

Aborigines will hit back at Govt. on Cook Day

SYDNEY: Aborigines in New South Wales are planning a protest demonstration in Sydney and at La Perouse (Botany Bay) on April 29 — the official commemoration day of the Captain Cook bi-centenary.

The demonstration will express their dissociation from the official Cook celebrations, the planning of which in fact has continued the historic attitude of thrusting aside the interests of the Aborigines as the original Australians.

It will also express their protest against all current forms of discrimination against Aborigines, particularly in rights to use and own the land, which has been consistently taken from them since Cook "took possession" in 1770.

The demonstration, on the initiative of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, is being planned by a special committee of Aborigines.

It is expected that Aboriginal protesters will march from a central point in the city to its outskirts and then travel by specially chartered transport to La Perouse, on the north side of the entrance to Botany Bay.

La Perouse, a traditional living place for many Aborigines, faces directly across to Kurnell on the southern headland, where Cook's expedition first landed.

The demonstration will coincide with the junketings of Royalty and bigwigs of the Australian Establishment at the Kurnell landing place. It is sure to infuriate the authorities, particularly the Gorton Government which has been given the job of trying to cool down the rising Aboriginal rights struggle.

Wedge

Leaders of the Aboriginal rights movement have been convinced for some time that the Government, and especially its Aboriginal Affairs Minister Wentworth, have been conspiring to find a way to weaken the militant spirit of the movement.

The Government are particularly eager to drive a wedge between the Aborigines and the Australian trade union movement.

Senator J. Keefe, Labor Party Federal president, addressing the annual Easter Conference of the Aboriginal advancement movement, warned against new kinds of attack on FCAATSI through government agencies like the ASIO political police and the State police forces.

He said Government representatives had been active

a Melbourne group of Aboriginal and student delegates and observers. They joined forces with a Brisbane group and conference divided on the issue. Later these two city groups declared they would form a separate organisation.

Last week the Federal Council's national president, Mr. J. McGinness, well-known Cairns Aboriginal waterside workers' activist, said that the conference division was very unfortunate.

He said the two limited groups mentioned had been able to outvote the delegates of the main sectors of the Aboriginal workforce in pastoral, mining and other industries across northern and in western Australia.

Because of distance and expense, the latter — though numbering 50,000 or more — had to be represented at the conference by only a handful of delegates, including Dexter Daniel (NT) and himself (North Queensland).

He said that at the usual all-Aboriginal session of the conference, on the basis of misleading information and misunderstandings, observers from Melbourne had voted with some delegates to carry a recommendation to the effect that non-Aboriginal delegates should refrain from voting at plenary sessions of conference.

Following this, voting in the plenary session on whether the Federal Executive should continue to be multi-racial or should become all-Aboriginal, was 48-48. A two-thirds majority would have been necessary to achieve a constitutional change from multi-racial composition.

Mr. McGinness said: "The Council formed itself as multi-racial, with the main aim of creating awareness among the whole Australian population that there is a serious problem of discrimination against Aborigines. This is still a serious problem for all Australians. Other organisations with more sectional aims are affiliated with the Council."

Confused

"Although the attempt to change the multi-racial leadership failed, it nevertheless seriously confused the conference and prevented it from dealing with urgent issues of land rights, the bi-centenary, job training etc.



DEXTER DANIEL