

Aboriginal 'embassy': PM seeks way out

CANBERRA. — The Federal Government is expected to announce that it will establish an Aboriginal centre in Canberra in a last-minute effort to prevent further violence when Aborigines and their supporters try to re-establish the Aboriginal "embassy" on Sunday.

The Prime Minister (Mr. McMahon) is understood to be under strong pressure from the Minister for the Interior (Mr. Hunt) to make the gesture in the next 48 hours.

Eight people were arrested and several injured eight days ago when police tore down six-month-old "embassy" opposite Parliament House.

Commonwealth police swooped after an ordinance had been gazetted preventing camping on unleased Commonwealth land in the A.C.T.

Last Sunday there were 18 arrests during wild scenes when Aborigines and their supporters unsuccessfully tried to re-establish the "embassy".

Aborigines, trade unionists and students will travel to Canberra for Sunday's mass demonstration, which threatens to be more violent than the other two.

The NSW Builders Laborers' Federation has announced that it will send 100 "battle-hardened" members to Canberra to help to re-erect the "embassy".

Mr. Hunt, the deputy secretary of the Department of the Interior (Mr. J. Ballard) and the Commissioner of the A.C.T. police force (Mr. R. Wilson) met seven Aborigines for two hours on Wednesday, when the proposal for a centre was discussed.

The Department of the Interior is anxious for some conciliatory gesture, be-

cause it has been under attack from within sections of the Government itself over its handling of the "embassy" issue.

However, the department wants the Government to make it clear that the centre would provide a lobby and place of representation for a wide range of Aboriginal groups—not just the "embassy" protesters.

Representatives of the Aboriginal "embassy" sent a telegram to Mr. McMahon yesterday urging him to intervene at once to prevent a "national black crisis including bloodshed and possible deaths".

The telegram, signed by Mrs. P. Eatock, Miss Bobbi Sykes and Mrs. G. Briggs, asked him to meet a delegation of Aborigines.

It followed a refusal by the Minister for Aborigines (Mr. Howson) to meet a delegation.

Mr. Howson said on Wednesday he would be happy to see a delegation after the forthcoming national conference of Aboriginal advisory counsellors to State and Federal Governments on August 10-11.

Mrs. Eatock, secretary-treasurer of the "embassy", said later that "Mr. Howson's arrogant refusal has added to an already extremely critical and highly explosive situation".