

Watsonville Canning seeks tougher restraining order

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Attorneys for Watsonville Canning and Frozen Food Co. indicated yesterday they will ask a judge to issue more strict prohibitions against pickets at the company's Ford Street plant.

Teamsters union pickets are currently limited to four at each plant entrance. Since Tuesday the company has been removing gates, closing the entrances, thus effectively cutting the number of pickets allowed outside the plant under terms of the existing restraining order.

Police Chief Ray Belgard has interpreted the restraining order to mean pickets are allowed only at functioning gates.

Yesterday, company attorneys filed papers stating they

will ask Superior Court Judge William Kelsay to limit pickets to two at each functioning gate and keep all other pickets at least 200 yards away.

A hearing is scheduled tomorrow at 9:30 a.m. to hear arguments regarding a preliminary injunction against picketing.

Attorneys from both Watsonville Canning and Richard A. Shaw Frozen Foods, where employees have been on strike since Sept. 9, have asked the court for injunctions. Judge Kelsay has issued temporary orders limiting picketing at the plants.

Teamsters union attorney Kenneth Silbert yesterday asked Kelsay for a clarification of his order limiting picketing activity to four pickets at each gate in light of Watsonville Canning's closing gates. The judge refused to change the order, Silbert said.

Another lawyer representing Teamsters Local 912, Albert Kutchins, in a declaration filed with the court, charged the assistant district attorney in Watsonville with improperly telephoning Kelsay at home requesting he issue a restraining order on the morning of the first day of the strike.

Kutchins also charged Watsonville Canning attorneys had a request for a restraining order prepared before the strike began. The two factors led Kelsay to be predisposed to rule against the union, according to Kutchins.

Kutchins said Kelsay told him he respected the DA and that on the strength of his request for an order he felt he had to issue one.

Meanwhile, no negotiations between the union and either of the companies are currently scheduled.