mundo oiga su interés, su apoyo, y su buen corazón en lo que toca al bienestar del obrero.

¡Mexicanos no se rajen! Insistan por justicia, y reiteren su insistencia. ¡Que no nos den atole con el dedo! Ya no andamos con los ojos cerrados, ni de mendigos.

Nuestros derechos son nuestros, que no se atreva nadie a arrebatarnos.

¡Abajo con los explotadores! ¡Arriba el hombre común!
¡Viva la huelga!

A matter of utmost importance needs to be looked into further by our organization. That is the (sub-rosa) proposed "international zone," one mile on each side of the Rio Grande. This would be, in reality, a "free zone," with no taxes on industry and with unlimited cheap labor from Mexico. If established, such an operation would seriously aggravate the state of all American workers in that area, especially the Mexican American. It would have very serious negative effects on the labor situation of agricultural workers throughout the nation. It would deprive Texas taxpayers of relief; as the tax-free industries would, in effect, be subsidized by those taxpayers -- to say nothing of Mexican American workers. On this, and of the matters covered by the resolutions, protest to your representatives in Washington and in Austin. My advice is, as I said at the VIDA rally, "don't ask them, tell them." Bombard them with your endorsement of the resolutions, and with your unalterable opposition to a "free zone." The establishment of such a zone would constitute a bare-faced sell-out of the mexicanos of Texas.

Once I have arrangements cleared, I will send you details on the meeting we are to have in McAllen in July.

¡Abajo con los Rinches!