

# U.S. to Act If Dockers Walk Out

SAN FRANCISCO — (UPI) — The government will move quickly to force a settlement of the West Coast dock dispute if longshoremen walk off the job again tomorrow, a Nixon administration official said yesterday.

J. Curtis Counts, chief of the Federal Mediation Service, said the administration "will be ready with a bill for Congress" which would force the dock workers back onto the piers.

He said such a measure would either "settle the terms of the contract or establish a mechanism for settling those terms."

Counts made his comments during a recess in negotiations under way here between the Pacific Maritime Association and the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen Union in a last-ditch effort to avoid a walkout. The union has announced it may strike any time after 8 a.m. tomorrow.

Counts said he is hopeful that the basis for an agreement on the knotty jurisdictional question between the Teamsters and Longshoremen may result from talks held by ILWU president Harry Bridges with Teamster president Frank Fitzsimmons this week.

However, the federal mediator said the Teamster-ILWU relationship was not discussed in negotiations yesterday.

Bridges told newsmen that widely published reports that the two unions have agreed on a merger were "a lie." He said, however, he was optimistic that the weekend negotiations could avoid a renewal of the dock tie-up.

A 100-day walkout ended last October with a Taft-Hartley injunction which expired on Christmas Day.

Both sides have indicated that settlement of the container "stuffing" dispute between the Teamsters and the ILWU would end the threat of "guerrilla warfare" which has plagued West Coast docks in recent years.

The dispute has been simmering for 10 years over whether teamsters or longshoremen will pack and unpack the huge van-like containers which are increasingly being used for ocean freight.

Bridges has said his union regards the containers as "part of a ship," even though they can be removed from it. The Teamsters Union considers the containers part of a truck. Thousands of jobs are at stake because it takes