

Proceeds from sacred prayer bundle run to N.Y. queried

EDMONTON (CP) — Descendants of Big Bear want Jim Thunder to disclose how much money he raised during his run to New York to try to retrieve the revered Cree chief's sacred prayer bundle.

The relatives also want Thunder to say which charity will benefit from the money, said George Chatsis, adopted son of Joesph Peemie, the youngest son of Big Bear.

Thunder has reportedly said he raised \$8.8 million, but family members in Alberta suspect he pulled the figure out of the air in an effort to show American Museum of Natural History officials he had the support of Canadian Cree Indians, Chatsis said.

Thunder, whose name was formerly Jim Gladue, left Edmonton in September for his 4,400-kilometre run to New York City. He has said he is a descendant of Big Bear through adoption and that his ances-

tor instructed him in a dream to retrieve the bundle — a sack holding a bear paw, sweetgrass and tobacco.

The museum has told Thunder it will not turn the bundle over to him because he could not provide evidence of broad Cree support and could not answer in detail how or where the bundle would be kept if he obtained it. Museum officials say their decision is not appealable.

Chatsis said Monica Soosay of Hobbema, Alta., is Big Bear's great-granddaughter and she has denied ever having adopted Thunder. Thunder has never named the great-granddaughter he says adopted him and could not produce proof of the adoption to museum officials last week.

The family has commissioned a genealogy study which should be completed soon and which will put an end to many people's claims they are direct descendants of Big Bear.