

EMPLOYEES BEGIN STRIKE AT MACY'S

8,000 Workers Directed to Stay Out—Store Officials Hope to Open 'as Usual'

A strike of 8,000 unionized employes at Macy's began at 12:01 A. M. today. The midnight shift did not report for work and thirty-five pickets began to patrol the entrances to the world's largest department store in Herald Square.

Arrangements also were completed during the night for pickets to greet shoppers today at the store's four branches in the metropolitan area. Macy officials, nevertheless, promised to be open "as usual" at 9:45 A. M.

The walkout was called last night after efforts to negotiate a new contract had failed over the week-end. Both sides said at 2:30 A. M. today that there was little chance of a settlement before opening time.

As of that hour negotiations were still off and there were no arrangements for a meeting of store officials and leaders of Local 1-S of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Workers Union.

In the first hours of the walkout the police detail at the main Macy store had to be temporarily increased after a woman picket was hurt.

The incident developed when twenty placard-bearing union members attempted to prevent a delivery truck from backing to a loading platform on West Thirty-fourth Street.

The truck driver had waited nearly an hour for word on whether to cross the picket line. He was ordered to proceed with his work by a man said to be a representative of Local 804, the Parcel Delivery Service unit of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Women Fall to Ground

As eight patrolmen moved to break up the human roadblock of strikers, at least two women workers fell to the ground. Miss Ceil Curry, a saleswoman, of 121 East 169th Street, the Bronx, was taken to St. Clare's Hospital and X-rayed there for a possible fracture of the right leg.

A union spokesman said later that the police had been merely "doing their job." The women pickets left the lines at 2:30 A. M., leaving about twenty men in Herald Square. The union called a "mass" gathering of 4,000 workers for 8 A. M. today.

Other picket lines will be set up this morning at Macy branches in Jamaica, Queens; Flatbush, Brooklyn; Parkchester, the Bronx, and White Plains in Westchester County.

The 8,000 workers directed to strike include salesmen and women, nonselling employes such as elevator operators and stock clerks, and nonexecutive office personnel. They comprise about two-thirds of all Macy personnel.

Union leaders said the pickets' chief concern would be to urge customers to keep out of Macy's. Store officials said they had been assured by the teamsters' union that incoming and outgoing deliveries would continue and that craft workers, such as carpenters and electricians, might cross the picket lines.

Macy's hoped to enroll 1,500 persons, including high executives, to man the counters, run elevators and push stock wagons in the five stores. They expressed confidence in their ability to service all shoppers.

Strike Authorized Week Ago

Store workers authorized their leaders a week ago to call a strike whenever they felt it was necessary. Their meeting last Tuesday delayed the opening of Macy's a half hour and forced executives to operate the store until the employes reported for work at 11 A. M.

The old agreement expired at midnight April 1. Macy's last reported offer to the workers was a four-year contract providing a \$2 general weekly increase in each of the first three years. In 1959, the wages and hours clauses would be opened to negotiation and sent to arbitration if the parties could not agree.

The union had sought a three-year compact, with \$3 increases in the first and second years and renewed negotiation in 1958. A spokesman said last night, however, that the pre-strike demands were no longer applicable.

The company also offered improvements in its health, insurance and retirement plans. The union wanted higher pension scales as well as a reduction in the work week from forty to thirty-seven and a half hours.

The present minimum wage is \$39 a week. The union disputes the company's estimate that the average weekly pay is \$64.

A strike of the 8,000 workers at the five stores two years ago hampered but did not halt operations at Macy's. It ended after five hours. The union then claimed a victory, but company spokesmen insisted they had made no concession during the walkout.

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