

Aborigines Lose Hunting Grounds

Aborigines at Yirrkala Methodist mission in Arnhem Land feared the complete loss of their lands and eventual extinction, the general secretary of the Federal council for Aboriginal Advancement (Mr. S. Davey) said yesterday. *Age Aug 5 '63*

This followed the leasing of 140 square miles of tribal hunting ground to the French Pechiny Bauxite Mining Company, he said.

The 500 aborigines had been forced to live in little more than a square mile of land surrounding the mission, in the north-east of the Northern Territory.

No restrictions had been placed on hunting, but the many roads and increasing traffic were frightening animals from tribal lands held since time immemorial.

Petitions

Mr. Davey said 12 elders from 17 tribes at the mission had signed petitions on decorated bark plaques protesting at the leasing of the land.

Copies of the petition have been sent to the Prime Minister (Mr. Menzies), the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Calwell), the Vice-president of the Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement (Mr. Bryant, M.P.) and Mr. Davey.

The petitions protested against:—

The excision of tribal hunting grounds without explanation.

Taking the land, their source of food and their birthplace.

The welfare and Govern-

ment officials who did not present their views to the Federal Government.

More Land

The Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement is also protesting about the wish of the mining company to lease more land at Melville Bay.

The Yirrkala aborigines want a committee with interpreters to interview the people in the areas involved before the land is leased.

The tribes feared that, like the Larrakeah people, their lands would be taken from them completely and their tribes will die out.