

Eight arrested in wild fighting after 50 PCs swoop

Police clash with Aborigines



Dr. Coombs

**Nine hurt
as native
'embassy'
tents are
flattened**

From MICHELLE GRATTAN

CANBERRA. — Police pulled down the "Aboriginal Embassy" opposite Parliament House yesterday during a violent clash with Aborigines and their supporters in which eight people were arrested.

Seven police and two demonstrators were treated for injuries after the fighting, which began when about 60 police took down four of the five tents and loaded them in a lorry.

Then the demonstrators linked hands and surrounded the "chancery" tent.

In the fights police and demonstrators were hurled to the ground. Several demonstrators were bleeding from the face and police were bitten and kicked.

Demonstrators lay on the road in front of a police wagon.

Five of the eight arrested were Aborigines.

Police said last night two policemen had been treated for broken fingers, one had a broken wrist, three had bites on the hands, arms and legs and one had been kicked in the groin.

Police moved in on the "embassy", which has been camped opposite Parliament House since January 26, soon after an ordinance making it illegal to camp on unleased Commonwealth land in the ACT was gazetted yesterday morning.

The "embassy" was established as a protest against the Government's decision not to grant land rights to Aborigines.

At one stage it consisted of 11 tents, but during the winter the number shrank to five tents and six "residents".

Yesterday afternoon about 150 demonstrators marched from police head-

quarters to the site of the dismantled "embassy" to hold a protest rally.

A spokesman for the "embassy", Mr. John Newfong, told the rally: "The Government are a lot of racist bastards—and they're gutless, too."

The Government had gazetted the new ordinance in a "slimy" way.

"We're going to ask the Prime Ministers' Conference to vote Australia out of the Commonwealth," he said.

"Other countries have been thrown out of the Commonwealth for racism—racism that probably isn't as bad as here."

He claimed Aboriginal "guerillas" were being trained in Fitzroy and Redfern in Sydney, and in Brisbane.

The chairman of the Commonwealth Council for Aboriginal Affairs (Dr. H. C. Coombs), who has been critical of the Government's attitude on land rights, said last night he was "sorry that there was violence and that it was found necessary to arrest Aborigines and students."

He said: "I believe Aborigines and others have a right of protest. This closes one avenue of protest. There are obviously other avenues. I hope they will continue to be used."

The Labor Party will move for the ordinance to be disallowed when Parliament resumes.

The Leader of the Opposition in the Senate (Senator Murphy) yesterday lodged a notice of motion for the disallowance of the ordinance.

"In the debate the real reasons why the Government has used this ordinance against the Aborigines can be exposed," he said.

The Opposition Leader (Mr. Whitlam) accused the Government of "completely disregarding its obligations to Parliament" in "moving forcibly and furtively" against the "embassy".

Yesterday, the president of the Australian Council of Churches (Bishop Garnsey) protested to the Federal Government.

He said the "embassy" was established to draw public attention to the denial of Aboriginal identity and the Aborigines' claim for land rights.

Telegrams have been sent to the Prime Minister (Mr. McMahon) and the Minister for the Interior (Mr. Hunt), protesting against the action and renewing the churches' call for the granting of land rights.

The Federal president of the Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations (Mr. P. W. Reilly) said: "We must feel a great sense of revulsion at the actions of the Federal Government in its brutal removal of the Aboriginal embassy from the Parliament House lawns."

In Brisbane last night Senator N. Bonner predicted an upsurge of Black Power violence in Australia.

In Perth it was announced that the Aboriginal "consulate" tent erected in Parliament House grounds is to get some new tenants — a homeless Aboriginal family of eight.

To back the move the Aboriginal Advancement Council will ask the WA Trades and Labor Council to call a general strike if there is any attempt to remove the tent or its occupants.



ABOVE: Police grapple with demonstrators. BELOW: "Embassy" supporters form a barrier.

