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ALBERTA  
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Interviewee is former member of Sawridge Band, now living on Metis colony.
- Describes breaking of treaty promises relating to fishing rights.

Inter: The person about to speak is Henry Prince who is on the Metis colony but at one time was on the reserve and is quite knowledgeable about the promises and history.

Henry: My grandfather came from a reserve in Winnipeg. He had one Indian name when the representatives of Queen Victoria came to this area. He was told he was like a prince and was given a name. They said "you are just like a prince of Canada so your surname will be Prince." As he was one of the first to meet with them.

The Queen gave that name to my grandfather so that is where our last name came from.

I was eleven years old when I went to school. My father had a very sore leg at that time. He was the one who knew the treaty thoroughly and was well liked by the government. My father said that the treaty No. 8 would be in effect until the sun stopped shining. He also said that nothing in the Indian livelihood would be stopped. That they would hunt anytime for food, until the sun stopped shining.

They were told they would never go hungry. Next they would

always be assisted so they would not have hard times. My father served as an interpreter as well. When the police came to this area, they would seek out for help. This is one article not many know about. If a woman chose to leave the reserve, she was given an advance of \$50.00 for ten years. After that she could come back if she wanted to. I also served as an interpreter many times as my father used to do.

The people were promised cattle and farm implements whenever they wanted them. A lot of the people around here have cattle. Some have 30,40, or 50 head. Treaty No. 8 should be made right. It can be found where it was written and it should come back into effect. Today, the treaty isn't followed. Wherever they can get out of the promises as written down, they do. If they can talk the leaders out of promises, they do. At that time the people were stubborn and made sure the promises were followed. Today the young people are of a different mind and the treaties are not being followed. The people before, understood their treaty rights and made sure they were followed. The young people today are unsure for they weren't there when the treaty was made and are probably doubtful.

If I was still on the reserve, I would follow the treaty as I know what is written. No one would threaten me as I would stand up for my rights. When I left the reserve, the agent came to

see me to pay me but I refused. I told him I had been raised here and the land was mine. He told me I had been rejected out of the reserve. I said, "Yes, that's a word but it is only a word until I choose to accept it." The people here wanted me and I knew everyone so that is why I came here.

As to the stipulations of the treaty, and see it, I don't see where the white man can cheat the Indian. If all the people unite and protect the treaties they cannot be brothers. But where the white man can succeed in breaking the treaties, sure, they'll break them. They are doing it a little at a time.

My brother comes from another area and over there he says the agent has no power and over here the agent is getting more power all the time.

Before the fish instructor came here, the fishing was done by hand for the winter. When Sid Travis arrived, he came in a buggy to our place and said, "Well, Jim, you won't be able to fish this spawning season." "Why?" I asked.

Sid Travis said, "That's the law, it's a new law. I'm the fish instructor." "Yes, that's the law through your mouth but it is not the law of the land. I will fish for my winter use," Jim replied. "But if you do, I'll arrest you." "All right," said Jim.

Well, some of the people didn't fish but my father did. He had just caught about 1,000 whitefish when Travis came to him and gave him a summons to appear the following Monday at the Indian agent's for a trial. I went with him to court. McDermoth was

the J.P. at the time.

My father was greeted by Laird. "How are you doing, Jim?" "Well I come to court." "Come to court? What did you do?" Laird asked him. My father said, "I was fishing and the fish instructor, Travis, told me to come here." "If there's anything you want me for, just tell the boy to close for 15 minutes and I'll be over," Laird told him.

So we went to court and the J.P. mentioned that the new law applied to everyone and that to fish during spawning season was against the law. "Well, this is the treaty," my father said. So the J.P. asked him, "Well, Jim, what are you going to do?" "I'll call for the agent," he said, "he knows the law." "Mr. Laird," the J.P. said, "this Indian is on trial and he says he is only following what was set down in the treaty. That as long as the sun shines and the river flows he could fish for his livelihood." Laird replied, "He is an Indian and draws \$5.00 a year for the treaty money. So there is nothing you can do to this man for fishing."

See, if the one who is under treaty knows his rights he is right. Today's leaders do not follow the treaty and it would follow it strictly. Oh yes, if the treaty is followed you will be strong and always win.

Inter: What about the ducks and wild fowl they have lost.

Henry: No one fought and stood up to uphold the treaty. I guess, they're going to lose if they don't stand up for their rights. If you just kill them for fun, I can see it. But for food, I don't see where that right remained. No, treaty is getting weaker. If you let them do it, they will. (Law recently made is you can't go into another province to hunt). You could only hunt in the area of your birth.

Inter: What do you understand about the medical rights?

Henry: That is the same as the others. Education, too, is supposed to be free. If the treaty people went to the meetings to fight and stand up for their rights, the treaties would never be threatened. If all different tribes united and stood up for their rights the rights wouldn't be taken away.

Inter: Didn't they promise ammunition?

Henry: Oh yes, they used to give these powder and shot.

Inter: Nets?

Henry: Nets too and canvas as well.

Inter: For those that were helpless, was rations given to them? At hay season rations were given out.

Henry: Yes, anytime they needed she got. When their sleighs and wagons broke down, they were free.

Inter: Did they mention how much land they sold on foot or what?

Henry: Which one do you mean?

Inter: Treaty.

Henry: Down to the sea. If they come on our land with their dozers we get paid. It goes to our funds. They clean up the area that they survey.

Inter: Money goes to your funds?

Henry: Oh yes, it is there until we need machinery or something of use to us.

Henry: My dad was a treaty Indian from Winnipeg and my mom was from Grays. They will admit to the scrip. The laws weren't yet finished at the time. I was about four or five when the lines were laid down. A lot of the families here were originally from Winnipeg area. The Andersons, Courtereilles, and Halcrows.

Inter: They weren't from here originally?

Henry: Oh yes, and the Kennedys, Sutherlands, MacLeods, the Benzis from Peace River. There is many, the Whitebears. My father brought 14 from Hudson Bay when they left. There was 14 of them in a line call with freight racks; there was much crying as they left. Tom Settler came from there too. As far as that goes, we like it there. We are registered on Dad's name, not my mother's. They were not married. My dad emphasized that we were registered on his name. He told Frair that he'd take his children elsewhere for they were to be baptized. He got him mad. He said these are my kids, not yours. The agent came to see us many times to order us out but he never

succeeded. Lafougam was his name. My dad was a treaty Indian and is by his name. He told me "Your mother is a white woman."

"Yes, I know" I said, "My father is registered." The people in this we know us and we moved here from the reserve.

Inter: What about the lake?

Henry: The Beaver people were here at first. They had wars here and they must have been chased out. My grandfather on my mother's side was named Walker in Cree. My father brother-in-law, Simon Walker was 14 when his father died.

(End of Interview)

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