

Jim Sinclair, Jim Durocher, and Ron Laliberte:

Métis Political Activist Interviews (April 17, 2004)

Tape 1

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RON LALIBERTE: Just before we get into that discussion, I just wanted to go back to the creation of Gabriel Dumont Institute. What was the background of that movement? Were you involved in that first hand, you must have been in some way?

JIM SINCLAIR: Oh yeah.

JIM DUROCHER: Yeah, we were **(inaudible)**...

RON LALIBERTE: What was the whole objective there and, and why was it, maybe you can talk a bit about that, you did mention that a little bit earlier. What was your roles on that?

(Video Tape: 4:30.37.30) JIM SINCLAIR: Well I think the, you know, we always felt we, we didn't like, we did have at Batoche one year what we called a burning of Canada's history books. Don't know if you heard about it?

RON LALIBERTE: Never heard about that.

JIM SINCLAIR: It made big news. We took all the history books we could find, went to Batoche...

RON LALIBERTE: Is that right?

JIM SINCLAIR: We had a big bonfire of the history (**inaudible**)...

RON LALIBERTE: Wiener roast?

JIM SINCLAIR: Yeah, we burnt them all and we said you know, and Howard Adams was there and we gave speeches and said you know this history - gone, untrue, untrue. And we had a...

RON LALIBERTE: Is that right?

JIM SINCLAIR: Oh, a real demonstration of it and when we did that, we said well we have to get our own history in perspective and we have to educate our people. And how can we educate our people where we are in control of the education system?

JIM DUROCHER: But we had to be in control of the education system. We had to be.

(Video Tape: 4:31.25.11) JIM SINCLAIR: Yeah to be in control. And at the same time there was a big argument of, mathematics is mathematics, you got to teach it and you got to teach it right. So we got, if we're going to eventually have teachers and an institute we still got to learn to live in the everyday world. So we don't want second class education, but we want to include in our education our history, and our rights and a different perspective of Canada and a different perspective of Louis Riel.

JIM DUROCHER: History according to us.

JIM SINCLAIR: History according to us. And that's the whole movement behind the Gabriel Dumont Institute and was driven a lot again by Nappy Lafontaine. Nappy Lafontaine had a little centre in Qu'Appelle, they call, Fort

Qu'Appelle, they called it the Métis Centre where they, they had little classes and that. And he became the strongest person for the Dumont Institute. Durocher and myself were involved in the Dumont Institution... **(inaudible)**...

JIM DUROCHER: We were the first board members, but that's all we were. We didn't... **(inaudible)**...

JIM SINCLAIR: We were temporary board sort of thing and we, we pushed Dumont and we fought with governments and the government finally relinquished and did enter into an agreement for the Dumont Institute. And then we, then he got a board elected and that board ran that institute by elections and of course we gave it direction but it didn't have to take all the direction we have. And we had our problems hiring certain people, we wanted to hire old people and we did. We had Dr., what was the doctor's name we had there that, you know, I'm getting bad for names but...

JIM DUROCHER: Me too.

JIM SINCLAIR: We even had Keith Goulet take over out at one point in time and we had some high-profile people. Even though if we didn't agree with their politics, we thought we better hire them because they are educated and they know, they know the system.

JIM DUROCHER: They know how it works.

(Video Tape: 4:33.12.13) JIM SINCLAIR: They know how to do it and we wanted the top grade education, so our struggle was to get that, that going and what bothers me over the last few years, and I'm glad you guys are doing this because Jimmy and I were talking about it. I hear a lot of people getting up and actually saying in the news medium and the documentaries that they were people who started, I won't mention any names, and saying we're they guys who had done Dumont, you know. And Dumont was done

twenty years before these guys, before we ever seen these. **(inaudible)** So I think we need to, we need to put things in perspective and give credit where the credit is due, and again if you go back, the communities are really, it was this Dumont was community driven so you can't give any one person the whole credit. It was, it was community driven, yes it was by the people.

JIM DUROCHER: Don Neilson was one of the big.....

JIM SINCLAIR: Because we had little classes in our community before Dumont, you know.

(Video Tape: 4:34.06.16) RON LALIBERTE: This is a question that always, is probably a silly question but I still want to ask it: Why Gabriel Dumont? And I know that he was our leader in this, you know, in 1885 our military leader and so on, but was there any debate about that at all?

JIM DUROCHER: Yes there was, yes there was. We had lunch that day I remember in Regina, I remember that, that time and Nappy Lafontaine was the guy, again he was the guy that said, "What are we going to call it?" You know, we didn't know what we were getting at as usual. We didn't know what we were getting into. You know I had no idea that you know, that it would one day become what it.....

RON LALIBERTE: Look at it now.

JIM DUROCHER: Yeah

RON LALIBERTE: Amazing.

JIM DUROCHER: But, but at that time we said, "What are we going to call it? And Nappy said "Well, we'll just call it Gabriel Dumont Institute," he said, just out of the clear blue, just like that, you know. And, you know.

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