

Jim Sinclair, Jim Durocher, and Ron Laliberte:

Métis Political Activist Interviews (April 17, 2004)

Tape 2

**Start Clip: 8:12:02.02**

**RON LALIBERTE:** Oh certainly both of your work has made it a lot easier for many of us.

**JIM DUROCHER:** So that's what basically... **(inaudible)** ...

**(Video Tape: 8:12.19.24) RON LALIBERTE:** Would you like to add anything before we, anything else that you'd like to say, on any issue at all?

**(Video Tape: 8:12.28.09) JIM SINCLAIR:** Well, you know, I don't want to blame, you know, it's easy to blame onto people because we've had our share of, of, of failures as well. But I think, you know, there has to be a fundamental change in the Métis Constitution now, to make things different, to set, to set, to set the record straight and to give opportunities, more opportunities to people at the community level. Because if you stop and look at it, as a result of your, of your Constitutional rights and Canada's Constitution, your own Constitution should be built around the rights that you see for your people in accordance with what Canada recognizes you to, so you got the full recognition. Build a Constitution that builds your people around those rights and those institutions and, you know, and, and, and build the communities. I think that's, that, that can be done but you're going to have to change that Constitution, as Durocher and I were saying, you have to, the political leaders are going to have to take on the responsibility, not the senate, you know. And I, I, I think it, it, it might have been a nice way to do things to respect your elders, but, you know, right now you don't want, you got, the leadership must take the responsibility, they can't blame

the senate. You have to take the full responsibility of what you're doing. You have to be inclusive. You have to, for God's sake, don't leave out people who might have voted the wrong way, or you kick a whole community out or a whole local out. You gotta somehow be inclusive because it's dividing your people. Again, you know, again let's not get too, you know, I, this is what people tell me again, that they're saying that the Red River people again, if you're going to base it on the Red River people, I'm left out, you going to base it on another group, I'm left out. God sakes, let's, let's get these people together and just know what our issues are and our problems are and our identity should be, should be based on our, on our, on our, on our, on the issues that we have, you know. We all face the same issues and I think that, you know, that building our nation is really, really important this time. And you have an opportunity to build in Western Canada here. You have an opportunity to sit down with a Prime Minister right now today and this is, this something I worked very hard on over the last year, is to get that Prime Minister, set up a special, a special executive committee in Ottawa to, to, I think he has fourteen ministers on it now, to deal specifically with the rights of Aboriginal peoples. To deal with Treaties, to deal with Métis rights. To be able to start implementing these rights and, and, you know, put them into action. And if, if that's followed up it can happen. But again you, you, you, you must go there and you must have a platform and you must be able to implement that agenda. And I think again, you know, it's, it's, it's, it's not going to be easy but I think the leaders have a real job before them but they're just at that point in history now where, where I say they're, they're better off than the Indians because the Indians have Treaties that they haven't been implementing for so long, and they've sort of left them in the background. The Métis have a, newly in the Constitution and they can take a look at that say, and say, "Hey look, we got everything. We got a full box of rights here." You know, it's, what are we going to take out, what are we going to implement first? And they can do it on that basis. Where it's not spelled out for them what they can and they can't do. And I think again, the provinces, you know, they have to be tough with the province. You got to go

to the table and say, "This is what we want and this is how we're going to do it." And I can't have a Premier come along and say, "Well I will give you a few bucks, go home and do this. Or I'll give you a few bucks." You know, those days are gone and for even a place like the Primrose Bombing Range, where you have Jimmy and a few people trying to fight for this, where is the leadership on this in terms of getting and supporting these people, you know? These are fundamental issues and, and never worry about whether they're going to cut off your budget or not because we never worried about it. Do it, do what has to be done because if you're gonna put your rights in terms of dollars and cents, you're in trouble. You're in trouble. And, you know, and your people are in trouble because you're going to have, you're going to have again, another, what I call, I could call a Banana Republic. Or I could call a, you know, a Third World Nation where you don't have no working-class and you have an upper-class and you have the poor. The Métis Nation's only going to survive if it gets a working-class. And that working-class will support the social structures and also support your tax base and whatever you need to do things in your community, when you're doing things on your own as well. And then your agreements with the land and the resources will give you a contribution to your people and also a contribution to Canada. This pipeline for instance that's coming down from Northern, from across, through the Northwest Territories, you know, we should be involved in this, this construction. We should be involved in the business of that. We want to be, not just employees, we want to be employers. We want to be employers.

**JIM DUROCHER:** We want to be on the upstream of economic development, which means ownership.

**JIM SINCLAIR:** We can be there, we can be there. And, and, and Canada is such a huge opportunity for that. And I think this, this whole business of, of, of this terrorism that's come around and, and, and has taken over everybody's agenda and over everybody's life. Suddenly the federal

government's found out we're not the enemy, you know. That Oka was, Oka, I predicted Oka. I said this is going to happen. I said you walk with the... **(inaudible)** ...this is going to happen. And it happened very shortly after that and Oka was an internal struggle over our rights within this country that people were prepared, still prepared to go to the table. But you have somebody from another country blowing up Canada, then what are you going to do about it? Go and bomb the other country? So you can work out your solutions at home. You, you have a home problems, home solutions. And that's not a hard thing to look at and to solve. And in a country as rich as this, there's no need to have our children dying on the streets, overdose of drugs. No reason to have our children dying of the suicides they have. No reason to have our people living in slum houses and pushed around and, you know, and living under the poor conditions that they have to live under.

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