Coast Body Urges Locals To Step-Up Talks

SAN FRANCISCO — All longshore and clerks locals on the Pacific Coast have been advised to expedite local negotiations in the coast dock strike.

In a letter to the locals and members of the Coast Negotiating Committee, Harry Bridges, as chairman of the Coast Strike Strategy Committee, also transmitted his latest exchange of correspondence with Edmund J. Flynn, president of the Pacific Maritime Association.

This exchange was touched off by PMA rejection of the ILWU offer to resume coastwide negotiations “providing that the Container Freight Station Agreement as it applies on and after June 30, 1971 is continued in full force and effect.”

Bridges said the exchange of letters does not necessarily mean that the Coast Negotiating Committee will be called automatically prior to August. It will depend on meaningful progress in local negotiations.

He emphasized that these local negotiations must be taken very seriously. Otherwise, he said, once coast negotiations are resumed, some extremely important local issues tend to get shoved into the background.

Texts of Bridges’ letter to the locals and the Bridges-Flynn exchange follow:

San Francisco — September 1 — that’s the effective date unanimously recommended by the recent ILWU International Executive Board meeting for a monthly $3 assessment to help the longshore strike.

On September 1 the strike will be exactly two months old. In a letter urging non-dock locals to act quickly on the recommendation, president Harry Bridges and secretary-treasurer Louis Goldblatt wrote:

“The strike is crucial in the life of the ILWU, and from all indications will continue for some time. The strike itself is solid and effective. The monies raised by assessment by the membership still at work will not be used to pay strike benefits to longshoremen but to help defray the regular, basic, strike operating expenses.”

Among the first to act on the International Executive Board recommendation was the Local 6 executive board. It placed before its membership a proposal to increase monthly dues to $10, effective September 1, for duration of the longshore strike. When the strike ends dues will revert to $7. In the meantime the extra $3 will be turned over to the Coast Longshore Strike Committee.

The proposal is to be discussed at Local 6 membership meetings in August and voted on in September.

Local 142 Board Acts

Honolulu — The Local 142 Executive Board, meeting here August 5-6, voted to recommend to the members that they assess themselves $3 per month to support the West Coast longshore strike when called upon by the International Executive Board. The local board left the timing of the assessment vote up to the Local Executive Committee.

The Hawaii membership has already approved Convention resolutions pledging all-out support to West Coast longshoremen and to island longshoremen as needed. This was voted overwhelmingly in membership meetings throughout the state in May and June.

The Local 142 Board also instructed the Local Executive Committee to meet with the West Coast Strike Committee in mid-August for a first-hand report and discussion of the strike and its effects.

The Board heard a report from its Hawaii members and observers on the July meeting of the International Executive Board.

Non-Striking ILWU Locals Voting Funds for Longshore

San Francisco — Dear Mr. Bridges:

The PMA requests of July 14 and July 23 to resume negotiations were made unconditionally.

Your July 26 letter requests PMA to agree to certain conditions before ILWU will resume bargaining.

These conditions are unacceptable. Indeed, by attempting to establish them you are not bargaining in good faith.

PMA renues its request to resume bargaining immediately.

Very truly yours,

Edmund J. Flynn

August 3, 1971

Dear Mr. Flynn:

Answering your letter of July 30, as you are well aware, bargaining between the parties has been continuing for several weeks in the form of local negotiations. We both know that settlement of the eight issues referred to local negotiations is essential so that a coastwise agreement can eventually be concluded.

Considerable progress is being made in these local negotiations, and we are urging our local unions to intensify and expedite these negotiations so that coastwise bargaining can resume on all issues in dispute including the CPS Supplement. We urge you to do likewise.

It is our intention to call our Coast Negotiating Committee back into session some time around the middle of August so that a complete review or progress of local negotiations can be made, and at which time hopefully a date can be set for the resumption of coast negotiations.

Very truly yours,

Harry Bridges

August 3, 1971