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**Brazil Indian Tribe Was Poisoned
By Rubber Tappers, Priest Says**

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By Joseph Novitski

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP)—A Roman Catholic missionary says white rubber tappers wiped out half a tribe of Indians in Brazil's Amazon territory last year by putting arsenic in sugar they gave them.

"Now they want to do away with the rest of the tribe," the Rev. Valdemar Weber said Saturday. He said the itinerant tappers wanted Indian land in the northern part of Mato Grosso state between the Xingu and Tapajos rivers.

The Jesuit priest raised charges of white massacres of Indians while in Rio De Janeiro this week to raise funds for his missions. The charges brought a response from agriculture minister Ney Braga, whose department runs Bra-

zil's highly respected Indian protection service.

After Maj. Luiz Vinhas Neves, chief of the protection service, told Braga that the priest's claims probably were true, Braga ordered the formation of a commission to see what could be done to help the Indians.

Neves said his service is undermanned and unable to provide Indians continuous protection because of the vastness of Indian territory.

Father Weber identified the tribe he said was half wiped out as the Tapanhumas. He said 35 other tribes are threatened in the wild country being opened up in Brazil's frontier.

"The Indian people have been betrayed," Father Weber said. "The white people are

ferocious, and all the Indians can do is to flee and continue fleeing. Permanent help by competent people is necessary to save them. Until now they have never been helped properly."

The rubber tappers roam the jungles collecting raw rubber and selling it as outposts. They want the land occupied by the Indians and in some cases have already sold it in the coastal cities, the priest said.

Father Weber and Neves agreed that development banks should not be permitted to lend money to develop the rubber trade in northern Mato Grosso where Indian civilization survive.

Brazil has about 110,000 Indians still living by their own ancient standards.