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Dogrib Treaty 11 Council Passes Resolution to Initiate Negotiations for a Regional Comprehensive Claim

Rae (September 1, 1992) -- At an historic gathering of the First Assembly of the Dogrib Treaty 11 Council August 24 - 28, 1992, a resolution was unanimously passed by the delegates to the Assembly mandating the Dogrib Treaty 11 Council to "assume full control and responsibility for negotiation" for a Dogrib Nation Regional Comprehensive Claim.

The Dogrib Treaty 11 Council represents the four Dogrib communities of Rae-Edzo, Lac La Martre, Rae Lakes and Snare Lake.

With fundamental changes in Native issues on the National scene and increased demand for economic activity in the North Slave Region, the Dogrib Nation feels the timing is right to negotiate a regional claim. Isidore Zoe, Chief of Lac La Martre, commented during the Assembly that "it is good timing to settle a regional claim. We still have many elders with us that were present during the discussions and signing of Treaty 11 in 1921. If we wait too long we won't have their understanding of the Treaty because the Elders will be gone."

Eddie Erasmus, Grand Chief of the Dogrib Nation, set the stage early at the opening of the Dogrib Treaty 11 Assembly, when he said: "We have patiently waited for the resolution of our land claims for the last 20 years. Time has come for us to seize the opportunity and be masters of our own destiny. We hope that the long time it has taken the Dogrib people to take this initiative will be followed by rapid action in support of socio-economic development in the Dogrib communities."

The settlement of a regional claim along with a self-government agreement will provide a solid foundation on which a cooperative partnership between business, government and the Dogrib people can take place. "Ownership over land and resources and a self-government agreement which entails meaningful control, is what aboriginal title means to the Dogrib people," says Grand Chief Erasmus.

An enormous amount of work lies ahead for the Dogrib people. Once a land claim is in place and self government a reality, the communities of the Dogrib Treaty 11 Council will be in an excellent position to put an end to the pattern of economic dependency and paternalism. Grand Chief Erasmus, summed up his vision of what a land claim and a self government agreement means by saying that "what we want to ultimately see is decisions over social, economic and political matters being made by the people who are most directly affected by the decisions - the Dogrib people. Yes, we will make mistakes. But they are less painful than suffering the consequences of other people's mistakes."

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