

Darwin Natives Go On Strike For £2 A Week Wage Rise

DARWIN, Tuesday. — All natives in the Darwin area have gone on strike. They say they are underpaid and are claiming an all round rise of £2 a week — for women as well as for men.

This is the biggest and best organised native strike ever conducted in Darwin.

The natives, who belong to a dozen different tribes, include municipal workers, house servants, police trackers, laundrymen and laborers. About 200 are involved.

The Native Affairs Branch requires householders to pay their servants at least £1 a week. Most get £1 and some up to 30/- a week. Employees in Government departments and the services are paid 30/- a week.

Householders employing natives feed and clothe them, provide their tobacco and "picture money" for the talkies once a week.

A Native Affairs Branch officer said today that if a £2 increase were granted there would be no jobs for natives, as householders who employed two could not afford £5 a week for servants on top of the already extremely high cost of living in Darwin.

UNION HELP

Natives organised themselves for the strike, and then consulted officials of the North Australian Workers' Union.

They have appointed leaders from each tribal group from places like Millingimbi, Bathurst Island, Melville Island, and Daly River.

A spokesman for the NAWU said today that his union would support the natives' demands, if asked.

The strike is believed to have been organised by a Wargaitj tribe native who was recently in trouble with the police, and was to be banished to a penal settlement.

Many of the natives say that they were undeterred by threats that if they stayed on strike their leaders would be sent to Beswick Station, about 300 miles from Darwin.

"If anyone is sent to Beswick, we will all go," one said.

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