

Questions for Cavanagh over Perkins' future

By PAUL KELLY

THE Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Senator Cavanagh, will be confronted at the National Press Club today on the fate of the senior Aboriginal public servant, Mr Charles Perkins.

Mr Perkins, who has an appointment with his permanent heads, Mr B. Dexter, this morning, also plans to attend the press luncheon.

Mr Dexter held lengthy talks yesterday with senior officials from the Public Service Board about the procedures to be followed if charges are to be laid against Mr Perkins.

Mr Dexter is under strong pressure to lay charges because of the written agreement made with Mr Perkins last month after his controversial attack on both Senator Cavanagh and the Minister for Northern Develop-

after he had agreed to refrain from public comments on certain issues.

At this stage there has been a three-day delay in the announcement of a decision and the longer it continues the more certain it seems that Mr Perkins will be charged.

It is understood Mr Dexter believes Mr Perkins has gone beyond the bounds of the agreement and that as the departmental head he has a responsibility to take action.

Although Mr Perkins has made a number of outspoken remarks, until January the Government turned a blind eye to them.

Last night no final decision had been made but it seemed likely that Mr Perkins would be charged.

Mr Perkins believes that he has not breached the agreement made last month.

"I have not made any comment about either the Govern-

"I will stand by my remarks.

"I believe the Liberal and Country Parties are racist organisations that have denied us land rights, caused tribes to disintegrate and kept Aborigines at a depressed socio-economic level."

The issue has been complicated by the review of the public comment restrictions on public servants which is being finalised.

Mr Perkins has the strong support of the Council for Commonwealth Public Service Organisations and the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee and any move against him is certain to create a major furore.

Both these factors suggest that it would be imprudent for the Government to suspend Mr Perkins at this time, which will happen automatically if he is charged.

Moreover the remarks he made in calling the Liberal and