

PRESS RELEASE

CONFEDERACY OF **TREATY SIX** FIRST NATIONS



HEAD OFFICE: ENOCH CREE NATION NO. 135 P.O. BOX 270, ENOCH AB T7X 3Y3

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
OCTOBER 28, 2016**

Treaty No. 6 Chiefs Offer Condolences to the family Jim Prentice

The Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations Chiefs are deeply saddened by the sudden passing of Jim Prentice. The Chiefs express deep shock and sadness as they join in mourning the passing of Jim Prentice.

Treaty No. 6 Grand Chief Randy Ermineskin says thoughts and prayers are with his family, friends and colleagues. "Today we are with your Family in prayer and we too mourn with all Albertans as we considered Mr. Prentice an honourable friend who made considerable progress and contributions to advance our concerns."

Prentice left a rich legacy of public service, both federally and provincially and is being remembered as having a genuine commitment to working with First Nations people in Canada. Whitney said in a statement Friday. "Jim brought his remarkable work ethic, intellect and passion to bear on matters critical to the improvement to the quality of life for First Nations people.

The former Alberta Premier was considered a friend and ally and worked for better relationships with First Nations across Alberta. As the federal minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Mr. Prentice engaged First Nations communities with respect and a deep understand of First Nations issues.

Adam said he had hoped Prentice would win last year's provincial election so that he could have continued engaging with aboriginal communities. "It would have been the turning point for better relationships with First Nations people across Alberta who will be remembered for engaging with oft-ignored communities during his time in office. Allan Adam, Chief of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, said Friday that Prentice's work as a politician was unprecedented. "I remember my first meet-up with him. He looked at me and said, 'Chief, what do you want, what do your people want?' "

Prentice, 60, was killed Thursday night near Kelowna in a plane crash. He served as Alberta premier from September 2014 to May 2015 before his Progressive Conservative government was defeated. He had been a candidate for the federal Progressive Conservative leadership and had served as the federal minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Advertisement

#11 Invalid streamType and/or streamServer settings for .

Adam said he had hoped Prentice would win last year's provincial election so that he could have continued engaging with aboriginal communities.

"It would have been the turning point for better relationships with First Nations people across Alberta."

In November 2014, Prentice was the first sitting premier in nearly two decades to visit aboriginal communities in northern Alberta, including Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation. At the time, Prentice touted the merits of frank discussion on issues such as land use planning and environmental monitoring as well as the province's approach to consultation.

"It made me feel really proud that the premier came for a trip on the request I sent out," Adam said. "That's why I respected the man."

He said even though he disagreed with Prentice on certain issues, the former premier built positive relationships with aboriginal communities.

"You (have) to give the man credit for what he has accomplished," he said. "He gave a gallant effort."

Chief Billy Joe Laboucan said Prentice helped the Lubicon Lake Band to launch a land claim — the community is hoping to finalize an agreement with the federal government next year. In October 2014, Prentice became the first premier to visit the Lubicon community of Little Buffalo in northern Alberta, which claims to have never given up its land rights because treaty makers missed the band in the early 1900s. During his visit, Prentice had said that settling the decades-long dispute was a priority for him. "He was such a compassionate and genuine person," Laboucan said. "We will always be grateful for him reaching out and helping us when he did. "He was able, through his connections, to get \$5.6 million for emergency housing (for the community)," he added. "He saw the need."

Laboucan remembers Prentice as someone who "what you saw was what you got." "And it wasn't just indigenous communities," Laboucan said. "People saw him as being a very compassionate and a caring person."

Dene National Chief Bill Erasmus, who is the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) regional chief for the Northwest Territories, said he last saw Prentice on a flight leaving Ottawa in May. "He said he was in the process of writing a book about the events that occurred in his lifetime; he was excited about it," he said. "That's what I was thinking of when I heard about (his death)."

Erasmus said he believed Prentice to be more liberal-minded than the politicians in his party. "A lot of times he couldn't get as far as we wanted him to," he said.

"He had to find ways to be creative." AFN Regional Chief for Alberta Craig Makinaw said the aboriginal communities where Prentice worked appreciated his efforts. "He was a minister that wanted to see things done," he said. "I am sending my condolences to his family. I'll pray for his family during this time."

Roy Whitney, chief of the Tsuut'ina First Nation, said Prentice left a rich legacy of public service, both federally and provincially.

"However, of special note was his genuine commitment to, and work on behalf of

First Nations people in Canada,” Whitney said in a statement Friday. “Jim brought his remarkable work ethic, intellect and passion to bear on matters critical to the improvement of quality of life for First Nations people. Tsuut’ina mourns with other Albertans as we consider the immense contribution of this truly honourable man.” Adam echoed the sentiment. “He wanted to fix things,” he said. “I’m sad to say that he’s gone now and he’ll be greatly missed.”