

Beat Workers at Saigon Docks

50,000 More Men Called on to Strike

SAIGON, Viet Nam, Dec. 29 [Thursday] (AP) — Vietnamese goon squads, using short wooden clubs and lengths of chain, today beat up a dozen men trying to go thru the main gate of the strike-bound Saigon port.

The violence erupted as the strike entered its fourth day. A deadlock in settlement talks has resulted in the use of increasing numbers of United States troops to handle war goods beginning to pile up.

To Punish Workers

Vietnamese labor leaders admitted that their strongarm men were guarding the gates of the port and would punish any Vietnamese workers who try to get onto the docks before the labor dispute is settled.

No American troops were reported to have been involved in the melee in which one man reportedly was seriously injured.

Meanwhile, the Saigon Council of Labor ordered an estimated 50,000 workers to strike for 12 hours tomorrow in support of the dock strikers.

Union leaders said tomorrow's strike would affect all the capital's public utilities, including power, water, gas, and transportation.

American and Vietnamese officials said the talks still were deadlocked and there was no prospect of resuming them immediately.

Try to Steal Jobs

A Vietnamese labor official said the men attacked were trying to get onto the docks to "openly steal the jobs of the port workers."

"Instead of supporting us, they try to rob us," he said. "So we prevented them from going in. It was a punishment rather than a fight."

It was the second incident arising from the port walkout. Last night a group of women, who normally work as clerks

GOONS ATTACK DOCK WORKERS IN SAIGON PORT

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and fork lift operators on the docks, attempted to report to work but were shoved back by strikers.

A military guard fired his rifle into the air to break up the potentially explosive situation.

The women turned back.

The soldiers-turned-dock-workers have tripled the flow of vital war goods since the strike began Monday but the total tonnage handled yesterday was only about 50 per cent of a normal work day's cargo load.

American officials warned that a prolonged strike would block "the unloading of materials necessary for pursuit of the war effort and maintenance of the Vietnamese economy."

Consider Intervening

Informed sources said that if the strike continues, the South Vietnamese government may feel obliged to intervene because of the high cost to the war effort and the fragile economy.

Civilian cargo—not being handled by the United States troops—was piling up. Civilian commodities coming thru the port are used to fight inflation by absorbing excess money on the Vietnamese market.

The strike started Monday when the Vietnamese dockworkers walked off their jobs after United States officials refused to yield to union demands that Vietnamese workers continue to be employed at Newport, the American-built, 50-million-dollar depot constructed 5 miles up river to ease congestion in Saigon's regular port.

Barred at Newport

Bill Moyers, civilian personnel director for the United States army in Viet Nam, said the army was willing to meet all of the union demands except the one concerning Newport.

He said the labor leaders were told that Vietnamese workers could not work at Newport because it is strictly a military facility.

He said, however, that 288 Vietnamese dock workers laid off at Newport would be given work at the main port if they asked for it.

Moyers said the Vietnamese were hired to work at Newport with the understanding that they would be employed only until United States troops were available to replace them.