

Jim Sinclair, Jim Durocher, and Ron Laliberte:

Métis Political Activist Interviews (April 17, 2004)

Tape 1

Start Clip: 3:05:23.26

RON LALIBERTE: Jimmy, do you have the same sort of **(inaudible)**...

(Video Tape: 3:05.25.20) JIM DUROCHER: Yes absolutely, because when I was talking a little earlier about waking up people. You know we had people that, you know, came in there like Howard Adams. I remember coming in there with Jim and you know that's when Jim first started getting involved in, at the provincial level and one of, one of the first things we had to do of course was get the North and the South together, you know somehow. Because we had a Northern, a Northern Métis organization and we had a Southern group as well, and so there was always that and it was purposefully left like that because governments wanted that division and they didn't want us to get together. And then that's when Jim, you know, came up North in 1969 I think it was, '68 or '69...

JIM SINCLAIR: Late '60s.

JIM DUROCHER: And came to organize a meeting in Ile a la Crosse. I was able to help. We didn't have any money so we set up a little dance and you know those kinds of things and, and just to help these guys a little bit with their gas and stuff like that. Jim, he came in with Howard Adams and, and talked about rights, talked about, you know, talked about those kind of issues and, you know, talked about, you know, the right to be able to control our own institutions, like our school, our education and stuff like that. And then we, we got people thinking, you know. Why have we not got any of our

kids graduating from our school. You know, they all quit at grade nine, grade ten maybe at the very most the outside. And, and, you know, we, we determined that well, because it's controlled and it's purposefully done that way. So what do we do to change it? And then, you know, that's where Howard and, you know, Jim, these guys, said well we have to get rid of the school board and we have to bring in our own, elect our own people from our own community who are thinking, you know, the same way. And then we need to develop some kind of a curriculum that's going to, you know, that's going to showcase our side of things, you know and so to speak. And so, and so we, we, we said yeah that may be a way to do it. But the awakening, you know, happened, it started to happen at that point in time and then, and then of course there was, you know, the destruction of the economy in the North, you know, where people were forced to live in communities. There was no longer nomadic to go out on the trap line.

RON LALIBERTE: This was with the CCF and centralizing everybody....

JIM DUROCHER: Yeah, yes, that's right. Yep telling everybody to stay in one spot and, and the, the, the families couldn't move with a, with a, you know, with a mother and a father on the trap line anymore you know, so they had to stay. So how are you going to live? Well, you put them on welfare. So, you know, that's, that was the thing and that was another form of control, you know....

RON LALIBERTE: That's the family breakdown too...

(Video Tape: 3:07.12.02) JIM SINCLAIR: Remember how they got us into that Jimmy? They, they said you people need running water and you need power.

JIM DUROCHER: That's exactly it.

JIM SINCLAIR: And in order to have running water and power you got to centralize your community, so people are living no more than from here to Jimmy together and the huge areas that were before they lived out and families lived together...

JIM DUROCHER: All over the place.

JIM SINCLAIR: All over the place and when they done that then the social problems started. You know, the alcohol and that because otherwise people were independent in those days but yet they worked as a community. Everybody fed each other, looked after each other and you could go to any place in those days and go to the log homes and always have a meal. People were warm, furs were all over the place. People were healthy and happy but later on it turned into a nightmare for us under the condition of trying to help us but all they wanted to do was put us in central spots so they could control the land around us.

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