

Natives plan camp in protest

About 80 Aborigines intend to camp in Sherbrooke Forest until they are given land rights.

They plan to establish a small settlement on the Crown-owned land if their request is rejected.

The leader of the group, Mr. Lin Onus, said yesterday the occupation would start on February 6.

"It is hoped that as many supporters as possible will make themselves available to sit in on the protest from time to time," he said.

"Our protest is over the non-granting of land rights to Aborigines, but it also

includes such points as the infant mortality, leprosy and the preservation of Aboriginal culture."

Mr. Onus said that if the claim reached a stalemate the Aboriginal protesters would form a settlement on the land and try to become self-sufficient.

"I imagine we could be there for about five years before something concrete happens," he said.

"On a claim like this one we will have to be there for 24 hours a day during seven days a week."

He said the group would make their claim on about 40 acres of the 1983 acres of permanent reserve.

"Sponsors are helping us with food supplies and we will pass the time by producing handicrafts," said Mr. Onus.

It is an offence to camp in Sherbrooke Forest. The penalty is a fine of up to \$12.

The chairman of the Forests Commission (Dr. F. R. Moulds) said yesterday that there had not been any approach by Aborigines for tribal rights to the Sherbrooke Forest area.

"If they intend to reside there they will be breaking the law and we will take action against them," he said.