

Cooling down

ABORIGINES of the NACC have discovered that, as their spokesman courteously put it, "Cavanagh is not going to be removed by Whitlam," and have decided that they had better work with him.

Senator Cavanagh has responded with a more conciliatory attitude. He even managed to keep a straight face when the committee proposed that Capital Hill be the site for Aborigines' headquarters in Canberra. Or, alternatively, that Parliament House be turned over to them when it is vacated.

Meanwhile, the rather less pretentious tent "embassy" on the lawn opposite Parliament House remains a bone of contention. The minister wants it removed — and no wonder. Not only is it "unsightly," as he says. Its reappearance is an embarrassment to the Government as a symbol of the failure of its policies, in the eyes of Aboriginal activists at least.

Senator Cavanagh should not plead or bargain on this matter. The "embassy" is an insolent intrusion on the public domain and should be banished. Then the provision of appropriate accommodation could be considered without any sense of duress.

A mixture of firmness and patience on the ministerial side, and the curbing of extravagant NACC demands and abrasive statements, offers far better prospects of Aboriginal advancement than the developing confrontation.