

Church Women Protest Stores Open on Sunday

Eighty women, representing eight different Protestant denominations, of which thousands of women are members, struck out yesterday afternoon against the opening of grocery stores in Norfolk on Sunday.

They unanimously approved a resolution strongly protesting such alleged violations of the State law and laid plans for further action to bring an end to further "desecration of the Sabbath".

The resolution was passed by the executive board of the Norfolk Federation of Missionary Societies at a meeting in the YWCA, and will be recommended for adoption by the members at the next business meeting November 2 in the Park Place Baptist Church.

Standing behind the resolution, without a single dissenting vote, were 80 women of the Norfolk, Berkeley and South Norfolk areas.

"We will not sanction the opening of grocery stores on Sunday and will not support them," declared Mrs. Harmon P. Jones, president of the Women of the Church of the First Presbyterian Church, who presented the resolution. The same resolution was adopted unanimously at a meeting of the women of the First Presbyterian Church Tuesday.

Mrs. Jones pointed out that most food dealers have no desire to remain open for business on Sunday but that they feel they are being forced into the move because others doing so would make inroads in their business.

The women were enthusiastic because they could do something about the resolution besides passing it, since they do the marketing and could refuse to buy from stores that persist in remaining open, Mrs. Jones explained.

If that fails, in all probability, an effort will be made to obtain a city ordinance to prohibit the practice, she said.

The Federation plans to bring the matter before the City Council and will write Commonwealth's Attorney H. Lawrence Bullock, urging cooperation.

In addition the Protestant women will petition all clubs of women in this city, in every faith and denomination, to follow their example regarding the matter.

Sunday Closing Long Problem Of Association

Food Dealers President Says Most Stores Want To Cooperate

Sunday closing of grocery stores has been under study by the Norfolk Food Dealers Association for more than eight months, said James E. Harrell, Jr., president, yesterday.

"Early in the year we met with representative members of the grocery business in Norfolk, together with a member of the Norfolk Ministers Association, and discussed ways and means of bringing grocery operators to agreement on uniform Sunday closing in both the city and Norfolk County," he said.

He said that the recent focus of attention on the matter has stirred some members into agreement. The Sunday closing will begin in Norfolk September 30.

Two Refuse

"Today," said Harrell, "there are only two known operators of the larger volume stores who have refused to close voluntarily one day a week starting next Sunday. Undoubtedly each operator has the privilege of a jury trial in testing the 'Sunday Blue Laws' but we of the association have no thought in mind of testing any law."

"In fairness to customers used to doing the family shopping on Sunday, it is fair that the stores should remain open this Sunday to serve an established practice and acquaint those customers to adjust their purchases to conform to the new Sunday schedule," Harrell said.

George Ames, executive secretary of the association, said, "there has been no real problem in getting grocers to close on Sundays. We only needed to select one particular time for all to start at the same time."

Ames said the response of the large-volume grocers has been splendid, with only two exceptions and that among the smaller merchants there has been scattered reluctance to close but by next Sunday even those will realize the good of the community is not served by their personal desire for gain.

Grocers Agree To Closing of Stores Sunday

That Is, All But One, Ministers' President Announces

Informal negotiations around a table in the Blue Room of the Monticello Hotel between representatives of leading Norfolk grocery interests with the Rev. Beverly Tucker White, rector of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, as moderator, resulted last night in agreement that grocery stores would not be open on Sunday in Norfolk.

One store, however, declined to join the agreement.

After the conference ended about 11 o'clock, the Rev. Mr. White made this statement:

"All representatives agreed not to open on Sunday, or to close on Sunday if they were now open then, with the exception of one, whose name I will not give.

"The merchant representatives were in general agreement that if all opened on Sunday, none would profit. They also felt that in order to preserve the things we believe in most, Sunday merchandising should be dispensed with. They felt it would profit nothing to anybody."

The Rev. Mr. White, who is president of the Norfolk Ministerial Association and was the sole representative of Norfolk churches of the 16 men attending, said the conference was characterized by "good spirit and good fellowship."

He said the calling of the conference had been arranged through personal contacts among city leaders in the grocery business.