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HIGHLIGHTS:

-Interviewee is a non-Indian employed at the Gabriel Dumont Institute in Regina. At the time of the interview he was writing a book on the history of the Metis nation.
*-story of William H. Jackson, a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant who became Louis Riel's secretary prior to the 1885 Rebellion: his involvement in the Metis struggle, etc.
-the birth of the Metis nation, and its development: economically, politically, socially, militarily
-Marxist analysis of the Fur Trade, the birth of the Canadian state, and Canadian westward expansion
-grievances leading to the 1885 Riel Rebellion--Metis halfbreed, and white--and the role played by the Canadian gov't in fomenting that war
Don: I just got the job out of a newspaper.

Christine: That is something that people always ask Tony because he is a non-Indian.

Don: Yes.

Christine: And I find it interesting to ask other non-Indians that too.

Don: Well, it is not because I am some sort of liberal. I guess I am really not. I am very political. And I guess the movements of the sixties sort of opened my eyes. The movements of the late sixties. And I began to see that other life forms were possible. And I began to get involved in organizations pushing for social change, political organizations and other organizations.

Christine: Here in Saskatchewan?

Don: Yes. And then I got fired, I was working in the mine and I got fired from the job in the mines so, I only just had grade ten. So I thought, I ran across a sociologist, I just wanted to take a class for the fun of it and I really got interested in what he had to say and so I wrote the adult entrance exam and then went into a Master's in Sociology eventually. So, I started kind of late in life. And I got a job working for the bureaucracy and I hated it and then this job came up. I knew a bit about it, quite a bit about Gabriel Dumont. And the name itself sounded pretty great so I applied and got the job. And we have been digging up these documents from the past ever since.

And maybe the best thing I could do would just be to sort of just go over the issue without bothering you with all of the documents, just go over what we have found.

Christine: Okay. Um, alright yeah, let's do that because then ...

Don: What are you going to use it for? You are going to make a series of films?

Christine: Yes.

Don: That will not purport to be history as such.

Christine: Oh yes, they will.

Don: They will?

Christine: They will purport to be history from a very specific point of view.

Don: Yeah, and I don't know much about making films, historical films. Where do you derive your credibility from? A writer footnotes you know, and so ...

Christine: We derive, you see that is the oral history component of this, we are hoping to derive the credibility from the oral history base. What we are saying in this, that oral history has a validity especially amongst Indian nations.

Don: Yeah.

Christine: That that is the validity. You cannot go, in many cases, back to documents and things that have already been written because of who they have been written by.

Don: Yeah.

Christine: You can't do that and get the perspective that you are looking for.

Don: You can't until we get our book finished. And I would argue that we can then, and I am going to try and go through briefly I suppose, the history that we have put together. And I would argue that we can piece together, the real history of

the native people because, of course, looking at the whole process of mercantilism and colonialism. No nation or no people can look at its own history in isolation. Because the whole history of humanity is the history of military and economic conquest. Imperialism, colonialism, and okay, I guess the discovery of America by Columbus came not as some sort of freak accident of time and place but in response to the specific needs of a feudal society that was being rapidly transformed into a capitalist society. And I am not getting into any dogmatic diatribe.

Christine: No.

Don: But in order to create capital for industrial growth at home, in Britain and France, certain things had to be achieved. They had for thousands of years, been agrarian, backward, fiefdoms, you know. There was no concept of nation in Europe. There was a whole series of petty kings and aristocrats that were engaged in wars with each other over territory. Once that sort of fight at home was achieved, then once all of these feuding aristocrats and so on, had sort of centralized their power into the monarch, then the concept of nation had begun to develop in Europe. And that was a pretty profound occurrence because what happened was that the state, instead of it being a local tribal sort of arrangement whereby people sort of shared things on a communal basis, okay, the state began to stand above the community and over the community and became in fact, an instrument of oppression for the vast majority of the people. And that began to really speed up in the 1600s when the British merchant class really seized state power and overthrew the Stuart kings. You know, the Divine Right of Kings, the whole feudal system really came crashing down in Britain, when Cromwell invented parliamentary democracy, because what this meant was that this rising class of merchants was becoming so powerful that the ancient aristocracy had pretty well become redundant. And the merchants were the only group that could provide capital, merchant capital for the production of industry at home. And of course the growth of the military had to be funded from somewhere.

So the mercantile company was invented. Hudson's Bay Company was of course, the most famous. What it did was it united the needs of the merchant class, their needs for conquest of colonies, united the merchant class's needs with the needs of the state and it put the army and the navy, the British Army and Navy in particular, at the disposal of the merchant class through the charter company. The company, the Hudsons Bay Company, for instance, was granted sole rights over Rupert's Land. The fact that there were a few million people living here didn't seem to bother them much. And the state was put at the company's disposal. Now, the East India Company, actually these charter companies were the means by which Europe conquered the rest of the world, the chartered company. They had, the East India Company had its own navy, had its own army, literally. There was absolutely no separation in these chartered companies between the state and the corporation. The corporation was the state. The Hudson's Bay Company ruled

Rupert's Land literally, made it's own laws to enhance it's own trading monopoly. And hanged people, although there was some question as to whether they had the right to do that. That was the British Crown's right. But they had their own jails and made their own laws against free trading and all the rest of it. So it literally combined, it is like Exxon today, being the government of the world. And Spain, Portugal, France, all the Catholic countries, were into the same sort of business. The only reason that Britain overcame them as competitors was that they hadn't had their capitalist revolution yet. Capitalist revolution, that is the revolution of the middle class taking over the state, didn't occur in France until the

1800s. The late 1700s and the early 1800s. And it never occurred in Spain and Portugal. So Britain had unleashed this dynamism of this revolutionary middle class on the world scene. The others hadn't.

The Pope in 1492, 1493 actually, just after Columbus discovered the West Indies, put out a Papal Bull and what this Papal Bull did was that it gave, the Pope's and therefore God's, blessings to Portugal and Spain to in fact conquer the rest of the world and exploit both the lands and the labour of all the colored peoples of the world. There was some reciprocity required there. In order for Spain and Portugal to rape and plunder South America, they were supposed to Christianize the natives and once that occurred, the natives were then seen as human beings. If they became Catholics, they were then quite literally human beings. And it was really okay to marry them. There wasn't the racism there in one sense. I mean there was the exploitation, there was the rape of the land, the plundering of the people, to an even greater degree one presumes than was the case with Great Britain. But there wasn't racism as such. It was okay to intermarry. In fact, they enslaved, the Spanish government enslaved the people of South America to a much greater extent than was the case with the Hudson's Bay Company in North America. The reason being that they were into labour intensive work that required slaves. And of course the whole slave trade developed, the triangular trade route from Britain to Africa to the West Indies developed where the British, the newly industrialized British nation would send it's ships to Africa and pick up slave loads and take them to the West Indies where they would dump off the slaves, pick up the cotton, bring the cotton back to the burgeoning cotton mills in great Britain. And the slave trade was the chief source of capital upon which the Industrial Revolution was based. You know it literally came into being through the use of slaves.

In North America, what was required was a trading relationship that wasn't in fact reciprocal. I mean an extremely exploitive trading relationship with the Indian tribes. Indian tribes were gatherers of fur, now this was the second most important staple, right, that was exploited, that was to build the industrial empire and the war empire in Europe. The slavery and cotton and the South Americans provided the main source of capital. The second, the most important source of capital was furs. Because of the fact that a lot of people were getting rich, a lot of the British

merchants were getting rich, a lot of the French merchants were becoming quite wealthy. The middle class was very healthy and furs were the ostentatious symbols of new wealth. So there

was an incredibly lucrative trade. Profits of two thousand to three thousand percent on the dollar invested were quite common.

Okay, the French were sort of into buying along the St. Lawrence River because the natives of that area had a viable agricultural economy. They had sedentary lifestyle, villages, almost the beginnings of their own state apparatus. And the Iroquois five nations had a fairly advanced form of imperialism of its own and they were uh, what would you say, they were a very, very powerful tribe. Pretty well ruled the east coast. But anyway, there was no way that the French could sort of move in as conquerors with the Iroquois and a lot of these powerful tribes who had not only a hunting and gathering economy but also had a viable agricultural economy. Now, what I am trying to say is that it was very difficult for the French to create a trade dependency with these people who could fall back on their own agricultural, right? What had to be done with the French was that they really had to Christianize the Indians. They had to be a bit more subtle than the British who had the lands in the north around Hudson's Bay. See, I am saying that there is a relationship between, and it isn't a direct relationship, in no way is it a direct relationship. The fact that the French had one of the most, one of the greatest missionary endeavours in history, vis-a-vis the American natives, had something to do with the fact that the entire colony along the Quebec and Montreal depended upon the fur trade for its very existence. And the people who were engaged in this fur trade, had their own economy they could fall back on.

Now, there was another way to create dependency, though, and that is the use of weapons. I mean the trading of weapons because, of course, the war between Britain and France, the war of the conquest wound up with the battle of Quebec, that war was a world war. It was really the first world war. And all the colonies around the world were dragged into this war. Now, as soon as the British and the Dutch armed the Iroquois, who were the enemies of the French, the French then had to arm their Indian allies. So failure to obtain weapons for the Indian tribes meant destruction, almost total destruction. Because of the fact that they were getting wrapped up in the European wars as allies, and because of their own endemic warfare prior to the white man. There was a lot of traditional warfare which, carried on with stone age weapons, was little more than a ritual. Little more than a ritual. But when carried on with weapons that the Europeans brought over, became

very deadly. Especially considering the fact that the Indians were the chief source of manpower for these wars. So, to make a long story short, the French were very successful in creating this dependency on the fur trade with the use of weapons. The only way you could obtain guns if you were an Indian tribe was for you to trade in furs. This meant that when you depleted your own area of fur-bearing animals, if you happened to be

Huron, you then had to venture into new areas. Somebody else's territory. And this contributed to war. So, ...

Christine: And you also left your farms behind.

Don: You left your farms behind, that is right, I forgot. And in fact a lot of the agriculture went by the wayside. Because there wasn't only guns, there were metal pots. These labour saving devices, this metal technology that the Europeans had, really was badly needed in terms of it's labor-saving capacity.

Christine: Sure.

Don: Imagine the problems with boiling water using, you know, just heated up some stones and so on, as compared to a steel pot. And a metal axe, the labour saving qualities was ... you know the native folks really recognized that they needed that stuff. So there wasn't much they could do about it.

But to look at what happened with the Hudson's Bay Company, now, along the north. Here were a group of people who, because of the terrain, because of their environment, lived strictly on hunting. And there had been a fair amount of starvation from time to time in the north. It was a natural phenominon and people did share things communally and had developed a very, very cooperative society to deal with that harsh environment. Primitive communism it is called. It wasn't primitive at all, it was very complex. The relationships throughout the tribe were such that everybody was seen as being a relative of everybody else and treated as such. Perhaps, in terms of the social relationships that existed, they were far superior to anything that exists today, with the nuclear family and the alienation of big city life. But anyways, the same process occurred there, you had to create a dependency so that the bargaining power all resided in the hands of the fur trading companies. Now, this was really cruel. The British didn't bother messing around with some fake ideology to rationalize the exploitation of these people. They said, "We are the British, we are the super race. We have conquered the frigging world. We don't have to piss around with this."

Christine: Yes. (laughs)

Don: So they just moved in and rather brutally exploited the tribes. Now what they did was eventually they had to move in some agricultural component of their own because their supplies that were arriving in the north from Britain were maggot-ridden and they were inedible and scurvy was developing. So they realized that even around Labrador, they had to create an agricultural colony of their own. Yet, they had to keep the natives from acquiring this technology. They had to keep the natives out in the bush, gathering furs in exchange for stone pots and guns and what have you.

Donald A. Smith, Lord Strathcona, later of course became the great CPR magnate and Canada's first capitalist, got his start

in these fur trading posts around Labrador. The fur trading posts that he was in charge of were the ones that were the most notorious for starving people. What happened in the north was that there was no agricultural economy to fall back on. The natives very quickly lost the old knacks of hunting with spears and bows and arrows and very quickly got on to the use of guns. It made a, well, one can imagine what a difference it makes to a hunting people. But once that occurred in a period of two or three years, five years, people had forgot their old skills. They then were absolutely and totally tied to the fur trading companies for their life support system. And the fur trading companies refused to let the natives get involved in agriculture. So, as the furs became depleted in the northern regions, and remember that there was no competition after the war of the conquest, the Hudson's Bay Company was the only fur trading company in the entire northwest, in all of what is now Canada. So, they sat in their static forts, ringed around Hudson's Bay and James Bay and let the Indians make the trek, thousand mile trek, whatever was required to trade the furs. So, they had a pretty happy situation there. They had oats and barley. Very labor intensive work. The Indians eventually became totally dependent having lost their old skills. They even began to deplete the furs in a specific

region and starvation was the alternative for it. Because the company very consciously refused to let them get involved in agriculture and literally set up a situation where that was genocidal. It wasn't genocide of armies coming in like the Americans did, but the very economic relationship itself had this genocidal component built right into it.

Now this is where the Metis really began to develop as a brand new culture. The "home guard" Indians around the Hudson's Bay Company, of course the tradition I guess for thousands of years, was that the Chief's daughter would marry into another clan or tribe thereby creating, solidifying trade relationships. Of course that happened in Europe as well, royal families, the same sort of thing exactly. So, the Chief would come in and offer his daughter in marriage to the Hudson's Bay Company factor as a means of acquiring trade relationship which initially seemed to be reciprocal. Now, the British did have rules against miscegenation. No truck, no trade with those native women. After all you know, the Puritan ethic and all of that kind of stuff. But the company very quickly found that in a land with stone age technology, with all of these complex tasks that were required to survive, that the labour of the native women was absolutely necessary for the survival of the fur trading companies themselves. Their skills were such, canoe making, making clothes, even packing equipment, women did most of the work.

Christine: Yes. I read Sylvia Van Kirk's book.

Don: Well, I like Sylvia Van Kirk. Okay, so...

Christine: That book was really an eye opener for me. The kinds of work that they did! It was just extraordinary.

Don: Yeah, the skills required.

Christine: The skills and also just the sheer physical work of acting as mules in a lot of cases. Just, you know, carrying things long distances because they do it much better than men. I was amazed!

Don: Like the Cree, the old Cree said that one woman could carry as much as three men. That it's insane to try and make a long trek without them. That was all true. So what I am saying is that the British ideology of racial spirit just gave way, in terms of day to day economic necessities. So pretty soon people were marrying. What I am saying is that the French, the French class system didn't get forced into the very genus of their relationship with the natives so much as the British did because initially it was trade relationships that were cemented by marriage. And that, the marriage of course, was to the head man in each case. So the British class system was infused into the very genus of the halfbreed populations. And it became very much part of their culture. More so than the wild Frenchman and the creative , you know. They were freer.

Often times they were as, well you read Sylvia Van Kirk, often times they were as cruel to native folks as the British were. In fact the British had this rigid discipline that was fairly strict. And their exploitation was more as I have described it in terms of just the economic relationship itself. And it was of course far more deadly. The natives never did learn to, sort of, like the British, as they did the French. But they feared the British. There was a fear relationship.

In any event, that, what I am saying in a nutshell, is that the creation of the Metis culture or the Metis race if you will, really came in response to the needs of the fur trading companies. It wasn't reciprocal. But, you couldn't stop it. You sent these people from the highlands and people from poverty-stricken regions of Britain who had themselves recently been conquered by the English and had their clan system destroyed and of course we are very familiar with the starvation of the Irish. Three million in a year and a half died of starvation. That was the internal colonialism that happened before the exploitation of the rest of the world. These were the people that came over as low class, indentured labourers, semi-slaves. Work for a seven year period and could get five pounds a year. Not much to support a family, whether here or in Britain. But they would come over and they would marry a native woman, eventually they were allowed to. Actually there is some interesting things occurred. They had these huge forts and they locked the gates every night. A woman at native symposium in Winnipeg was describing this relationship, and I asked the question, "Were the gates closed to keep the natives out or to keep the workers in?" And she said, "Well, both, but primarily I think to keep the workers in." Because here are a bunch of young men out here with no women, just a bunch of native women, a lot of them with no men

because of the hardships, and they had to keep these people apart. It eventually became impossible so the working class was able to marry the Indian women but were not really able to support them. Now they could support a family here for the time that they were, if they had too large a family, they couldn't save money to rebuild their life in Great Britain. After seven years were up, they would have no capital saved up because they had a family here. And the Hudson's Bay Company officers refused them the right, in most cases, to take their wives and family back to Britain. So they would leave and leave their wives and family behind. The officer class that did that usually left them with enough money to keep them. The working class didn't have that luxury or that option so there was a lot of families building up around the outside of this, the natives, the Metis I mean, these were the halfbreeds as they were called. As the years went on, this became a very sizeable population and I have all kinds of records from Governor Simpson and other Hudson's Bay Company people saying, "Well look, here is this work force out here and women have all the skills we need. We can work the hell out of them for next to nothing."

Christine: Did they feel any responsibility to those people?

Don: None

Christine: As the families of company men, in any way?

Don: Yeah, initially they did by saying here is this work force just waiting to be exploited and so of course the halfbreeds very quickly became the work force for the Hudson's Bay Company. Cheaper than Europeans. They had a caste system set up and if you were a native, you were payed last. If you were Metis you were payed last. If you were a European and were just kind of pissed off with this whole set-up and took off, went to live with the Indians, came back to deal with the Hudson's Bay Company, you would get payed as an Indian then.

Christine: Really?

Don: Yeah, really. Your ethnicity was determined literally by what you did.

Christine: Yeah? That is interesting.

Don: Yeah, and payed accordingly in a scale that went from the highest to the Europeans to the lowest to the Indians. The Metis in between. Metis became super important because they were bilingual, bicultural, had acquired the skills of the native women plus the organizational ability of the British and they became interpreters and middlemen. (The Iroquois were famous middlemen as well.) They had a fairly contented existence and there was very little starvation among the halfbreeds. As the Indians began to be wiped out by starvation and white man's diseases, because they had no resistance to it of course, the Metis rose in power. Their population literally grew in accordance with the labour needs of the fur trading companies.

But when France was conquered, a Canadian company developed, a Canadian fur trading company, just stepped in and took over their old trading infrastructure against the wishes of and against the laws of the Hudson's Bay Company, the North West Company of course. And it consisted of Scottish upper class people, merchants, very wealthy people, in Montreal. So they very quickly got into a competition with the Hudson's Bay Company. They were a very dynamic group of people. A lot of them were born in Canada. And they utilized the Quebec workers, the old coureurs de bois became their new work force and so they went into competition with the Hudson's Bay and started building a line of forts all the way through to the Athabasca country and of course, Alexander MacKenzie to the west coast. But when that happened, the Hudson's Bay Company had to compete with them so they ran their line of forts. Everywhere, there was a dual infrastructure. Now, if you can imagine the labour time necessary to haul a load of trading goods down the Great Lakes, across Lake Superior, through to Lake Winnipeg, Red River, up to the Athabasca country and back again. You know, the number of person hours, took nine men to a canoe. The canoe could haul like 20 tons of equipment. These were no, these were Canoes with a capital C. So they would take nine men, you would be looking at, I had it calculated somewhere, you would be looking at something like twelve man years. The labour power was the capital again by which this whole exploitation of the northwest was occurring. That particular link, the labour power of the voyageurs and of the Metis.

They were payed so poorly that a lot of the Quebec voyageurs, by the time they got to Athabasca and back to Montreal, they owed the company, literally owed the company bucks. Now, a lot

of the French guys would say, "Look, you know this life as a habitant is pretty devastating, you know this feudalism. Out there are all these beautiful native women and we are all this adventure." And so they were gone, and freedom. I forget what I was driving at there but, so even though they weren't making much money, it was a good life for them.

Christine: And so they just stayed?

Don: They stayed and married Indian people and had large families and they are the Metis. So you have the ...

Christine: But what you are really talking about is two whole different strains.

Don: Two whole different strains. The same, they came together through the fur trade but two absolutely different strains of people being, becoming a part of the mixed blood. And very important differences too because the Catholicism of the French versus the Protestantism of the British, this was an excuse for war for centuries and it was used to provide ... Britain had, of course, turned Protestant, brought sort of the Imperialism of Rome within its own national boundaries when it

became a capitalist nation state. It had to control its own ideology. And of course, ideology was religion in those days. So these were very powerful differences. They could lead to war and of course they did lead to war.

The Battle of Seven Oaks was really, really, critical to the whole story of the northwest. What happened there was that the competition was really becoming keen, people were being sniped off, there was a small war going on, forts were being attacked by these companies, war of corporations. There was literally a war of two corporations. Nothing more or less for the fur trade. Now the French-speaking Metis were, became the sort of warriors of the North West Company. Cuthbert Grant, a Scottish Metis, was set up by the Hudson's Bay Company, I'm sorry, by the North West Company to keep the Sioux away. They had a colony, a semi-agricultural colony just south of Red River and the idea was to impose these 500 Metis buffalo hunters and semi-warriors really. They had been trained both in terms of Indian methods of war, and Napoleon had sent one of his people over to train them in the style of the French cavalry so these were literally the police force of the northwest. And the military force of the northwest. The strongest military in what is now Canada by far and away. Now Cuthbert Grant married or lived with the sister of a MacKay, who was his opponent. These were both upper class people. Cuthbert Grant was the son of a chief back in the islands and MacKay was a chief and so these people had no great hatred for each other yet the corporations were at war so they decided quite simply to put the halfbreed English-speaking people of the Hudson's Bay Company, to pit them against the French-speaking Metis of the North West Company. There was going to be a war of these lower classes. While all of this was going on, MacKay and Grant were visiting each other and intermarrying and what have you. So it was strictly a war of the lower classes.

Lord Selkirk really did, I think as a humanitarian gesture, bring over these highlanders who were starving to death in their own countries and had hoped to set up an agricultural colony which would provide them with a means of staying alive. And there is some question in my mind as to whether he didn't have some philanthropic motives in setting up this colony. But the idea was to set up this agricultural colony right at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine River which is the spot where the North West Company had built Fort Gibraltar. Now, if you controlled the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, militarily, you therefore controlled the waterways infrastructure all the way through to the west coast. Nobody could bring furs past that point without going under those guns. That is the spot where they set up the agricultural colony. I mean there was a lot of good land elsewhere but so what they did was they brought in a group of peasants with no weapons, about 200 people, no weapons, no military training, dumped them right under the guns of the North West Company. So of course there had to be war. But war didn't break out. Grant and his cohorts agitated among the French people and the Metis for a period of a year. Really getting them quite riled up because they could see that if an agricultural colony

developed, their old way of life was going to go and along with it their jobs. So a guy by the name of Miles MacDonell, eventually passed an ordinance that made life impossible for the Metis. They were buffalo hunters, and he passed an ordinance something to the effect that you couldn't hunt buffalo while on horseback. (laughs) You know, something, in other words to really force these people to go to war. Now, it didn't make much sense. MacDonell, as a Hudson's Bay Company man warned it would certainly mean the obliteration of the settlers. They had no defense whatsoever. Very late on, in the game, Selkirk sent back and ordered a regiment of professional soldiers from central Europe somewhere. They didn't come in until after the massacre that occurred. And a massacre did occur.

Twenty one of the settlers were killed along with Governor Semple and of course it left the Metis in terms of standard Canadian historical text with a real bad name. It was a bad scene. No question about it. But what I found out was that Alexander Mackenzie, who owned most of the shares in the North West Company, had gone back to Britain and had bought very heavily into the Hudson's Bay Company. So here was a group of international capitalists now who owned shares in both companies. Now for this group of people, the war made no sense whatsoever. Now, they had been trying for years to get the British state to intervene in this crazy war because for years no profits had been earned. The dual infrastructure, the cost of the war, they were both failing to make any profits. And they had to end the competition somehow. The British state didn't intervene and wouldn't intervene until Britons had died you see. So what I am saying is that this battle of Seven Oaks was contrived. That it wasn't all philanthropy, that dumped them under the guns of Fort Gibraltar.

Now, I want you to remember that, that intrigue. Because I am convinced although I don't have positive proof, it is too far back, but if you just look at the whole situation, take an overview of it, you can see that that didn't make sense as an agricultural colony. That these people were really moved in there to be murdered. And set up. After all, it was twenty people that were going to die, maybe fifty, maybe one hundred and fifty, but they were only peasants. Their death is going to bring about the amalgamation because the British state is going to force an amalgamation of these two companies. And in fact that is what happened is that the Battle of Seven Oaks occurred in 1812, the amalgamation wasn't complete until 1821 but once this occurred, this amalgamation of the two companies, there was an effective monopoly over the gathering of furs throughout all of North America because they very quickly made a deal with the American fur trading companies to sort of stay out and they paid them so many pounds sterling and I have got that. Not to intervene or compete. So they had a monopoly then over the supply of furs and therefore, they also had a monopoly worldwide over the marketing of furs. They could conserve furs for a while, create scarcity, jack up the price, make a mint and they could always, it is what monopolies are all about. They had a monopoly of supply and demand. And of course it became very, very lucrative.

Christine: Can I just go back a bit? You said this guy, Cuthbert Grant, was charged with keeping the Sioux away. What was that about? Keeping the Sioux away from what?

Don: From the colony that was developing in Red River and perhaps I should talk a little bit more about that because after the amalgamation, about half of the people, almost precisely half of the work force was laid off. In a land like North America where wage labor hadn't, really hadn't been invented, suddenly here was unemployment. And for all of the same reasons, the replacement of labour by capital. That is the amalgamation, centralization of capital and the replacement of labor by simple restructuring. Immediately half of the forts were no longer needed since they were only in place because of competition. And you remember the incredible labour power needed for this dual infrastructure. So you are talking an immense savings in labor power just through amalgamation and restructuring.

Now what happened was that, the people that were laid off throughout all of the northwest, it was recognized by Governor Simpson that they had to be under some sort of social control. So they said, "We will ship them all to Red River. Give them twenty acres, twenty five acres of land." Which is not enough to get involved in commercial farming but might be enough to keep a small family alive you see. So the Hudson's Bay Company foisted upon the Metis and the halfbreeds this whole system of subsistence farming, okay? Very important to keep that in mind. You will see why later on.

Christine: What kind of controls were there on them not getting any more than this twenty five acres?

Don: Well, the company owned the land, controlled the land in any event and it divided out twenty five acres and that was what you had. It would be hard to control, it would be very difficult to control but that twenty-five acres was yours. Now, most of the people were making their living off the buffalo. The agricultural colony failed miserably. In twenty years, they had twenty crops, they had eighteen crop failures because wheat had not been invented yet with a short enough growing period. And so the Selkirk settlers, some of them survived of course after the massacre and they were always sort of living off the buffalo hunters, the Metis, I am trying to go too fast. Okay, the Red River Colony was set up to handle the surplus population created by the amalgamation and it was set up so that the Catholic priests and the Protestant ministers and the council of Assiniboia, which was an appointed council, appointed by the Hudson's Bay Company, here was the beginnings of a small state apparatus for the social control of people. Now it wasn't required at all until such time as restructuring had created a surplus population, that is a population that couldn't be fitted in and exploited by the company as a work force. And a population who was going to be troublesome because, how are they going to exist? How are they going to live? You give them these twenty-five acres and it should avert trouble and it should keep them alive so that they

can--after amalgamation the company was moving away from indentured labor, they are moving to a situation of free labor because now free labor was going to be cheaper than the people who you had to maintain year around. So what you do is you give them twenty-five acres of land, that keeps them alive, you can then use them during peak seasons and lay them off during the rest of the year. Now this was all conscious, none of it was accidental. It was all part of the policy which I have of the Hudson's Bay Company spelled out. And the Metis were sent south of Red River to keep the Sioux away because the Metis were buffalo hunters and they were moving across Sioux territory right? Now the Sioux realized that the buffalo were becoming scarce so it was a war for the right to hunt and the Battle of the Grand Coteau in 1814, I'm sorry, somewhere around there, was a devastating defeat of the Sioux by a handful of Metis who were equipped with rifles. So they really, nobody conquered the Sioux, but they achieved a sort of stalemate with the Sioux and they were then able to travel through Sioux territory to St. Paul. This became very important because they then opened up a new trade route through St. Paul which was vastly cheaper than the old route through the Hudson's Bay Company. And of course the Hudson's Bay Company ...

(End of Side A)

(Side B)

Christine: They were forced into that though, they were the surplus labour and they were simply the overflow.

Don: And after the amalgamation, they selected the French-speaking people and said, "You are out. You no longer have a job."

Christine: I see, okay.

Don: Remember they were the workforce for the North West Company.

Christine: I couldn't really understand how that selection was made but it was by language?

Don: It was by language but it was also due to the fact that the French-speaking people were the labor force for the North West Company, the junior company which was bought out, the Hudson's Bay Company, the senior company. So they kept their English speaking workforce because they themselves were abetting Britain you see. Okay, so, the French-speaking Metis had no choice but to become free traders because again and all the way through the history of the Hudson's Bay Company from 1670 to 1870, they rigidly refused to let anyone get involved in local agriculture, that is commercial agriculture, because that went against the interest of the fur trade you see. They were here for one thing only, fur. And they refused to let local industry grow because that was how you keep colonies colonies. They have to be dependent on the manufactured goods from the Imperial country. So of course, there was no other form of life possible than the fur trade other than buffalo hunting okay? They became the buffalo hunters and they united this

French cavalry form of semi-military organization with Indian savvy and guts and they became such tremendous buffalo hunters that this original trek that they took to St. Paul for the Hudson's Bay Company very quickly became a source for their own free trade. And they, like the United States of America, really were involved in nation building, in the true sense of the word. That is to say they became, a merchant class developed which provided the economic basis and which provided the money for a small intelligentsia, Riel, et al, and it was fought through the free trade struggle against an imperial monopoly in precisely the same way as the 13 colonies took on Great Britain. So, what we have here then, is a brand new nation coming into being in precisely the same historical social, the same historical social forces were involved as was the case with other nations that were coming into being at that time.

Christine: It is really extraordinary though, that in history books and stuff, it is never dealt with. It is like they were just sort of, well they were just sort of there you know. They just sort of hung around on the periphery. That is the impression you always get of Metis in the history books. They were just sort of like, I don't know, almost like a form of wildlife.

Don: Well, that is the way they were described.

Christine: There is never, well, of course, they deal with Indian nations much the same, but not as badly. There is some slight recognition that there were ...

Don: The Indians were painted as a noble savage. And I think for specific reasons, I mean you know, the Indians were providing the labor, they were providing the furs which were providing the capital that was flowing to England through the fur trade. So you have to accept them in some reasonable way, the noble savage was ideal and they borrowed that from of course, Rousseau. And anyway, to get back ...

Christine: You have got a whole nation developing ...

Don: You have got a whole nation developing in precisely, it is the same historical forces at work, as occurred in the United States.

Don: After they got that free trade group open to St. Paul, the magnitude of the buffalo hunt would blow your mind. Twenty-five hundred carts loaded with buffalo meat and hides going into the United States. All owned by Metis and Scottish halfbreed people from Red River. Now the Hudson's Bay Company had to stop that but they couldn't get sufficient troops in from Great Britain to take them on. The Metis were, as I said, were the police force. They were the military force in the northwest. And there is no way that the council of Assiniboia could control. The council of Assiniboia, Cuthbert Grant, after the Battle of the Seven Oaks, after the amalgamation, was

very quickly co-opted by Governor Simpson. Governor Simpson wrote a letter saying, "If we can get Grant, we can set him up as a trader, he has such prestige with the Metis, that we will therefore bring the Metis in under our wing and prevent free trade." And so they gave Cuthbert Grant a position and set him up as a transportation company but that worked until 1842 when a guy by the name of Guillaume Sayer was charged with free trading in furs and was to go to court. The Hudson's Bay Company judge was going to find him guilty as usual but they were afraid the Metis were going to organize so they set the trial date up to correspond with one of the Catholic holidays in spring, in May. I'm sorry, I don't remember which one it was, but the Ascension or something like that. And they hoped that the Metis wouldn't show up but they did show up, 500 of them with weapons. And they just filled the courthouse, filled the area outside, didn't say anything, but the judge very wisely decided that, "Better not jail this guy." And so, Louis Riel's father was in charge of this whole episode and struggle for free trade so the Judge found him guilty but said he can go free. So the Metis, being childlike, pardon that, a little fun, they left and of course being very Latin and being very full of life, they come out of the court and they get it mixed up. They said, "Sayer is free and trading is free. Free trade from this day forward." And there was. The British couldn't bring the troops in. I've got some unusual documents describing their attempts to bring troops in and Britain simply couldn't afford to send the troops over any more. I mean, the India trade, the China trade was becoming more important than the fur trade by this time. And so there was no way they could control the Metis. From that day forward there was free trade. The whole free trade movement, as I say, Louis Riel Jr. and Sr. developed as intellectuals and leaders of the upcoming Metis nation. And I think that gives you some insight into the divisions that existed in a dormant way between the English-speaking halfbreeds and the French Metis. The English-speaking halfbreeds were passive because they had a place left for them in the fur trade.

Now, the Metis had derived quite a bit of wealth from the buffalo trade through St. Paul. The buffalo, by the way, were being slaughtered indiscriminately by the Yanks but they were also being slaughtered discriminately by the military. Their reason being that every dead buffalo is equivalent of a dead Indian. So, but the Metis took like twenty-five million buffalo a year because they were trading through to St. Paul. This was resulting in massive starvation throughout the west. The buffalo hides were being used as belting for the industry that was developing in the United States. You recall in that era, a lot of industry was water-powered. And of course, belts ran everywhere. It was kind of ironic that the buffalo that had provided the basis of the old economy were literally being incorporated into the industry that was to replace the old economy. But that, you know, a lot of people don't realize that this occurred but there was a technological breakthrough, buffalo hides were processed in such a way that they could be almost as good a leather as that which you could derive from cows. The whole destruction of the buffalo, you see, the Metis

were doomed from the start as a nation because their whole economy was based upon the buffalo hunt and the trade with the Yanks. The Yanks were engaged in military genocidal activity against the Indians. So, that whole relationship had to be short-lived. And it was.

By 1870, the fur trade was virtually depleted. A new Canadian national merchant class had developed from the North West Company in Montreal. Millions of pounds sterling from the fur trade had developed all of these merchants sitting in Montreal and Toronto who had attempted for years, with the sort of primitive industry that they had, labor intensive primitive industry, to compete with American industry which was even by that time, pretty capital intensive. Fairly automated, you know, mechanized. And of course they couldn't compete with them. Now there was that massive agricultural frontier being pushed rapidly across the United States and it was a very lucrative business for local manufacturers. Now the Canadians tried to enter that market and failed year after year. They couldn't compete with the Yanks so what they decided they had to do was to create an internal colony, that is an agricultural colony in the west which could be exploited both in terms of it being a captive market for Canadian industry. A whole system of tariffs were going to be set up, and they would have to buy Canadian. And a plow would cost a man two years of his work you see, because of these high tariffs, and you couldn't buy a Yankee plow. This was the plan of the merchants of Montreal and Toronto, to get rid of the Hudson's Bay Company, buy it out, and set up Canada in the west as a colony. An agricultural colony where again, industry would not be allowed to grow, where they had to buy everything from the east and in fact, the works of Vernon C. Folk show that Canada came into being as a nation in 1867 in response to these needs, literally. They set up a state to provide the rules and regulations and tariffs so that this could be achieved. Now, when this occurred, there was no place for the Indians, the Metis, or the halfbreeds. The reason being they occupied, or the Selkirk settlers for that matter, they occupied lands and these very lands were going to provide the capital through a magic process. The creation of paper money. A capital by which the CPR was going to be built and the west was going to be developed and the way that was done was that after the Red River insurrection and the struggle for Riel, through Louis Riel for responsible government in the west, after that failed, when the Canadians sent in the troops under Colonel Garnet Wolseley and drove Riel across the border, banished him, armed invasion literally, that was the end of any hope for responsible government. The federal government came into being, set up its administrative arm in Manitoba. (I have to get a coffee.)

Christine: Oh, I bet. (laughs)

Don: That administrative arm was called the Department of the Interior and Sir John A. Macdonald himself headed up that department because it was vital to the whole future economic growth of Canada. It had to be done in such a way. We've got to shorten this up.

Christine: I have got all the time in the world. (laughs)

Don: I guess I have described all too briefly really what the Canadian, it is called the National Policy, and it really spells out precisely how the west has got to be developed.

Christine: Now where is this National Policy?

Don: It is called, a book by Vernon C. Folk called The National Policy and The Weak Economy and it is well worth reading. It is very dry but it is well worth reading. It lays out the whole story of how the Canadian merchant class developed the Canadian state as an instrument by which it could create a colony in the west that would be underdeveloped in the classic sense - no industry allowed. Where the people, where they would exploit an agrarian population, a farm population, it would be brought in specifically for that purpose.

Okay, now I am going to deal with how they created paper money. What they did was they converted native lands into money. And the way they did that was by advertising in Europe. Remember Europe was in a state of conflict, there was a vast surplus population, starvation all over Europe, as feudalism gave way to capitalism. All the surplus population was dumped into North America. And they were brought in, the idea was, "You are going to make money on transportation bringing them in, you are going to make money by selling the land to them and you are going to make money by appropriating surplus value," everything over and above what they required to exist. You are going to rip that off in the market place, through the grain exchange. Okay, you are going to control all that so you are three-way exploitation. However, what had to be done before that land became free as it were, had to deal with the land claims of the Indians and the land claims of the Metis. I'll refer to the halfbreeds from now on and Metis simply as Metis. We recognize the difference, the split. So I'll refer to them all from now on as the Metis.

So, there was no problem with the Indians. The buffalo had pretty well disappeared by the 1880s. The Indians had no bargaining power left. Their entire life support system revolved around the buffalo. The plains Indians, they had never quite been able to conquer them so long as there was buffalo to keep them going. They were terrific warriors and it was a warrior's society with most of the plains Indians. So it was very difficult to conquer these people. However, after the buffalo were gone they had no bargaining power left, zilch, zero. And so they simply sent in, under the Liberals, they sent in Alexander Morse to make treaty. Morse came across as the good guy and Morse came in under the arm of the Department of the Interior, set up his local government in Manitoba, began his only purpose was to make treaty with the Indians. There is no such idea here as justice for the local people. He was sent in to make treaties with the Indians. That is what the local government was all about. And so he did. There was no bargaining power. They pretty well had to take what they could

get and give up their lands for a pittance and be shuffled in onto reserves as you know. And he made a whole series of treaties with the Indians. Now up around the north, Big Bear, Pound-Maker, these guys were not going to capitulate. Up around Fort Carlton, P.A., Okay. One main 400,000 acres was given out, 160 acres, I'm sorry, I think it was 160 acres was to be divided among the Metis, each family, or rather each person was to get 160 acres, the head of each family. And that was to extinguish the Metis land claims. They were recognized as having aboriginal land claims at that time. One hundred and sixty acres was to be given to each head of the family. There were all kinds of things attempted to have this land given and to extinguish Metis land claims in such a way that the land could very quickly be taken back by entrepreneurs and speculators. There was all kinds of talk of how we can extinguish these land claims and at the same time making sure that we don't lock that land up for a 20 year period. Some of the French priests had indicated to the Metis that the land should be given to the sons of heads of families so that it couldn't be parted with for at least 20 years so that people could develop their own land a bit. But the Metis were not given any capital at all. There was no way that they were going to loan them money. So therefore that land was absolutely useless to them beyond their old system of subsistence farming. It was literally no good to them, as long as there were buffalo around, you were better off out hunting buffalo than you were trying to scratch out a living in 25 acres or 160 acres with a hoe. You were not going to be allowed capital and I have got all kinds of information on that. The reason being of course that they wanted that land freed up for eastern Canadian speculators. So, two people who had come in with Garnet Wolseley's invasion force in 1870, people, an Irish aristocrat by the name of Alloway, and an English aristocrat by the name of Champion, came in as soldiers under Garnet Wolseley and terrorized the people of Red River, drove out Riel. Literally terrorized them, it was state terrorism. Drove the people out of Red River. They stayed on as speculators in scrip, they were very wealthy. Now, this is what they did. They would buy 160 acres with a nominal value laid on by the government, of \$1 an acre. Or they would buy the money scrip and they would keep it. They wanted the land. They would buy the land scrip ...

Christine: What was the money scrip?

Don: Land scrip and money scrip, you could take your pick if you were a native. As to how your aboriginal title would be extinguished, you could take money scrip for \$160 or land scrip on any available dominion land for 160 acres. As I say, it wasn't much good to them without a plow. So a lot of them took money scrip, many of them took land scrip, one million four hundred thousand acres was doled out. So, I will just give you a scenario of how paper money was created out of this land and it is incredible. Alloway and Champion, in cahoots with government officials, would buy up thousands of acres of land at, instead of paying \$160 they would pay perhaps half, perhaps a quarter of the face value of the note, or the money scrip. They would pay that to the Metis person. So they would get

\$160 worth of value for perhaps half, \$80. They then used that as capital. They, Alloway and Champion, very quickly got into banking. They made so much money from scrip speculation that they became bankers and set up Alloway and Champion in Winnipeg. Now, this is how it worked. They would have for example, \$1000 worth of value from lands acquired through the purchase of scrip. There were literally no enforced regulations as to how much capital was required in order to make "x" number of dollars of loans. If you had \$1000 worth of capital in the bank, you could loan out easily \$10,000, maybe \$30,000 on the basis of the \$10,000 worth of capital at eight percent. So, the millions of dollars that came in, the millions of dollars of value that was acquired through scrip, we'll just take a, I have it written up here in this other chapter but, \$1000 worth of value so acquired would give you the ability to loan \$10,000 at eight percent. Now if you follow this whole thing through, you can see that very quickly, very quickly a million dollars is worth a hundred million, is worth two hundred million, and that is precisely how the money just came like magic from the acquisition of the Indian and Metis lands. This provided the capital of course, for the industrialization of the east and it really was the basis of an awful lot of Canadian wealth, existing wealth, like banks, railways, everything, Molson's Brewery, everything that is Canadian capital. Money came either through the fur trade or through the acquisition of scrip and the creation of paper money through this banking system.

Now up until the 1930s, this caught up with the whole system and many banks collapsed. Okay, you can see how lucrative it all was.

Now Sir John A. Macdonald was setting up his own British feudal land holding system. He set up a system of land acquisition, grants to people who were friends of the government and it was incredible the nepotism and the family connections. Macdonald himself was sort of above that. He was a politician and he got his kicks out of political power but all of his cabinet were involved in, both as cabinet members and elected representatives and as speculators you see, and so on. So, millions of acres of land were granted at fifty cents an acre to these colonization companies. That is the way they were going to populate the west. A colonization company would get the land for fifty cents an acre and they would sell the land then to settlers for two dollars an acre. Pretty good profit. And they advertised in Europe and they were to bring all of these settlers in and monies were to pour into the government and it was from this that the CPR was, the original plan was that from these lands, the CPR would be financed.

Okay. To make a long story short, the relationship between these feudal companies and the peasants coming in was so exploitive that damn few peasants stayed long on that land. They would just go and take free land themselves somewhere if they had the capital. The ones that did try to come in and set up farming under the colonization companies, either left and became sort of free enterprisers or they moved to the United

States. So the colonization companies only populated about two percent of all the population that came in, they accounted for about two percent. So it just didn't work. But what happened was this, the original plan for the CPR, now remember that the CPR syndicate was very close to the upper echelons of the Sir John A. Macdonald government. The Macdonald government, in a sense, was simply their lackeys in Ottawa. And the CPR was super important, not only for the needs of the Canadian merchant class who was setting up a colony in the west. The CPR was of course, step number one. The first megaproject in Canadian history. But it was even more important for Imperial Great Britain because at that particular time, in the 1880s, there was a war in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. It was going badly for the British. Now this was the height of the British Empire, two-thirds of the world was owned by Great Britain and they were using colonies that they had conquered previously to supply troops for their on-going battles. In the spring of 1885, they had a war going in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, they had a war going with Afghanistan, they had a war that was imminent with Russia, I don't think it came off but... And the Suez Canal was in danger of being taken by the Egyptians and by the Russians and of course that provided the trade route through to India and China and of course, they were the countries that at the time were being super exploited to this merchant relationship. They were the new colonies. China had been carved up by France, Britain, America, Holland, it wound up with the Boxer Rebellion in 1890 and there was, but of course China was the poor country that was just being devastated by these colonizing countries in the 1880s. In any event, the CPR line across Canada was needed as an alternative route in case the Suez should be lost to the British. And it was needed more immediately and more specifically to transport troops to these impending battles. And of course too, it had plans to recruit five regiments of Canadians. They made very good soldiers apparently in these foreign wars because of their sort of pioneering background. So the CPR was needed by Imperial Great Britain. It wasn't some out of the way place in some far off continent. It was the center of the action. It was critical to the needs of the British Empire. The British Empire might not exist without it. And it was also needed to keep Canada British because the Americans, the whole manifest destiny, the American state turned out to be a very vicious predatory state and was competing with Britain all over for world hegemony. So the CPR was absolutely vital to the concept of the sort of class ridden exploitive nation that Canada was to become and it was vital to the British Empire.

Now, the original plan for the Canadian Pacific Railway was from, we'll start from Winnipeg, from Winnipeg diagonally across to about where Prince Albert is today and then almost due west to Edmonton and through an area of the mountains that was known at the time as the Pine River Pass area. The Pine River Pass area would get them through the mountains without having to actually go uphill much. The river valleys, the whole route to the west coast was going to be very reasonable in terms of construction costs and so on. Okay, so they had planned that route from the early 1870s on through and an

expedition had been sent out earlier on, even while the country was still owned by the Hudson's Bay Company, to map this area out, to plan what part of the west would be best suited for agriculture and a guy came out and he determined that the northern fertile belt, it was called, you know, through P.A., the sort of wooded areas, was just ideal because it supplied an abundance of water, an abundance of firewood, and of course the trees protected people from the harshest storms, but the southern area, Regina, Calgary, Medicine Hat, was seen as desert which of course it was.

Christine: It still is.

Don: It still is. And couldn't possibly be suited to agriculture given the technology of the day. The crops couldn't be grown. It was called the Hind Expedition. So the CPR, the government provided free of charge, the surveyors that mapped that whole route out. Now what happened was that Sir John A. MacDonald's friends who had been able to get grants of lands for, lands for the people who owned the colonization companies, got wind of where the railway was going, okay? And of course they had their huge tracts of land spotted all along that route. Now, these were sort of the petit bourgeois, the small middle class entrepreneurs. This was the beginning of national capital right.

Now, the CPR was owned by the syndicate. The syndicate consisted of a guy who was the, Stevens, who was the president of the Bank of Montreal. Angus, Hill, who were great railway builders in the United States, Donald Smith who had made a fortune on speculation after he gave up his job with the Hudson's Bay Company, French Bank, American capital was involved as well. International capital, the biggest source of capital in the world at the time. That is the people that made up the syndicate. Now they sort of got browned off when they saw all of these small time, two-bit speculators had picked the choice land all along their potential route. And so suddenly, out of the blue, J.J. Hill stood up and he said, "We are not in the business of making other people rich, we'll put this railway through the south and development will just have to follow us and we can pick spots along the route where cities will be spotted and we'll own that land and we'll make the millions upon millions from urban development as well." And so they suddenly, arbitrarily, put the line through Regina, Calgary. And have a guy go to rationalize that, an Irishman full of bullshit by the name of Macoun. So he come out and whereas this other guy said, "This land is desert, it is not fit for human habitation, certainly not good for farming." Macoun said, "Oh this is great. This country is, you should see the sunsets at night! Beautiful!" (laughs) And so he rationalized this new route for them.

Christine: So he is the guy we can blame for having to live here.

Don: And a guy by the name of Rogers, a Yankee who had worked with J.J. Hill, was hired to find a new pass through the

mountains, and he did, the Roger's Pass. Now this pass meant that the goddamn freight had to be trucked up thousands of feet. So forever after this expensive pass has been used.

Okay, what happened was that, by picking this new route, an awful lot more money was required. Now, we have statements from J.J. Hill and all of these big time operators saying we are not going to spend our own money on this shit, on the construction of the railway. That is going to be all government money. And indeed they received twenty-five million acres, plus approximately twenty-seven million dollars of existing track plus free surveys. That was all a gift of public money, tax money, to the super rich to get the rail line through. You can see why, Britain needed the line so bad and the Canadian capitalists needed it so bad to create their internal colony. So they simply took the taxpayers' money and gave it to the super rich for all of these reasons.

However, by the spring of 1885, because of the additional expense required to put the railway through the pass, the southern pass, the Yellowhead pass, and because they had used a lot of this government grant money to create the marketing infrastructure, the elevators and so on, by which they were going to rip the new economy off, they were broke. And having put the railway through the south, branch lines were going to be required to go up north where the wheat was going to be grown. Millions of additional dollars were required for these branch lines. So, there was just no way that they could make it work. And Sir John A. Macdonald had already been defeated once, the Pacific Scandal it was called in 1873, because he was caught, or not him but his executives and his cabinet was caught taking bribe money, you know, hundreds of thousands of dollars from the CPR syndicate. And so, to make a long story short, it was politically impossible for Macdonald by March of 1885 to get any more money, public monies into the CPR. Hill, Angus, Smith, had even gone so far as to use their own money to try and get the railway through. The Irish navvies were on strike in the west and they were taking pot shots at North West Mounted Police who were being used by the company to break the strike. They were driving these trains through to the Chinese coolies who hadn't gone on strike. They had no bargaining power but there was a severe crisis. Now, if the railway collapsed, if it went broke, it would have meant that all the plans of the Canadian merchants, all of the plans for the future of Canada would have failed. They would have gone to the States. And furthermore, that Britain would have lost its vital link by which they hoped to move troops into the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, in other words it was central to the military requirements of the British so it would have been catastrophic from their point of view if this private enterprise railway was to go broke. Something had to be done clearly. Okay, I am going to go back now.

After the Metis left Red River in 1870, after they were driven out by state terrorism, they settled in the main, in a little place not far from Prince Albert called St. Laurent. They had several settlements who were all French-speaking people. They had several settlements in that area. For years, they along

with white settlers, English-speaking halfbreed people, had a series of petitions going to Ottawa demanding title to their land. Because they were saying, "Without title to our land, we can't borrow money, we can't improve our farms. Our whole economy is in a state of collapse." And of course after the railway moved south you see, Prince Albert which had originally been designed to be the capital of the northwest, was in a severe state of economic crisis. And so a lot of the fairly wealthy entrepreneurs who had moved in as speculators to Prince Albert had joined forces with the halfbreed folks and the Metis folks, pressuring Ottawa to do something and get us titles to these lands. A fifteen year period, 1875, this whole campaign, thousands, literally thousands of petitions, peaceful petitions, humble petitions were sent to Ottawa. Never a response. Initially there was a response saying, "Look, eventually you will get your land. Everything is going to be okay. Don't panic." And they began to send out surveyors in the early 1880s and these surveyors began to survey the land the way the halfbreed, the English-speaking halfbreed people wanted it. They had the riverfront lots, the long narrow riverfront lots which fitted their political economy and which particularly fitted subsistence farming.

Okay, the Hudson's Bay Company was still functioning up there. It was still involved in a fairly lucrative fur trade situation at Fort Carlton. The boss of the Hudson's Bay Company was a guy by the name of Lawrence Clarke. Clarke was married to a MacKay woman, a halfbreed and Clarke had, back in 1875, pulled quite a scam. The Metis had set their own laws, laws for hunting while the buffalo were still fairly plentiful but becoming scarce. And they set up laws by which the hunt would be communally pursued and communally distributed. The buffalo were to be taken for the use value, not commodity, not a commodity value, and distributed equally among the folks. And there were strict rules, military discipline, everybody had to leave at the same time to hunt so that no party could go out in front, scare the buffalo away and thereby create starvation for the rest of the people, all of these rules. And they were developed into the Laws of St. Laurent and it was a document done up by Father Andre. The Laws of St. Laurent spelled out the civil rules, just simply making the place liveable. There was a fine of eight louis for any guy who told a lie to a lady and you know, just little moral laws, and these other laws to make sure that everybody would survive. But as the buffalo became scarcer and scarcer, the Metis began to refuse to sell buffalo to the Hudson's Bay Company. The Hudson's Bay Company depended upon buffalo meat, pemmican. Without pemmican, the people simply could not pursue the fur trade in the winter. Absolutely vital, without pemmican, no fur trade. Now, as it became scarce, the Metis just simply wouldn't sell it, they would use it for food. So Lawrence Clarke had to find a way to obtain pemmican. I have letters from Clarke saying, "People are starving here, I have only eight bags of pemmican left and I am leading a dog's life of it. Something has to be done." So Gabriel Dumont was charged with enforcing the laws of the prairie and three people, a guy by the name of Ballendine, a couple of Indians, who were employees of the Hudson's Bay

Company, went out ahead of the main body in the spring of 1875, got a few buffalo, scared them away. Now, this meant starvation for the people in St. Laurent. So, they had a meeting, there was a, I would think that of all of the groups of people that I have ever seen, that the Metis societies at that time were the most democratic. Everything was done communally, democratically. And at this meeting they charged Dumont with finding these guys who broke the Laws of St. Laurent and punishing them. So Dumont went out and caught them, fined them fifty dollars, heavy fine for those days, and confiscated their equipment. Now, they went back and told Lawrence Clarke who was also the judge. The government had given him a job as a judge, he was called the Magistrate. The Magistrates had a lot of power. So Clark immediately wired Lieutenant Governor Alexander Morse, the treaty man, the guy who made all of the treaties in Winnipeg and said something to the effect that the Metis are creating their own laws and they are in a state of revolution and he sent word to Toronto and hit all the papers that the Metis were rebelling against the Canadian government. However, I read the Laws of St. Laurent and the, what do you call it, the things that came before, time and time again they had indicated to the government, that this is not intended to supersede Canadian law in any way, shape, or form. These are just laws we are putting together until Canadian law is established. You see, after 1870, Manitoba was a province, but there was no sort of official body that was actually governing the Northwest Territories, which was everything west of Manitoba. Now, Morse was charged with governing the Northwest Territories but as I indicated earlier, his only function was to create treaties with the Indians. So there was no government out there. This government was seen as an interim situation only, to make life possible. Anyway, they sent in the police. Remember that the rail line was going through there as well now and along with the rail lines, the telegraph line. And remember that Big Bear hadn't been defeated yet, so they were burning the telegraph lines, some of the Indian folks, right? And they had to get a police force in there. Now Sir John A. Macdonald wasn't in power. He was very aggressive. A guy by the name of Alexander Mackenzie was in power. He was a Liberal and he was far more humanitarian, he wasn't pursuing such an aggressive policy in the west. So he had to have an excuse to bring in the North West Mounted Police, or to bring in the military. So this was the excuse needed of course, in 1885. Now Alexander Morse wanted troops in there to handle Big Bear, to provide the power by which he could force treaties down his throat. So he needed the police force there. Lawrence Clarke needed the police force there in order to destroy the Laws of St. Laurent and smash the Metis political economy and in order to get buffalo back in as a commodity again so he could pursue his fur trade. Okay, so that was the deal. Well, the police did an investigation, an honest cop investigation, brought in the detachment from, I guess there was a lot of cops at that time. They brought a detachment in under Colonel French from Swan River, Manitoba. They investigated this thing and they found that Ballendine and the people who had set this whole thing up were paid by Lawrence Clarke to do so. Okay, so it was a set up. Similar to the one

in Seven Oaks. Okay, the same sort of Machiavellian work going on. The Mounties discovered that this is what occurred, found out that Clarke was guilty, found out that Gabriel Dumont wasn't guilty and recommended that Clarke be punished but of course he never was. And the police were established in the Northwest where they could protect the telegraph line. And so the whole thing was pretty cozy. Alright, that is Lawrence Clarke.

Now, back to 1885. I have described the problems of the CPR. I have indicated that Macdonald was unable to, it was pretty impossible for him to get more public money, his own cabinet ministers were threatening to resign if another penny went to the CPR. A guy by the name of McClelland from Nova Scotia threatened to resign, in fact, did resign later on. But, there was only one thing that could save the CPR and that was a rebellion of a few hundred Metis in the northwest. Now, the Prince Albert Colonization Company was literally owned by the Macdonald cabinet and the reason it was located near Prince Albert is because they knew, according to the first set of plans, that that was going to be the provincial capital and that therefore that land would be worth millions because it sat astride the CPR, as close as possible to the CPR, in the heart of the fertile belt, in what was bound to be a provincial or district capital. And they didn't bring any settlers in. The land sat dormant. Now, that land happened to be the township where the Metis people lived. All of the others had gotten their, by 1885, had gotten titles to their land. The halfbreed people had got the surveys they wanted, the long and narrow strips along the river, they had gotten title to their land, the white settlers had gotten title to their land, most of them, well all white settlers, most of the halfbreeds. None of the Metis, and of course the Metis were getting desperate, the buffalo were gone, if they couldn't get into the commercial farming economy, they were dead, they would starve to death. Fifteen years of petitions had failed, it worked for the others, it didn't work for them, divide and conquer. The reason they didn't get it is of course, as I have just repeated, because that land was owned by the Macdonald cabinet and was designed as the provincial capital so they were going to make millions off of it.

So this became pretty fortunate when Macdonald needed a rebellion. This whole situation of the Metis not having gotten their land became pretty fortunate. Now he can force a rebellion. The Metis sent Lawrence Clarke, who they still saw as their friend, they didn't know his true role in 1875, they knew he was quite lenient with Dumont, and he was married to a Metis woman and after all his whole relationship with the Hudson's Bay Company was centuries old, they trusted him. Why, God knows. They sent him as their emissary with a final ultimatum to Ottawa.

(End of Side B, Tape IH-013)

(Side A, Tape IH-014)

Don: ... and became very active. Now the police and, they had

an intricate spy network in the west. Most of the Indian agents were in fact spies and government officials were spies and the police had plain clothesmen out. A lot of Metis folks were, halfbreed folks were employed as spies and, so they were keeping track of all of these meetings that they had with Riel. Intercepting letters and they were finding that a lot of people in Manitoba were talking revolution. And a lot of people in the Northwest were talking revolution. And Sir John A. Macdonald has letters saying, "With this mixture of white radicals, halfbreed and Metis folks, with all of these problems with the federal government, real problems, we are going to have an insurrection here. So we better control that insurrection and use it to our own ends." Okay. When Riel came back, I think Macdonald was pretty happy. It was only a question then of keeping the Indians out of the struggle. Keep the Indians out of the struggle, it can be handled. And so Father Lacombe was sent out and he was given a locomotive and he really was instrumental in neutralizing the Blackfeet. There was an ancient animosity between the Cree and the Blackfeet. Now Gabriel Dumont had almost overcome that. He had almost united them.

Christine: He took Crowfoot on his, on his train trip west. Have you heard about that? Or east? So that he could see all of the cities because up until that point he had only seen these small groups of white people. He made sure that Crowfoot got a good view of what he was up against.

Don: Yes.

Christine: All very deliberate.

Don: Oh, yeah. Oh, right on. And so they neutralized the Indians. It took quite a bit of doing but they did. And isolated the Metis.

I have to tell you about Will Jackson later on.

Christine: Okay.

Don: It is getting into too many streams here.

In any event, by March of 1885, the ultimatum was given to the federal government by the Metis through Lawrence Clarke. And we found out that Clark had gone to Ottawa and come back, we found this out quite by accident. We never found this in any history book in Canada, that Clarke had actually gone to Ottawa. This is a brand new discovery, and that he had been sent by the Metis, another brand new discovery. See, the standard historical texts say that the war was started when a guy by the name of Lawrence Clarke met a group of natives and foolishly told them that their petitions were going to be met with bullets, that 500 armed police were on their way to take Riel.

That was the standard historical text. We found he was sent there as an emissary, he talked with government officials in

Ottawa, came back, talked with Lt. Gov. Edgar Dewdney. We found that he had access to the police codes, in other words, we have letters saying that we should employ Lawrence Clarke as a spy. And so he definitely was a spy. And came back, the people that he met, on the return mail as it was called, from Ottawa, were none other than Dumont. He went right to the top man. He told him that, "You are going to be attacked." Dumont of course, and Riel, set up a provisional government and made war plans, defensive war plans. They didn't go on the attack. They anticipated, they robbed a few stores in order to get some ammunition, secured a few cattle and made ready. Dumont was a brilliant gentleman, he wanted to blow up the CPR and he wanted to carry on an ongoing guerrilla warfare and, until he could get the Indians involved, and Riel didn't want to let him do that. Now Riel had a whole history of trusting the British. But he knew that really ...

Christine: Why? After all the things he had been through?

Don: I don't want to go back to the 1875, I mean to the 1870, but during the 1870, Riel let the Metis be used as a force to keep the Irish Fenians out. Now, when they set up the provisional government in 1870, there was a guy by the name of Wild Bill O'Donoghue and Wild Bill was a charismatic Fenian. Now the Fenians had their own bitch with Britain. Millions of them had died of starvation and they moved to America in mass and a lot of them were in the west. And the Fenians naturally aligned themselves with the Metis because they saw them as a force that could attack Britian, or you know, Britain's interest in the west. And Wild Bill argued with Riel that, "You must not trust the British politicians. They are bastards, they are murderers." But Riel did trust them and in fact, sought to ingratiate himself with the British after a split between himself and Wild Bill O'Donoghue. O'Donoghue went south and was coming back with a handful of Fenians, he was going to attack Red River and Riel's troops captured them. So he thought he might ingratiate himself and thereby get something for the Metis folks. It was a good political move in a sense. But it didn't work and they sent the troops in.

Christine: So why would he have done the same thing in 1885?

Don: Because he recognized that no military solution was possible. That somewhere there may be some decency in the

British government, so somewhere there may be some humanitarian that might respond to his democratic process. Because in the end of course, there wasn't any military solution. In the end, what would have occurred would have been the same sort of genocide as the Americans had pursued from the beginning. And he knew that.

It wasn't a matter of strategy. You know, the beast had them. But Dumont wanted to blow up the railway and carry on this guerrilla warfare so it is just difficult to say what would have occurred. But again in 1885, Riel didn't want bloodshed. He was very humanitarian. He didn't want to see people die in

any event. He hoped for peaceful solutions. And he sort of held Dumont back. But anyway, Clarke dropped this verbal bombshell on them and forced them to take up arms. He then went to Prince Albert and there was another Irish guy full of bullshit and bravado that was in charge of the police there. A guy by the name of Crozier, (Maj.) a really honest cop. The natives all had a lot of respect for him, gutsy. They could appreciate it. And Crozier said, "No way am I going to go out on the offensive. I have a telegram saying that there are 200 troops on their way from Winnipeg to support us. And until they arrive, I am not going out." So Clarke knew it and he says, "You are nothing but a goddamn coward." So of course, Crozier responded to that and gathered 98 volunteers and fifty, the North West Mounted Police that had been stationed there and out he went to take these stores back. And they met at Duck Lake and of course, you know the rest.

So, in a nutshell, what we are saying is, to be quite plain and frank about it, is that we feel we have enough empirical evidence here to prove a case of conspiracy against the federal government. That they brought on the rebellion through the use of an agent provocateur and they did it in order to get the loyal Protestant Orange voters from Ontario to loosen up more money for the CPR. After all, it was a rebellion, the CPR could be used and in fact was used to bring out the troops and it thereby, for Queen and country chaps, once more to the. And of course it worked and the CPR got its money and it was completed through to the west coast. Thereby saving Britain's interests both in terms of the China trade and all of its wars around the world and thereby creating the vehicle by which the Canadian National Policy could be pursued and fulfilled.

The whole history of British imperialism is riddled with this kind of intrigue. They saw the Americans as upstarts and very vulgar chaps. You know, going in with guns ablazing when it can be done so much better this way. And it shouldn't be a surprise to anyone, I mean we are talking about world conquest, we are talking about a predatory people. At least a predatory class of people. And it shouldn't be a surprise to anyone that these events occurred. But I anticipate a good deal of difficulty in getting it published. Maybe not, we'll see.

Christine: How far along are you with it?

Don: The second-last chapter.

Christine: Really? How long have you been at it?

Don: About six months.

Christine: Is this sort of a collective effort here, of the institute's or is it yours personally? Are you doing the writing?

Don: No, it is collective. What happened was we had these minor projects for grade eight curriculum and in writing them

up and in digging out these documents, I was the only one here. I was the research department. And we had to get things out yesterday and everybody was saying, "What are you guys doing." You know and I had to turn out a lot of fairly bad, sort of secondary source material and I was under the gun to produce day by day for curriculum. But while this was occurring, I saw this whole thing developing. I had a theory in fact that the rebellion had been brought on by the government and I had read people who had mentioned this sort of thing.

Christine: Howard Adams alluded to it.

Don: Alluded to it, and a lot of people suspected. Nobody had ever dug it out. Well, okay, so while this is going on, I kept saying, "Hey, look, look at what is happening here." People were saying, "Oh, McLean, you are just a goddamn radical." "Yeah, but look man, look." You know and nothing would happen. Then this guy came from Toronto, Martin, my cohort. And he is an old yippie and I said, "Hey man, look at what we got happening here." And I says, "Do you think," I am beginning to be convinced you know, that I am just a radical, I said, "Look, what do you think?" He said, "I am going to get that son-of-a-bitch."

And he didn't have any of these other things to do so he could pursue full time and his job was in fact indexing that library. So rather than indexing that library he would just go flying through there you know. He found everything we needed, everything.

Christine: So he has really done all of the research on the documents.

Don: A lot of it, a lot of it, yeah. I had a lot of it too but, but yeah. He has really masterminded that and of course, the bare bones of the theory began to really flesh out. And we were short a couple of items. So I said, "We are going up to Prince Albert." And I thought I might find Lawrence Clarke's house, where he had a huge dwelling up there, I thought I might find his diary. Something as ridiculous as that. You know, where I could get his actual statement of what he was doing. And I thought maybe not, but one chance in a million but let's go. We didn't find that but we did find that in fact he had been sent to Ottawa. That was in favour of the Metis.

Christine: Where did you find that?

Don: In the archives in Prince Albert. So we found you know, we found all of the missing pieces. Now, there is no way we can impute motive. We can't say he did it and he got paid so much, we don't know. But we can say that he did this, here are the overall motives. We know about all of his connections to the conservative party. Like he was the guy that smashed the union, the farmer's union. He bureaucratically deaked them out. We have statements from his saying, from the Jackson papers, an interview with Will Jackson's sister in 1932 by W.L. Morton. And she talks about a guy by the name of Lawrence Clarke coming in to see Riel's, one of Riel's right hand men.

And Lawrence Clarke told him, "Here is twenty dollars for Riel's keep. You guys bring on this rebellion. It is going to be the makings of this country." And we have another statement of Lawrence Clarke where he is chiding the Liberal politicians, the Jacksons and Doctor Porter, he is saying, "You guys think you are making history, you think you are radicals. While you are running off at the mouth, I am making history sub-rosa." So you know, we got him, we got him. You know, I think this would, it is too bad the book isn't out because I think it would have some bearing on, on the constitutional talks and, but it might not be too late.

Christine: Not in the time frame of the constitutional talks.
Don: Well, I got a problem though with that and that is that I am white, Will Jackson is white and so therefore one would perhaps assume that, you know, why do I pick this guy? And that is a good question to ask and I think I can answer it. I really think that by focusing on Jackson, right now, in this day and age, that it would go a long, long way if a really well done artistic film was put together to smashing, to getting at the heart and core of a lot of racism.

Christine: Yes.

Don: Well I mentioned I guess that Jackson came west with his father. He was from quite a wealthy family in Toronto and old English stock. I suspect rather upper class. Certainly wealthy merchants and so on. I don't think he is one of the poor immigrants that came over. And I find it difficult to explain why he had such an active social conscience. I think he was probably very brilliant and inquisitive and that led him into these sorts of things. But at that time the British were so goddamn racist. And here was this person who didn't appear to have any racism in his bones at all. Which is really remarkable for the age because you look at the most progressive, so called progressive white writers at the time that they become progressive in terms of socialism and progressive in terms of fighting for the working class. But would see natives as something a bit inferior perhaps. So this is really unusual. And I think one of the reasons might have been that he was a romantic and he fell in love with a woman. The only person he ever spoke with - and he is a guy who had a lot of inside dope from the Metis themselves - was Joseph Kinsey Howard, and I suppose you have read his book Strange Empire. It is one of the best histories to date on the Metis.

Christine: I haven't read it yet, no. I know that I should, everybody keeps telling me I should.

Don: Yes. It is pretty good and it is beautifully written.

In any event, he died before he was able to get a bibliography put together. He was one of the victims of the McCarthy era as

well. But he mentions about this love affair between William Jackson and Moiese Ouellette's daughter so that may have had

something to do with it. He is the only one that has ever mentioned it. According to Jackson's niece, Mary Grant living in Glenbush, Sask., he was not a lady's man at all. He eventually married, anyway I'll get on with the story.

Well, Jackson first came into the standard historical books through his radical activities in the Farmer's Union. Jackson, because I guess he was educated in the University of Toronto, although they deny that. They have indicated in some of the literature that I have that he never attended school there but Martin and I have his school marks. And he was at the top of the class in everything he liked and at the bottom in things he disliked. And he was always an unusual person. What's the term? For a person that doesn't fit in, always doing things differently. Anyway, that is what he was. They moved to Prince Albert, they went broke during the depression of the 1860s or early 70s and moved to Prince Albert. His folks, I think his dad was a minister, and his mother was a tough little lowland Scottish woman. Calvinists, Protestant to the core, anti-Catholic, the usual. So, I guess it was Jackson's political activity that began to align him with the Metis in particular. I guess he found them to be the people that were the most ripped off, the most militant, and he made some very serious attempts to unite the struggle of the Farmer's Union. Since there was this similarity of interests among all of these groups in their conflict with Ottawa, I think he recognized that together they might win. One of the few people that did.

I mentioned that he was involved in financing Riel's return to Canada in 1884.

Christine: Had he any contact with Riel before that?

Don: No.

Christine: So he was just taking him on, on Dumont's...

Don: I suppose he had heard about his efforts and you know, that sort of thing. I don't think he had any contact with Gabriel Dumont politically until his activities in the Farmer's Union. I am just finding it hard to find a take-off point. But when the divide and conquer tactics of the North West Mounted Police and the politicians began to separate the

halfbreeds and the white settlers from the Metis, just prior to the rebellion, he took a strong stand and sort of argued that if the people were in the right, you don't back off, period, no compromise. And so he had an active correspondence going with Riel. When Riel came back they immediately hit it off together and Riel realized how useful William Jackson would be being English, being Protestant, and set him up as the secretary. So during the whole non-violent period preceding the rebellion itself, the resistance itself, Jackson was used as the writer for the petitions. And he wrote up the Metis Bill of Rights which was sent to Ottawa, received by Sir John A. Macdonald,

discussed. I'm sorry, it wasn't discussed. It was received by Macdonald, sent on to the British Foreign Office, this whole Bill of Rights that was presented. And in parliament Macdonald denied that he ever received it. He just denied that there was any such document but of course the proof is there. Anyway, Jackson was used as sort of an intellectual and parliamentarian by the Metis.

I have a letter from Riel to Jackson, I think it was about mid-winter 1884, and Riel was saying, "Look, we know that the police are spying on you and we are beginning to fear for your life. You are getting pretty active." And indeed, the letters I have from Macdonald indicated that Macdonald was very, very concerned about white support. He knew it had to be smashed. So Jackson was really seen as as serious a threat as any other leader in the native or Indian or Metis organizations. So I suspect that in fact his life was in danger. And Riel's letter said, "If you can't tolerate it out there any more, come and live with us." And he did. He moved in, I think it was St. Laurent, in any event, he moved into a Metis community and some trouble began to develop when that occurred. Other lieutenants of Riel became sort of jealous of their close relationship. And one day the police, just out of the blue, came riding into the Metis settlement and one of these people who was sort of jealous of Jackson, laid charges that William Jackson was in fact a police informant. Now there were a lot of police informants around. He being the only English person there, of course, there was always that problem and things were pretty tough. So he charged him with that, with being a police spy formally. And the Metis got together and held council and sentenced him to death. And, they couldn't take chances you know, I mean there were spies around. And Riel was unable to, didn't have the power of the veto. It was very democratic. He was unable to sort of override that. So he was kept under close guard. Always well treated. Kept under close guard

until the rebellion and then he was thrown into the cellar where actual police informants such as Mitchell at Mitchell's store was a police informant. He was thrown in and other settlers who had been taken as hostages were thrown in. Now the reason they were taken as hostages was because Riel had despaired of, he knew there was going to be war, and was trying to avoid it. He was going to use these hostages as a last sort of, effort, to bargain with the federal government. Everything else had failed. He didn't want war. So the hostages were taken with that in mind. And they were fed as well as the Metis were fed all the time in the cellar. In the cellar for about a week all through the Battle of Batoche. And then the Metis were defeated and they were let out of the cellar. Gabriel Dumont escaped, Riel gave himself up, you know all about that.

There were some really sort of funny things that occurred during that period. These two guys that "captured" Riel were lauded as heroes throughout the land. The Toronto papers were all you know, reading about it. And we found in the scouting

report just how it occurred. And these two guys were standing around, having a smoke, shooting the shit, and this guy came up on a horse. The guy looked at him and says, "You ain't Louis Riel are you?" He says, "Yes, I am Riel. I have come to give myself up. And oh, by the way, I have this pistol, I guess you guys should take it." So that was that. They rode on into camp. And these guys were given all of these honours for that. In any event, Riel was jailed, tried in Regina. William Jackson was tried. Riel's trial lasted five or six days. Jackson's trial lasted twenty minutes. And whereas they refused, well Riel refused to plead insanity because he felt the whole cause would be lost that way, so they hung Riel because he refused the plea of insanity. And yet history has left him, sort of a record of him being some sort of a lunatic. So, they did the same thing with Jackson, precisely. They dare not hang Jackson because he was English and he was Protestant. He had turned Catholic by the way, but that wasn't recognized. And the trial lasted fifteen minutes and Jackson stood up and said, "Since you have sentenced Riel to death, you must sentence me to death because we were in this together. I am as guilty as he is." But they said, "Look, he turned Catholic so therefore he must be insane." So they threw him in the insane asylum in Winnipeg and, you'll see that. I don't think they mentioned in the trial that he had turned Catholic and therefore he is insane.

Christine: Yes. But that was the implication.

Don: That was the implication. In fact, both Riel and William Jackson, once the battles began, they being intellectuals, were really sort of right out of it when the bullets started flying and people started dying. And the whole role of the intellectual at the time, a guy was to say, "My God! What have we done?" You know, this is real. People are dying here. And so both Riel and Jackson sort of flipped out. I mean there really was a question as to their sanity at particular times. Because of the material circumstances that they were in. And their inability to do anything about this insane situation. Anyway, they stamped him insane and threw him in the insane asylum in Winnipeg. Jackson, that is. And I think he was let go. You know, he was well treated there. He was there for several months. He was able to wander around, open doors everywhere. And one day he just walked out and went across to the United States somewhere. He turned up in Chicago about a year later and he had become a Bahai, remember the Bahai religion. So Will was a lot of different things okay. At the same time, he got involved in some entrepreneurial thing and became a contractor building sidewalks and made quite a few bucks and had an office in Chicago and I think he married at that time. He married a French-Canadian girl. Most people didn't, most historians don't recognize that the guy was even married, if they care. But he was married for a very short period of time and one of his statements about marriage was, he wrote to his niece, Mary, that, "marriage is the institution for the enslavement of women so I don't think, you know, that we will be married long. We should never have tied the formal knot."

He got involved in Chicago in street politics and he got involved in all of the working man's struggles of the 1880s. You know it was a very militant time. When the railways were going through across the States, miners were dying like flies in the mines and you were looking at three thousand, four thousand people a year being killed on the railway. You can look at Bitter Wages, a book called Bitter Wages by Ralph Nader dealing with that period of time. And the working class of America was becoming very militant. And a group of people known as the IWW, International Workers of the World, they were anarchist folks with a theory that since the working people of the world create all of the wealth, they should therefore own all of the world. They could control it and distribute it equally. And so of course, Jackson got involved there and he was, he became a militant organizer for years with the IWW. And he was involved in the organization of a lot of unions in

Chicago. Then he developed a plan to go to Mexico and to, if possible, unite the IWW struggle with the revolution that was going on in Mexico. The national liberation struggle under Pancho Villa. And he contacted Pancho Villa and he spent a couple of years in Mexico with that revolution and nothing much came of it. He came back from Mexico with a plan to set up a colony for the folks who had fought, the Metis folks who had fought the Battle of Batoche in that war and to find freedom in Mexico. Of course Pancho Villa wasn't altogether successful and that fell through.

William Jackson moved to New York and there is a long period of time when I can't trace him. But he turned up in New York a few years later on the banks of the Bronx river. He had built a house out of orange crates and dirt and what have you. He had given up on any sort of career in life. He felt revolution was his career. In New York, he got involved in a struggle with the crooked city politicians, the Tammany politicians, you may have heard of them. And these were people who had sort of Mafia-like tactics. Controlled government and controlled development and all of that sort of early twentieth century stuff. The whole God-awful situation in Chicago where the Irish ethnic groups fought the Polish ethnic groups, fought the black ethnic groups and where politics were really decided by machine guns, the Mafia, you know, that whole bitter era. He got involved in the struggle, not against organized crime as such, but against organized crime in government.

And all the while this was going on, old Will was gathering up material dealing with, particularly with Metis and Indian struggles, and Metis and Indian history. And he disappeared from view again. Nobody knows where he was for a period of about twenty years. Then in 1952, not very long ago really, a human interest story appeared in a New York newspaper, a daily, and here was this old man, 92 years of age who had been evicted from a slum tenement building. He had been living in a basement there. And along with him was two and a half tons of material, written material. Newspapers, articles, books, his lifetime of work really gathering this library. Just prior to Christmas, he was, the snow was coming down, there was a bit

of a blizzard on, and he was rummaging around trying to save these papers. He bribed the city cops not to get rid of them. And there was an underground newspaper editor, well, semi-underground newspaper editor. Sort of a, I forget his name now, but he made friends with Jackson, he let Jackson stay

at his place but old Will was determined he was going to save those papers and he was out trying to do something with them. I guess he got two or three armfuls back up into this newspaper editor's place and he got pneumonia and he went to the hospital where again, they threw him in the insane asylum.

Christine: At the age of 92?

Don: Yes. And he died there with pneumonia. But while he was on the street, he had made alliances with all of the hoboes and a really, oh Christ, you just have to, I'll have to give you the whole story. These are really colorful folks and they all have these nicknames of course and he was known as the Major by this time. Major Jaxon, J-a-x-o-n. Because he changed his name from William Henry Jackson, to Honore, H-o-n-o-r-e, oblique over the e, Honore Jaxon when he had turned Catholic prior to the rebellion. And that is the name he used for the rest of his life along with other aliases, the Major etc.

Seems kind of an anti-climax, I sure missed a lot on old Will. His ambition had been to get that library up north to Batoche and to build sort of a shrine up there to the native people who died in the war, and suffered the consequences, and to create a library at Batoche because he felt that unless the Metis people came to understand precisely the type of government they were dealing with and precisely the type of Machiavellian behaviour that led to their downfall, that they simply wouldn't stand a chance in the twentieth century and that they would disappear off of the face of the earth. So, his was kind of a sad life in a sense but yet in another sense, it was, Christ, it was just solid romance all the way.

Christine: So what did happen to the papers?

Don: They got dumped into the New York City dump. A garbage unit came along and hauled them away to the dump and buried them. There are some of his papers around. Shannon Twofeathers went south and was involved last year in getting oral histories from people and Shannon says he found one of Henry Jaxon's documents that should have been, gone to the dump. Probably part of the stuff that was saved. So I don't know. Somewhere I didn't really do a good job on filling in on old Will Henry.

Christine: So what have you based your construction of his life on then, newspaper things and ...?

Don: Newspaper accounts. There have been a couple of really bad articles written about him by people who were trying to prove his insanity and so on. And one really good one. It was

done up, the Saskatchewan Archives Board did it. It was well researched and well put together. That and then of course, the William Jackson papers which for several years were locked up in the archives in the University of Saskatchewan. I am not sure why they were locked up. It had something to do with a law suit and I suspect it was probably some of the offspring, some of Jackson's nieces, battle over possession of it. In any event, it was locked up and it was only freed this spring. So, I went dashing wildy up there as soon as it was freed and got into the Jackson papers. And a lot of it came from there. There is a very interesting file on him up there. That is where I got the information that Clarke had made a statement about operating sub-rosa and all that.

Christine: So that stuff is in the archives in Saskatoon?

Don: Yes.

Christine: How much of a role is he playing in your book?

Don: Virtually none.

Christine: This is sort of a sidelight that you have become fascinated by?

Don: Got to be the next book.

Christine: Yes. But why do you believe then that he, you said the other day, that he and Riel and Dumont were really the, the instrumental people?

Don: Well, it was obvious why Dumont and Riel were. Why Jackson was, was ...

Christine: I mean I understand that he was very close to them and sort of on the inside track and all of that but how did he really affect events? Like how did he personally affect events or did he?

Don: I don't think anything that he did led directly to anything constructive or lasting. However, the struggles that he was involved in were very important because I know that (Sir John A.) Macdonald feared most of all, because of the political ramifications, involvement by whites. Because if there were involvement by whites, Protestants on the side of the natives, then the thing couldn't be packaged and sold to the Orangemen of Ontario as neatly as otherwise would be the case. It couldn't be seen as a race war if white people were hung, it couldn't be seen as a race war. It had to be seen in terms of something broader and more accurate than that. And this of course, was Jackson's intention. And the reason I put him almost at the same level as Riel and (Gabriel) Dumont is because of his intellectual capacity, his understanding, his thorough and intimate understanding of the Canadian Policy, of the class relationship. The Canadian Policy, in order to extract profits from, through industrial capitalism, you

somehow have to build industrial capitalism. So the idea was to create this colony. The structured regional disparity which affected natives the worst. In fact, the natives primarily, but also really negatively affect the whole small farm class in Saskatchewan. Because the idea was that you are going to take their surplus value through the market place, all the rest of it, through the sale of lands, and you are going to extract your initial sort of merchant profits from these people. That is the money that is going to provide the basis for industrial development and therefore Canada's entrance into the twentieth century. So, Jackson didn't accomplish much in his life that can be put down on paper. Neither did Karl Marx, neither did Che Guevara, neither did Riel because they lost. But they, if properly, if these people, these heroes, if these people who put everything, who dropped their own self interest for the interest of the people, the really true heroic figures in Canadian history, Jackson has to stand among them. Because he risked everything. He didn't pursue a career. He looked at other world views, became part of them, a giant of a man. And the fact that he failed can hardly be held against him because what possibility was there for success? At that time, some possibility, but virtually none. So I don't know, I think that if these people become a part of the Canadian consciousness in terms of their symbolism, what they stood for, then Jackson could begin to achieve his ends a hundred years after, you know, fifty years after his death. The same as Riel could, the same as Dumont could, by smashing down these frigging barriers of, these created barriers that divide people, have people fighting amongst each other.

You know, I mean particularly racist barriers. I mean the whole class system now, in democratic societies, is a vertical mosaic of natives on the bottom, coloreds on the bottom. The whole class system has been transformed in a sense to fit ethnicity. It is structured racism. And all of the racism comes from that. You know, racism isn't something a child was born with, obviously. Racism is taught subtly. It is institutionalized, it is structured. And it is structured economically first. You know, you have a surplus population in Regina of native folks are not allowed into the working class. Today, under monopoly capitalism (and I am no raving Marxist, I am a Marxist but I am not a dogmatic asshole or anything like that), what I am saying is that in Canada today, the situation of monopoly capitalism where labor for a hundred years has been replaced by capital, we are caught in this whole constant process. If you look at the mines in Estevan for example. In the 1930s you would have had a thousand men digging with pick and shovel to haul the same kinds of coal out in a day that a steam shovel can do now with two men. Now that whole, you can literally extrapolate that whole process across Canada, across the world. And you can see the replacement of labor with capital. So my question is, I am saying this is a historical process that is inevitable under capitalism or inevitable under state socialism and such as exists in Russia to some extent. But the system then structures out these people. They simply cannot be exploited. I am saying that today, it is a privilege to be exploited. It is a privilege to be a member of the working class so that your labor can be exploited to create profits for

somebody else under monopoly capitalism. Now, the question emerges then, since the system has eradicated these other people from the process and more and more people are being put into a position where they have to be unproductive. Structured unemployment and that unemployment is very necessary from the point of view of the people who own the means of production because the larger the army of unemployed, the cheaper is the hourly rate of those who are left in the system.

And so, from the beginning the Metis were used as a threat to particularly farm labourers, the Metis were never allowed into the industrial system, but in the early days, the Metis were used by the white farmers, the halfbreed farmers and became successful as rural seasonal labourers. And then of course, they were used in World War II. Up until World War II, the British scientific racism, you know, this whole overt racist

dogma saying that the Anglo-Saxon is a superior race and that natives are inferior. It was done in a straight forward manner in the schools, everywhere else, no questions.

Alright, after Hitler's Mein Kampf, and after they saw the results really, of twentieth century scientific racism in action, that whole paradigm had to be abandoned. They could no longer say, "They are racially inferior." So then of course, the middle class intellectuals, intellegentsia came up with a new theory. "Oh, well, yeah, cheap. The natives aren't really racially inferior. Shucks no, they are culturally inferior." And see this whole cultural determinant coming in to explain why it is that people are in the ghetto and from that we get the whole culture of poverty theory which says, "Well gee, it isn't their fault, but you see, after you have been there for so long, you develop a culture that is cultural poverty and therefore, you don't have the proper attitudes," you see. And so all of these things are coming in.

Now, in authoritarian countries such as South Africa, they don't bother with any of that bullshit. They just throw them in jail and kill them. So, what we are looking at here really, is the same process going on. Canada has the same Machiavellian process that I have tried to describe all of the way through. And it functions much the same. The natives are structured out, not allowed to be productive and then the man says, "Look at them guys, they are not working." And the working class guys are saying, "Goddamn I hump my ass in this mine eight hours a day, working and slaving to keep them buggers going." And they are scapegoated one against the other. And so racism becomes a living reality and gets into a hot battle on the street. You know, it is the ultimate self-fulfilling prophecy. You turn people into, you disallow people to participate and then condemn them for not participating. That is done very subtly in democratic societies. In Nazi Germany it was straight forward. After Hitler and the just sort of scum of the earth seized state power, they just built it right into the ideology of the fascist state and the head of the state, Hitler, just simply said, it was a vertical mosaic alright, but it was structured. It states that the Germans are the

warriors, they are at the top. If you are a Nazi, you are a
 superman, so these horrible wretches living in the ghettos of
 Berlin and ...

(End of Side A, Tape 014)

(End of Interview)

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