

Power sought to move 'embassy'

By *DAVID SOLOMON, Political Correspondent*

The Department of the Interior is putting the finishing touches to a draft ordinance designed to give the Commonwealth power to move the Aboriginal "embassy" from outside Parliament House.

It is likely that the ordinance will go before Federal Cabinet for approval next Tuesday.

The Minister for the Interior, Mr Hunt, would then approach leaders of the "embassy" and try to persuade them to move peaceably.

If they decide not to move, the ordinance would then be put before the Executive Council and its provisions used to force the Aborigines to move.

In any event, it is certain that the Commonwealth will approve an ordinance giving authorities power to control demonstrators and squatters occupying Crown land or open areas controlled by the Commonwealth in Canberra.

At present, the only ordinance which can be used against demonstrators such as the Aboriginal "embassy" is the Gaming and Betting Ordinance. Section 19a provides a \$40 maximum penalty for refusal to obey a police direction for a person to cease standing or loitering in a particular area.

This section was used earlier this year against a demonstrator outside the Israeli Embassy, but it is not considered appropriate for controlling demonstrations outside Parliament House.

The new ordinance will be

designed to preserve and protect public places in the ACT. The Commonwealth already has very considerable power under the Public Order Act to control demonstrators in buildings in the ACT.

The Aboriginal "embassy" was established on the lawns opposite Parliament House late in January to protest against the Government's refusal to grant tribal-land rights to Aborigines.

Spokesmen at the time said the Aborigines intended to remain camped opposite Parliament House until the Government reconsidered its policy on land rights.

The Government has to date made no effort to move the demonstrators, partly because it had no satisfactory legal powers under which it could operate.