



THE aboriginal "embassy" outside Parliament House in Canberra.

Tent 'embassy' aids aboriginal protest

From MICHAEL DE KRETZER

CANBERRA. — The sounds outside Parliament House are broken by a young aboriginal girl strumming a guitar, the lighting of kerosene lamps and the murmured voices of men playing cards.

The men are playing poker and the game goes on till the early hours of the morning.

It's deadly serious and the stakes are high, because the losers get tomorrow's chores.

It's about eight o'clock in the morning and people entering Parliament House get the breakfast smell of eggs, bacon and sausages.

One of the losers of last night is cooking breakfast

for the "aboriginal embassy."

The "embassy" was set up on the lawns across the road from Parliament House on January 26.

It began with one tent as a protest against the Federal Government and steadily grew to 11.

A floating number of aboriginals, usually about 12, stay at the "embassy" at a time.

The main tent of the "embassy" is a bright blue with two flags. One

protest

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of the flags was designed by an aboriginal artist.

It shows a spear head (for trouble) and four arcs facing inwards (for discussion among people).

The other flag is the African National Congress flag, with green, black and red stripes.

One tent has been converted into a kitchen and "eating place."

Around breakfast the aboriginals, Willy Bungie, 19, Brian Marshall, 25, Charlie Dixon, 47, and Ambrose Brown, 32, laze around doing odd jobs, talking to tourists or playing guitars.

Every morning a young woman, Maureen Powell, 20, comes to the "embassy" and picks up the washing.

She returns in the evening with the clothing washed and ironed.

All the members of the "embassy," which includes men and women say the life is "really great."

HELPERS

Mr Bungie says: "We've got everything. People are helping us all the time."

"Some even just drop in to wish us luck."

The aboriginals use a public lavatory about 200 yd. away.

The aboriginal "embassy" has survived on public generosity.

Visitors, tourists and helpers have contributed over \$1500.

Mr Dixon said the money is used to buy food and clothing.

Mr Bungie says: "When the boys get a bit of extra money they go to the local pub for a big night out."

The aboriginals have two pets, a dog and a cat.

"We picked the dog up from the tip," said Mr Bungie.

The dog, a black terrier, is called "Nigger" and has black power badges all over his collar.

The "embassy" has become a tourist attraction. Aboriginals sitting outside their tents, bare chested and with Afro hairstyles are photographed often.

The aboriginal "ambassador," Mr Michael Anderson, said: "The 'embassy' will stay indefinitely."



ABORIGINALS relax at the "embassy" with a guitar and a pet cat. The "embassy" comprises 11 tents with an average of about 12 people staying in them.