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HOWARD ADAMS:

Howard Adams, the first Metis in Canada to have a Ph.D., was at one time the president of the Metis Association of Saskatchewan. He travelled in the north while working on community development programs for the University of Saskatchewan. He was impressed by the political awareness of the people and attributes this to the work of Malcolm Norris.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Travels in northern Saskatchewan in the 1960s.
- Malcolm Norris: his work and his philosophy.
- Norris's final illness.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Howard Adams is a Metis from the St. Louis area, south of Prince Albert. He was at one time the only Metis with a Ph.D. in Canada. While working for the University of Saskatchewan, Department of Education, he travelled into the north on a community development program. It is there that he became acquainted with Malcolm Norris who was then active in organizing the first Metis Association in northern Saskatchewan. Like Malcolm, Adams has an advanced analysis of the native dilemma and, in this tape, he discusses the role played by Malcolm in the Metis organization, his impressions of the man, including his downfalls and the tragic decline of Malcolm after his stroke and heart attacks.

INTERVIEW:

Murray Dobbin: I am speaking to Howard Adams who has been active in Metis politics for many years, and who knew Malcolm Norris in the north in the mid 1960s. Howard, when was it that you first met Malcolm and under what circumstances was that?

Howard Adams: Well, I think I must have met Malcolm quite early in the beginning of my political activities with regard to the Metis people here back in 1966. I suppose I would say 1967 would be when I first met him because he certainly was a very active man and he was involved in any meeting that was going on in Prince Albert or in the north and so that it would have to be almost at the beginning of 1967.

Murray: Do you recall the circumstances and where you met him?

Howard: Well, I would say that it was very definitely at a political meeting and it would be likely a meeting of the Metis Association because Malcolm was president and certainly the main force behind the Metis Association. And likely the meeting was called to discuss some of the things that must be done, you know, political issues that were being discussed, and how we were going to go about organizing, and raising the political consciousness of the people, and how we were going to mobilize, and what are we doing to improve the conditions for our people, and so on. These would be the issues we would be discussing.

Murray: Do you recall how many locals had been organized at that point and where they might have been?

Howard: Well, I can't exactly remember offhand but I do know for sure that there were locals at Green Lake, at Buffalo Narrows, at, you know, after you pass Green Lake and then there is a place...

Murray: Beauval?

Howard: Beauval. And what other places now? Almost all of the places.

Murray: Ile-a-la-Crosse?

Howard: Ile-a-la-Crosse, yes, Ile-a-la-Crosse, and probably La Loche. Now, I'm not sure about La Loche but there would be probably still smaller locations than that yet. Now, I'm not sure how far over he went, whether he went say, you know, to Molanosa on the way to the La Ronge area. He probably did.

Murray: Yeah, I think Jim Brady had organized a local in La Ronge and I'm not sure about the east side, about Cumberland and those areas, or were they...?

Howard: No, I'm not sure about Cumberland. But the thing is that I know Malcolm worked in the west and yeah, that's true, Jim Brady did work in the La Ronge area, yes.

Murray: The meetings that you attended, what did you perceive as the level of consciousness of the people of the north at that time?

Howard: Well, definitely I'll say I was really impressed. Now, why I was impressed is that I really, in a sense, met the people before I met Malcolm because, when I was hired on with the University here in 1966, I was hired as an extension specialist to do community development work in the Metis communities and the Indian reserves. So that that fall, in September, the University sent me on a trip to the Metis communities in the north on the west side, in the north. So that I was really travelling in Malcolm Norris country and I stopped and spent at least a day, or two sometimes, in those communities. Now the thing is that I had no trouble at all in just simply talking to the Metis people even though I look white and by all, you know, my lifestyle, I am white and a bureaucrat from the University. And there is no reason why the Metis people should have trusted me or spoke to me at all but they did. And I did not have any hesitation from them whatsoever about discussing the issues that really were important to them such as fishing problems they were having at Buffalo Narrows with Waite's fishing outfit, and they really had some real serious confrontations and struggles there. Others talked about Mounted Police brutality. Others talked about the housing conditions and how they were going to organize in terms of getting more political muscle. And these

kinds of things. Now they had what I would consider really a fairly high level of political awareness which rather alarmed me because I didn't really expect that. I thought I would drive up there and those people are really quite remote and that they had not come to understand any of these kind of issues. But because of their involvement, they had really been involved in hand-to-hand combat with Waite's fishing outfit and his men who, with their planes, had tried to go out and meet the native fisherman coming in with their boats and tip them over because they weren't selling their fish to Waite's, they were selling to the co-op. And so that these fellows, the natives, already had real firsthand encounters and they knew what it was all about. And so they had men like Norris who was sort of the organizer, kind of the brains behind the whole thing that kept the people united. And in a sense you could draw upon one community or another although I don't think they ever did. And they were fully aware of racism. You know, they had no hesitation to talk to you openly about racism. It wasn't as if they were trying to hide and sneak and, you know, sort of...

Murray: Be subservient or anything like that?

Howard: Yeah, no sir. There is racism and it is brutal and we'll face it. And you know, I'd walk out of the cafe with them and a couple of white fellows would be sitting behind there laughing at us as we went out and say, "Those drunken halfbreeds," and all that, you know. And these halfbreeds, they wouldn't give a damn about what he was saying. That didn't bother them. They were used to it.

Murray: They wouldn't lower themselves to respond to that.

Howard: No, but that was unusual because I must say that I did not find that in all other places throughout the province. I found that, to me in my assessment, when I came back and wrote a report to the University (and I wrote a very lengthy report to them) that I found that the Metis people in the north had a considerable social awareness of problems they were facing, economically, politically, and so on. And that, you know, that these were the kinds of things that had to be dealt with realistically and not some kind of superimposed community development programs that would be mapped out at the University and so on. But nothing ever happened to my report; it was just filed away. So that, I would contribute a lot of that to the work of Malcolm Norris.

Murray: So this was in 1967 that you made this trip?

Howard: Yes.

Murray: And Malcolm had organized...

Howard: In 1966 it was.

Murray: In 1966. And Malcolm had started the organization in 1964, was that your understanding?

Howard: Yeah, you are about right.

Murray: Was Malcolm's name mentioned quite often by these people?

Howard: Oh yeah, oh frequently. Oh yes, there was no doubt about it that they certainly looked up to him and realized that he was quite a leader and organizer among them.

Murray: What were the main activities as you could tell from your association with Malcolm, of the association executive? What were Malcolm's broad goals if you can use that term?

Howard: Yes. I'm not too sure now what I could say were his broad goals.

Murray: Or for that matter, specific sort of things that he was focusing on.

Howard: Yeah, well, you know, he was so political. The thing is that it had to be in terms of political understanding and political objectives and so on. You couldn't just simply mobilize and argue for better housing. If you were going to do that then there had to be some kind of political awareness going on about the fact that we have got to organize politically so that we are really contacting and putting pressure through the various political channels that really mean something and you, as native people, have got to

understand that you are involved in a political struggle. And you have got to have enough political understanding that you will know how to respond and react and really punch through on this. So that what he was trying to do, basically... sometimes it might be a little idealistic in that it was kind of a political abstraction of just saying political consciousness. But generally it was tied into some sort of specific activity, as I say, like fishing or housing or hunting or something like that. Hunting was, of course, trapping, was a fairly big thing. But Malcolm was so political that it was just - everything was political.

Murray: So he would always put any given issue in the context of a broader political consciousness and struggle?

Howard: That's right. You know, that is one reason why I feel I got along so well with Malcolm was the fact that we understood that this was a political struggle.

Murray: Can you describe, maybe this is not possible, but a sort of typical meeting that you were at? What kind of discussion, what would be the content of a meeting like that that you have attended?

Howard: Well, if it was in Prince Albert, it would usually be a lodge meeting. And either Malcolm would be chairman or some other Metis would be chairman who would be fairly articulate. And one thing I do remember is that Malcolm was a real stickler for rules of order. And I don't know why that was. It seemed to be kind of contradictory to him - but he really was.

Murray: It fits with other things I've heard.

Howard: Yeah, I remember he didn't let us adjourn a meeting there one time for about fifteen minutes because we couldn't get anyone to adjourn the meeting and so he refused to allow it to... But generally he took a side position but he would be up at the front. And then the discussion. There was an agenda and there was a discussion and the people came there with a specific purpose to discuss and see what developments were taking place regarding the issues that they were concerned about. And so the meeting would begin with a very definite beginning and then the issue, it would be talked about. And Malcolm though, I must say, I really felt, was a bit of a dominating force in the sense that he had ideas in one direction and, you know, a discussion should take place and to keep the minds of the Metis focused on the broader political aspect of it. And so he would sit there and he would participate in the discussion a great deal but on the other hand, the other Metis people discussed things but if they wandered off too far he would quickly bring them back to it. Now, at times one could certainly accuse Malcolm of being rude, because he just did not tolerate any sort of wandering around and talking a lot of nonsense and wasting time like that. And so, he was, as I say, a bit of a dictator in this sense, that he wanted you to stick to the topic and know what you are talking about or if it wasn't he would bring you back to it.

Murray: He was impatient with...

Howard: Very impatient, he was an impatient man. Especially as time wore on, you know, before his stroke, that he seemed to be increasingly impatient about it. If you didn't come up with sort of where we should be going and what are some of the solutions and how are we going to achieve this and so on, then he would start with his input into it as... in a sense, kind of directing it.

Murray: Did he ever berate the native people at meetings? I've heard other people say that he would call them cattle if they didn't, you know....

Howard: Yeah, I've heard of that a lot too. I really have heard of many stories about Malcolm really condemning native people. Like as you say, calling them cattle, or calling them stupid or things like that. But I can honestly say that I never heard him abuse the people in that way and he was extremely articulate and he could be abusive, as I say.

Murray: He could cut you down if he wanted to?

Howard: Oh, he could cut you down, and the way he would cut you down would be just brutal, but I honestly can't say that I ever, ever remember him cutting someone, any one individual down, or cutting the group down because they were stupid or anything like that. No, I could see him being very capable of doing it and also that just the right emotion would spark him off. Now, he may have done it at other meetings but he just never did it when I was there.

Murray: Malcolm, a lot of his activity in the early years in Saskatchewan was aimed at instilling pride in people. Was that a theme in the meetings as well that you recall?

Howard: Yes, I would definitely say so. Right. Really, and he certainly was very sincere about that, instilling pride. He was very proud, a very, very proud Metis, you know. But again you could almost accuse him of being arrogant. But...

Murray: An improved Scotsman he used to call himself.

Howard: Oh, is that right. (chuckles) Because he certainly was, as I say, very proud about it and he wanted the other people to do the same thing. And that's where his impatience showed up again is that, you know, there is no reason for you to feel ashamed or anything like that, you know. What the hell is wrong with you, you know. To him, it was just that you were

personally weak or something like that and so he didn't have any patience with things like that. But he did instill pride because he was so confident.

Murray: He was so impressive himself.

Howard: He was so impressive himself, right. And heritage did mean a lot to him. I can remember the time... I guess he had learned this. We knew one another before this, but on occasion we met... but in the meantime, he had found out that my great-grandfather had been one of the leaders with Louis Riel and one of the great guerrilla warriors.

Murray: Maxime Lepine.

Howard: Yeah, Maxime Lepine, in 1885. And Malcolm came over to my place and he was just absolutely delighted, you know. He was just so overwhelmed with it and he just thought that was the greatest thing in the world. And he said, you know, "Who could have such noble ancestry?" And he cried about it. It was just such a fantastic thing. He says, "To think that we have such noble ancestors. If only all of us could speak of such noble ancestry." Now those things were really important to him.

Murray: He was a tremendously emotional man?

Howard: Oh, very emotional, very emotional. And then, of course, unfortunately after his stroke he became extremely emotional, you know.

Murray: To the point where it was debilitating for him.

Howard: Very! Practically every meeting after that it would be that it was just really tragic to go to a meeting and it practically always ended up with Malcolm in his chair and he was making a speech. And the speech was good at the beginning but then it would start to deteriorate and he would get into some sort of emotional situation about himself or about someone else who had suffered. And it became a tragic story and as a result he would start crying. And he would then, because of his difficulty... that really was a very sad scene to sort of see him trying to speak and crying and make sense and, you know, he just really disrupted the whole thing totally. That was a total breakdown after that.

Murray: He fell apart.

Howard: He fell apart, and he would break up every meeting the same way because...

Murray: And the meeting. It was such a powerful reaction that the meeting broke up at that point?

Howard: Always. The meeting always broke up; that was the end of it. Because the thing is that the sadness that sort of overwhelmed the whole meeting, that there was no way that anyone could carry on after that. So that...

Murray: So even in his deterioration, he had a tremendous...

Howard: Oh, he commanded it. He commanded it through his weeping, you know. He could command it when he was at his

fullest and his greatest; he commanded at his weakest. That was always the end. I could always remember that, that Rod Bishop and some other person would usually carry him out in his chair at the end. But that was the end of the meeting and everybody left with tears. You got so that you really didn't want to go because you sort of knew what was...

Murray: You anticipated the end.

Howard: Yeah, you could anticipate the end.

Murray: Despite his disability and his emotion, he was determined to keep going to these meetings and keep active?

Howard: No way you could keep him away. We tried all kinds of tricks. Rod Bishop and others who were active at the time, knew the destructive forces, the disruptive force it was in the meeting, and we tried all kinds of ways to keep him away from the meeting. We tried not to let him know. We tried to hide the meeting from him, meeting days. And we tried to get him involved in something so he couldn't come to the meeting. But we never succeeded once, no.

Murray: He always found out?

Howard: He found out and he was there. That's how determined he was.

Murray: Can you recall some of the more articulate and conscious native people in some of the locals such as Buffalo Narrows or Beauval or any of the places that were at some of these meetings that you would have attended?

Howard: Gosh, I can't really remember because they changed so quickly. The thing is that shortly after Malcolm had the stroke and then new forces seemed to start rising in every community. Of course, in Green Lake it was Rod Bishop. There

were others though besides Rod at that time and I just can't remember who they were. Now, in Buffalo Narrows, it was those two brothers that ran the co-op store and one had a mink farm, Frank um,....

Murray: I know who you mean.

Howard: Those two fellows at one time were the most... at that particular time. But they were the most successful and the most prosperous and the most everything. At that time they were the leaders and they were also in strong fairly well with the Catholic priest there. But Buffalo Narrows was sort of an exception to other places. Like Green Lake and Beauval and Ile-a-la-Crosse were really strongholds of Malcolm's and very political whereas Buffalo Narrows was dominated by a lot of... there were a lot of white people in there. And the priest was very powerful and the DNR. At that time it was the DNR. The DNR, they were very powerful in there. So you could understand you had a situation which was really an explosive one in

Buffalo Narrows at that time.

Murray: So that in places like Green Lake and Ile-a-la-Crosse and Beauval, there were people who were strong leaders in their own right?

Howard: Oh yes, right, exactly. And I think they had come up through the ranks with Malcolm. That's definitely my feeling. Now, you see, later on, then because of my report and because of a certain amount of activity starting to generate among the communities, then the University took me out of community development in those communities and eventually took me out of community development totally. So what I did the following summer was then I went back up through those communities on my own. I got my own car, paid my own expenses and made a trip up that direction myself and this time I didn't announce anything more than that I would be arriving and I must say that I had a wonderful reception as a Metis who was not attached to the University in any sense. You know, I was going as a free person and I really had good turnouts at meetings and the people just treated me just as if I was royalty. And there seemed to be such a heightened activity with regard to the Metis and what was going to happen to them, and how we were going to move, and the kind of social action that would follow, and all the developments that would take place, and so on. Oh, to me it just excited me, set me on fire, because I would go to those meetings, as I say, with a little bit of, as least imagined of publicity you could think of. Just somebody rumored that there would be a meeting and all these people would turn out and they

had questions to ask and were ready to participate and I found nobody hostile to me. The hostile people were the whites and they stayed away. They were not at the meetings.

Murray: So there was quite an optimism at that time?

Howard: Tremendous optimism and I would say a tremendous amount of really basic, sort of grass roots, political work that had gone on in those communities before I went there in, that would be in the summer of 1967. Because I remember telling them, I said, "There is no possible way that I have just stepped in here and have come here and hold a meeting and to have this kind of meeting and this kind of attention and this kind of interest. And these people don't even know me really and I'm obviously not that much of a Metis, they can see that. And yet, they are really trusting me and they are interested and..."

Murray: And excited as well.

Howard: And excited. They were so excited. Of course, you know, that just fired me. And that's why I say that someone before me in 1967 really had done a lot of real political work. And had done it in such a way that it had raised their political awareness. They had a certain political consciousness. They were thinking about it; they were interested. So you know, there is no other way of explaining

it. Because they wouldn't come to a political meeting unless somebody had stirred them to give them some understanding.

Murray: And Malcolm was the spark?

Howard: Obviously. No one else had been in there like that. Malcolm was the man who had done that. You know, that is really his terrific work and I understood at that time and I appreciated when I came back and I was saying to my friends that there has been a lot of work going on and there can be nobody else except Malcolm is the man who has been in there and he has done a lot of work.

Murray: What was it in Malcolm that inspired people do you think?

Howard: Well, I think it was his general physical bearing really, number one. Because he was very tall and slender and carried himself in a very powerful way. He was a bit aggressive really, and maybe they liked that about him. He was very forceful. He looked Metis. On the other hand, he didn't look like the old wise man, the old medicine man type, the

traditional sort of orthodox kind of Indian or Metis we think of as the old, you know, chief....

Murray: Chief Dan George? (Chuckles)

Howard: Chief Dan George, right. (chuckles) Chief Dan George. No he didn't. He was entirely opposite to that. He was forceful. His movements were...

Murray: He had a hawklike sort of - and he was dark.

Howard: He was dark, right. He was dark and his very appearance and the way he commanded himself when he did speak... He was never in doubt. And you know, it carried all the force and the impact that we really are going to get things done. All we got to do is we got to mobilize and get off your ass and show that you have got guts for it, and we got to stop that damn stooping to the white establishment and so on. And...

Murray: People were ready for that sort of thing?

Howard: I guess they were. Exactly, yeah, that's true. Because they spoke to me in that kind of language when I went up in 1967. That's the kind of language they spoke to me, sure.

Murray: It was as if they had all been wanting someone to come and say that, so they could say it as well.

Howard: Exactly, yeah. Particularly those fellows in Buffalo Narrows who had had fights with Waite's and also with the DNR who had the patrol boats, you know, followed them around in the lakes there and would check them periodically and everything. Those fellows were really tough. Those Metis guys, they meant

business. They blew up one DNR boat which was a \$20 thousand dollar boat. Now, they were very proud of that, when I arrived there. They thought it was a hell of a big joke and they were very proud of being able to do something like that.

Murray: But there was a militancy as well as...?

Howard: Oh, right. Absolutely. They told me how they had wired the police plane but the damn thing didn't go off properly. (chuckles) So they never got to blow it up. But there was a militancy, yeah, right. I don't know whether - I never heard Malcolm talk in those terms but I'm sure if you followed and said, looked to the conclusion and forced Malcolm to make a conclusion on his statement, it may very well have ended out as being a...

Murray: He would have to have supported that sort of action if he followed his own talks to the final end?

Howard: Yeah, if he followed his logic.

Murray: Did he ever talk about that particular incident in positive or negative terms?

Howard: No, he really didn't. You know, I can't remember. On the other hand, we may have and, if so, I would have said that Malcolm thought it was a joke. He thought that was, you know, he....

Murray: Fair game?

Howard: Fair game, you bet. Because they hound the hell out of those halfbreed fellows who are out there on their boats. They check them every few minutes and they have no damn reason to check them until they come in.

Murray: Just harass them.

Howard: Yeah, just harass them, and they are checking them all the time, weighing them in and all this. And it was strictly harassment, so he thought they got what they deserved.

Murray: Did they ever catch those?

Howard: No, it was too political.

Murray: Nobody would ever tell?

Howard: That's right. No, they didn't know. But on the other hand, the police didn't investigate it seriously, I don't think. Because nothing ever came of it.

Murray: Well, this is a tradition in the north now that no matter what happens, nobody tells the RCMP anything.

Howard: I heard that, yeah.

Murray: So it would be basically useless to investigate, I suppose.

Howard: Yeah, I guess so, yeah, right.

Murray: Was there any lobbying by the Metis Association at that time to the government for programs or changes or anything like that that you recall? Was the organization developed in that sort of way at all?

Howard: Well, let's see now. Let me make this really clear, that there was number one priority or number one thought in Malcolm's mind about organizations and about governments and other kind of institutions and politics and so on. It was, number one was, that you never accept any money from the government. And you know, that was a prayer, and that was a declaration and that was everything, a proclamation and that was the rule. Malcolm firmly believed that there was no way that you would ever accept money from the government.

Murray: For the organization?

Howard: For the organization. Because it would be a disaster. It would control the organization. It would destroy it. It would oppress all the people. And he repeated that and repeated it and he just drilled that into your head.

Murray: In retrospect with good reason.

Howard: Now when I look back, you know, I think that there couldn't have been truer words spoken. Impossible. I never realized at that time that he was speaking with such truism and such a prophecy on everything.

Murray: So this was a major theme on his part?

Howard: Oh, he was...

Murray: Warning.

Howard: Warning. That just sort of bugged them all the time and I used to think he was...

(End of side A)

(Side B)

Howard:brutal. It could just really cut you to ribbons.

Murray: Did he ever do that with you?

Howard: No, no, I can't say he ever did. No, I think mostly because I guess I was careful when I met Malcolm because I had heard so much about him ahead of time and I was so tactful and so sure that everything was going to go right because I didn't want that we would clash immediately. Because already, my name was up quite a bit and I thought maybe Malcolm might not like

that and invade his territory and so on. And so I was careful to approach Malcolm most gingerly and we really did get along

exceedingly well. And we became really good pals. I think it was really a great sadness to me when he came to visit me at my home when he was leaving to go to Calgary and live with his son where he died shortly after. And I think he seemed to know that, almost, because he said good-bye to me as if this is good-bye.

Murray: The last good-bye.

Howard: Yeah.

Murray: He probably wouldn't have left Saskatchewan and went...

Howard: No, exactly. That was sort of precious to him, Saskatchewan. As it is to me, but I think it meant more to Malcolm even. Saskatchewan was really precious to him, particularly northern Saskatchewan. And that was, in a way, really a part of his religion. He was really dedicated to it. That was a commitment.

Murray: Was it partly because he felt in his own mind at any rate, that he hadn't accomplished enough?

Howard: I think so. Yes, I think... Right. He had set up really high, high sort of standards, high principles, high objectives, things that he intended to achieve during his day. And you know, I think he thought things would roll probably a lot faster after the war. I think he had great hopes for the Metis people becoming involved and functioning in a lot of areas where they would have a certain amount of influence and somehow they would have some political muscle in the Canadian society. And I really felt that this is what he thought would happen. And it didn't happen. Instead of that, they went back to their communities and settled right back in. And some of them just left off drinking... where they had left off drinking, they now picked it up and didn't do anything more. So he was, I think, a bit disillusioned there. But that didn't mean though that he gave up.

Murray: Didn't slow him down?

Howard: No, it didn't slow him down at all. No.

Murray: How would you describe him? During this time before his stroke while he was active in meetings and things, was he optimistic at that point? Did he seem to be more hopeful?

Howard: Did you say before...?

Murray: Before his stroke, during the time he was organizing on the west side and that.

Howard: Gosh you know, I would have to say that he was optimistic. Yes, I really would. I don't know how the degree

of optimism would compare to earlier times but definitely he was optimistic, yes. Because even when I was up there on that trip by myself, and I spoke to the people and chatted with them and they told me a lot about Malcolm, of course, but what they were saying was quite positive things and they seemed to have a certain amount of optimism. That's why they went to the meeting because maybe things were going to happen. But on the other hand, where Malcolm may have made a mistake, is that he may have played the role of a Messiah a little bit, which is a bad thing to do among oppressed or colonized people. Because that is exactly what they do, is they look for a Messiah rather than a spokesman.

Murray: The Messiahs die.

Howard: Yeah, and Messiahs die. Messiahs really don't open the water so you walk through. You damn well have to get off your ass and fight.

Murray: This was unconscious on his part.

Howard: Yeah, I think so, yeah.

Murray: Was it a result simply of his dynamic personality perhaps, and that that was the vision, that was the image he put across?

Howard: That was the image he put across. I think so. I don't think that he intended to put an image across like that.

Murray: Did you ever discuss that with him, that that may be the thing that was happening?

Howard: No, I really didn't. I don't know whether I would have dared. Because, as you say, people were terrified and... I guess Rod Bishop wasn't terrified by Malcolm but I felt I wouldn't want to have him attack me although I really never heard him attack anyone. You know, personally.

Murray: Unjustifiably, or personally.

Howard: Yeah. But I think that's really what he did, is that he created that kind of image among those people and therefore

left them too much with the idea that Uncle Malcolm will pick it up and he'll carry the torch forward.

Murray: Almost like a priest, only different clothing.

Howard: Yeah, that's right. But in some ways in his dark suits which he often wore, dark suits, he looked like a priest... his hair...

Murray: Did Malcolm ever discuss with you any particular strategy for the north? What kind of thing he hoped would happen out of this situation?

Howard: No, he really didn't. And yet he was really touchy about the organization. It was his organization. And it really was too, let me tell you. Although there were other members who were officers and members and everything like that, it seems to me that the real full force of the organization was centralized in Malcolm, in Malcolm as a person. And so that if the organization died, then the whole thing throughout would die; it would just collapse. And you know, I can't honestly say I remember sitting down and talking to him and discussing, "Now where are you going with that organization?" Except I would say this, that it seemed to me that he was interested in building the organization, expanding it, bigger membership, greater power.

Murray: Greater consciousness.

Howard: Greater consciousness, right. Greater consciousness. And possibly fighting these kinds of battles in the north that, you know, were rising, as I say, like the fishery and the brutality and discrimination. He must have been keen on discrimination because nearly every community was very upset about discrimination.

Murray: So this is something he had planted...?

Howard: Something he had planted in their minds. And it really was vicious.

Murray: Do you think that part of this lack of particular strategy was, I don't want to put words in either yours or his mouth, but was perhaps a feeling that if the people are conscious then they will decide the strategy?

Howard: That's possible. That is very possible, yeah.

Murray: I've heard others say that he had a great faith in the common man.

Howard: Oh, I'm sure he did. He certainly did because when, I would talk to those people up there, and they were certainly the 'common man' person, there was no doubt about it. And they knew a lot of Malcolm's philosophy and they knew a lot about what they should be doing and where they should be going and how they should be operating and what this (?) should be and so on. And so obviously he had implanted these ideas in them. They had some sense of responsibility as well. The only thing that I can really remember about Malcolm was when we amalgamated the two organizations, the Metis Association of the north with the Metis Society of the south. And in the beginning, Malcolm was in favor of it but at the end he opposed it bitterly, and it really was just singularly on the fact of grants. Because already the Metis Society in the south was getting \$2000 from Thatcher. But even that \$2000 was....

Murray: The principle was the thing.

Howard: That was the thing.

Murray: Once you started...

Howard: And you know, that was the thing. He really made a big issue about the fact that he was sorry that he had even agreed to amalgamate now. By now he was in the wheel chair and he was really quite disabled but uh...

Murray: He didn't have the power to reverse...

Howard: He didn't have the power to reverse it now, right. But I think he thought it over and probably had heard people speak from the south. Probably had heard the president of the Metis Society, Joe Amyotte, and others speak and talked about trying to get more money from the government and so on. And under those conditions, and that would upset Malcolm and he would say, "No way will I have any part of any organization like that."

Murray: Did people see the importance of that at the time do you think? Of his argument?

Howard: No, no, not at all. I'm really quite certain they didn't. Because, in a sense, I feel that I was up to those kind of things and I was aware of them, and probably more so than anyone else, and I was not even able to foresee what was really going to happen.

Murray: The disaster that would happen.

Howard: The disaster that would take place. You know, in the wildest imagination that I could have thought out would never have been able to draw this picture that really did develop later, in the late 1960s and early 1970s. But you see, obviously Malcolm must have been able to. Or just that he had an obsession about it because he just fought it right to the end.

Murray: It may have been his experience in Alberta that taught him that.

Howard: That's right. That's possible.

Murray: One last question, I know you've got to go. I was wondering if he ever talked about the kind of image he had of what would be successful for native people? Did he have in mind some sort of an amalgam between the best of the Metis culture and the economic benefits of white culture? Was this the kind of thing he saw or did he ever talk about that?

Howard: Well, yes he talked a little bit about that. The thing is certainly he did not talk about the sort of mainstream industrial world. That was really out. I would say that he really talked a great deal about more of the traditional, the trapping and the fishing and hunting and so on. But on the other hand, I think he was realistically...

after all, he had been in the army as well, or in the Armed Forces, and he could see that... and the situation in the 1960s that we couldn't possibly make a living exclusively on trapping because that was over. All those things were over. But nevertheless, because that had really been part of his way of life, he just couldn't see a life, any other life apart from that. It is just like somebody works on the job in the city on the assembly line; you can't see any other kind of a job. But I think that's what he was thinking of, you know, was somewhere there is certain concessions or compromises, halfway measures that have to be made on this. But on the other hand, I know that Malcolm was not prepared to go too far into the mainstream.

Murray: Didn't want to lose the identity at all of the native people.

Howard: That's right. He was very conscious of that. And that we would be going into the mainstream and it was probably through jobs the way - if I can remember Malcolm talking about it - it would be through jobs where the men would work at certain establishments, hopefully not too far away from

where they lived in the north or reserves or wherever and that they would continue to stay within the realm of their own culture and perpetuate it. So that, you know, he did not certainly see the native people coming into mainstream and becoming very technological and the great consumers of the society and so on.

Murray: Right. Did he have a nationalist message to native people at the same time? Or did he stay away from that?

Howard: He really stayed away from it because, you know... I remember Malcolm. I can remember that he really was local. He really was Saskatchewan and he didn't have any national message. He didn't have any national sort of ambitions. He didn't have any national dreams. And maybe it is because he just didn't know there were that many native people throughout the whole dominion whereas on the other hand he may have sought to him, the way you build the organization is from the locals up and until you get those going, then you are not going anywhere.

Murray: You are spreading yourself too thin otherwise.

Howard: Of course.

Murray: Was there ever an anti-white message in his...?

Howard: No, no I never heard Malcolm be anti-white.

Murray: It was strictly political and people were oppressed or they were oppressors and that was sort of the...?

Howard: That's right. I don't know how well-educated he was, but he certainly was an intellectual person. He had a very

intellectual mind. He had a keen mind for abstract thinking, intellectualizing, and being able to make systematic analysis of political and social situations. So that he was an unusual Metis at that time.

Murray: Ahead of his time.

Howard: Ahead of his time, yeah. Because how we could use Malcolm now. Yeah.

(End of Side B)

(End of Interview)

PROPER NAME INDEX

PROPER NAME	IH NUMBER	DOC NAME	DISC #	PAGE #
AMYOTTE, JOE	IH-419	HOWARD ADAMS	68	18
BISHOP, ROD	IH-419	HOWARD ADAMS	68	9,16
BRADY, JIM	IH-419	HOWARD ADAMS	68	3
BUFFALO NARROWS, SASK.	IH-419	HOWARD ADAMS	68	3,10,12, 13
GREEN LAKE, SASK.	IH-419	HOWARD ADAMS	68	9,10
ILE-A-LA-CROSSE, SASK.	IH-419	HOWARD ADAMS	68	3,10
LEPINE, MAXIME	IH-419	HOWARD ADAMS	68	8
NORRIS, MALCOLM	IH-419	HOWARD ADAMS	68	2-20
PRINCE ALBERT, SASK.	IH-419	HOWARD ADAMS	68	2,6

INDEX

INDEX TERM	IH NUMBER	DOC NAME	DISC #	PAGE #
FISHING				
-commercial	IH-419	HOWARD ADAMS	68	3
INDIAN-PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS				
-Saskatchewan	IH-419	HOWARD ADAMS	68	14,18
METIS				
-Riel Rebellion (1885)	IH-419	HOWARD ADAMS	68	8
METIS				
-political	IH-419	HOWARD ADAMS	68	2-11,14-19
POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS				
-Metis Association of Saskatchewan	IH-419	HOWARD ADAMS	68	2,3,5-11, 14-19
POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS				
-Metis Society of Saskatchewan	IH-419	HOWARD ADAMS	68	18
ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE				
-treatment by	IH-419	HOWARD ADAMS	68	3