

Treaty #6: Poundmaker

6.1.4
c

The following excerpt was recorded by Peter Erasmus, an eyewitness to the signing of Treaty #6, which covered central Saskatchewan and Alberta. He was present at the meeting between the main Cree chiefs in the area and Commissioner Morris, sent by the Government of Canada to negotiate and explain the treaty.

Poundmaker, who was not a chief at that time, just a brave, spoke up and said, "The Government mentions how much land is to be given us. He says 640 acres one mile square for each band. He will give us, he says," and in a loud voice, he shouted, "This is our land, it isn't a piece of pemmican to be cut off and given in little pieces back to us. It is ours and we will take what we want. "

A strong wave of approval came back from the seated Indians at his statement. Some braves in the last rows rose to their feet, waved their hands and arms, shouting "Yes! Yes!" in Cree. Apparently these were Poundmaker's followers. It was some time before the main Chiefs could restore order.

Many of the Cree people were present to discuss this treaty, as there were increasing problems with food scarcity at that time. First Nations people were becoming increasingly more dependent upon agriculture and trade with settlers for their survival.

As noted by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Neither Morris nor the Indians knew at this time that in three years the buffalo would be entirely gone from the Canadian prairies. However, they were both aware that the buffalo were going. It was only the extremely short interval before that event which took them by surprise."



Source: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, *The Making of Treaty Six*:
<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/trts/hti/t6/mkg2_e.html>