

Bridges Explains PMA Final Offer, Strike Strategy

The following letter, sent out to all longshore and clerk locals, brings the negotiation and strike picture up-to-date through July 7. In the letter, president Bridges discusses the PMA final offer, and strike strategy, including what cargo is to be worked. Also discussed is the matter of welfare and pension benefits during the strike—Editor's note.

To All Longshore and Clerk Locals

Dear Sirs and Brothers:

Negotiations with PMA resumed Monday, June 28 and continued until the evening of June 30, 1971. During these negotiations the Coast Negotiating Committee presented PMA with a revised copy of our strike position quoted in full in *The Dispatcher* June 17, 1971. The union's pension demand was firmed up to provide for \$500 per year pension at age 55 for all men retiring after July 1 with 25 years of service. The union also demanded PCLA wages for CFS work. All other demands in the union's strike position remain the same.

PMA Final Proposals

PMA made a number of new proposals to avoid a strike during the course of the last minute negotiations. On Monday June 28 the employers proposed a basic wage increase of 50 cents for the first year, 35 cents for the second year, and 50 cents for the third year. PMA also proposed to add an additional money amount as a substitute for the union's demand for a work opportunity guarantee, provided the union drop its demand for a work opportunity guarantee.

No meaningful negotiations and explorations could be conducted along this line because the employers refused to accept the union's definition of longshore work jurisdiction, and the union's definition of a shipper's load.

PMA pushed very hard for a 3-year contract, emphasizing that both in the National Master Freight Agreement with the Teamsters and the ILWU-IBT Warehouse Agreement, and the recent United Auto Workers-General Motors settlements were made for 3 years, and for money amounts less than half that being asked by longshore.

On the eve of the strike PMA made two proposals—one for a 1-year settlement and the other for a 3-year settlement—both of which were rejected by the Committee.

Employers' One-Year Settlement

75c per hour increase—7/1/71.

Pensioners retired prior to 7/1/66—\$235 per month, plus cost-of-living increase, 7/1/72 and 7/1/73.

Pensioners retired on or after 7/1/66 but before 7/1/71—\$300 per month, effective 7/1/71.

Pension benefits after 7/1/71—\$325 per month.

Normal retirement age—62 years, with 25 years of service, and those who retire prior to age 65 shall receive a supplemental pension of \$75 per month until age 65. Compulsory retirement age to be reduced from age 68 to age 65 over a 3-year period.

Change one sentence in the CFS Agreement to provide that the transition period terminates midnight, June 30, 1972.

Employers' Settlement for Three-Year Proposal

The British Columbia Longshore Agreement as written, for a 3-year period.

For the benefit of many of our members who are unfamiliar with it, the British Columbia Longshore Agreement now has a base rate of \$4.78 per hour with an increase to \$5.03 on February 1, 1972. It has provisions in it for the stuffing and unstuffing of containers by longshoremen for freight destined or originating in certain well-defined geographical areas. The British Columbia agreement also provides a guarantee of \$4,349.80 (Canadian dollar is now valued at \$.97) every 26 weeks, provided that the man is available for

work 130 days (excluding Sundays) during that period.

It is impossible to thoroughly evaluate the real meaning of this proposed agreement because of differences in work practices and other items. The next issue of *The Dispatcher* will publish a summary of the major provisions of the British Columbia Longshore-Agreement so that our members will become more familiar with that Agreement. (See page)

One thing of course was very obvious, namely that the employers can grant our demands on jurisdiction if they so desire. This was the first time any movement took place during the entire nine months of negotiations on this important matter. These proposals were rejected by the Coast Negotiating Committee, and a coastwide strike was effective 8 a.m., July 1, 1971.

Coast Strike Strategy Policy

The Coast Strategy Committee, consisting of CLRC and Int'l officers, a sub-committee of the Coast Negotiations Committee per caucus action, has made the following decisions on strike policy which all longshore and clerk locals shall follow:

- 1) All longshore and clerk locals whose members are employed by both PMA and non-PMA companies are on strike. All foremen and watchmen's locals shall continue to perform their normal work.
- 2) Confine the strike to on-and-off ship, or barges, and on-and-off docks, as defined in the longshore agreement. Permit off-dock warehouses and dock area warehouse operations to work with port wide and/or area wide committees instructed to implement such policy. In implementing, care should be exercised at all levels so as to preserve maximum unity and understanding of locals."
- 3) The following EXCEPTIONS are authorized:
 - a) Military cargo. Area committees to work out distribution of work.
 - b) Passenger ships.
 - c) Mail, baggage and stores.
 - d) Perishables (including ship stores, cargo that will rot or spoil on ship or dock, chill, or some frozen cargoes). To be determined at local level.
 - e) Lines, inbound and outbound.
 - f) Logs shall be received.

g) Port grain elevators manned by longshoremen from dispatch halls shall be closed.

4) Diverted vessels with cargo for U.S. ports should be worked until further notice. This policy to apply to Canadian, East Coast and Mexican ports.

The Committee feels that with the entire Coast solidly on strike there is no need at this time to seek action from Canada, Mexico or the Atlantic and Gulf ports in the I.L.A. The Coast Strike Strategy Committee has the power to change policy on this at some future date.

Should any situation arise in any area which is not covered by these instructions, the local strike committee should contact the Coast Strike Strategy Committee.

Welfare and Pension Benefits

For the past several weeks, the Coast Labor Relations Committee has been trying to work out arrangements with PMA for continuing welfare benefits during the strike. The ILWU position has been that all monies left in the Welfare Fund should be used to make payments to various carriers, so that welfare benefits should be continued at least until such time as the funds are exhausted. The union has stated that the Trustees are bound to use the money for the purposes intended, and that payments for welfare should continue. The PMA has refused to change its position of not paying medical benefits to strikers.

Disagreement was reached in Coast LRC on this matter at 10:30 a.m. June 30, 1971. ILWU will take this matter before the Coast Arbitrator, and if the Coast Arbitrator refuses to rule, or rules against the union, then the ILWU Longshore Division will negotiate directly with the carriers. The ILWU Longshore Division will guarantee that full reimbursement will be deducted from the final wage settlement. Every effort will be made to provide welfare benefits for the duration of the strike.

Pension payments will continue.

The matter of welfare benefits will go to arbitration very shortly, and local unions will be kept fully informed of any decision in this important matter. As the strike develops, all local unions will be kept fully informed of all developments.

Fraternally,

HARRY BRIDGES, Chairman
Coast Negotiating Committee.

