

ABORIGINAL CONGRESS "USED"

CANBERRA. — The Aboriginal Affairs Minister (Senator Cavanagh) last night blamed a power - fight among urban aborigines for his showdown with the National Aboriginal Congress.

He accused those involved in the fight of using the body to further their own interests.

The dispute with Senator Cavanagh arose after the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee last week changed their name to the National Aboriginal Congress.

They also changed their function from that of an advisory body to one involving a more direct say in handling aboriginal affairs.

Stop payment

On Friday night Senator Cavanagh said he would stop payment of salaries to the 41-member body.

This was because he only had authority from Cabinet to pay a body known as the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee, not one known as the National Aboriginal Congress.

The members received \$6000 each a year plus al-

Cavanagh said from his Adelaide home that he believed the pay would stop from last Friday.

However, he has ordered his department to check today with Treasury officials on the position.

Senator Cavanagh said it was not the body's function to tell the Minister what to do, but to advise him.

"If I can persuade them to give this away we will get on all right," he said.

"They have got a false idea that popularity comes from condemning the Minister, the Department and the Government. But that's not the case judging by the information I have got this weekend."

Senator Cavanagh said he had received phone calls from several members of the Congress over the weekend supporting his stand.

He had also received

He accused the body of never having fulfilled its role of an advisory committee.

"On no occasion have they given any advice to the Minister at all," Senator Cavanagh said.

He added: "The Congress will not continue in its present role.

"If it is prepared to agree to become a consultative committee, then I have authority to pay it."

The Congress chairman (Mr. Bruce McGuinness) said he wanted to arrange an early meeting with Senator Cavanagh to discuss the matter.

Mr. McGuinness will fly to Canberra today for discussions with the Aboriginal Affairs Department.