

Black aide plan to end strife

"TELEGRAPH"

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ADELAIDE: The Aboriginal Affairs Minister, Senator Cavanagh, is prepared to appoint a full-time Aboriginal adviser to his staff, to replace the 41-man National Aboriginal Consultative Committee.

The committee called for the appointment yesterday, and at the same time called for Senator Cavanagh's resignation from his portfolio.

(Last night Senator Cavanagh said he had stopped payment of salaries to the newly appointed Aboriginal body.)

Senator Cavanagh said he had taken this action because on Tuesday the committee had changed its name from the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee to the National Aboriginal Congress.

He said he had no authority to pay the body under its new name.

ONE MAN

Speaking at his Adelaide home today Senator Cavanagh said: "I am quite prepared to appoint a full-time adviser in lieu of the committee.

The committee had been set up to advise him and if it felt it could not carry out its appointed task, then he was prepared to replace it with one man.

"If the committee is not fulfilling the task it was set by Cabinet I just can't pay them," he said.

Senator Cavanagh said \$1.2 million had been set aside to pay the wages of the committee elected from Aborigines throughout Australia.

Each member received a \$6000 salary, with city members receiving a \$2000 annual expense allowance and country members a \$3000 annual allowance.

"There is no question of Cabinet or myself cutting off payment," Senator Cavanagh said.

The congress taken itself outside of my rights to pay them.

"I don't think they could be accepted as an advisory committee to the Minister.

"I spoke to them last Tuesday and said we should get down to considering the problems of Aborigines and not consider their own self interest all the time."

Senator Cavanagh said he was not worried by the committee's call for his resignation.

He said he did not think this decision was shared by Aboriginal communities throughout Australia.

RIDICULE

Senator Cavanagh also said some of the decisions the committee had made this week had held it up to ridicule.

One of these decisions was that a permanent prefabricated building be placed outside Parliament House in Canberra.

It was ridiculous for anyone to think they would be allowed to put up a permanent building on the lawns of Parliament, Senator Cavanagh said.

Senator Bonner, Queensland Aboriginal senator, said the National Aboriginal Congress would fall apart following Senator Cavanagh's decision to stop payment of salaries.

Senator Cavanagh had no alternative but to virtually sack the National Aboriginal Congress, Senator Bonner said.

Senator Bonner said the 'sacking' would cause a furore in Australia's Aboriginal community.