

Jim Sinclair, Jim Durocher, and Ron Laliberte:

Métis Political Activist Interviews (April 17, 2004)

Tape 1

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RON LALIBERTE: You mentioned an interesting point that I just want to pick up on. You said that when they moved the people out of places like Baljennie and Willow Bunch and Crescent Lake and all of these you know, communities, Lestock and so on, that they moved us there, up North, because they wanted the land. Was it the farmers lobbying to get that land or was it ...

JIM SINCLAIR: I don't think it was the farmers so much. I think it was just the embarrassment to the government of Saskatchewan at that time and of course their philosophy of hoping to find us a better life, which never really was the issue. It was to get rid of us and put us in the North whether we survived or not they didn't care.

JIM DUROCHER: They were trying to hide us.

(Video Tape: 3:20.14.23) JIM SINCLAIR: Just hide us where ever they could and hide their shame for the way they were treating the half-breeds and to keep our rights, sort of under the rug and to hope that we would never organize. And I think the worse they treated us the more we became aware of what was happening and the more we became aware of what had to be done to move our, to move ourselves into a position to, to be part, to be part of Canada. You know, not to be outside of Canada and when the Constitution, the 1970 or '71 Victoria Conference got me thinking and it got me thinking because they were talking about bringing the Constitution home

and it got be thinking because of the fact that they as I said when I went to get a job we were not recognized as people. We were not even recognized. And we felt, and every time I asked for some changes in, in terms of legislation they would say, "We can't because you people don't exist really," you know. And the reality don't exist, although they had a *Half-Breed Act* for us. I think you'll recall your historians to tell that they had a *Half-Breed Act*. But as far as they were concerned we didn't really exist. And we had to assimilate and that was a dirty word for us again, assimilation, once we found out what it meant hey Durocher?

JIM DUROCHER: Yeah that's right, it took us a little while.

JIM SINCLAIR: So we, we then started to realize again what a job we had ahead of us and that's when the days of people like Howard Adams came in, well and then he could explain these things, explain these big words and tell us in a sense what they were doing, even though we knew what they were doing. And Malcolm X was one of my big heroes when I was young and I was looking more at his ideas of, you know, especially his speeches "The ballot or the bullet" things like that. **(Inaudible)**.

(Video Tape: 3:22.01.26) JIM DUROCHER: We had sort of a, we had sort of a, we had sort of a double-whammy on that, on that, on that issue that Jim is talking about because we had to understand, you know, these things with the proper words and what they meant and how they fit in you know and what these guys were trying to **(inaudible)**. But then, but then we had too, we had a double-whammy because we didn't, then first we had to understand ourselves and then to be able to take this and bring it to the community level, at the grassroots level.

JIM SINCLAIR: And explain it.

JIM DUROCHER: And explain it so that people can understand and, you know, that took a lot of time and that took a lot of effort and you know. But, I think, I think, you know, I think it happened.

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