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WALTER DEITER:

Walter Deiter, a former president of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, was the first president of the National Indian Brotherhood.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Malcolm Norris: his importance in Metis politics.
- The splitting of the National Indian Council into the National Indian Brotherhood and the Metis Association of Canada.
- Racism and bigotry in the Department of Indian Affairs. Improvements that took place when Chretien became the minister.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Walter Deiter was active from the middle sixties as an Indian leader. He was involved as president of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians in 1964 and was the first president of the National Indian Brotherhood. He talks about these two organizations and about the position of Malcolm Norris in the history of the movement. He describes the revolution in the Indian Affairs Department in 1969 with the arrival of Chretien as minister and the racism and bigotry that existed before that year. He describes the unity debate that took place over the years between Indians and Metis and the role of government grants in the debates.

INTERVIEW:

Murray: I'm speaking to Walter Deiter of Regina. Mr. Deiter, maybe we could start by talking about when you first met Malcolm, if you can remember more or less when you first met him and what the circumstances were?

Walter: Well, I met him in a meeting in Saskatoon. The first paid-for meeting by the government when both Indians and Metis met, you know. That's the first time. I met him previous to that but that's the first time I ever got kind of known to him.

Murray: That was in 1964 then?

Walter: Yeah, I guess so. It would be 1964.

Murray: Can you describe that meeting to me? What happened at that meeting?

Walter: Well, the government at that time was planning to do something for Indian people. I think that was the first Liberal meeting there ever, you know. And they decided that they would work, set up a department and work for better conditions and better employment and better everything for...

Murray: All native people?

Walter: Indian, all Indian peoples. They didn't want to segregate the Metis from the registered or other groups of Indians. But that kind of fell through, you know.

Murray: Did it fall through at the meeting too, that people weren't buying that kind of idea? Or were they?

Walter: Well, it was just the educated younger people were buying it, but the older ones - no way. One guy jumped up and he said, "Why," he says, "the last time we helped the halfbreeds we got them hung!" you know. And I didn't say too much about that. I didn't think that was too much of a smart statement anyway.

Murray: So it was the older chiefs who were concerned about their treaty rights? Is this the main thing?

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: The younger treaty Indians tended to think that it was a good idea to get all the people to get together.

Walter: Yeah. I think the trend right now is getting that way too, you know. I don't know how it'll work out in the end.

Murray: Malcolm quite often felt that Indians and Metis and non-status Indians should be all one. Is that the position he put forward at the meeting?

Walter: Yeah. Oh yes. That was his idea, you know, but it never really come about in his time. But he was too much of

anti-government. He got mad at all of us guys when we started getting grants and stuff from government.

Murray: What did he say about those grants?

Walter: Nothing. He said we were bought off. He said, "You guys sold out." I don't know. Maybe we did, I don't know.

Murray: But when he said that, most people, did they disagree with him or did they not understand him or how did people argue with him?

Walter: I don't know. I guess they really didn't understand him because he never really got to be too powerful a leader within the Metis community after that. He fought against the leaders. He was kind of anti-establishment anyway, you know. All the time.

Murray: He fought against the leaders? Which leaders would they be?

Walter: Well, he fought against Howard Adams, Jim Sinclair, and them guys at that time, you know. They were the leaders of the Metis people. And he would have nothing to do with the leaders of the registered Indians. So he was really against the establishment, you know.

Murray: Were there younger men among the Indians and Metis who listened to him, do you think?

Walter: Oh yeah, there was quite a few I guess that were quite interested in him. And some of the writings that he had are still being used by the Metis people. I had a book on them but I lost it when I worked for the Metis on their claims, you know. Doctor Howard Adams had that book and he never returned it to me.

Murray: And what book was that?

Walter: No, it was just minutes of a meeting in 1938 that was held by the Metis, you know. In Saint Denis.

Murray: In Alberta?

Walter: No, in Saskatchewan.

Murray: In Saskatchewan.

Walter: Yeah. Yeah, around 1938-39. I had this old book of the minutes so I don't know what happened to it.

Murray: Can you recall if Malcolm, at that 1964 meeting, if he attempted to start an organization? Do you remember that happening?

Walter: No, no. I don't think he did. Well, at that time he was still working for the government, you know, and it wasn't

long after that that he was out of it, you see.

Murray: Right. I'm wondering, he put forward at that meeting the idea that the Indian and Metis should get together. Who would have been the person who opposed that most strongly at that meeting?

Walter: I think John Tootoosis.

Murray: So, they were the two spokesmen for the different positions.

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: Do you remember Don Nielson?

Walter: Oh yeah, I know him real well.

Murray: He was at that meeting.

Walter: Yeah. That time he was a pretty smart young fellow, you know. He was the president of the Teachers' Federation or something in northern Saskatchewan.

Murray: Yeah. I'm wondering, I mean there was obviously some difference of opinion between the Indians and the Metis, but do you think that there was any hostility at all between them or was it just they thought they had different problems?

Walter: No, there wasn't any hostility at that time. No. Yeah, there wasn't any really.

Murray: There was some disagreement but not any hard feelings?

Walter: No. See, Wilfred Belgarde I think was the chief of the Federation at that time. And he was more or less for assimilation and integration and everything, you know. And so he didn't have too much to say at that meeting.

Murray: John had more to say than anybody else.

Walter: Oh yeah.

Murray: Would it be fair to say that the two people who spoke the most were John Tootoosis and Malcolm Norris?

Walter: Oh, no. Lots of times we wouldn't give John the floor because he wasn't a delegate, you know.

Murray: He was up at the head table?

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: With the government people?

Walter: Yes. We wouldn't give him a chance to talk too much, you see.

Murray: But he tried anyway?

Walter: Oh yeah.

Murray: Was he a popular man among the Indians in those days?

Walter: No, not too popular. He never was really popular but he was always scrapping for things, you know.

Murray: A fighter.

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: Did he fight for the right things?

Walter: Well, yes, in a way he did; and there is some things I didn't really agree with. But he was always a scrapper anyway. He was a good guy to have behind you.

Murray: Right. In 1946 the CCF government held a meeting with the Indian people to assist them in amalgamating three organizations into the Union of Saskatchewan Indians.

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: What do you remember about that?

Walter: Bill Wuttunee headed that out, you know.

Murray: This was 1946?

Walter: I think it was. No I don't know really. They never really got together until 1966, 1967.

Murray: The Federation?

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: Yeah. But were you ever a member of the Union of Saskatchewan Indians? That's the organization that led up to the Federation.

Walter: Yeah. But I never was active in politics, I didn't care about it.

Murray: You weren't active until the sixties in the organization?

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: That would have been the National Indian Council then?

Walter: Well, I wasn't even active in that. I didn't have anything to do with that. The National Indian Council was a mixture too, you know. And then we went to Toronto and started

the National Indian Brotherhood. You see, because I had the chance of getting money from the federal government as a registered Indian and the Metis, at that time, didn't. But they conceded just so we could get that money. And it was a good move on their part.

Murray: Who conceded? The Metis?

Walter: The Metis, yeah. See, Dr. Adam Cuthand was the president then of the Metis Association of Canada.

Murray: So you and he were the first presidents of the two organizations.

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: Now, what you're saying is that the Metis realized that as long as you were all in one group that no one would get money from the federal government, is that right?

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: And if you split then the Indians would have a chance?

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: Is that what the government told the National Indian Council, that as long as there were two groups, there would be no funding?

Walter: No, they never actually said it but they sure used that as a wedge.

Murray: Can you remember how they did that?

Walter: Well, I don't know. It was... well, I don't know. I think it was kind of ignorance on some of the leaders in the Metis Society, you know. Because I used to go and fight for them. I went up there and got ten thousand out of Davey Steuart one time and I had the Metis president with me. I told him, "Go in there now and ask for ten thousand too." You know, he went there and Davey Steuart asked him how much he wanted and he said five hundred dollars and that's all he got.

Murray: Was that Joe Amyotte?

Walter: Yeah. Oh, I blew my cork when he came out, you know.

Murray: Thinking small, eh?

Walter: Yeah. Well, he says, "We just use that much to start with."

Murray: Had you already got a grant for the Federation?

Walter: Well, there was a grant already there of seventy-two

hundred, you see.

Murray: For the Federation?

Walter: Yeah. But after I got to be the president of the Federation, I phoned up there and yelled. I said, "Look," I said, "you're supporting 39 Ukrainian organizations and a couple of German clubs and you're not giving the Indians any." "Oh yeah," he says, "we're giving seven thousand." "Peanuts," I told him. "You can keep that damn money." It changed the whole attitude of the whole thing, you see. Yeah, I don't know.

Murray: What year would that have been that you got your first grant for the Federation?

Walter: 1967. Or 1966.

Murray: I think it was earlier than 1967, probably 1966.

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: Because I think that's when Amyotte got his first grant.

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: It would have been the same year I guess, eh?

Walter: Yeah. See, I got \$67,000. I went and I sold a program to DREE you see. And I didn't pull it out of my pocket. They were so sold on the idea that it was only made for \$40,000. I went back and called my secretary and made her rewrite the whole thing.

Murray: You mentioned earlier that the government used as a wedge the idea that you'd have to split your organizations.

Walter: Well, actually, really I don't know who was the worst in politics, the NDP or the Liberals but they were both pretty sneaky, you know. I'd say that the NDP was worse than the Liberals.

Murray: In what way particularly?

Walter: Especially in funds. You see, I started that Native Alcohol Council thing and I was operating without a government grant for pretty nearly two years. And because I wouldn't cater to him, he wouldn't give us any money.

Murray: Who was that?

Walter: That Minister of Finance.

Murray: In the NDP government?

Walter: Yeah, in the NDP government.

Murray: What year would that have been? Just a few years ago I guess, eh?

Walter: That would be 1971, 1970. Yeah. So when I quit, he gave them money.

Murray: Do you think it was because you were the president that they wouldn't...?

Walter: Oh, he damn well stated it. He says, "That man won't do anything for the party."

Murray: He figured you were a Liberal or something, did he?

Walter: Yeah, well all I was interested in was helping people with their alcohol problems.

Murray: Right.

Walter: But that just doesn't matter. If I ever catch him on the reserve though I'll show him where the (?) was.

Murray: (chuckles) Was it the federal government that was trying to drive a wedge, do you think? In terms of trying to get the National Indian Council to split into two?

Walter: No, that was the Indians themselves did that. We had a meeting, a real emotional meeting. People didn't want to split, you know.

Murray: Where was that one held?

Walter: In Toronto. Yeah, it was Toronto.

Murray: So some people wanted to split and others didn't, is that...?

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: But the majority wanted to split.

Walter: Wanted to split, yeah. The vote was about 28 to 12 or something like that.

Murray: Who was it that first of all, brought the issue up at that Toronto meeting? Who was the person who was pushing hardest for a split? Or do you remember that?

Walter: I don't really know, you know. You see, I and Stan Daniels was real good friends. We still are. But we talked about this, you know, that as long as we're together, I said the government made it plain that they weren't going to give us money as long as we were with the Metis, I said.

Murray: To who did they make clear to? Did you actually talk

to the government yourself?

Walter: Oh yeah, the Indian Affairs was the worst ones, the worst bunch you ever seen.

Murray: That was their line was it?

Walter: That was their line of leave, we met it for years, you know. Like in 1957, 1956, we started a tutoring class with all native people...

Murray: Metis and Indian?

Walter: Yeah. They'd just pay for the registered Indian. But first they pretended they didn't even know it existed, you know. This tutoring. And then they sent a guy out to investigate and I guess they were just having coffee break when he went out there. Sent a report in all the kids was doing was sitting around having cigarettes and drinking pop and coffee, the students. We had a hard time to straighten that out, you know.

Murray: But they did the same thing with the National Indian Council. They said that you had to split?

Walter: Yeah, they did the same thing.

Murray: Do you think that's what prompted the people on the council to say we have to split? Was that the thing, about government funds?

Walter: Yeah. It was only government funds. The regulations was different for Indians than it was for the Metis.

Murray: Because the Indians had a special status.

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: What was Stan Daniels' position on the council?

Walter: He was just the president of Alberta.

Murray: Yeah, but I'm wondering if he fought in favor of keeping the organization together or was he in favor of splitting into two groups?

Walter: He seconded the motion in splitting the two groups, you see.

Murray: Who made the motion?

Walter: I did.

Murray: You did.

Walter: Yes. I think I have that motion here someplace. So, we formed two groups. We still had a meeting together and after conference was over, I called a few of the local

presidents, treaty Indians about forming the National Indian Brotherhood. And Walter Curry came with us and he named it, you know.

Murray: The National Indian Brotherhood.

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: Where is he from?

Walter: He's from, he's a half Ojibway and half English I guess. He's from down there. He's a Metis and he works for Indian Affairs now in the education branch, you know. Very well-learned man, a Ph.D. I think.

Murray: There was a meeting in Sault Ste. Marie too, of the National Indian Council. Did the same issue come up there about splitting? Was it something that was sort of talked about all the time?

Walter: Oh, well, they was having problems all the time, you see. Bill Wuttunee and Kahn-Tineta Horn was fighting about that issue all the time.

Murray: That was the same issue was it?

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: Was that to do with government funds as well then?

Walter: I guess so because the National Council did get money, you know.

Murray: They got it from the Centennial Committee, I think?

Walter: Yeah, from the Centennial, yeah. So I don't really know what went down previous to that, other than when we started the National Indian Brotherhood. And it was in Sault Ste. Marie... no... yes, Sault Ste. Marie. I happened to meet with about six ministers and some kind of a Liberal meeting they were having there. I heard about it and I made a special trip. They committed themselves to giving me money for the National Indian Brotherhood. See, we started... We worked all night at the submission, writing out the submission to deliver it to them in the morning, you see, to get it finished. They okayed it and it took them quite a while to get the money out but we got it anyway. And they also committed themselves to helping us research treaty rights and aboriginal rights. But Trudeau didn't want us to have anything to do with aboriginal rights, you know.

Murray: Right.

Walter: There was so many fancy words used that I don't really remember. It was residual rights and aboriginal rights and, oh, squatters' rights and like that. Hunting rights and

fishing rights and so many different things that was then talked about, you know.

Murray: Right.

Walter: Actually, most of the Indians, oh there was still a group of Indians still working up and down.

Murray: Right.

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: When you first started the National Indian Brotherhood or when it was first started, who were the people most involved in getting it going?

Walter: Well, I guess we'd have to say the FSI. Hilliard McNab and John Tootoosis and, let's see, another guy, Wilf Hilliard you know. Because I lent them, sent them to Manitoba to go and set up the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood. And I sent them to Alberta, lent them to Alberta when Fred Cardinal was the president, you see. Then we got some money and we lent Manitoba \$3000.

Murray: To help them organize?

Walter: Yeah, we lent to Alberta.

Murray: This was before those organizations had money, is it?

Walter: Before they had money.

Murray: And the Federation had gotten money from the federal government?

Walter: Yeah, but that wasn't Federation money that we gave them, it was National Indian Brotherhood money.

Murray: Oh, I see.

Walter: See, actually we didn't get money from the government right off the bat. We got it from a private source. So we were able to do a little bit more with that money than what the government recommended when they give us money, you see.

Murray: Can you tell me who that private source was or is that confidential?

Walter: Well, that's kind of confidential. The guy is, of course he's dead now. I guess it should have been, that was the Harvey Foundation out at Calgary.

Murray: Oh.

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: The Harvey Foundation, eh?

Walter: He was a millionaire you know, and made his million in oils. And I went to school with his doctor, you see. And his doctor's brother was my school teacher.

Murray: So you knew the family?

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: So that's how the National Indian Brotherhood first got going was through a private donation?

Walter: Yeah. Well, the Indian Eskimo Association helped us a lot too you know. I think there was a lot of people that should have got credit that's never mentioned, you know. Ernie McEwen(?) who was my old school teacher, he was the director of the Indian Eskimo Association and I think he worked harder on that than anybody did.

Murray: On the National Indian Brotherhood?

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: In terms of putting in time and...?

Walter: Time and helping us find money for meetings and helping us find fares, you know, to get air fare.

Murray: So the National Indian Brotherhood was really an organization of leaders and then it expanded to help the Manitoba Indians and the Alberta Indians to build up their organizations, is that right?

Walter: Yeah, and Ontario and B.C. and, right all over Canada.

Murray: So the national organization really existed before the provincial organizations were strong, is that right?

Walter: Yeah, that's right. The national organization didn't arise from all the provincial organizations. We say the national organization come from Saskatchewan, you see.

Murray: That's where it was, where it came out from.

Walter: Right, yeah. We had that meeting and the guys, there were six of them there elected me president. And we had an election, every time a province came and got organized and they...

Murray: Had an election.

Walter: Had an election.

Murray: Who were the six people? This was the first election was it?

Walter: Yeah well, there was Omar Peters, Wilber Najon, John Tootoosis, Fred Cardinal, and oh, I just can't think of his name. He was before Dave Creshane in it.

Murray: This was a fellow from Manitoba then?

Walter: Andrew Delisle(?), Andrew Delisle(?) fought against, wouldn't come to meetings.

Murray: Where was he from?

Walter: He was the leader of the Quebec Association.

Murray: Why wouldn't he come?

Walter: I don't know. He thought he was stronger without the organization. And then the national leaders didn't make a big thing out of Andy like governments were, you see. Governments made him the commissioner of the do out there, against the Indians wishes, you see.

Murray: He was a big shot.

Walter: Yeah. So he wasn't too popular. I talked him in, got him in big meeting in Winnipeg and he ran for president, you know. And he got defeated. Well, there was no way that he'd pull his organization out after that, you see.

Murray: Right.

Walter: But the vice president was of his organization. He was elected as a vice president in the national, you see. So he was in and he had no choice.

Murray: Right. How long did it take the National Indian Brotherhood to sort of get the provincial organizations going?

Walter: Two and a half years.

Murray: So by about 1969 things were....

Walter: Yeah, the seventies. I was (inaudible) in 1970.

Murray: Were there ever any discussions among you and the other Indian leaders about the kinds of dangers that Malcolm used to think there were about government grants and the fear that some Indians might get bought off?

Walter: Oh yeah, there was always that, you know.

Murray: People talked about that a lot, eh?

Walter: Yeah, I get a great kick out of Cardinal now - Harold Cardinal and his position. Because he was right after my hide when I got a grant from the government, you see. But I had a submission of his when he was the president of the youth, asking

government for money, and I showed him so he kept quiet.

Murray: (chuckles) Can't have it both ways I guess.

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: Were there any Indian leaders that you remember who took the same position as Malcolm about not taking any government funds or was Malcolm the only one you can remember who took that position?

Walter: Malcolm was the only one. But he really wasn't active. He was already sick when the whole thing started to move, you know.

Murray: Right. He died I think before it really... he died in December of 1967 so that was just about the time when things took off, I guess.

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: He must have known a lot of Indian leaders though?

Walter: Oh yeah. He was very well known.

Murray: Was he well-respected among the Indian leaders?

Walter: Oh yeah. Well, he spoke Cree fluently, you know, and he knew them all.

Murray: Do you think he was influential?

Walter: I don't know. I don't think so, really. I mean, he did a lot of talking. With a person that does a lot of talking like that, the Indian people don't really follow, you know.

Murray: You think he talked over their heads or too fast or...?

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: Too many ideas at once.

Walter: Yeah. Oh he was a great speaker.

Murray: Do you think he encouraged Indian people to organize? Was that one of his messages? That they should have a strong organization?

Walter: Yeah, oh....

(End of Side A)

(Side B)

Walter: In 1959.

Murray: Right.

Walter: I don't remember because I didn't drink for years before.

Murray: One last area I wanted to talk to you about was the organization called the Queen Victorias, the Queen Victoria Indian Association. Was that the name of it?

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: It kept going alongside with the Federation. Did it exist separately from the Federation?

Walter: Yeah, it did for a while until the Federation got money.

Murray: And then the two joined or the other one just disappeared?

Walter: Yeah, the other just disappeared.

Murray: I remember talking to John Tootoosis and he seemed to think that Queen Victorias opposed the Federation for a long time. Is that right? They had some different ideas than the Federation?

Walter: I guess they did, you know. Because it was like this one other organization started up, the president of that organization didn't want to relinquish his position, you see.

Murray: Who was the president at that time?

Walter: I don't really know. You know, I don't really know.

Murray: Was Lawrence Thompson the last president of the Queen Victorias?

Walter: No, I don't think he was the president.

Murray: But he was a member, eh?

Walter: Yeah. He was a member, yeah.

Murray: So what year was it that the Federation was established? 1960?

Walter: Yeah, I guess so.

Murray: 1959 or something?

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: So that's when the Queen Victorias sort of died off, was it?

Walter: No, they never really died off until about 1966.

Murray: So they stayed after. Did they have a big membership or was it just a few leaders?

Walter: Well, they were just as big as the FSI because when I got to be the leader of the FSI there was only 17 chiefs left out of 67, you know.

Murray: And what year was that when you were first president of the FSI?

Walter: I guess that was about, let's see, about 1964 I guess, 1965.

Murray: So it wasn't a very active organization then?

Walter: No, it wasn't. No, it wasn't. Not until I started making work for everybody, making people work. I got into a lot of trouble, you know, with the Indian Affairs especially.

Murray: They didn't like you much, eh?

Walter: No, they never did anyway. You couldn't imagine the bigotry in the branch at that time.

Murray: Can you give me some examples of that?

Walter: Well, one was when we used to go into the regional office, they had a pad, a writing pad. And they had a girl there. If an Indian came, he'd put his treaty number and his band and stated his business and who he wanted to see, you see. But if a white man came, he walked right in. And the first thing I did was stop a white man from going in and making him wait his goddamn turn. Started a big riot in there, you know. No damn way he was going to get ahead of me. And of course, I was used to dealing with white people all my life, you know. I never was mean to them or anything but I mean, they respected me and I respected them.

Murray: Equals.

Walter: Yeah. But after being a leader for a while, I got a little bit - you might say that I got a little bit prejudiced myself. And you know, the things that I'd see happen really burnt me up. And lots of the branch of Indian Affairs would just laugh about it, you know.

Murray: So they were still pretty racist in the mid-sixties, eh?

Walter: Oh yeah, terrible.

Murray: How did they deal with the Indian organizations? Did they ignore them or did they...?

Walter: Completely ignored them. When I suggested we hire six people to explain the programs of governments to Indians, Clark

immediately got on the plane and he hired 45 across Canada, to kill my program, you see. They hired 45 to oppress them.

Murray: Who was Clark?

Walter: He was the regional superintendent.

Murray: Hmm.

Walter: And he swore up and down he didn't see my proposal when I went in there. It was right on his desk and I pointed to it and he just stood there. Tell you how they felt about Indians - a bald faced lie right in front of my face. He knew he was lying and I knew he was lying. And I told him, I said, "There's not much use in me and you having an argument because you're too dishonest."

Murray: He didn't like that, I don't suppose.

Walter: No, he never. He didn't give a damn, you know. He just... so what.

Murray: When did that change? Obviously there was a dramatic change at some point.

Walter: It changed when Lang was kicked out of office, head office. See, Lang came here with my submission.

Murray: Who was Lang then?

Walter: He was the Minister of Indian Affairs.

Murray: Right.

Walter: And he wanted to meet us, meet the FSI. So he figured he was going to embarrass me in front of the Indians. So I introduced him as the Minister, like a good gentleman would introduce anybody, you see. The Honourable Mr. Lang, Minister of Indian Affairs and all this. And I give him the floor. You know what he did? He pulled out that submission out of his pocket, opened it up. He says, "Where did you get those figures?" And he started up one side of me and down the other. Had no business going to anybody to ask them for help or anything. That kind of an attitude. I never argued with him one bit. I just apologized to the Indians that I brought in such a bad mannered man for a politician and that's all it was. And they all started yelling at him. And he said he'd never come back to Saskatchewan any more. He never did.

Murray: He never had the chance.

Walter: No, he didn't have the chance because I met Trudeau. Two days after he was in office, I was in his office.

Murray: In 1968?

Walter: Yeah. But I could never get in to Pearson's office. He was too much of a bureaucrat. Trudeau said, "Well," he said. I told him, I said, "Lang, oh that guy," I said, "he's had it with the Indians." "Oh yeah," he said, "I know he's in trouble with the Indians." He says, "We'll move him," he said. "I'd like you to meet a guy, he's coming in a minute." And Chretien come in. "He's going to be your new minister." He let the bag out, out before it was announced officially.

Murray: So it changed with Chretien?

Walter: Yeah, a right about face, changed completely. Attitudes. Oh boy, them guys was just getting fired left and right all over the place.

Murray: Out of Indian Affairs?

Walter: Yeah. Especially them old vets that was in there you know.

Murray: The guys who'd been there for 25 years.

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: The same guys who ignored the organization and...

Walter: Yeah, Clark was chased out of here.

Murray: He was fired was he?

Walter: No, he wasn't fired. They sent him to B.C. And oh, there was a great big change.

Murray: What do you think prompted that change?

Walter: Chretien's attitude. He said, "There is going to be a different policy," he said. A new policy from now on. "Indians are people," he said. Attitudes was sure changed.

Murray: Do you think that it's possible they might've sensed that Indian people were going to become militant if things didn't change?

Walter: Well, I don't know. Maybe it was possible. Worrying about them guys in northern Quebec right now. I just wonder what Billy Diamond is up doing, you know. He's quite the guy. And then the Inuit up there. They're living with a bunch of Crees up there in Labrador too. They're sure opposing that Rene Levesque.

Murray: Among the Indian tribes throughout the time you've been active in Indian politics, who would you say took the most active part in organizing? Which tribe would it be? The Cree, do you think or...?

Walter: Oh yeah, the Cree. Well, the Ojibways too, you know.

Well, the Cree and the Ojibways are the biggest number of people. Cardinal was quite an influence. I don't know what the Indians think of him right now.

Murray: Right. Well, he got involved about the mid-sixties too I guess, didn't he?

Walter: Yeah. He was just a young fellow too.

Murray: Do you think that there was a change in Indian consciousness in the sixties too, in terms of Indian people seeing that...?

Walter: Well, there was a lot of fear in going to University and going to school like that. If you went to University under the old Indian Act, for two years, you were automatically a white man. You know, and we had to change that. We had to change a lot of things. We had a lot of battles over laws, and there is still lots that has to be done, you know. That Indian Act is not changed. It's a discriminatory piece of legislation yet and it's still in force. You can't give me a drink legally yet today. You could be fined \$250.

Murray: For buying you a beer?

Walter: Yeah.

Murray: You can drink but you can't get a drink from a white man?

Walter: Yeah, if they want to be officious or dirty about it, you know. And them laws have never really been changed although they give you the right to drink but they still didn't give you the right for everybody. There is so many laws that are in conflict, you know, especially with the Indian laws. I had so many battles about them Indian laws.

Murray: Well, I better not keep you any longer.

(End of Side B)

(End of Interview)

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