

NO REST FOR THE WEARY

One Department Store Denies Holiday to Clerks.

ACTION IS CONDEMNED

SPECIAL MEETING OF TRADES ASSEMBLY IS CALLED.

Competitors Compelled to Keep Open in Defense of Their Own Interests Although They Object Vigorously. The New Store, Freimuth and Silberstein and Bondy Co. Express Their Sentiments.

There will be a special meeting of the Duluth Federated Trades assembly tomorrow night to discuss and consider resolutions denouncing the action of one of the leading department stores of Duluth for its announcement that it will keep open until 12:30 p. m. on Christmas day. The meeting was called last night by President Jones, after consultation with members of the executive committee and such delegates as he could reach at that time. Of the four large up town department stores, only one had advertised to keep open on Christmas day, and this may force some of the others to do the same. President Jones, of the trades assembly, said last evening that the organization would denounce the store which proposes to keep open next Tuesday forenoon, as the charter of the assembly itself contains a clause protesting against Sunday and holiday labor.

It is possible that the thousands of Duluth shoppers who have eagerly thronged the big department stores during the past week have given a thought to the clerks, and perhaps have wished them a Merry Christmas, after making their purchases. It is customary for the clerks in the stores to work long hours during the week preceding Christmas, and neither the clerks nor any other person have ever been heard to protest. It is the only week in the year when it is required of the clerks and there is a public demand at that time for the stores to be open for business. But Christmas day is another thing. As a rule, merchants do not wish to have their stores open on that day, but if one or more of their competitors do, they feel that they also are obliged to do the same in defense of their own interests.

Sympathy For Clerks.

It is one of the duties of the executive committee of the Trades Assembly to watch for infractions of the ordinary rules of labor and look after those interests in a general way. Their duties pertain mainly to organized labor, but there are occasions when organized labor protests in the interests of unorganized labor. There is an organization among the clerks, though there are many who do not belong to it. One of the things that prompted the executive committee of the assembly to take action last evening was sympathy for the large number of young men and boys and girls, employed by the offending firm.

Three members of the executive committee of the Trades Assembly, A. W. Jones, J. W. Richardson and George M. Davis, called upon the other three big up-town department stores last evening to ascertain if they, too, were to keep open Christmas day. The first place they called at was the Silberstein & Bondy company. There they interviewed J. M. Giddings, who promptly informed his callers that the store would not be kept open under any consideration. Much encouraged by this, the committee went to The New Store, where they saw George M. Tallant.

That gentleman said he was surprised to learn that any of the stores here kept open Christmas. Mr. Tallant said he would like to have his clerks enjoy a full holiday Tuesday. "If you urge me I may not keep open anyway," said Mr. Tallant. He intimated that he would be glad of an excuse to close, even if one of his competitors did keep open. From The New Store the committee went over to Freimuth's. Mr. Freimuth said that he would close his store Christmas day if his competitor, who is advertising to keep open that day, would do so. Mr. Freimuth said that under no circumstances would his clerks be compelled to work on that day. If they did not show up for work it would not be to their discredit. Mr. Freimuth, apparently, did not expect to have a very large force on hand Tuesday, and would be glad to close his store.

The committee did not go to the other department store for they assumed that, having advertised to keep open Christmas day, the firm would probably make no effort to recall it. The committee feels that in view of the fact the clerks had been on duty until 10:30 every night last week and will be on duty tomorrow night until 11 o'clock, it is a plain outrage to ask them to get around again the next morning, especially as it is Christmas day.

What President Jones Says.

"I think", said President Jones of the trades assembly, "that it is a violation of all traditions connected with Christmas to perform unnecessary labor on that day. It is a day which should be kept sacred on account of its religious origin, and is the day of all days for families to be united. I cannot too strongly express my disapproval of any firm who seeks to turn the day itself to business account, especially when, in order to accomplish it, over-worked clerks, many of them boys and girls, are required to give up their holiday, or a good part of it. It is

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not as hard for men, though it is not right in their case, but somebody should speak for the younger clerks, who ought to be at home having a good time about the Christmas tree instead of working just the same as if it were any other day. I have called a special meeting of the trades assembly to consider the action of this store, and I have no doubt that the delegates will display their sympathy for the proposed injustice to the employes of the department store in question."

J. W. Richardson, who is secretary of the trades assembly, said: "I feel that it is my duty as a citizen to make an appeal in behalf of the children employed in this store. The three other principal department stores up town are more than willing to close on Christmas day, but they naturally feel they have to protect their own interests, for competition is keen. The clerks in the store complained of are to be deprived of one half of their Christmas holiday, after having put in long hours during the week, and will again work late Monday night. There is no commercial need of a department store keeping open on a holiday. It is a question having a moral and economic side, and I do not believe the people of Duluth approve of such action by a firm toward its employes. I do not believe a firm that has the welfare of its employes or the city at heart would cut out half of Christmas day from their enjoyment."

George M. Davis, who is vice president of the trades assembly, said: "People everywhere are considerate if their hearts and sympathies are touched in the right spot. This is one of the cases that will be appreciated. The Duluth public, in my opinion, does not sanction the unnecessary working of clerks on Christmas day. I would like to see the social organizations and the church societies take this matter up also. Most people go to church on Christmas day, for it is a holy day. People that do not go to church have their Christmas trees and stockings and entertain relatives and friends. It is essentially a home day, and a person asked to do unnecessary labor on that day, is asked to do something unreasonable and wrong. I would like to see laws passed prohibiting unnecessary labor on holidays."