

Govt. plans law on land rights for Aborigines

The Federal Government would set up an aboriginal land rights commission during the next session of Parliament, the Aboriginal Affairs Minister, Senator Cavanagh, said today.

He said at the ALP State Convention in Adelaide that the legislation would define land rights, possibly giving back to the Aborigines land they had lost.

Senator Cavanagh said the new commission would be the over-riding body of two land rights councils which were already in operation.

The commission would determine the legality of a lands right question and then pass it on to the councils for administration.

The Minister said there had been a distinct improvement in Aboriginal administration since his statement earlier this year that implementation of some policy had been a "disaster."

"The Australian Government is now getting acclaim from Aboriginal groups throughout Australia," he said.

Senator Cavanagh was speaking against a convention motion calling for an inquiry into the conditions under which Aborigines were living in South Australia and the extent to which these conditions were inhibiting their advancement.

EXAGGERATED

The motion, proposed by Mr. Laurie Bryan of the Brighton sub-branch of the ALP was defeated.

Mr. Bryan had claimed 90 per cent. of the 3,500 Aborigines living in urban areas in South Australia were existing on Government handouts.

He also claimed Aboriginal girls were coming into the cities from out-back areas of the Northern

Territory to escape pre-arranged tribal marriages.

Outside the meeting Senator Cavanagh said Mr. Bryant's unemployment figures and his claims of girls fleeing to the cities to escape pre-arranged marriages were grossly exaggerated.

Motions passed at today's session were:

- That the Government reduce its current spending on atomic energy research and set aside sufficient funds for research into industrial solar energy.

- That the Labor Party

severely limits the extraction and export of uranium to those countries which desperately needed it for fission nuclear-powered non-breeder reactors.

- That the Federal Government organise a national survey of Australia's resources and name materials which much be recycled.

- That the State Labor Party investigate existing Electricity Trust tariffs and consider introducing legislation to modify tariffs to encourage people to use solar water heating systems.