

Gleason Speaks; ILA Solidarity Pledged in Coast Dock Battle

HONOLULU — A pledge of cooperation and solidarity during current negotiations — and in the event of a West Coast longshore strike — was brought to the ILWU's Nineteenth Biennial Convention by Thomas "Teddy" Gleason, president of the International Longshoremen's Association.

This was the highlight of the second day of the Convention, which voted to seat Gleason and seven other ILA visitors from the East and Gulf Coasts as fraternal delegates.

Gleason and his companions were introduced by ILWU president Bridges, who referred to the need for unity between the two unions.

Gleason touched on the many problems the two unions have in common: Technological changes that threaten jobs; legislation, such as the Nixon Administration's "Emergency Public Interest Protection Act," which both the ILWU and ILA consider a threat to force compulsory arbitration on transportation unions. He touched on the necessity for guaranteed wages, a work-or-pay guarantee that has been won by the ILA, and is one of the major ILWU demands in current negotiations.

FOR COOPERATION

Although Gleason touched lightly on the possibilities of eventual merger, he said he did not want to make this an issue on the floor while he was a guest.

Cooperation was his keynote:

"One down, all down, we have to support you in your efforts—because our efforts depend on it.

"We pledge ourselves to the goal of industry-wide unity and industry-wide solidarity. We extend to you the promise of our fraternal support in your own efforts toward a new collective agreement. The sense of fraternity and cooperation that has been developing between us in the last year must flourish and grow."

Gleason spoke of the difficulties the ILA has had with the "waterfront commission" which has the power to deny men the right to work. And he noted that recent customs regulations could be also used to determine who has the right to work on the waterfront.

In an amusing sidelight, Gleason said he had his "barrister" along with him — referring to Louis Waldman, ILA legal counsel — who told



ILA FRATERNAL visitors, from left, Captain William Caldwell, vice president, Masters, Mates and Pilots; Anthony Scotto, ILA vice president (Brooklyn); John Bowers, executive vice president; Louis Waldman, ILA legal counsel; Thomas Gleason, president; William Murphy, vice president (New Jersey); Fred Field, general organizer. Missing from picture, William Hopkins, vice president (Houston). Below, Gleason gets traditional Hawaiian welcome from Jean Sampaio.



him he had to read his speech exactly as written.

Gleason brought fraternal greetings from ILA's 115,000 members in Atlantic Coast, South Atlantic and Gulf Coast Ports and the Great Lakes.

He also noted that the ILA, like the ILWU, is built around the nucleus of longshoremen, but has many related crafts — checkers, clerks, carpenters, painters, maintenance men, warehousemen, fishermen, food processors and many others.

"The greatest challenge we have faced in recent years is the same one that has confronted you," Gleason said. "These are automation,

containerization, LASH, and all the other technological developments that threaten to decimate our industry and leave our members jobless."

While the ILA has not solved the problem of technological change, Gleason said it has made great progress through contractual agreements that guarantee that most of the work of stripping and stuffing containers is handled by longshoremen.

BRIDGES COMMENTS

The other main item of progress is the guaranteed annual income, "which means that every regular longshoreman who is ready, willing and able to work is guaranteed a

day's pay whether he's hired or not."

Gleason called this "the union way of solving the unemployment problem. Only unions can do it."

He said that a guaranteed wage is not only what longshoremen need, but is something needed on a national scale for all industries in the country.

At the conclusion of his speech Bridges pointed out that among the common programs of the ILWU and ILA is an agreement, "that we are not going to rest until a political prisoner who was framed is set free. His name is Jimmy Hoffa."

In answer to speculation that the two unions may develop plans for formal affiliation, Bridges said, "We can have close cooperation with or without affiliation. That is a decision that can be made at this Convention. The rank-and-file members of this union will decide what to do."

In addition to Gleason and Waldman, other fraternal delegates from the ILA included: John Bowers, executive vice president; William Murphy, vice president (New Jersey); William Hopkins, vice president (Houston); Anthony Scotto, vice president (Brooklyn); Fred Field, general organizer (New York); Captain William Caldwell, vice president, Masters, Mates and Pilots (regional director, Pacific Coast).