

# Minister agrees to constitution

The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Senator Cavanagh, reached agreement in principle with the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee yesterday on the question of the NACC's new constitution.

The main thrust of the new constitution, which changes the NACC into the National Aboriginal Congress, allows it control of its own funds, and to be less a body advising the Government than a forum of Aboriginal opinion, was accepted unchanged.

The NACC agreed to a request from Senator Cavanagh to redraft a section to establish a council of ministers to act as an executive and supervise spending.

Senator Cavanagh told reporters he felt the sec-

tion gave too much power to the ministers and took too much initiative from the 41 delegates.

A special sub-committee began to work on a new draft, yesterday afternoon, and, according to Mr Bruce McGuinness, the NACC spokesman, would present a report for submission to the Minister by tomorrow.

"Cavanagh believes the ministers have too much power, which doesn't bug him so much as that it is taken away from the 41 members", Mr McGuinness said.

The elected ministers themselves agreed with this criticism, he said.

The constitution, when accepted by the NACC, will be submitted to Senator Cavanagh, who will submit it to Cabinet so that the changes can be taken effect.

Both the chairman of the NACC, Mr Jim Stanley, and its spokesman, Mr McGuinness, said Senator

Cavanagh had been constructive in his criticism.

The criticism had not been put in a way which would undermine the constitution, and the NACC was pleased with his reactions.

Earlier, Senator Cavanagh told the NACC meeting that he and his department would support their claims for a review of salary and expense allowances, and the establishment of offices in each delegate's electorate, possibly with part-time secretarial assistance.

Mr Stanley and Mr McGuinness said the NACC would approach the Government to extend its current two-year term as members felt the initial period was not long enough to pursue the work they were elected for.

Mr McGuinness said he was confident the NACC could take over complete control of Aboriginal Affairs in its second term of office.

## Request for Capital Hill

The Victorian branch of the NACC asked Senator Cavanagh for the Australian Government to acquire Capital Hill as the site of the NACC headquarters.

Senator Cavanagh told the meeting that the Senate had plans to put the new Parliament House there.

Mr McGuinness, who proposed the plan, said the NACC would be happy to take the present Parliament House off the Government's hands if a

new Parliament House were built on Capital Hill.

Senator Cavanagh said that if the Aboriginal tent "embassy" across the road from Parliament House was removed it would enhance their case for a permanent building.

He described the tent "embassy" as, "that unsightly thing".

He said the Department of Aboriginal Affairs was in favour of providing an information centre for the NACC close to the present Parliament House.

The Minister for the

Capital Territory, Mr Bryant, was also in favour of this but the proposal would have to receive Government approval.

A motion seeking the Capital Hill site was adopted by the NACC after Senator Cavanagh had left the meeting.

Mr McGuinness, said, however, that the committee did not regard the site of the building as especially important. What was important was that the Minister had indicated that he was in favour of the proposition of a headquarters.