

# CHIEF JIMMY BRUNEAU

One of the greatest leaders of the Indian people has passed away. Former Chief Jimmy Bruneau died at the hospital in Rae at 3:20 a.m., on Thursday, January 16, 1975. He was almost 90 years old.

Chief Bruneau led the Dogrib people of Rae for almost 50 years, until 1969. His wisdom will be missed by the Dogrib people who loved and respected "the old Chief".

"We are into a new era" says James Wah-Shee, President of the Indian Brotherhood. "He started the movement towards a land settlement . . . he is largely responsible for the fact that Indian people here kept their rights to the land and that the federal government still recognizes Indian hunting and trapping rights."

It was in 1967 that the Chief, who was well over eighty, led the people of Rae into refusing to accept their Treaty money. This was a protest against government efforts to chip away at their rights and put them on reserves of the government's choosing.

This, says Mr. Wah-Shee, was the turning point. The flood of white domination had been turned and the struggle for control of their land by the Indian people had begun.

"We denied that the Treaty money had bought our land, or our rights"



Chief Jimmy Bruneau speaks at Indian Brotherhood Annual Assembly at Rae in 1971.

states the Brotherhood's President.

The rejection of the Treaty money in 1967 came near the end of his years as Chief. In 1969 he resigned due to age and his son Susie became Chief.

One of the old Chief's greatest accomplishments stands today at Edzo, near Rae. The school named in his honour was largely the result of his efforts and the School Society that he formed many years ago.

Chief Bruneau saw that the old white-run school system was destroying the people's culture and harming the children. He fought for years to create a school that would really educate the children in both their own language and culture and the new ways children need for the modern world.

One of his proudest moments was on January 9th, 1972 when he stood on the stage of the newly built school with Indian Affairs Minister Jear Chretien and officially opened it.

The native-run school is still the only one of its kind in the N.W.T. A School Society of local people is in complete control and both native and white teachers share duties. As Jimmy wanted it, the children learn many of the old skills like trapping, net fishing, hunting and handicrafts. Teaching is in both Dogrib and English.

Chief Bruneau's leadership will be missed by more than the people of Rae. Quite often the chiefs of the other Dogrib communities of Lac La Marte, Rae Lake, and Detah-Yellowknife would consult with him. The unity of the Dogrib people today is largely due to his efforts.

A man of great strength, he set the finest example of leadership for the Indian people.



A proud moment: the old Chief speaks at the opening of the Jimmy Bruneau School at Edzo. Jimmy Rabesca translates while the Commissioner looks on.

Funeral services were held for Chief Bruneau at Rae on Friday, January 17, 1975 and attended by many people from all the Dogrib communities.

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