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CONFLICT ON THE WATERFRONT

By

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Labor and business leaders throughout the nation have much to gain, we believe, from this account of the transformation of labor relations on the West Coast waterfront. It shows what has happened since the longshoremen and employers, after years of strikes and lockouts, decided to get along together. CLARK KERR *is Director of the Institute of Industrial Relations at the University of California, and served as Impartial Chairman, Pacific Coast Waterfront, in 1946–1947.* LLOYD FISHER, *who collaborated in the writing, is an Associate Professor in the University's Political Science Department.*

CONFLICT ON THE WATERFRONT

by CLARK KERR *and* LLOYD FISHER

IN December, 1948, the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union and the Waterfront Employers Association of the Pacific Coast concluded a bitter strike which had paralyzed shipping in Pacific Coast ports for 95 days. If this were all that had occurred, the event would have been a matter for relief, community satisfaction, and news comment for several days thereafter, but little more. There had been strikes before which were equally long, bitter, and exhausting, and they had also come to an end. What made December, 1948, a date more memorable than other dates in longshore labor history was that it may have marked the end of a war, rather than the beginning of a temporary lull in the fighting. If the peace proves durable it will be the most extraordinary transformation in American labor history.

The present has a past as well as a future. The first century of labor relations on the West Coast waterfront was distinguished by intermittent and intensifying warfare, and the longshore industry came to be synonymous with industrial unrest. Gold was discovered in California in 1849, and cargo handlers first struck in 1851. Thereafter active conflict was never far off.

San Francisco's spectacular general strike of 1934 grew out of efforts at reorganization and recognition by the longshoremen, unrepresented by a bona fide union since the end of World War I. The early New Deal sparked the renewal of unionism on the waterfront, as elsewhere. When the employers resisted, a three-month strike, which exploded into the general strike, tied up the West Coast waterfront. Out of this conflict Australian-born Harry Bridges emerged as the commanding general on the longshoremen's side of a battle which was destined to be fought, on one front or another, almost daily for fourteen years.

But 1934 meant a good deal more than the contract which concluded the strike. It became for the longshoremen a decisive social experience. Longshoremen had met police, tear gas, community condemnation, a solidly antagonistic public press, and the fully mobilized strength of the employers; yet they had achieved recognition, the six-hour day, and the hiring hall. Out of the waterfront strike came heroes, traitors, and martyrs, a tradition of militance, and a leadership group which understood how to use this experience in an environment it defined as one of ceaseless struggle.

To meet the onslaught of the new unionism, the employers organized the Waterfront Employers Association. Their weapons, such as the lockout, were the counterpart of union weapons. Solidarity was a term from the labor vocabulary, and the employers were not likely to employ it, but it had a full measure of meaning for them. They were as

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convinced as union leaders that an injury to one was an injury to all. If the employer was a symbolic enemy against whom the union must close ranks, the union was a common adversary requiring common defense by employers. Thus the tactics of conflict developed on both sides in terms of collective thrust and counterthrust, guided by rationally calculated strategy and rationally organized general staffs.

The parties did not settle the 1934 strike, just as they failed to resolve by themselves numerous disputes thereafter. The National Longshoremen's Board, appointed by President Roosevelt, wrote the basic coast-wide contract which served as partially adequate articles of truce until late 1948. The parties never had had, in any real sense of mutual acceptance, a contract of their own.

The next major walkout, which lasted 97 days, occurred in 1936 and proved, if nothing else, that both sides had staying power. Arbitration of contract terms by private arbitration, the National War Labor Board, and a Federal fact-finding board helped the parties over contract reopenings down the years until the six-week strike of 1946 and the 95-day strike in 1948.

More than 300 days of coast-wide strikes do not constitute the full record. "Job actions" against individual ships and ports, and local lockouts by the employers, greatly swelled the total of idle days. Arbitration, during much of the period, was almost continual. Awards affecting the basic contract — and there were 250 of them — became part of the contract itself. Arbitrators were expendable. Out of some thirty local port and coast-wide arbitrators, only three — one of them Wayne L. Morse, now United States Senator from Oregon — handed down more than ten decisions. Proceedings were formal and debate acrimonious. No matter how minor the issue, the case was fought with the full facilities of both parties. Each arbitration award was made part of the contract until the contract became a monstrosity containing little that reflected a meeting of minds and much that was judicially imposed.

The economics of the industry fed the strike. A ship in port is peculiarly vulnerable to a "quickie" strike. Port time is costly time. Charges pile up and no revenue is being earned. A quick turnaround is often the necessary condition of a profitable operation. The tendency in the face of a "quickie" is to settle and get the ship moving. The men had a decided advantage in the short run. They might well win the "beef" under the circumstances; and if not, might at least earn extra overtime pay as the employer tried to make up for lost time. At worst, the work was still there to be done. The "quickies" penalized the employer heavily in higher costs and the prospect of lost business due to the uncertainty of maritime transportation. The "quickie" was a weapon almost cost-free in the eyes of the men but wickedly effective in the eyes of the employers.

The pace of work in San Francisco prior to 1934 was reputed to be as fast as in any port in the world. The speed of gang operations is very much within the control of the gang itself. It affects costs for the operator directly; but it also determines how long the job lasts for the men. The employers have claimed that productivity fell to half the 1934 level; the union has contested the amount of the drop but proclaimed that it ended the "speedup."

Domination over hiring and regulation of work output were the pre-eminent individual issues between the parties. They are always perplexing ones in any bargaining relationship where the job is short and work effort uncontrolled by custom or assembly-line speed. On the Pacific Coast waterfronts they were magnified by ideological conflict and bitter personal antagonisms.

From this complex of physical, political, economic, and personal causes developed an unmatched record of labor-management controversy.

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In September, 1948, the employers had wrathfully announced, "No more negotiations will be held and no contracts will be signed with any such unions unless and until their officers have disavowed communism." The union simultaneously had charged the employers with a "drive for the open shop." In March, 1949, an employer spokesman told a joint WEA-ILWU conference, "We have a new spirit and we know that if we supplement it with the right kind of action, we can turn it into new jobs for all hands."

In 1937 Bridges was quoted as saying, "We take the stand that we, as workers, have nothing in common with employers." In 1949 his chief lieutenant, Louis Goldblatt, the Secretary-Treasurer of the ILWU, said, "We're not trying to kid anybody that the man who writes the pay check and the man who gets it aren't two different people, but we know equally well that they have a wide field of mutual interest. . . . We should concentrate on our areas of agreement, not our areas of disagreement, in order to obtain a fair share of world cargo." Industry-labor coöperation had replaced class warfare.

The joint conference held in San Francisco in March, 1949, illustrates the new approach on both sides. In earlier times, such a conference would have been beyond the limits of realistic contemplation. For two days fifty leaders on the employer side and twenty on the union discussed and agreed upon a "joint program to get more cargo through the Pacific ports and more jobs on the waterfront and ships" — so said the joint press release. "The conference explored all avenues through which the union and the employers could pull together to their mutual interest." Among the topics surveyed were improvement of port facilities, recovery of cargoes for commercial operators from the railroads and from ship and dock facilities operated by the armed services, solicitation of cargoes in competition with the railroads, promotion of transoceanic trade, development of welfare plans for longshoremen, and establishment of a joint safety program. Five continuing working committees were appointed to follow through on decisions of the conference. At the port level, the parties now consult on impending technological changes, safety programs, and other operating problems. At one company in San Francisco the new approach to safety reduced accidents for the first four months of 1949 one third under the level for the similar period in 1948. The mutual recriminations which daily filled the West Coast press have been conspicuously absent.

The first signs of change occurred in the latter days of the 1948 strike when two new figures appeared in the situation. Almon E. Roth, a well-known figure in San Francisco shipping circles and one of the organizers of the San Francisco Employers Council, negotiated an arrangement by which the national CIO and the San Francisco Employers Council agreed to use their influence respectively with the ILWU and the WEA to help enforce any contract which might be arrived at; and the Waterfront Employers Association imported Dwight Steele, President of the Hawaii Employers Council, to represent them in their negotiations with the ILWU.

Experienced observers realized that important developments were in the making. Steele had only marginal connections with the industry and had no special knowledge of its problems. His reputation in labor relations had been made as an official of the Northern California Distributors Association, an organization of warehouse employers which had its principal dealings with the warehouse branch of the ILWU. In that capacity he helped to develop a pattern of negotiations with the ILWU which differed markedly from those of the Waterfront Employers Association. Where formal arbitration had been the hallmark of the longshore relationship, informal collective bargaining characterized the warehouse dealings. The selection of Steele was the first concrete indication of a change in attitude on the part of the employers.

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THE contract itself by which the strike was concluded was the second major evidence of change in the relationship between the parties. It was substantially rewritten by the principals themselves. It was to run for two and one-half years, during which strikes and lockouts were banned. Long-term contracts which proscribe strikes and lockouts are not rarities, but in longshore labor relations on the Pacific Coast the contract was without precedent.

More important than the term of the contract, however, was the change in grievance procedure which the contract provided. When Bridges, in the course of negotiations to settle the strike, offered to trade two pages of typescript for several pounds of arbitration awards, new influences were clearly present at the bargaining table. The new grievance machinery proposed by Bridges provided that all disputes should, so far as possible, be settled at the job level between gang steward and foreman, with work to continue while the grievance was being settled. This arrangement was the more interesting in that gang steward and walking boss are both members of the ILWU, albeit in different locals. In the event that the "beef" could not be settled at the job level, it moved to a meeting of business agent and company superintendent, then to a joint labor relations committee, and only as a last resort to arbitration.

Other evidence of a concrete character followed. It was mutually agreed that such matters as might still come before arbitration would not be handled by lawyers except where matters of law were clearly involved; consequently, the cost of arbitration has been much reduced. A Panamanian ship was picketed and the longshoremen refused to cross the picket line. Instead of locking out the port in support of an injured member, the Waterfront Employers Association moved directly to arbitration and the dispute was terminated without spreading. A new mechanized operation was introduced into the struggling coast-wide lumber trade which increased fourfold the lumber handled per gang-hour and reduced the number of men employed in the operation. The matter was quickly adjusted with a wage increase for the reduced number of men needed in the operation.

There is also evidence of a negative kind which is perhaps stronger than any positive acts or statements of the parties. In longshore relations, what is not done may be more significant than what is. The Hawaiian waterfront was shut down in May, 1949, by a strike of ILWU longshore locals in the Islands. The strike affected primarily the Matson Navigation Company, which holds a virtual monopoly of water-borne commerce with the mainland. By virtue of its commanding position in the Islands trade, the company handles perhaps 20 per cent of the work of the port of San Francisco. A major longshore dispute in Hawaii has many channels by which it can spread to San Francisco. That the Hawaiian strike has not spread to the mainland suggests that both union and company took precautions to see that it did not spread.

Perhaps the most impressive evidence of change lies in the conspicuous restraint which the ILWU has shown in its communiqués and press releases dealing with the perjury indictment of Bridges in the current government proceedings against the longshore president. Bridges cases in the past have been marked by violent denunciation of the employers as the secret instigators of the actions. The current case is marked by the complete absence of any charge of employer complicity.

Delegation of authority to walking bosses to settle grievances, along with the whole reversal of approach by the employers, has brought a new attention to personnel policies. The employers, under the leadership of some of the younger and more professionally trained executives like Al Tichenor, Vice President of the Matson Navigation Company and formerly associated with the Industrial Relations Counselors, are taking more interest in the welfare of their employees. This is most noticeable in the case of the walking bosses, who correspond to the foremen in an industrial plant. They have been placed on a monthly basis and are paid by the individual employer instead of through the WEA, are often included in company insurance plans for executives, have been allowed to exercise more authority, and are being trained and consulted in management conferences.

Gang bosses, who are the lead men, have been given a voluntary five-cent increase in pay in San Francisco to raise their differential fifteen cents above the rate for gang members. The principle of a welfare plan for the longshoremen has been accepted but the details are still being negotiated. The employers have discovered personnel administration.

The Waterfront Employers Association has now merged with employers of offshore labor to form the Pacific Maritime Association, and new men on the employer side are working out the new ideas. Frank Foisie, formerly President of the WEA and the first successful reformer on the West Coast waterfront, with his introduction of the hiring hall in Seattle in 1922, has been followed by O. W. Pearson, Vice President of the Marine Terminals Corporation and wartime Port Captain for the Army in San Francisco. He is being assisted by Henry W. Clark as Vice President and General Manager.

Pearson, who was born in Sweden and has worked as a sailor, mate, and longshore foreman, is an experienced operator oriented toward production problems. Clark is a former history professor and athletic director at Eastern colleges, and the author of books on Alaska. Gregory Harrison, brilliant but embattled San Francisco attorney, no longer spearheads negotiations. However, no similar change has occurred in union leadership. The new wine there is contained in old bottles.

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The maritime strike of 1948 was an extremely costly experience for the longshore employers. There were those on both sides who believed that the strike could not last because there were no issues to nurture it. The parties had been very close to a settlement of the wage rate which was the major point in dispute. But the small gap was not closed, old hostilities reasserted themselves, and when Bridges left the conference room with the remark, "We'll see you on the picket line," with or without an issue the strike was on. If Bridges had no strike issue then, he had one soon afterward. When the employers issued a public statement that they would not do business with irresponsible leadership, the strike did not thereafter want for an issue. If, in fact, the requirement for concluding a contract was that the employers would determine who should represent the union, then it promised to be a long, long strike.

Those within the Waterfront Employers Association who saw no reason for the strike in the first instance, saw even less reason for pitching in on a plane which would make settlement impossible. As the strike wore on and losses began to mount, dissension grew within the Association, and with it went a critical review of the premises upon which the union relationship had been built. As the smaller companies close to the margin of survival were pushed nearer the brink, criticism mounted. And when the Matson Navigation Company and the American President Lines joined the dissident group, the balance of power swung to the opposition, and negotiations were opened by the employers for the settlement of the strike.

Despite the evident force of the economic pressures generated by the strike, it would be misleading and incorrect to conclude that no more was involved than the search for a formula to relieve immediate pressures which had grown unbearable. The plight of the shipping industry and the condition of maritime trade had been the subject of gloomy speculation in shipping circles for some years. A once prosperous intercoastal commerce had dwindled. Competition from truck and rail transport had cut deeply into the cargoes which once had gone by ship. Radical measures were necessary to halt the decline in maritime commerce.

The divergent views among the waterfront employers were not unlike the divergent views in any council of opinions upon peace. Everyone wanted peace, but there were sharp differences about means. A very small remnant of intransigents clung to the view that peace could come only as a result of the decisive defeat of the union leadership. Another and somewhat larger group insisted that eternal vigilance, perpetual preparedness, and strong organization were the conditions of peace — an armed peace, to be sure, but the only kind that the militance of the union permitted. The third group, and the one which emerged finally as a decisive majority within the association, proposed a determined effort to get along with the union.

What the industry required above all else was an increase in the efficiency with which cargo was handled. The West Coast longshore operation amounts to approximately 20 per cent of the total cost of a standard haul between the East and West Coast, and the longshore operation was not efficient. Productivity is difficult to measure with any accuracy in the longshore industry, but it requires no time and motion study to know that there is considerable room for improvement. The fault was not solely that of the longshoremen, but without a willing work force no management measures would be materially effective. There was a desperate, albeit somewhat distant, hope that a fundamental reform in labor relations would yield a more efficient longshore operation and improve the competitive position of the maritime industry not only with reference to truck and rail transport but with reference to the rival Atlantic and Gulf ports as well in the contest for trans-Pacific trade.

Less speculative and more immediate was the reputation of unreliability of the Pacific Coast ports. Labor trouble was frequent enough, but rumors of impending labor trouble were even more frequent. Substantial amounts of cargo were diverted to Atlantic and Gulf ports, and to rail and truck transport, which even under existing costs of cargo handling should have been shipped through Pacific Coast ports. Orders with fixed dates of delivery would sometimes be shipped at greater cost through other facilities. Competing media and competing ports captured trade from the Pacific Coast by pointing out that the modest increase in cost incurred by using their facilities might be a very low price to pay for strike insurance. A period of stable labor relations in the West Coast industry promised to recapture trade which its rate structure entitled it to have but which it had lost through its labor record.

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There are a number of possible explanations of the reversal in the union position. The first denies that there has been any change in the union's position and in its view of the employers. It suggests that after every major strike, there is a period of relative calm. Union treasuries have been depleted and the private savings of longshoremen drained, and what is being mistaken for a new harmony is simply a period in which the reserves of the longshore locals and their members are being rebuilt so that the next strike will be no less effective than the last. Those who hold this opinion point to the strike of other ILWU locals in Hawaii and its effects upon the Port of San Francisco, and to the June, 1949, strike of ILWU warehousemen which extended to the edge of the San Francisco docks.

The very fact that amicable relations continue on the San Francisco waterfront, notwithstanding the storm which rages around it, is evidence that things are not the same. But there is an even stronger reason for rejecting the view that nothing has changed. A period of recuperation would not have required a $2\frac{1}{2}$-year contract nor fundamental changes in the grievance procedure and the administration of the contract. The cycle of fatigue and recuperation has occurred before without necessitating any alteration in the formal relations of the parties.

A second explanation traces the change in the behavior of the ILWU to internal political affairs of the union. At least two of the major longshore locals are administered by openly anti-Bridges officers, and an opposition led by members of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists operates in most of the longshore locals. One of the leaders of ACTU is James Kearney, president of Bridges's own local in San Francisco. In general the leaders of the ACTU group have been associated with a more conservative political philosophy than the Bridges administration.

Some observers have credited the new attitude of the longshore leadership to the growth of anti-Bridges sentiment among the rank and file and the increasing power of ACTU. Whatever the strength of the opposition within the several longshore locals, the overwhelming victory for Bridges and his whole slate in the election of international officers disposes of any implication that Bridges's following has dwindled to the point where appeasement of the right wing is required. The last convention of the ILWU, held in 1948, suggests quite the opposite. For the first time, an open attack was launched on the ACTU by Bridges forces.

A more credible explanation is the unemployment hypothesis. Longshore employment has declined seriously below wartime levels in all Pacific Coast ports. The decline has been especially severe in San Francisco during the last six months. Unemployment has always been a specially difficult problem for the longshore locals of the ILWU because of the large measure of control the union exercises over who shall be employed in the industry. With union control over the hiring hall and a system of work equalization through rotary dispatch, the available work opportunities are divided evenly among the registered longshoremen. When aggregate employment declines seriously, all longshoremen are underemployed. Seniority is precisely determined by the date on which each longshoreman was registered.

With adequate employment the problem of seniority seldom arises, but when employment levels drop, pressure is quickly generated for the deregistration of those with lowest seniority and the sharing of available work among a smaller group of longshoremen. Recently in San Francisco the demand for deregistration has twice risen to a formal vote. Both times, the membership refused to drop presently registered longshoremen, but the issue is likely to be recurrent so long as unemployment persists.

The more conciliatory mood of the ILWU was doubtless in part a response to the press of unemployment within its ranks, and a desire to improve the employment opportunities of the longshore working force. But the history of longshore relations suggests that the moderating effect of unemployment plays only an auxiliary role. There have been equally severe periods of unemployment which have had no similar consequences.

The change in industrial relations may also be partly explained by the current relationship between the ILWU and the CIO. The schism between right and left within the national CIO has reached a stage in which decisive action by the national CIO is widely anticipated. Efforts by Philip Murray and the Executive Committee to discipline the left-wing unions have failed. The next step may be expulsion. Whether in fact the expulsion threat materializes, it is a very real possibility and one of which the ILWU leadership is fully aware.

The officers of the ILWU are seasoned strategists and understand the advantages of limiting the number of simultaneous fronts on which warfare is conducted. The ILWU is surrounded by a hostile political environment, an unfriendly Democratic administration, and the ever present threat of Dave Beck and a powerful Teamster organization with jurisdictional claims to many of the jobs now covered by ILWU contracts.

If the CIO expels the longshoremen and revokes their charter of jurisdiction, rival unionism from within the CIO becomes a distinct possibility. Ironically, the employers might then turn out to be the sole remaining allies of the longshoremen. The alliance would doubtless be a grudging one, but still might be firmly grounded. For the employers have a well-founded respect for the fighting qualities of the union; and however much they might prefer a different union with a different leadership, years of strife and discord would result from any effort to supplant the ILWU, and the cost might easily prove excessive.

To the series of possible explanations for a more conciliatory union policy must be added another which perhaps was as much a condition as a cause. The major moves were employer moves, the initiative was employer initiative, and the changes in leadership were employer changes. If bona fides to the union were necessary — and they probably were — the employer offered them in most substantial form in removing the union's most formidable adversaries from positions of employer leadership.

The new contract was the result of genuine collective bargaining. It cleared up several issues which had disturbed the union for some time: grievance procedures, arbitration machinery, vacation provisions. In the face of a prospective depression, the wage structure was given a sound foundation for two and one-half years.

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The causes of the decline in maritime trade on the Pacific Coast are many and complex. The water-borne commerce of Pacific Coast ports is divided into four major categories: foreign, noncontiguous (Alaska and Hawaii), intercoastal (traffic between East and West Coast ports), and coastwise (trade among West Coast ports). The second has maintained its pre-war level; as has the first, until quite recently, by virtue of heavy westbound military and relief cargoes. The third has dropped off by half, and the last by nearly 90 per cent. The total volume of cargo handled in Pacific Coast ports is roughly one quarter less than in the pre-war period.

Clearly the size of military and Marshall Plan cargoes will have more to do with the volume of foreign trade than will the condition of labor relations in the industry. The world-wide dollar famine will be a more serious bar to commercial recovery than labor strife in Pacific ports. Commercial trade with the Far East is in a most precarious position. The dollar shortage limits westward movement, and the sheer nonavailability of cargoes in the Philippines, Indonesia, China, and Japan brings ships back with tonnage too small even for adequate ballast.

But even though peace on the waterfront can do little to increase the total volume of Far Eastern trade, it may recapture a portion of the trade which West Coast ports have lost to the Atlantic and Gulf ports. A quarter of a century ago Pacific Coast ports handled 70 per cent of the trans-Pacific trade. Today their share is but 45 per cent. In part this has resulted from a shift in the character of exports, but in part it represents a loss of trade which could be recaptured if longshore operations improve in efficiency and reliability.

The greater problem for the shipping industry is the loss of domestic trade to rail and in lesser degree truck transport. The railroads have been able to offer certainty of service, and in some cases a very favorable rate structure. The rate experts of the shipping industry are convinced, and confidently expect to prove to the Interstate Commerce Commission, that the railroads' rate structure is discriminatory and makes excessive charges in inland territories to subsidize a price war against the shipping industry.

In any event the shipping industry must either force an increase in railroad rates or decrease its own if it is to recapture a substantial amount of the domestic trade. The first course lies through the ICC and a case has been submitted. The second lies in so thoroughgoing a reform in labor relations that the cost of cargo handling, and therefore the cost of water-borne freight shipments, will decline substantially.

The immediate effect of waterfront peace has been and will be relief from strikes and "quickies" and a consequent improvement in the reliability of service. It is extremely difficult to measure the extensiveness of the trade which may be recaptured by virtue of this single factor. Certain kinds of business are extremely sensitive to longshore work stoppages. Small companies with little inventory accumulation, manufacturers of seasonal articles such as Christmas toys, flower bulbs, and women's dresses, are particularly affected by continuity of service. Manufacturers buying materials in short supply, and shippers of cargoes the freight charges of which represent a small portion of their value, are likely to place a high value on reliability.

This is the new business immediately in prospect, business to which the West Coast shipping industry is economically entitled by virtue of lower costs. The national recession, paradoxically, promises to be of assistance as well. As business becomes more conscious of the necessity of cutting costs, water transportation promises to regain a portion of the traffic it has lost to the railroads. Some shipping companies report that results are already in evidence and that old customers have begun to return. Bananas are once more being shipped into San Francisco on a regular schedule, and this trade had been discontinued since 1938.

Hopeful as these present signs may be, it is clear that the major potential achievements of waterfront peace are not yet certain of accomplishment. Their realization depends upon a change in the psychological environment great enough to be reflected in markedly increased productivity and a substantial reduction in costs. Only then will the shipping industry retrieve the major portion of its losses to other ports and to other forms of transport. It is far too early to pass a sensible judgment on productivity. Here too there are some favorable signs, a small revival in the coastwise lumber trade which is directly attributable to technological improvements introduced by negotiation with the union, a new machine installation introduced upon union assurance of coöperation, and here and there signs of improved morale and work efficiency. These, if they multiply, will be important fruits of labor peace.

In the six months that have elapsed since the end of the strike, by any definition there have been no more than three "quickies" in all of the Pacific ports. Only five cases have been arbitrated and each of these has been handled expeditiously at the port level. No single case has been presented to the Coast arbitrator, the last step in the grievance machinery.

Waterfront peace is not without its antagonists, critics, and skeptics. Some employers are fearful that their cohesiveness has been sacrificed to momentary panic and that decentralization will sap the capacity to resist which has been built up so painfully over the years. There are those also who regard the affair as a *mésalliance* and those who explain it as a marriage of convenience which will not survive the temporary objects for which they consider it was undertaken. They suggest that it is only a temporary reaction of the employers to their tactical mistakes during the 1948 strike and that employers will soon tire of buying peace as the concessions demanded by the union grow more costly. They question whether Matson's support, for instance, will survive the effects of the Hawaiian strike.

But a solid majority of employers now support the concessions which have brought peace to the waterfront, and evidence is daily accumulating that the effort to create a new environment for industrial relations on Pacific Coast waterfronts has been worth its cost. Continuity of cargo movement has been established, modest increases in productivity achieved, and the public relations of the industry much improved. Both sides are making concessions to operating necessities in a give-and-take adjustment.

The balance sheet on the union side cannot be so clearly read. There are sound reasons for supposing that peace will serve union purposes as well. A large part of the union's struggle for the past fourteen years has been a struggle for a sense of security which comes only with unequivocal acceptance by the employers. This may now have been achieved and union forces and energies released for other tasks and purposes. But the union's relationship with employers must serve a variety of purposes of which the employment relationship is only one. It must serve internal political purposes; it must harmonize with the needs which arise from the union's relationship with other unions friendly and hostile, and with the political objectives which the union may hold.

Important as are the specifics of the problem to the shipping industry, to the longshoremen and their union, and to the communities of the Pacific Coast, the future of waterfront peace raises a more general question. What happens on the West Coast waterfront may answer a question which for students of industrial society is the all-absorbing and all-important question: Can a decade and a half of bitterness and strife be wiped out by one bold stroke? Time is on the side of the peace. New cargoes, new habits, new confidence, give it strength. The longer it lasts, the longer it is likely to last.

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