

REDS BLAMED FOR NATIVE STRIKES

Action Against N.T. Leaders Defended

CANBERRA, Monday.—The Acting Minister for the Interior (Mr. Anthony) said today there was little doubt that strikes by aborigines in the Northern Territory were part of a Communist-inspired plan for general industrial disturbance.

"I am not prepared to allow natives, who are wards of the Commonwealth, to be used for this purpose," Mr. Anthony added.

He was commenting on the gaoling of one aborigine, Lawrence, and the removal from Darwin of another, Fred Waters, for taking part in strikes.

The N.S.W. Chief Secretary (Mr. Clive Evatt) described the removal of Waters as "further evidence of the Australian police State."

Mr. Anthony said: "The action taken in the case of Waters has been entirely at the instance of the local administration at Darwin."

"I have no doubt the administrator acted after careful consideration for the sole purpose of protecting the interests of the natives themselves," Mr. Anthony said.

"The primary consideration in this matter is the welfare

of the aborigines, Lawrence and Waters. "I am satisfied from reports from the administration that these men are being used without regard to their interests by persons anxious to cause disturbances," he said.

Not Justified

"There is no real justification for the complaint that aboriginal employees are being exploited."

"Their conditions of employment are being constantly reviewed."

"Those employed by the Government receive £2 a week in addition to the free supply of their essential needs."

"Having regard to their needs, and the quality and limited hours of their work I am satisfied that the total remuneration is reasonable and adequate," Mr. Anthony said.

"It is the Government's policy to exempt from control any aborigine who is able to look after himself and make his own decisions."

"Except in very rare cases, the time has not arrived when the native of the Northern Territory can do this."

Welfare Step

"It is most necessary to prevent further unsettlement of Waters and Lawrence, and other aborigines which would seriously upset the day-to-day relations with their fellows and greatly hamper their absorption into the community in which they must live."

"It must be emphasised that the administration is most concerned with the best interests of the aborigines."

"Those who have provoked the recent disturbance have objectives quite dissociated

from the welfare of the natives or from that matter of the country," Mr. Anthony added.

In Darwin aborigines refused to perform a corroboree for the visiting American tourists of the M.S. Stella Polaris unless their strike leaders are released from gaol and exile.

The corroboree is given as the entertainment in Darwin in the official cruise booklet.

The natives held a meeting at Bagot-road compound last week and unanimously decided "no Fred no Lawrence, no corroboree."

Administration officials have tried to change the corroboree, but the natives are firm.

The Director of Native Affairs (Mr. Moy) said the natives would not put on a corroboree because of "certain outside influences."