

Jim Sinclair, Jim Durocher, and Ron Laliberte:

Métis Political Activist Interviews (April 17, 2004)

Tape 2

Start Clip: 7:38:28.24

(Video Tape: 7:38.28.24) RON LALIBERTE: When you think back on the *Métis Act*, you were instrumental in getting that, with the government right, that legislation? Is it, was it 1999?

JIM DUROCHER: Yeah, I think so yeah.

RON LALIBERTE: How do you feel that that's worked out? Do you have any thoughts on that?

JIM DUROCHER: Well I didn't, I wasn't very comfortable with the *Métis Act* to begin with in the first place, because I will tell you, what to me what, what has happened, what it's done is the *Métis Act* has, has not really recognized, this *Métis Act* here in Saskatchewan really has nothing in it.

JIM SINCLAIR: Nothing in it.

JIM DUROCHER: It's got nothing in it. There's absolutely nothing. I, when I, when I first negotiated, you know, the *Métis Act*, I had people like Marc Leclair helping me out and, you know, those, those folks. I said I wanted to make sure, I wanted to have land in there. Land is very important. We got to have land. We got to have the right to hunt and to fish. Those kind of things needed to be in there. We need to have control of, of our own institutions - education and those kind of things, you know. Those are the kind of things that I wanted to see in the *Métis Act*. But then we got an act just about as

good as the one that they have in Alberta, which they've had since the 1940s or whatever it was...

RON LALIBERTE: *The Métis Population Betterment Act.*

(Video Tape: 7:39.43.26) JIM DUROCHER: Yeah, the *Métis Betterment Act* because in, in Alberta they have a *Métis Betterment Act* which was instituted in the late '30s, early '40s and they have 1.3 million acres of land in those five communities. That's a lot of land, you know. And that's what I wanted to see, but when I saw the *Act* after I left there, they of course, my, you know, the people that were, that were in opposition to me, you know, didn't think it was such a great thing and that we shouldn't, we shouldn't be signing anything so. You know, after I left there, you know, and the people that took over went ahead and signed the *Act* without, without having those things in there, you know. So all it is actually is a blank, blank piece of legislation, you know, there's nothing in there and it says well we, this *Act* recognizes the, the contributions made by Métis people in the history of Saskatchewan. Big deal, you know.

(Video Tape: 7:40.41.17) RON LALIBERTE: But it does, it does say that the government, the provincial government will enter into negotiations with the Métis, with the federal government to secure things like self-government, land rights and, and devolution of programs and so on. But there is no teeth in it, is that what you're saying?

JIM DUROCHER: Nothing, there is nothing in there. All they say is make that statement, you know. I remember, I remember trying to negotiate that thing and I remember saying I am not going to sign an agreement that, that, that, you know, that introduces this piece of legislation in this province unless there's teeth in it, you know. It's got to have those things. Why, why sign something that says that they're going to recognize us for our

contribution. What the hell does that mean? You know, we don't need legislation for that.

RON LALIBERTE: No. Okay.

(Video Tape: 7:41.28.10) JIM SINCLAIR: I wasn't involved in it but I had a lot of people call me and were not happy with what was going on because it didn't even live up to the expectations of what's in the Constitution. Why would you write up something that was still backwards and behind the Constitution ... **(Inaudible)** ... of what's happened.

JIM DUROCHER: It's moving backwards.

JIM SINCLAIR: You know, if they would move ahead and say based on this we're guaranteed we're going to go down the road, we're going to go work, that's, and I think this is where the differences between the Métis in Saskatchewan and the Métis agreement we got for the Northwest Territories in my last tenure as a national leader for the Congress of Aboriginal people a, a few years back. I was just, mind you mostly to get them out of debt, but that's all my job was but at the same time we, we got an agreement with the Northwest Territories, the Métis of the Northwest Territories in the, in the Fort Smith area, in the, in that area and to go through a comprehensive land claim which allows them to deal on every aspect of governance including, including land ownership, including governance, including, you know, you know, access to the resources, the whole comprehensive claim. And they signed that agreement and now they're working on that. And at first, they were kind of a little bit leery of it, and I said "Guys, you know, do it, do it because here's something that gives you the same opportunities the Indians are getting in many ways. And it gives you the same opportunities to make your claims on your land and then go ahead with the deal." And now I understand it's working well. I had a talk to George Clazusky **(unknown spelling)** the other day, which is part of that. And he said "Hey, look we're

making progress. We're doing really well on it." Now, why can't that be done with Saskatchewan? Why, cannot the Métis in, in Saskatchewan have the same rights in south of, south of 60, as north of 60? You know, constitutionally you have those rights. Why are suddenly they getting treated differently up there and then down here...?

RON LALIBERTE: They have always sort of done that up there with the Northwest Territories.

JIM SINCLAIR: So again, you know, you have, you have allowing Canada to get away with it.

JIM DUROCHER: Double standard.

JIM SINCLAIR: Double standard and that's what the Métis should be after here. Saying hey they got a comprehensive agreement for the Métis in the Northwest Territories, let's get an agreement down here in Saskatchewan.

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