

# Lumber Unions, Management Start Negotiations in Portland

By JAMES J. DOYLE  
Portland - UPI - Negotiations between the two large lumber unions and management groups are under way here. Sessions are to continue through May. The contracts between the International Woodworkers of America, AFL-CIO, and the Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union, AFL-CIO, and fir pro-

ducers expire June 1. Industry spokesmen feel the results of the talks could set a stabilizing trend for the industry for the next three years - or throw it into chaos. The unions say they will strike if they don't get their wage demands.

But management says the demands are unreasonable. The IWA, western regional council, Tuesday, held talks with the Timber Operators' Council, representing 196 operations in Northern California to Alaska. The LSW, western regional council, met with the TOC last Friday.

Industry officials say lumber is still fighting for its life against Canadian imports in its own market. But the unions say the industry is in good shape.

### Wage Demands Made

The unions did not ask for wage hikes in 1962 although contracts were open for increases. They received a five cent per hour hike as a result of 1961 contract agreements. For this reason, both unions say they are entitled to more money this year. They are asking for three-year contracts.

The IWA has asked for 40 cents more per hour with additional money for "some classifications."

The LSW seeks 60 cents more per hour in wages. Earl Hartley, executive secretary of the western regional council, heads the LSW negotiating team. His counterpart in the IWA is Harvey Nelson.

Karl Glos, executive vice president of the TOC, heads a management negotiating group.

Hartley said in a statement to the TOC last Friday that a larger cost package would be justified. Nelson's point of view is that management is in "real good shape" and in fact, did not suffer the setbacks it claimed in 1962.

But management sees the situation quite differently.

### Demands Excessive

G. Cleveland Edgett, executive vice president of the West Coast Lumbermen's Association, who is not directly involved in contract talks, said "demands as they have been presented cannot be absorbed at this time."

Glos said the wage demands are "certainly excessive." "Even they (the unions) are aware of that," he said. He said the industry is still suffering from last year's recession and Canadian competition.

The question of Canadian competition remains a point of contention between the industry and the unions. Other factors that appear to influence the negotiations are climate conditions, 1962 production, the Columbus Day storm and "buy American" policies.

Management contends that Canadian imports have forced some mills out of business, and has forced U.S. producers out of their own market place.

IWA International President Al Harting told delegates to a regional convention early this year that Canadian im-

ports have not caused U.S. lumber losses.

Harvey Nelson said Americans shipped more lumber than Canadians last year.

### Unionist Notes Imports

A statement to the TOC in the opening session last Friday contained what is apparently a minority opinion among union leaders. Earl Hartley said during the last two years exports have dropped an additional 20 per cent while imports have climbed an additional 18 per cent.

By statistics, Canada has taken over about 75 per cent of the east coast markets. It can produce and ship lumber at a lower cost and takes advantage of expensive promotion of American lumber producers.

Lumbermen have tried to have imposed a 10 per cent quota on softwood imports, but without success. Proposals for a "buy American" policy has also met with no success.

The unions feel that "buy American" is not necessary. Cargo shippers, however,

say they suffer greatly from the disparity of cost in having to ship in American vessels under terms of the Jones Act, while Canada can ship in lower cost foreign flag ships.

Edgett said the union brotherhood stretches across the border as if it weren't there. "The third country is the unions," he said.

The IWA and LSW are international unions and choose to stay aside of national preferences.

### Government Policies Differ

In this regard, the border affects only management. The same forests that supply U.S. producers stretches into Canada and supplies British Columbia producers. And the same unions work them.

The policies of the two governments, however, are very different in regard to timber policies.

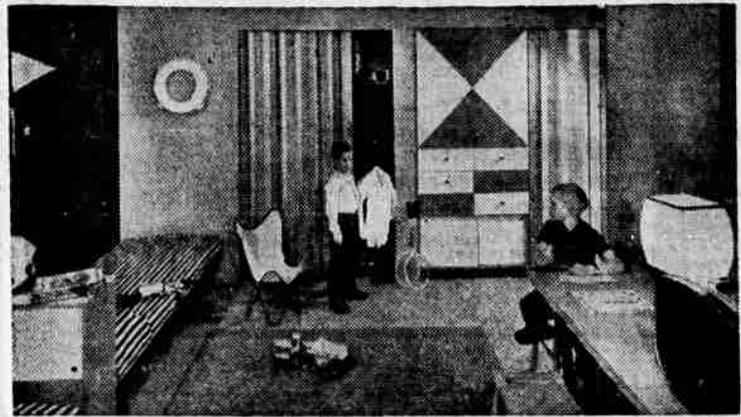
The Columbus Day storm will have lasting ramifications in the marketplace, Edgett said.

Billions of board feet of

timber were felled. It must be cleaned up before an endemic insect situation becomes epidemic. But the situation also will make the fire season extremely hazardous. When forests are closed due to dry weather, there isn't going to be any work whether contracts are in force or not.

The unions say the blow-down can actually help small operators by making the timber available. But management has said the sudden availability of the lumber could cause prices to drop. Also, some small operators suffered heavy losses.

Union spokesmen have said any strike would be "selective" and against those operations which could withstand it. A strike through the important summer months could play havoc with the economies of Oregon, Washington and Northern California, and about 40,000 men in each union.



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