

Jim Sinclair, Jim Durocher, and Ron Laliberte:

Métis Political Activist Interviews (April 17, 2004)

Tape 1

Start Clip: 3:35:16.28

JIM SINCLAIR: See the difference is we had like, like Howard and I got along, I still had a lot of respect for Howard up until his death even though he wrote some bad things about me in his books but, you know, I never ever took the respect I had away from him for what he did in terms of putting us on the right track for the whole movement. But Howard, in his own way, was a fairly wealthy man, you know, because, and one of the things I believe in, I said "Why should we work for any less than we would if we working in another job?" You know, our people deserve a fair, fair wage for a fair job. So, when we got money to pay the board of directors in our work because we paid them, tried to pay them going wages because paying them less they were stealing them away from us.

JIM DUROCHER: We considered them you know, in the same category as MLAs, or MPs. That's what they do. That's what they are supposed to do.

RON LALIBERTE: Oh sure.

(Video Tape: 3:36.05.08) JIM SINCLAIR: So we did, we paid them and that's, we felt. See Howard felt we were more in a revolution and than we were a movement and that's where we differed a bit because a revolution, when you really go to you know go to war with the guns and that. I, we used militant acts and we had militant ideas and very radical ideas but I always felt that we didn't need to die for it in that sense. You know, we could, we'd use this to move our way into getting our rights and getting our rightful place

in Canada, rather than to fight another war. We felt the Métis already fought a war in which we actually, we actually didn't lose that war in a sense. We still had the spirit there and you know, and it all became...

JIM DUROCHER: All you had to do was wake up the spirit.

(Video Tape: 3:36.56.40) JIM SINCLAIR: Wake up the spirit because there was a philosophical argument there again about, we had, you know, which really got a lot of dialogue going. Whether we should go to Ottawa and ask for a pardon for Riel, you know, and there was always this pardon for Riel and I was against it, I was against it. I said, "Why do I want a pardon for somebody who didn't do wrong?" We should be asking for a pardon from, Canada should be asking us for a pardon for what they done to us when we had legal representation in Ottawa and they took it away from us. And they took away our rights, you know, it wasn't a rebellion, it was a war, it was a resistance.

JIM DUROCHER: It was a resistance yeah.

(Video Tape: 3:37.34.26) JIM SINCLAIR: So we, we pegged it that way and I think in the end we got more out of that than we would have if we had admitted it was a, a, you know, a traitor or it was more a rebellion, you know, because I never ever believed it was a rebellion. I knew it was, it was a resistance. We were fighting for rights of our people. And we had that right for that struggle then, the struggle was squashed but it just remained dormant. It was always there, and the feelings were always there and I was surprised when I started to travel around to communities and met these people like Jimmy and others, Medric McDougall, that, that flame was always there and we're saying, "How can we get back, how are we ever going to get back?" And when we started these demonstrations and occupations and we could occupy, I remember one time when we needed to we occupied Prince Albert, the DNS in the North and La Ronge, Regina, Saskatoon, even Buffalo

Narrows, and Yorkton all in the same day. Now, how many people could do that, could put together an organization to do that? You'd think it would take days and days and weeks. We could organize it in two days. Just a few phone calls and people were there and people took their grub, and like you say, people fed each other as much as we could and looked after each other.

RON LALIBERTE: That's amazing.

JIM DUROCHER: The whole communities would come in and help.

RON LALIBERTE: You had to have dedicated people at ready, you know, who fought for what they believed in.

JIM SINCLAIR: I never, never forgot that. I've never seen anyone do that in my life. I don't think it will ever happen again. So, it wasn't a one-person leadership. It was the masses that did that.

(Video Tape: 3:39.09.20) RON LALIBERTE: There was that thread all the way back from, to 1869 in fact, 1885 and then you know, it laid dormant there but you know that spark was there once you **(inaudible)**...

End Clip: 3:39:18.23