

# Bridges Blasts Compulsory Arbitration

I appear before you to oppose House and Senate Joint Resolution No. 1025 now pending before the Congress of the United States.

The purported purpose of the joint resolution is to provide a procedure for a settlement of the longshore strike on the Pacific Coast; to establish an arbitration board to hear and settle all issues in dispute; and to make a final and binding agreement which shall not be less than 18 months or more than 24 months; and to provide in some way for no strike or lockout action by the parties during such agreement.

## RANKS DECIDE

I want to say here and now personally, and for the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, which I have the honor to represent, that our recommendation to the striking ranks will be—that the workers came out on strike with a vote on an industrywide secret referendum ballot and they will return the same way.

In saying this, I mean no disrespect or defiance of President Nixon or his high office. I simply mean to say that in this instance he is trying by methods that won't work to force an end to our strike.

Even the President of the United States in his message to Congress does not make the claim that this strike must be ended because the national health and safety is in danger. Let me state for the record that the ILWU is working all cargo which has been designated as essential by the military. It was not the union but the employers who attempted not to work military cargo.

## ESSENTIAL WORK

During the course of the strike all special requests of the administration to work cargo which is deemed essential to the health and safety of the nation were granted. The special request of President Nixon to work wheat for emergency relief for Pakistan was granted. Other special requests involving special NASA cargo were also granted. During the present strike it is the policy of the union to work all passenger vessels and to unload all refrigerated cargoes which were on the high seas prior to the start of the strike.

It has been stated by the President and various administration spokesmen that the longshore strike is bringing about a permanent loss to the economy of the United States. Let me give you the results of a survey conducted by Mr. George Schultz presently head of the Office of Economic Management, in which he says:

"There appears to be no evidence of a permanent loss of export markets because of a strike. Any permanent losses would presumably show up in a slowdown in the rate of growth of either exports or imports not directly traceable to other causes—no such slowdown appears in the data and questioning of both major US exporters and US embassies failed to develop examples of permanent loss of customers or access to markets. This relative stability of markets for goods moving in foreign trade despite the loss of some sales during the strike most likely reflects the high proportion of finished manufactures in US trade. At present, over two-thirds of US exports and almost 60 percent of imports are finished products, an appreciable share of which are well insulated against the effects of temporary breakdowns in delivery schedules. These goods reflect unique technological developments and patents, brand name maintenance, or consumer acceptance. "The steady growth of the mul-

tinational company with extensive international inter-plant transfers also undoubtedly has an impact on the stability of markets for finished goods. Because their various plants and subsidiaries are, in effect, captive markets, interruptions in the transportation system, such as those caused by strikes, will not generate changes in the trade patterns for these companies. Market permanency, however, does not exist for many commercial agricultural products such as soybeans and wheat. These are normally sold on a strictly competitive basis involving price and delivery schedules. Inability to make delivery during strikes is reported to have caused significant losses of specific sales by the US, but not any appreciable loss of ability to repenetrate the market once delivery again becomes possible."

(January, 1970.)

## GRAIN NEGOTIATIONS

Recognizing the need of the farmers from the grain belt to ship their wheat abroad, the union has commenced separate negotiations with the principal tidewater grain terminal operators on the Pacific Coast of the United States, covering all grain elevators between Puget Sound and Mexico. Our purpose is to negotiate a special separate agreement to per-

left alone these issues will be settled very quickly. The issues in dispute at present have been greatly narrowed.

The principal misconception which seems to exist—that the major issues are of a jurisdictional nature—is totally untrue. The question of stuffing containers has been settled between the parties. And, if any minor jurisdictional problem should arise, we feel that sufficient mechanism has already been worked out between the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters to settle these few remaining matters.

The joint resolution attempts to draw the Teamsters Union into this dispute although the Teamsters Union is not on strike. The jurisdiction issue is manufactured for the purpose of passing this resolution. Mr. Einar Mohn, vice president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and director of the Western Conference of Teamsters, appears here with me today in complete opposition to the proposed joint resolution.

This legislation is so poorly drawn that apparently it was designed to give everybody a piece of the action. The legislation applies to the State of Hawaii, where there has been no strike of longshoremen, no strike of any kind. In Hawaii our union made

Paid holidays have become an accepted fixture in practically all American industries, including most of the transportation industries. The union's demand for paid holidays is neither unusual nor excessive. Yet, the employers say that paid holidays should not be granted in this particular industry.

3. The union has demanded that employees covered under the collective bargaining agreement shall be provided with prescription drugs.

This is a very normal and generally accepted practice in American industry.

Other issues in dispute relate to an increase in insurance coverage, wages for certain skill differentials, and a few other similar items.

In the context of an industry which has had 24 years of peaceful collective bargaining without a strike during all that period, it seems hardly practical or proper to me that this is the solution to our problems. We feel that if left alone, within a reasonably short time the parties will arrive at an amicable agreement.

During the last 10 years particularly, the union has grappled with the problem of mechanization, automation, containers, bigger ships. Most of these problems relating to job security, work opportunities, and providing the industry with an opportunity to develop, have been settled without strikes.

The present dispute relates basically to the need of the longshoremen for economic security. Many of the issues were complex and novel and required lengthy discussions. Most of these problems have already been settled.

In many industries these problems have resulted in strikes, year after year. The new technology in shipping has presented us with the types of problems which were not even in existence ten years ago. In this industry productivity has increased and costs declined. Our union must provide the security for our members and their families.

As a matter of fact, with all due respect to the committee, my appearance at these hearings has caused a delay in the negotiations which are required to end the strike. It appears to me that given some additional time the parties will be able to negotiate a suitable agreement.

This joint resolution is the first step in bringing about compulsory arbitration for all unions. The passage of the joint resolution will change the face of America and will bring us a long way down the road to compulsory arbitration, elimination of the right to strike, vesting the power over wages and working conditions in the hands of the government.

In my opinion this whole approach is unconstitutional and illegal. There is no law or constitutional provision requiring compulsory arbitration, and there is no law or constitutional provision saying that we can't take a referendum vote to return to work or to stay on strike, or that we must take such a vote. There is no law, at least not right now, which lays down the conditions under which we must return to work regardless of the wishes of the striking rank and file.

This joint resolution is the Trojan Horse to open the door to an all-out attempt to destroy the transportation unions in the United States, and we on our part have no intention of submitting to such legislation unless that is the will of our members as expressed in a secret ballot.

I shall be happy to answer your questions.

## Statement by Harry Bridges, President International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union

Before the  
House Labor Committee, Subcommittee  
Hon. Frank Thompson, Chairman  
and  
Senate Labor Committee  
Hon. Harrison Williams, Chairman  
Washington, D.C.  
February 4, 1972

mit normal shipments of grain and foodstuffs to begin immediately.

Our negotiations with the principal wheat companies are progressing, and we hope for a settlement with them shortly. In addition, our union is making efforts to commence separate negotiations with citrus, banana, and other perishable food shippers so that any burden which these shippers have may be alleviated.

## DETRIMENTAL TO WHOM?

Now, of course there are hardships to the importers of foreign automobiles and the importers of scotch whisky and the importers of Japanese steel, but I hardly think that the lack of imports of these commodities constitutes an emergency and is detrimental to the health and safety of the USA. In fact, many people, including some administration spokesmen, say just the opposite.

If the President of the United States has any special requests for any special cargo which he thinks must be moved in the interest of the health and safety of our country, we shall consider his requests to move that cargo now, just as we did in July, 1971, when he asked us to move wheat destined for Pakistan.

Our negotiations with the Pacific Maritime Association are making some marked progress. The parties have agreed to ask Mr. Sam Kagel, who for many years has been the Pacific Coast Longshore Industry Arbitrator, to act as a mediator in an effort to settle the issues in dispute; and, we feel that if the parties are

special provisions to handle the principal export crop, sugar. It permitted special voyages to bring such supplies as were necessary, and during the entire strike period weekly steamship service has been supplied by one of the principal steamship companies of the US. There is no emergency in Hawaii. There never has been an emergency in Hawaii. The emergency has been manufactured in the facile minds of some of the members of Congress from that state—and in the mind of the present Assistant Secretary of Labor, who was formerly employed by the Hawaii Employers Council.

We are apart at present on the following points:

1. Effective date of the wage increase.

The union proposes that the wage increase be effective as of November 14, 1971, the date of the commencement of Phase Two of the President's economic stabilization program. We propose this date because it is the date which has been granted by many of the same employers who are members of the Pacific Maritime Association to other longshoremen employed in the ports on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the United States. We see no reason why these employers should treat the longshoremen on the Pacific Coast in any different manner than they have already agreed to treat the longshoremen on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts.

2. We are in disagreement on the matter of paid holidays.