Jim Sinclair, Jim Durocher, and Ron Laliberte:

Métis Political Activist Interviews (April 17, 2004)

Tape 1

RON LALIBERTE: Again you raise some interesting points that I'd like clarify. When I, when I think about, you know, the early movement during this twenty thousand people at Batoche in 1971, your ideas about starting your own Métis parliament and so on. I mean you're talking about, a lot, what you're saying here is you know "We're self-governing" and does land claims or anything about scrip ever, ever talked about during that period?

JIM SINCLAIR: Ohhh, yes we talked about land. We talked about land. Land was a…

RON LALIBERTE: What, what were the issues around that if you, can you recall?

(Video Tape: 3:53.51.00) JIM DUROCHER: Well, we, I think basically we always knew that, you know, we always looked at ourselves as a nation of people, you know. And when you're talking nationhood what is the one of the first ingredients of a nation? Well you got to control, you know, you have to have land. That was the most important, that is paramount, land. And then you have to control your own institutions, you have the right, you have the right to control your own institutions.

JIM SINCLAIR: Citizenship.

JIM DUROCHER: Citizenship yeah, and then you have, you have economic development. You need to feed that, you need to be able to, you know, to

raise the finances to run those institutions. And then we knew, that we needed, we needed to do that at a community level and we needed to, that's what people were telling us to do, that's how, that's the direction that we wanted, we wanted to go. Because, it has to, you're talking nationhood, you have to have land and then you got to be able to control all of that yourself. I mean, your people need to control that, you know you can't have non-Aboriginal people come in there and, and run it the way they have been, you know, you have, you have to move away from that.

RON LALIBERTE: Was an argument articulated by Métis people on what basis they should have that right to land?

JIM SINCLAIR: Just as, just as an inherent right. We always believe in our inherent right. We always believe that we were, we had the same rights as the Indians. And we wanted to make sure we exercised that right and so we always had that **(inaudible)**, I think there was a growing form of nationalism amongst us and that's what really pulled us together. And we, we, we you stomped on Jimmy's right, when we started to look at ourselves as a nation.

JIM DUROCHER: Nationhood, yeah.

(Video Tape: 3:55.28.00) JIM SINCLAIR: Rather than just a people. We felt that the first thing a nation has to have is land. And then it's citizenship and it's control of its institutions. And I always looked at coming into confederation, I hate, you know, some people may laugh at me when I use that word because we were outside of confederation and we wanted to come into confederation during these Constitutional discus-, meetings and we wanted to come into there with, with, with our rights, our full guaranteed rights and come into confederation under our conditions with Canada and negotiate with Canada our conditions and that's exactly what we done. We wanted to make sure that we were there. We wanted to make sure we were

recognized because we wanted to become part of Canada, not to be outside of Canada. We wanted to have those conditions and I think that we were, we were on the right track and we never strayed from that in any of our meetings. We always held firm. So I think that again, you know, if you go back and you take a look at us, that our development over the first years was based on our history. My history being on a half-breed, being a half-breed which I am really proud of today to be that half-breed rather than just a, you know, people call me half-breed, I, I, love it, I love it. Because I always say to the, to anybody else who calls me anything else I'll say, if I'm an Indian now, I have to legally, not legally, illegally, if I stuck to my, our treaties we'd be okay but I go back and I have to ask permission from a white man to go and hunt on this land or else I'll be charged. The half-breeds won their right to hunt and fish and gather now. So I said if I'm a half breed I can go anyplace, I can go on the reserve and go hunt. I can go onto any community and go and hunt because I have that right, that's a Constitutional rights. I have more rights than others to hunt and gather. And I think that if we take some of those ideas that we have and develop them now, we're going to have not only our place in Canada, but we'll have place in Canada under conditions, to be a partner. I want to be a partner in Canada. I never wanted, that was the difference between some of us and some of the leaderships. More **(Unknown Word)** guys just talk about a revolution, which we take over the country. I said no, we just want a kind of quiet revolution where we take over control of our destiny.

JIM DUROCHER: To have our own place.

JIM SINCLAIR: Through the Constitutional and institutions that we can develop.

(Video Tape: 3:57.55.28) RON LALIBERTE: So, those people that were really radical and said that we want a, you know, was there any talk about using violence during that period?

JIM SINCLAIR: Oh, there was violence. There was violence. There was killings went on. Durocher lost his brother due to that at Ile a la Crosse.

JIM DUROCHER: (Inaudible)

JIM SINCLAIR: There was, there was, there was violence and of course there was struggles but we always had the kind of leadership in Saskatchewan where we were considered nationally by all the organizations in Canada, including the federal government, who, who said that whenever they heard we were coming to town, every department got together in Ottawa wondering what are these guys after? So, you know, I hear stories today about how feared they were of us when we went to Ottawa, because we meant business and we had support at home.

JIM DUROCHER: Yeah, we always had made sure we had support at home, that's the...

JIM SINCLAIR: You don't get that today.

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