

F 2 MAR 1971

Land rights vigil goes on

Four gravel-covered steps lead down to the Bunnorrong camp in Sherbrooke Forest.

At the camp of two pitched tents, two part-aboriginals are still keeping a stubborn vigil for Aboriginal Land Rights. Organiser Mr Lin Onus,

22, and his friend Donald Bux, 17, have been there for almost three weeks now.

The pair have started to build an 8ft. highwalled,

sapling hut a stone's lob from the Belgrave to Kallista road.

Mr Onus said that the hut would be used to sell examples of aboriginal craft.

About two thirds of the wall has been completed.

At the weekend friends will bring up palings to make the shingle roof.

Mr Onus said they intend to build another hut and later dwellings the other side of the creek. Eventually they hope to reclaim the full 40 acres that they say belonged to the original tribe, the Bunnorrong.

However, Mr Onus thinks that their stay might be cut short on Monday. He has heard that once the roof goes on the hut the police will come.

"They have to wait until it contravenes the Act and becomes a building," he said. Tents are not considered permanent abodes.

He said that they had already contravened some regulations by breaking a few ferns, selling newspapers and "land rights"

buttons and setting up a lavatory.

But he said the Forests Commission passed the lavatory because it was necessary for sanitation.

The camp has every "mod con" from soap powder and insect spray to a tiny primus stove and plastic garbage cans.

Shaving and dish-washing is done on the spot with water from the creek.

In fact they are self-sufficient with almost everything but food. They started out with the locals inundating them with cakes and scones.

These supplies have stopped.

The camp has received about \$20 in gifts but Mr Onus admitted that it was now broke and they might have to ask for help.

Two local girls come twice a week to act as general rouseabouts and bring some food.

Visiting "koories" (meaning "one of our own" or virtually anyone who is aboriginal) pay regular visits.

About 15 come each

weekend, sing songs and camp overnight.

Week nights are usually spent playing draughts or reading comics by the light of two hurricane lamps.

The secretary of Sherbrooke Shire, Mr Kenneth Matson, said today the local council had no jurisdiction over Sherbrooke Forest because it was Crown land. He said the land would be administered by the Forests Commission.

The assistant forest commissioner for the district, Mr Jim McHugh, said there was a section in the Forests Act which provided that permanent fixtures such as buildings were illegal in reserved forest unless the Commission gave permission.

He said he could not say when or what form of action would be taken over the aboriginal squatters.

He believed a court order was required to remove any group from a reserved forest.



LIN ONUS, 22, trims his beard outside the aboriginals' tent in the forest.

Craft shop

