

Black control motion given white backing

Aboriginal leaders yesterday called on the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to hand over its entire running to the Aborigines.

"Only eight whites abstained — it's a breakthrough," the executive officer of the Aboriginal Consultative Council (Mr. Bruce McGuinness) said after the four-day closed seminar on Aborigines and the law at Monash University.

Stipendiary magistrates, police and other white officials were among the 135 who took part in the seminar.

Mr. McGuinness joined a panel of eight Aborigines, American Indians and Samoans who met the Press yesterday to reveal "a great deal of conflict and confrontation" during the seminar.

Mr. McGuinness said he intends to lodge an official complaint against Victoria's assistant police commissioner (Mr. Newell), who he said was taking notes of what activists said "for intimidation."

Mr. Gary Foley, public relations officer of the New South Wales Aboriginal Legal Service, called for lands and compensation to be granted to all Aborigines to "do their own thing." This would reduce all black problems, he said.

Wearing a black fur cap and a badge that read Arm The Poor, Mr. Foley said that seminar whites "thrust a lot of theoretical papers on us" but he called the seminar beneficial because whites had admitted en bloc that blacks should control themselves.

Leading Queensland activist Denis Walker claimed whites were using Government money to process and control blacks.

"They're making a fortune out of it," he said.

"The system stinks and we should have a revolution, that's what I'm saying," Mr. Walker pronounced. "Take black control outside the Public Service Board."

"The Public Service Board

By MICHAEL RYAN

is our greatest retarder," Mr. Foley agreed.

When the conference opened on Saturday, the steering committee of six academics was replaced — by black demand — by blacks.

They called for the establishment of a Federal legal aid service, financed with Federal money, for Aborigines.

Janet McLeod, an American Indian from Nisqually, Washington, said the Australian Aborigines were like the 19th century Redskins, the victims of open warfare.

Her views were backed by John Echohawk of Boulder, Colorado, by Syd Jackson, of "Tamaki" (Auckland), and Adrian Nia, of "Whatganui-a-Tara" (Wellington).

Mrs. Iris Clay, a dignified small woman whose husband, Fred, is chairman on Palm Island reserve, said Townsville City Council was about to usurp Palm Island for a tourist site to go with an international airport, and expel the blacks.

"My father was sent to Palm Island in handcuffs in 1939," Mrs. Clay said. "He

was king of the tribe at Mapoon. The whites accused him of witchcraft.

"Mapoon gave place to Weipa in 1966 — they drove my people out at gunpoint before dawn to allow Comalco to take over."

"I know I'll face trouble when I go back now. I'm used to trouble. They crucify us every day . . ."

The Clays and their five schoolchildren now have a house in the "white" Mango Avenue where it used to be an offence for a black to walk in the 1960s. Their one house is declared a "reserve" so the whites on either side can drink liquor which for them is a crime.

"We've only got till August to stop the Townsville Council before the rich people start to push us off the island," Mrs. Clay said.

"They'll keep some blacks there to make a human zoo," forecast Janet McLeod.

The seminar was told of a crucial Aboriginal test case coming up in Walgett, NSW, on August 12, where two police face 17 charges of mistreatment brought against them by the Aboriginal community.

"They're still nigger-farming in Queensland," stormed Denis Walker. "They make blacks sign a 'slow worker' clause then pay him one-third of what the white station hands get."



Denis Walker



Janet McLeod



Mrs. Clay

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