

Jim Sinclair, Jim Durocher, and Ron Laliberte:

Métis Political Activist Interviews (April 17, 2004)

Tape 2

**Start Clip: 8:26:00.18**

**(Video Tape: 8:26.00.18) JIM SINCLAIR:** Well, poverty was, you know, poverty was our motivation I suppose, you know. I think if you, when you look back to those Road Allowances, were really a place where people can remember, you know, they had happy times. But it was a place where we will victims of a system that we didn't exist and no one would recognize our existence and that, that is again, you know, really bad for Canada. In fact if the Métis want to go to court, and I said that to them before, if you want to go to court, the Japanese took Canada to task for their interment, internment and the Chinese for being slaves on the railroad. You know, there's been other action suits taking Canada, where Canada has given apologies, shouldn't Canada look at compensation for the Métis who didn't get an education, who some of them are still alive today who can't read and write? Ahh, we're victims because, simply because they said they didn't pay taxes and didn't have the right to go to a school. Didn't have a right to have a house, didn't have a right to, to, you know, to many things that Canadians take for, for, for granted. That's the kind of suit I would go to court with and, you know, even if you didn't win, it would bring out the history again of the Métis and the poverty they faced and the discrimination and the racism they faced. And that's made so many of us angry over the years, and made people like me angry, you know. And, and that anger, you know, you never, never forget. And I think it's really important because as I said before I have, the heroes that I have the best in my mind, I suppose, like I said is Gabriel Dumont. I've had great respect for Geronimo because when I read the history of what he done and how he done it when he fought the whole United States Army because he didn't want to be put in a reservation. You really

understand what life was about for our people and our whole existence. And that when he was finally captured, he was put into a, a, the environment, I think they finally took him to Oklahoma where he had to stay on a reservation, where he sold pencils. I think, you know, and signed autographs. But it told the people not to recognize him, that he was sort of not recognized because he was, you know...

**JIM DUROCHER:** Shouldn't have existed.

**JIM SINCLAIR:** They took away the history from him. And Sitting Bull who, who was forced to come into Canada and then, you know, fought his battle at the Little Bighorn and those places and were left out of, out of history when they did have a big impact on history and that history actually had, would have had bad results for us because, you know, they thought Indians in those days were not smart. Those Indians in those days, knew that Custer wanted to become President of the United States and the way he was going to be President of the United States was to fight the last Indian war and beat the Indians and he would become president and kill off the rest. They knew that and they gathered there and they done the opposite, they killed him so he'd never become President. And that had a change in history. Now again, when Sitting Bull came to Canada, of course, he stayed here for some time before he went back. But when he went back, he was shot by two deputies. His own people who were deputized as policeman. So again, it's the system that turned his own people against him, you know. And so I feel honoured right now and I said, when governments, in a sense, doesn't like me or keeps me on the outside because almost saying that because of what I did, would keep me in that arms length from government. You know, so for me that's like I said, a badge of honour. And although I'll never fill the shoes those guys did, I can understand what they went though. And people like Gabriel Dumont who, you know, who took the struggle and was willing to die for it and, and, and, you know, basically set the standard for the Half-breeds in terms of their courage, and what they could do. And when you start

thinking again about the soldiers, just thinking the other day my Uncle Douglas died overseas on April 11, in 1943. He was killed in Italy. And we, we had all these people, and when Vander Zalm was sitting there and, you know, I told him very clearly that time, and I still remember telling him, "You came over to Canada and in the nine years of coming to Canada, you become Premier. And you sit there and you deny us our rights and our people liberated your people in Holland."

**RON LALIBERTE:** I remember that.

**JIM SINCLAIR:** So, you know, it's a, it's a sense of, of, of again, of, of how our people, you know, sacrifice so much and went through so much to live in this country and to be treated the way they were treated and I think again that, you know, after that meeting, I didn't tell you, but Vander Zalm invited me to meet him in Victoria and for two hours he sat and talked to me about that meeting and tried to somehow apologize for what he said. And said that "I didn't know that Jim. I should have known better than to say that," and he said, "You singled me out," he said and, "I'm embarrassed over that and I'll never forget that." So, he was, in a, in a sense apologized. We weren't looking for an apology. We were looking for an agreement but nevertheless, you know, that was Devine? He deserved what he got and to this day I still say he deserved what he got, you know. But at the same time, Devine was, you know, was one guy that was actually willing to give us some help in terms of getting us some land. And he should have said it there, he should have been the hero there and said it. He would have been, it would of, it would have changed him from a zero to a hero. He could have helped us at that time of Constitutional conference but his people told him to back off, even though people like Sid Dutchak said, "Look, you should go along with this, it's worthwhile." But Gary **Unknown Word** hates Indians, you know, so he's going to hate us and there was an argument. I know they had a discussion. I was told clearly after they had a discussion, that "Is Sinclair going to raise hell with us or is he going to go home and keep his money?"

And the bet was by Devine, was he's going to not say nothing and keep his money. And Dutchak said, "No, he's going nail us." Dutchak was right.

**JIM DUROCHER:** Dutchak was right.

**RON LALIBERTE:** Interesting.

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