

Melbourne, Vic.

Aborigines report raps Australia

From Michael Richardson

CANBERRA.—Australia's treatment of Aborigines is slated in a report likely to be raised soon in the United Nations.

The report was made by the secretary of the British-based Anti-Slavery Society (Colonel Patrick Montgomery) following a four week visit here early this year.

It says that, despite a marked improvement in treatment in the past few years, many Aborigines still live "in dependent poverty which is extreme by world standards."

It says that, despite a verment should take over full responsibility for Aboriginal affairs from the States.

It also calls for a big injection of funds for a long-term programme to eradicate Aboriginal poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy and ill-health within 25 years.

The 12-page report also criticises the Government attitude on land rights.

It says a commission should be set up to restore land to aborigines with full mineral and forestry rights.

The report claims the division of responsibility for Aborigines at Federal level between the Minister for the Interior (Mr. Nixon) and the Minister in charge of Aboriginal Affairs (Mr. Wentworth), and between Federal and State Governments, "facilitates procrastination and evasion of that responsibility."

"This evasion has continued so long that it has played into the hands of movements such as black power and communism which are seeking to exploit the Aboriginal situation for their own ends," the report says.

Another part of the report says: "It appears that Aboriginal opinion on Aboriginal affairs is not yet genuinely accepted at any

executive level as being of value.

"Experts believe that no remedial measures, however generous, will succeed without a creative effort towards decision-making which must come from the Aborigines themselves."

However, last night both Mr. Wentworth and Mr. Nixon said the criticisms contained in the report were extreme.

Mr. Wentworth said he would look at it with interest. "In many ways it is parallel with the Government's thinking," he said.

Both Ministers said that Col. Montgomery admitted in the report that "if praise has been omitted where it is due, this has been for brevity's sake . . ."

Mr. Nixon said that Col. Montgomery was in the Northern Territory only from February 4 to 8.