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TOM FIDDLER:

Tom Fiddler is a resident of Green Lake. He and his wife have been involved with the Metis Association since its beginnings.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Early meetings of Metis Association.
- Impressions of Malcolm Norris and his philosophy.
- Metis problems in the north prior to the development of the Association.
- Meeting with Adrian Hope.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Tom Fiddler is a resident of Green Lake and has been involved with the Metis Society since its beginnings in 1964.

INTERVIEW:

Murray: Do you remember the first time you met Malcolm?

Tom: No, I can't. That's what I started to think about. I think he come here. I think he had a meeting here. I can't remember right just when I met him. I've been trying to think about that all day, where I first seen him, you know.

Murray: Your wife says that she first met him, she thinks, in Prince Albert at a meeting.

Tom: Well, maybe that's the place then. You see, maybe it was the place. Then he come here to a meeting after, after we got to know him. And we went down to a meeting there one time to P.A. I remember. And we had to pay our own way down. We had no money and all the stuff like that. So we went down anyway.

Murray: Did a bunch of you go down?

Tom: No, just the two of us.

Murray: Just the two of you.

Tom: Just the wife and I. No, just the two of us then and we come back. Anyway we had a meeting. I don't remember what went on at that meeting now. I mean, you know, what I remember of being there and...

Murray: You remember Malcolm?

Tom: Oh yeah, Malcolm yeah. He'd give quite a talk, you know. It was through him and this Brady and somebody else, I don't know this other...

Murray: Pete Tomkins?

Tom: I don't know. There was three of them, you see. They were the ones who started that Metis Society in Alberta. I mean, this is what he told us. (Yells for quiet in house) And this is what he was telling us. He was a great friend of the Stoney Indians, he said. I remember this, the Stoney Indian. And when I asked him, I says, "Why the Stoneys?" "Well," he said, "that's where we live, close to them," you see. But he always talked about the Stoney Indians and I don't know why, you know. I'd like to know why.

Murray: They grew up around Edmonton.

Tom: Well, he must have lived out of Edmonton somewhere and this must have been where the Stoney Indians... is there a Stoney reserve up there?

Murray: Yeah.

Tom: Oh, there is. Well, this is one...

Murray: There is a place called Stony Plain too.

Tom: Stony Plain. Yeah, well up around there then, must have been. But I'd like to have got to know him better, you know. I mean I couldn't talk to him the way I talk to some of the other guys, leaders, you know. I mean, most of them you can get and talk to them after the meeting. Sit down and have a good talk, you know. While you're having dinner or supper or something.

Murray: Just a nice, just easy talk.

Tom: Yeah, you know, just talking back and forth. And this is where you learn a lot, you know. I mean, all I ever learned, I learned it from people, just by listening. And this is good. I mean, and I used to do a lot of reading. I still do a lot of reading but not so much now.

Murray: But Malcolm you couldn't do that with?

Tom: No, I mean, you know he would, I don't know. Well, of course, he had his wife and family and kids, you see. And when the meeting was over, I guess he wanted to get home and he wanted to go to his wife and family. I met a couple of... I don't remember now. One of his girls is married I know. And the boy, I remember the boy. But I wouldn't remember them now. That's quite a while ago.

Murray: Well, was Malcolm the kind of man you could sit down and talk to if he was available?

Tom: I think so. But I mean, I don't think you could talk to him the same as you would somebody else. I mean, he was like a hard man to get to know. You know.

Murray: He was a native person, a halfbreed by birth, but do you think he had a lot of the sort of style of white men? Was that part of Malcolm or...?

Tom: Well, I think, you see, after he got up and... you see, he used to prospect in the field a lot, eh. What do you call these fellows?

Murray: Well, he was a trainer. I think he had a, yeah, a prospector. He was a geologist.

Tom: Yeah, geo... Well, that's what he was and he was out in the field a lot and at that time. He told us at one meeting one day when the times were hard, he used to go out and he used to make \$50 a day. I mean, you know, just like that. I mean, where the rest of us maybe was making \$1 a day, eh. So, I don't know whether this got to him or not but some people thought he was, you know, he was too high for these common people. But I don't think he was that way. It was just his ways.

Murray: It was his style more than his...?

Tom: Yeah, it was just his ways, you know. I mean, he talked awful high English, you know.

Murray: Too high sometimes, eh?

Tom: Well, sometimes too high. And I told him this one time. I says, "Well, come down a notch or two," I says. "And talk to us so we can understand you. We all haven't got the education you've got." You know.

Murray: What did he say to that when you...?

Tom: He said, "Well." Well he did.

Murray: He tried, eh?

Tom: Oh yes. I mean, he was an easy guy to get along with, you know, to please the people. And he knew that there were a lot of people there that talked Cree and English, you see. And lots of them talked Cree. I mean, they didn't talk English too good. So some of them couldn't understand just right so you had to explain it to them and had to explain it to them in very low English, you see. And this is what I liked him about. I mean, when he got down talking to people, when he got with that group of people, he talked the way the group of people was, you see.

Murray: So he tried to adapt his talking to the people?

Tom: Yeah, his speech to the people. Then when he got talking to big people, you know what I mean, to the bigger shot, well it would be all big words. Half of these words I'd need a dictionary, you know, to find out. But on the whole, Malcolm was a sincere guy to what he was trying to do, you know. Well, he done a lot, I mean he done a lot for his people, through his life. He said when he used to go out in the field, he'd take most of these guys with him, you see. All the ones he could. For to help him packing and, you know, most of the time they were walking, eh.

Murray: Right.

Tom: Packing. And stuff like this and they'd make camp and stuff like this, you see. The people knew this. And he says there wasn't always just them; it wasn't always just the halfbreeds. There was the odd white man too, you know, wanted to go out and do this and that so, oh, he got along. He got along with the people pretty good.

Murray: If you were to have any criticisms of him as a leader, what might you...? If he were sitting here today and you were going to suggest things to him that he might have done differently, what would they be? Or can you think of any?

Tom: No, I can't think of any. Well, there's a few things that I didn't agree with him on but I mean, that was just my point of view, you see. All the other people, I brought this up to some of the people after the meeting and I just wanted to see what they say. Oh, they said, most of them said, "Oh Malcolm's doing alright." "Well, of course," I says, "I know he's doing alright. But couldn't this have been done different?" you know.

Murray: Can you remember anything in particular?

Tom: I can't right now. I had all this wrote down at one time. I had this all on paper and I used to keep a diary of

stuff because I forget so quick, you see. And I used to keep a little diary and now I don't do this. You see, all this, some people come along and they'd read it and they'd want this, you know, and everybody is trying at it. How many people was in there? There was two here last summer, two from Saskatoon. They were going to write a book. Well, I didn't talk too much to them. This is this woman I was telling you about and this

other, I met this other guy. I don't know, Marian I think her name was. Or Miriam. I just forget anyway. And this guy what was on TV, you know, when they took the kids down here. You know, pow-wow and what not, this (?). And this guy, I met him but I didn't talk to him long. I was in and I was working too and I couldn't be away. I watched them over there for about an hour and I couldn't be away. But I forget, I even forget his name. That's only what, two months ago, three months ago, two months ago?

Murray: Right.

Tom: You see, I can't - I should've wrote... You see, when I'm doing this, when I'm at a meeting or something like this, I write all this down. I mean the guy's name and what he was...

Murray: What he was saying...

Tom: And what is his job in the organization. This is what I used to put down and I used to put little notes under it, you know, and when I'd look at it, I could just about tell, you see, then.

Murray: You don't have any of those notes left, eh?

Tom: I haven't got, I don't know. Somebody borrowed them from me and I had pretty near a whole bookful. You know, just about this guy here, a little bit about this, a little bit about the next one, you know. When you glance through that you can tell what went on.

Murray: Right.

Tom: And this is what I used to do. And I haven't got any of this left. I was looking through some of the stuff there but there is nothing left anymore. Just papers that come out, you know, like the books that come out from the Metis Society and books and papers, and stuff like this is about all I got left. I seen one little letter there the other day. They were telling us about a meeting in Batoche. That's about three years ago and that's all I can....

Murray: That's the kind of stuff you got.

Tom: Yeah. That's about all I got left.

Murray: Can you remember some of the things that Malcolm would say at meetings? Were there certain things that he would

talk about at almost every meeting? You know, or was there some things that he thought were really important? Can you remember any particular things?

Tom: Well, anything he talked about, he thought it was real important anyway, you know. I mean, I'll tell you one thing, Malcolm didn't like to talk and talk for nothing.

Murray: He had to be talking about something important.

Tom: He had to be talking about something that was going to do the people some good. A bunch of us one time were sitting around the table at one end and this guy asked me something and I told him what I thought I could. And this old Malcolm looked at us and he hollered at us. He says, "If you fellows want me to talk at this meeting," he says, "why don't you listen!" He asked me what it was he said. I said, "I can tell you what said. I was listening."

Murray: He didn't like being interrupted.

Tom: Oh no, no. Oh no, when he was saying something, he wanted you to listen. Because he says, "My time is valuable." Well I says, "Mine is too, but I'm not getting paid for it." (chuckles) I think I made that man smile once. And you know, I'm a guy I like to have fun. I mean, it's not all work.

Murray: Or all serious.

Tom: But I made him smile once. All the time,...

Murray: That's all, eh?

Tom: And he went to a lot of meetings. But he was a man that never did smile much anyway, you know. Once in a while he'd crack a joke in Cree but I couldn't understand Cree. And he'd tell something in Cree. Then, well, he'd laugh then, you see, because he was telling it. But on the whole, I mean he was a...

Murray: Pretty serious man.

Tom: Pretty serious man. He was awful serious.

Murray: Do you think he was optimistic about things? Do you think he felt that things were going to get better or did he feel the other way?

Tom: Oh no, no. He thought it would be better, it would be better for the majority of people. Not only the Metis Society but all people, you see.

Murray: So he had hope that things would shape up?

Tom: He had hope that things would change and go better for

everybody. Not only just the Metis people but for everybody. Because, I mean, he made his living through the white man and stuff like this; and he made a good living. And you know, he never run them down. Only the guys that maybe come to a meeting and he'd run them down to his face, not behind his back. And then he was a guy of this sort, you see. I didn't get to know his family too good. I seen his wife a couple of times but you know, you never...

Murray: You don't get to know them.

Tom: You never got to, just by looking at them.

Murray: When he talked about society did he talk about... how did he talk in terms of...? You said he thought things would change for everybody. Do you remember what he said, did he talk about how the white man would have to change too?

Tom: Well, I mean this is it. This is what he was figuring on. He said before the Metis Society can function right, then the white man has got to change his way of living too because "what the white man is doing now," he said, "it's not always right." Well, everybody knows this. I mean they're the ones that made a lot of mistakes. And you see, when I was a young fellow, well you see, I lived by the rule of the white man because I always thought he was superior to us. But I find out as I get older he's not always right, you know.

Murray: That's what you were taught when you were young, that the white man was on top?

Tom: Well, this was it. I mean, this was the belief that we got. When we went out to work, well okay, we always had a white man for a boss. It's only him that knew.

Murray: So all your experiences showed the white man at the top?

Tom: Yes, that's right. I mean, through all the time that I worked. And I mean, if somebody got up and said something, you take like if a Metis got up and said something to the white man, then the white man didn't like this because he was talking and maybe telling you more good than the white man ever told him. You see, this is the way it is. And this shall never be right until each person has his equal rights. You know, you, me, and everybody else.

Murray: So Malcolm, that was the message that Malcolm put across a lot, eh?

Tom: Well, I mean on the whole, on the whole, yes. This was his belief, I think. I wouldn't swear on a stack of Bibles for it, but I mean this is my opinion of him.

Murray: Right, so it wasn't an anti-white thing, it was just everyone should change for the better.

Tom: That's right. And this was his belief. Everyone should have changed for the better and I mean, and he says this would've been a better place to live. And I agreed with him, you know. You can agree with this.

Murray: Sure.

Tom: I mean, there is good and bad in every race of people. You know.

Murray: Right. You judge each individual on...

Tom: That's right, that's right. You can get the Chinamen; there is good people there, there is bad people. You can get the Metis Society or the Metis people; there is good and there is bad in them all. So I mean this is the way that it is. And until this changes, so each one has a... You see, there is too many people trying to be big shots, boss, you see, boss. I mean, they always want to be boss.

Murray: Power.

Tom: Power, power, power. And what makes power, how do you get power? They want to get ahold of the money. Money men, you see. And this is the ruination of all our countries is power. That's it. That's what you hear on the radio, on TV,

you read it in papers. And this is what it all boils down to is just power. That's all. And when they overcome this, then it'll be a lot different, you know.

Murray: Right.

Tom: But will they ever let it overcome? I don't think so.

Murray: Did Malcolm talk about that sort of thing too?

Tom: Well, I mean, not so much about that. He might have talked about it at a lot of meetings maybe I never attended but, I mean, I think this was his aim. I mean, this was one of his...

Murray: He was getting at that, sort of.

Tom: This is what he was coming to and this is quite a while ago. Our people at that time, you know, they were grasping. They were trying to make their living and stuff like this and they're always, well, how would you say it, they were always put down. I mean, they was always the lower dog or something like this. And they got all the dirtiest jobs there was if there had to be work.

Murray: Lowest paying and...

Tom: Lowest paying job and and stuff like this. And he says,

"Until we get educated..." Well, I mean, education is good. But I mean as far as I'm concerned, I think education has ruined every country there is. As far as I can see. Well, take like our countries here, the more these people get educated, the worse they are. This is the way I look at it.

Murray: The more they want power, is that what you mean?

Tom: Yeah, that's right. I mean, they get educated and they get this and they get thinking about this I imagine. I don't know what they think about after they get so much education. But I mean, the more education they get, I mean, the brighter they are and they want to...

Murray: Do you think they become more selfish with more education?

Tom: Well, more money. I mean, this man, this man over here, he has a chance maybe to make a million dollars. Well, these fellows with the big education is going to get in there and get some of that, eh?

Murray: Right.

Tom: Well, this is what's going on today. This is as far as I can see. I mean, it's greediness. One old fellow told me, and he wasn't an old fellow either, he was young. I think he was a, what was it, a Swede or a Norwegian. He was quite a man. He used to go to church. And he says, "Greediness is born into humanity. And this world will never be any different until you get a nation brought up young and learn them not to be greedy."

Murray: Do you think that when you were young, do you think that native people were as greedy as they are today? Have things changed at all?

Tom: Well, I mean, no, I mean, I never heard of them but, you know, been trying to fill their pockets too but I imagine if they got educated, they'd be the same as anybody else, wouldn't they?

Murray: Right.

Tom: I don't know. I don't think there'd be any difference but I imagine there was a few, a few who done this. But I mean the more you get educated, the more you get into this and the more you want better things. You want cars, you want this, and you want that. Well, you got to have money to do this. How are you going to get it if you're not making enough in wages?

Murray: Right.

Tom: You know, you got to get it somehow. And there is only one way to get it and that is to get your fingers into the pie and take a little bit out of the kitty. You know, little by little, and this is what goes on.

Murray: Right.

Tom: It did happen here in Green Lake, two or three times, where people got their fingers in the wrong kitty and took out a little too much money and they got caught. You know, it's happened all over. It happened in Regina, it happened in Saskatoon. You hear about it, you know. And this is just, I don't know, but I think it's just greediness.

Murray: When you say it happened in these places, you mean this is in businesses and things like that do you or...?

Tom: Well, I mean, you see that some of these people looking after welfare, welfare cheques and whatnot, well, they can write out a cheque and go and cash it and do this and that.

Murray: That kind of thing, yeah.

Tom: This kind of thing here. This is what I mean. You see, there was a woman, what I heard somebody was telling me here, I don't know how long ago now, this woman was in Vancouver and she was...

Murray: Had quite a system going I think, didn't she?

Tom: Oh yes, she got away with a lot of money. But I guess they caught her in the end but I don't know how long it's going to take her to pay it back. (chuckles) You know, but I mean things like this. Just greediness, that's all.

Murray: Can we get back to Malcolm for just a minute? I was wondering if he ever talked about Metis history and how they'd been lied about in books and things like that?

Tom: He talked about this a lot but I just don't know. I just can't explain it to you. I just forget about it, you know, the biggest part of it.

Murray: But did he ever talk about the history in books about native people being inaccurate? Is that the kind of thing he would talk about?

Tom: What do you mean?

Murray: Well, like a lot of history books would refer to Indian people as savages and that sort of thing.

Tom: Oh yeah, yeah, well, I mean this is true. But he always said that if this is put down in history and put down right, he said the only savage is the one who wrote it. (chuckles) That's the way he put it, you know.

Murray: You can remember him saying that, eh?

Tom: Well, I mean, stuff like this. I mean, he says, "Okay, we were called savages all our lives," he says, and he come up

with something there. The first person who got scalped, he thinks the white man done it, you know. He says, "The Indians didn't go out and go and scalp. And after he seen this," he says, "I guess everybody done it." I remember him saying this.

Murray: That the Indian copied the white man. The white man did it first?

Tom: Yeah, well, the Indian learned the white man how to smoke. This is what they say. And the white man learned the Indian how do drink. Firewater, you see.

Murray: A bad bargain, yeah.

Tom: Both of them. Well, I mean stuff like this. But I wish I could, you know, I wish I could remember.

Murray: Can you ever remember Malcolm talking about the Liberals or the NDP at all in his discussions about one being good or one being bad?

Tom: I don't want to go out and say something, I mean, that I don't really know. But Malcolm Norris, he never, he wasn't, he said he wasn't a...

Murray: A party member or...

Tom: He said he's not, he says, "This society, he's got to run," he says, "and run on a.." Oh what do you call this when you're not, you know, political, political party. Not political party is behind him.

Murray: Oh, nonpartisan?

Tom: Non... oh, he called it something. I don't know what he called it now; I just forget what word he used. Some big word anyway. But he says, "When you're into the organization, when we get an organization like this," he says, "we're not for no party."

Murray: Right.

Tom: You see, this was his belief. He says, "I think, when you start getting politics into different organizations, this is bad." Now Malcolm didn't say this. Somebody else said this about all parties. They're no different, you know. I mean, I didn't hear Malcolm Norris say this but I heard some of our other leaders say this. He said all parties are, they're just out there for the, you know, to fill their pockets too, good jobs eh. Well, stuff like this I mean.

Murray: Do you think Malcolm believed that too or you can't remember him saying that?

Tom: I can't remember him saying that and so I wouldn't want to say anything about that. Malcolm was a, you know, he was a very straight and honest person.

Murray: Always said what he believed.

Tom: He said what he believed and everything he said come from his heart mostly, you know. He was awful sincere.

Murray: Right.

Tom: Yeah, so this is about all. This is all that I know about, you know. If I could have been closer to Malcolm you know, and got to know him, I mean, a fellow could have got a lot of information. I mean, a lot of good information you know, for all the peoples. He was born and raised I think in Alberta. I think this is what he said, around the Stoney Indians. He always talked about the Stoney Indian. And I don't know, well, I guess all people is the same. There is good and bad in them all, you know. This is it. You always find bad Indians, good Indians, and the same with everything else. Good Chinamen, poor Chinamen, stuff like this. They are all the same. There is no one nation that is perfect.

Murray: Right.

Tom: No, no.

Murray: I'm wondering about some of the meetings again. Could you describe how, say a meeting in Green Lake that Malcolm came to, how a meeting would start and what would happen at that meeting? Just generally, you know.

Tom: Oh, gee whiz boy, I don't remember. I can't. I try to think of this meeting today here, that Joe had in Green Lake. I know he was here, but what he talked about I don't know.

Murray: If a meeting lasted a certain period of time, would he be talking most of the time or would he encourage other people to talk?

Tom: No, no, no. He would talk for a while, you know, this and that, about this and that, and then he'd have a little period there, questions, eh.

Murray: People would ask him questions.

Tom: Ask him questions. And he would answer them. I can't remember now, I can't remember. You see, when they go to a Metis meeting like this, they always wanted to know what they're doing someplace else, what they're talking about and stuff like this. But I can't remember.

Murray: But they would talk about other places and things like that?

Tom: Oh yeah, yeah. He'd talk about what happened in

Saskatoon when he was at a meeting, what happened in P.A. and stuff like this, you see. And he says he went to Alberta, him and somebody else just went. I think it was, oh yeah, when we set a meeting in P.A. We had a meeting down there. They called us in. Anybody that wanted to go. So we got the letter through. I think it was the wife and I and we took two other people from here. And they brought a guy in from Alberta. Pete Hope.

Murray: Oh yeah.

Tom: You must have heard of him.

Murray: Or Adrian Hope.

Tom: Adrian, well that's his right name, Adrian, but I mean we used to call him Pete.

Murray: Oh yeah.

Tom: And I got to know him, and that's the first time I met him. But he was an easy guy to get to know. And he could talk. He was the one that got this land, this colony at...

Murray: St. Paul?

Tom: Out north of Edmonton there somewhere. I don't know, I guess it might be St. Paul.

Murray: It's around that area.

Tom: Yeah, what did he call this? Kikino.

Murray: Kikino, right.

Tom: Kikino, Alberta. And this means "our home" I think or something. Then he got this call and he got this land anyway. And he got it signed and he says there was him, and two other guys and he says a handful of Metis people went into the... "There was oh, there must have been twenty, twenty-five of us," he says, "but they all didn't go," he says. "They sent us. They wanted us to go," he says, at the meeting there. And he says, "When we signed, when we got the," what is it the premier for the province, like?

Murray: Yeah.

Tom: Well, he says, "We got him to sign this land." They wanted, you see, this area of land. Well, he says, "It wasn't what you call the best land," but he says, "good enough to farm, good enough for raising cattle." And he says, "There was lumber on it and stuff like this." So they got it. Anyway, they signed it and then he says, "When we got this, boy, did we go to work." And Pete Hope was the one what got this, Adrian. He was the one that got this. And he was telling us this and this was five years after, you see. After he got this land, he

come down to our meeting.

Murray: When would that have been? Do you remember?

Tom: Gee whiz, I can't remember.

Murray: In the middle sixties sometime, I guess. Or would it have been later? Was it around the same time that Malcolm was around?

Tom: Oh yeah. Yeah, it would have to be because Malcolm was at that meeting and it was him that brought this Pete, this Adrian Hope in. He knew him from before.

Murray: Right, and the meeting was where?

Tom: In Prince Albert.

Murray: In Prince Albert.

Tom: And he was a funny old fellow. He had this woman out here with him. She could talk Cree, and this Adrian Hope he could talk Cree and so could Malcolm. And anyway they was getting tired. They were having coffee, so he said, "Oh, we'll have a little break," he says. So he starts telling them jokes in Cree, you know. And I guess they were awful funny in Cree. (chuckles) Boy, they were laughing anyway.

(End of Side A)

(Side B)

Tom: It takes time, eh.

Murray: Right.

Tom: So, that's about all I can tell you about Malcolm. I mean, if I'd have got to know, if I would have had some of them letters here - I'm pretty sure most of this stuff went to Regina. Because different guys, you see... you take like, well you know Howard Adams. Well I got to know Howard pretty good but he was another man with an awful education. You know, he was away up. But I like talking to him, I like listening to him. But Howard wasn't always right either. You know, he had a lot of faults that he, that could have been better.

Murray: You never met Jim Brady though?

Tom: I don't think I ever seen Jim. I heard a lot about him.

Murray: From Malcolm? Did Malcolm talk about him?

Tom: Well, oh, yeah, yeah. He was, just like this you know. They were two good friends, I guess. Don't think I ever met him. Is this fellow living?

Murray: No, he died the same year Malcolm did. He disappeared

in the bush up around La Ronge.

Tom: Oh yes, I heard this, that's right. Him and two other guys?

Murray: One other guy.

Tom: One other guy. I heard this, I heard this now. I remember now.

Murray: I just want to ask you a bit more then I'll let you go. I wondered how people in Green Lake felt about Malcolm? Did they feel the same way you did? Did they like him and respect him?

Tom: Oh gee whiz, I don't know, you know. I mean, I couldn't know....

Murray: Did you hear comments at all?

Tom: Well, you hear them at the time but there is lots of these people when they were talking to him, you see. He understood Cree good, you know, and I mean they understand Cree from here. And it was better for them to talk Cree.

Murray: So often you didn't understand what they were saying.

Tom: And often I didn't know what they were saying. They'd ask him questions in Cree. Well, I didn't know what they were saying, you see, so, no, I couldn't. There is bound to be some people that liked Malcolm. I mean, you know, he was a likeable guy.

Murray: Did he encourage people locally to become leaders in the Metis Society?

Tom: Well, not only become leaders but get up and do something.

Murray: Right.

Tom: "Do something for yourself," he says. He says, "We always waited for the white man to tell us what to do. Well," he says, "let's get up and do something for ourselves." Well, this is true. "Get up off your backside," he says, "and get to work." You know. (chuckles) So, I mean, this is it, eh. So, you know, he was a guy, I think if he could've had something like Pete Hope started there, I think he would have been well.

Murray: Did he talk about land at all when he talked at meetings?

Tom: Well, he talked about land. He says, "Land," he says, "there is lots of land, lots of land for everybody." He says, "If they would just do it and do it right."

Murray: Did he saw land as an important thing for people?

Tom: Well, the land was very important because, you see, if you're building a house, you haven't got land to put it on, you know. And he says, "You want to have a home of your own," he says, "where you going to put it?" He says, "You get into the city, and the ordinary Metis guy can't buy a lot to build a house on it." And he says, "You got restrictions, building in the cities. You got to build it what they say. Not the way we used to do it. Used to go out in the bush and build a log shack, and live there, you know." This was it. And he says stuff like this. This is what Malcolm always said, "Get up and do something." So I guess he seen a lot of lazy Indians and halfbreeds. (chuckles) But lots didn't have a chance too, you know. I mean, this is true. You know, lots of our people was kept down. I mean, this was it.

Murray: Oh, sure.

Tom: And I mean, if this hadn't have been so, I think they would have been a lot better, you know, to get out and work on their own and stuff like this. But when you get pushed down, pushed down, pushed down, you know, you're not going to do anything.

Murray: Right. Do you remember if the Metis Society kept growing after Malcolm died? Or did it, was there a period when...?

Tom: There was a period of time in there that it didn't do well, no. After he, who took over? Howard Adams, I think.

Murray: Or was it Joe Amyotte was around for a while?

Tom: Oh yeah, yeah, Joe Amyotte, that's right. That's right too, Joe Amyotte, he was with the Metis Society. That's right, Joe Amyotte. He was the one that went in there for a president.

Murray: I think that's when the two, the northern one and the southern one joined I think. Joe was with the southern one and then when they joined he became president of both, I think.

Tom: I think that was it. Now, I don't know. I just forget about this, but I remember this Joe Amyotte 'cause he was here not too many years ago.

Murray: But was there a period there where it sort of slowed down a bit?

Tom: Yeah, it was kind of slack in there.

Murray: Do you remember when that was? Would that have been after Malcolm?

Tom: Oh yes, that was after Malcolm. Well, Malcolm wasn't, I don't know. He wasn't a guy anyway, you know, to keep people organized, eh. It seemed to me sometimes he wasn't that much

interested, you know. At times. And at times when he got to a meeting, he was very interested, you know. He wanted to see people do something.

Murray: Could you tell me about those other times when he didn't seem so interested? How do you mean?

Tom: Well, I mean sometimes he didn't, you know, I mean it is, like getting the people organized and keeping them, doing something. You see, this is what I mean. You see, you maybe had a group of people of maybe five or six hundred or maybe a hundred or maybe of fifty, eh. And you see, once you got these people around P.A. there interested, then he wasn't all that eager to keep them going.

Murray: He would try something...?

Tom: Well, he would try something else, you see. He would be doing something else. He would be away somewhere and then he'd come back. Then he says, "Did you have meetings about this and meetings about that?" you know. And the people around there said, "No." Well, he says, "Well, this is what you're supposed to be doing. I can't be here all the time." Well, he was true in that way. So I mean, you can't put all the blame onto him.

Murray: So he tried to get people to do things themselves?

Tom: Yeah, well, oh yeah, this was it. This was very much so of Malcolm, you see. He didn't want to be there because he knew he wasn't going to be around there all the time, you know. But this was true.

Murray: He didn't want people to be dependent on him then, eh?

Tom: Yeah, he wanted people to depend on themselves. You know, well this is so. This is good for everybody to get out and get on their own, you know. Not waiting for somebody, come wait for somebody to tell you what to do. You know? I mean sometimes a guy might get pretty hungry if you had to wait. But anyway, there must have been a little time in there when this Amyotte was in there that things didn't happen anyway. But anyway, they had a meeting. They called this meeting and

had it in Saskatoon. We were called up there. Well, I wasn't making that much money. I was raising a family. Well I says to the wife - I had an old car here - I said, "We'll go." So we went to Saskatoon and I think this is when Howard Adams got in as president. And Jim Sinclair got in as Vice President that time, I think.

Murray: Or maybe field worker, eh? Jim was a field worker at one time.

Tom: Oh yeah, that's right. He was a field worker. I wonder how I got this all twisted up anyway.

Murray: Was Malcolm still alive then? At that meeting? Was

he at that meeting?

Tom: No.

Murray: That would have been after 1967 then?

Tom: When we went back to the meeting in P.A., Malcolm was in a wheelchair then. And after that I never seen him again.

Murray: And this meeting in Saskatoon was after that?

Tom: Yeah, well, it would have to be after that sometime. I can't remember whether it was that same year or the next year.

Murray: Was Howard Adams elected after Joe Amyotte?

Tom: I think so, I think so, boy. Now I don't, I just can't trace this right. I don't know whether he was in there after Joe Amyotte or not. Do you know if anybody else was president after Joe?

Murray: I think Howard but...

Tom: You think, yeah, well this is what I thought. Now I'm not too sure either, you know. I don't want to go out...

Murray: Pretty sure.

Tom: I was, I think when Howard got in, and you said Jim was a field worker.

Murray: Well, I know Jim was a field worker at one time but he may have...

Tom: Yeah, well, that must have been the time. But who was the, who went in as Vice President then?

Murray: I don't know, maybe I'm confusing you. Maybe Jim was Vice President, I'm not sure.

Tom: I don't know. Maybe Jim was a field worker before that while Joe Amyotte was in there somewhere. And maybe he went as Vice President. Now, I think we had this down in writing but I just can't place this. I wasn't - and after that meeting we didn't go back for quite a while, you know.

Murray: Do you remember how many meetings that Malcolm came to in Green Lake?

Tom: One for sure.

Murray: Do you think there were more than that?

Tom: I don't - I couldn't say.

Murray: Not that you were at, eh?

Tom: Now, I was away here sometimes, you know. Out doing this, doing that, and he could have been around here to a meeting while I was gone someplace you know.

Murray: Who was the first president of the local? Was that Alec Bishop? Was he...?

Tom: Yeah. This was quite a while ago when Alec Bishop was the president here and, oh, he got along pretty good, you know. Something to do anyway you know, this is what I always said. It's something to do anyway even if they don't do what we want to do.

Murray: Before the Metis Society started organizing, was there any people in the community that could sort of represent people if they had a problem? Would they go to government or was the Metis Society the first organization that did that?

Tom: Well, I guess they were the first people that done this on a larger scale. There is always somebody with a pretty fair head, write to maybe the provincial government, demanding or asking for this or for that. There is always somebody. I imagine Alec Bishop done this.

Murray: Before the Metis Society came along.

Tom: Before the Metis Society. You see, anything that went on... you want something you got to do it for yourself if you got no organization to help you. But after the Metis Society got organized, they done a lot of good. I'll say this.

Murray: What kinds of things would they do when they started? How would they help people?

Tom: Well, I mean, what was their trouble? What was the Metis Society and the Indian and the halfbreed, what was their trouble? The biggest part of them was not getting enough to eat. You see, and this was through the Department of Welfare. You see, if the Department of Welfare would have stuck to their guns and done what they were supposed to do, then the Metis Society wouldn't have to step in and get out and get maybe a bannock for this guy over here, or a pail of tea or something.

Murray: So all that was a lot to do with welfare?

Tom: A lot of that was. The biggest part of it was all welfare until they got things straightened out. My wife was... at that time, she was a field worker here. And in Meadow Lake and the Green Lake area. Then she had Dory Lake, Sled Lake, and some of these other places, Cole Bay, James Bay. Up north you see, Beauval. And I used to drive her around and I learned a lot about how welfare was supposed to do.

Murray: What are the things that the Metis Society pressured the government for? Did they pressure them for jobs?

Tom: Well, jobs, yeah. Jobs, land, land, stuff like this, you see. I mean, well, he says, "You're always talking about getting our people educated and when you get them educated, give them a job." You see, this is what Jim Sinclair used to... Howard Adams too, used to talk on this. He says, "After we get them educated," he says, "we see that they get jobs."

Murray: Did Malcolm talk about education too?

Tom: Oh yeah, he was. He was very much for education.

Murray: He talked about that quite often, did he?

Tom: Quite often. He always told the young people, any young people there, he says, "Keep in school." He says, "Get that education." He says, "The white man wants us to be educated." He says, "Let's get it." (chuckles) Well, this was true, eh. Yeah, well, this is what happened and after Howard got in there, well this is what he was. This was his beef too, you see. Educating the people. Well, he was a...

Murray: He was an educator himself.

Tom: He was an educator. He could talk to anybody, I guess, about education but I mean, this is what he wanted. He wanted the young people to get educated and get up there. Well, you see, it's in times now where a person has to be educated to get a job.

Murray: Right.

Tom: And I can't see it's no different now than it was 50 years ago.

Murray: Right.

Tom: You know. It's absolutely no different. If a person wasn't educated how did some of these people work? They weren't educated at all. How did they run their farms? This was it. I don't think education is all that necessary as long as you can learn to read and write and as long as you've got the know-how.

(End of Side B)

(End of Interview)

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