

# Big Stores' Deliveries Halted by Walkout Called Despite Contract; State Mediates

Deliveries from most of New York's leading department stores and specialty shops were halted yesterday by a complete stoppage of work by union employes of the United Parcel Delivery Service, Inc., of 331 East Thirty-eighth Street, which serves 350 retail merchants in the metropolitan area.

The State Mediation Board made immediate efforts to settle the dispute. In response to invitations from Jules S. Freund, executive secretary of the board, representatives of both sides met last night in the board's offices at 250 West Fifty-seventh Street, with William H. Davis, board chairman, presiding. It was said there that no statement of developments would be made until today.

An official of the company said the stoppage began at 9:30 o'clock Friday night in all its stations and was not expected to last more than four days at the most. He hoped to resume deliveries tomorrow or tomorrow night.

The stoppage followed disciplinary action taken against a 20-year-old belt boy, employed to sort packages on a conveyor belt, according to a company official. He said a supervisor suspended the boy and sent him home Thursday night for "fooling around" with a fire ex-

tinguisher instead of doing his work, with orders to report to the personnel manager the next morning.

The stoppage was called by William Courtney, president of Local 804, International Brotherhood of Teamsters and Chauffeurs, according to the company, with the demand that the boy be reinstated before the stoppage was lifted. The company took the position that the men should return to work before the boy's case was discussed.

An informal discussion was held by company and union officials yesterday. On behalf of the company it was said the discussions were being carried on in a friendly spirit and that there was no strike or picketing. The company said it was willing to mediate under the terms of a three-year contract signed with the union last year, granting substantial wage increases, barring strikes and stoppages, and providing for mediation and arbitration.

An official of an important department store affected by the stoppage said that it would cause losses in sales to suburbanites, who can buy goods in New York City for delivery without paying the city sales tax, but have to pay the tax

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if they take the goods with them. It was also said that some of the stores might suffer losses in perishable goods, some of which will not keep more than six or eight hours.

It was said in company quarters that delivery of 100,000 packages, with a probable value of \$500,000, has been delayed by the stoppage. This included packages picked up by the parcel service up to and including Friday night. Some merchandise bought yesterday was delivered by parcel post.

A union official gave a different version of the stoppage. He admitted the contract provided for no stoppages, but insisted the company, not the union, had violated it by dismissing rather than suspending the belt boy. The union official said the boy was discharged by a man who had no authority to do so and without discussing the case with the union, as he insisted was required under the terms of the contract. According to the union official, the stoppage was not a strike but a "one-man" lock-out.

This was denied by the company. One of its officials said that its supervisors, one of whom took the action complained of by the union, had no authority to dismiss, and could only suspend the boy, subject to action by the personnel manager. This, he repeated, was all that had been done.

Before last night's meeting, officials of the State Mediation Board privately agreed with the company's version after talking informally with both sides. They said the stoppage was a "clear violation" of the agreement between the company and the union. According to a spokesman for the board, the contract sets up an elaborate machinery for the adjustment of grievances and outlaw strikes, lockouts or stoppages of work during the life of the agreement.

The office of Mayor La Guardia kept in close touch with the situation throughout the day, but left the task of bringing the parties together to the State Mediation Board.

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