

# West Coast Longshoremen, Clerks On the Bricks

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• On a work opportunity guarantee, the union demanded 40 straight time hours guaranteed for registered "A" men and 32 hours guaranteed for "B" men. The employers in effect tried to buy out the guarantee by offering an in lieu approach—meaning not to offer a guarantee but to add some of the cost to the entire package.

• On pensions, the union asked \$500 at age 55 for all men retiring after July 1 with 25 years of service. The employers' basic pension offer was \$325 a month for new retirees.

## ALL COMPANIES

The ILWU longshore strike is against all companies, PMA and non-PMA alike.

The Negotiating Committee, chaired by ILWU president Bridges, agreed to the following exceptions:

Military cargo will be worked as will passengers' baggage; also mail.

The other exception is perishables, now on ships or docks. This includes chill cargo but not freezer.

## CONTAINER ACTION

The day before the strike was called, starting at 12:01 a.m., June 30, a program of action was undertaken at all ports in which any containers not stuffed by the registered work force were not loaded aboard ship, unless those loads fell under the exception of manufacturers' loads, military cargo, door-to-door delivery or pickup (domestic trade).

At all ports on the Pacific Coast, longshoremen and clerks were making strike preparations all during the week. Strike committees were set up, including picketing commit-

## Local 63, Wilmington

WILMINGTON—In recent elections, Nick Podue was elected secretary-treasurer of clerks' Local 63. T. C. Harrison was elected relief dispatcher; Maneul Balver will be alternate dispatcher. Al Perisho will serve on LRC and Jim Bowen, Harlan R. Azpettia, Al Perisho, James Jackson, Joseph Argento, Nick Podue, Harry B. Aiken will serve as directors of the Marine Clerks' Memorial Association, Inc.

tees, information and publicity, waterfront patrol, finance and credit committees, legal defense, commissary, etc.

A number of local bulletins reminded members that this is the first West Coast longshore strike in 23 years.

This makes it a new experience for the majority of ILWU longshore division members—most of whom came into the industry since 1948, the year of the last Coast strike.

Most bulletins also reminded their members that longshore strikes traditionally last a long time, and to be prepared for a tough and grueling fight. The 1948 strike lasted 95 days, only being settled on Christmas Eve of that year.

The 1971 strike fell on the eve of the 37th anniversary of Bloody

Thursday, which happened during the "Big Strike" that was won in 1934.

## BACKGROUND

The background of the present strike began with the "preliminary longshore caucus" held in October, 1970. Then the 105 delegates from 40 locals developed a heavy set of demands, covering every aspect of waterfront work and conditions.

The first of these negotiations began in November, 1970, shortly after the caucus adjourned, and demands were presented to the employers. On December 7 both sides met again but by December 15 negotiations broke down.

Negotiations were resumed again February 3 and after many days spent at the bargaining table, the Negotiating Committee reported to the April longshore caucus, which took place immediately after the Nineteenth Biennial Convention.

That five-day caucus, April 27-May 1, was told that the PMA had rejected the "October demands."

The caucus determined the following program:

• No negotiations with PMA unless the Negotiating Committee believes the employers will come up quickly with a settlement position which can be recommended to the rank-and-file.

• Locals to enforce the Container Freight Station Agreement by not working containers on June 30 not stuffed by the ILWU registered work force (with certain exceptions).

• The Negotiating Committee, when it feels such action is necessary, may call a coastwise strike vote.

## SUPPORT

The caucus was told of the full backing by the rest of the ILWU, including a special pledge of support by Canadian area longshoremen. Support was also pledged by the International Longshoremen's Association, which operates in Atlantic and Gulf Coast and Great Lakes ports.

Negotiations were recessed shortly after the caucus to give Committee members time to go to their home ports to negotiate on local issues and explain the program.

As the deadline approached, president Bridges in his On The Beam column said: "The union's program is one of making every effort to get a new two-year agreement by negotiations and to embark on a strike program only as a last resort when all else fails."

Negotiations broke off on June 7, because of a lack of progress. The strike vote was taken soon after, with the 96.4 percent results.

Negotiations began again on June 29, with the union's final strike position presented to the employers. Talks went on for two days.

And on July 1, at 8 a.m., the wheels stopped turning!

## New Vote Ordered

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On June 25, the International balloting committee announced that since "interpreting the International Constitution is the exclusive authority of President Bridges" it would withhold certification of the coast committee election until Almeida's challenge was resolved.

On June 28, President Bridges, after consultation with the balloting committee, upheld the challenge and set the new date for coast committee elections.

In his ruling, Bridges noted that Ward and Huntsinger had won the contested election and commented:

"Naturally, I do not make such a serious decision . . . of declaring an election by secret ballot null and void without giving the matter serious thought, and realizing I must adhere strictly to the constitution, regardless of what opinion I might have. In the instant case, I let the balloting committee know that I had notified both incumbent committeemen, Ward and Forrester, what I intended to do in this matter, and can only say that both of them agreed with me . . ."

Bridges noted that the elimination of the Hawaii vote and the inclusion of the 350 Local 13 votes could change the results for both offices.

June 29, 1971

### 1) JURISDICTION — Containers

Extend for two years the present CFS, subject to review after one year, with elimination of transition period provision and addition of union's definition of shippers' loads. PCLA wages for CFS work.

#### EXCEPTIONS: Manufacturers' loads

Door to door delivery or pickup (domestic trade)

Other exceptions by mutual agreement

2) CONTRACT PROVISION ON SCOPE OF WORK AND CONTRACT COVERAGE, i.e., Industrial Docks, teamsters loading and unloading trucks at designated areas, log assembly—still to be negotiated.

### 3) WORK OPPORTUNITY GUARANTEE.

- Registered "A" men — 40 straight time hours;
- "B" men — 32 hours plus guarantee of being moved to "A" registration in stipulated numbers, and over stipulated periods of time during two-year term of contract, or a longer time as mutually agreed upon;
- Hours worked or paid for under the guarantee to be counted for all fringe benefits.

## Union's Strike Position

4) WAGES. First year — 85c; second year — 75c.

5) PENSIONS. \$500 at age 55 for all men retiring after July 1 with 25 years of service.

6) WELFARE. New welfare benefits limited to active men only, except prescription drugs.

- Continue present level of benefits under Kaiser Plan;
- Eliminate inequities in small ports where no group plan is available;
- Add dental care and prescription drugs for all who qualify under the contract;
- Life insurance of \$20,000, double indemnity, and A.D. & D. for men whose survivors are not entitled to benefits under the Pension Plan.

### 7) MANNING SCALES.

- For new operations: Before being started, to be decided by JLRC or Local Arbitrator's interim decision;
- Basic minimum manning for hand-handling, as now in Section 10.1;
- Present T-letter manning scales to be carried over to new agreement, subject

to challenge and change by the parties;

d. Present T-letter manning procedure to be abolished. All manning other than basic hand-handling (10.1) and manning in present negotiations established for all ports to be determined locally by parties and by Area Arbitrator if necessary.

### 8) GRIEVANCE MACHINERY

- Revised to provide for speedy settlement of on-job discharge, with on-job interim arbitration;
- Define assault;
- Amend Section 17.72 on non-dispatch to put limit on the period of time a man can be on the list;
- Revise Section 17.81 regarding penalty on union officials.

### 9) LENGTH OF CONTRACT — two years.

### 10) CLERKS' DEMANDS—to sub-committee.

11) Five PAID HOLIDAYS the first year; five more the second contract year.

These demands are strike demands. All other union demands as submitted to PMA on November 6, 1970, to be negotiated by the parties, and to be finally resolved by negotiation and/or arbitration.