

ILWU-PMA Dock Talks Resume

SAN FRANCISCO — Coastwise longshore negotiations were resumed here on Wednesday, August 25, just as the strike was moving into its ninth week.

In a joint press release the ILWU and PMA stated "all items are open for negotiations except those items reserved for local negotiations."

The first coast meeting was underway as **The Dispatcher** went to press.

This marked the end of a remarkably busy week that started with ILWU president Harry Bridges speaking to the news media in what newsmen said was one of the biggest press conferences ever seen in this area.

At that press conference on Wednesday, August 18, Bridges read two statements; and answered questions for about 45 minutes.

He first read a telegram to President Nixon stating the union's opposition to the freeze on wages, claiming this puts the burden of fighting inflation on the backs of the working people, favors the rich and hurts millions of workers and small businessmen.

Further, he said, companies have been raising prices "whenever they can get away with it" and exorbitant prices "prevent organized labor from catching up with what has been lost through inflation."

STRIKE CONTINUES

Finally, he told the President: The LWU's strike against the PMA "will continue in full force and effect until such time as a collective bargaining agreement is ratified by the membership."

This statement came at the same time that government officials were demanding that all strikes cease and applying that legal force might be used against strikers.

It was also reported that the strike

committee agreed—"recognizing the special needs of the wheat farmers in California and the Pacific Northwest"—to resume work in any tide-water grain elevator which had been stopped as a result of the strike.

In another statement to the press, Bridges read from a document that had been concurred in by members of the Coast Strike Strategy Subcommittee, which includes the four titled officers and two coast committeemen.

This statement also vigorously condemned the Presidential Order freezing wages and called for a meeting of the Coast Strike Strategy Committee for Monday, August 23. It recommended:

- To make it clear to all concerned, particularly the PMA, that the longshore strike continues in full force and effect on all items, including wages.

- To consider resuming negotiations.

- To reconsider the question of allowing all cargo to be cleared from docks . . . but with no cargo to be moved from ships or barges, with the exceptions already in effect, such as military cargo, perishables, passenger vessels, mail and baggage.

- To reaffirm the union's position that local negotiations must continue on the eight items agreed upon by the caucus—including manning and section 9.43, dealing with steady men.

(Full texts of the telegram and statement as well as excerpts from the press conference can be found on pages 4 and 5.)

CONCURRENCE

The full committee met on August 23-24 and concurred in the recommendations.

In another letter to all longshore and clerk locals, the full committee announced the decision to resume

negotiations "on all of the union's strike demands, including wages."

They also decided that cargo on docks or transit sheds which was on site when the strike began will be released for delivery.

In referring to the delivery of cargo, the committee stated ". . . releasing this cargo will strengthen our strike and relieve some of the hardships on small businessmen as a result of the President's freeze order."

Cargo released must be handled and prepared by longshoremen and clerks in accordance with either the Pacific Coast Longshore and Clerk Document or the Container Freight Station supplement. However, no commercial cargo will be received for loading.

(Full text of this letter is on page 8.)

Welfare Fund Keeps Paying

SAN FRANCISCO—Health Plan benefits will be continued, with longshore employers paying the premiums as in the past.

This was the ruling by Coast Arbitrator Sam Kagel on August 24, after ILWU and PMA trustees disagreed on the issue. PMA claimed no obligation to pay from the Welfare Fund; ILWU trustees said the money in the fund had to be used. It totals \$2,606,374.33.

Kagel's decision said: "It is hereby ordered that the monies in the Fund shall be used and expended for the purpose of paying the required premiums to provide the benefits agreed to in the Fund, such payments to be effective as of July 1, 1971."