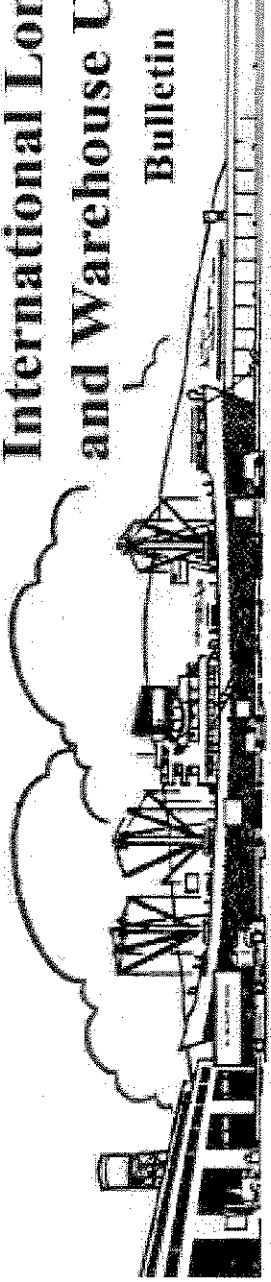


International Longshore and Warehouse Union

Bulletin



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Mexico's Pacific Coast Union Visits Local 13

On Monday, October 15th, six officers representing Mexico's largest longshore unions arrived for a week long visit to Local 13 and the Ports of Los Angeles-Long Beach. The Mexican delegation represents the major ports on their Pacific Coast. The union's are part of a federation led by CRON President Cecilio "Lepe" Bautista includes the ports of Ensenada, Guaymas, Topolabambo, Manzanillo, Lazero Cardenas, and Salina Cruz. ILWU President "Big Bob" McEllrath led the ILWU delegation that spent the week showing them the ports, dispatch hall, and how our system works. "Big Bob" had previously set up the visit after he had gone to Manzanillo (the largest port in Mexico) in August. He then extended the reciprocal invitation to the officers of CRON (the Mexican federation) to come here. President Bautista described how the Mexican waterfront is structured, their manning, pay, and jurisdiction, and the union's relationship with their employers. Manzanillo is by far the largest container port in Mexico. It has a large SSA container terminal, a Hutchison omni facility specializing in all cargos, and a large bulk-only terminal.

During their five day stay, the Mexican delegation was not only able to see the large volume operations in Los Angeles and Long Beach, but they also had the opportunity to sit down with locals 13, 63 and 94 and discuss how our relationship with the PMA differs with that of their employers. They were also amazed at the size and volume of jobs dispatched through the dispatch hall.

During the discussion with the officers of all three locals it became clear that the Mexican unions share many of the same problems we have. Many of their members are new to the industry; and impressing the need for things like job responsibility is difficult to make their newer members understand. It was also apparent that we share many of the same problems they have with the same terminal operators. Safety, contract responsibility and things as simple as making sure the men cover the work appear to be the same everywhere.

I would like to thank Local 13 Executive Board members Alberto Bonilla, Angel Blanco, Sal Pardo, Steve Serafin and Sunshine Campbell, who spent the week assisting with translating, transportation and just helping out in general. They did a great job promoting Local 13. The entire Coast Committee actually sponsored the event with President, Bob McEllrath; Vice President, Joe Radisich; and Coast Committeeman, Leal Sundet and Local 13's own Ray Ortiz all present. President Bautista and his entourage had a private meeting with Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, visited both container and general cargo facilities in the ports, and took a Port of Los Angeles-sponsored boat tour. They finished their stay at a barbecue (complete with Mariachis) thrown at the home of Local 13 Executive Board member Socorro Fimbres, who made the delegation from Mexico feel right at home.

The most important part of the entire week were the discussions surrounding the need for longshoremen and dockworkers to support each other. This was but the first step in establishing a mutual relationship of respect, trust and communication between the ILWU and the Mexican syndicates (unions). Wherever this may lead, it was an important beginning to something that could develop into a much larger and more specific relationship.

Fraternally,
Mike Mitre
President

Ray Benavente
Vice-President

Chris Viramontes
Secretary/Treasurer