

Police in riot over Black Power

SHOTS were fired and stones thrown at police during a wild riot at Cherbourg mission station, 170 miles north of Brisbane, it was claimed yesterday.

Two Aborigines, a Brisbane pastor, the Reverend Donald Brady, and a Melbourne teacher, Mr Harold Blair, said yesterday the riot occurred on New Year's Eve after a week of clashes between Aboriginal police at the mission and youths wearing Black Power badges.

Seven Aboriginal youths appeared in Murgon Magistrate's Court on Monday. Four are now serving one month's imprisonment for disorderly conduct, two were convicted on using obscene language and one of driving a motor vehicle without a licence.

Mr Blair said three other boys under 16 were now serving three-month sentences at Westbrook Boys' Home, near Toowoomba, as a result of the clash.

"The boys claim shots were fired by the people and the Aboriginal police," he said.

"The management and the Aboriginal Council say this is not so but that some of the older people threatened to pull guns against the boys."

RUN FOR COVER

During the riot police from Murgon had to run for their cars when rioters began hurling stones at them. The rear window of a police car was smashed.

Mr Blair said an ugly situation arose when several youths from Brisbane arrived to visit relatives at the mission for Christmas.

"When they arrived wearing Black Power badges they were told to take them off or they would go to gaol," he said.

"As a result they spent one day in gaol when they arrived."

Mr Blair said a \$700 cattle dip was destroyed during the riot and Black Power slogans painted around the mission.

"The trouble seemed to arise mainly from the fact that the Aboriginal police provoked the youths despite management and council efforts to soothe them," he said.

The superintendent of the Cherbourg settlement, Mr J. Bailey, said yesterday he did not know what started the trouble on New Year's Day.

However, he regarded it as normal new year revelling similar to that experienced in Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

The policeman in charge of Cherbourg, Sergeant G. W. Muller, said no person had ever been imprisoned at the settlement for wearing a Black Power badge.