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New tent embassy sparks wild brawl

CANBERRA.— Eighteen people were arrested and several people injured during violent clashes between police and demonstrators outside Parliament House yesterday when Aborigines and their supporters tried to re-establish the "Aboriginal embassy".

More than 200 demonstrators and about 250 police confronted each other as police moved in to demolish a tent which the protesters had put up.

Eight of the people arrested were Aborigines.

The "embassy," which was set up six months ago to protest against the Government's refusal to grant Aboriginal land rights, was pulled down by police during wild scenes last Thursday.

This followed the introduction of an ordinance by the Federal Government making it illegal to camp on unleased land in the Australian Capital Territory.

Yesterday morning the demonstrators, including almost 100 Aborigines, marched from the Australian National University to Parliament House, where they were met by about 50 police.

They sat down on the road outside and listened to speeches.

When two policemen walked behind the crowd, the demonstrators ran to

the lawn where the embassy had stood. They erected a tent and formed a human guard around it.

About 200 police marched in from the gardens adjoining Parliament House and surrounded the demonstrators.

As the police moved in on the crowd around the tent, there were violent scuffles and several policemen and demonstrators were bleeding from the face.

Five policemen and nine demonstrators were treated for injuries at the Canberra Hospital. All were allowed to leave later.

A spokesman for the Department of the Interior said two policemen were treated for bites, two for cuts and abrasions, and one for a suspected broken shoulder.

He said two of the demonstrators, arrested were treated by a Government doctor. One was treated for

a stomach pain, and the other for a bleeding nose.

The charges against the 18 people arrested include insulting language, hindering police, and obstructing and assaulting police.

The demonstrators arrested will appear in the Canberra Court later this week and next week.

One of those arrested yesterday was also among the eight people who were arrested in last Thursday's demonstration.

While the melee was going on outside Parliament House, the Prime Minister (Mr. McMahon), the Leader of the Country Party (Mr. Anthony), the Treasurer (Mr. Snedden) and the Minister for Primary Industry (Mr. Sinclair) were inside finalising details of the Federal Budget.

Two busloads of Abori-

gines — one from Sydney and one from Brisbane — travelled to Canberra to take part in the protests against moving the embassy. Other Aborigines travelled by car or hitched rides. Black Panther leader Mr. Denis Walker was among the demonstrators.

The Aborigines are likely to hold another demonstration next weekend.

Miss Bobbi Sykes, one of the Aboriginal leaders, said yesterday: "The actions taken by police against us are creating militance for us."

"People would come from all over Australia to support us if they had the money to get here."

Some of the Aborigines were going back to Sydney to raise funds, Miss Sykes said.