

# Shaw strikers voluntarily agree to reduce picketing

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Striking workers at Richard Shaw Frozen Foods voluntarily limited their picketing this morning. In contrast to the cooperative spirit at Shaw's, picketing at Watsonville Canning and Frozen Food has been uneasy.

The voluntary action by the Teamsters avoided a court injunction that would have called on police to forcibly remove the hundreds of pickets who have surrounded Shaw's plant since the strike began four days ago. Shaw, which usually employs about 1,200 workers during the fall peak

season, is operating at minimal levels now.

Attorneys for Shaw went to Santa Cruz County Superior Court at 1:15 p.m. yesterday to file for a temporary restraining order. Judge William Kelsay scheduled a hearing on the item for three hours later.

While waiting for their court appearance, attorneys for Teamsters Local 912 and for Shaw settled on an eight-page handwritten agreement which limits pickets to no more than six per entrance.

A stricter order to limit pickets at Watsonville Canning was issued by Judge Kelsay earlier this week, and Watsonville police have been busy respond-

ing to calls from both sides, each accusing the other of violating the restraining order.

"In comparison to Watsonville Canning, Shaw has been acting like a prince in their attempt to limit pickets," said Sergio Lopez, a business agent for the union.

The head of security at Shaw's, Joe King, reported to Watsonville police that someone entered the plant today at about 3:45 a.m. and turned off the main power switch. Power could not be restored until a mechanic came in to fix the system.

At Watsonville Canning, about 1,400 workers are striking

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## STRIKE

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over a reduction in wages and benefits. Beginning July 1, Watsonville Canning imposed a new wage scale for new hires that reduced the wages of line workers from \$6.66 an hour to \$4.25. Higher-skilled workers, such as mechanics, were reduced from \$12.31 to \$7.48 per hour.

Tensions at Watsonville Canning among the strikers, the management, and the police are running high.

Teamsters officials contend the police are favoring Watsonville Canning in enforcing the restraining order.

"The police have been going over to Watsonville Canning every five minutes," said Lopez. "They will not even let our people walk on the public sidewalk across from the plant."

One striker complained that even when she would try to use the bathroom or get a cup of coffee from a nearby restaurant, the police would ask her where she was going.

"This is a public street," she said. "Why should they care where I am going. We're not even allowed to cross the street."

Richard Baca, owner of El

Rinconcito restaurant across from Watsonville Canning, said the enforcement of the restraining order has drastically hurt business.

"The first day (before the restraining order) was all right," Baca said. "But after Tuesday, the police wouldn't let anyone come here to eat, use the bathroom, or buy a cup of coffee."

Baca said business has dropped from the usual \$700 per day to only \$100 per day.

"Yesterday I went up to the corner and I asked these guys who have been my customers for a long time if they were hungry," he said. "They said, 'Sure, we're hungry, but the police say we can't leave.'"

Police Chief Ray Belgard said the police have not permitted anyone on either side of Ford Street except in designated areas in the police department's interpretation of the restraining order.

"We're just trying to keep within the guidelines of the restraining order," he said.

In response to the controversy over attempts to ensure peace at the two plants, City Manager John Radin has asked all concerned parties to meet with him tomorrow at 10 a.m.

Striking workers from Watsonville Canning are also angry about a notice from the company informing them they could not come to the plant to pick up paychecks from last week's pay period, but would have to wait instead for the checks to be mailed to their homes.

Many workers objected to the delay and several said they were worried checks would be lost because of address changes.

Teamsters officials said they have not gotten cooperation

from police or Watsonville Canning in their attempts to get a list of address changes to the company.

Calls to Watsonville Canning were not returned and the company had no comment on the strike or related events.

In other incidents, police found a BB rifle last night in the car of a Watsonville Canning employee.

According to a police report, a striker reported that the employee brandished the gun. However, the employee told the police he did not remove the gun from his car.

Police confiscated the gun for safekeeping.

In another incident at Watsonville Canning, a security guard there was arrested last night on charges of being drunk in public and possession of less than one ounce of marijuana.

Ronald Alden Young, 25, of San Jose, was arrested last night at 11:35 p.m. after complaints reached the police that he was harassing pickets.

No new negotiations have been scheduled between the Teamsters and the two striking plants, nor between the union and the other five major frozen food processors whose contracts have also expired.

## REFERENCE

APTOS BRANCH LIBRARY  
7695 Soquel Drive  
Aptos, California 95003

WATSONVILLE  
REGISTER-PAJARONIAN  
September 12, 1985