

Museum asked to return skeletons

MELBOURNE, Friday. — The trustees of the National Museum of Victoria have been asked to return skeletons to the Aboriginal people.

Mr F. X. Purcell, solicitor for the Aborigines Advancement League, made the request in a letter handed today to the curator, Mr A. L. West.

The letter said the league also wanted to have handed to them sacred ceremonial objects and artefacts.

The letter said in part, "The league has indicated to the Federal Government that they would like to see a museum set up controlled by Aboriginal trustees where these items would be held. Skeletons would be buried.

"It may be that your museum would be in a position to assist and advise in the establishment of such a museum".

Mr Purcell said later there needed to be a government policy in relation to this matter. "This is just the beginning because the advancement league people consider

they have been treated as zoological creatures", he said.

Mr Murray said a writ would be served on the Institute of Aboriginal Studies in Canberra for the return of Aboriginal artefacts.

Under false pretences

The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Senator Cavanagh, and Mr Charles Perkins, an assistant secretary with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, who attended last night's ball in Canberra to mark National Aborigines Day, were both unaware of the steps to recover the Aboriginal skeletons and artifacts.

Mr Perkins said, the artefacts were very sacred, and they were taken under false pretences. The Aboriginal people were cheated out of them without fully realising the implications of allowing this to be done. They thought they would be kept in an area strictly controlled not to be scrutinised by the public.

BRISBANE, Friday. — Rival Aboriginal groups clashed during ceremonies to mark National Aborigines Day in Brisbane today. Protesting Aborigines told Aboriginal church leaders that they were preaching white man's religion and were selling out the blacks.

Police stood by but there was no violence.