**Bergland charged by farmers**

An American Sugar Cane League official, Jan. 11, charged Agriculture Secretary Bob Bergland has "misled" Louisiana sugarcane field workers into expecting wage rates higher than minimums prescribed by the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Gilbert Durbin, the league's general manager, said most cane farmers cannot pay more than the FLS Act minimum, which was increased from $2.20 per hour to $2.65 per hour Jan. 1, 1978. He said Secretary Bergland has "no authority to require that higher rates be paid, except in an unlikely instance where sugar is put under government loan."

Durbin explained the government sugar-subsidy program does not require minimum wages be paid. The higher rates which Bergland would require as a condition for government loans on stored sugar has killed the loan program, in the league's official's opinion.

Bergland's hourly rates for the 1977 crop, beginning Nov. 8, are $3.10 for equipment operators and $2.85 for all other workers. His rates for the 1978 crop are $3.30 and $3.

Durbin said cane farmers wish they were able to pay the higher rates and regret their workers have been misled by the Secretary of Agriculture into believing they would get those rates.

**Thomas Warner:**

The American Sugar Cane League's board of directors recommends political action rather than strikes as a means of achieving higher prices for farm products.

This resolution was adopted by the board at its regular meeting Dec. 28: "The American Sugar Cane League recognizes the need of American farmers to get higher prices for their crops."

"The League feels, however, that a strike by farmers is the wrong action to take because: (1) a strike would be ineffective because many farmers would not par-