

Longshore Industry
[1949?]

THE
**WATERFRONT EMPLOYERS
ASSOCIATION**
OF THE
PACIFIC COAST
AND
LOCAL PORT ASSOCIATIONS

EXPLANATION OF FUNCTIONS WITH CHART

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WATERFRONT EMPLOYERS COOPERATE ON A COASTWIDE BASIS FOR BENEFIT OF BOTH MANAGEMENT AND SHORESIDE LABOR

● Teamwork In Collective Bargaining And Other Essential Activities Helps Solve Problems of a Vast and Essential Industry

The Waterfront Employers Association of the Pacific Coast was established in 1937 for the purpose of negotiating a coastwide contract with the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union and to administer certain phases of this contract where it was impractical for the matters to be handled on a local basis. Today the membership of the Coast organization is made up of about 150 shipping companies, contract stevedoring companies, terminals and other employers of longshoremen.

In 1934, the longshore strike brought together representatives of four employer groups from Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland and Seattle. These representatives formed a "Coast Committee of Waterfront Employers" and met in San Francisco to consider the major union demand for a coastwide contract for the longshoremen's union. This demand was submitted to the President's Arbitration Board which awarded the Union the right to negotiate the contract on a coastwide basis. This action clearly called for a counterpart organization of employers with centralized authority to deal with the union. For a time the employers tried to function through a Coast Coordinator, but as a result of the strike of 1936, it was found that this system was not effective and the Waterfront Employers Association of the Pacific Coast was formed.

Certain functions, such as negotiating the master longshore contract and operating the Accident Prevention Bureau, are exclusive with the Waterfront Employers Association of the Pacific Coast. On local problems, when requested, the Coast organization cooperates with each of the three local employer associations—the Waterfront Employers of Washington, the Waterfront Employers of Portland, and the Waterfront Employers Association of California.

Except for the administration of the coastwide master longshore contract, the local port associations negotiate directly with shoreside labor. In addition, they maintain their own central pay and records offices and hiring halls. Since the coastwide contract concerns only CIO longshoremen, those ports under the jurisdiction of the Waterfront Employers of Washington which employ AFL longshoremen—International Longshoremen's Association—negotiate their contracts exclusively through the Waterfront Employers of Washington.

While the master longshore contract is usually negotiated but once a year, administration of the contract is a matter requiring daily attention. To meet each problem as it arises and to aid in maintaining continuous work in the loading operations, the Coast organization works closely with the local port organizations. In matters involving disputes between local employers and CIO longshoremen, the local port associations handle the preliminary phases according to a pattern—dispute machinery—agreed upon by both the employers and the union. (See MARITIME REPORT, February 5, 1947.) The dispute is usually settled on a local level, but if not, the problem is referred to the Coast Joint Labor Relations Committee. This committee is made up equally of members of the Coast Association and district officials of the ILWU to deal with the matter on a coastwide level.

ACCIDENT PREVENTION BUREAU

In cooperation with the Pacific American Shipowners Association each local Waterfront Employers organization, through membership in the Waterfront Employers Association of the Pacific Coast, contributes to the maintenance of the industry-wide Accident Prevention Bureau. This bureau, established in 1927, began with a one-man office and a \$10,000 a year budget. In 1946 the annual budget was \$100,000. During the years of its operation the scope of the Accident Prevention Bureau's activities has steadily increased until today the staff includes eleven permanent safety engineers working out of the major ports on a 24-hour a day call. Since 1935 the compensable injury rate has been reduced by 40 per cent.

LOCAL EMPLOYER ASSOCIATIONS

Negotiation of Shoreside Labor Contracts

The individual port associations negotiate agreements directly with all shoreside labor groups such as dock workers, carloaders, checkers and clerks. As has been noted, the locals have responsibility for administering the longshore contract locally. Standing committees are maintained to assist in dealing with any disputes which may arise from the longshore or other shoreside labor contracts. Each port has special problems which may determine its policies on a different basis from its neighbor ports.

Central Pay and Records Offices

Each local port association operates a central pay service and records office for longshoremen and other miscellaneous waterfront employees. This system not only eliminates considerable work and expense for the individual company members but it is a great convenience to the waterfront workers. Instead of walking from one employer to another to collect checks the employee receives a single check for his work from a convenient pay office of the local port association, even though he frequently works for as many as three different employers in one week. The rotational hiring system brings about the situation whereby employees have more than one employer each week.

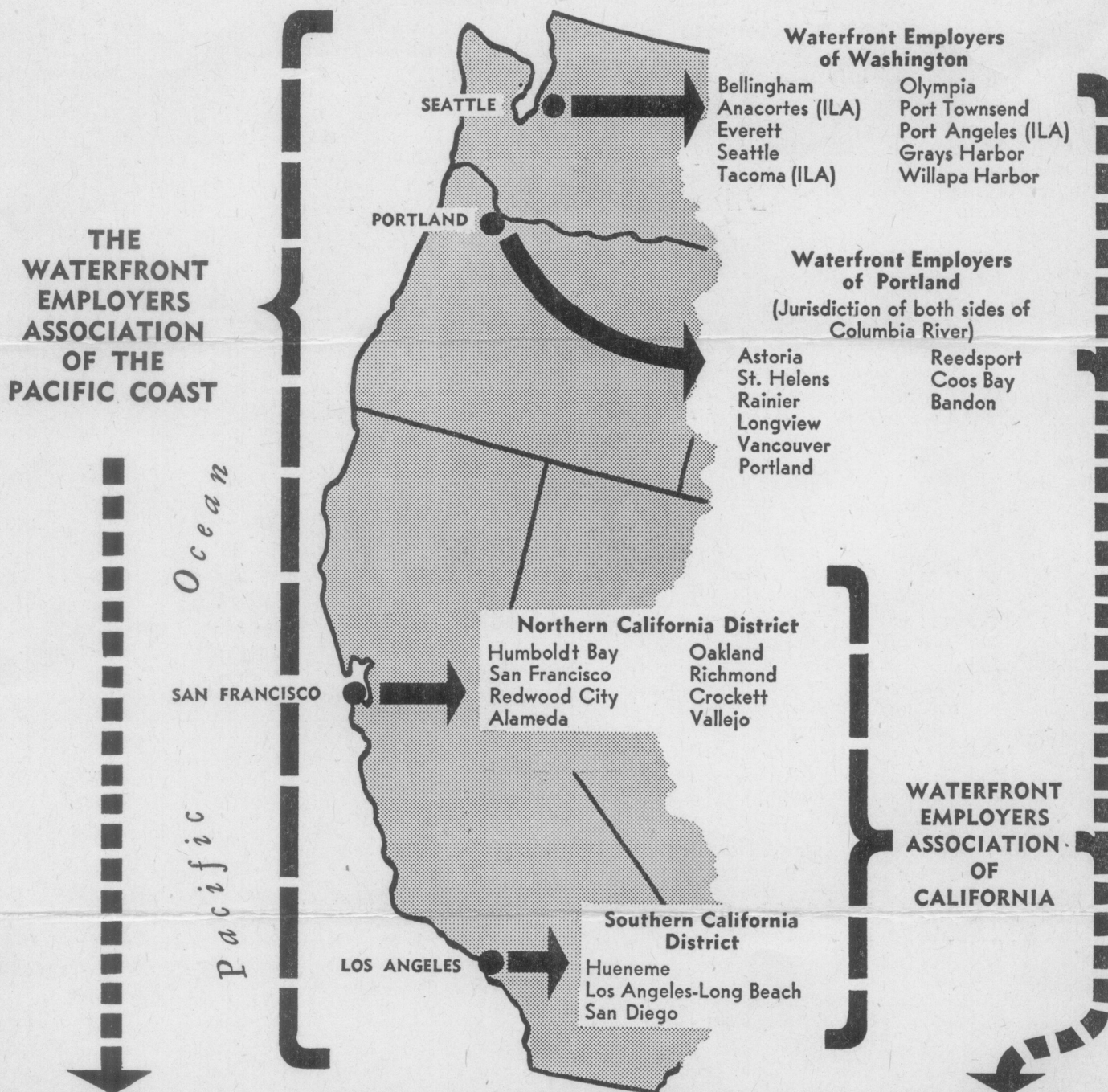
The State and Federal governments also benefit from this system since it simplifies the task of obtaining information for income tax, old age and unemployment insurance purposes. Only one posting is necessary for each waterfront worker at these government offices instead of as many as twenty-five, if all of the companies reported individually. Although the Waterfront Employers of Washington has a central pay office, under the present circumstances it is necessary for them to collect checks from each of the employers. However, plans are under way in Seattle to set up a system of central pay similar to that used in the other ports.

Members of the local port associations have found that a centralization of both the paying and records offices affords a great economy and has solved one of the most complicated problems before the industry.

Hiring Halls

In cooperation with the unions the local port associations share the expense and the responsibility of operating hiring halls for longshoremen and ship clerks. The Joint Labor Relations Committee is responsible for the policy governing the halls. This insures central dispatching and greater decasualization of the industry.

THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT NEGOTIATE AND ADMINISTER CONTRACTS WITH SHORESIDE LABOR UNIONS ON THE PACIFIC COAST FOR THE SHIPPING INDUSTRY



THE WATERFRONT EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC COAST

The primary function of this organization is to negotiate and aid in the administration of the coastwide CIO longshore contract. It deals with no other labor group but it acts as a coordinating agency in the activities of the local Port Associations. Headquarters for this Association are located in San Francisco.

THE LOCAL PORT ASSOCIATIONS

The local Port Associations negotiate contracts with checkers, and miscellaneous shoreside personnel in their districts. Each has a staff available to administer these contracts in addition to the CIO longshore contract which is negotiated on a coastwide basis by the Waterfront Employers Association of the Pacific Coast. All ports except three in the Washington area employ CIO longshoremen. The three so designated above employ members of the International Longshoremen's Association—AFL.

Each local Port Association maintains a central paying system and records office for the benefit of its members and their employees. They also share the cost of operation of the joint hiring halls with the unions and through membership in the W.E.A. of the Pacific Coast contribute to the Accident Prevention Bureau.