

politically active in Rarotonga and later extended its activities to the outer islands. For some time the Cook Islands Progressive Association, many of whose non-political objectives are in themselves excellent, has attempted to dominate the labour scene and to impose unilateral decisions on employers and workers alike. The association has been particularly antagonistic towards the union, and a jurisdictional struggle centred in the main around waterfront work has developed. This has been carried on by the Waterside Workers' Association, a section of the Cook Islands Progressive Association.

On the December voyage of the "Maui Pomare" work at Rarotonga was considerably impeded by the dispute, and at Aitutaki no work at all could be done due to the uncompromising attitude of the Waterside Workers' Association. Matters were brought to a head when on the arrival of the "Wairuna" early in March the Waterside Workers' Association established picket lines around the wharf area and succeeded in preventing any work proceeding. It was intimated that similar action would be taken on the arrival of the "Wairata" later in the month. As this vessel was carrying large quantities of supplies which were much needed in the Group, the Government considered it imperative that the vessel be unloaded. Accordingly, to ensure that law and order were maintained and that *bona fide* waterside workers were not prevented from carrying out the work of unloading, a party of New Zealand police was sent forward as a precautionary measure to strengthen the local Police Force. At the same time the Cook Islands Trade Dispute Intimidation Regulations, which had been under consideration for some time, were brought into force, thus enabling action to be taken if required to prevent a trade dispute assuming serious proportions.

The presence of the police party and their tactful behaviour averted any incidents, and waterfront work has since proceeded without interference. By Government direction, labour for waterfront work has been called on each occasion from lists of *bona fide* waterside workers, irrespective of their affiliation with either the union or the Waterside Workers' Association. On and after the "Wairata" call, however, members of the association have refrained as a body from accepting wharf work, and this position still obtains. The New Zealand Federation of Labour has appointed a delegation to investigate industrial relations in the Cook Islands and to endeavour to reach an amicable settlement of current disputes.

Although there have been attempts in some quarters to misinterpret the Government's position in the matter of labour relations, the sole object of the action taken has been to bring all sections of the community into reasonable harmony and to ensure that the islands as a whole do not suffer from the actions of any irresponsible and unreasonable group.

10 MIGRATORY LABOUR

The British Phosphate Commission recruits labourers in the Cook Islands for work in the phosphate island of Makatea, in the Society Islands. On 31st March, 1948, a total of 352 men were absent in Makatea.

Employment in this work is popular on account of the relatively high wages, and a great proportion of the workers seek re-employment. Contracts are individual and on an annual basis. Workers are medically examined before departure and on their return, and a portion of their wages is compulsorily allotted either to their dependants or by means of savings accounts. The Cook Islanders have proved themselves very good workers and have contributed in a substantial manner to the development of the production of phosphates so urgently needed in New Zealand and Australia for primary production.

There is no movement of migratory labour into the Group. Some migration occurs from the less-fertile islands of the Northern Group to Rarotonga and other islands of the Southern Group.