

Black congressmen 'off the payroll'

OFFICERS of the Aboriginal Affairs Department will this week meet Treasury officials over government support of the National Aboriginal Congress.

The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Senator Cavanagh, said yesterday the meeting was made necessary because the congress had changed its name from the National Aboriginal Consultative Council, and had adopted different functions from those described in the Cabinet minute establishing the body.

Senator Cavanagh said: "I may have no power to pay them in

view of the fact that they have changed their name, and become, not a body to consult with me, but a directive body.

"If my belief is correct, they have put themselves off the payroll. If I have no power to pay them, we will have to discuss it with them and see if we can reach a new arrangement," he said.

Government support for the NAC is mainly through the salaries and allowances paid to its 41 members.

Last week the congress altered its name, and adopted as its aim the takeover of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs as its secretariat.

VIOLENCE

On Friday the congress censured Senator Cavanagh, accusing him of being "ignorant of the plight of the Aboriginal people of Australia," and called on the Prime Minister, Mr Whitlam, to take over the portfolio.

In Melbourne yesterday, the chairman of the Methodist Commission on Aboriginal Affairs (Victoria), the Reverend Ronald Croxford said frustration is making Aboriginals angry and could lead to violence.

"I have been hoping that because of Federal Government policy statements a new era was to emerge, but Senator Cavanagh has shown that there is no change of heart on Aboriginal affairs," he said.

"If so, the Government is in for a sad awakening: The Aboriginals are becoming very frustrated and angry and they are getting more and more united. I feel we are in for real trouble, even violence.

"Cutting out payment to members of the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee after their decision to change their name to National Aboriginal Congress was a silly act," Mr Croxford said.



Senator Cavanagh