



ESSO FLEET NEWS

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THE ROAD AHEAD

A Message to Esso Seamen

Next month Esso seamen will once again start voting to decide between an independent, unaffiliated union and an outside, shore-workers' organization.

Despite the fact that Esso seamen have already rejected the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the North Jersey Hoffa group will appear on the ballot in another NLRB vote beginning about January 2.

The secret ballot voting will again be held under the supervision of the National Labor Relations Board. Each ship will be voted three times with an interval of about 40 days between voting sessions. Each eligible employee will be entitled to one vote. Despite the Teamster announcement of a mail ballot, the voting will be done manually and the procedure will be the same as it was in the earlier election.

WHY THE TEAMSTERS?

Esso seamen have repeatedly turned down outside unions. Ever since the 1939 tanker strike they have, of their own choice, remained free and independent. This is because they have always known that there was no reason to become entangled with an outside hiring-hall outfit. Why then, should the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America become interested in the Esso fleet? The Hoffa organization does not represent deep sea sailors. Seamen employed in U.S. Flag off-shore ships have not in the past been targets of Teamster organiz-

ing efforts. Neither have the longshoremen on either coast displayed any organizing interest in seafaring men.

There is only one plausible answer to the above question. Everyone knows that the Teamsters have the bargaining rights at the Company's Bayway Refinery. Everyone knows that the 101 day strike in the winter of 1964-65 was a failure largely because of the uninterrupted operation of the Esso tanker fleet. And the Teamsters know very well that any future strike at Bayway would be fruitless without the Esso seamen.

WHO NEEDS WHO?

In the weeks ahead you will probably be bombarded with Teamster propaganda. You will be told that you need a large and powerful union to represent you. You will be urged to join the mainstream of the labor movement in the struggle for a better life, Teamster style. You will be told that you need the Teamsters — that without them you have no voice in your own affairs.

The fact of the matter is, the Teamsters at Bayway need you more than you need them. That is why they are making such an energetic effort to sign you up and to get your vote. That is why they are spending money on the election campaign— money earned by the sweat of some other workers somewhere.

Esso seamen do not need the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. They do not need a

professional shore workers' union to tell them how to run their lives. They do not need an organization that has been drummed out of the AFL/CIO for corrupt influences. They do not need an organization that has been characterized by Senator John L. McClellan as "racket-ridden, gangster-infested and scandal-packed." They do not need a union whose general president has been convicted of fraud and conspiracy involving the union's pension fund and whose conviction of jury tampering has just been upheld by the Supreme Court. Nor do they need a union local whose secretary-treasurer was shot down in front of his own house less than a year ago by an unknown gunman.

SEAMEN DON'T BUY SHORE UNIONS

From the very beginning of trade unionism in this country, merchant seamen have always held themselves apart from shore-workers' unions. There are very good reasons for this policy.

Seamen in a shoregoing union would have a very small voice. In a shore union seamen would be outnumbered by the truck drivers, the male hairdressers, the bumper refinishers, toll collectors, car rental representatives and garagemen, or whatever. Any important issue, when put to a vote, could be decided by the people ashore attending the meeting and doing the voting. Seamen would be a minority group. They would be outnumbered and outvoted. This could apply to a strike assessment, a dues increase, election of officials or many other important questions. This is why American merchant seamen

have always shunned the shore-going union organizer.

THREE ROADS

The coming NLRB election brings Esso seamen once more to a crossroad. There are three routes to choose from. One, the Teamsters, offers a strange new path to follow — a road unfamiliar to the tanker crews. Once chosen, it may be difficult to turn back. It is a road paved with union bossism, outside alliances and strange companions. For Esso seamen it could prove a costly and unhappy route to follow.

Next, is the road marked "No Union" — an empty road that leads nowhere except to still another NLRB election.

Finally, there is the independent road. This is the road that Esso men have fought to safeguard and, since 1939, have preferred to travel. It is a road free of outside interference over which Esso seamen have journeyed, strike free and unencumbered, for nearly 30 years.

As for the Marine Department, we make no bones about where we stand. We want no part of the Teamsters' Union. We prefer to deal with our own employees, not strangers. We believe that an independent union with spokesmen elected by their own shipmates is the most effective kind of representation. A union of Esso seamen, not shoreside strangers.

As the time for the voting draws near, you will need to consider carefully your decision. Your vote is secret. It is supervised by an agency of the U. S. Government. Your choice is your own. It is very important. Use it wisely.

