

# Wages Are Frozen; Prices Melt

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## Coast Parleys Intensified

SAN FRANCISCO — One of the main immediate effects of the Nixon wage-price freeze was that pay raises and cost of living allowances for more than seven million workers in the United States have been prevented, according to labor sources. An AFL-CIO economist said that "in fact there's a good indication that at least 10 million are affected."

Payment of those increments, said economist Rudolph Oswald, would not have been inflationary because "business and industry built that money into the price system before the freeze. They knew when the pay raises and cost of living allowances were due."

The effects on collective bargaining were also clear. Said Secretary of Labor Hodgson, "The executive order was not intended to declare a moratorium on collective bargaining nor to discourage settlements. The parties may undertake to negotiate settlements providing wage and benefit terms to become effective after the freeze period. If they do this, they should be advised that subsequent revisions of these terms may be needed depending on what policies will prevail following the 90-day freeze. The policies have not been determined at this time."

"Now let's examine what may be done. The parties may not agree to wage or benefit increases which would become effective during the freeze period. Nor may they agree to wage or benefit increases that apply to work performed during the freeze period which would be paid at some later date."

In other words, workers can bargain on everything but wages!

### WAGE CUT

And sometimes it's even worse: "For example," Hodgson continued, "a contract is agreed to on September 1, effective July 1, increasing the wage rate from \$2.80 to \$3.00. For the period July 1 through August 15, the workers' wage is \$3.00 and from August 16 through the duration of the freeze, \$2.80." In other words, we are dealing not only with the weakening of collective bargaining but an actual wage cut in Hodgson's example.

Consensus among labor people is that the wage-price freeze has affected wages far more than prices. Substantial loopholes have been permitted to create rising prices, as the Consumer Price Index continued to rise by 3.1 percent last month.

If you are buying a new 1972 car, for example, during the freeze, there is nothing to stop a new car dealer from increasing prices by simply shaving his trade-in allowances.

Another government ruling allows many items to be priced during the freeze at their level in the 30-days preceding President Nixon's order or at their level of May 25, 1970. They can choose whichever price is higher.

This means that in the several instances where prices actually have decreased over the past year they may be raised during the freeze. For example, fibers which go into clothes were down as much as 35 percent over the year. Now, according to the Wall Street Journal, the DuPont Company indicates that it will raise prices during the freeze. Landlords are also given all kinds of latitude for raising rents during the freeze. Many fresh fruits and vegetables, among the most inflationary items, are exempt also.

### STEEL, INSURANCE

Most important, officials have interpreted the President's order to

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## Pensioners Back Dock Negotiators

ANDERSON, Calif.—The ILWU's West Coast pensioners held their fourth annual convention here September 13-15, and—undeterred by the broiling Sacramento Valley heat—made plans to continue their assistance to the dock strike.

In a telegram sent to ILWU International officers and the Coast Negotiating Committee, the Pacific Coast Pensioners' Association expressed "appreciation and approval of the manner in which you have given leadership and guidance toward bringing the strike to a successful conclusion. The Pensioners have reaffirmed their full and complete support of the locals' strike committees, and their striking brothers."

In his keynote address, PCPA president Bill Lawrence, formerly of Local 13, also praised the pensioners for their generous contributions to the dock strike. "To say the least," he said, "the response of our pensioners and widows has been tremendous."

### DEMONSTRATE

This was demonstrated in fact on opening day when Southern California pensioners' president Harold Billiarde presented Local 13 secretary-treasurer Rudy Rubio with a check for \$25,000, plus other smaller amounts for other locals in the area.

Rubio gave thanks to the pensioners and brought greetings from his local and from president John Pandora who could not be present because of a sudden death in his family.

Greetings were also sent by ILWU International officers and a number of members of the Coast Strike Strategy Committee who could not be present because of intensive negotiations.

Several top officers were on hand, including Shaun Maloney, Local 19 president; Eddie Holland, Local 54

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LONGSHORE NEGOTIATIONS were running at high gear in the last two weeks. Picture above shows a full joint session. Below, ILWU negotiators meet with US Mediation Service director J. Curtis Counts, seen in center, as president Bridges explains the union's position.

## All Issues Still on Table

SAN FRANCISCO — Coastwise longshore negotiations, which were resumed on August 25, became intensified in the last two weeks as ILWU and PMA committees held meetings days and nights and over weekends.

These sessions were being held almost continuously as the strike neared the three-month mark and as more ships came into Pacific Coast ports to tie up. At last report there were about 190 ships idled in the three western states.

For the first time last week there was United States government intervention in the strike with J. Curtis Counts, director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, sitting in on the joint talks, and occasionally meeting separately with union and employer committees.

Counts appeared after President Nixon announced he was sending him to San Francisco to try to get the parleys off dead center.

Counts told both sides that the government was anxious to see the dispute negotiated quickly because, the economic impact on the country,

especially as it hit the agricultural sector, was running into billions of dollars. He also implied in public statements that more severe legal or congressional intervention could be forthcoming unless settlement was reached across the table.

ILWU president Harry Bridges told Counts that the strike could end only as it began—by a vote of the rank and file.

He also pointed out (see his "On the Beam" column, page 2) that no substantial progress has been made on the union's major economic demands and warned that Taft-Hartley intervention "won't work!"

All basic issues remain on the table to be negotiated.

The union has presented a complete package to the employers, with emphasis on the main demands.

As The Dispatcher went to press, the new package included modifications in matters relating to wages, containers, the guarantee and pensions.

In keeping with the original ILWU-PMA agreement, details are not made public, except by joint release.

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