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ADRIAN HOPE

Adrian Hope has been active in Metis politics since the 1920s. He was involved in the organization of the Metis Association of Alberta, the Ewing Commission hearings, the development of Metis colonies in Alberta.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Formation of the Metis Association of Alberta.
- Hearings of the Ewing Commission.
- Metis Betterment Act.
- Early Metis leaders: their individual strengths.
- Establishment of Metis colonies in Alberta.
- Malcolm Norris and Jim Brady: their contribution in Alberta.
- Sale of Metis lands by a priest.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Adrian Hope has been active for fifty years in Metis political organizations in Alberta. He was involved in the first efforts to guarantee land rights for Metis people in the Edmonton area where Metis reserves had been established. He was a close friend and associate of Malcolm Norris and Jim Brady from the mid-twenties until the mid-forties when the two men left Alberta for Saskatchewan.

INTERVIEW:

Adrian: "There was no ring upon her finger to tell her she was mine,/ No doubt in mind there was to linger, the best that I could find./ She cooked my meals and washed my clothes,/ She cared for all of my needs./ When my moods changed she always knows,/ Ambitions always feeds./ Her name was not upon a paper, no preacher heard her vows,/ The sprinkling of rain the only water to bless her act somehow./ The great spirit saw and blessed her and gave her health and happiness./ So now we live our lives together with companionship, not loneliness. July 20, 1970." I write little fool things like that all the time. That's not what I was looking for. Quack, quack, that's the one.

Murray: I'm talking to Adrian Hope who has been active in representing and fighting for the Metis people for, oh, forty or fifty years anyway. And he was a close friend of Malcolm Norris and Jim Brady. Adrian, you talked last night of sort of the beginning of the colony where you lived in 1922. Could you start the story there again?

Adrian: Yeah well, it just happens that there was an old man by the name of Charlie Delorme, and there were five of them in, really. They were playing cards one Sunday afternoon, between Frog Lake and Fishing Lake. It was on a Sunday afternoon and that's where some of the Metis would gather and they'd play cards, and they'd tell stories and one thing or other. Finally old Charlie Delorme began speaking, seeing that there were so many white men coming in and taking up land and shooting off moose and all kinds; well, their living in fact was going downhill. And he was saying, wouldn't it be a wonderful idea if we could get reserves like the Indians have; and that started the whole works. Among the five was old Charlie Delorme and Mr. Alot(?), and there was a Cardinal, and old man Collins, and I forget who the other one was. But anyway, there was five of them. So they talked away on this and of course it went on. Every Sunday a little bit stronger and their wishes kept on going - worked on them pretty strong.

And 1923 it continued and there was a fellow came in there from Winnipeg somewheres, a fellow by the name of Monroe. I forget his other name. Anyway, they asked him, seeing that he was able to speak English pretty fair, to go to Edmonton and find out if something could be done about this. So they put a blanket on the ground where they were playing cards and, of course, everybody chipped in, threw in 10 cents, 25 cents, and things like that. They didn't get very much money but it was \$8.40 or something like that and they offered that to him to help him on his way. He left alright enough and went to Edmonton, but he didn't come back that year, but the following year he showed up again. And right now they hit him up, how come he didn't show up right after that? Well, he had some excuse he had to get back home. Somebody was dying or something, so he had went straight home, back to Winnipeg. But this time he come back and they talked that over again and he

decided, well, he could go in and find out a little bit more on what to do about it. This was in 1923 now. So he went in and he come back and he told them that he had spoken to this fellow and that fellow and finally one of the ministers. And there could be a possibility on it, but people would have to organize and get more people, because the government goes by the people's wishes. And that was the end of that.

In 1924 nothing happened, but in 1925 they invited a school teacher to come up, an enfranchised Indian by the name of Joseph Francis Dion, who was teaching school at Gurneyville. Well, he decided, yeah; they talked him into it. He went in and seen different government people and he come back and told them that they would really have to organize and that the people would really have to exert themselves in getting a lot of people behind what it was they were trying to do. So some people went up to Cold Lake, other people went up to Bonnyville and all elsewhere, wherever there was Metis. And they got quite a number of them in St. Paul des Metis in Alberta.

So in 1926 they held a fair size meeting at the theatre. They rented the theatre and was able to rent that for two or three hours where they held their meeting. So they decided there to kind of organize. Joseph Francis Dion, was then president. Our first vice-president was a fellow by the name of Cunningham, Henry Cunningham from St. Albert, and the other fellow was, Boudreau; he was from High Prairie. And that started the ball rolling. They were to have an annual meeting again in St. Albert in 1927.

Well, we heard some rumors about it but nothing certain, and one day, I went into Edmonton and I was told that there was a pretty big meeting for the Metis people in St. Albert that evening. Or that afternoon. And, of course, I let it go over

my head, I didn't pay too much attention to it and I went into the Royal George Hotel beverage room. There was Malcolm sitting there, and Brady, and Felix Callihoo. Of course I told them about this big meeting that's going to take place in St. Albert and then maybe I talked about it a little stronger than what I really knew. I don't know. Anyway, I said, "Maybe we should go and take a reading and see what happens." I had about \$18 on me. Malcolm says, "You have enough for a mickey?" I says, "You're darn right. For two mickeys." So I said, "We'll hire a cab and go down," and this we did. We got in and away we went with these two mickeys and some straws. We had them in our inside overcoat pockets and we'd take a sip once in a while. We got to this meeting and we seen what was taking place, but they were quite feeble. There was not enough strictness up there by the chairman. Sometimes there were two people speaking and finally the two people start kind of arguing among themselves and I seen what was taking place. So I told Malcolm, "Sic 'em, Malcolm. Get in there, doggone it. Show them how it's done." So Malcolm went up there and took off his overcoat, slammed it on the floor and he said, "May the hole in this body be heard," meaning his mouth, mind you. And everybody laugh right now, and they thought maybe he meant

something else. Anyway, he spoke Cree for a few minutes then he spoke English and, mister, the command of English that man had! Of course, it is not surprising because he wrote one sentence with every word in the Webster's Dictionary; it took him over two and one-half years to do. So I guess he understood the language fairly well.

Be that as it may, we had nominations, and we had an election again. So we left Joseph Francis Dion as president, Malcolm Norris as first vice-president, Felix Callihoo, the second vice-president because he had a good command of French, and Pete Tomkins, because he had a real command of the Cree language. And of, course, Malcolm had called Brady up there to do the secretarial work, because this man is a sort of a genius in compositions or write-ups or what have you. And this was the first meeting; this was in 1927.

I was sent to Calgary three times that year with no money. I caught the freight train once, I rode the blinds on the passenger twice. When and I got to Calgary, I went to a fellow by the name of Baptiste McDougall. That's the guy I went and seen and he sent his kids hither and yon gathering Metis people from Calgary to come and listen to what I had to say. I spoke that evening, slept there, the next day we had a real meeting with a whole lot more people. So the people wanted to join. They had the money, 25 cents to join. At that time it was "Association des Metis d'Alberta et des Territoires du

Nord-Ouest." That's what it was named. Malcolm wanted to include the Northwest Territories because this is where he had done a lot of trapping prior to coming back home to Edmonton. Anyway, things went on and we used to sit up sometimes three, four o'clock in the morning talking and discussing how to present the case of the Metis people to the government. And when we had to go ahead, Malcolm hit the ceiling, of course. He didn't like some of the derogatory questions that he would have to answer, especially that part where it comes in the venereal diseases. But nevertheless, Tomkins pointed it out to him that these were actual facts and must be looked at and it would help because of what we were trying to obtain. And Dion, he was adamant that land should be set aside like Indian reserves for the use of the Metis people without treaties. We didn't need to be paid \$5 a year to lose our citizenships. And it took a heck of a lot of planning.

Anyway, we brought enough pressure to bear to the dominion government and the provincial government until there was the appointment of Judge Ewing. When this man was appointed to investigate the problems of the Metis, there were several people had to be in with it. One of them was Mr. Panic(?). And they had an Archbishop. Oh they had several people in all this. I have a paper somewheres telling me all these, who all was appointed, and I won't bother taking it up at this time.

Be that as it may, starting in 1935 this investigation started. They had Reverend Bishop Guy with one of them. In fact, there were seventeen questionnaires filled up. I know this, that

among Brady's papers I found only six, the rest must still be in Edmonton somewhere. So things went on. We organized. And it went on and on and on and finally in 1939 we had the last hearing at the high court in Edmonton. This is where I attended it. We had Malcolm Norris as our spokesman. He was walking back and forth like as if he was a barrister or a lawyer or something, speaking on behalf of the Metis people. And the judge asked him at that time to condescend down to common everyday phraseology, because the brand of English he was using was really way up there among the skyscrapers. He was running around for dictionaries and encyclopedias and everything else to find out some of the meanings of the words that Malcolm was using. So Malcolm excused himself. He says, "I am sorry, your Honor. When I stepped into this courtroom and seen the British flag hanging there, I knew I had to use the English language. My only regret is, your Honor, that I could not express myself in my mother tongue." He says, "Maybe I could be able to present my case more clearly." Yeah, I felt real proud to be a Metis that day, due to that fact.

Anyway, the judge eventually conceded that the Metis people had a claim on this country. Of course, we brought in everything that we could think of. We even spoke of the scrips that were issued in 1900. And there was the individual scrips of 160 acres or else 160 dollars in cash. A lot of people sold their land scrips way cheaper than that. And it was too bad that these people were not better schooled so that they would know the value of their scrips because you could place that scrip anywhere in the province of Alberta and you also got the mineral rights at that time. So, it went on. Anyway, we brought this in, that we did have a sort of a claim on this country anyway because only one third of the Metis families drew what was known as a family scrip of 240 acres. The other two thirds were promised that they'd be back in fifteen years to quash the aboriginal claims of the Metis people. The only trouble is they did not say which fifteen years. It might be in the 1800s or I couldn't tell you. Be that as it may, they never came back.

So with that on our sleeves, the judge did concede that the Metis people of Alberta did have a claim on the land and what was our wish. Malcolm Norris pointed me out and told me to stand up and, "Tell the man what we need," he told me. My kneecap was just shaking, I was nervous as you could make him. So I got up and bit my tongue twice. I looked the judge straight in the eye and I says, "Your Honor, I'll be speaking for the Metis people of the province of Alberta. Due to lack of schooling, if you gave me scrip today, tomorrow me and my people would be drunk and the day after tomorrow our children would be standing on the road allowance the same as we are standing today. What we want is land. Land that we cannot sell, land that we cannot mortgage, land where we could build our homes so we could be in a permanent place where our children could attend school." "Oh," he says, "what you want is a 99 year lease." "Hold it, your Honour," I lifted up both my hands. "I do not want my inheritance loaned to me. I want

to own it in the way that nobody can take it away from me." He says, "Exactly. An outright gift from the government to the people. Yours as long as you use it. It's a 99 year lease from tomorrow, always from tomorrow." This is the words he used. But I cannot find no record of it. This is the sad thing, for me anyway, and perhaps for my people. Things went on like that anyway. I moved down to the colonies.

There was Pete Tomkins and Mr. Francis Dion were hired by the government to compose and write a Metis Betterment Act. There was two rooms hired in the Cecil Hotel, also a big parlour. And in the big parlour is where they worked and they would go ahead and compose. Some guy would come in from the government, look over what they'd composed, and tear it up and throw it

into the wastepaper basket. Told them to try again. They were there for four months before they copied the Indian Act with a few slight changes and this was known as the Metis Betterment Act. This was in 1940. In 1942 I was called in by Mr. Francis Dion. Pete Tomkins, myself, altogether there was seven of us to discuss the regulations of the Metis Betterment Act. We spoke about the scrips. When you got the scrips in 1900, you placed them anywhere in the province of Alberta but you also got the mineral rights. Why could we not get the mineral rights on the colonies? We called them colony because there were quite a number of Metis settlements in the province of Alberta. In order to recognize these lands that were set aside to be on a different, to be known by a different name, we called them colonies. Although I'll take exception to the word. A colony means a group of people being governed by a government outside of the country and this is not so. We are governed by a government in the country. Because, as for myself, I am first off a Canadian. And secondly, I am a Metis.

I am proud to be a Metis because not long ago I had the pleasure of meeting 38 of the biggest ranchers we had in Alberta and they invited me to a luncheon with them. And after lunch, they asked me to speak to them some of my thoughts. So I asked them three questions. The first question was how many of them were raising purebreds. One man put his hand up. He said he had a few head of cattle that were considered purebreds in a separate pasture. Then I asked them, "How many of you people are crossbreeding your cattle?" Every one of their hands lifted up. They all were crossbreeding their cattle. The other question was, "Why did you crossbreed your cattle?" The answer was, they got better calves. I told them, "That was the answer I was looking for because you are looking at a man that was crossbred." That created quite a laugh, of course. And I says, "Maybe we got better people." I says, "For a long while you used to look at me as if I was a mongrel, a damned halfbreed. But you find out yourself that crossbreeding is better than purebreds." Anyway, so much for that. That's one man's opinion. Perhaps I'm suffering with what we call a superiority complex, I don't know. But there is one thing for darn sure, I'm not suffering from an inferiority complex and you who listens to me, if you happen to be a Metis, I hope you take that same stand as I'm taking.

Oh, there is many things a person can talk about. Be that as it may, we have got eight big parcels of land in the province of Alberta set aside for the use of the Metis people. This land do not belong to us. Personally, I come from Kikino. I belong to Kikino. Kikino don't belong to me in no way, shape, or form - which is a different outlook than the white man has. And that's the way we've been looking at it and that's the way we continuously look at it. Every once in a while, the

government tries to make us owners of certain parcels of land in the colonies. But we tell them, no way do we want that. We belong to the land, the land don't belong to us because we are here only a short period of time. When we go, somebody else will make use of it. If my relations after I'm dead cannot use that land, somebody else can. And this is how we look at things over there. I hope it's realistic.

Murray: This is what you tried to explain to the judge at that commission meeting?

Adrian: That's right. I tried to explain that so that he would know, but it seemed like it just can't seem to sink into their heads. We have a minister now that looks after these Metis colonies by the name of Helen Huntley. Only now she is beginning to see what we mean by these things. And in the regulations that is written that all natural resources money is derived from the sale of oil, gas, or any other natural resource, should go in the Metis Betterment Trust. And they never put one cent there from all the gas and oil they've been selling since 1942. Well, there is only one thing left for the Metis people of the colonies to do, and that's to have a court hearing on this case. So we got permission from the Attorney General to bring this about and our hearing will perhaps happen sometime this winter. No later than February, I was told. Because I was of the opinion that the law was here for the rich as well as the poor, for the educated as well as the untutored. But let justice prevail. I think I've read that in the BNA Act. It also goes for the government as well as the common people. On that score, I lay my case and once something is written and it passes through legislature, then that is law. Why the government doesn't follow it, I don't know. But be that as it may, we'll see what the judges say. Although it's a white man's court. I may not get satisfaction there.

Murray: What is in the actual law as it stands now? Is that 99 year lease written down anywhere?

Adrian: That's something I've been looking for for a long time. I seen a big paper once, describing the ranges and townships and the sections of these, at that time nine, different colonies with a big red seal on the left hand bottom corner. I have been unable to find that paper. Joseph Francis Dion showed it to me. Who kept it, I don't know. We've looked for it and just simply cannot find it. Be that as it may, if there is such a thing in existence, there has got to be a copy of it somewheres.

Murray: Right.

Adrian: Did Francis Dion hire a vault somewhere in the bank and put it in there? And if he did, which bank and where? That I wouldn't know. Although it would take some investigation to find. Anyway, when he passed away suddenly, I just don't know.

Murray: Didn't have a chance to ask him.

Adrian: I didn't have a chance, no, because I didn't live close to him.

Murray: Last night you talked a bit about how the four men were extraordinary and they each contributed something to leadership. Could you describe that a bit?

Adrian: Yes, it's simple enough. There is no one man can take the leadership of a group of people all by himself. Due, I suppose, to the electrons within each body. Malcolm Norris, we had him as our leader to speak the English language. He was able to converse with any person, government or otherwise. Pete Tomkins was able to....

(End of Side A)

(Side B)

Adrian: ...this organization was going on in the province of Alberta. In 1938, well they were still investigating, talking to the different people like the bishop, different guys. In 1939 we had the last court hearing. In 1940, the maps were then brought in. In 1942 we discussed the regulations of the Metis Betterment Act. And they went through legislature. Since that time, they've tried to change two things in that Metis Betterment Act without any consultation to the Metis people of whom it governed. When I became president of the Metis Association, I went to the government, the minister that was looking after the Metis and the colonies, and brought it to his attention that any time they wanted to change the Metis Betterment Act that they had better consult the people that it governed, not only themselves. Because there was too much Metis blood shed in the old country, both France and Italy, due to dictatorship, that we couldn't have it in our own backyard.

Murray: What things were they trying to change?

Adrian: There were two things that they tried to change. I cannot quite remember just offhand and I know I've got them somewhere in writing, separate pieces of paper that I had instilled in one of these copies. And be that as it may, they said, "Well, it has passed through legislature already. There is nothing you can do about it." So, in order to forestall any more changes on account of this here court case I have coming,

I got all the five board members from the eight colonies into the city and managed to get an audition with the premier and five or six of his ministers. And verbally we made him state, at least I asked them that not one word of the Metis Betterment Act or its regulations shall be changed until after the court hearing. He fully agreed with it. You see what I was driving at? I don't want to lose this case, and if they change one little word somewhere...

Murray: It all could be lost.

Adrian: It would be lost. Even just one word even. Be that as it may, there was enough of us witnesses there, he can't very well go back on his word.

Murray: Right.

Adrian: And even the ministers agreed that this was so. So this is about how it lays now. There is no doubt in my mind that if we win this case, we'll not only develop our communities, we will develop the human beings living in these communities. Because I've been pushing education so hard in the last ten, twelve years that last fall, I had six of them in my own little community graduated grade twelve. And from there we got them jobs with the CYC and all different things like Manpower. We had them going strong from one thing to the other. We keep them jumping right along with their schooling. They even had talked one girl into taking up law but she went to the university for a while and then she had to give it up. She come home.

Murray: Can we talk a bit about the organization? I remember you saying it was strongest between 1927 and 1937.

Adrian: Yes.

Murray: Could you tell me, you know, how many people were involved, how many members of the Association? Do you remember numbers at all?

Adrian: To know the exact number, it would be false for me to state any number but we did have quite a number of people belonging to it.

Murray: From many communities.

Adrian: From many, from the whole province.

Murray: South and...

Adrian: South and north and even the Northwest Territories there were some people belonging to the Association.

Murray: What happened? You say it was strong up to 1937. Did it start to get weak after that?

Adrian: After that then there seemed to be some sort of a division between our big five. In fact, Malcolm Norris left and came and worked for the CCF in Alberta. It wasn't too long he sent... Well Jim Brady couldn't - he was either going to starve or something, so he joined the army. But being good friends with Pete Tomkins, they sent for Tomkins to go to Cumberland House. Running a store or something, they gave him a job there. Government store I think it was. Be that as it may, when Brady came back from the army, he stayed here in Saskatchewan and I think he made his headquarters at Lac La Ronge.

Murray: Do you know what it was that divided the big five?

Adrian: Probably politics because Malcolm was always a little bit on the red side. And he was a man he didn't give a damn on whose toes he tramped, whether he be a minister, a premier, or anything else. Malcolm was straight from the shoulder sort of a man and perhaps he had stepped on somebody's toes a little bit too darn much.

Murray: In the government?

Adrian: In the government. That's the reason why they took Tomkins and they took Dion to write the Metis Betterment Act instead of the other two people that were better qualified than these two people.

Murray: They were qualified but were suspected by the government.

Adrian: That's right. Well, the suspicion should not have made too much difference to these people because after all, we are in a strong democratic country like Canada. The odd socialist in the country doesn't harm the government too much; it just makes them a little bit more on their toes. And we need that sort of a thing in this country. The fellows that I take my hat off to who are a little bit on the red is to make the democrats pay a little bit through the nose financially because, after all, democracy is financially backed whereas

socialism is not so much financially backed. They are more idealistically backed. And these idealists should make the democrats pay as much as they possibly can because, after all, that seems to be their God.

Murray: Was there a real conflict between Malcolm and Brady and some of the others? Were there arguments or...?

Adrian: No, there wasn't too much of that. It was just a matter of a difference of opinions, say. And that's about all I could say about that. I wouldn't want to be making any derogatory remarks because they didn't really fight among themselves. They just had differences of opinion and it's a good thing because if everybody thought that same way, nothing would go forward.

Murray: Did the direction of the Association follow one direction of opinion or the other or did it go back and forth?

Adrian: I wouldn't say it went either way. You see, we are a free people and every man is given his own freedom of which way to think. And I don't think the whole Association suffered either one way or the other. The reason the Social Credit stayed in so long is because they did a lot, the Metis people, lands where they could build their homes on a 99 year lease. There is enough of them, even here in the province of Saskatchewan if you like, and if all the Indians and all the Metis voted one way along with the Caucasians voting that way, they can swing any election you may want to put up in the province of Saskatchewan. We continuously remind the provincial government of this in Alberta. Mind you, it's not blackmail. We didn't set up that sort of a democracy, but we do know that it would be easy for us to sway and swing any government. The reason why we weren't so strong with the provincial government this time in Alberta, the Progressive Conservatives - firstly, our premier there is one quarter Indian, secondly, he wanted to conserve the natural resources for the use of the people in that province. This was his big stand and we all agreed with him. So any time I was asked of my opinion, I gave it quite freely and that spread like wildfire through all the Metis people and the treaty Indians. And that's how it stood. If I was to give my opinion otherwise, I don't think that Progressive Conservatives would stay there longer than a snowball in hell. But be that as it may, with these sort of ideals, we said, let's give them a chance and see, because the other governments was giving it away.

Murray: Right.

Adrian: For instance, our iron ore was leaving our province at twelve dollars and forty cents a ton, going into the United States. And there it cost them fourteen dollars and sixty cents to push it through the smelter. And we bought back that same damn steel for ninety-two dollars and eighty cents a ton. Look at the big profit in between. So we had a fellow investigating this. And apparently Mackenzie King owned two thirds of that smelter.

Murray: That's irony for you.

Adrian: If that don't make a fellow vote NDP, I don't know what the hell won't. But you investigate these little things. Perhaps we do look, some of us, sort of foolish among the Metis people but we sure go ahead and try to find out things and we investigate. Not blatantly no, but somewheres in there we find a way. We find it.

Murray: I'm interested in finding out more about the Association back in 1938. Brady and Norris remained active in the organization?

Adrian: You bet; they were together. Regardless of difference of opinions, they were all for this, getting this land. And we got the land. And I think there is a sort of an unwritten code that if you sat in one place for over twenty years, the land would automatically be yours.

Murray: This was before 1922; this was what people understood.

Adrian: Yes. Squatter's rights, is it?

Murray: Right.

Adrian: Now then, there is one deplorable thing happening in all the provinces throughout the whole dominion of Canada. Years back, some Metis went out way up into the wilderness, built themselves a log cabin, came out, got himself a girl, married her and took her up there. Raised a family. Now these kids call that home. These kids went out and got themselves wives, and come back, raised their children in the same place. Their children now are adults and they all have children that are still living there. Sometimes five generations was raised on that spot and still they don't own the land. In John Baine's report (I'm sure I have a copy of it somewhere but I can't lay my finger on it), prior to issuing a scrip, a person was allowed to buy a lakefront where he was living at the rate of a dollar an acre and also draw his scrip and take it anywhere he wanted. Up to forty acres only. I was advocating

- CMHC has a housing program but you have to own land before they can build you a house. And look at the deplorable housing there is for the Metis people all over hell's half acre. Why in the hell don't they sell them ten, twenty acres at the rate of a dollar an acre and then they'd have land that they could mortgage to get themselves a house built, eh? It would solve a big problem of the housing that we have here in the dominion of Canada.

Murray: It would be easy for CMHC to change its rule as well.

Adrian: Yeah. So this is it. I don't know. Maybe I'm wrong. These are just one man's opinions. And if I'm wrong, well I'm wrong and that's all there is to it, but this is the way I see things and I'm not afraid to speak on the things the way I see them.

Murray: When you were organizing for the Association, was it very difficult to convince people? Or did people respond to you pretty quickly?

Adrian: Yeah, they responded pretty quickly because, after all, they are understanding people too and this is maybe some of the ideas that they would like to have seen happened.

Murray: So the idea was sort of in people's minds anyway, and it just took some leaders to...

Adrian: It's just a matter, that's all that made it.

Murray: On the colonies and in those settlements, were there some sort of democratic institutions? Were there committees or councils that used to discuss problems?

Adrian: Yeah, we pretty near have to have that at all times. In fact, we are going a little bit further now. We have what we call a board of five people, all elected by the people.

Murray: These are from all the colonies?

Adrian: Each colony.

Murray: Each colony.

Adrian: Now then, from each colony, there is a chairman and these chairmen all get together and we call that the Federation of Metis Settlements. And they elect an executive of which I am one of them. It's really organized nicely. The next thing is, there is a council of elders which are not elected but

selected, old people. The board asks them questions, their opinions and then they go and sit at their board and they bring a lot of things out. Not necessarily...

Murray: The elders are an advisory board, sort of.

Adrian: That's right. A lot of them, like the Metis Association, they call me Senator. I am no senator but they call me their senator.

Murray: You wouldn't want to be a senator as in Ottawa?

Adrian: No.

Murray: Did you have the same sorts of organizations and boards back in those days, in the thirties?

Adrian: No.

Murray: What kind of bodies represented the people in those days in each of the colonies?

Adrian: Well, usually in every community there is one guy that is a little bit more vocal than the rest and we kind of use him as a sort of a messenger boy to bring about the wants and the needs of the community.

Murray: It was an informal...

Adrian: Informal, yeah. He is not elected or anything; he is just a man. There is a fellow there that maybe he can talk pretty fair English. Let's send him in and bring in our wants and needs, eh.

Murray: Did people meet regularly to discuss things or when there was an issue?

Adrian: On Sunday usually a bunch of them gathered. They played cards and they would jump. See who was the best jumper, who was the fastest runner on 200 yards and all that kind of stuff. This was continuous. When I was a young fellow, I know on the Winterburn Indian Reserve, I used to go and gather a bunch of horses and push them in behind a gate somewhere or ear them down and put a saddle on them and crawl aboard and give the people a show, eh. This was my line. Until a big mad bull came in one time and gee willikers, I went over there and grabbed one fellow's coat and I ran out there and I was bullfighting, eh. The same as they do with the matadors. They thought I was a hell of a brave guy but I wasn't so brave;

there is nothing to that. This old bull goes straight for that red rag and you just step off to one side and kick him in the behind as he goes by and make him a little madder. And people thought, "Oh, gee willikers, that fellow, he's got guts." Well, sure I had guts. But you see, things like that happened. You know how to do it and you're just fast and them bulls, you can do it, eh. Oh, there is many little things I suppose a fellow could talk about but doggone, that's not it. That sounds like I'm trying to put laurels on the lapels of my coat. I didn't do such a heck of a lot. I did the best I could for the leaders.

Murray: There were many people besides the five leaders who were working hard as well, eh?

Adrian: Oh, everybody worked. It had to be. These are scrips. History started in 1870 with the onset of trouble between the Metis and the federal government to establish a provisional government on the first Red River settlement. Maybe you've read all that.

Murray: Were a lot of the people in the colonies related originally to people in the Red River settlement?

Adrian: Not everybody. I'm one that wasn't related to the Red River. There is quite a number of others like myself but I would say maybe the half of them could trace their ancestry to the Red River.

Murray: And to Saskatchewan as well?

Adrian: Oh yes, definitely. Because Saskatchewan, that's where they come from to begin with, eh.

Murray: Right.

Adrian: They came from the Red River to Saskatchewan.

Murray: So it was a progression over the years?

Adrian: That's right. Like my Dad, well he came direct from Scotland, eh. Joined the Mounted Police and finally fell in love with this Indian girl and married her and that's where I

progenated from so I have nothing to do with Red River or Batoche.

Murray: So there was a mixture of people who were born in the area and people from Red River?

Adrian: Yes.

Murray: What role did Jim Brady play in organizing in those years?

Adrian: He was writing.

Murray: He was the one who did the writing?

Adrian: He was the clerk. He did the compositions and any paper that had to be sent to the government, well Brady wrote it out and changed the words and listened to Malcolm and took down notes and then he went ahead and he got on his typewriter and brought that to me. Like I said, he was a genius in composition.

Murray: He wasn't so much an organizer as some of the others?

Adrian: No, not that way. But in writing he couldn't be beat. He wasn't much on speaking even. He wasn't a good orator. He was all right this way, privately, but I mean for public orating.

Murray: Malcolm was the stronger there.

Adrian: Malcolm was a strong man; that's in English. In Cree, it was Tomkins. And in French, it was Callihoo. Yes, they would bring things out, just about wring hell out of your heart too, sometimes. The thing is, what are you going to do about it? This was the question. We knew what was wrong. What are you going to do about it? It's up to you, you, and you. Every one of you.

Murray: Who used to put that question to the meetings?

Adrian: That used to come out, all three.

Murray: What did the people say back?

Adrian: Well, they tried. Everybody dug in that way. Instead of sitting on their behind and let the leaders do everything. No way. Everybody tried and that was a doggone good way of doing it. But I notice some of the leaders of today, they want to do it all and get all the praise, get all the laurels, get everything; and that's not right.

Murray: That wasn't the way with these men?

Adrian: No way, not with us. Not in Alberta. It doesn't work out like that. So I don't know if there is anything more I

could tell you at this time about these people excepting maybe for - you were asking about Brady?

Murray: You could maybe tell me what the men, Brady and Norris, were like as you knew them. Personalities. Maybe if you have any stories about them?

Adrian: Malcolm was a strict disciplinarian you might say. Even with his children. He had a book there which was available to all of them. If you bought meat you wrote down the price of the meat because he wants to know where every cent goes from that house. If you bought candy for five cents, you wrote candy for five cents and he banged that into their heads really, really strong. I liked that attitude because he knew where he was at at all times then and he knew where the money was spent and what for. I even saw in there where he bought a mickey and what he paid for it, two and a half dollars. It was in that book. I wonder what become of that book? It would be quite interesting to read. And as far as Mr. Brady is concerned, Mr. Brady was born in St. Paul des Metis in Alberta in the year of 1908 on the 11th day of March. And of course, he was reported missing and presumed dead on the 4th of June, 1967. Apparently when he was in Cumberland House, he did have a common law wife, a Mrs. Dorion, and with her had three children.

Murray: What was Jim like to talk to? What was his personality? Could you compare the two men, Norris and Brady?

Adrian: Oh, very much. One was a whirlwind and one fellow was just a common nice little breeze, you know. You could get along with him nicely. He wasn't a pushy sort of a guy. Ideas and personality is this way, but on paper, he was pushy there. He didn't agree with the democratic system in many, many ways. He had reasons enough built up in his mind, the reasons why. But that could have happened because he was rejected by the provincial government of Alberta, both him and Malcolm, due to the fact of the stand that he took in politics. And that could have been the reason why. Malcolm, he was a whirlwind. Yet I liked the man. You don't dare brush him the wrong way, mister, or you were put right in your place and I don't give a damn if you were a bishop or premier or king or who the hell you were. You got put right there; I don't mean maybe.

Murray: But he was a gentle man as well?

Adrian: Oh yes, he was a gentle man as well and a very soft-hearted man. And I think this exterior that he put on was to

hide that softness within. This is the way I judged him, I don't know.

Murray: Did he maybe feel that his softness was inappropriate for the cause?

Adrian: Not exactly. He knew he was doing it. When he wasn't getting enough backing. If that man was to get enough backing, he was ready to go anywhere. He was ready to sacrifice. He was ready to do anything. He'd work for that ideal that he had in mind. For the common cause and for the good of the people that he had to deal with. He was proud to be a Metis. There was many times he felt ashamed of the Metis on the actions that they were carrying on with.

Murray: He thought they weren't strong enough perhaps?

Adrian: Yeah, that would be it, I suppose. But the way they carried on in their own home lives was something not to be too proud of. Just because they have a few beers, they have bigger muscles and they were ready to scrap due to the frustrations, I suppose, they had suffered in their lifetime. They were ready to battle.

Murray: Right.

(End of Side B)

(Side A, Tape 381A)

Murray: I know that I've talked to people in northern Saskatchewan who said that Malcolm in his frustration would often frighten native people away or put them off. Was that true in Alberta as well?

Adrian: No, he couldn't very well do that in Alberta because a heck of a lot of them were on his side with the same doggone idea.

Murray: Right.

Adrian: This, we knew, was a common thing. That is, not every one of us but the majority of us. Some of the people who has been to school, eh, knew these things. And knew there was something that we could do to better the people that were really suffering either with diseases or economics or whatever it is that you want to look at. We know there is a better way. And we know, there is many things about it we knew. But the thing to do is what we're going to do about it. So we tried our best. All, everybody, well those that were capable tried

their best to better the other people. I know I've held pretty big meetings with a heck of a lot of people and at one time when I started the meeting, after the meeting was opened, I began bringing up a subject or two for the benefit and the betterment of our people. One woman jumped up and she says, "Adrian Hope, you shut up. You're no darn good."

(Murray chuckles)

Adrian: So I jumped off the platform and ran over to where she were, took her hand, shook it. I says, "You know I'm no good, I know I'm no good. Now everybody knows I'm no good. But what

I'm after, will you back me up? For the benefit of the people?" She did. So everybody backed me up. This is the things that happens in a man's lifetime because there is no man strong enough to stand on his own hind legs without the people backing him up to get what it is that you are trying to do. And there is no man can do it alone. You've got to have four or five people because one man might forget one little blinking item that's really necessary to what it is that you are trying to attain. If there is four or five of you leading, then you have a chance of not forgetting the little bits of things that if you forgot you couldn't carry on or attain at the other place.

Murray: What kinds of things did Peter Tomkins contribute? Malcolm was the orator, Jim was the writer, what was Peter's contribution to the leadership?

Adrian: Pete Tomkins's father used to be a member of parliament in Ottawa. And he had a good friend in the archives. We used Pete Tomkins to talk to his dad and his dad speak to this friend in getting very vital information we needed to be able to have success with the Metis Association of Alberta.

Murray: Gave you the necessary information?

Adrian: Yes. Now, Pete Tomkins in many, many ways... A lot of people would never have understood Malcolm Norris nor Felix Callihoo. But he spoke the bush Cree and the people around Grouard, High Prairie, East Prairie, Peavine, right down to Calling Lake and Wabasca, they understood him perfectly because he spoke their brand of Cree.

Murray: Dialect.

Adrian: And this is where he came in very, very strongly.

Murray: So Malcolm spoke Cree but it was a different Cree.

Adrian: Malcolm spoke Cree but he didn't have it at his command like these other people had.

Murray: What about Joe Dion, what was his strong point?

Adrian: He was a figurehead.

Murray: He had the respect of the people?

Adrian: Yeah, he was a sort of a sanctimonious Christian and with that he would say, he wouldn't see anything go wrong because he believed in God so much that the people really trusted him in that manner.

Murray: And thought that if he supported the Association, that God supported it.

Adrian: Yeah.

Murray: So he was the religious aspect of the leaders.

Adrian: That's right. He was the religious aspect of the whole thing.

Murray: Was there among those men a sort of storyteller who could sit down and really put across the ideas in that sort of a way?

Adrian: They were pretty near all business men, these three orators that we had. As far as storytellers, there was oodles of them. Like Charlie Delorme and old Jimmy Lee Collins talking about buffalo hunts and things like that. How it was organized, how there was always a head man and if somebody broke the rules and the things that happened to him. And this kept kind of the Association sort of policed. We never needed a policeman at any of our meetings. We never needed anybody for that matter because the respect was there. If some people got too voluble, Malcolm would shut him up in damn short order. And don't you ever forget it.

Murray: A sharp tongue.

Adrian: If they insisted, Malcolm would put them right where they belonged in damn short order.

Murray: Malcolm wasn't the kind of man who was challenged by very many?

Adrian: No, you couldn't very well challenge his vocabulary, no way. Some have tried but never got to first base. Like at the hearing, the bishop made one wrong statement. He said, "The Metis were given a colony at St. Paul but they wouldn't stay home. They left. And left the land there. I don't think if you give them land that the Metis is liable to stay there. They are liable to go hunting or liable to go south working." Malcolm Norris jumped him. "I am sorry, your Eminence," he says, "that you are making a wrong statement. You are not speaking the truth." He didn't want to call him a damn liar. "Because I have with me here, three people who belong to that St. Paul des Metis colony and they are standing right there. Please stand up," and these three guys stood up. He winked at me. He done that so I put a paper in front of him. It was a notice that they had put up in Quebec written in French that for \$500 you could buy a ready made farm in St. Paul des Metis. And Father Therien told these Metis that were living there that they should go and fish and hunt, make a bunch of dry meat because "next year when you go to work, you won't have time to be looking for grub. But come back on Christmas." And they left there. In the meantime, these French Canadians arrived and go to Father Therien and for \$500, there is a house. Open the door and they are in. When the Metis come back, there is a light in the house. "Oh, my gosh, maybe it's my aunt, maybe it's my sister." And they go there and they are stopped, eh.

"Oh, it's my home."

Murray: When did that happen?

Adrian: This happened in St. Paul.

Murray: Was that in the early years?

Adrian: Yeah, well when that St. Paul des Metis thing was going on. You'd run into papers on that anyway. In fact, you have them here. And they'll go and see the priest. They went and saw the priest and the priest said, "Well, you are always leaving the place so the government gave it to the Frenchmen." He didn't say he sold it. Then they had to call Mayber(?) up. He went up there and found out nine different people where this had happened and Metis settlements were sold. Then they tried to say that these people were selling their land without having a patent on it. Which was not so.

Murray: Did the Metis get their land back?

Adrian: Some of them. Some of them got their land back and then they up and they sold it but they still didn't get a patent from the government for it. Then they tried to say that there was something wrong with the whole darn thing and...

Murray: What happened to the priest?

Adrian: Oh, the priest left. Oh yeah, he left. He went to Montreal or someplace. Kind of a rich man by now. These little things like that, if the truth only came out. But we sure put it there. I don't know where that notice is. I figured Brady would have it but he hasn't got it. Who has got it? Malcolm maybe?

Murray: Malcolm might have it. It might be in his papers.

Adrian: It was there because it was in front of me and I pushed it over and he showed them this thing and he made them...

Murray: The priest had put that up?

Adrian: Yeah, sent it to Quebec and had several villages with these things out.

Murray: When the commission had its meetings between 1935 and 1938 I guess, were there a lot of Metis people attending?

Adrian: Yeah, every time they had a meeting like that. I was called only at the last hearing. And that was in 1939.

Murray: They were open though. People could come? Any Metis people could come?

Adrian: Oh, yes.

Murray: I see.

Adrian: You see, they have a meeting with all different people. They have a meeting with Reverend Guy and they had different ones. They are all up there; Quandt has them. Up to one, two, three, four, five, six and there is 17 of them. But he has only up to six.

Murray: And each of these represent a meeting?

Adrian: That's right. With different people.

Murray: So there were seventeen meetings over those four years?

Adrian: That's right.

Murray: Did the people at the time feel that things were being dragged out too long?

Adrian: Oh yes, we were always on edge and worried to beat heck all the time. And Malcolm was really frustrated and then he'd go and then there would be another meeting.

Murray: People were afraid that they were going to get...

Adrian: Pinched out. Talk about stumbling blocks thrown in front of us.

Murray: Was there any one man among those leaders who was the strongest, who kept people fighting the hardest, who inspired...?

Adrian: Malcolm.

Murray: Malcolm was.

Adrian: Malcolm. That was the strongest man we ever had or ever will have for a while. We have a great politician now in Alberta by the name of Stan Daniels. But the best diplomat we ever had was James Ducharme(?) but he quit on us without asking us permission to let him go. He wanted to run as a Liberal candidate.

Murray: Did that happen quite often? Leadership would be syphoned off by the government and political parties?

Adrian: That's right. But that's one way of buying him out and he couldn't see it. He tried to run to be the president of the NCC, eighteen votes I think he had. We put Harry, the dog, the fighter, our second, Dumont in there fighting for the aboriginal claims and land rights of the Metis people. That's who we have in Ottawa now. That man is pretty well posted. Now he can dig into the archives a little deeper even, which helps.

Murray: Right.

(End of Side A)

(End of Tape)

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