

Nixon 'Ends' Strike from

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Nixon, while in Peking, signed legislation to end the already-ended West Coast dock strike, coupling his largely symbolic act with a renewed call for congressional action on broader legislation to prevent future transportation tie-ups.

Longshoremen returned to the docks in force today to begin clearing the backlog of ships idled during a 134 day strike, longest in American mainland shipping history.

Dock workers who on Saturday completed ratification of a new contract crowded hiring halls for assignments to unload and load the 218 ships waiting in ports from Bellingham, Wash., to San Diego.

SMALLER crews worked yesterday to prepare cranes and other equipment for the resumption of work.

In a statement relayed from China via the White House situation room, and disclosed at a news conference today by Secretary of Labor J. D. Hodgson, Nixon hailed settlement of the nation's longest dock strike.

"For thousands of Americans whose livelihoods have been threatened," the chief executive said, "this strike has been a painful experience and its end is most welcome."

Nixon said he had delayed action on legislation to end the strike by arbitration "in the hope that the pending legislation would encourage the parties to reach a voluntary accord."

"**TODAY**," he continued, "as this legislation takes effect with my signature, I am pleased to note that the arbitration machinery will no longer be needed."

Hodgson was asked why Nixon signed the bill if it has no effect. The labor secretary responded, "it just seemed appropriate . . . for him to sign it" since he had pressed for the measure.

He described the President's action as "a largely symbolic act" and said "unless unknown or unexpected developments occur it will have no force and effect."

The West Coast union and shippers' spokesmen were unavailable for comment on the bill signing, but Sidney Roger, the dock union's information officer, speculated last week that Nixon would sign the measure in Peking.

"What an irony that will be," Roger said. "He will be signing a bill intended to stop a strike by the one American union that has for years consistently advocated recognition of Commu-

Peking

nist China and opening up U.S.-Chinese trade."

A spokesman for the employers' Pacific Maritime Association said 57 crews were to work in San Francisco Bay ports. Seattle reported 17 gangs made up for today with 10 more for the night shift.

THE CONTRACT with the PMA was approved late Saturday in a coastwide ballot that rolled up a 71 per cent approval vote, the ILWU announced.