

# Kw'ahtidee Jimmy Bruneau (1881-1975)

*“Senèk'e enjht'èkò hohè-ha, Dèts'q K'àowo geehke... eyits'q secheekèè njht'èkò git'á wheʔq-ha, secheekèè njht'èkò goyì eghàlagiidèe-ha eyits'q chekoa nàowo nàke t'á hoghàgetq-ha, gonàowoo eyits'q kwet'jì nàowoo k'èè.”*

Toyatì Zaà 12 dzeè, 1881 ekò Jimmy Bruneau wegòhtì jìlè eyits'q dechì-nì dèezq. 1936 k'e Kw'ahtidee Monfwì ełajwoo t'áxqò, Jimmy Bruneau t'á Kw'ahtidee whelì. Asìi hazoq eładjì at'jì yek'èezq jìlè, eyits'q dqne enjht'èkò hoghàgeetq njdè nàowo k'ègeezq-ha eyits'q edaanì asìi weghàlats'eeda nàowo gik'èezq ade-ha nìwq. Chekoa nezì hoghàgeetq-ha nìwq hanìkò, dq nàowoo eyits'q dq yatì gìghq wedèq hohè ha-le nìwq. Gogha nàdaq njwàa nàniwhewoo ts'qʔqò, kòta dq nàdeè sìi, Behchokq/Edzo Enjht'èkò gha K'àodee gehtsì eyits'q Edzanèk'e gha K'àowodee xè nàowo whehtsì t'á sigòlà, eyit'á enjht'èkò nàowoo dqne git'áa whela anajà.

Ek'èdjènq daats'q weghòò ekò, Kw'ahtidee Jimmy Bruneau sìi, Behchokq dq nàdeè goamì Dèts'q K'àowo k'èehogeehʔà-le t'á Sòmba Nàzeè nàowoo ts'q sòmba ts'ihchì ha-le geèhdì. Sòmba nàzeè sòmba t'á dè wek'e nàts'edè goghq nàedi ne-le eyits'q gonàowoo goghq ìchì ne-le hadìi. Kw'ahtidee sìi nàdahoeWHO ts'qʔqò Ottawa ts'q Dèts'q K'àowo sìi, goet'jì jìtaà dè giitsq nq wek'èhoèhdzq agjìla.

Edàidzeècho Zaà 16 dzeè, 1975 ekò Kw'ahtidee Jimmy Bruneau ełajwo, ek'èdjènq daats'q ʔqòtq weghòò jìlè. Dq nàdaq nàniwewoo eyits'q dq nàdatso dqò jìlè. Dq gha k'àowo elì t'á weghàà laanì dq eghàlaede-ha sìi k'àowo nezì jìlè. Qhdaà jìtèq weyatì ghàà dìi hadì jìlè, “Nàdaq njwàa gogha nàniwhewoo eyits'q weghàà laanì t'ahsìi gots'q ajà.”



*“I have asked for a school to be built... on my land... and that school will be run by my people, and my people will work at that school and our children will learn both ways, our way and the white man's way.”*

Jimmy Bruneau was born on December 12, 1881, and raised on the land. After Chief Monfwì's death in 1936, Jimmy Bruneau became the Chief. He understood that times were changing and that people needed the knowledge and skills that they could learn in school. He wanted children to be educated, but not at the cost of losing their language and culture. Through his vision, members of the community formed the Rae-Edzo School Society and negotiated an historic agreement with the Commissioner of the NWT, returning control of the local school to the people of the community.

When he was over 80 years of age, Chief Jimmy Bruneau led the people of Rae in a protest against the government by refusing to accept the Treaty money. He denied that the Treaty money had bought the land or the rights of the first people who lived on it. It was through strong actions by the Chief that the federal government continued to recognize the claims of our people to the land.

Chief Jimmy Bruneau died on January 16, 1975, at the age of 89. Hundreds of people attended his funeral to pay respect to this Chief, who was so important to the lives of so many people. He was a man of vision and great strength, who set the finest example of leadership for our people. In the words of one elder, “He looked far ahead for us and we gain by it.”

