

We don't want these land "rights" — Aborigines

About 25 Aborigines and members of the Northern Territory Aboriginal Rights Council demonstrated outside the Legislative Council this morning.

They were protesting against provision of a Government bill now before the Council to give Aborigines the right to lease, and later sell, land within Aboriginal Reserves in the Territory.

They gave letters to the Council president, Mr Harry Chan, and eight elected and non-official members.

The letters, signed by Mr Davis Daniels, secretary of the Aboriginal Rights

Council, said:

"On behalf of my people, I'm deeply asking you to use your good office and not to let this land tenure bill pass through the House.

"The Aborigines don't even know what's happening, and they must be told about the bill and talk about it."

Mr Daniels said later, land in reserves should be held in perpetuity for Aborigines, and never alienated.

No rent

Spokesmen for Aborigines on land matters should be elected and not nominated by the Government.

The council agreed that reserve land should be leased to Aborigines for pastoral, agricultural and other purposes, but not that it should later be available for sale to other people.

The Government should give financial help for the development of leases held by Aborigines.

The leases should be rent free. "Why should we pay

rent for our own land?" he asked.

"We also believe sections of tribal land now leased to pastoralists in areas away from reserves should be resumed by the Government for Aborigines.

"This would include areas like Wattie Creek on Wave Hill station.

"Compensation should be paid to the present owners." Mr Daniels said.

His points were also made in posters carried during today's demonstration.

Some read: "Ask us what we want", "Give us our land", "Land for our people", "Some tribal land for disposed Aborigines," "Elected Aboriginal representation", and "Freehold, not sentatives", "Lend us leases."

When the Legislative Council started its sittings, the demonstrators moved quietly into the visitors' gallery.