

# Letters to the Editor, Dec. 30

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Following the West Coast waterfront strike in 1934 when two longshoremen were killed, there were hearings leading eventually to laws being passed with the **International Longshore and Warehouse Union** having sole jurisdiction on working vessels calling on any U.S. West Coast port. The law also granted ILWU exemption from the antitrust laws.

This is still the law.

ILWU has an outright monopoly. U.S. West Coast port labor is the highest-paid in the United States and the world.

The contract between the **Pacific Maritime Association** and ILWU has been in negotiations since well before July, when the old contract expired. There is still no contract, and the parties are reportedly far away from one. However, this is called collective bargaining. PMA is now asking for a federal mediator, but ILWU must agree to such mediation, and ILWU is stalling.

With monopoly on one side of the table, is the bargaining by ILWU done in good faith? Obviously not.

It will take an act of Congress to open West Coast labor contracts to competition.

In the absence of the monopoly, the six-year contract would have been concluded months ago.

What conditions exist that warrant the monopoly? Why is one part of the country treated so differently?

One can't deny the imbalance of the outcome. In the face of global competition, can we afford to ignore the facts and allow one side to stake out a "take it or leave it" position?

And if you don't, then take actions that virtually bring an industry to its knees and make the nation suffer?

No business or labor force deserves a monopoly.

*Bengt Henriksen, Woodside*