

Crawford Plant Workers Strike; Wages Involved

Firm President Says Company Willing to Talk

A strike by members of United Furniture Workers of America, CIO Local 45, materialized at the Crawford Furniture Manufacturing Corporation this morning as union and company officials failed to renew contract negotiations prior to the Sunday midnight deadline which the union had set earlier last week.

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Negotiations for a contract have been underway since Sept. 3 but the main point of disagreement between the two parties has been over a wage increase for the 160 workers at the plant.

Union members voted to go out on strike at a special meeting last Wednesday after Sam Olfano, international representative of the CIO, reported that negotiations had reached a stalemate. The union set Sunday midnight as the deadline for reopening the talks before going out on strike today.

Clyne Crawford, president of Crawford Furniture, said this morning that his committee is willing to meet with the union officials at any time.

He stated that the company submitted its final offer Saturday, consisting of an hourly wage increase of 3 cents immediately and 2 cents June 1, under a two-year contract. Mr. Crawford also said that the firm has offered an escalator clause that will compensate for increases in the cost of living as measured by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Sandy Scarantino, president of Local 45, stated that the 3-cent hourly increase was offered on the amount of hours worked and not on base rate. He said that the two-year proposed contract called for no wage-reopener clause.

The union had originally sought a 15-cent hourly increase but had scaled its request down to 5 cents on base rates for piece worker and 7 cents for day workers.

Picket lines were established at the plant this morning.

Mr. Scarantino said that union members will hold a special meeting at 3 P.M. today.