

# Slaying of Youth Angers Chippewas

By Jack Anderson

Brian Desjarlait is dead, and the Red Lake Chippewas are angry.

How he died is disputed. The federal policemen who killed him say he was armed. But U.S. Attorney Robert Renner thinks it conceivable the gun may have been "planted" on the body.

A classified report says one of the three Indian officers involved in the shooting had been charged with a civil rights violation. He had been accused by a Desjarlait family member who said the police beat him. After an FBI investigation, the charges were dismissed.

But the details are no longer important. All the tribesmen care is that a restless, yearning, 15-year-old Chippewa boy is dead, the victim of a policeman's bullet.

Suddenly, he has become the symbol of the disorder, disease and death that have plagued the Minnesota Chippewa reservation. The situation at Red Lake, Renner told us, is "explosive."

The wonder to us, after studying the Broken Treaties Papers taken from government files by the Indians, is that Red Lake took so long to produce a martyr.

For Red Lake is a classic example of how the federal government, often in league with the tribes' own leaders, have

let young Indians languish and drift and sometimes die.

## Abounding Poverty

The stolen papers show that the Red Lake lands, comprising an area about the size of Rhode Island, are rich in timber, fish and probably minerals. Yet the median family income is a stark \$1,300.

"Less than 60 per cent of [the] labor force is presently regularly employed," declares one document. And half of those who work are employed on federal welfare projects.

Not that the Chippewas are shiftless. One report describes them as "friendly and cooperative people [with] a high degree of manual dexterity . . . quick to learn trades and skill under competent guidance." More than that, they are "a people eager for employment."

The stolen documents show that at least a dozen federal agencies have tried to help the Chippewas in the past. But the attempts to help, more often than not, have wound up hindering the Indians.

"About 15 years ago," reports one study, "the federal government undertook a dredging operation of the channel of the Red Lake River. [It] destroyed one of the great natural habitats for fish and wildlife plus one of the best nesting grounds for ducks in the United States."

It also put many Chippewas

out of the hunting and trapping business.

## Bleak Conditions

Several decades of federal "help" are summed up in these bleak terms: "No air, bus, rail or regular commercial freight service; limited highways, lack of commercial shopping; no motel accommodations; lack of tribal capital for development; lack of employment; lack of banking . . ."

Under present planning, says another document, "it will be 1997 before . . . roads are upgraded." Meanwhile, the secondary roads on the reservation are "full of chuckholes and are hazardous."

The houses on the reservation are no better than the roads. Despite federal housing programs, charges a study, there are "deplorable housing conditions."

And despite federal licensing of trading posts, another report says, "conditions . . . are indeed atrocious. [There] are grounds for immediate revocation." The trading post owners, of course, deny the charges.

What the Broken Treaties Papers show, in essence, is that most of the money allocated for the Indians has gone instead to benefit the bureaucrats who have administered the government programs.

## Vietnam Intelligence

The real reason President

Nixon resumed intensive bombing of North Vietnam, according to the word going out from Henry Kissinger's office, was to break up military preparations for a renewed offensive after the cease-fire.

The President has overlooked the preparations, according to official White House leaks, as long as he thought there was a chance for an enforceable cease-fire. Not until Hanoi hedged about honoring the cease-fire did the President resort to bombing again, it is said.

We have had access, however, to intelligence reports which dispute the official leaks. The infiltration of men and materiel into South Vietnam, according to the reports, hasn't increased appreciably.

Instead of large troop units, Hanoi has been sending down political personnel who could be used to drum up political support and run a civil government. This would indicate that Hanoi anticipates a political rather than military struggle.

The military supplies that are reaching North Vietnamese forces in the south also don't appear to be adequate for a large-scale offensive. More likely, they are intended to defend Communist positions in case of South Vietnamese military action.

The secret intelligence and the official leaks, in other words, simply don't jibe.