

11th-hour Talks Try To Avert Dock Strike

Deadline Is This Morning

UPI, AP

SAN FRANCISCO — With this morning's strike deadline drawing close, negotiators held last ditch talks last night on a tract which could avert resumption of West Coast longshoremen's walkout.

Both sides were warned by federal mediator J. Curtis Counts that the Nixon administration will move quickly to force a settlement if 15,000 workers leave their posts at 24 ports in California, Washington and Oregon.

The International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU), which took members of the Pacific Maritime Association for 100 days last summer.

at a strike deadline 8 a.m. today.

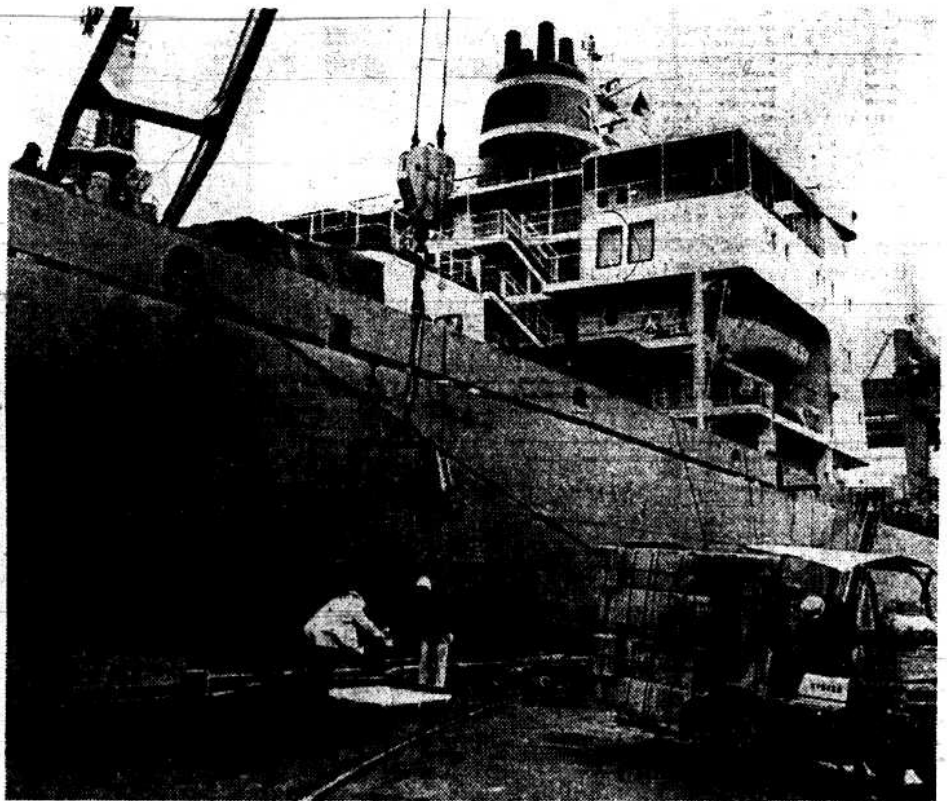
Representatives of both parties met separately for nearly

24 hours yesterday before recessing for dinner. They then held a four-hour session during which the ILWU made a contract proposal. There was no public response from the PMA.

When the bargainers recessed for dinner, Counts told newsmen: "You can't tell me these guys — the thing may blow up like a kite or this whole thing may be settled."

The administration's No. 1 mediator earlier said: "Nobody's really thinking out an extension of the contract."

Seattle longshoremen await results of this morning's key meeting. Page A-7.



—P-I Photo by Tom Brownell

LONGSHOREMEN READIED SLINGS ON JOHNSON LINE'S AXEL JOHNSON

Dock workers here put in last regular shifts yesterday

After a dinner break, both sides resumed their efforts to resolve the dispute.

Counts warned that the administration would immediately ask Congress to force longshoremen back to work if they do walk off the job again.

"We'll be ready with a bill for Congress," said Counts, explaining it would send the dockers back to work and "either settle the terms of a contract or establish a mechanism for settling those terms."