

PUBLIC SERVANTS HELD AT GUNPOINT

CANBERRA. — An armed Aboriginal held four senior Aboriginal Affairs Department officers at gunpoint for an hour yesterday.

The siege ended when suspended public servant Mr Charles Perkins persuaded the Aboriginal to hand over the revolver.

Last night a 26-year-old man from Canberra was charged with possessing an unlicensed firearm, and he will appear in Canberra Court at 10 a.m. today.

The incident took place six miles from Parliament House as the Queen was opening Federal Parliament.

Shortly before the Queen arrived, three Aboriginals left a rowdy demonstration outside Parliament House and drove to the offices of the Aboriginal Affairs Department.

They demanded to see the department head, Mr B. Dexter, but when told he was away they went to the office of the acting director, Mr F. Moy.

Mr Moy said last night that the Aboriginals came into his office and said: "You are under arrest."

Soon afterwards two senior officers poked their heads through the door and were immediately bundled in and told to sit down.

Then the first assistant secretary, Mr J. Long, came to the door and joined the other hostages.

The Aboriginals demanded to see Mr Perkins.

One rang a department liaison officer, Mr H. Clarke who in turn telephoned the office of the Aboriginal Affairs Minister (Senator Cavanagh) at Parliament House.

One of Senator Cavanagh's staff ran outside to the demonstration and found Mr Perkins, who alerted police as he was driven to the office.

Meanwhile the three Aboriginals were having a heated discussion with the hostages about Aboriginal affairs.

Stunt for attention

"It was very confused, very loud and very aggressive," Mr Moy said.

"I didn't feel concerned for anyone's safety."

"I thought it was a stunt to direct attention to the plight of Aboriginals."

Mr Perkins rushed up to the second floor office and

immediately in a calm voice began to cool the situation.

After 10 minutes Mr Moy struck a "no charges" bargain with the Aboriginals and the pistol was unloaded.

Mr Moy said he had told them that if the pistol was unloaded the department would not press charges.

The Aboriginals then left the building and one man was taken to A.C.T. police headquarters.

As he left, his distraught wife cried out and the acting president of the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee (Mr B. McGuinness) hugged him.

Mr McGuinness said last night that he thought there would be a "lot more action."

"Frustrations are build-

ing up to the extent for direct action to be taken.

"It is lucky this sort of thing has not happened before with a lot more violence," he said.

"The situation is at rock bottom. I think it will greatly improve."

"These men weren't trying to become martyrs."

At Parliament House yesterday more than 700 Aboriginal demonstrators, including white supporters and about 70 Public Servants from the Aboriginal Affairs Department, loudly booed the Queen when she arrived with Prince Philip.

They called for immediate Aboriginal land rights, free speech, and waved placards demanding an end to British imperialism in Australia.

Their jeers drowned out the playing of God Save the Queen and cheers from about 150 people in support of Queen Elizabeth.

More than 100 police manned barricades, and a guard of honour formed by soliders from Duntroon stood in a double row with bayonets mounted between the police and the Queen as she stood at the entrance to Parliament House.

Age 1st March 1974