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CLAUDE MORRISON

Mr. Morrison is an employee of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. He formerly worked for the Department of Mineral Resources along with Malcolm Norris.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- The Saskatchewan Prospectors' Assistance Plan.
- Norris's work in the department and his work on behalf of native people.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Claude Morrison was a working associate of Norris in the Department of Mineral Resources. In this tape he talks briefly about the activities of Malcolm in the department.

INTERVIEW:

Claude: Well, you are going to have to ask me the questions because...

Murray: I am talking to Claude Morrison of Prince Albert. Claude, you worked for quite a while with Malcolm Norris.

Could you describe a bit the kind of work he was involved in with native people in northern Saskatchewan?

Claude: Malcolm was in charge of what we called at that time, the Prospectors' Assistance Plan. And it included native people as well as others from other provinces and local people from La Ronge and Uranium City and Flin Flon and places like that. And we used to put roughly fifteen two-man crews out in the field prospecting. They didn't receive any pay but we provided all the services, flying and grub. And whatever they found, that was their own. And Malcolm, while he wasn't a geologist, he was a very capable mineralogist, and he would assess their properties and assist them to sell them in the fall if it was possible. And on many occasions, he made a good deal for these people.

Murray: What kinds of things would he do? Would he go out with each of these pair of people and sort of train them?

Claude: Well, no. We had a prospectors' school in La Ronge every spring. Now many of them were experienced prospectors and they would generally take a student out of this school. The school lasted three weeks in La Ronge. We had one every spring. And we used to have two or three geologists there and myself and Malcolm and other people that came in to assist us and we would give them a short course in prospecting. And Malcolm would go out and spend maybe three or four days with each one of these crews in the field every year and give them a few pointers as to where some of the best places... He was a very experienced prospector, Malcolm, and that's the way he made his living for 35-40 years before he came to work for us.

Murray: Was he a political person all the time? When he was out working with native people was he talking about self-determination for native people?

Claude: Oh yeah, he was trying to assist the native people as best he could, you know. He used to try to instill in them the value of good living and money and to build themselves homes. Oh, Malcolm was very good with the natives in that respect.

Murray: What was the reaction of native people to him? I know he certainly had a lot of respect among white people that knew him. Was he respected as well among the native people?

Claude: I don't think there was anybody that didn't respect Malcolm. Particularly the native people because he sets an example that they couldn't deny. He was a native himself. Well there was others like Jim Brady and other native people. Well Malcolm's son is a doctor of geology. He's one of the main people down in Ottawa for the Canadian government. You

know, his family was well-educated. He set an example that they couldn't deny.

Murray: Was he an outspoken person within the department about policies and things if he felt the policy was incorrect?

Claude: Oh, very much so, very much so. If he didn't like anything, he didn't hesitate to bring it up. Oh, he would criticize what he thought was wrong. Didn't matter whether it had to do with natives or... and not only in our own department which was known as the Department of Mineral Resources, but other departments as well. He was very well read and he kept his finger on many things, social welfare, Department of Indian Affairs, well, anything to do with natives and other people as well.

Murray: When he was in the department, did he have an effect on policy when he was in...?

Claude: Oh yes. He was a highly respected man and whenever Malcolm... Well at that time, most people thought the things that he said or done were radical things but now, of course, we take that as a matter of course. But he made many changes that were for the best.

Murray: Can you think of some particular ones?

Claude: Well, let me think. Well, at one time there used to be a small fee for going to the prospectors' school. I forget what it was; it wasn't very much. He was instrumental in eradicating this fee which didn't really mean anything because

the school was paid for by the government. It was just an admittance fee. There was many things particularly in social welfare. We didn't have a sophisticated means of social welfare in those days that we have now. He used to approach the authorities of social welfare and he didn't hesitate to write in the minister anytime.

Murray: So he probably had an effect on the welfare system as well?

Claude: Oh yes, he certainly did.

(End of Side A)

(End of Interview)

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