

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: PIERRE CARRIERE  
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: CUMBERLAND HOUSE  
SASKATCHEWAN  
INTERVIEW LOCATION: CUMBERLAND HOUSE  
SASKATCHEWAN  
TRIBE/NATION: METIS  
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH  
DATE OF INTERVIEW: AUGUST 18, 1976  
INTERVIEWER: MURRAY DOBBIN  
INTERPRETER:  
TRANSCRIBER: JOANNE GREENWOOD  
SOURCE: SASK. SOUND ARCHIVES PROGRAMME  
TAPE NUMBER: IH-356/356A  
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC 73  
PAGES: 54  
RESTRICTIONS: NONE

PIERRE CARRIERE

Pierre Carriere is one of the leaders in Cumberland House. He worked closely with Jim Brady on various community projects.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- History of Cumberland House.
- Jim Brady as a leader; comparison with Malcolm Norris.
- Fishing and forest industries in the town.
- The CCF party compared with the Liberal party.
- CCF programs in the north.
- Role of the churches in the north.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Pierre Carriere is a long time resident of Cumberland and one of its strongest leaders over the years. He was a close friend of Jim Brady and worked with Jim on many community projects. In the interview he talks about the history of Cumberland House, social life as it changed from pre-war period to present; Jim Brady's role as a leader in the community; the fishing and forestry industry in the town; the CCF government and its programs; Malcolm Norris and his activities and a comparison of Norris and Brady as leaders; the effect of the war on the town and its leaders; the role of the Legion in Cumberland.

INTERVIEW:

Murray: ...when Jim first came in about 1946? 1947 maybe?

Pierre: I think it could be 1947 or 1948.

Murray: It might have been later. Yeah, maybe 1948.

Pierre: 1948, yeah, because that's the time we organized cooperative. And he was there to assist us, you know, how to organize, how to lead, how to place the leaders and stuff like that.

Murray: This was the fish co-op that he was...?

Pierre: Yeah, yeah, the local fish co-op, he helped us a great deal on that.

Murray: Was the fish co-op started before he came in?

Pierre: No, it was just come to be when he come in.

Murray: So he sort of came and announced that he was there to help set it up?

Pierre: Well, he was there to help. He didn't set it up himself but he was there to help, you see. And he gave us the way that they operate in Alberta. He gave us the points. And also we worked closely with the Department of Co-operatives. And joined together like that, you know. We knew exactly the direction where we were going.

Murray: So he was with DNR at the time but working with co-ops as well?

Pierre: Yes, yeah, he was working with co-ops and I think Jim Brady was the one that assisted us more than anybody else in the cooperative.

Murray: Was he a good man for that?

Pierre: Oh yes, definitely. He believed in that, like myself. I'm not an NDP or anything like that. I just believed in an organized system of the fisheries. That is the only way that fisheries will survive.

Murray: And you felt at the time too that the co-op was the best way for fishermen to get a decent price too, eh?

Pierre: Well, that would be one of the answers. That would be one of the answers that we thought would help us.

Murray: What was the fishing like before the cooperative was organized?

Pierre: It was pretty rough. The way that they were operating, if the price is fair, well you get a fair price. But as soon as the price goes down, you'll go down too. And you almost worked for nothing, you know.

Murray: So you never knew for sure what was going to...?

Pierre: Yeah, you were never too sure what was going to happen. Till we organized ourselves. Then we made a bargaining power, we organized a bargaining power. We were dealing with the same people, the same company but what we did, okay, you lay down your price. What you think the price we should get for our fishing operation and you don't jump the price when you started. So, this is the way it was. They never lowered the price of what we got and that's it. And we paid our bills through the local cooperative. They buy the nets and they collected from their individual members.

Murray: So people weren't on their own anymore, selling one to one. They all went through the co-op?

Pierre: They all joined through the co-op and we paid our bills through the co-op. Like we ordered a bunch of nets, then we make a distribution. Now, everybody was treated equal. Even though I might be good fisherman but I can't get any more nets than my neighbor, you know. He's got to get the same amount of nets too.

Murray: Before that it was different? Some guys would get more nets than other guys would get?

Pierre: Oh yes. If you got money, you can buy all kinds of nets.

Murray: If you haven't, you're out of luck.

Pierre: If you haven't, you're out of luck. But with cooperative, they said, "Okay, we are going to have so many fishermen and then we buy our nets and then we make distribution." And it works very good. Everybody was treated equal. Otherwise, we would get advantage on them. Like the ones that have the money most of the time to pay their equipment, you know.

Murray: Before the co-ops, did that cause a lot of tension in the community? Where some people would have money and be able to buy and other people wouldn't?

Pierre: Not really. It's mostly bargaining. That's another problem to get equipment. That's another minor problem in fisheries. But the way we work it, the companies that we deal with, they were satisfied. They said that's the best outfit we ever deal with.

Murray: The co-op?

Pierre: Yeah, the co-op.

Murray: So everybody was happy with it?

Pierre: Everybody was happy with it. The companies was happy with it because they know when they give their nets, the co-op is going to pay for them nets. And they are paid for the

equipment what they sell. They don't have to worry about anything and they are getting the fish, every pound of fish because that's the way the co-op was operating. He collected the fish and turned them in.

Murray: And then after that, they would still sell to the private buyers, eh?

Pierre: Yeah, yeah. We still sell to the private buyers. But when the government called it quits on marketing, provincial marketing fisheries, then we organized cooperative as it is now, Co-operative Fisheries in Saskatchewan. Still existing, you know.

Murray: When did the government pull out of the marketing part of it?

Pierre: In 1959.

Murray: In 1959.

Pierre: In 1959, yeah.

Murray: And when did they start the marketing?

Pierre: They started the marketing in, I believe it was around 1946 or 1947.

Murray: So they started the marketing and that's when Jim came in?

Pierre: That's where Jim came in.

Murray: Right. So, could you also sell the fish to the co-op then?

Pierre: Well, uh...

Murray: Or to the government?

Pierre: It was a compulsory program first. But that's where it hurts the government. See, they didn't have no transportation services. They didn't have proper management services. The fishermen were the ones to lose money. Not the government.

Murray: Because of the compulsory part of it?

Pierre: Because of the compulsory part of it.

Murray: And they changed that?

Pierre: Then we fought that and we won out and that's the reason why the Cooperative Fisheries was organized in Cumberland House, on it's own, so that it can bargain if there's any place you can get a better price. So when we get a better price from the private companies than this marketing

board price, then naturally that's where we sell our fish.

Murray: So after they changed it, you could still sell to the co-op or the fish marketing, but you could sell to the private people as well?

Pierre: No, after the business was changed from the Marketing Corporation, we know the value of the Cooperative Fisheries. And when the government says, "Okay, we'll sell you all your equipment for so many thousand dollars and you pay us so much a year." Something like twelve thousand dollars a year that we'd guarantee them to pay and anything above that it had to be double. If we put in a dollar they match a dollar. And we

were lucky to match a dollar sometimes. Some of the years it was very good.

Murray: So you bought the equipment from the marketing part when they closed down?

Pierre: Yeah, the provincial Marketing Corporation. And then we organized ourselves. Then this...

Murray: What year was that? I'm sorry...

Pierre: This is 1959.

Murray: 1959, right.

Pierre: Yeah, and when the meeting was called, I was advised to join the organization by the members of Cumberland House. So I did that. We worked on that and I became a board of director then.

Murray: This was your own co-op then?

Pierre: Yeah, from my own co-op to the central organization.

Murray: Oh, I see.

Pierre: Yeah.

Murray: So when the government closed down, a co-op that was locally built up, started in 1959. Is that right?

Pierre: Not exactly. I wouldn't say that. The government didn't have nothing to do with us.

Murray: No, that's what I mean. When it closed down, people themselves organized.

Pierre: Yeah, we joined the Cooperative Fisheries because there were, I think there were a few locals at that time. And they came to eighteen local cooperatives in Saskatchewan when it was built up to the height. Around eighteen locals and Cumberland was one of them, one of the eighteen. We joined on our own free will.

Murray: Right.

Pierre: We joined the cooperative.

Murray: When was it that the government changed the compulsory policy?

Pierre: I'm not too sure now, I think it was 1947 or 1948.

Murray: So it was pretty quickly after they started?

Pierre: Pretty quickly after they started because it was local fishermen were the ones that were losing a lot of money.

Murray: And the government started the program to help fishermen, right?

Pierre: Yeah, supposed to help fishermen but they didn't have no management and they didn't have no transportation service and everything was against them and therefore, the poor fishermen was the one that was losing his shirt. So it was really, politically unrest then.

Murray: Right, so people were pretty upset.

Pierre: The people of the north were very upset. You can recall in the 1948 election, it was a by-election. We know that the NDP was in power already but still we were against them in 1948. And they lost the two by-elections. You can check the records.

Murray: Right. I remember someone saying that at that time, after the CCF lost that election, that they withdrew some of the government services.

Pierre: Right.

Murray: Can you describe that for me?

Pierre: Well, that's one of them. That's one of the fisheries. And some of the companies that they build they closed them down, you know. They didn't carry on because they were losing their shirt. I mean, the taxpayers of Saskatchewan were losing out and I imagine that they had to change then. They realized that they had to change but they are coming back strong at it again, you know.

Murray: The way I heard it they closed down the marketing services because they were angry. Was that why they closed it

do you think? Or did they change because they realized the people wanted it changed?

Pierre: Yeah, the people wanted it changed. The people were against the provincial set-up. They were very much against it

because you can drive the people so long and once they start hitting back at you, there is no way you are going to correct them. Even if you try to correct the sad situation that is happening, the people will not accept it. Once they...

Murray: They are against you.

Pierre: That group of people against you, it's pretty hard to come back. The only people that come back is the ones that wasn't involved. Like there is a lot of people came back and support the NDP government. Matter of fact, Cumberland is one of them that support the NDP government shortly after that. But it's all new people, not the old original people.

Murray: So even after they changed the rules, there were people who felt suspicious of the CCF did they?

Pierre: Well, you don't trust people at all, you know. Their word don't mean a thing to you.

Murray: And no matter what the CCF did after that, people didn't trust them?

Pierre: You can't trust people. Once you are losing your shirt, you can't trust the government. Doesn't matter what kind of government you have.

Murray: Are people in Cumberland pretty cautious people when it comes to that sort of thing?

Pierre: It was at that time anyway but I don't know how they are because I'm not following the politics here.

Murray: But that's what I mean, in those days?

Pierre: Yeah, in those days I was one of the leaders and I had to be very careful what the people want and that's what I was fighting for.

Murray: Jim was described by some people as being too aggressive when he talked to people. Did you find him that way?

Pierre: No, no. I never got tired of Jim, his limelights. Because he wasn't talking about today. He was talking things about tomorrow. And I always appreciate the points that he brought up because these were the things that I had in mind too, you know.

Murray: So you were, in large part, in agreement with him?

Pierre: Yeah, I was in large part in agreement with him. No doubt we talked a lot because I'm not a yes man, you know. But to his ability, he knew that the Indian people, that is the Metis people and the treaty Indians, were going to be on the short end of the stick. He knew that all the way through and

there is only one way to change that is to keep fighting for your rights and build up something that is your own. And this is my belief and that's the way we'd been operating and we built a lot of things. That's how we built a lot of things in Cumberland House. Not too many communities have what we've got, you know.

Murray: It's a healthy community.

Pierre: You know, on account of that. Yeah, yeah, we keep on building.

Murray: And that's the message that Jim had for the people?

Pierre: That's the message Jim had. It's a long-range, everything is in the long-range program. I understand his language very good.

Murray: What kinds of things would Jim say to people along the lines you've been talking about?

Pierre: Well, the usual words he said that the only answer to a group of people is to organize themselves to try and build up an image that you deal with the government not on one voice, no doubt in one voice, but you have a leader to talk to the government and yet the people are behind you.

Murray: So he stressed leadership as being important?

Pierre: Yeah, he stressed very much leadership. And by accepting these things, we find the results was correct.

Murray: Before the war, in that period, was there leadership in Cumberland House or were people pretty much independent and working on their own?

Pierre: It was the beginning of the leadership in Cumberland. Jim came in at the right time.

Murray: People were looking for that?

Pierre: They were looking for guidance, you know, and Jim was one that guided the people in that direction. Like we started building our hospital in 1935 and it took us five years to build the log house, the hospital. Then we saved a lot of children and a lot of mothers on operating that system. And from there, of course, when the war broke out in late 1939 and in the 1940s, then things had changed. While we were building, then the young people starting to join the service. Well, up to 1941, all the young people were gone already. And these little local organizations that we built, they went down.

Murray: Because all the people active in them joined the war?

Pierre: Yeah, during the war. And there was one fellow, he was an RCMP called Chappy, he kept on collecting little monies

from the people to build the hall, like the dance hall. That's the community hall we're using right now as a post office. This is the hall we built. I was the first one to come back. Naturally, I had that experience; I was the secretary/treasurer with the hospital. They put me on the job right off the bat.

Murray: When you got back?

Pierre: Yeah, and then to take over from Marshall Chappy because he was leaving. He left in 1945 and somebody had to take over and carry on and build the hall that the people wanted, you know. So we did. We built a hall. We started building right away in 1945.

Murray: This is the recreation hall, eh?

Pierre: Yeah, the recreation hall.

Murray: Is that the Legion hall or not that?

Pierre: No, the other one. The community hall. It's, now you go down you would see a post office right beside the co-op store. That's the one that we built. And there were a lot of supporters and in no time we had enough money to build. Times were good, the price on fur was high, and the people were making a lot of money.

Murray: This is right after the war?

Pierre: Yeah, right after the war. In 1946, we started to organize a Legion. We had to build another hall. And all this time I was involved in every building right up to the skating rink. That's where I ended up. I'm not going to participate any more to help them. They'll help themselves now. (chuckles)

Murray: Right.

Pierre: All these years you know, I put in my time, my free time and I never complained. They don't pay me a cent to do that work but I kept on doing it because it was for the welfare of the community.

Murray: It sounds like even before the war, and right after the war, that there was a pretty strong community, that people worked together quite a bit. Is that right?

Pierre: Right, right. This is the beginning, but in cooperatives, Jim was the one that assisted us. Because he knew how to set up the cooperative.

Murray: He had the knowledge.

Pierre: He had the knowledge along with the, as I say, with the department. I don't want to leave the department behind because they worked hard too to organize this. The personnel of the government.

Murray: Was Jim a pretty popular man in Cumberland?

Pierre: Yes, he was very popular as far as we were concerned. Maybe some were against him but as far as the leaders, because I was one of the leaders as I said right before the war and when I came back, I was one of the leaders in the community. I appreciated Jim very much of staying in Cumberland.

Murray: Those who might have not liked him that much, can you understand why they wouldn't have?

Pierre: It's mostly, if they do - I imagine there would be very few who were against him - it's only the life, the way you are behaving. Not the progress. It's your own personal life, you know. This is the way that some people would be against Jim.

Murray: What aspects of his personal life would they not have liked?

Pierre: I couldn't tell you because I haven't heard a man yet to say that Jim wasn't a good man for the community.

Murray: Right. So as far as any work he did, he was appreciated?

Pierre: Yeah, it was appreciated very much because he also organized a timber cooperative. This is what he organized too, as well.

Murray: Could you give me some details about that?

Pierre: Yes, he put in quite a bit of money on the organization. But as you know, all these projects, especially the costly projects to start with, the government is not too anxious to help all the way. They always come close to going over the hill. Before they go over the hill, they usually stop, you see. Because it's a costly operation to go over the hill. But once you build an organization that's going to uphold the business of it, it's sad when the government is operating that way. So Jim lost his shirt. I'm pretty sure he lost his shirt because at that time when he left Cumberland, the cooperative still owed him money, the local timber cooperative still owed him money. We knew that, we still owed him money. But the local Legion organization helped Jim to leave the community. They give him money to start up.

Murray: So he was broke at the end of the timber thing?

Pierre: To me, he was broke because I happened to be one of them to agree to help Jim out so that he can find a job someplace else. And that's the time he went to La Ronge.

Murray: I gather from other people I've talked to that Jim was

quite interested in the Legion and worked in the Legion. Could you tell me about his work in the Legion or...?

Pierre: Oh yes, this is one of the reasons that he got money from the Legion. And that was a grant; that was not to repay the money. It was given to him so that he can take off. He

assisted us because we were building, at that time, and we had to get the material from the timber board and he worked in a system where we didn't have to pay very much for the lumber. Matter of fact, we cut the timber ourselves. The local boys cut the timber themselves to build the first Legion hall. But of course, that burnt now. And he was very good. One of the reasons why Jim left the government, because the government wanted to transfer him away up north. And he knew, Jim was more valuable in the frontier area than way back in Uranium City. This is where he was going to be sent.

Murray: Did he think they wanted to get rid of him?

Pierre: I couldn't see why they should get rid of him. I couldn't see - because he had education, he had experience, how to work with the people. I couldn't see how they wanted to get rid of him.

Murray: He never mentioned that they were after him or they wanted to force him to quit? Did he ever talk about that at all?

Pierre: No, he didn't talk to me about that but he didn't like where he was going to be sent to. He says, "I'm no good down there. I want to be in the frontier area where the society are moving."

Murray: Progress.

Pierre: It was a frontier area.

Murray: Right.

Pierre: And that's progress, you see. That's the reason why it's frontier area. And the progress can overrun the local people, especially when their lack of education and lack of business knowledge and stuff like that. They could be overrun and this is where Jim belonged. He knew that he should be there; he should be working with the people so that they are not overrun.

Murray: Right. When you say that he always encouraged people to organize and fight for their rights, would he talk to people, sort of go and have coffee with them and talk to them or would he call meetings? How would he get this message to people?

Pierre: Oh, sometimes we had the gathering in his home. And of course, that is the department buildings. He used to call me to

go down there and we'd discuss things. And sometimes we discussed things together, like him and I, how to approach things. I was very close to him no doubt because he was the same kind of person like I was.

Murray: He thought the same.

Pierre: Yeah, he believe the same and he come from a poor family and naturally, I am too. And what his beliefs were, that is my beliefs, to try and help ourselves.

Murray: Right. Could you describe him as a person, the way you knew him? What things do you remember about him? What kind of man was he?

Pierre: He was a very good man as far as my books goes. As I say, he was one of the best field officers that we had. I'm not saying that he is best, but he was one of the best. No doubt, Cockwell I guess, Gordon Cockwell might have rated with him. In regards to the community affairs, to build up the community, you know.

Murray: Was he a sympathetic man? Was he the kind of person who not only did his job but would help people who were in trouble?

Pierre: Oh yeah, he would give you his last shirt. That's the kind of man he was.

Murray: Did he do that quite a bit? Did people go to him for help?

Pierre: Oh yeah, he did that. I'm sure he helped a lot of people from right out from his pocket. Well, even the organization, like the timber cooperative and he spent a lot of money in there.

Murray: His own money?

Pierre: His own money. He didn't get it back.

Murray: The timber co-op, did the government give any assistance to that?

Pierre: Yes, they helped but maybe you don't take what I meant.

Murray: To a point they would help.

Pierre: The government will help to a certain point. But that's nowhere near enough in regards to timber, timber operations. Because everything is against you. Breakdowns, unforeseen problems that going to rise, you know. This is always come up in the timber operation; there is always a breakdown. And I'm sure if this thing would have developed and government would keep heeding and Jim was to manage this, they

would make success. They would make success. They would have come on top. But the government quit before it came over, over the top.

Murray: You just needed to get to that certain point and then you would be able to go it on your own?

Pierre: Yeah, yeah, this is the idea. Sometimes you cannot recognize the value of the resources, you see. You underestimate the value of the resources, and timber operations is one of them. Because it costs money to build up an operation, a timber operation. But once you build up, once you don't have to pay back any amount of money that you owe, you are bound to go ahead. But when you are paying back what you owe, you got nothing for the members. And the members will fold up on you, you know. They are starting to quit on you because they cannot make their decent living on it. And this is what happened.

Murray: Did the people in Cumberland tell the government that they needed more help? How did they keep this going? Did they organize?

Pierre: Oh yes, they did. They did and the people folded up. They called it quits. They told the government they wouldn't operate any more.

Murray: Once the government wouldn't help.

Pierre: They can't make a living. They can't make a decent living out of it. They were just losing their shirt, you know. It's hard work but there is money in it. Once you make the people work. This is the best part of these operations, you know. You build people. Just for example, the farming development in Cumberland House. It's not the people that started, that's going to make it.

(End of Side A)  
(Side B)

Murray: ...going to help them or was there a suspicion of the government and what it was doing?

Pierre: I wasn't here when they elected the NDP.

Murray: But about 1946 or 1947 when they started bringing the programs in?

Pierre: When they were starting to bring the programs, when they were hitting in 1947, when most of us had to go to Manitoba to get employment and there was nothing in Saskatchewan, well you got to look down on the government. That's all there is to it. Because he has got nothing for you and you're still paying taxes. And therefore, we knew that the government, the NDP government, wasn't the answer for our goals at that time.

Murray: So people weren't that friendly with the CCF then?

Pierre: Well, even in 1948 you know, they were very much against them.

Murray: Was that partly because they thought the CCF wasn't listening to them, was that part of it? Or was it something different?

Pierre: Well, the compulsory schemes. That was, I think, the main problem. Because when the government is starting to push you around and says, "Do as I say," now the people are having a hard time and react back on you. "Oh, to hell with you, we are not going to do as you say."

Murray: Was this compulsory thing involved in the fur marketing too?

Pierre: Right.

Murray: Could you describe that a bit, what they tried to do?

Pierre: Well, they took the fur and they collected a certain amount for development. And we were paying for development. And that was compulsory. And we had to turn our furs to the government. And that was bad. That was bad too because there was very little development within the community.

Murray: Did they establish the block system too, was that something they did?

Pierre: Well, this is the joint program.

Murray: With the federal government?

Pierre: With the federal government because they had to agree because there is so many treaty Indians in the northern area. They had to bring in the federal government to agree with this block system.

Murray: Did people understand these programs, like the block system? Did the government make an effort to explain these things or did they just sort of drop them on the people and say this is how it's going to be?

Pierre: Yes, we were hurt very much again in the block system in Cumberland because we had a huge trapline where there was a lot of communities around us at that time and we had to have a big area. And I believe we lost tons of trapping ground and we couldn't get it back. And Cumberland was hurt very much on that.

Murray: Which trapping area was this?

Pierre: The northern part and the southern east part was taken over.

Murray: They were just taken over by the government?

Pierre: Yeah, they were.

Murray: What happened to them?

Pierre: Well, they would make another blocks.

Murray: For other people?

Pierre: For other people. They just took our trapline. As a matter of fact, some people went to court because they went in the same place that they'd been trapping for all their lives, you know, and they went back in there and they had to go through court. And they paid a fine.

Murray: For going on their old trap lines?

Pierre: For going to their trap lines. And that really hurts, you know. And you know how the people can raise things up to

make it big and make it worse. But as far as I'm concerned, any organization set up to control these is the only answer. In regards to trapping and hunting, you've got to have a set up; you got to have a system.

Murray: So the system they were setting up was a good system but the way they set it up was wrong was it?

Pierre: Yeah, it was wrong. The way they set it up, it was wrong. The set up was right but the way they set it up. You know how some people are. They don't consult you.

Murray: They tell you.

Pierre: They just tell you. That's the kind of people that they had at the time. Hell, these people are better educated and maybe they thought they were better trappers too, but that wasn't the point.

Murray: What was Jim's role in this thing, did he try and explain to people what the government was trying to do?

Pierre: Well, Jim worked hard to explain the set up. And that's the reason why we liked him very much. That's one of the reasons why. Because he would keep on trying to explain. If you don't understand him one way, then he will turn it the other way to explain to you. Well, that's the way this set up had to be.

Murray: He was a patient man with people?

Pierre: He was a really patient man, I'd say that.

Murray: Did he like people? Was he the kind of person who liked to talk and liked to be with people and have friends?

Pierre: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. Especially his own kind. He liked his own kind a lot.

Murray: He'd fit into the native culture really well?

Pierre: Oh yeah, very, very good. As a matter of fact, he was better than Malcolm Norris in regards to organizing, organized the people.

Murray: He was closer to the people than Malcolm, eh?

Pierre: He was very close to the people.

Murray: How would you compare him to Malcolm? Describe Malcolm in his approach? How did he approach people?

Pierre: Jim had the business knowledge. I guess he was a secretary or something like that in Alberta, you know. And he knew the business.

Murray: How to organize, how to set up.

Pierre: How to organize and how to build up that organization. You know, he was well experienced with that.

Murray: And Malcolm, how would you describe him? What kind of things was he good at or not so good at?

Pierre: Well, Malcolm was a rather a militant type of a person.

Murray: More aggressive than Brady?

Pierre: More aggressive. He would fight, you know. He'll agitate. He'll keep on fighting whether he's right or wrong. And Jim wasn't built that way. He would try and do his best to work for the people but he will not try and convince you if you disagree with him that he is right and you are wrong.

Murray: He'll try and find the middle ground or something, eh?

Pierre: Yeah, he tried to find the middle ground.

Murray: And Malcolm would keep...?

Pierre: Would keep at you and say, "This is the way it should be run." And that's the way I found him. I find it too (inaudible).

Murray: And do you think most people saw them that way?

Pierre: I couldn't tell you. I couldn't tell you just because the reason why that I associate with them both because I believe in an organization and to convince the people that they have to pull up their socks, you know, to try and help themselves. This is my way and Jim was that way too. You work hard for what you want.

Murray: Did Jim ever talk to people about being proud of their native ancestry? Was that something he talked about?

Pierre: Oh yeah, very, very much so. He was very strong that Louis Riel was the right man. He was the right leader although he was a selected leader because he had the education, you know. But what Louis Riel did was the right thing.

Murray: He talked about that quite a bit, eh?

Pierre: He talked about that. He said we lost the battle and naturally the people will suffer and that's the way it is. There is nobody that can deny that. The Metis people are in the short of the stick.

Murray: But he always encouraged people to keep fighting, was that his...?

Pierre: Yeah, but he kept telling them, "The only way that you are going to survive is to keep at it."

Murray: Organize.

Pierre: Not in a militant way, but in an organized business way. Because he believed in business.

Murray: Doing things in a systematic way.

Pierre: Yeah, yeah. To go and talk business to the people you are going to deal with. And this is one of the reasons that we make success, because we bargained. He says, "You got a bargaining power in here in fisheries. You can bargain with any one of these people." So we bargained with the provincial fish marketing and we also bargained with a private company, one other private company. Why not?

Murray: Jim was very active in Alberta, of course, in the Metis Association there. Did he talk to the people who were in Cumberland about the need for that kind of organization in Saskatchewan at all?

Pierre: Yes, yes. This is the reason why that I remember that he was talking in that line about Louis Riel and how to develop, to try and build up ourselves more strong so that we can deal with the government.

Murray: Right. Did he ever mention that name, a Metis Society or anything like that? Did he talk about it in those terms?

Pierre: Well, usually - he speaked French, you know. And he wouldn't say Metis, he would say Le Metis, accent on the last.

Murray: That's the right way, Metis.

Pierre: Metis. A word I heard him use a lot in English is

halfbreeds.

Murray: Right.

Pierre: Breeds. And he used this term a lot.

Murray: Because that's the word they used, that the halfbreeds themselves used, isn't it?

Pierre: Yeah. It's the halfbreeds and breeds. Part Indian and part French or part English or part Scotch.

Murray: Right.

Pierre: It doesn't make any difference to him.

Murray: Did he ever actually organize a Metis Association in Cumberland?

Pierre: No, no,...

Murray: He talked about it but didn't actually...?

Pierre: He talked about it and then we organized it ourselves.

Murray: When was the first one organized? Do you remember what year that would have been?

Pierre: Gee, that I couldn't tell you. I think around the late 1950s I think, or early 1960s. Sometime in that time.

Murray: Was it organized completely by Cumberland people or was that the time that Malcolm Norris came through and started helping?

Pierre: Malcolm Norris came through and, as a matter of fact, I think he was one of them that started to organize.

Murray: So it was with Malcolm that it first started?

Pierre: With Malcolm, yes, it first started. I'm pretty sure it was Malcolm.

Murray: In other places in Saskatchewan, it was about 1964. Does that seem about right to you or..?

Pierre: That's about right. It would be the early 1960s that they organized themselves.

Murray: Can you remember the first time he came through talking about that? Did he call a meeting or just talk to a few...?

Pierre: Yeah, he called a meeting. We had a meeting and we joined. I joined the Metis Society too when it come there.

Murray: Were there quite a few people at that meeting?

Pierre: Not too many. Because that's the way it goes, you know. There are never too many people in meetings.

Murray: How many? Maybe a dozen do you think?

Pierre: Oh, more than that.

Murray: More than that, eh.

Pierre: Yeah, more than that. It could be about 40 or 50 people attend to that, to those meetings. And then I was picked up for one of the local leaders and I joined and I became, I went up to the board of directors but my health was very poor at that time and I had to be very careful not to overwork myself because I had this blood deal on my veins and...

Murray: Blood clot...?

Pierre: Yeah, through the lungs and heart. The doctor told me that I was sick, you know.

Murray: So you had to take it easy.

Pierre: I had to take it easy and I slowed down a lot and so that progress slowed down when I slowed down too, myself. Because I never believed to be a militant. I've always believed that we should, no doubt, fight for our rights but in a business way. Start at a table and discuss the matter, how it could be solved.

Murray: Do you think it's true to say that the northern people are not a naturally militant people?

Pierre: No, I don't think so.

Murray: That they would shy away from that?

Pierre: Yeah. Especially the mixed blood people, part French or part Scotch, men like them. You see, they can associate with both sides and I don't think these kind of people will ever be a militant people.

Murray: But they will be a people who will see the benefit of organizing?

Pierre: Oh yeah, yeah. I could see the benefits myself. That's how we got this old folks home in Cumberland. Through my ability because I went to Ottawa on my own expense to deal with them people in Ottawa so that we can get money to build an old folks home. And through me that we got that when I was the director. The president, Jim Sinclair, said - well, I was the boy that worked hard to get this project going. And he said, "The first person to build an old folks home, that's where we should have started." And I says, "No, you don't start it in Cumberland. We start it where we lost out," I says. "At Duck

Lake. That's where we lost the battle," I says. "Let Duck Lake start the project first and then I'll take second."

Murray: And that's the way it happened, eh?

Pierre: And that's the way it happened, the way I suggested.

Murray: Yeah, right. Do you remember, getting back to Malcolm Norris a little bit, how many times he would have visited Cumberland during that period that the Metis Society was being organized?

Pierre: He has been around quite a bit but it's pretty hard to build a strong organization to start with. You got to build slowly.

Murray: A slow process.

Pierre: It's a slow process. Now, you are changing the people, you know. You're changing the society and that's a big job; that's not a small job.

Murray: The society idea, the Metis Society idea was completely new to people at that time was it?

Pierre: Yeah, it was new to the people. But they had an idea that these people were behind in progress. You know, and a lot of them people living in the road allowances down south.

Murray: Right.

Pierre: They didn't have no place to live. They were pushed to the road allowance and that's pretty darn rough when you...

Murray: You got no place to go.

Pierre: When you start to think of the way you treat the original Canadian people you know. You push them around.

Murray: And is that the kind of talk that Malcolm would talk as well? About the original Canadian people and pride?

Pierre: Yeah, yeah, to have a pride so that you don't be pushed around to the road allowance. I seen that. I seen that myself because I was there, you know.

Murray: This was in the south was it?

Pierre: That's in the south, not in the north. In the north there...

Murray: There were hardly any roads so...

Pierre: Well, we were equal to anybody because we worked just as hard as anybody else to make a living. But down there, when you are caught and squeezed out from the land you live in, when

agriculture take over the land, you got nothing. You got nothing.

Murray: This was the area where, around St. Louis and Duck Lake and St. Laurent...?

Pierre: A lot of them places, yeah. A lot of them places where it used to be a very good resource area.

Murray: Trapping and that sort of thing?

Pierre: Trapping and fishing, these are the places the Indian people went to. See, a lot of these people that you see now are like ourselves. It started from Winnipeg. They started pushing out from Winnipeg. And a lot of the people's relatives are down there. If you take a look at the telephone book, you find names that we use in here are used down there.

Murray: So a lot of the people from Cumberland were originally from the area where Louis Riel had...?

Pierre: Yeah, to start with, yeah. And these people says, "Oh to hell with you. We can go and make a living someplace else. We don't have to live in here if we're not wanted. We don't have to live in here." So they take off. But these are the working class people and they built the working class people in Cumberland, you know.

Murray: So they came to Cumberland with a consciousness of being halfbreed people and having a background and a history?

Pierre: Right, right. Yeah, they knew that.

Murray: Do you think most of Cumberland's population had origins in those kind of people or were some from north as well?

Pierre: Yeah, very few from the north. They migrated from south mostly.

Murray: So a lot of people here had their origins in the Manitoba area at the time of Louis Riel?

Pierre: Yes, that's the time of Louis Riel.

Murray: So the people here would have similar names maybe to the people in Batoche and Duck Lake and that, 'cause they are the same people as well.

Pierre: Right, yeah, they were the same people there.

Murray: Do you think there was ever really a problem in Cumberland of people feeling proud about their background? Do you think that people always had a certain pride in being halfbreed people and knew their history or did that get lost sometimes?

Pierre: Well, to us we were educated on that and I always been proud. Even when I went to the service, I been always proud. And that's the reason why I became a leader too in the war.

Murray: Right.

Pierre: Just on account of my pride.

Murray: Naturally, it was a natural thing.

Pierre: It was a natural thing. I say, "Well, by gosh, if you can go down there, I can do it too." You know, the idea. Always the same. If you can do it, I can do it. You know, you have that pride to...

Murray: It gives you self-confidence.

Pierre: Yeah, it gives you self-confidence, as you're just as good as the next man.

Murray: Do you think that that was generally the feeling of people in Cumberland? The same as you, or were some people not the same?

Pierre: Some of them, some of them people didn't give a darn. And this is the reason why it's a slow progress.

Murray: So some people felt they weren't as good as the next person, is that right?

Pierre: Well, it's that way. You see that they didn't want to go ahead and build up the community.

Murray: Were they frightened, do you think, of trying?

Pierre: If I would continue to be the leader, things would have been changed a darn sight more than what you see today. Because I would have people to work with me, that kind of people that I mentioned like myself. "If they can have this, if Jones can have these, follow the Joneses, you know." That type of people. Well, every race is like that.

Murray: Some people have the initiative.

Pierre: Yeah, some people have the initiative. And this is the reason why too, that our tourist business, holding on, even that we were knocked out by the mercury contamination. We couldn't get people in the summertime to come and fish. For a period of time there, we were knocked out of business. While we were building up, then all of a sudden mercury contamination hits Cumberland area, you know. And that affected our flying camps that we built at that time.

Murray: Things are back to normal now though, are they or are they still...?

Pierre: Not, still, it still isn't. Still is bad. The fish marketing is bad yet. We can't even sell our goldeye fish.

Murray: But is the mercury gone now or is still there?

Pierre: No, it's still there. They check our fish every once in a while. Every year they check our fish, you know. Still the mercury is there.

Murray: Is it getting better or...?

Pierre: Well, actually the water is a lot better than what it was a few years ago. Between the 1960s and 1970s or late 1970s was the worst. You couldn't even make tea in the springtime. All that chemical that was floating down the river, you know. You couldn't drink that water. It was so strong. Even if you boiled it, it still didn't help.

Murray: It still didn't help.

Pierre: It was bad. But now, you can boil tea now.

Murray: I wanted to get back to the Metis Society a bit. Did it grow slowly? It did pick up, did it? Did it pick up members or how did that work?

Pierre: It did pick up a great deal when I resigned from participating from the directorship. I resigned myself out so I wouldn't compete to be elected and we had a pretty strong organization. But again, like Jim Sinclair, he was a militant type of personality, you know. And we didn't agree with him. At that time, we didn't agree with him. We didn't believe to be a militant, to be against certain society. We don't believe in that because I fought for this country, for freedom. So that everybody be equal. And this is my belief and I couldn't go along with Jim's idea at all. So that's part of the game that I resigned and so there was a lot of followers...

Murray: That resigned as well?

Pierre: Who resigned as well.

Murray: What kinds of things did Jim say that you would classify as militant? That people didn't like? Did he attack the church at all?

Pierre: Oh, yes. Naturally, this is a militant look. They discriminate the church system and they discriminate the political system. The way that our government is operating. They are always against...

Murray: Against the government?

Pierre: Against the government.

Murray: Were they, did they ever talk against the white man,

all white men, or was that part of what they did?

Pierre: Well, it's part of their system. Like their belief is no doubt, there is very little change to have the true Canadians. We are still the colonial, there are still a lot of colonialists in Canada. It's still very bad. There is very few true Canadians yet that believe in united, to unite Canada as a nation, you know. There are still very strong colonialist type of people.

Murray: Would you describe Malcolm as a militant in the same way that Jim is?

Pierre: No, I don't think so. I think Malcolm was aggressive more in militant type. Because he advocates so and so does that. And it's mostly the white people that he talked about but you didn't hear Jim say very much of that. He always working in a way that to talk business, that you had to prepare to be in business.

Murray: This is Brady?

Pierre: That's Brady.

Murray: Can you remember any of the meetings that Malcolm was at? What might he have gotten up and said? If he had got up and talked to people, what do you remember him saying in those meetings?

Pierre: Well, I wouldn't say very much about them because it's quite a while, you know. And I start to forget now because it didn't mean nothing to me, very much, what he said.

Murray: Because it was new to you too at the time was it?

Pierre: Yeah, that's right. It wasn't very much then.

Murray: Did he give sort of pep talks to people about organizing and winning better conditions? Would that be part of what he would say?

Pierre: Oh, yes. Oh naturally. That's part of his game too. To go on with the same organization they had in Alberta and to make better improvement in Saskatchewan.

Murray: Did he bring that Alberta experience up? Did he talk about that?

Pierre: Yeah, he talked a lot of that. Jim usually talked a lot about histories.

Murray: In Alberta?

Pierre: In Alberta. La Biche, you know. Lac La Biche.

Murray: So they would use the Alberta experience as examples

to persuade people, would they? Is that what they did?

Pierre: Yeah, yeah, like just one example, like what I am saying about Jim in here. He was telling us when they first organized, how they were beat out in these private deals that they made in the United States. They lost their... I don't know whether it's a carload that they lost out. Because they weren't that careful of security. And we had that experience too in Cooperative Fisheries. We lost \$60,000 worth of fish one shipment.

Murray: How did that happen?

Pierre: Well, that's the way it is.

Murray: Somebody just stole it, did they?

Pierre: Yeah, they knew that you weren't doing the right thing for security and they took advantage of it. So I had both experiences on that and this is what Jim usually talked about. He says, "You've got to make sure that you make a good security in here, that you don't lose out."

Murray: Right, he was always talking about being careful in the business way.

Pierre: Yeah, this is the way he talked, you know. That's his talk; that's Jim Brady's talk. But Malcolm talks different. He organized through the Metis people and so and so government is not operating. He was more or less a political type. Malcolm was more or less the political type of person than Jim.

Murray: Malcolm would be the one who would push for a Metis Society or organization harder than Jim, would he?

Pierre: Yeah, well, Malcolm will say, "We'll support the NDP." But you'll never hear him to say to support the Liberal party. No way that he will support the Liberal party. But he'll support the NDP. So you can tell from there where he stands, you know.

Murray: So he was openly for the NDP?

Pierre: Yeah, he was openly for NDP.

Murray: And Jim would never talk about that?

Pierre: And Jim would never talk about politics. Never talked politics to me.

Murray: Do you think Jim felt that all the parties, that none of the parties...?

(End of Side B, Tape IH-356)

(Side A, Tape IH-356A)

Murray: You just mentioned, Pierre, that you remembered the first time that Malcolm was organizing. Could you recall that for me?

Pierre: Yes, I believe it was 1964, right after the Liberals got in power. And they were very anxious to organize and they were really fighters against the Liberal party. The same like Howard Adams. You don't hear of Howard Adams any more in Saskatchewan since the NDP got in power again. I'm pretty sure Malcolm would have done the same thing.

Murray: I see, so you think it was because of the Liberals being elected that prompted Malcolm to start organizing, eh?

Pierre: Right, right. This was his idea. And he made successful of it because they really discriminate the Liberal party. If you recall, him and Jim Sinclair and a farmer union, I think, leader dished out flour in the province, in the northern part of Saskatchewan. They didn't have to do that because at that time the social welfare was pretty strong and nobody was starving.

Murray: This was in 1964 they distributed this flour?

Pierre: Yeah, yeah, right after 1964. They got on together to try and discriminate the Liberal party.

Murray: The Liberal party, were they tougher on welfare than the CCF? Did they try and get people to go off welfare? Do you remember that at all?

Pierre: I couldn't recall because I didn't follow up very closely but since you asked me these questions and I thought well, that I find them different. They were different people altogether. They got together and I guess they really wanted to hit the Liberal party and they did make successful of it.

Murray: How did people here feel about the Liberal party or about politics in general? Did they pay much attention to Liberals and NDP and that sort of thing?

Pierre: Not so much as before but since recently now the people of the north are going to start participating in politics. Again that we have too much outsiders. Even the foreign people get into politics and they run our country. I think in the future the true Canadian people will certainly get into politics because some of them are highly educated at this time. They know what's going on.

Murray: In the period just after the war, which is the sort of the start of the period I'm interested in, did people participate much in elections? Did they believe what politicians say? How did they view the politicians in those days?

Pierre: I think at 1944, when the Liberals were knocked out, especially in the northern area, I think at that time, I was told that the NDP was using a lot of them in armed services. They said to the people, I know I've been told quite a few times from different people, that there was no reason for us to go to war. And this is the argument they used and they win a lot of ground on that, by using that method.

Murray: So they were against the war, against Canada being in the war?

Pierre: They were against the war but they are not any better themselves. They are just... talk is only talk.

Murray: Right.

Pierre: But it doesn't mean nothing in one way. They are just misleading the people, that's all. When it comes to a showdown to defend your country, there is nothing stop you because most of the wars that have developed is through dictatorship, the group of people that want to take over the world. World domination, like. That's real bad. That's a really bad situation.

Murray: So you felt that you should have gone and fought in the war?

Pierre: Well, definitely. Definitely the two wars that I know of I think the boys did the right thing to join to defend their country because if they didn't, if England and the other part of the country, Europe, lost out completely, then we would have had to fight to defend our side. So it didn't make no difference. But it was real nice for, I believe, for when the boys went and fought to meet the dictatorship or whatever you are going to call it, in their homeland because there was no destruction at that time in both countries, United States and Canada. As a matter of fact, war developed the country.

Murray: Right. Did Jim Brady ever talk about the war?

Pierre: No, no, he didn't talk about the war so much. Sure, he went to the war himself. But to talk about the war, that he shouldn't go and it was a mistake, he never...

Murray: He didn't agree with that, do you think?

Pierre: I never heard him talk because any person that uses that language, usually I argue with them right away. Even that I was wounded twice and still I'll suffer the rest of my life on account of my wounds.

Murray: Right. Brady was wounded as well at the war?

Pierre: I don't know if Brady was wounded. But if I hear people saying that, using that kind of words in front of me, I can...

Murray: That gets you going.

Pierre: That gets me going and I don't think Brady and I ever argued about the war. I doubt very much that we ever argued too much.

Murray: So as far as you know, he was in favor of going to fight in the war?

Pierre: I wouldn't say that. I wouldn't say that. Maybe he didn't want to talk about war in front of me because...

Murray: Because he knew your position.

Pierre: Yeah, he knew my position. As a matter of fact, I was the last one in the family to join in the service. The rest of my brothers were gone already.

Murray: Getting back to the political parties a bit, just after the war, were people participating in the parties? Were there many people here who actually had memberships in the Liberals or the CCF party or did they not pay much attention to them?

Pierre: I think there were some NDP memberships. I think there were NDP memberships in 1948 election. But as far as to know about the Liberal party, I don't think the people of Cumberland ever participated to support the Liberal party like they did the last election. There was quite a few memberships.

Murray: More in the Liberal party in this last election?

Pierre: Oh, more, more members in the Liberal party.

Murray: What used to happen in the elections? How would the parties, what would they do when they came to Cumberland? The candidates?

Pierre: Well, at that time it was mostly that by-election. And we knew who was in power and that's the only time that we were really against the NDP party with this compulsory and kind of a communistic type of programming, you know, and forcing the people, "You must do this. We are in power now," and stuff like that. They didn't listen at all. I think they got the lesson and they got the message when, in the 1948 election, they were pretty sure they were going to take the two seats in the northern area. But they sure didn't.

Murray: They lost them both?

Pierre: They lost them both, yeah. And on account of that, they lost them both.

Murray: Do you think if more native people had been involved in the party that things would have been different?

Pierre: Oh, I think so. I think you'll find it, as I say, you'll find it quite a difference in years to come. There will

be some Indian local people will participate in different parties. I'm not stating that the NDP is not going to get their fair share of the Indian people. I think they will get a fairly good share of the memberships that are going to arise. And there will be Indian people that will participate to try and get into, in MLA or MPs. This is a beginning.

Murray: Do you think that people are more confident now than they have been about that sort of thing?

Pierre: I wouldn't say they didn't have confidence. It's on account of education. Because a lot of people will knock down the missionaries in education, you know. Perhaps you heard about it, that the missionaries were doing wrong with the education in the north. These are the people that brought in education, that forced the government to get involved in the education system in the northern part of Canada. It's mostly the Anglican and the Roman Catholic missionaries. Because these are the ones that were building boarding schools. But again, and I say before to you, that it's a slow process, eh. Because the Indian people didn't believe the value of their children to be educated. Like, I was educated more or less through the missionaries. The government didn't spend very much money on me to be educated and when I went to war I knew the setbacks that I would, I had or if I had the education. Because I had the ability to become a leader in the battle-field and...

Murray: And that was because of your education, eh?

Pierre: Yeah, it was the education that hold me down. And when I came back, I knew that right away, that any of my children that are going to be grown up, they are going to be educated. This was my thought all the time.

Murray: That was in your head all the time?

Pierre: Yeah, all the time. I says, they will be educated to meet the society. Now, I don't know whether you've heard about my family but the first girl that we put through, we had to start from grade ten and up to send her out. And she had a pretty rough time because we had to find out the cheapest place where she could enter school, we could afford. And furthermore, when she went to university, I had to scratch the dollar to put her through.

(break in tape)

Pierre: ...in high school and university.

Murray: Did Jim ever talk about the importance of education?

Pierre: Oh definitely. Definitely. This is what Jim Brady

believes, that in order to compete and get into society, the young children have to be educated.

Murray: Did he talk to young people too about that?

Pierre: I wouldn't say he talked to young people about that but we often talked about it, like myself.

Murray: Yourself.

Pierre: When he was with me and if I go and visit him, we talked about everything. How the Indian people should develop and help themselves.

Murray: Can you remember any of those conversations or what kinds of things would come up most often? What kinds of things would you talk about?

Pierre: It's mostly business. Because Jim Brady....

Murray: Jobs and...

Pierre: Jobs and... Jim Brady was very much a business-minded person you know. And I guess that's the reason why that he was more or less business-minded, on account of his secretary work. And I was doing a lot of secretary work too for the community. Even secretary/treasurer work.

Murray: He was a well-organized sort of person was he?

Pierre: Yeah, yeah. This is what I've been doing too. Right from the start because I was educated enough to be placed as a secretary/treasurer when we first built our hospital, and from there I took that work. And I learned as I go on you know. And pretty soon, I knew more in education through that development than the time I went to school. I knew that I was more educated.

Murray: Did Jim ever talk about... I've heard other people say that he sort of saw among native people in northern Saskatchewan, two different groups of native people. One he called nomadic and the other he called progressive. Whereas the nomadic native person liked to live in the bush and didn't want

to get an education or change much and the progressive person wanted to get ahead in society. Would you say that that's true? In those days, anyway, that people fit into one of those two sort of categories?

Pierre: Well, this is what happened when the people like my age are not educated. They don't understand education. And there is a hell of a lot of them in the northern part of Canada. I used to go out to the meetings, the fishermen's meetings. When I see young people, young married men, a little younger than I am, when they signed X in their cheques, you know, I used to feel pretty bad about that case because that shouldn't be. A rich country of ours, that shouldn't take

place. The government should be more active because they know if they don't educate people, they are going to have trouble with them. And the taxpayers are going to pay the shot. And this is what is taking place right now. The taxpayers are paying the shot for those people that cannot compete in this society.

Murray: Welfare.

Pierre: Yeah, they end up welfare. Because as the way that progress goes, you are starting to deplete, even we are depleting fish right now. Nobody catching very much, depleting the fish.

Murray: So the land isn't supporting the people as much anymore?

Pierre: It's not supporting as much as it used to. I can't say now, "Well, I'll live off the land. Never mind the welfare." I can't say that. I can't say that anymore because if I do, I'm just kidding myself because the resources, what we had as before, it's not there. It's pretty well depleted in a lot of places.

Murray: Do you think the coming of hunters from the south has helped that, has made an effect on that too?

Pierre: No, not to cause serious problems.

Murray: Just a small effect maybe?

Pierre: It's a very small effect. What the problem we have in regards to big game is the timber wolves. These are the predators that have controlled big game before and now they are not wanted in our society. We don't need timber wolves to take care of the...

Murray: Of the overpopulation.

Pierre: Of the overpopulated game. Because the hunters can take care of that. And again, these treaty Indian rights is one of the disgraceful and harmful things that ever took place. That means you can go and kill the game 365 days in a year. Well, it's the same with timber wolves. Now we had people from south, the treaty Indians and that never heard about Cumberland, they come and hunt in here because that's where the game is.

Murray: And they can hunt without restriction?

Pierre: They can hunt without restriction. Now, with our hunters we have from down south, that's the only customers we had. That's before. Because the Canadians don't hire people as a guide, you know. They don't hire as a guiding business. They don't believe that we should have more rights in game in the northern area than they do because they are Saskatchewan residents. They believe that it's theirs.

Murray: They go out themselves?

Pierre: They go out themselves and they said, "Kick all the Americans and all the Europeans out. We don't want them. That game is for us."

Murray: But as far as you're concerned, the Americans will hire guides.

Pierre: Okay, okay, when we were told this by the administrators, by the provincial government administrators, I said right away, "That's fine. You can do that. You can cut us off but that's going to be the easiest way out to knock us out of business. Because you are going to knock out our customers." So what they did, by our recommendation, they give us so many licenses to handle. And that's what we wanted. But no doubt, we haven't got enough. Like I got three camps and some of the boys got a few camps too, each lake in a group. Well, the Delta outfitters, they have camps here and there that they build. They can't use them all, because when they hunt, they are limited with the licenses. But it's okay for that part because we got to start looking at cutting down the season dates. The season dates are too long for big game hunting now.

Murray: Because the game is getting thinner all the time is it?

Pierre: Yeah, the game is getting thinner and because the public are putting the pressure on the provincial government, stop killing the timber wolves. And you know, politics goes a hell of a long ways. I believe right now that the provincial government is hiding that they are poisoning. They are still running the poison program. Which is the answer to trying to control the timber wolves. It's not altogether to clean out the predators, but to slow them down, their killing. Then you give the game a chance to grow, to rebuild again.

Murray: Rebuild, right. I was going to ask you a bit more about Malcolm Norris and the NDP. I remember you mentioned earlier that he used to talk sort of in favor of the NDP.

Pierre: Right, right.

Murray: Can you tell me more about that?

Pierre: Yes, yes, this is his belief and he campaigned. He did campaign in 1948. The same with another, Tomkins. Tomkins is another gentleman.

Murray: But Jim never campaigned in that campaign?

Pierre: Jim never campaigned for any political party. He was the only one that, out of the three, that I never heard or seen him campaigning. But I seen the other boys campaigning for the NDP.

Murray: Did Norris campaign in other elections too?

Pierre: Oh yes, he was very active in the NDP party. I'm pretty sure of that. And I don't think I'll be wrong to say that.

Murray: No, I've heard that before.

Pierre: Yeah, I don't think that would be wrong at all.

Murray: Did he mention the NDP at all when he came in 1964 to organize the Metis Society?

Pierre: He never mentioned but with my experience with him... this is the reason why that he organized very strongly so that we can fight the Liberal party.

Murray: He thought that the Liberals were bad news for the north.

Pierre: Yes, he thought that way but we didn't think that way ourselves.

Murray: Did people think that the Liberals and the NDP were about the same as far as their attitude in the north?

Pierre: Pretty well. They haven't got very much... there is not very much difference in them except that the Liberal party will tell you, "Okay, you go ahead and develop what you can and we'll give you the opportunity." Like they did with agriculture, like they did with our tourist business. They helped us along with our tourist business, to develop it. And as a matter of fact, if Ross Thatcher was in power the time he was kicked out, we would have had control of this area for guides-only operation. That means a Saskatchewan resident, if they wanted to come in here, they would have to hire guides. And that brings in money into the area and that's the way it should be. But not the way the NDP is running. They just give the opportunity, that group, to carry on and deplete the...

Murray: So Saskatchewan residents or other Canadians can come in without hiring a guide?

Pierre: Yeah, right.

Murray: But Americans have to hire one?

Pierre: Yeah, that's the only ones. The Americans and the Europeans. The Europeans have got to have guides.

Murray: But the Liberals would have supported the idea of everybody having to hire a guide?

Pierre: Oh yes, they would support the area where that group is organizing. See, if you give them a good constructive

program to help the people, right away they'll support that. That's the way the Liberal party operates. Even a company who'd want to come in and develop that area for employment, they go for that. But the NDP is different because he wants to control everything. He wants to be the operator regardless if he makes money or not because the taxpayer is paying the shot anyway.

Murray: Is this the way most people see the NDP?

Pierre: That's the way I see the NDP.

Murray: They want to control things?

Pierre: They want to control things. Regardless.

Murray: Have the power.

Pierre: Yeah, regardless what happened. That's the way I see them.

Murray: Do you think they had the attitude that they were always right regardless of what people said?

Pierre: The NDP?

Murray: Yes.

Pierre: No, I wouldn't say that they were always right.

Murray: No, but did they think they were always? Is that the attitude they had, do you think?

Pierre: Yes, yes, that's the attitude. You don't tell me how to run the country, we know it. You know, they have, I guess they have high people that are educated and experienced people but it doesn't always work. It's the people that live in that area know what's going on.

Murray: Right. Did Jim Brady ever talk about the government very much? Was he against it or for it or did he think the CCF was good?

Pierre: No, I don't think I ever heard him to talk bad things about the NDP party. I think he more or less supported the NDP principle. This is the way I take him. But, to come out outright with me to say, "This is a good thing that the NDP operates on. They did a good job in here. They did a poor job in here." To say that, I never heard him. I never heard the man say that. Maybe he'd tell that to the other people but not to me.

Murray: Not to you?

Pierre: Not to me.

Murray: Right. When he talked about a Metis Society, what kinds of things did he think that that organization would do? Did he talk about that?

Pierre: Well, he did talk about the Metis group from Alberta and this is the way that he always bring up, that in order to get any place, you have to organize. You have to have an association to back you up. This is the way that you can convince the government that what you want, sometimes you can get it. This is the way he preached. He preached this, at least to me.

Murray: So he would see the Metis Society as an organization that would put pressure on governments and that kind of thing?

Pierre: I'm sure that was his idea, to put the pressure on to the government so that they'll make some changes.

Murray: Did he ever talk about voting? Did he ever say that that wasn't as important as a Metis Society or did he talk about it at all? In voting in an election? Did he talk about that at all?

Pierre: No, no, I never associated with him in political ways. The time I had with him is mostly education we talked about, and progress within the community and business.

Murray: Right. Community development.

Pierre: Community development, yeah. We always did talk a lot and he was a little older than me and he spent quite a time to try and explain to me, this is what they did for the Indian people. This is what he said to any government, any government at all. He never pinpoint one government. He would more or less say 'a white government' or something like that.

Murray: Right.

Pierre: Because that's what it was.

Murray: He didn't distinguish then between Liberals or NDP? It was just the government?

Pierre: Yeah, it was just the government. And he says, by organizing, that's the only way to put the pressure on them to make some changes. Otherwise, they said they'll never make a move.

Murray: Why do you think he never got around to actually organizing a Metis Society in Cumberland?

Pierre: Well, the time that he left in here... 1964, he was already gone. He left Cumberland early.

Murray: In 1951 or something like that.

Pierre: Yeah, he left in Cumberland fairly early and he spent his time at La Ronge. He didn't spend too much time to organize it. It's the only one that he helped us organize is the co-op fisheries, the local co-op fisheries.

Murray: I wanted to get off the topic of Jim and Malcolm for a little bit and I want to try and get a feeling for what the social life was like in Cumberland. Like, just after the war, that period in the 1940s, and if it changed at all? Did they used to have dances and fiddle players and that sort of thing back in those days?

Pierre: Oh yes, there was. They had some great dances here in the early days. In the early days, what you would call a Red River jig and square dancing and round dancing. All these things was developing in Cumberland. We never heard any pow-wows or....

(End of Side A, Tape IH-356A)

(Side B)

Pierre: We started the picture show through the Legion. I recall when I came back and I said we got to have these picture shows so that the kids will be educated from it. I know, some of the pictures that's developed at that time, it was pretty educational. So I worked really hard and I was assisted to find a projector. There weren't very many projectors that time in this country. We found one in British Columbia that wasn't used. So we bought it. We bought those projectors secondhand. And at that time, people that were selling films, they come and assist us to run and educate us how to run the machine. So, this is how we started.

Murray: Was there much alcohol in those days after the war? Was there a lot of drinking like there is today?

Pierre: I think there was no doubt quite a bit but at that time the laws were different. When you break something, the law tells you to replace it. And you'll replace it or else you'll go to jail. Nowadays, they can burn your building, they can burn your house, they can destroy your equipment and there is no law to protect you anymore. It's very dangerous and it's getting out of hand. It's getting worse all the time. The society is getting worse.

Murray: Do you think it's the law is getting worse and the people too? There is more crime?

Pierre: You're telling me, that's the way the white society law develops. It's just no damn good. We sent in a petition from Cumberland that we didn't want this legal aid system. We know what is going to happen to legal aid system and we said at that time, the first time we said it, I says, "You're only hiring professional crooks to protect the amateur crooks." That's what it's developed and that's the way it still stands

today. And that's what's killing the society.

Murray: Was there any period in the twenty years from after the war until, well, until about 1970 or so, was there a change in the social activity in Cumberland? Did people stop going to dances and stop playing the fiddle? Did that happen?

Pierre: Yes, that happened and this is continuous and more of the drinking. It's getting worse. It's getting out of hand and the crimes is getting out of hand. This is what developed.

Murray: When did that start do you think? Is there any period you remember?

Pierre: Well, you know, these organizations such as the Indian organizations in Canada, and a lot of other organizations, not only Indian organizations, they are always fighting to say, "Oh, you discriminate the poor people. They haven't got a chance like the rich people have." This is the image or influence it builds. And naturally the association, like the Indian associations, they support this program of these legal aid program. They support it very much where you tell the government, "You protect that poor in regards to law." But that's where it hurts, when the government backed down. Usually it seems to me that the government backed down on these problems to become worse.

Murray: Do you think that before the war or during, around that period that there was less crime?

Pierre: Yeah, it had to be. It had to be because there was no welfare. When I worked for the government in 1951 and 1950, there was not a single welfare person that was an able-bodied man. There was not one single person was on welfare in that year. They had to work. They had to work hard to try and work and trap and fish and whatever they can get ahold of to make a living on. They did that. The Cumberland people did that. But since the welfare program came in, now you're building a different society that's going the other way. Because they got lots of time. They got lots of time to organize crime.

Murray: When did welfare come into Cumberland? Do you remember?

Pierre: I think it was around the 1960s, the early 1960s that came in. And then when the Metis Society came in and seen that there were so many white people who were all on welfare down south and here they find that there are people are part starving, you know, they weren't getting any welfare and this is where it really developed. No doubt, some of the people are lazy. It's only human. That's nature, you know. That they are lazy people. Regardless what race they come from, human people is human people. And there are good workers too. That's the last thing they will try and get is welfare. They'll struggle it out first before they accept welfare because they have pride in themselves.

Murray: Do you think that these things, the things we've been talking about like that dances and the fiddle playing and that sort of thing and the start up of crime, did all these things start to grow with welfare?

Pierre: I wouldn't actually say that it's developed from welfare but when you're organizing to protect the crooks with the legal aid system, I think that's made it worse.

Murray: But what about before the legal aid, like in the early 1960s or the late 1950s when welfare came in, did that have an effect on the community?

Pierre: Oh sure, if you were breaking, as I say, breaking a window, the law forces you to replace it. If you don't replace it, you'll go to jail.

Murray: What about things like dances and things? When did those stop happening, and the fiddle playing?

Pierre: I think that's the time that young people wasn't active to play the instruments and the other people were dying, the older people that were playing. We can't all be musicians, you know. There is only certain people that play music very good. And they catch on right away when they start to play the music and that's the ones that didn't continue...

Murray: Didn't pass it on to the young people.

Pierre: They didn't pass it on to continue. And we did have dance halls. We did have a Legion Hall at that time where we could organize dances. But still we were on its way down. Same like the missionaries, the misionaries were going downhill too.

Murray: At the same time, eh?

Pierre: At the same time.

Murray: What kinds of factors do you think made those things go downhill? Can you think of any of the things that would've made that happen?

Pierre: Well, as I said before, it would have to be part welfare problem that started it.

Murray: That broke up the community?

Pierre: Yeah, that broke up the community.

Murray: Did people, before welfare came in, help each other and trust each other and sort of work as a community more than they have in past years?

Pierre: Yes, they are certain people who are providers in the community. I was one of them that was a provider because I was

a hunter in my younger days. And we didn't have no electricity at that time. Whatever we killed, we had to make distribution and give to the poor.

Murray: Right away.

Pierre: Right away so that the meat won't be destroyed or...

Murray: Spoiled?

Pierre: Or spoil or anything like that. We give a lot of meat away.

Murray: So the people who did a lot of hunting would share their stuff with the whole community?

Pierre: Oh yes, yeah. As I say that I was one of them that was a hunter and I shared whatever I killed.

Murray: Does that happen as much now?

Pierre: No. It doesn't happen very much. When you kill a moose, you can put that in your freezer, the whole thing. We've got freezers now, you know, and less killing. I do less killing now since I had my freezer and since my boys, even the ones that are still hunting. We don't kill. Only the time we killed when we are short. When we were short of game.

Murray: Was there much theft? People stealing from each other in the days before, you know, in for 1940s or early 1950s?

Pierre: That time, in my time and after the war, you can leave your equipment down river, and nobody will bother it. You can leave your equipment down there and hell, when you're ready to go out, you go out again. Today, I either have to bring all my equipment, my boats, motors, locked up. And it's getting worse. It's more or less out of hand.

Murray: When did the stealing... like there was hardly any stealing, back, as you say, just after the war and that period.

Pierre: Yeah, yeah.

Murray: When did stealing start to become a problem?

Pierre: Well, once we argued about this deal and I tell the Americans that, oh it's getting worse now, stealing is getting worse. And one of the young fellows, he was a young boy that time, "Oh that's what we brought in from Cumberland to make the people steal." (chuckles) This is the remark that he made. Well, he just made a joke out of it, you know. "We're the people that brought them to steal." (chuckles) But that's the way it goes.

Murray: Maybe there is some truth in that, eh?

Pierre: They come outside, even entered in, they come and blow up the... In the wintertime when there was only a winter road, the outsiders used to come in and steal at the Bay or at the Co-op. And these young people see that the outsiders are doing that. They even steal some of our motors, our whatever, paddles.

Murray: Whatever they can get.

Pierre: Whatever they can get ahold of. It's gone. And the law will never find them motors.

Murray: The outsiders, were they white or native or both?

Pierre: Oh it's white. It's the white people from down south. You take like right now, one of the boys, his name is Joe McAuley. These people told him that they were Americans and they had a hard luck story. They couldn't go and hunt. And he says he felt pretty bad about them and he says he loaned them the motor to go out so that they don't get stuck. You know, they haven't brought the motor yet. It's gone. And he hasn't got the serial number. On top of that, I told him, I told him that today, I says, "That's not Americans that you came and talked to. The only place American goes to," I says, "they come to our place, the ones that got the licenses. Because they can't come here and hunt without guides. And they arrange," I says,....

Murray: Ahead of time.

Pierre: Almost a year. I am booking parties right now that are going to come next year. I'm already booking parties. So that's the way they operate.

Murray: So these were Canadians?

Pierre: These were Canadians that stole his motor. Now he is an old age pensioner and I would say he paid that motor about eight or nine hundred dollars. An old age pensioner like that, he's lost his motor.

Murray: And there is no way he can get it back?

Pierre: No way he is going to find it. Because there is no other person who can find it because he hasn't got the serial number. So this is what's taking place.

Murray: Right.

Pierre: It's real bad.

Murray: So the road coming in made a difference too then?

Pierre: Yes, and you can say the disadvantages and the advantages. The advantage is we can go out in Prince Albert. I made a trip the other day. I just made a trip in one day. I

went and shopped in Prince Albert where I can pay a little cheaper.

Murray: Cheaper goods. That was the big advantage?

Pierre: That's the advantages. But the other advantage is to, so that our customers could come in with a vehicle instead of flying in. Because only rich people that we looked after before. Now today, we don't have to have rich people. We can take on anybody that got the price to hire us, you know.

Murray: What would you say were the main disadvantages of the road coming in?

Pierre: Well, this is a disadvantages that we find, that these outsiders coming in here and stealing.

Murray: That was a big one.

Pierre: Yeah and they were bringing liquor too, to get the women. That's one way of doing things too.

Murray: So they were after native women were they?

Pierre: Yeah, they were after native women.

Murray: The younger ones.

Pierre: The young native women. And they were making a mess out of that too.

Murray: A lot of babies being born and that sort of thing, eh?

Pierre: A lot of babies being born and you ruin that family when you're doing that. Now, I'm not saying that they can do that in every community, in every house, because there are people that don't drink and there are families that don't drink. You don't push them around.

Murray: But there are some, always some that....?

Pierre: There are always some that are willing to accept the strangers to drink with them. And you know what will happen if you allow that you know.

Murray: Right.

Pierre: Like here, it's not only this house that you will come in, quiet, quiet place and talk. If you go to other places you'll find the same thing. But if you find the places that I'm talking about, they might kick you out if this is what you want. If you haven't got liquor, get out.

Murray: Not interested.

Pierre: But they are not interested in you. (chuckles) But

there are people that are willing to accept these people and right away, these people, that's what they're after and they are taking advantage of the women.

Murray: The last thing I wanted to talk about was the role of the church in the community and what kinds of things it did. Besides being a religious place, what kinds of things did the church do back in the days after the war and that sort of thing? Before the war?

Pierre: Well, before the war it's that they were teaching religion and they were teaching that the young people to be educated. This is the thing that these religious denominations were really offering. To try and encourage, they even built boarding schools. You'll hear a lot of bad things about boarding schools but there is a hell of a lot that's not true too. What they said about boarding schools. Because I know some of the native people that was educated through boarding schools. They come out to be good men. And if it wasn't for that missionaries, that man would be worthless today. So, if the missionaries would have made success and the government had enough brains to help them out, our society would have been much better today than what it is.

Murray: Did the church encourage things like gardening and recreation and those kind of community things?

Pierre: Oh yes, oh yes. In Cumberland anyway, before the war, everybody had a piece of garden. Everybody had a piece of garden. This is one of the missionaries' teaching, gardening.

Murray: Were there gardens before the church came, do you think?

Pierre: I couldn't say. I couldn't say that much because I think what had happened before the missionaries goes, the people were travelling and stay where the game is plentiful. And they will move on from there. They were travellers.

Murray: Nomadic people?

Pierre: Nomadic people.

Murray: The church changed that then?

Pierre: The church changed that. The church changed and they come to Cumberland, to Cumberland House. And then they organized a school. It wasn't very much of a school to start with but it was a beginning. The beginning of an education system. So this is one of the main reasons that you now find, by gosh, there is quite a few Indian people that went to university from Cumberland. And holding their own.

Murray: So the church was really the first institution that sort of formed a community in Cumberland. Before that, people were moving in and out all the time, were they?

Pierre: Yeah, that's right. I think it's the church that made success to try and hold the people where they will place their children. And they were building boarding schools here and there, that I know of. One is built at La Ronge, the other one is built at Sturgeon Landing. And another one was built at The Pas, that is MacKay school they call it. The Anglican church school, it was a very nice school. And that burnt down. So Sturgeon Landing was burnt down.

Murray: How did people live before the church came and started organizing communities? Would whole families be moving all year around or would they come back to a certain spot sometimes during the year?

Pierre: Well, the Hudson's Bay Company had posts and this is where the people were concentrating because that's where they did their trading. And I think, at one time, if I'm not wrong, the Cumberland House was the first inland trading post for the Hudson's Bay Company and that was the headquarters at

that time. If you look in the history, I think that's what you'll read. So that was the beginning of Cumberland.

Murray: So it was first, the Hudson's Bay, then the church, then the government. All these things worked towards bringing people into a...

Pierre: Yes, bringing people together.

Murray: Into one place?

Pierre: Into one place.

Murray: Each time that happened, like first the church and then government, did that start drawing people away from trapping or did they keep trapping until recently?

Pierre: Well, they were trapping to start with. I think that was the first industry that was developing is the fur trading. But the next one was the fisheries, the fisheries developed. Even in Cumberland here, the time they started fisheries. The fishing companies used to come in and harvest sturgeon in here. To pick the caviar and process them in here and then ship them down. But they left the meat.

Murray: Oh I see, they left the meat.

Pierre: Yeah, they left the meat.

Murray: And so the native people could...?

Pierre: Yeah, well, they live on that fish. But that's how the commercial fishing started in the Cumberland area.

Murray: Was for the caviar, not the meat.

Pierre: For the caviar, not for the meat of the fish.

Murray: What years would that have been when they first did that?

Pierre: I think it still started... oh it could be the early 1900s or late 1800s. Something like that.

Murray: That early, eh?

Pierre: Yeah, the fisheries came in. But that's what they did because they were transporting all that stuff through Grand Rapids and on to Lake Winnipeg and to Winnipeg. They were transporting that.

Murray: So for a long time, it was just caviar they were after eh?

Pierre: Yeah, the caviar. That's the first commercial fisheries that developed in here is sturgeon, the sturgeon fisheries.

Murray: And they processed the caviar right here, did they?

Pierre: Yeah they processed and they took them down.

Murray: Do you remember or have you heard when they started doing other kinds of fishing, like, for the actual meat of the fish? When did that start?

Pierre: Oh, that started in the early 1800s. Because they had the boats. They had fishing boats in here that worked the Sturgeon Landing and Namew Lake and through Cumberland of course. Cumberland had a big huge lake at that time and it was deep, you know. And there was a hell of a lot of fishes taken out from here, so was sturgeons. A lot of sturgeon was hauled out from here and taken. But in no time, when the railroad came into The Pas, Manitoba, this is where the advantages took place. Because the commercial fishing came in very strong, soon as that railroad came into The Pas. And I think you can check when the railroad came in there.

Murray: So that's when there was a real push on commercial fishing?

Pierre: Yeah, that's the beginning of the real push.

Murray: Because transportation was the problem before that?

Pierre: Yeah, because at that time, Cumberland people were fishing not only Cumberland Lake but they were fishing at Amisk Lake. And also, Suggi. And frankly, we're still fishing at Suggi Lake. But that was the areas where the Cumberland were concentrating. And then the Namew Lake, Amisk Lake and Suggi and Cumberland Lakes. That's their fishing ground.

Murray: So for a long time there were lots of ties, more to

Manitoba than to southern Saskatchewan?

Pierre: Yeah, there was a lot more ties, even the timber operations. The boys I worked for, The Pas Lumber Company too. At one time, and most of the older boys worked for The Pas Lumber Company either cutting timber or floating the timber up the Carrot River and float them down to The Pas.

Murray: One more thing I was going to ask you about the church. Both the Catholic and Anglican churches were, and are, in Cumberland. Which was the strongest in terms of the community and community activity do you think?

Pierre: Just depends who is the missionary. I believe one time they called a man Mr. Fraser. Apparently he was a principal at La Ronge, Anglican missionary. He was very active. And Bishop Charlebois from Roman Catholic was very active in community affairs and that's the one that brought in education in Cumberland.

Murray: He was the first one.

Pierre: Yeah, but these people are different people. They are active, not only for their work but for the community welfare and economic side of it.

Murray: So they were interested in every part of it.

Pierre: Every part of it to try and develop a better life.

Murray: When did that start to change as far as, you know, the church being interested in economic development and recreation and things like that?

Pierre: Well, I think that's where it actually developed, from Bishop Charlebois because he brought in education and then the school that he started. And then Mr. Fisher was in there too and these are the boys that really developed the people.

Murray: Fraser and Charlebois?

Pierre: Yeah, Fraser and Charlebois.

Murray: Have priests and bishops since that time not been as active?

Pierre: Mr. Fisher, Mr. Fisher is his name, yeah. Another guy, Fraser, he was here too. You may find him in the history that he was here but he wasn't that active. No, you take like the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. You find one policeman that is very active and you find another person that doesn't give a darn as long as he get his wages, he gets his daily meals and...

Murray: Keeps to himself...

Pierre: Keeps everything to himself, you know. He won't do anything extra you know, no way. But the good people, the good men, they'll share. They'll do more than what they are supposed to do.

Murray: Right, so it just depends on the man?

Pierre: It just depends on the man. That's the reason why I'm talking about Jim Brady. Because I know Jim Brady wasn't here in Cumberland just a field officer for the NDP party, he was here for other things.

Murray: He was here to be concerned with the people?

Pierre: Yeah, he was concerned with the people and he was trying to help them.

(End of Side B)

(End of Interview)

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