WASHINGTON, DC — On February 8, in the midst of a Senate debate on President Nixon's bill to bust up the West Coast dock strike, it was announced on the floor that the ILWU and the PMA had reached a tentative agreement.

That didn't faze anyone. Senator Robert Packwood (R-Ore.), pushed right ahead, declaring that "the ILWU is a very independent union," and that the agreement still had to be approved by the caucus and a rank-and-file vote.

So, concluded the Senator, the compulsory arbitration bill was still necessary, in case the dock workers acted up.

So much for union democracy.

The "joint resolution"—which authorizes the President to appoint a panel of arbitrators to settle the dispute—without any membership vote—was then quickly ramrodded through both houses.

NIXON TACTICS

It was assisted along by a combination of steam-rolling, congressional guilelessness and political card-sharpening.

ILWU Washington representative Pat Tobin noted that the administration had successfully whipped up enough anti-labor feelings in Congress to get the resolution through.

Passage of President Nixon's forced return to work and compulsory arbitration bill was made possible by the defection of the so-called liberal Democrats in the House and Senate.

In the face of united action by the AFL-CIO, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, United Mine Workers, United Auto Workers, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers and the ILWU, President Nixon was able to pass his anti-strike bill the same day or the day after agreement had been reached on all economic issues in the West Coast longshore strike.

SENATE A PUSHOVER

Administration lobbyists pushed the bill through the Senate by a 79-3, despite protests by labor committee chairman Harrison Williams (D-Del.) of undue arm-twisting.

Even the labor committee's liberal majority voted to support the bill with minor alterations.

Only Senators William Proxmire (D-Wisc.), Fred Harris (D-Okl.) and Lowell Weicker (R-Conn.) voted against the bill.

And Proxmire said that only reason he voted "no" was that any settlement coming out of the administration's bill would not be subject to Pay Board approval. Thus, he said, it would be "inflationary."

In spite of strong commitments made by California Senators Alan Cranston and John Tunney to Jack Henning, secretary-treasurer of the California Federation of Labor, both California senators deserted the united labor movement to support ratification of the contract.

---Continued on Page 9---

Ranks OK Contract By 71%

SAN FRANCISCO — After more than a year of negotiations and over 134 days of strike which shut every major West Coast port, ILWU longshore division members have approved a new contract.

It was agreed by both sides that if the President's Pay Board does not approve, either party may give notice of cancellation and the union shall be free to take any action, including strike action. (See Bridges' "On the Beam," page 2.)

In secret balloting between February 17-19, nearly 1,000 longshoremen and clerks voted over 71 percent to approve the new 17 month agreement negotiated by the Coast Negotiating Committee and recommended by the Longshore, Clerks' and Walking Boss' Caucus.

The vote was: Yes—6,803; No—2,761.

(See tabulation of caucus vote on page 4 and rank and file vote on page 8.)

The final vote was taken only after 95 regular delegates from 53 locals, including Hawaii, spent four days going over the tentative agreement—In the form of a Memorandum of Understanding between the ILWU and the PMA — with a fine comb.

The Caucus met at ILWU headquarters in San Francisco on Saturday, February 12 and worked through until Tuesday night, February 15.

At the outset, the delegates received the summary of the pact printed in The Dispatcher on February 11, 1972, as well as the full Memorandum of Understanding. The agreement, it was understood, could only be voted up or down, with no amendments.

The delegates then worked their way through the contract, asking questions, raising objections and getting clarification. At all times, the