

WE WILL

# CAMP HERE" SAYS NATIVE LEADER

Over 200 aborigines will take over 40 acres of Sherbrooke Forest at the week-end.

Lead by Lin Onus, a son of the late Bill Onus, they will set up camp in the bush about halfway between Belgrave and Kallista, just off the main road on the downhill side.

Mr. Onus, in an exclusive interview with the 'FREE PRESS' at the weekend, said they would 'squat' there until they had obtained justice over land rights for aborigines.

He allowed reporters, IAN WOOD and JOHN FEARN, to accompany him on a final inspection tour of the camp site.

Mr. Onus left no doubt that he and his supporters are quietly determined to go ahead with their plan regardless of the personal consequences, and are prepared to "stay for years" if necessary.



MR. LIN. ONUS

"We are prepared to go to jail if we have to," he said, "We will either go down in history or go down in flames."

## Hostile reception

An advance party of 40 will leave the Aborigine's Advancement League offices in Northcote early Saturday morning, and arrive in the Forest between 8.00 and 8.30 am. to what will probably be a hostile reception.

Mr. Onus expects officials from the Forests Commission, and the Police, to form a 'welcoming committee' at the camp site. There could also be trouble from onlookers.

It is an offence to camp in Sherbrooke Forest, carrying the penalty of a fine of up to \$1200.

and two small children at their Balwyn home to take up a 24-hour vigil at the camp.

He said on Saturday, "There are nearly three million square miles of Australia and only about one million of them are settled."

"Surely some of this land can be made available by the Government for the advancement of the 'kooories' (the name aborigines give themselves)."

"Just one self-sufficient aborigine is an advantage to the economy of the country."

"The outcome of this issue will effect the lives of a million keories," he said.

"We have the full backing of the Aborigines Advancement League and the National Tribal Council, two key groups organising aboriginal affairs."

"We hope that the State Minister of Aborigine Affairs, Mr. Meagher, and the Federal Minister, Mr. Wentworth, will visit the camp to hear our case."

Mr. Onus' group will live in tents and prepare their meals on portable gas stoves.

Care will be taken to

in the homes of nearby friends on fire danger days and conveyed to the camp.

He said they would be particularly careful preserving the area in its natural state and would take precautions against any form of pollution.

Members of the group plan to spend their time making souvenir items for sale to the public and eventually hope to stage displays of aboriginal art and culture.

"The aborigines have much to learn about the white man's ways, but the white man also has much to learn about our ways" Mr. Onus said. "We will do whatever we can to help this process of mutual education'.

"I hope people will stop at the camp and call on us so we can discuss our position face to face with them'.

FOOTNOTE: On Saturday the State Minister for Aborigine Affairs, Mr. Meagher announced that residents of Lake Tyers and Framlingham are to be given ownership of 4250

acres of land on the reserves.

Ownership trusts will be set up to take control of 4000 acres at Lake Tyers and 520 acres at Framlingham.

Mr. Meagher said the land transfer would be the first of its kind in Australia.

APR