

- on the side of the militants. This became especially clear at a historic coastwide union convention that met in San Francisco in late February and early March 1934." Bridges was defeated when he ran for temporary chairman of the convention. See p. 8A. At the end of the convention the Albion Hall candidate for district president, Henry Schmidt lost to one of the leaders in reorganizing San Francisco, William Lewis, 43-17 to 153/4. See p. 151. Charles P. Larrowe asserted in his *Harry Bridges*, p. 23 that "Bridges and other militants decided on a move that was sheer heresy to the old-timers, the creation of a federation of all unions in the industry to give them more power when they met with the employers." Two Generations of maritime workers, including Larrowe's old timers, had tried to form coastwide waterfront federations since 1902. See Ronald Magden, *A History of Seattle Waterfront Workers*, Chapter Seven, *Quest for Coastwide Unity*.
85. Local 38-30 also elected Virgil Ward as a delegate to the 1934 convention.
 86. PCDILA 1934, p. 1.
 87. *Ibid.*, pp. 119-120.
 88. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
 89. *Ibid.*, pp. 134-135.
 90. *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138.
 91. *Ibid.*
 92. Letter from J. C. Bjorklund to All Affiliated Locals, March 19, 1934.
 93. Letter from Walter Freer, president of Local 38-97, to Harvey Wells, March 31, 1934.
 94. N.L.B. Testimony of W. T. Morris, p. 1736.
 95. Eight lumber handlers quit longshoring rather than accept amalgamation. See Old Town Amalgamation List, 1934. Courtesy of Morris Thorsen.
 96. Reichl Files. Robert Hardin stated that nine or ten of the 1916 Tacoma strike committee still lived in Tacoma. See Hardin's speech at the 1935 ILA Convention, p. 31.
 97. T. A. Thronson Interview.
 98. *Teamster Local 313 Minutes*, April 17, 1934.
 99. Telegram from President Franklin D. Roosevelt to William J. Lewis, March 22, 1934. Telegram from William J. Lewis to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, March 22, 1934.
 100. Report of Henry F. Grady, C. A. Reynolds, and J. L. Leonard to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, April 25, 1934, pp. 1-3. Hereafter cited as PB.
 101. Markholt, *Unionism*, Volume III.
 102. Letter from William Lewis to All Pacific Coast Locals, April 11, 1934.
 103. ST, May 8 and 9, 1934.
 104. Telegram from Robert F. Wagner to J. C. Bjorklund, 4:08 p.m. May 8, 1934.
 105. Telegram from John (sic) P. Ryan, 3:57 p.m. May 8, 1934.
 106. Telegram from W. J. Lewis to J. C. Bjorklund, 5:28 p.m. May 8, 1934.
 107. T. A. Thronson Interview.
 108. Dewey Duggan and Gordon S. Wylie Interviews.

CHAPTER IX

TACOMA LONGSHOREMEN AND THE 1934 MARITIME STRIKE

At 8:00 a.m. on May 9, 1934, work at Tacoma docks came to a "dead standstill." From Pier 2 to the smelter the waterfront had become "extremely quiet." Employers had decided "to close up and let the strike pursue its course."¹ Large groups of longshoremen peacefully picketed three idle ships in the harbor. Another 300 men assembled at the hall at 2:30 p.m. to hear reports on the closures at other West Coast ports. ILA strategy aimed to shut down all docks for as long as it took to achieve recognition, union hiring halls, and a coastwide agreement. The employers concentrated on keeping open San Pedro, San Francisco, Portland, and Seattle.² Tacoma Waterfront Employers' President Sam Stocking told the *News Tribune* that in Washington State only Tacoma would suffer. Cargo would be diverted to Seattle where "unquestionably" efforts would be made to load ships. Stocking did not understand why the men walked out. They had a closed shop, good wages "and practically everything they've asked for since the strike of 1916."³

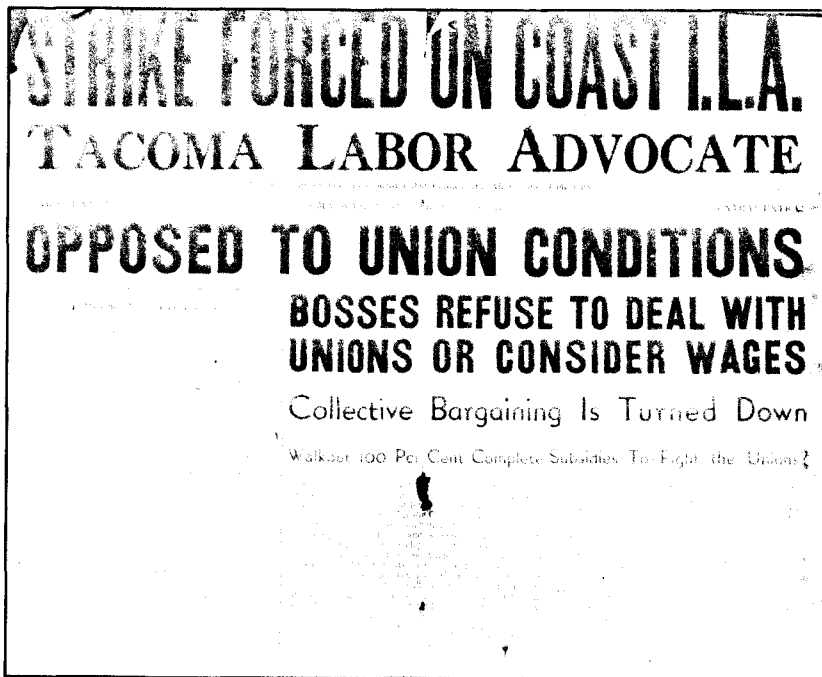
The Tacoma Longshore Press Committee, composed of Robert Hardin, Paddy Morris, Ernest Tanner, and T. A. Thronson issued a statement on the first day of the strike: "All we're asking for is a fair shake and if we get that we will be satisfied. We also wish to impress on the minds of the public that we don't like strikes, but we are forced to fight for what we believe are our just dues . . . They [the employers] refused point blank to give us any consideration in regards to hours and wages, thus breaking the agreement they made with our organization and the President's board."⁴

Tacoma newspapers ignored the longshore press release.⁵ To present their message to the general public, Tacoma dock workers took to the airwaves. Throughout the strike, KVI radio offered time on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings to present "Longshoremen on the Air." As program host, T. A. Thronson stressed that the efficiency of Tacoma longshoremen had brought millions of dollars of business to the community. "If by any chance the union should be broken, its members will be scattered over the country, inexperienced men will take their places, ships will be diverted elsewhere, and grass will grow on the Tacoma docks."⁶

During the first month of the strike Tacoma papers emphasized the impact on lumber mill and industrial plant workers. The *News Tribune* claimed 700 Tacomans and 16,000 Pacific Northwest workers were laid off during the first week.⁷ The weekly *Tacoma Labor Advocate* issued an EXTRA on the third

day of the strike contrasting the "Forbearance, patience, tolerance and eagerness for peace by the men," with the "truculence, evasion, stalling and delays by the waterfront employers." The *Labor Advocate* declared that the bosses drove the men "to strike in the hope that the unemployed will rally to take the places of the men and defeat the strike."⁸

On May 11, at the Defiance Lumber Company dock the crew of the freighter *Lake Frances* turned off the steam, walked ashore, and joined Local 38-97's picket line.⁹ Three days later seamen aboard the *F. H. Marvin* struck.¹⁰ It was the same up and down the coast. Sailors, engineers, masters, mates and pilots, and other marine unions tied up their vessels. The seagoing workers struck as soon as meetings were convened to approve the strike. As co-equal, but separate strikers, the mariners demanded union preference in hiring and employer recognition of their respective unions.¹¹



The Tacoma Labor Advocate, weekly newspaper of the Tacoma Central Labor Council, distributed an "EXTRA" in the downtown area at the beginning of the strike. (ILWU Local 23 archives)

Employers were stunned, and longshoremen heartened, when Pacific Coast Teamster locals voted on May 10 to not move cargo to and from docks while the strike was in progress.¹² At the request of Senator Robert Wagner, Seattle Teamsters returned to work. On May 14 Seattle Teamster locals rescinded their action. In Tacoma, Paddy Morris and Teamster Organizer C. M. "Whitey"

Dahlager, who had been friends since 1908, worked out details of Teamster-Local 38-97 cooperation. IBT Local 313 established a checkpoint beside ILA pickets at the Eleventh Street bridge to turn back truck drivers going to the waterfront.¹³ In their meeting on May 14, IBT Local 313 members reaffirmed their pledge to aid the longshore cause financially when the request was made.¹⁴

Both the employers and longshoremen established strike funds. Puget Sound steamship companies, stevedore firms, and dock businesses contributed \$41,500 to house and feed strikebreakers. Quarter-page ads in the daily newspapers also accounted for a sizeable share of the employers' strike budget.¹⁵ The Tacoma Central Labor Council sent out its first circular letter asking for funds to help the striking ILA members on June 6.¹⁶ Seven days later Martin Frederickson told the council, "Our representatives visiting local unions are received with such enthusiasm that it is clear organized labor realizes that this is the fight of every union."¹⁷ The response came in amounts from \$5.00 to \$2,000 from as far away as Spokane and New Westminster, British Columbia. By July 21, the council had collected \$3,259.59 for the longshoremen. During July and August, Teamster Joint Council 28 contributed \$1,000 a month.¹⁸ Farmers provided fresh produce and staples for the soup kitchen operated by elderly and disabled longshoremen in the hall.¹⁹

In contrast to the complete shutdown in Tacoma, the situation in Seattle was "shaky."²⁰ Nonunion company gangs continued to work at three piers, and employers announced that they would be hiring more strikebreakers.²¹ Before dawn on May 12, 1934, longshore flying squad captains George Soule and "Big Ed" Harris loaded 600 Tacoma strikers into trucks, buses, and cars for a foray into Seattle.²² By prearrangement, another 150 men came from Everett. At the docks they were joined by members of Local 38-12, seamen, teamsters, and loggers. With police standing by "complacently," scab clearers tore down dock gates and rushed ships from McCormick docks to the East Waterway Terminal.²³ The ILA men shouted to strikebreakers to get off the ships. Otherwise, union men would come in to get them. At pier after pier, scabs came out. The climax came at Pier 2 where seventy-five scabs filed through long lines of strikers. Last to come out was the foreman "Iodine" Harradin.²⁴

Employers met that afternoon with Seattle Mayor John F. Dore and King County Sheriff Claude G. Bannick. The waterfront bosses demanded assurance of future protection.²⁵ Dore wired Governor Clarence Martin to send state troops. Instead, Martin met Seattle and Tacoma waterfront and chamber of commerce officials. Martin reported that he had already sent a joint appeal with the governors of California and Oregon to President Roosevelt asking the Chief Executive to "intervene and arbitrate."²⁶ Martin invited five of the businessmen to a session that afternoon with interested labor leaders. At the meeting employers urged Martin to use guardsmen to open Washington ports. They told the Chief Executive that they were shutting down the port of

Seattle until police made the docks safe.²⁷ Union representatives asked Martin not to take sides.²⁸ The governor told participants that action at this time would be "unwise."²⁹

During the governor's afternoon meeting with employers and organized labor, Alaska Steamship Manager Thomas B. Wilson brought up the issue of food supplies for Alaskans.³⁰ Dave Beck said Alaska should be treated as a special case.³¹ Paddy Morris rejected Wilson's plea. Morris believed other companies would take advantage of the opening.³² That evening, Seattle Local 38-12 voted to load, and seamen agreed to sail, the *Victoria* under union conditions. The next morning Dave Beck informed Governor Martin and General Manager Wilson of the decision by the maritime unions.³³ A delegate from the Painters Union proposed at the May 16 session of the Tacoma Central Labor Council that "If troops are used to break the Longshoremen's strike, Council call general strike, and that letter be addressed to Chamber of Commerce notifying that if they are successful in their efforts to have troops called out to try to break strike, Labor Movement will retaliate with general strike. Motion carried unanimously."³⁴

The use of strikebreakers in Oregon and California during the first week of the strike caused massive confrontations. In the Rose City employers tried to bus scabs from the fink hall to the piers, but the vans were turned back by ILA men. The next morning strikebreakers reported directly to pier gates, but they were driven off by union longshoremen. Mayor Joseph Carson requested troops from Governor Julius Meier, but the governor refused. Just in case, the Portland Central Labor Council passed a resolution that if the National Guard was called out, "We favor and will advocate a general strike." Portland employers closed the port on May 15, stating protection was inadequate.³⁵ On San Francisco Bay area waterfronts, shots rang out and cars of scabs were overturned. The most serious confrontation occurred in San Pedro at midnight on May 14. About 500 strikers attacked the scab stockade. Richard Parker was shot through the chest and died on the spot. John Knudsen died later from a bullet wound near the heart. Both were members of the ILA.³⁶

San Francisco Negotiations

In response to the Pacific Coast governors' appeals, on May 17 the Roosevelt Administration sent Assistant Secretary of Labor Edward F. McGrady to San Francisco. McGrady chaired federal mediation sessions between ILA district officers and San Francisco and Los Angeles waterfront employers.³⁷ Negotiations deadlocked when employers refused recognition to the ILA district. At the request of Senator Robert Wagner and federal mediators, ILA President Joseph P. Ryan came to the West Coast. Ryan arrived on May 24, but bargaining deadlocked on May 26. Longshore negotiators insisted the union shop be the foundation for bargaining. Employers refused to consider the closed shop. Then longshore bargainers urged that seamen and engineers demands be considered. Employer spokesman Thomas Plant refused to discuss the marine workers terms.³⁸

On May 28 employers offered to recognize the ILA as bargaining agent for the men and to joint management of hiring halls, if the ILA would accede to no discrimination between union and nonunion men. Dissatisfied with the terms, Bjorklund, Morris, and Cliff Thurston of Portland walked out of the meeting.³⁹ The district negotiating committee submitted the proposal to a membership referendum.⁴⁰ When he arrived in Seattle on May 29, Ryan said he would try to get the men to accept it. Even before Ryan had an opportunity to speak to Local 38-97, Tacoma rejected the May 28 employers' offer. When the unanimous no vote was announced, cheers reverberated around the hall. The next day, Ryan tried to get Local 38-97 to reconsider, but the Tacomans passed a resolution proclaiming "Any proposition proposed or offered by the negotiating committee which does not first recognize the UNION SHOP will be absolutely out of order."⁴¹ Everywhere Ryan went in the Pacific Northwest he received the same answer, no compromise on the hiring hall issue.

Throughout the San Francisco negotiations, President Roosevelt and Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes urged federal mediators to get the ILA to load the Alaska fleet.⁴² The *News Tribune* predicted economic disaster for the Northern Territory's fishing industry.⁴³ On May 20, McGrady secured a pledge from ILA district officers in San Francisco that Alaska cannery ships would be loaded in Seattle.⁴⁴ Local 38-12 declined to load the Alaska ships until employers acceded to ILA recognition.⁴⁵ On May 23 Paddy Morris asked Local 38-97 to call together a Joint Northwest Strike Committee "to effect the release of the cannery ships." The next day sixty-five delegates from nine locals elected Tacomans Walter Freer president and "Big Ed" Harris secretary of the new joint strike committee. Then, representatives argued about the cannery ships for thirteen hours. A majority of the delegates opposed releasing the cannery ships until they were certain San Francisco had set free its cannery fleet. On May 26 the committee voted 38 to 10 to load general cargo on the *North Wind* for southwestern Alaska. Committeemen stipulated that all loading gangs and sailing crews had to be 100 percent union men.⁴⁶ On May 29, Alaska Governor John W. Troy telegraphed the Joint Northwest Strike Committee asking for resumption of all Alaska shipping. The committee referred the governor to those "directly responsible," the waterfront employers of the Pacific Coast.⁴⁷

On June 5, the Joint Northwest Strike Committee negotiated with Alaska shipping line executives. An Alaska Agreement was signed three days later that provided for union control of hiring, six-hour day, thirty-four hour workweek, 85 cents straight time, \$1.25 overtime. If the strike ended with a wage increase, the Alaskan shippers guaranteed it would be retroactive to June 8. Loading would commence as soon as each company made agreements with the other marine unions.⁴⁸ The work was distributed to ILA locals on a ratio: Seattle, five gangs; Tacoma, three gangs; Everett, two gangs; and Olympia, one gang. Gangs from other Northwest ports would be permitted to work as they were needed. Each man would receive 50 percent of his earnings, 25 percent would go to his local, and the other 25 percent would be put in a fund to be distributed



Joint Northwest Strike Committee in front of the Seattle Labor Temple July 28, 1934. Bottom row, left to right, Charles Peabody, Portland; Carl Stotts, Seattle; Art Woolbert, Seattle; unknown; Chris Martin, Seattle; Emil Swanson, Seattle; Art Whitehead, Seattle; Tom Mitchell, Seattle; unknown; Roy Collins, Seattle; Andy Larsen, Tacoma; George Conrad, Port Angeles; Joe Marshall, Seattle; unknown; John Beaton, Portland. Top row, left to right, Jack Shannon, Seattle; Harry Olson, Seattle; Art Hassell, Port Angeles, Art Wills, Seattle; George Clark, Seattle; Les Getchell, Port Angeles; Harry Hazel, Port Angeles; Karl Isakson, Everett; William Ezard, Seattle; Ernie Tanner, Tacoma; Ed Morton, Seattle; Harry Pilcher, Everett; unknown; Louis Taggart, Seattle; next five, unknown; Joseph Thomas, Astoria; Matt Meehan, Portland. (Webster & Stevens photo, ILWU Local 19 archives, identified by Burt Nelson, Jack Spurrell, T.A. Thronson, and Eimer Barth)

among locals not participating in the work.⁴⁹ The committee sent \$2,000 to San Pedro strikers, \$300 to San Francisco, and various amounts to other California locals. The Joint Northwest Strike Committee set aside \$1,500 to organize a coastwide waterfront federation. The new organization would make permanent the solidarity of longshoremen and seagoing unions.⁵⁰

The Seattle-Tacoma-San Francisco Mayors and Negotiations

On June 11, 1934, Tacoma Mayor George A. Smitley and the city council invited Bjorklund, Morris, and Ryan to an executive session. City officials offered their good offices to settle the strike. After the meeting Ryan told the *News Tribune* that there was nothing the mayor and council could do. "It must be done from San Francisco."⁵¹ The next day Mayor Smitley met with Tacoma waterfront employers who gave him little encouragement. That night Smitley telegraphed President Roosevelt asking the nation's chief executive to take over the West Coast maritime industry in the event that the strike was not settled by June 16.⁵² On June 15 Smitley traveled to Seattle to confer with the Queen City's new mayor Charles Smith.

Seattle's Mayor Charles Smith had been busy. On June 11, he tried to interest San Francisco Mayor Angelo Rossi in a summit conference of Pacific

Coast mayors to discuss common action. Mayor Rossi told Smith that the time was not opportune for such a move.⁵³ The next day, Smith told the Joint Northwest Strike Committee he wanted the port opened immediately. The mayor asked that three union delegates be given "full power to act" in a meeting with three employers in his office. At the mayor's meeting longshore representatives presented the Alaska Agreement as the model for a coastwide settlement. The bosses offered the May 28 San Francisco employers' proposal. Both sides turned down each other's offer, but agreed to resume bargaining the following day. The second round of negotiations also failed, but the ILA men promised to present the employers' terms to the Joint Northwest Strike Committee.⁵⁴

The strike committee unanimously rejected the employers' proposal. A motion was made to notify Mayor Smith to stop interfering in the strike or the men would cease working Alaska ships. The motion was held in abeyance until the committee could better judge the new mayor's attitude.⁵⁵ In the meantime Tacoma and Seattle waterfront employers perfected "in strictest secrecy" plan to open the waterfronts.⁵⁶ To facilitate the opening of the two ports, the Seattle and Tacoma chambers of commerce created citizens' emergency committees. Chairmen John Prins in Tacoma and Alfred Lundin of Seattle told local newspapers in separate statements that their emergency committees would be ready to act when the mayors opened the ports. Prins added that Tacoma could not afford to allow its docks to remain closed if the port of Seattle opened. "Such a condition would place this port under a cloud in the eyes of the maritime world from which we would have difficulty in ever emerging."⁵⁷

In San Francisco the open-shop advocacy agency, the Industrial Association, took over direction of strike operations on June 12. Industrial Association President John F. Forbes announced that his organization "would take whatever steps are necessary to protect the economic interests of the community."⁵⁸ Mayor Rossi contacted Michael Casey who in turn asked Joseph Ryan to return to San Francisco. Everyone recognized this was the last chance to settle the strike before force would be used to open the ports. On June 16 a new agreement was signed by Thomas Plant for the Seattle, San Francisco, Portland, and Los Angeles waterfront employers' unions. Joseph P. Ryan signed as representative for the ILA and J. E. Finnegan for the the Pacific Coast District. Bill Lewis and A. H. Peterson refused to endorse the new pact. The June 16 accord reiterated the May 28 employers' proposal: recognition of the ILA, joint control of hiring halls, and no discrimination against any man for membership or nonmembership in a labor union. Wages and hours would be arbitrated after the men returned to work.⁵⁹ On June 17 ILA locals in Tacoma, Seattle, San Francisco, Portland, San Diego, Grays Harbor, and Olympia rejected the June 16 San Francisco agreement. After the meeting Local 38-97 President Freer told a reporter, "No body of men can be expected to agree to self-destruction."⁶⁰ Up and down the coast, seamen expressed indignation that they were left out of the agreement. In port after port,

longshoremen and striking marine unions began to formally pledge not to settle separately.

Several hours after the Tacoma longshoremen turned down the bosses' latest offer a troublesome incident occurred. At the Tacoma Waterfront Employers' office vandals threw a half dozen bricks through a window showering glass on Harvey Wells's desk. Wells refused to blame Tacoma longshoremen. "Frankly, I regard this as the work of communists who are trying to steal the real issue of this strike trouble, not only here but all over the coast."⁶¹

John Prins and Sam Stocking asserted that the signing of the agreement in San Francisco on June 16 formally ended the strike. On June 18 Harvey Wells called the union dispatcher for gangs to work the *Sithonia*. Wells received a flat refusal from the ILA hall. On the same day the Citizens' Emergency Committee placed an advertisement in the *News Tribune* promising 5,000 workers who had lost their jobs because of the strike that they would be able to work again when the Port of Tacoma reopened. The ad concluded "600 TACOMA LONGSHOREMEN HAVE NO RIGHT NOR WILL THEY BE PERMITTED TO DICTATE THE FUTURE TO 106,000 PEOPLE."⁶²

At 5:00 a.m. on June 20 the Tacoma Citizens' Emergency Committee and Mayor Smith of Seattle tried to open their ports. Loaded with scabs, the motorship *India* circled Commencement Bay expecting a signal to land. Meanwhile fifty special deputies arrived from Seattle in a chartered bus. At Fifteenth and Pacific the deputies transferred to trucks. Inside the vans were guns, baseball bats, hand grenades, and tear gas bombs purchased by the Tacoma Chamber of Commerce. After arming themselves, the deputies motored through a foggy murk to the Milwaukee dock. At the pier waiting to meet the deputies were 400 Tacoma longshoremen. The Milwaukee dock gates were locked. Neither the deputies nor the awaiting Citizens' Emergency Committee had a key. A tense parley was held by deputies and unarmed longshoremen. When police arrived, they searched everyone. The lawmen relieved the special guards of their weapons. The "specials" discarded their arm bands and badges and returned to the charter bus.⁶³

At the same time in Seattle, 400 officers escorted 200 scabs into Smith Cove. In the process, police routed 200 pickets from entrances to the piers and warehouses. That evening, Seattle Local 38-12 sent a delegation to the Central Labor Council asking the council to "go on record favoring a general strike if police and armed guards were not withdrawn in twenty-four hours." After a long debate, the council adjourned without voting on the motion.⁶⁴

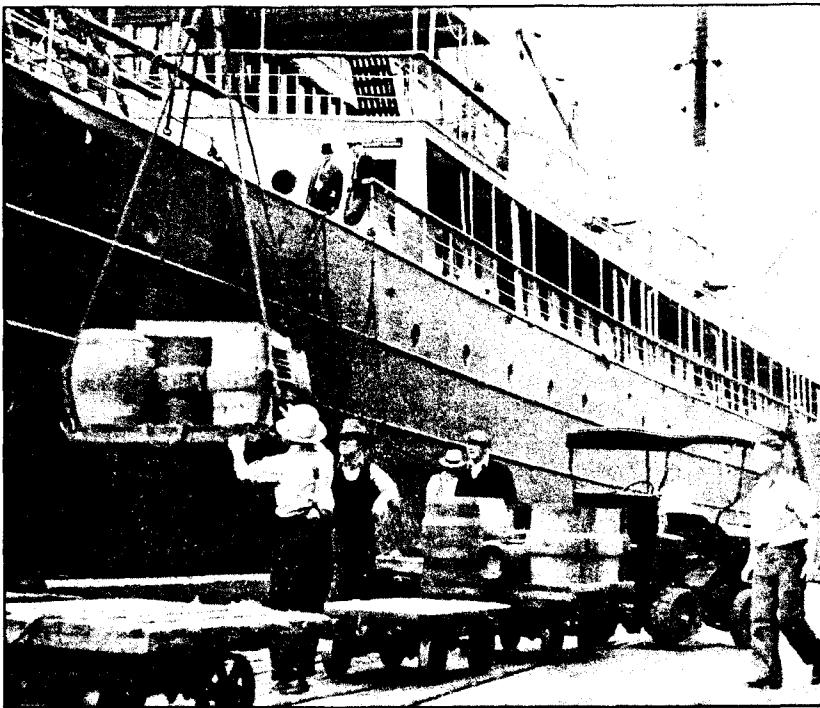
During the afternoon of June 20, the Tacoma Citizens' Emergency Committee issued a statement: "The frustration this morning of our initial effort to open the port has not caused us to change our minds in the least. The port must open." The committee promised that new special deputies would be hired. Thousands of unemployed would soon be able work on the waterfront in safety.⁶⁵ That evening the Tacoma Central Labor Council condemned the emergency committee's "advocacy of violence and lawlessness." The council recommended the Alaska Agreement as the best solution to the waterfront strike.⁶⁶

During the morning of June 21, the Joint Northwest Strike Committee asked the Seattle Central Labor Council to inform city officials that if police were not removed from Smith Cove, all work would cease on Alaska ships at 4:00 p.m. When Mayor Smith refused to remove the police from the docks, the strike committee pulled the men off the Alaska ships.⁶⁷ That same day, Mayor Smitely and Public Safety Commissioner Frank T. Callender received a written request from Port of Tacoma commissioners asking that police remove striking longshoremen from Port property. The port commission also sought police protection for steamships needing to load or unload.⁶⁸ The next day Commissioner Callender surveyed the Port's terminals to determine the number of officers that would be needed. The Citizens' Emergency Committee asked that guards be hired and stationed quickly to protect strikebreakers. After a newspaper reported the planned Port-Citizens' Emergency Committee deal, 150 longshoremen joined the existing picket patrols at the entrances to Port piers. The union was determined to stop any surprise attempt to open the Port. Efforts by Callender to obtain state highway patrol officers to guard the docks were blocked by Governor Martin.⁶⁹

At 8:00 a.m. on Sunday June 24 longshore pickets suddenly disappeared from Port of Tacoma docks. A secret session on Saturday afternoon between port commissioners and longshore officials led to "a closely veiled pact." Neither longshore officials nor port commissioners would discuss the matter with the press. Police Chief Harold Bird told reporters that port commissioners did not seem to be interested anymore in having additional protection. The Citizens' Emergency Committee thought the Port had evicted the pickets. The next step would be to keep the docks open twenty-four hours. Then, steamers would be dispatched to pick up cargo.⁷⁰ When a delegation of the citizens' committee appeared at the port commission meeting to ask about using the docks, the commissioners turned a deaf ear to their questions.⁷¹

The Waterfront Employers of Seattle continued to work ships at Smith Cove with armed protection. By June 29, scabs had unloaded seven vessels at Pier 40. With warehouses filled to overflow, the cargo lay helter-skelter on docks and against the walls of overstuffed warehouses.⁷² In response to a rumor that Standard Oil planned to dispatch a tanker with a scab crew, longshoremen and sailors tried to get through the company's gates at Point Wells. As the union men and guards clashed, an ambusher opened fire from across the road. Local 38-12 member Shelvy Daffron dropped, fatally shot in the back.⁷³

On June 30, Interior Secretary Ickes prepared to charter ships to take food and supplies to Alaska.⁷⁴ The next day President Roosevelt quietly signed an executive order to charter ships to supply Alaska. Before Secretary Ickes could implement the presidential order he had to clear it with Labor Secretary Perkins.⁷⁵ Meanwhile, in Seattle Charles A. Reynolds, a member of the President's Mediation Board, told longshoremen and Alaska shipping lines that a new agreement covering Northern Territory vessels must be reached soon or government troops would load chartered ships.⁷⁶ After a conference with Judge Reynolds, on July 5 the Joint Northwest Strike Committee offered to



Alaska Steamship's S.S. Yukon was the first vessel to unload cargo at the Port piers when work was resumed in Tacoma on July 7 under the Alaska Agreement.

(Richards photo, Magden collection)

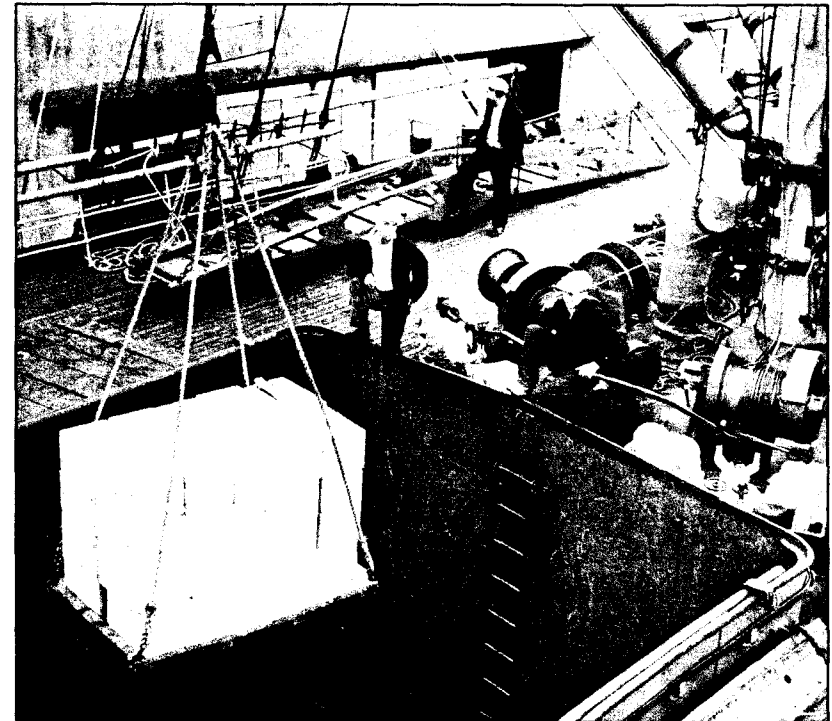
load ships under the terms of the Alaska Agreement at any port where there were no armed guards. A committee from Northwestern Steamship Company agreed to longshore and marine terms. Northwestern asked, and received, permission from the strike committee to load the Alaska-bound *Evelyn Berg* at the Port of Tacoma. Quickly, the other Alaska shippers acceded to the Joint Northwest Strike Committee's terms.⁷⁷ On July 6 four Alaska Steam freighters called at Port of Tacoma piers. The line of trucks carrying cargo from Seattle extended a half-mile in front of the Port of Tacoma's Pier 2.⁷⁸

The National Longshoremen's Board

Resumption of Alaska shipping ended the Tacoma Citizens' Emergency Committee's campaign to force open the Port of Tacoma. Prins turned to the Waterfront Employers of Seattle to put an end to Local 38-97's closed shop. In turn, Seattle waterfront employers sent representatives to participate in hearings with the newly constituted National Longshoremen's Board (NLB) in San Francisco.⁷⁹ Labor legislation passed by Congress during June 1934 empowered

President Roosevelt to establish boards of investigation and arbitration for labor disputes. NLB was the first of these boards created under the new federal law. On June 26 President Roosevelt appointed to the NLB Archbishop Edward Hanna, attorney Oscar K. Cushing, and Assistant Secretary of Labor Edward F. McGrady. The board was charged with bringing the contesting sides together. But by this time the positions of the adversaries had hardened to granite.⁸⁰

At the first NLB public hearing on July 9-11, ILA executive board member A. H. Peterson pointed out that the men wanted a coastwide wage scale of \$1.00 an hour straight time and \$1.50 overtime. In order to distribute the work evenly the six-hour day should be instituted. Harry Bridges of the San Francisco strike committee stressed the necessity of ILA control of the hiring hall in order to eliminate discrimination and favoritism.⁸¹ On behalf of the marine unions, Paul Scharrenberg demanded recognition, wage increases, and an end to the shipowners' employment bureaus.⁸² Speaking for shipowners and waterfront employers, Thomas Plant emphasized "A jointly operated hiring hall as provided in the June 16 agreement is fair and gives all that any fair-minded longshoreman can reasonably ask." As for the maritime unions, Plant told NLB that "It is utterly beyond the power [of the Waterfront



Mel Anderson tending hatch and Guy Bowman driving winch as cargo is hoisted from the hold of the Yukon.

(Richards photo, Magden collection)

Employers Union of San Francisco] to settle a controversy involving wages and working conditions of seafaring personnel.”⁸³ NLB recommended arbitration to the ILA, marine unions, and waterfront employers.

In the midst of NLB hearings, the Industrial Association opened the Embarcadero. On July 3 scab trucks rolled out of Pier 38 behind eight police patrol cars. Waving his revolver at pickets, Captain Thomas M. Hoertkorn yelled, “The port is open!” Strikers surged forward and threw bricks, cobblestones, and railroad spikes at the sent truck drivers. Police answered with night sticks, tear gas, and bullets. Pickets retreated and merged with the spectators. July 4 was quiet. On July 5, a mammoth confrontation occurred in the morning on Rincon Hill. Here strikers fought with bricks and stones against tear gas and night sticks. That afternoon, a fierce struggle took place on the Embarcadero. Near the ILA hall, Nikolas Bordoise and Howard Sperry were shot and killed by police. Twenty minutes later, the riot squad bombed the ILA hall with tear gas. Police drove strikers into the crowd of bystanders. About 100 strikers were hospitalized with bullet wounds or other injuries. Finally, “Bloody Thursday” was over and sanitation workers cleaned up the area.⁸⁴

Within hours of the Rincon Hill battle, national guardsmen took positions along the San Francisco waterfront. The Golden Gate city became somber July 9. Thousands of longshoremen, other union men and women, and sympathizers walked silently up Market Street in the funeral procession for the two martyrs. In response to affirmative votes by affiliated unions, a General Strike Committee organized a massive walkout to start July 15, 1934. Although most California newspapers editorialized that the general strike was Communist-led, the general populace remained sympathetic toward the strikers.⁸⁵

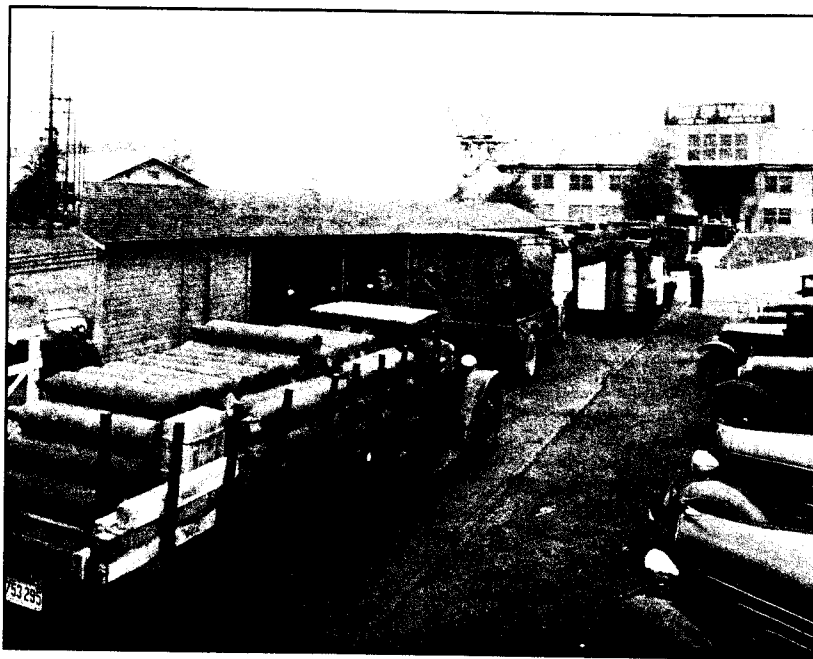
During the second day, the General Strike Committee debated a resolution calling for arbitration of all outstanding issues between longshoremen and maritime workers on the one side and employers on the other. Joint Marine Strike Committee Chairman Harry Bridges asked that the hiring hall issue not be included in arbitration. However, the committee voted 207 to 180 to arbitrate all issues. The following day, July 18, the National Longshoremen’s Board urged the two sides to arbitrate all outstanding issues. On July 19 the General Strike Committee debated a motion that the general strike end upon acceptance by the shipowners and employers of the terms of the President’s Longshoremen’s Board. An amendment to the motion removed the requirement that the employers must accept NLB terms. The motion passed as amended, and the general strike was over. That night, Teamsters voted to haul to and from the waterfront.⁸⁶

On July 20 prominent waterfront employers and newspaper publishers held a private meeting in a San Francisco suburb. After the meeting, newspapers printed front-page stories announcing that employers urged shipowners to accept a plan of arbitration for the various seagoing crafts providing the Longshoremen’s Association voted to submit all differences to the President’s Arbitration Board. Forty-two shipowners agreed to arbitrate wages, hours, and working conditions, and to hold representation elections on all vessels. The steamship companies declared they would accept union recognition if a majority of seamen voted to form unions.⁸⁷

In the Pacific Northwest, the strike moved rapidly toward a climax. Portland employers tried on July 7 and 11 to open the port, but failed. In the process, affiliates of the Portland Central Labor Council began voting on whether or not to declare a general strike. On July 18 special deputies fired on a car carrying United States Senator Robert Wagner around the Portland waterfront. The next day, Governor Julius Meier ordered the National Guard to encamp near Portland. When employers made no further efforts to open the port, general strike talk subsided.⁸⁸

In Seattle, on July 9 special deputy sheriff Steven Watson was fatally shot in a clash near the scab hiring office. A week later the Citizens’ Emergency Committee announced plans to double the number of ships to be worked at Smith Cove.⁸⁹ On July 18, about 1,200 Puget Sound longshoremen and their sympathizers battled police at Smith Cove.⁹⁰ The next day ILA reinforcements from Aberdeen, Bellingham, Everett, and Tacoma marched in semi-military fashion into the cove.⁹¹ Early in the morning of July 20, Mayor Smith ordered pickets driven from Smith Cove. From the side of the Garfield Street Bridge, police let loose a barrage of tear gas pellets. Seaman Olaf Helland fell mortally wounded. A gas grenade had hit him in the head. Police “mounties” chased the pickets from the cove across rail tracks and up the side of Queen Anne Hill. In fifteen minutes the battle was over.⁹²

On July 22 ILA District President William Lewis telegraphed Secretary John Bjorklund to poll the membership on the question of whether or not to



Trucks were lined up for over half a mile July 7 to deliver cargo for Alaska.

(Richards photo, Magden collection)

have a referendum on submitting all matters in dispute with employers to NLB for arbitration.⁹³ In notifying the locals, Bjorklund recommended the men accept arbitration. "We have put up too good a fight and our membership has gone through a considerable hardship, and I feel that this governmental board will at least render a decision whereby we can retain our organization."⁹⁴ The membership acceded to arbitration 6,504 to 1,525. In Tacoma 464 favored and 87 opposed NLB settlement.⁹⁵ Employers informed President Lewis that all strikebreakers would be removed from the docks, and that they would meet with marine groups to work out negotiation schedules.⁹⁶ The ILA locals stalled their return to work until all marine groups had also voted to go back to work at the same time. Seven hundred and thirty-five Tacoma longshoremen returned to work on July 31.⁹⁷ The strike had lasted eighty-three days. Twenty-seven thousand men had struck. Eight strikers had lost their lives. Hundreds had been gassed or injured. Thousands of families went through privation. It was the same across the nation. Altogether there were 1,856 strikes in the United States during 1934. Almost 1.5 million workers struck for union recognition and higher wages.⁹⁸

The NLB Award

The National Longshoremen's Board announced its decision in the form of an Award on October 12, 1934. NLB dealt with the major issue in Section 4: "The hiring of all longshoremen shall be through halls maintained and operated jointly by the International Longshoremen's Association and the respective employers' associations." Section 5 awarded appointment of hiring hall dispatchers solely to the International Longshoremen's Association. Since the dispatcher was the key to job control, the ILA had won a clearcut victory over the employers.⁹⁹

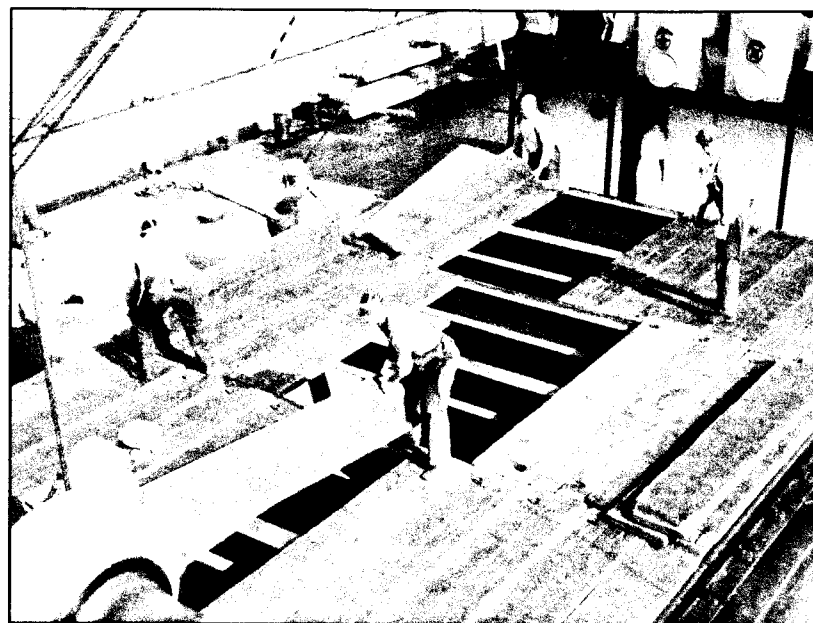
NLB also created joint Labor Relations Committees (LRC) composed of three employers and the same number of union longshoremen to operate each hall. This committee was required to maintain a list of registered longshoremen who would receive employment preference over casuals. Grievances by either workers or employers would be resolved by LRC. Additional ILA gains included wage increases to 95 cents an hour straight time and \$1.40 overtime, a workweek of thirty hours, and a six-hour day.¹⁰⁰

The longshoremen's allies in the 1934 strike made significant gains. Marine elections resulted in recognition and collective bargaining rights for unions on most coastwise and offshore shipping lines. However, unions were defeated in elections held on the oil tanker fleet. Overall, the 1934 strike was the greatest victory achieved by a group of West Coast unions. The men had gained a sense of power and solidarity during the strike that carried their unions to further victories.¹⁰¹

Employers did not come away from the NLB Award empty-handed. Shipowners and dock managers "shall be free, without interference or restraint from the International Longshoremen's Association, to introduce labor saving devices and to institute such methods of discharging and loading labor saving

devices and to institute such methods of discharging and loading cargo as he considers best suited to the conduct of his business, provided such methods of discharging and loading are not inimical to the safety or health of the employees." This was the first major Pacific Coast settlement that included a provision concerning mechanization. As new machines began to replace men on the docks and in ships' holds, mechanization became an increasingly thorny negotiation issue.¹⁰²

As far as Tacoma was concerned, Local 38-97 was exempt from the joint hiring hall provision mandated by the NLB Award. Tacomans kept their hall under full union control with their own dispatcher, thereby maintaining a pace-setting standard for the ILA. The 1934 victory over employers marked the apex of Tacoma influence in the affairs of Pacific Coast longshoremen. Supported by the large San Francisco local and well-disciplined Communist Party organizations on the coast, Harry Bridges sought to wrest control of the ILA Pacific Coast District from the established leadership. The ensuing power struggle had immense consequences, especially for the Tacoma longshore local.



Removing hatch covers July 31, the day the longshoremen returned to work.
(Washington State Historical Society)

CHAPTER IX TACOMA LONGSHOREMEN AND THE 1934 MARITIME STRIKE

1. TNT, May 9, 1934. TDL, May 9, 1934.
2. WES, May 8, 1934.
3. TNT, May 9, 1934.
4. Press Statement Issued at Noon, May 9, 1934, in Tacoma ILWU Local 23 Archives.
5. Of the Puget Sound metropolitan dailies, only the *Daily Olympian* and the *Seattle Times* published ILA statements as the strike began. See *Daily Olympian*, May 15, 1934 and ST, May 10, 1934.
6. T. A. Thronson, *The Tacoma Longshoremen and the Community*. Speech broadcast on KVI June 18, 1934. Reprinted in TLA, June 29, 1934.
7. TDL, May 15, 17, and 25, 1934. TNT, May 15, 16, 17, 18, and 24, 1934.
8. TLA, May 11, 1934. EXTRA Edition.
9. Ibid.
10. TNT, May 14, 1934.
11. Ibid., May 17, 1934.
12. WES, May 15, 1934. J. C. Bjorklund Memorandum to All Affiliated Locals, May 15, 1934. In his review of activities during 1934, President Lewis pointed out, "The Teamsters were contacted and their aid was asked, and the policy that they would pursue was discussed. They were distinctly told that we expected more than just a refusal to go on the dock proper; for the 1919 strike was broken through this means. They agreed to cooperate to the best of their ability." See PCDILA 1935, p. 23.
13. Clyde Black Interview. Black worked with Dahlager at the Eleventh Street Bridge during the longshore strike.
14. *Teamster Local 313 Minutes*, May 15, 1934.
15. WES, May 8, 9, 10, and 16; and June 15, 1934. On April 22, 1935, W. D. Vanderbilt of Grace & Company estimated that the 1934 strike had cost shipping companies \$60,000 in Seattle, \$122,000 at Portland, \$563,000 in San Francisco, and \$8620,000 in Los Angeles. See WES, April 22, 1935.
16. TCLC, June 6, 1934.
17. TLA, June 15, 1934.
18. Tabulation courtesy of Otilie Markholt. On July 6, 1934, J. C. Bjorklund sent out an appeal for funds to Atlantic, Great Lakes, and Gulf ILA locals. On July 21 President Ryan regretted that the response was poor. Great Lakes locals were involved in their own strike. The treasuries of Atlantic district locals were already depleted. See letter from J. P. Ryan to J. C. Bjorklund, July 21, 1934.
19. John Now Interview.
20. Bert Farmer, *Diary of an Everett Longshoreman*, May 12, 1934 Entry.
21. ST, May 10 and 11, 1934.
22. Victor Olson, T. A. Thronson, and Morris Thorsen Interviews.
23. PI, May 13, 1934. ST, May 15, 1934.
24. Gordon S. Wiley Interview.
25. WES, May 12, 1934.
26. ST, May 15, 1934. The governors sent their telegrams to Roosevelt on May 14.
27. WES, May 12, 1934. In attendance at the governor's afternoon meeting were the following labor officials: State Federation of Labor President James Taylor; Teamster Dave Beck; Harry McIlvaigh, Secretary of the Tacoma Central Labor Council; Paddy Morris and George Smith of Local 38-97; 2 members each from the Aberdeen and Olympia locals. Representing the waterfront employers at the morning session were W. S. Barr, K. J. Middleton, A. J. Swepe, W. D. Vanderbilt, and T. B. Wilson. Also present were John Prins, President of the Tacoma Chamber of Commerce; T. A. Stevenson, Secretary-Manager of the Tacoma Chamber of Commerce; Lee F. Dowd, President of the Defiance Lumber Company; and Sam Stocking, President of the Waterfront Employers of Tacoma. See WES, May 15, 1934, and TLA, May 18, 1934.
28. TLA, May 18, 1934.
29. Ibid.
30. WES, May 15, 1934.
31. Dave Beck Interview.
32. TLA, May 18, 1934.
33. Letter from E. A. Quigle, president of WES to Frank Foisie, May 17, 1934.
34. TCLC, May 16, 1934.
35. Roger Buchanan, *Dock Strike*, pp. 64-67 and 73-74. Hereafter cited as Buchanan.
36. TNT, May 15, 1934.
37. *Statement Issued by President's Special Board on Longshoremen's Strike*, May 28, 1934, p. 5 in FDR File 716. Hereafter cited as SB. For the employers' viewpoint of the negotiations see Paul Eliel, *The Waterfront and General Strikes San Francisco, 1934*, pp. 30-31. Hereafter cited as Eliel. For the ILA assessment see Letter from the California Members of the ILA District Executive Board to All Affiliated Locals, May 15, 1934. For a popular account of the San Francisco longshore strike see Mike Quin, *The Big Strike*.
38. TLA, May 25, 1934.
39. Ibid., June 1, 1934.
40. WES, May 31, 1934.
41. TDL, May 30, 1934.
42. *Memorandum from Turner Battle to Marvin McIntyre*, May 25, 1934, in FDR File 407B.
43. TNT, May 24, 1934.
44. ST, May 20, 1934.
45. TNT, May 24, 1934.
46. *Minutes of the Joint Northwest Strike Committee*, May 24, 25, 26, and 29, 1934. Hereafter cited as JNSC. Not until June 4 did the the JNSC give permission to load five Alaska vessels, including two cannery ships. ILA locals represented in JNSC included Aberdeen, Anacortes, Astoria, Bellingham, Everett, Olympia, Port Angeles, Raymond, Seattle, and Tacoma. Portland was entitled to seven delegates, but usually sent one person. The Columbia River ILA locals had their own joint strike committee. JNSC minutes are courtesy of Otilie Markholt.
47. John W. Troy Telegram. Thronson Interview. Thronson is the only survivor of the Joint Northwest Strike Committee.
48. JNSC, June 5-9, 1934. A copy of the June 8, 1934, Alaska Agreement is found attached to the June 9, 1934, minutes.
49. J. C. Bjorklund Files, *Plan to Create a District Strike Fund*, undated.

50. Bert Farmer, *Report of Strike Fund Committee*, June 18, 1934. Locals in distress received \$1.82 for each member. Among unions involved in the discussions concerning a coastwide federation were the ILA; Masters, Mates and Pilots; Marine Engineers; Sailors; Cooks and Stewards; Marine Firemen; and Radio Telegraphists.
51. TNT, June 12, 1934.
52. *Ibid.*, June 13, 1934.
53. Eliel, p. 51. Cites the *San Francisco News*, June 11, 1934.
54. JNSC, June 12, 1934. WES, June 13, 1934.
55. *Ibid.*, June 14, 1934.
56. TNT, June 15, 1934. ST, June 15, 1934.
57. Lundin was also president of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, and John Prins was president of the Tacoma Chamber of Commerce. TNT, June 15, 1934. There were also citizens' committees created by shippers in Los Angeles and San Francisco. See WES, June 2, 1934. Portland had a similar group, the Citizens' Emergency Board, which was composed of employers and sympathizers. See Buchanan, p. 76.
58. Eliel p. 57.
59. A copy of the June 16, 1934, San Francisco agreement is attached to WES, June 15, 1934. This marked the first time Los Angeles waterfront employers had been involved in an agreement. The guarantors of the June 16 agreement were: Mayor Angelo Rossi; Industrial Association President John Forbes; Teamster officials Dave Beck, Michael Casey, and John P. McLaughlin; and from the President's mediation board, Charles A. Reynolds and J. L. Leonard.
60. TNT, June 18, 1934.
61. *Ibid.*
62. *Ibid.*
63. T. A. Thronson and Vic Olsen Interviews. Accounts of the Milwaukee dock confrontation were printed in the TNT, June 20, 1934, and TLA, June 22, 1934.
64. SCLC, June 20 and 27, 1934.
65. TNT, June 21, 1934.
66. TLA, June 22, 1934.
67. JNSC June 21, 1934.
68. TNT, June 22, 1934.
69. *Ibid.*, June 23, 1934.
70. *Ibid.*, June 25, 1934. The Port of Tacoma minutes are silent about the June 23 meeting with Local 38-97.
71. *Ibid.*, June 26, 1934.
72. ST, June 29, 1934.
73. *Snohomish County Coroner L. S. Challacombe's Report into the Death of Shelby S. Daffron*, July 5, 1934.
74. *Memorandum Dictated by Franklin D. Roosevelt to Harold Ickes*, July 1, 1934, in FDR File 407B.
75. ST, July 11, 1934.
76. JNSC, July 5, 1934.

77. *Ibid.*, July 6, 1934.
78. TNT, July 6 and 7, 1934.
79. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.
80. *Report of the National Longshoremen's Board to the Secretary of Labor, February 9, 1935*, pp. 3-9. Hereafter cited as NLB2.
81. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.
82. *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.
83. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.
84. Irving Bernstein, *The Turbulent Years*, pp. 272-273. Hereafter cited as Bernstein.
85. Eliel, p. 128.
86. *San Francisco General Strike Committee Minutes*. Cited in Markholt, Notes.
87. Eliel, p. 172.
88. Buchanan, pp. 78-79.
89. ST, July 16, 1934.
90. *Ibid.*, July 18, 1934.
91. *Ibid.*, July 19, 1934.
92. *Ibid.*, July 20, 1934.
93. Telegram from W. J. Lewis to J. C. Bjorklund, July 22, 1934.
94. *J. C. Bjorklund Memorandum to All Locals*, July 22, 1934.
95. TNT, July 26, 1934.
96. Telegram from W. J. Lewis to J. C. Bjorklund, July 26, 1934.
97. TNT, July 31, 1934.
98. Florence Peterson, *Strikes in the United States 1880-1936*, p. 21.
99. *National Longshoremen's Board. Arbitration Award In the Matter of the Arbitration between Pacific Coast Local 38 of the International Longshoremen's Association, Acting on Behalf of the Various Locals Whose Members Perform Longshore Labor and Waterfront Employers of Seattle, Waterfront Employers of Portland, Waterfront Employers' Union of San Francisco and Marine Service Bureau of Los Angeles*. pp. 4-5. Hereafter cited as NLB Award.
100. *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 6, and 7.
101. NLB2, February 8, 1935, p. 24.
102. NLB Award, p. 9.