

BANABANS TO TRY AGAIN

We want full control, say Rabi leaders

The Banabans are renewing pressure for political control of Ocean Island and say that more of their people will be sent there from Rabi.

They are to have talks with Kiribati next month and hope that the Prime Minister, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, will help them, the chairman of the Rabi Council, the Rev Tebaiti Tawaka, said yesterday.

Meanwhile Dr Ankim Swamy, of the University of the South Pacific, has joined a three-man British-sponsored team which is looking at the island's economic future now that its

phosphate mine has closed.

He is working as an engineer with a British soil expert, Mr J.R. Hansell, and an Australian economist, Mr Ken Walker.

The Banabans pressed for Ocean Island's indepen-

dence as a state associated with Fiji but the island, their ancestral home, stayed as part of Kiribati when Kiribati obtained independence from Britain last year.

"We reject the arrangements for Ocean Island included in the

Kiribati Constitution," Mr Tawaka said.

His people were boycotting the Kiribati House of Assembly by refusing to nominate members as a protest.

He said the preliminary study by the three experts would be followed by a more detailed one.

The Banabans hoped for a deepsea fishing base at the island and a small tourism industry.

"This time we want to make certain that we are not robbed and that we get the major benefit from our resources," he said.