

# Chief Robert Smallboy Visits Alaska

FAIRBANKS—Chief Robert Smallboy from Alberta, Canada, claims he's just a tourist in Alaska this summer, but he's not taking the usual tour. He's meeting with Alaskan Indians and Eskimos at every opportunity, scoring high on diplomacy—and he just may be swapping ideas on dealing with the government.

The Cree Indian leader is well known in Canada for his stubborn fight to preserve his tribe's traditional life style.

Raised on the Rocky Boy Reservation in Montana, he moved to Hobbs, Alberta, when his father married a woman from a Cree reservation there.

Three years ago this reservation was filled with strife. Some of the people wanted to live the white man's way. Others, including Chief Smallboy, wanted to keep to the old traditions. They felt their reservation was getting too crowded. That there was too much violence and drinking.

"He had a dream he should

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CHIEF ROBERT SMALLBOY

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go to the mountains," Smallboy's interpreter said. "And so they went to Kootenai Plain about 10 miles from Jasper. It was government land and the government tried to chase them away."

But the Cree liked the new location where the mountains are beautiful and there is plenty of game. Since they moved there "everything has gone good again with the people."

This winter the government passed the Thirty Day Law which decrees no person can stay on government land more than 30 days.

"They said it was to keep the hippies away but it was really against us," the interpreter explains. "The Chief said, 'If you send me to prison I'll just go right back when I get out!'"

Impressed by such determination, the government minister

in charge of the land has declared, "I will not ride shotgun on these people," and Smallboy predicts they will have land at Muskogee Lake, not far from where they are camped, on which to build permanent homes.

With settlement in sight, Smallboy felt free this summer to vacation and is touring, Alaska by car with an old friend. His most successful stop to date has been the village of Tanacross where Chief Oscar Isaac gave him a hearty welcome.

Now he's going to an Indian camp at Beaver where he stopped briefly on the drive North. It's a very good camp, he said. In fact, Chief Smallboy is very much impressed with the way Alaskan Natives live.

"It's like the way the people did in the old time. It's a good life," he said.