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JOHN H. BROCKELBANK

John Brockelbank was minister in the Department of Natural Resources from 1948-56 in the Saskatchewan NDP government. As such, he was involved in the development of northern Saskatchewan. He knew Malcolm Norris.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Review of his years in office in relation to the development of the north.
- Development of marketing agencies and cooperatives.
- His impressions of Malcolm Norris.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

John Brockelbank was Minister of Natural Resources from 1948-1956 and as such, was responsible for northern Saskatchewan. Under his period, welfare and other government departments began to play larger roles in the north.

INTERVIEW:

Murray: I'm talking to John Brockelbank who was minister of the Department of Natural Resources from 1948 until 1956. Mr. Brockelbank, when you took over as Minister in 1948, can you recall what the extent of the northern administration was in terms of personnel and organization?

John: Well, there were field officers all over the north country. And had been for some time. The previous minister, Joe Phelps, really got around in the north and saw it and I guess he saw some field officers that had never seen a minister before in their life. But he really got around so the framework was there and there was quite a bit of work done then on fur conservation and so forth by the time I took over. And we didn't get the lines set up, the trapping districts and the local people had a lot to do with the management of the fur, how much they would take on some species like beaver particularly, and so on. And there was a good deal of interest in improving habitat by dams or something like this at that time. And there was a good deal done, too. Then we had the trappers' conventions every winter. We'd have trappers from all over the north and in the southern part, too. There were a lot of trappers in the areas next to the north like Nipawin and across that country. And these conventions were, I think, a good step ahead. They gave the local people a chance to discuss their industry and what they could make of it. And they began to recognize the purpose of the fur marketing service. It wasn't there to bother them or to make trouble for them or to make money for the government but to get a better price for the furs.

Murray: Do you think this took some time for them to understand that?

John: Oh yes, the same thing with regard to fish. I remember being at a meeting of fishermen near Canoe Lake in a little shack. I guess there were 15 or 20 fishermen there and the man with me and I both explained that the Fish Marketing Service

would handle the fish and the terms and so forth and so on. And when we finished the explaining, I said, "Now," - I forget whether it was "are there any questions?" or "do you want to make up your mind?" And with one accord, the whole crowd stood up and turned towards the door and marched out. That's all they wanted of it. A year later they came asking for a fish marketing service. The fish dealers got hold of them and taught them a lesson the hard way.

Murray: So the fish buyers did your job for you?

John: Yeah. Well, I guess they thought we just didn't know what we were talking about or they didn't believe us, you see. But the fish buyers approached them with all kinds of little things to be friendly and so on, and make them trust them, and promises that they never get and so on. But it was interesting seeing those things happen, you know.

Murray: What year would it have been, that cabin incident? Would that have been the first year you were a minister? 1948?

John: No, no, it would be - probably it was in the early 1950s.

Murray: The fish marketing was established when?

John: Inbetween 1944 and 1948.

Murray: It was built up over that period.

John: Yeah, but had an awful lot of problems and there were a lot of problems to fix up in time to get it to work after I took over.

Murray: What were some of those problems?

John: Oh, the system of pricing, determining what to pay the fishermen. And also the question of compulsory marketing came into it in those early days. Well, we did away with that and left it to the fishermen to make their decision and that's what we were at, you see, at this meeting at Canoe Lake.

Murray: Was that why you did it? That they weren't getting the response from the fishermen that you'd hoped for? What were....?

John: No. Well, it was our business to tell the fishermen what we would do for them and if they wanted, they could use the fish marketing service. If they didn't want it, they didn't have to.

Murray: Up until that time, it was compulsory?

John: In the early stage - I don't know the date, but there was some degree of compulsion. Now whether it was by areas, I don't recall.

Murray: What prompted the decision to open it up again? Do you recall any particular decisions being made or why it was made?

John: No, it was just a case of putting it across. You can't put anything across unless it's wanted for very long in this kind of a country of ours. And so, I don't know that there was any particular incident but we decided to let the fishermen decide how they wanted to market their fish. But there was this degree in it, that if the majority of fishermen on the lake decided, then all the fishermen marketed their fish, the whole catch, in that lake. There was no splitting the catch on a lake.

Murray: So it was made up by the lake, that was the unit that you had decided on?

John: Yeah.

Murray: After that point, do you think the fish marketing became gradually more acceptable to the fishermen?

John: Oh yes, yeah, very much, very much so.

Murray: Perhaps it was the compulsory aspect of it that alienated them from the program, is that a possibility?

John: Oh, I don't know. My memory is not good enough to comment on that. But they were suspicious, just naturally. They had been rooked by the white man that they were suspicious of ANY white man that came with a story of what he was going to do, whether it was government or not. And so this meant some problems.

Murray: You described that one meeting in the cabin. What other efforts were made to involve native people in trying to make decisions for themselves?

John: Well, I wasn't often involved like that, you see. It was the manager of the Fish Marketing Service would be doing this. There was a lot of it done. And he saw a lot of fishermen, and talked to them, and most of them went for it. By

this time, they had had enough experience that they went for it.

Murray: So they gradually lost their suspicion of the government once they saw the practical value of the plan?

John: Oh, yes. I think, now that you mention that, I think probably that twenty years of CCF government, this native built-in suspicion died to a greater extent than in any other period. There is still some of it, I suppose, and you don't have to go in the north to find it either.

Murray: But it was visible that it gradually got better in the years that you were there?

John: Well, yeah. I'm sure, more and more, the native people began to take the government at its word.

Murray: At least began to consider proposals.

John: Yeah.

Murray: Can you recall when you were minister if there were any particular major goals that you had set for the north or was it basically a continuation of the programs that had been started?

John: No, I really can't recall. I never was one to set major goals. I was one that believed we made progress a step at a time and that's why I often clashed with these people that wanted to have the revolution overnight. In a democracy, you can't. You do it a step at a time and that's what a few people still haven't learned. And they still want the revolution in overnight. You'll have to go to a country where they have a dictatorship to do that.

Murray: That was one of the things that seemed to be the problem in the first years in the north with the CCF was that

programs were in a large sense talk-down kinds of programs, developed not out of requests from the people but out of people looking at the situation and seeing what they thought would be good for native people. Was that what you came into, that sort of situation?

John: Well, how would you get a change in the north except suggestions coming from the top?

Murray: Oh, I realize that.

John: That's one thing, you see. So programs were thought out and developed and then tried on them to see how they worked.

And many cases where they didn't agree with the program until after they tried it. And some were found to be good and continued and some were found to be not quite as good and were changed. Turn that thing off if you want to.... (break in tape).

Murray: Back to another question that I'm interested in. Was there any political pressure from native people on the government like you might expect from farmers or labor or whatever in their interests? Was that ever noticeable in your tenure as minister?

John: Oh, yes. And of course we encouraged it, too. They used to ask to have a trail fixed up or a dam put in, this sort of thing.

Murray: Sort of piece things.

John: Yeah, this is the same kind of stuff you got in the south country, only on a different scale.

Murray: This wasn't something they would have done in 1944 perhaps...?

John: Oh, I think there was some of this. How much they got, I don't know. But I know that before 1944, the government was paying for the operation of a ferry at Ile-a-la-Crosse.

Murray: Do you think that, over the years that you were minister, native people became more, well, aggressive, if you like, in terms of putting pressure on? Did they get used to that sort of involvement with government in terms of requesting something and getting a response?

John: Oh, not by much. They were always very simple in their requests, you know. I think that is the right word.

Murray: If the answer was no, they didn't persist?

John: Well, they might argue a bit but they did it in a gentle manner, you know, and show the advantages of having this done and so forth and so on. But there was nothing in the nature of these goofy demonstrations like we see in the streets and like

we saw on the TV at Kansas City.

Murray: I tried not to watch. Was there any plan during your tenure at all to try and introduce local government into the communities in the north? There was very little at that time as I understand it.

John: Well, we did have committees at settlements where there would be a conservation officer, and these committees were in the nature of advisory committees, you see. That started and spread to quite an extent. This is like Buffalo Narrows, Ile-a-la-Crosse, Lac La Ronge, Snakehole Lake, no Snake Lake. What do they call it now?

Murray: I'm not sure. Not Deschambault?

John: No, no. Snake Lake is west of Lac La Ronge. There is a lake over there. You're so young you don't know the old name was Snake Lake and it was changed.

Murray: That's right, I've heard it referred to but I've never discovered which one it is.

John: Yeah, well I forget the new name. (laughs)

Murray: It's a large lake, is it?

John: Oh yes.

Murray: Not Nemeiben.

John: No, no, no. It's further west.

Murray: I'll find out. But these committees, do you recall when they were started? Was that before you came into the department or did they develop over a period of time?

John: I don't know. I can't answer you that question.

Murray: Were they elected committees or how was, it was a pretty informal arrangement?

John: And I don't know that. I imagine in the beginning, and this is more speculation than anything else, that the officer would probably just talk to the few that he knew to be kind of leading spirits, you see. And then later, they probably selected them themselves. Their idea didn't always just match exactly with our idea of electing a committee. (laughs)

Murray: I'm sure that's true. And the committees then would work generally with the field officer in the area? That was their contact with the government then was it?

John: Yeah.

Murray: On a normal basis?

John: Well, that would be it pretty well, yeah. And the district superintendent or the senior civil servant, when they would be around they would, I would think, meet with these committees, too. And this was one way of creating better understanding and better feeling. A field officer would say, "My boss is coming in next week. I want you people to come and meet him," you see.

Murray: And the committee would generally coincide with what would loosely be called community leaders then probably. Would that, as much as it worked?

John: It's like a rural municipal council; it could be put in that class.

Murray: They didn't actually have, it was strictly an advisory sort of capacity. They didn't take care of roads or garbage collection or...?

John: No, they had no power to do this or that. And when things were to be done, whether it was fixing a road or whatever it was, there would be some other people hired to do the job. And somebody would have the responsibility for seeing that they did it. In some cases it might just be the field officer and in some cases they might hire a straw boss.

Murray: But as far as the actual work, there was always someone paid for the job so that the committee itself was sort of, they played almost an ombudsman role to some extent too, I suppose, would it?

John: Oh yes, I would imagine so, too. Yeah, if something was going wrong like, they would tell about it. But these were pretty primitive committees, you know.

Murray: Did the people on the committees or in the villages respond to that idea pretty well? I mean, did they recognize the value of the committees and participate fairly well, as you recall?

John: Well, just to what extent they recognized value in the committees, I really don't know. And you can go out nowadays and hear people say, "Oh the government and the bureaucrats and the civil service, mumble, mumble." Don't worry. You're not appreciated yet to 100%.

Murray: It will be a long time.

John: Yeah. So I couldn't tell you how much they valued it.

Murray: But they did respond to a certain....?

John: Some of the people, yes. Some of the people did recognize them as a method that worked with some good results.

Murray: Can you recall any names of people in any of these

communities at all?

John: No, I can't.

Murray: You didn't take that many trips to the individual...?

John: No, no. I didn't see communities very often.

Murray: I would like to get back for a minute to some of the economic policies that the government first tried to implement and that's the marketing boards. Could you describe a bit, the history of those boards while you were there, what kinds of changes were made and how successful were they in accomplishing what they had been set out to accomplish?

John: Well, the first name of it in regard to fish was the Fish Board, the Fish Marketing Board. And then when we made this change in policy, we changed the name. I don't know that we changed the legal name but it was known as the Fish Marketing Service. And there is no doubt that the Fish Marketing Service did a lot of good for the fishermen in the north. One of the problems I remember we had was the fishermen from the Manitoba side of Reindeer Lake. They went over to the Saskatchewan side to sell their fish.

Murray: They thought maybe they would get a better deal.

John: Yeah, because they liked the deal better. And of course, the fishermen on these lakes weren't all native people. A good many of them were white people who had gone north, you know. And fishing was a part of their living. The trapping was a somewhat similar situation. I don't think there ever was compulsory delivery of long-haired fur to the Fur Marketing Service. There was for muskrat and beaver. Because these were the furs that you could work with on a pretty positive and successful conservation program, you know.

Murray: That was sort of the mainstay was it, of the trapping?

John: Yeah, and of course, this area was in, not in the far north but was in the forest area. When you got away to the far north, the land of little sticks, beaver wasn't very important. It was where the poplar grew and willow, for them. And they didn't have the materials to build the dams and houses with either.

Murray: What kind of progress was made in getting native people involved in the forest industry? Were there efforts in that direction?

John: Yeah. There was a mill at Green Lake which was operated by a private individual. I forget his name. Gus something or other. And it was twofold purpose, give them employment and sell the lumber. And then there were mills at other places, Ile-a-la-Crosse, Cumberland House. I don't remember one near

La Ronge there someplace. There was lots of places there was good timber. And where the chief objective, practically the only objective, was to manufacture material for local use. And in this program, they improved a lot of their houses. They had log houses and a great many of them without any floors. And one of the things they did was put floors on. Some of them put better roofs on when they had lumber. And there was logging out of Flin Flon, too. But that was more like an ordinary commercial operation...

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(Side B)

John: ...they financed the native people to go fishing. And this was one of their problems that at the end of the season, he came, and of course he got his groceries on credit from the fish dealer.

Murray: As well as his equipment.

John: At the end of the season he pretty near paid off his debt but very seldom did he more than pay it off. They had nothing left over.

Murray: It was almost a form of serfdom.

John: Oh yeah, they were in tight control.

Murray: What methods would they use to oppose a government then? Just basically propaganda among the native people against it, was that their main form of opposition?

John: Well, we give you a credit. We give you credit. Now the Fish Marketing Service started giving advances too. And we got away with this and it worked all right. But the difference was that in most cases the fisherman could pay it off and have some left over. And we introduced a plan of paying an advance price and then a final settlement after the fish were sold.

Murray: This happened as well with fur, did it not?

John: Yeah.

Murray: The same sort of initial payment?

John: Yeah, that's right.

Murray: Did the private buyers ever attempt to put pressure on the government or did they just assume that there was no point in that?

John: No, I don't remember any of them coming to me with trying to put pressure on.

Murray: The government efforts in education, from some of the

people I've spoken to, in retrospect, had a fairly disruptive effect on that sort of trapping nomadic culture. In terms of sort of forcing people to live in communities. Was that evident at the time when you became minister, that the education was having a disruptive effect on other aspects of native lifestyles?

John: Well, there were a lot of children going to these schools in the north, I know that. And that meant they weren't out on the traplines. It changed. Disruptive is - I think you could use a word there that is a little bit nicer than that one.

Murray: Yeah, I didn't necessarily mean a negative connotation.

John: It changed their way of life, which was one of the intentions of the whole program. And if they are going to maintain that way of life, there is going to be no place left for them.

Murray: Do you think it was made clear to them when the program was initiated that this would require from them a change in their lifestyle or was it just sort of a fait accompli and they...?

John: Oh, they wanted schools. They wanted education for their children, I'm sure of that. And they used to send a lot of their children to these boarding schools. And this was really the disruptive thing that broke up the family because they went.

Murray: They were gone for months.

John: Yeah, and they went back and they were little foreigners in their own homes. And used to different customs and all the rest of it.

Murray: Spoke a different language.

John: Yeah. So, I don't think there is any attempt made to deal in a philosophical way about where this would lead to. And I don't think it would have been any good to do that.

Murray: It wouldn't have made a substantial change in the final result?

John: No, I don't think so. I don't think so.

Murray: For many years, the Department of Natural Resources was really the only department that you could call active in the north.

John: Well, education. You see, they had a superintendent who specialized in the north and travelled all over the north. I knew him quite well, Harry Wall. And they had a lot of

dedicated teachers who were in the north. The Department of Health and hospitals. See, there was a hospital at Ile-a-la-Crosse, a sisters' hospital. But one of the first things that was done was build a hospital out at Buffalo Narrows, at - I forget names - Stony Rapids, and this place opposite Island Falls and La Ronge. And these were just small hospitals with four or five beds and a good nurse.

Murray: There wouldn't be a resident doctor at these? A doctor would come in occasionally but that...

John: Yeah, or the air ambulance operated you know, and they would bring patients out. Or the doctor would go in in some cases but I don't think the doctors went in very much.

Murray: The nurses handled the day-to-day sorts of problems and that.

John: Yeah. And I imagine they did lots of things that probably would have been inclined to be in the doctor's area when they had to.

Murray: What was the process that went on in cabinet to get the Department of Health and Department of Education involved? Was there any special committee that looked at the north or was it just a process that evolved through, you know, as normally would in a cabinet situation? Was there a special initiative from any ministers?

John: Well, we had two of the greatest guys that have ever been kicking around in politics and that's the Minister of Public Health and the Minister of Education, Woodrow Lloyd and Tommy Douglas. Now...

Murray: That's all you needed was that...?

John: Yeah, they didn't need much kicking to get them out and going. And they both had good dedicated staff, the Education in particular, I think. But I don't know that there was any committee to study the needs of the north. We thought we knew some of the needs of the north and I think we did.

Murray: So there wasn't...?

John: Instead of appointing a committee to talk about it for half a year, we said let's get out there and get doing it.

Murray: Because it seemed to me that in those years there was, among the general population in any case, there was quite an ignorance about it. But there was a strong feeling in cabinet then that there were problems in the north that had to be solved? It wasn't something that had to be brought to the attention of the...?

John: Oh yes, it wasn't hard to find out about it. When you knew there were so many people living up there and there wasn't

a hospital within 100 miles or 200 or 300 miles.

Murray: When did some of the other government departments begin to develop operations in the north? Besides Education, Health, and DNR? When did the Department of Co-operatives, for example, begin to become active?

John: Oh, I don't know just when but when there was a need. The need arose and partly because DNR was there. And you see, we operated this Northern Trading Corporation for some years and finally sold it to the cooperatives of the north. And this

was the intention in the first place. We tried to buy the Hudson's Bay stores in the north once. We didn't get any cooperation on that idea.

Murray: They weren't for sale.

John: No.

Murray: Was this before you started government trading or was this during the time that you...?

John: Well, I'm not sure whether this was after or before 1948. I know somebody went to see the big boss of the Hudson's Bay Company in Winnipeg and didn't get anyplace with it.

Murray: What year was that that the trading stores were changed into co-ops? That must have been towards the end of your...?

John: Oh yeah, that's all in the records. I couldn't tell you the date.

Murray: They were sort of a hybrid cooperative then were they, after this point? They weren't genuine in the sense that they were demanded by the people or encouraged by the people. Would that be an accurate statement?

John: No, I don't think it's right to call them hybrid. I think they were genuine co-ops and there are a great many people who are members of co-op now that have never asked for the co-op to come. So...

Murray: But they didn't develop in quite the same way as the co-ops in the farm areas in the south.

John: Well, I know situations in the south where a merchant sold out to a cooperative, you see. And where there was no co-op store before, they took that one over. And this was it, and this was the way it was done.

Murray: Were people pretty anxious to have those government stores? They were a positive feature in the north as far as the people were concerned?

John: Oh, I think so. I think they were very much interested

in it. Federated Co-ops got into it too, of course.

Murray: Were they involved right from the beginning of the change over?

John: I'm not sure about that. You'd have to look at the records. I don't think so. I think that came a little later.

Murray: Do you recall what the process was in changing a store in an individual place from just a store into a cooperative? What kinds of things took place? Was there a sort of a selling job to the people about the co-op or...?

John: Well, there was a general deal made and that deal... I don't know what all it included but I know it included that they were getting assistance. For example, when they paid a dollar, they got credit for two. This sort of thing. So, I can't tell you the details of that.

Murray: But they were established as legal cooperatives?

John: Oh yes, I think so. Yeah.

Murray: And so each co-op store would have a membership of some kind and board and the normal accoutrements of the co-op?

John: Yeah.

Murray: Was there any opposition to that whatsoever that you can recall from any angle?

John: Well, it's awfully hard to please the opposition, you know. They are very difficult people. This has been my experience. And I don't think the opposition ever admitted that this was done because it was the right thing. They claimed it was done to get the government out of a mess.

Murray: But as far as local opposition, I mean from the people themselves, there was no...?

John: Oh, no.

Murray: There was talk earlier on in the north, as I understand it, of what has been called the 'Single Agency' concept. When did that develop and was there a lack of coordination between the departments that sort of spread that idea?

John: Well, there was a great deal of discussion on this question. Whether it was better to have government in the north set up on the basis of function or the basis of geography. And most of our thinking and studies pointed to have it on the geography basis. And it never got done until the NDP government was back in again. Now why it wasn't done, I'm darned if I know. But...

Murray: It was proposed quite earlier on then, was it?

John: Oh yes, this was talked about and studied.

Murray: Was there any opposition to the idea? What speculation could be done on the basis of why it didn't take place?

John: Well, there are advantages and disadvantages. And there is risks in setting up one unit for the north. And some of those risks have proven themselves to be real ones. They've had real problems in some of the areas. So, but why it just sat so long before it was done, I don't know.

Murray: It was seen as quite a major job. That might have had something to do with it.

John: Yeah, I think so.

Murray: It wasn't, perhaps, a big enough priority to take on that kind of job. Would that be a reasonable...?

John: No, I don't know. I wouldn't like to say. But it wasn't done anyway.

Murray: Right. Was there, when you came into the department, an established structure in the civil service or was it pretty loose at that point in terms of the normal deputy with directors underneath him?

John: Oh yes, that was well established. And maybe there were some disruptions to that situation in that first four years through the enthusiasm, you know. But I think it was soon recognized that this kind of an organization, the departmental organization, was essential.

Murray: Mr. Phelps, having talked to him, seemed to have taken quite a personal hand often in the actual day-to-day operation of the department as it affected the north. Was your approach to the thing the same as that or...?

John: No, no. Mr. Phelps cut across these lines to a very great extent. I never saw anybody like it.

Murray: How would you describe your approach to running the department if you like, or being the political head of a department?

John: Well, I don't want to take any of the responsibility that should be carried by the deputy minister and his staff. But I do want to know what's going on and I want to see and know how the people operated and this sort of thing. That's a different thing. But he's the guy that looks after the administration. If I want it done this way, I say, "Do it this way," and he does it.

Murray: But you don't interfere after that.

John: But I don't go out and do it myself.

Murray: And you differ from Mr. Phelps in that then?

John: Oh yes, he would go out and do it, you see. And which was very frustrating to the deputy minister to find out that twenty or thirty thousand dollars spent which...

Murray: Never went past his desk.

John: No.

Murray: Well, wasn't Mr. Phelps at one time his own deputy?

John: No, no. Unless he was always his own deputy.

Murray: But not officially?

John: No, no.

Murray: What can you recall of Malcolm Norris when you were in the north?

John: Well, Malcolm was a fellow that I liked very much. And he had his headquarters in Prince Albert. He was, I think he was in charge of the Prospectors' Assistance Plan and the Native Prospectors' Plan. And we had a prospectors' school and we encouraged natives to go to this school and to do prospecting and we gave them assistance to enable them to do so. Malcolm was in charge of all of this work and Malcolm was a pretty good prospector himself too. He'd had a lot of experience in that. But he was a very nice chap. I liked him very much. I never knew Jim Brady so well. For one thing, he wasn't with the department so long while I was there. And I only saw him once or twice.

Murray: I know that Malcolm was quite often, at least according to his friends, pretty bombastic sort of fellow and always made his opinion known. Did he write to you often or...?

John: No.

Murray: Or talk to you about things he would like to see?

John: No, no. Well, he did talk to me. I can't remember that he ever wrote to me. And talking to me and making suggestions was nothing unusual. I always managed to have a staff that would do this, that would talk to me and make suggestions, which I think is very good. But I don't think he was bombastic. The things he figured he knew, he was sure about, yeah, that's right. But I always found him quite a reasonable sort of a character.

Murray: In his job, did he go beyond what his specific job was

in terms of trying to get people to accept the fish marketing and the fur marketing, that kind of thing? Was his job broader than just the assistance plan? Or did he see his job in that way?

John: Well, I don't figure he considered that part of his job. If he wasn't working for the government at all, he still didn't do any of that you see. This was his own personal belief in things. And when he thought a thing was good for them, for the native people, he would undoubtedly try to persuade them it was good.

Murray: Can you recall any particular things or programs that Malcolm talked about or that concerned him? Was there anything that he ever suggested to you that sticks in your mind that might be done?

John: No, I can't think of anything. I'm not very good at this sort of thing. I don't have a good memory at all about detailed things and so forth.

Murray: I dread the day when someone interviews me. I'm the same. (chuckles) One last question, in the eight years that you were there, what would you say that were some of the changes that you saw in the north? Not necessarily specific things, but in general. Was there a general movement in terms of a progressive movement among native people in terms of their standard of living, their attitude, that kind of thing?

John: Well, another thing that had quite an effect on the north was the question of transportation. Airways began to run regular scheduled flights. Some of them were only once every two weeks but there just weren't, practically weren't, any places that were completely isolated and let go for three months without ever seeing anybody from outside.

Murray: Which was the case before.

John: Yeah. That's right. They operated on a non-schedule. On another basis altogether. So this, the plane comes in today. The plane is coming in tomorrow, are you coming in? And they would all be at the station, or the centre where the train came in.

Murray: So it tied the northern communities to the south to some extent.

John: Yeah, it was a link in the pilots. Most of our pilots were terrific boys. Good with the native people and carry things for them, you know. Get things for them when they are out in Prince Albert and so on.

Murray: There was a pretty good sense of cooperation among all the people working for the government and...?

John: Well, I think this wasn't just our pilots either. This

is something that goes with a pioneer country, not just with the north either.

Murray: Right, it happened in the south.

John: It happened in the south in the pioneer days.

Murray: So it was a similar sort of atmosphere then?

John: And there is no doubt that some good progress was made.

(End of Side B)

(End of Interview)

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