

Power struggle on the waterfront

By HOWARD WEAVER
Daily News Staff Writer

Who controls the waterfront? That simple question has resulted in a tense and complicated power struggle which has tied up shipping at the Port of Anchorage, triggered a law suit in federal court and brought tempers in the Anchorage labor community to the boiling point.

THE BASIC conflict centers on the newly-formed Anchorage Independent Longshoremen's Union (AILU), which has broken away from its parent union, which controls loading and unloading at the Port of Anchorage. The independent local is on strike and Teamsters are refusing to cross the AILU picket lines.

Work at the docks has come to a halt.

Tied into the strike — which has left Sea-Land's S.S. Mobile stranded with its cargo at the dock—is a federal court suit brought against the AILU by the parent union which controls bargaining rights at the docks. The Anchorage Longshore Unit of the United Industrial Workers of North America, a branch of the AFL-CIO affiliated Seafarers International Union, has official jurisdiction at the docks.

The parent organization doesn't intend to give away that jurisdiction, and has moved the battle into U.S. District Court.

EARLIER this week, U.S. District Court Judge Raymond Plummer ordered the AILU group to cooperate with the terms of a trusteeship placed on them by the parent union until the matter was heard in court.

Legal counsel for the parent group will institute contempt of court proceedings against the AILU's striking members on Monday. They contend that the temporary restraining order means that the independent members should answer work calls from the parent union's trustee until the matter is settled in court.



Neal Menschel

Seafarers International Union members — many of whom were "imported" from Seattle, local stevedores charge — were on the docks ready for work Friday, but when Anchorage Teamsters refused to cross a picket line of local longshoremen, the men found nothing to do but play cards in one of the dock-side coffee rooms.

The battle for control has become a parade of charges and countercharges both in court and at picket lines and longshoremen's coffee rooms at the dock.

MEMBERS of the parent union charge that the local independents plan to join the Teamsters while AILU workers claim that the parent union doesn't do enough for them, and accuse them of bringing in out-of-state stevedores to "break our strike."

Many of the issues have been lost in the gut-level fight for control. The hearing on the matter was scheduled by the NLRB for Oct. 11, but has been postponed because of current legal actions.

Marty Farrell, counsel for the parent union, is quietly confident that his clients have a clear legal right to represent workers at the Port of Anchorage. Members of the AILU — represented by attorney Gil Johnson — don't think so.

THE LEGAL issues are further complicated by the fact that there is no current contract in effect at the docks. Longshoremen have been working under the terms of an old contract which has expired, and the AILU now claims that they, rather than the parent union, should negotiate new contracts.

But the local independent union is not recognized as the bargaining agent for dock employees by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). A hearing on the matter was scheduled by the NLRB for Oct. 11, but has been postponed because of current legal actions.

There are also questions about whether proper procedures were used when the former members of the Anchorage Longshore Unit met and voted to disaffiliate themselves from the parent union and form the independent AILU. The parent union feels that

away from the dock. One van was lifted off the ship Friday morning, but had to be replaced when the trucks failed to show up to carry it away.

A complete manifest of the cargo has not been made public, but sources close to the operation indicate that it includes perishable items which will spoil. In addition, the U.S. Army has cargo in four of the vans. It is not known whether they will be allowed to unload those containers until the issue is settled.

Wives join picket line at docks

The wives of striking stevedores joined their husbands on the docks and in the picket lines Friday, protesting "unfair treatment" which they claim the independent local longshoremen's union has received. The women vowed to continue support for the strikers, saying that they may bring children to the waterfront next. "Our kids are in this, too," one wife said Friday. "If our men can't get to work, there won't be any Christmas for our youngsters."

proper notification of the meeting was not given.

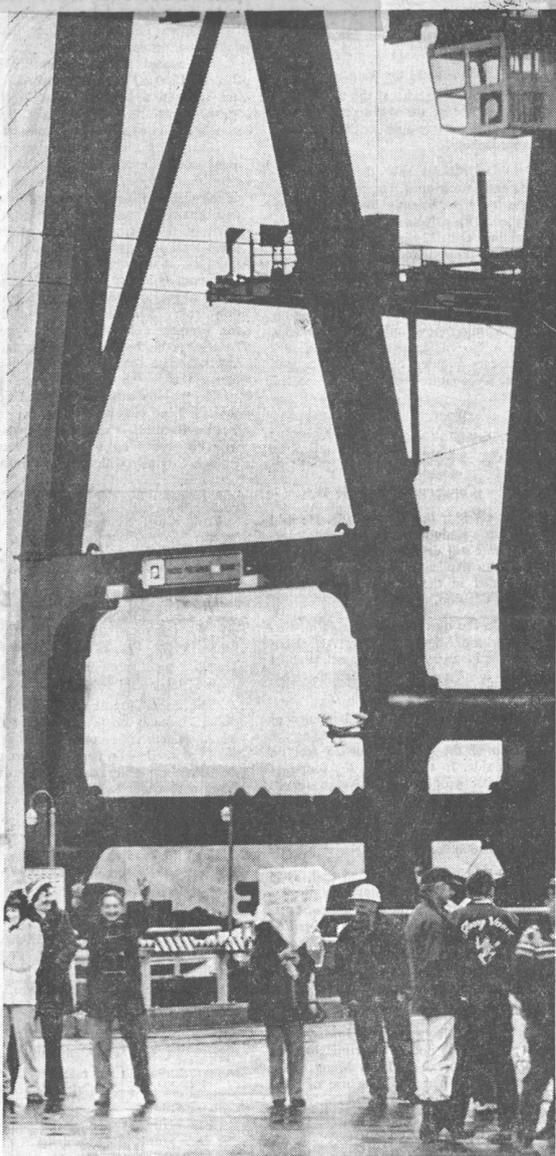
LEO BANSER is the area representative of the parent union, which organizes workers at canneries and other operations as well as longshoremen. There are claims that he was not able to communicate with the local stevedores.

Some local dock workers claim that Banser didn't care about them. "He just didn't want to come down to the docks and get his nice pretty suit dirty," one of the AILU members said.

The big union, on the other hand, feels that the local longshoremen didn't want to cooperate with the goals and purposes of the international group.

IN THE MEANTIME, the workers who have joined the new AILU are beginning to feel the monetary pinch of their strike, which is now in its second week. As a newly formed, independent group, they have no funds with which to finance members during the strike, and bills and payments are starting to pile up.

The merchandise aboard the S.S. Mobile is also caught in the middle. While the parent union has non-AILU longshoremen on hand to unload the vessel, local Teamsters are honoring the independent's strike and refuse to haul the ship's container van cargo



Neal Menschel

A picket line of striking stevedores and their wives stand beneath one of the

Tuesday, October 10, 1972, Anchorage Daily Times



CHANGE DRIVERS TO CROSS PICKET LINE

Sea-Land trucks were driven up to the SS Mobile this morning by company executives where they were loaded and driven past a picket line thrown up by the Anchorage Independent Longshore Union. The pickets returned last night when a dispute erupted again between the breakaway

union and its former parent, the Seafarers International Union. After the executive drove the trucks past the pickets, teamsters who refused to cross the picket line delivered them to their destination.

Anchorage Daily News, Thursday, October 12, 1972

Sea-Land has new problem on docks

By The Associated Press

Picket lines went down under a court order Wednesday on the Port of Anchorage docks, but Sea-Land Service Inc. officials said they are now facing a new problem.

The picket lines, set up by the Anchorage Independent Longshoremen's Union, have hampered efforts by Sea-Land personnel to unload perishable goods from the SS Mobile and the SS Brooklyn. They were taken down late Wednesday and trucks began moving through the area.

HOWEVER, late Tuesday night as Sea-Land officials were attempting to unload the first van of perishable goods from the Brooklyn, one of the two huge cranes on the docks broke down. And Sea-Land officials say parts ordered by air from Seattle have not yet arrived.

The dispute, which began last Thursday, is over jurisdictional rights on the waterfront between the independent union and the Anchorage unit of the Seafarer's International Union.

Under an agreement worked out last Monday, workers would be hired back under alternative terms. The independent union then said its men were not being hired back to work, and set up the picket lines for the second time since the dispute began.

THE ATTORNEY for the SIU, Marty Farrell disputed that claim, however, saying that on every call to work, the dispatcher "has called all registered and partially registered men to work."

However, nearly 40 per cent of the Mobile's cargo and a major portion of the perishables on the Brooklyn still have to be unloaded.

Sales Manager for Sea-Land in Alaska, Ralph Crotts, said there is another problem looming. All the vessels serving Alaska for Sea-Land are now "on the water" and there are no cargo containers available in Seattle for more shipments to Alaska.

Anchorage Daily Times, Monday, October 9, 1972

End Fight Over Ship Unloading

A union jurisdictional dispute which has prevented the unloading of ships at the Port of Anchorage was resolved today and final unloading of the Sea-Land ship SS Mobile was expected to start this afternoon.

Resolution of the dispute between the Anchorage Independent Longshoremen's Union and its former parent union, the Seafarers International Union, was concluded at a meeting called by Robert Smith, assistant state commissioner of labor for Anchorage.

Perishable cargo was unloaded from the ship Saturday under an agreement whereby Teamster Union members drove trucks to picket lines and Sea-Land personnel handled them inside the lines.

"I expect to call (the union dispatcher) sometime early this afternoon" for a crew to complete the unloading, said Ernie Webb, Alaska operations manager for Sea-Land. Asked if he expected anything to hold up further unloading, he said: "No, if everyone lives up to the agreement we should have no more problems."

Teamsters who normally drive the vans as they are unloaded from the ship were working this morning delivering vans that have been unloaded so far.

At Smith's request yesterday, Sea-Land stopped unloading vans that were initially supposed to contain only perishable goods when it became apparent that more than just perishables were being offloaded. By this morning 188 of the ship's 329 vans had been taken off the ship.

"I think things are progressing pretty well," Smith said. "Everyone seems willing to cooperate with the state on this. I was trying to get them talking and get the freight moving, and it looks like it worked," he said.

The status of two construction projects that are under way on the city-owned dock and union employees who do maintenance work also was resolved. Although the city was contemplating an injunction, the problem was resolved when the Anchorage Independent Longshoremen's Union informed the Anchorage Central Labor Council that it had no dispute with any of the crafts working on the dock. The council concurred that there was no reason for the unaffected crafts to stop work and advised them to cross the picket line.

Tuesday, October 10, 1972, Anchorage Daily Times

Pickets Bristle During Dispute At Local Dock

By The Associated Press

Picket lines have gone back up at the Port of Anchorage docks in a continuing labor dispute that has hampered unloading of Sea-Land Service Inc. ships since last week.

A spokesman for the Anchorage Independent Longshoremen's Union, Frank Grant, said terms of a partial agreement reached Monday following a meeting with state Labor Department officials were not being followed.

(Related picture on Page 4.) Grant, the business agent for the independent union, said he told officials "that if they didn't comply with that list we are not going back to work."

Grant charged that the Seafarers International Union is not adhering to an agreement to hire back alternative members of the independent union and the SIU.

He said: "We agreed to go along with them if they hire from our list of men who have been working on the waterfront from 20 years down to three years. And so we go down to work and they've (SIU) got all these scabs and everything else working and our men are just stopped here and there."

"We said we have got too many men at home, and you have hired all these outsiders," Grant said, adding "we just got up and walked off the job."

Sea-Land officials, who had another ship due into Anchorage Tuesday, were unavailable for comment.

Under an agreement reached during the meeting with state officials, work was to begin Tuesday night finishing the unloading of the SS Mobile, which has been tied up since last week because of the dispute.

The dispute is between the AILU and the Anchorage unit of the United Industrial Workers of North America, a branch of the AFL-CIO-affiliated Seafarers International Union.