

MP criticises land policy



Mr Hunt



Mr Bryant

Mr Gordon Bryant (Lab, Vic) said yesterday that the expected Cabinet refusal of the recognition of land rights for the Aboriginal people and the proposal by Nabalco to further invade Arnhem Land could make Australia Day 1972 one of the blackest yet for Aborigines.

"The Government ignores all international and British precedence in doing so", he said.

"In Papua New Guinea, under the watchful eye of the United Nations and faced by a large population capable of extreme militancy, the Government granted land rights.

"Recently in New Britain

preparations for a new power station were stopped by the hostility of the landowners, but the people of Arnhem Land are helpless politically and small in number.

"The struggle of the people of Yirrkala on the Gove Peninsula in Arnhem Land is being remorselessly eroded by a combination of Swiss-Australian industrial exploitation and Liberal-Country Party materialism.

"The long struggle of the people of Yirrkala to preserve their identity and their traditional land can only be successful now if a massive public campaign is waged on their behalf.

"It is reported that Nabalco proposes to add a large woodchip industry to their bauxite development program, and if this is so, it will turn the north-east corner of Arnhem Land, one of the most attractive areas in the Northern Territory, into a wasteland".

Mr Bryant said that after 12,000 years of occupancy the Aborigines should surely be left the 1 per cent of Australia that Arnhem Land represents to be used for purely Aboriginal purposes.

The struggle for Yirrkala was now eight years old and apparently court cases and petitions to Parliament had failed.

"For the people of Yirrkala the conscience of the people of Australia at the ballot box is the court of last resort", he said.

Mr Bryant initiated the campaign for the people of Yirrkala in 1963. He was on the select committee to examine the grievances of the people, and took action in the Darwin Court himself against the French aluminium company Pechaney.

NT sought study on inquiry

SYDNEY, Monday. — Nabalco Pty Ltd, among others, was asked by the Northern Territory Administration to conduct feasibility studies on the establishment of a woodchip industry in the Yirrkala Aboriginal territory.

A spokesman for the company said today reports that the company wanted to "control or purchase" the land were completely false.

Nabalco was also prepared to further its original feasibility study of the area and industry.

"But we won't do that until we get assurances from the Federal Government that any potential industry in the area would

not be affected by change of ownership of the area", he said.

"The original request came in 1968.

"We certainly never approached the Government for 'control' of the land".

70 per cent Swiss

Nabalco is a management company, half Swiss, half Australian, which acts for interests which are 70 per cent Swiss and 30 per cent Australian.

These interests are operating a bauxite industry on the Gove Peninsula.

The spokesman said that about \$14 million might be needed for establishment of a woodchip industry.