

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: HARRY PAUL
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: LA RONGE,
SASKATCHEWAN
INTERVIEW LOCATION: LA RONGE,
SASKATCHEWAN
TRIBE/NATION: NON-INDIAN
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH
DATE OF INTERVIEW: JULY 14, 1976
INTERVIEWER: MURRAY DOBBIN
INTERPRETER:
TRANSCRIBER: JOANNE GREENWOOD
SOURCE: SASK. SOUND ARCHIVES PROGRAMME
TAPE NUMBER: IH-401
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC 98
PAGES: 33
RESTRICTIONS: THIS MATERIAL SHALL BECOME
THE PROPERTY, IN COPYRIGHT, OF THE SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES BOARD
AND SHALL BE AVAILABLE FOR READING, REPRODUCTION, QUOTATION,
CITATION, AND ALL OTHER RESEARCH PURPOSES, INCLUDING
BROADCASTING RIGHTS WHERE APPLICABLE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE
REGULATIONS WHICH MAY HAVE HERETOFORE BEEN OR WHICH MAY
HEREAFTER BE ESTABLISHED BY THE SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES BOARD OR
ITS SUCCESSORS FOR THE USE OF MATERIALS IN ITS POSSESSION.

HARRY PAUL

Harry Paul was raised on a farm in Saskatchewan and went to work in the north in his late teens. He is now a successful businessman who, among other things, has a bicycle factory in Rivers, Manitoba, employing only Indian workers.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Life in northern Saskatchewan in the 1930s.
- The destruction of the Indian way of life in the north by various white institutions: government, church, RCMP.
- The project in Rivers, Manitoba, where a former airforce base has been converted into a new Indian community with various employment projects on site.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Harry Paul lived in La Ronge in the thirties and here describes what life was like in those years.

INTERVIEW:

Murray: Well, I want to just get a feeling for what it was like back in those days. I'm speaking to Harry Paul who

arrived in the north in 1936, I think. Is that correct?

Harry: Yeah. Actually, December 15, 1935.

Murray: 1935. Could you describe a bit why you came to the north and what you first started doing?

Harry: Well, my interest in the north was always quite intense. I lived on a farm in Saskatchewan, Spruce Home area, and I wanted the adventure. I had just turned 16 years of age and I wanted this northern adventure. The north appealed to me so I got a job driving horses for a freighting company. Brooks was one of the big contractors hauling freight into the country. So I got a job driving four horses and that was my assignment for the winter. And at the end of the freighting season in March - I had got to know Mr. Chris Olson who was one of the early pioneers here, came here in 1918 - I got a job with him and that's how I arrived here.

Murray: And this was in La Ronge that you arrived so you were actually in the town of La Ronge?

Harry: Yes.

Murray: What was it like then? How many people?

Harry: Oh, there was probably a dozen white people and the Indian population. There was, Ravion Freres was one of the big trading companies of Paris, was here at that time and in fact their store was right on the site of Red's Camp. And there was a Hudson's Bay Company and there was Chris Olson who was a free trader. And he was from Denmark. And there was a large Anglican mission. That basically was the community. The rest of the people were all native and the people lived by hunting, fishing, trapping. Some commercial fishing in the winter, very little for the Indian people.

Murray: Could you describe a bit the more ephemeral kinds of things and what was it like to live in the community? What happened on a Saturday night or a Friday night? Was there a lot of visiting back and forth? What was it like to live in the town at the time?

Harry: Well, I would say it was beautiful. The road, the blacktop highway that you see going down through La Ronge today was only two feet wide. You could drive a dog team, that was all. There were 1200 dog teams in the town when all the trappers came in at Christmas time. It was very colorful. There was no drinking problems at all. The only liquor I ever saw flown in by Bill Windrum of Canadian Airways, who was head of Canadian Airways at the time out of Prince Albert, would be some whiskey come in at Christmas time. Simply a bottle and it was for the white people. The Indian people did not drink at all. There was no alcohol.

Murray: This was as late as 1936 then.

Harry: That's right. In 1936, 1937, right up until 1940.

Murray: What kinds of things would you do on a Saturday night?

Harry: Ah, the activities of the people. There was visiting, card playing, playing cards and the people were very articulate in storytelling. We didn't have, very few newspapers, mail would only get in once a month or so. And so there was storytelling, card playing, visiting and dancing. And there were great dances. The dances would start at dusk and go till four or five o'clock in the morning and the violin players would be in relays. The native people were very talented in music, violins and guitars. And as I say, you could have a good time. The music was your stimulant.

Murray: Right, not the booze.

Harry: Not the booze. It was quite remarkable. And as I say, everyone had a good time and there was great family solidarity. The native people were well dressed. The children were healthy and strong. There were many things such as medicare and things like that we didn't have, but it didn't seem to be necessary. The people just...

Murray: They weren't sick.

Harry: They just didn't seem to be sick. I never knew of anyone dying of sickness or...

Murray: There is a lot of violent crime among the native community now, the native people abusing each other. What was the situation at that time?

Harry: Nothing like that. I never saw a fight. The people were, as I say, there were strong family ties. The chief still wielded considerable influence over the people even though he had been stripped of his dignity by the humiliation, the way they were handled by the Department of Indian Affairs. They still had that quiet dignity and a lot of influence by the chief so the families were beautiful. And so, to me in thinking back, and after forty years and seeing what I see today, I think it was a perfect society. I lived amongst these people in the Little Hills area west of La Ronge for virtually four years as a trader, lived out of tents. And it was an ideal society. Because there I saw a large group, a large segment of the Cree people, living in their society. There were no prisons, no old folks homes, no orphanages...

Murray: No social welfare.

Harry: No social welfare, no welfare of any kind. No contact, very little contact and no organized religion affecting them. These people did not...

Murray: They were outside the Anglican mission.

Harry: That's right. So to me, even as I was only 16 or 17 it

seemed to ring a bell. It seemed such a perfect society. Everyone was equal. There was no competitiveness, no social distinction. Everyone had an equality. There was no aggressive competitiveness. If a man was a good hunter, a moose hunter, well he hunted moose but he shared it with everyone. And they shared their talents and abilities and gifts.

Murray: Many Indian societies differ from each other and some of them have had a history of having quite distinct sort of democratic institutions by which they run things. Was that true of this group of Little Hills and in the La Ronge area? Was there that kind of decision making body or were there any decisions to be made then?

Harry: Oh, there were decisions made all the time and they were made quietly over the campfire. And this is where the stories were told and the traditions were carried on and the messages to the children by the grandparents. The senior members of the tribe would pass on the history of their people and their achievements and their legends and so forth - were passed on over the campfire. Now, these people, say the Little Hills people I'm speaking of, still part of La Ronge, they had their old religion which I think it was much better for those people. They believed in God just the same as we do, but, and probably more fervently, because God existed in everything. When I travelled with them and they were guides, when we approached a rapid or something, they would maybe have a piece of moose heart they would drop into the water and little things like that that they respected the spirit. They believed that the spirit of God was everywhere, therefore they were deeply religious people.

Murray: Did that, as a side affect, have a result of a lot of respect of the environment and that kind of thing?

Harry: Yes, exactly. They respected everything. Nature was a living thing. Every tree, fish - these were spiritual gifts and had to be respected.

Murray: And this attitude maintained itself until what year would you say?

Harry: I saw the changes coming in 1942. When I saw the drastic changes, the highway had penetrated and there was more white people coming in and wood operations was increasing nearby. And the big changes came in 1945, after the war, 1945. From then on it's been nothing but downhill for the Indian people.

Murray: What were the most dramatic changes that affected the native people would you say?

Harry: Well, of course they had the beer parlour, the introduction of the beer parlour, but you know...

Murray: What year would that have been?

Harry: That was about 1946 or 1947 I believe, 1947 probably. Yeah, like around 1947. But that's a social evil that was bound to come. It's a combination of things, I believe. Once the highway come in and there was greater exposure. Mining people were in greater numbers and mining people coming in. And there was a result of breakup of the Indian family because the Indian people are trusting, you see, and we had a great increase in illegitimacy. The Indian girls became pregnant and venereal disease was introduced extensively. Almost 100%. And it's not that the Indian people don't have high moral values, but these white people would come in, these young fellows, and they'd say, "Well, we want to marry you." Well, an Indian girl would believe that. And so it was a combination of things. A

breakdown, and lack of leadership, and increased welfare, led to a lot of these problems. They were losing a lot of their trapping grounds and they didn't know what to do.

Murray: Leadership is an interesting point that you brought up. What kind of leadership existed during the time that you say was the most positive period? Was there any specific leadership or was it just the community established itself and maintained itself without any need for a particular leadership?

Harry: Well, the leadership was there through their chief but it wasn't like our politicians getting up and promising you an awful lot of things for nothing. It was the traditional way of Indian leadership where the world was stable and revolved around nature. And as long as you kept that balance and harmony with nature, you didn't have too many problems. You maintained your family, your family dignity. There were the other external forces such as cold or certain animals disappearing of a cyclical nature and so forth that was acceptable to the Indian people. They could cope with that. They understood it and they could live with it. This season was poor, the next season would be better. But their whole life revolved around nature which is very constant. I mean we have the rising and setting of the sun and that's about the way their life was, it was very perfect. It was dependable, the type of life and environment they lived in, it was reliable. So they really didn't need to be desk pounding and table pounding like our politicians do.

Murray: So the kind of leadership that was necessary in their environment was not able to cope with what came in. Is that a fair statement?

Harry: Yes, it is. Because of the honesty of the people and they just couldn't believe that God or their spirits would allow or that they could believe that this could happen to the earth. It was too sacred, it was too good. Like one of the great chiefs Crowfoot when they were negotiating the treaty in Alberta and the government representative of Queen Victoria was harassing the chiefs and asking them to give up this land. Crowfoot grabbed a handful of earth and soil and he held it out

infront of the representatives of the crown and he said, "I'll give you everything except this. This doesn't belong to me, it belongs to God. I can't give you the earth." So, that's how their thinking is and it's still that way.

Murray: What was the relationship between the white community and the native community in those early years?

Harry: It was very amicable. There was no hostility. There was a lot of the white men, of course, married Indian women and they had nice families. There was more social integration, you might say, then than there is now. There was no distinct line. The way I see La Ronge now is straight apartheid. There is a definite line between the whites and the Indian people that is as obvious as an iceberg in the ocean. But going back to, we were talking about values, and I can remember sitting, an occasion when the elders of the council, Abraham Ross and Malachi Ross and Malachi Halkett was over. When a young man wanted to get married, he had to appear before the council. He'd state who he wanted to marry and so forth. And they would question him on his ability as a hunter. He could not marry this girl until he qualified.

Murray: Until he could provide.

Harry: That's right. And he had to prove that he could kill moose and that he had a certain amount of equipment and so forth. Then he was free to marry. But other than that, he could not. This was another.

Murray: Would they marry in the church or was this strictly native?

Harry: That time they were marrying the Indian way which was, you would ask for the bride and there were little ceremonies of qualifying before the elders of the council and you take your position in the tent.

Murray: Were there any arranged marriages in those days that you were aware of?

Harry: No, I think it seemed to be love. That's all.

Murray: It was choice.

Harry: Yes, there was choice. In fact, women had a greater choice than men. You probably don't see this at all but in the dances prior to 1940 a man did not ask a woman to dance. When you wanted to dance, you stood on the floor and the woman was the one that would choose whom she wanted to dance with.

Murray: That's interesting.

Harry: And so the women had a big say. The same, you know, if she loved a man, she had her way of getting word around that she wanted to meet him or see him. So women had a great deal of equality and I thought that was very interesting because

you couldn't ask a girl to dance. She would choose you. You'd stand on the floor, the men would stand in a circle and the women would come up and stand beside you and when everybody had taken their places then the dance would start.

Murray: That must have been fascinating.

Harry: It was, very much.

Murray: A lot of what you said has referred to the treaty Indians, I think, from what you've said. What was the nature of the Metis community? Was it pretty much integrated or was it separate in any way from the treaty Indians?

Harry: We did not have many Metis people here. They seemed to drift in from the south after, the last thirty years or more. There were some but the people that were non-status Indians were those that were persuaded by the government to get out of treaty.

Murray: To sell their treaty rights.

Harry: They did. And one family here is the MacKenzie family who are a very pure Indian, probably one of the purest of the Indian people, who are not Indians by law but by blood and birth they were true Indians. So there was no problem. Sometime I did hear of a couple of occasions where an Indian girl would marry into a non-Indian or something like that, losing her rights, and this was a concern to the family. But the government made very strong efforts to get every Indian out of treaty. That was their objective.

Murray: But most people resisted.

Harry: They did.

Murray: Was that a political issue at the time?

Harry: Quietly and subtly the government everywhere was maneuvering. Especially in the 1930s there was intense efforts to get Indians. They didn't know how to cope with the Indian problem. It was getting worse, especially on the outside at that time. The Indian people, of course, on the prairies were desperate economic problems. They were living on gophers.

Murray: So they lumped all the Indians together with this problem.

Harry: That's right. And the Indian up here was very well off because he had moose and lots of fish in the lakes.

Murray: Depression or otherwise, eh.

Harry: They were very prosperous.

Murray: What was the government activity in those days? Do you recall? Was there much influence or presence of government agencies at all in the north?

Harry: No, not at all. The Indian agent would come through once a year and pay the treaty. They'd bring along a nurse, not a doctor, and the dental care consisted of pulling out an aching tooth. That was the care you got and other than that, the only real government presence... the church, Anglican church was the real presence here. It had more influence than I'd say the government...

Murray: Than by the outsiders.

Harry: Yes. Then the RCMP was the big influence and then he had to create... the police definitely... they can say what they want and they say, "Well, we're here to uphold law and order." There was no breaking of laws or disorder in those days. So the police would look for situations, you know. He would have to report to his superiors outside and say, "Well,..."

Murray: X number of arrests or...

Harry: "Well, the people just can't be that good. There has got to be some bad people. You'd better find them, you'd better arrest them, you'd better do something because we can't have you sitting up there with no reports of anything being wrong." So as a result, they went on a campaign to seize all the furs of the Indian people. You see, there was no communication. This was the beginning of a terrible tragedy in this country and it started in 1936.

The government in the south would announce the trapping season. Muskrat trapping season would open April 15, they would say. Well, they would send word up by wireless here. But how do you get that message out to all the Indians in the surrounding area, that the trapping season was the 15th. And it would be announced in maybe February when the Indian was back after his Christmas visit. He was back at his trapline and no way of communicating. The traditional way for an Indian to trap and which is respected to this day - now the governments have changed - is if the weather conditions are right, then you trap

the muskrat. Say, if it's April 1, the weather turns warm then you trap even though it's, you know... Well, what really happened is, I know the season opened on April 15 - I saw that two years in a row - and yet the nice weather came along the end of March, first week in April. So the Indians started to trap and they did all their trapping in that two weeks. Took their muskrat crop off and had it hanging in their tents. And three days before the season would open, the RCMP would charter a couple of planes and they'd bring in the game wardens from Regina and they'd go out and they'd visit every single Indian camp and seize every single fur. One year the Indians didn't have a single crop of muskrats. Their entire living was seized

within a matter of a week. And a lot of them, as an example, were put on a plane and shipped to the prison in Prince Albert and sentenced to four months.

Murray: It must have had a devastating effect on people.

Harry: Terrible. Well, we're paying for it now. This is the result of it. The first introduction to prison and they didn't even know they were breaking the law and this is the foolish part about it is...

Murray: They'd been doing it for years and...

Harry: Well a great judge like Judge Sissons and Judge Morrow, the men in the north. They were fortunate to have judges who were very understanding of the Eskimo and so forth and spared the Eskimo a lot of the misery that the Indian has had to go through because he didn't have sympathetic judges or government people.

Murray: What was the response to that? Just that people were not able to cope with that kind of event, I suppose.

Harry: They didn't even know what was happening. They would barge in and kick the tents down and oh, they were rough, very rough.

Murray: And you think that it was partly to do with the whole mentality of the RCMP that they had to do something to prove they were doing their job.

Harry: Yes, exactly, exactly. The authorities.

Murray: What was the role of the RCMP beyond that in terms of the day-to-day community?

Harry: They did pretty little, you know. They made patrols. They went off by dog team up to Stanley and I think as far as Reindeer Lake, maybe to Pine House, make their presence. The government wanted them to make the presence of the government felt through the police and I think this was the mistake. The Indian has grown up... and this was everywhere, it's not only La Ronge, this was the technique of the government everywhere. The presence of the crown was represented by the authority of the RCMP, instead of a civilian person.

Murray: An armed representative of the government.

Harry: Exactly. So the Indian has reacted and I think a lot of this violence towards himself and, God only knows, probably be against us before long. If it takes the pattern of other countries, people will do that. But this was a big mistake and that is why there is a hostility towards not only the white

but to any white authority. I saw a great deal of this in The Pas. One night they put 90 Indian people in jail the first

night of the Trappers' Festival in The Pas.

Murray: What was the attitude of the native person to the law? Was it one of respecting it?

Harry: No, he feared it. The government probably took this approach with the RCMP the same as the ministers of the Anglican church took towards preaching the religion. Fear the Lord. Whereas before the Indian loved God through his religion and he respected God. He wasn't afraid of God. If he got a bad winter, well that's the way it was, it was God's way. He didn't fear the Lord but the church taught him to fear the Lord and the government taught him to fear the law. So he was terrified of them. He didn't feel it was giving him any protection, you see, ...

Murray: It didn't relate to his life at all.

Harry: Impossible. It had no relationship and the people you see, they've been let down very badly. Who abandoned them in the time of need is the Anglican church. I'm not saying God abandoned them, it's the church who's let God down. Who's standing beside the Indian when he has problems? You don't see any minister walking hand in hand with the Indian when he goes into court and charged with a crime or anything. There is no one there to support him at all. And the government, the white man which he did rely on to protect his rights as a treaty Indian were violated, and the government let him down by using sort of armed force.

Murray: Could you elaborate a bit on the presence of the church and what it meant to people over that period of time?

Harry: Well,...

Murray: Has it changed at all?

Harry: Yes, it has. When I was here, there were a lot of Indians were very devout Christians, the older people. If the service started at eleven o'clock, Indian people would be sitting out on the stones around the Anglican church at seven o'clock in the morning waiting for church to start at eleven. And the same with the evening service. But over the years, say when the crisis came there, the economic problems with...

Murray: This was in the early forties?

Harry: Yes. And the Indian felt he was abandoned, there was nobody to help him. So he gave up his faith in the church, he lost his faith in Christianity. Deep down he still believed in God but it's a terrible... it's a crisis for the people.

Murray: Would you say that, say between 1936 and 1940, did the church play a positive role at all in terms of social organizing, dances, or anything like that or...?

Harry: No, dancing was forbidden. You couldn't even go boating on Sunday. The church was very strict in that way. And one of the tragedies was their educational system. They had this large mission. And they would take these children

into that mission from all these isolated places, small children, seven years old, six years old, and they were shut in, like you might say a virtual prison, for one year at a time. And they were harassed. They could not speak English. Cree was their language so they were put into a classroom to start studying English. And they couldn't even understand it so the teachers used to whip the hell out of them.

Murray: Because they didn't understand them.

Harry: Yeah. A lot of kids ran away, they'd bring them back. That gave the police a job, "Go and find those kids." Truants. So the educational system provided by the church, in my opinion, has formed the foundation of the basic problem we have today. The total rejection of our educational system and what we were teaching. Open up a book and talking about La Verendrye's voyage, Peter Pond, and Samuel Hearne, and calling the Indians savages, and scalping the white man, and this is what they had to read about themselves. They would think, "My God, what kind of people are we?" But then again, who wrote the books? So, I think the Indian has totally rejected everything. Rejected the white man's religion, he's rejected the white man's education and he's in a state of limbo. And he's lost his own culture, he's lost his own identity. So, when you're in a vacuum, God only knows what'll happen. It could explode in any direction. That's the problem we have, not only in La Ronge. I've been in many Indian villages across the north, hundreds of the them, and they are all faced with the same problem. There is a large presence of white people and a complete change.

Murray: It seems to me just a total lack of any community in the places, is that what you're...?

Harry: Yeah, that's right and they are not brought into the community. We look right here. What role does the Indian play in community affairs, planning or anything? It's nonexistent. And some people will say, well the Indian doesn't want to participate. Well, that isn't the point. I think if the Indian were invited and was treated equally, he'd be quite willing to participate. Not in everything the white man does because he has a different view of things. But I think what we should do is encourage sports for the Indian people because I watched the Olympics and you see these people run and jump and swim and so forth and I can name a dozen Indians that could outrun any of the marathon winners, the gold medals in the Olympics this year. We could find them right in the north without any training. These people could run a hundred miles a day behind a dog team. You know, how many athletes could do that? They couldn't do it. They've got to have a perfect track. If they run twenty-five miles, they think it's a big

thing.

Murray: Right. There was one thing I meant to ask you in my mind at the time. In that community, in La Ronge in the late thirties, if someone was injured or a family was disabled in some way, what would be the response of the community? How would that work in terms of them being assisted?

Harry: Well, in that case, if he happened to be a member of the Anglican church, they would help. I can remember the Hudson's Bay Company helping, hiring planes and sending someone out. I didn't see many injuries. I never saw a broken limb.

There was only one person I knew that got shot accidentally with a rifle was Peter Bird from Hunter's Bay and I think he's still around today. He lost his left arm. He cut it off. He amputated the arm himself and the medicine man got a certain type of medicine and put a ring around, painted a ring around the wound, you see, and it healed. He never did go out.

(End of Side A)

(Side B)

Harry: ...in a force that you and I will never see because it's just quick. It's training...

Murray: They see different things.

Harry: Every sound, every movement. He knows where every animal would be and that was his formal education as far as... and very critical for an Indian family. And they were deprived of this and I think that is the generation we've got today, that went through the mission schools. The older people that I knew that were parents at that time are dead and their children, you see, have gone through this educational system.

Murray: The 35 to 40 year old people that have gone through all that.

Harry: That's right. Corrupted, and they are lost.

Murray: They have nothing in the white world and nothing in the Indian world.

Harry: That's right.

(pause)

Murray: Harry, you run a bicycle assembly plant I think it is, in Manitoba. Could you describe a bit what the operation is and how many people do you employ?

Harry: Well, I'd like to give you a little background on this project. You know, I want to be fair that there are people in all certain levels in governments, Indian Affairs or provincial

governments that are concerned about the people. They are not just the stone-hearted bureaucrats everywhere. Unfortunately, they are the majority in most cases but there are dedicated people, one or two, that seem to be able to survive and get some project going and one is at Rivers in this former airforce base. They wanted this as an experimental project. I became interested in it, having read about it. The Department of Indian Affairs approached me because, maybe I'm complimenting myself, but I was always interested in the Indians' cause and had participated in trying to help. For an example, we set up the Louis Riel Scholarship Fund, my company did, at the University of Saskatchewan, for university students of non-Indian status. So that's just to give you some of the background why I sort of got into this. And I've spent a great deal of time in Japan. We do a lot of business with Japan, and this bicycle project, this company, wanted to come to Canada; and the two sort of fell together. The time I was talking with a Japanese in the Department of Indian Affairs, Bob Connelly called me and wanted to know if we were interested in putting an assembly plant and employing Indian people and we liked the

idea. The directors came from Japan, we flew out and we looked at everything and we finally completed. And we're doing more than just assembly now. We are manufacturing frames. But the project there I think is key, maybe, to the future for opportunities for Indian people because what it does - a complete integrated community. There are four hundred homes, there is manufacturing facilities, there is a high school, there is an elementary school, there is a baseball field, there is a soccer field, a football field, they play tennis, there is a recreational centre, there is a community centre for women and it's just really a delightful place. And so the people that come to work there... now I'll go back a little bit here.

Now I'll just even bring in Lac La Ronge again or any other community. One of the problems facing the Indian people whether it's in La Ronge or in an Indian reserve or wherever it is, if they want a job, they have to leave their families and this is a very, very disrupting aspect of that social aspect. They have to leave their families and go and find work. Well, this is really bad. So in the case of the Rivers operation, they will go to these outlying communities, whether it's Norway House or Peguis Indian Reserve or Baren's River or Island Lake, and they will interview families that may want to leave the reservation life. Once the family have made the decision, they will fly them to Rivers, let them assess the situation and if they decide, then they are given a home at so much a month. They have a complete home. The whole family goes; it's not broken up. This is what I like about it. And the wife is given a course in home economics and how to look after a home and how to use a dishwasher and all the modern conveniences. And the husband is given courses in work, standards and so forth, and it's a complete orientation. And I think that lasts

for about three months. Then the man goes into our factory. And of course, we only have Japanese teachers. We decided in

our factory not to have a white boss because immediately you put a white man in charge of an Indian you have a separation. There is a hostility. So we felt only Japanese supervisors because the Indian hasn't got a gripe against Japanese.

Murray: Right, there is no history of anything.

Harry: No. And not only that, they look like each other.

Murray: They are the same color.

Harry: They are brothers, they really are. So that has worked very well. And I was interested in it because of the social benefits for the Indian people. It was a very worthy project. And there are other companies participating. We are not the only one. There is a trailer manufacturer, there is a furniture manufacturer going in there, there is quite a few industries are all participating. And, as I say, I think it's the only project in Canada of its type and it seems to me that that project could be expanded and that it shouldn't be looked upon as a profit centre either. The Indian, the performance of the Indian people, their work record is better than General Motors in Detroit so nobody can say that the Indians' productivity isn't equal. And they are very skilled. I know a lot of people say, "Well, a bicycle is very simple thing." It's not. Putting a bicycle together is like putting a watch together. There is a lot of fine, delicate work. The Indian people are very talented and very skillful with their hands and so they fit in very well with our project there.

And then, you know, when we think about it, why shouldn't the Indian be skilled because since the beginning of time until fifty years ago, they made everything. They made their own clothing, their own footwear, they made their own snowshoes, they made their own toboggans, dog sleds, they made their own dog harness. He was a natural craftsman. Built his own cabins. So he is born with thousands and tens of thousands of years of skill in his blood flowing through his veins and into his hands. We've never utilized that. You look at an Indian's handwriting, I've never seen an Indian with poor handwriting. Just beautiful handwriting. He has great skill in his hands and we've never utilized it. I have a couple of Indians building a cabin for me over in Manitoba. The finest carpenters I've ever seen. They have no formal training at all, they are right out of the Peguis Indian reserve. So it's there but we've never utilized it and this project at Rivers is bringing this out. There are industries going in there like furniture manufacturing and this camper and the bicycle business.

Murray: Native people are employed in all of these?

Harry: Yes. And they love that type of work.

Murray: You mentioned the other evening when you were talking about it that you had offered native people a chance for

promotion within the factory and they turned it down. Could you tell that story?

Harry: Well, yes, that's true and I can understand it and I appreciate it because of the social structure of the Indian. They are still tribal people and non-competitive and when we

offered an Indian an opportunity to become a foreman or lead hand where he had to give an order to his brother, he wouldn't do it. He said "It's not our way." You know, so we understood that part.

Murray: So the Japanese people have remained in those sort of supervisory positions.

Harry: That's right, yeah. And we are trying some new techniques out, giving the Indian a little more... rather than have a supervisor, make his job in such a way that he doesn't need a supervisor. You know, that he does his job well, self-regulating, self-discipline, like they do within their own tribe.

Murray: And that's working out is it?

Harry: Yes, they take their own responsibility rather than have someone tell them. For instance, the moose hunter, the man that may be providing the moose in a tribe, they wouldn't say, "Well look, you better go out and shoot a moose."

Murray: Or go here or go there.

Harry: No, that's right. It's all assumed that he will do that and with no direction. I think if we can appreciate the Indian's way, his approaches to these things, without twisting him and deforming his thinking and his philosophy, we have so much to learn from the Indian people. We could be far more humane, I think, in our industrial society, if we studied closely the Indian's technique and way of doing things. It could be transferred from the Indian way into our way.

Murray: Right. Do you think it was a particularly fortuitous sort of thing, the Japanese getting together with the native people, beyond just the fact that they are not white and don't have a history of exploitation, but the nature of the Japanese social structure?

Harry: Yes, well that has a bearing. And you want to remember the Japanese people have a long history of working with minority groups, being a highly industrialized country and operating - for instance, they are operating in many countries of the world especially in the Orient. They are in Indonesia and the Phillipines and Taiwan and Korea. And they take mountain people, village people, and have them doing these assembly jobs where there is complex electronic assemblies or machinery or bicycles, sewing machines or whatever it is. So they are skilled in that field and they are very flexible. And so it's part of the nature of the Japanese and it fits in very

nicely with the Indian way.

Murray: I'm wondering, what was the situation like in Rivers when you arrived and first established the plant in terms of what we've been talking about earlier, you know, the condition of the native culture? Was it in a state of deterioration like it was here or was it in a healthier situation?

Harry: What, Rivers?

Murray: Yeah.

Harry: Well, there were no Indians at all on the Rivers base. There were some Indian reserves nearby but they were agricultural people. The Rivers project was an airbase that

was closed. It had four hundred homes, several big hangers, runways and all this and it was turned into a manufacturing complex. It was incorporated, became a corporation within the Department of Indian Affairs. The Indian people had come to work there and 99% of them come from remote or farther away communities. We had working in there Sioux Indians, we had Saulteaux, we had Cree, and I think there were a couple of Chipewyan Indians, I believe, in there. So we had three or four different types of people. But basically, the people came from the isolated reserves that had no economic base. There wasn't a viable community any more. What did the people do? Their fishing was gone. There was just nothing. It was just strictly a welfare type of community. So that, basically, is where the people came from. As I say, we did have a few Sioux people from, I forget the name of the reserve, but they are agricultural people. They are quite well off. They are farming and...

Murray: I know that in the north today there are many families that have just deteriorated because of alcohol and welfare and it's hard to imagine bringing them out of that situation. Did the Rivers project manage to bring people in that kind of situation out of it or were they relatively healthy families that you managed to get?

Harry: Well, I wouldn't even know. We do not take an active part in the selection. This is done by native counsellors in cooperation with Indian Affairs. They have a lot of very competent Indian people as counsellors and who work with them and I'm sure that in order to be fair to people, I would assume that the government would want to take not just say the

perfect people but why not help the problem people. The perfect people can help themselves. So that it would seem to me that it's possible that there were problem families brought into the project.

Murray: A cross section of situations.

Harry: That's right, yes. But we certainly have no problems at Rivers with the people there. They've fitted in very nicely

and became very active in the community.

Murray: How important do you think was the training program? You mentioned both the woman and the man would be trained. Is that a key to the thing?

Harry: It is a key, yes. Very much so. We'll go back a little bit to some of my earlier experiences in Montreal Lake, Saskatchewan which is isolated too. In 1936 or 1935, the government as an experiment built five houses on the reserve at Montreal Lake. And they went around and they picked out five families that they thought should have these houses. They wanted to get the Indians out of the wigwams. At that time they were still living in tents and fur, the wigwam type of dwelling with skins, moose hides or caribou hides over it. They thought it would be a great thing to have them in houses. So they built five houses and they harassed these Indians to move in when they come back from their trapline. Well, I happened to be there that summer and we were travelling by canoe from Montreal Lake right through to La Ronge with a load of freight. And I noticed tents pitched beside each house. I knew an Indian - I think his name was Hunter, he was a prominent Indian in the place - and he told me that the

Indians would not accept those houses because it would put them higher, you know. Again it would take them out of the tribal structure and put them into the white man's world and they were not ready to accept it. So as a compromise, they pitched the tent beside the house and lived in it. They never did move into it. I thought that was the beginning of a mild protest against the white man's ways.

Murray: They never moved into the houses?

Harry: Never moved in the houses. They rotted and sank into the ground. There were five homes. Now I thought that was really a beautiful, you know... it was a wonderful example that we should have...

Murray: Picked up on.

Harry: Just been alerted to it at the time. But the government was never interested. And at that same time, if I can tell you this other story which is interesting, the election of a chief was due at that time in Montreal Lake. The Indian agent came in and they had an old log structure and they called a meeting to elect a chief. So I asked the Indian agent if I could sit in on the election of the chief and they had a big long confab and finally they agreed. I guess they didn't want me around. Anyways, it was the most pathetic thing I have ever seen in my life and again another step in the degradation of the Indian people. The hall, there must have been fifty or seventy-five Indian members of the band there. So there is the Indian agent and his assistant and some clerk. The three of them were sitting at the front. The Indian agent pounds his hammer, you see, and the meeting called to order

and, "We will now call for the election of the chief. Who wants to be chief?" This is the way they started out. All their faces were passive and some magnificent faces too, you know. They are really handsome people. And not a movement. He got going again, "Well, there must be, Abraham how about you. You'd make good chief." And he goes on and he names another one. They don't want to make a move. This isn't the way of electing a chief; it's a joke. But this was a new policy of the Department of Indian Affairs.

Murray: You got to be supervised.

Harry: Yeah, right. They don't do it any more. I think they learned their lesson. But I'll bet you a half an hour passed before he got one Indian to make a move and it was on the virtual threat of being kicked out of treaty and you name it. And he practically had to virtually go down and grab somebody like this and pull them up. Finally they got five men up at the front, standing up like school children. And these are hunters and warriors, you know. They were men in their fifties at that time and they still had that tradition of being an Indian. And so they are standing there, and I thought, oh God. It just reminded me of Big Bear the time he was put in chains in 1870 and humiliated in front of his people. I thought, here they're putting the Indians in chains again. So, he says, "Oh, that nice group. Yeah, Abraham and Solomon," and he goes down the line, five. "Now," he says, "you've got five men up here. I want you to stand behind the man you want to be chief." It took another hour of harassing and pounding the table and you name it to get the people started. And a couple stood behind this one and four or five behind here and I don't think they

got any more than eight or nine people to stand up behind those five people. The rest never moved at all. "Okay, you're the next chief." The one who had five Indians standing there. "You're the next chief."

Murray: It was over.

Harry: So he give him a badge and a blue suit and a few trinkets and stuff like that and he's chief. And I thought, what a pathetic performance.

Murray: On the part of our civilized government.

Harry: Civilized world treating these people, grown men, responsible people, really great people, treating them like little children. And this went on all over the country. And I say, this laid the foundations of all this terrible tragedy that we have today. Of course, it was going on for a hundred years anyway. It started when the west... imprisonment of all the Indians in Battleford in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. And it continued on and I don't think it's changed. It's changed a little but the attitude of the bureaucrats is not to treat the Indian with any dignity and respect. And even the church, I heard a bishop say in The Pas one time that the Indians are nothing more than little children, they should be treated that

way. I hate to say it about the church because I know their intentions were good but they were so wrong. They didn't even represent God when they were dealing with the Indian people. I think they were representing the devil.

That's a little diversion from your original question but I just had to tell you this part of it because it all fits in with - if we are to do something for the Indian people and go back to the Rivers project, it has to be a positive project.

It has to be a project, you know, work that the Indian will like. You have to keep the family together. And it's not a matter of handouts or help. The Indian really wants to do it his own way and he's going to make a lot of mistakes just like we do. We make lots of mistakes. I made lots of mistakes in my business. I flounder and we all do. But because we're all white, we never see it.

Murray: It's accepted in white people but not in Indians.

Harry: That's right. We have all these problems. Every time the Indian does something and he makes a mistake, they say, "Well, there's the taxpayer's money..."

Murray: Down the drain.

Harry: Yeah. But I think we've got a limited amount of time that we have to come up with very positive programs on a massive scale to solve this problem or it's going to be serious. Because I work in the prisons, you know. For a number of years I was chairman of the employment committee of Chaplain's Volunteers at Stony Mountain to get people jobs. When you look at 26% of the population of Stony Mountain is Indian people and I know in Prince Albert it's probably 90%, and in other prisons it's even higher. Stony Mountain was built to house Poundmaker and Big Bear, all the Indian chiefs that they arrested and threw in jail and they died. And I think we're still building prisons to put Indians in jail. We're not going to solve this problem. And something much more positive, meaningful to the Indian to get him to feel that he is really a part of our society when we've taken his culture, we've taken his livelihood away from him. We've taken

everything away, stripped him of all his dignity. First of all, we killed the top leadership. We took the chiefs away and that was...

Murray: The real chiefs, not this phony...

Harry: The real chiefs, that's right, in 1870 and 1875. So, we have to find out what can we do that's meaningful to the Indian. It's no use giving him welfare. We've got to restore to him what originally was his. Now I'm not saying we're going to give Canada back to him or anything but we've certainly got to start with giving him his dignity back. We've got to recognize his land claims and let him go back to his belief in his religion, possibly. And there is a hundred things that we

can do. And when he gets back into that, he's not certainly going back hunting and trapping and fishing; that's gone. But by restoring to him his natural rights, he can maybe step forward into the white man's world, proud, with dignity, and a good feeling and...

Murray: And be successful at the same time.

Harry: And be successful.

Murray: Yeah, I think....

(End of Side B)

(End of Interview)

INDEX

INDEX TERM	IH NUMBER	DOC NAME	DISC #	PAGE #
ALCOHOL				
-abuse of	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	3,7
CHIEFS AND CHIEFTAINSHIP				
-election of	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	29-31
CHILDREN				
-illegitimate	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	7
CHRISTIAN CHURCHES				
-Anglican	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	16,17,19
CHRISTIAN CHURCHES				
-attitudes toward	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	17
CRIMES AND PUNISHMENTS				
-prisons	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	32
DANCES AND DANCING				
-social	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	4,10,11
EDUCATION				
-residential schools	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	18,20
EDUCATION				
-traditional	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	20
INDIAN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF				
-Indian Agents	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	12,29,30,31
INDIAN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF				
-economic development policies	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	21-28
INDIAN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF				
-housing	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	28,29
LAW ENFORCEMENT				
-and police	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	13-16
LAW ENFORCEMENT				
-attitudes toward	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	16
MARRIAGE				
-preparations for	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	9,10
MARRIAGE				
-responsibilities	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	9,10
MEDICINE AND CURING PRACTICES				
-surgery	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	20
NATURE				
-relationship to	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	6,8,9
NATURE				

-and spirituality	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	6
NON-INDIANS				
-Japanese	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	21-26
NON-INDIANS				
-relationships with	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	9
RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT				
-and environmental				
damage	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	7,8
ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE				
-treatment by	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	13,14,15
SOCIAL ORGANIZATION				
-communalism	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	5

2

INDEX TERM	IH NUMBER	DOC NAME	DISC #	PAGE #
SOCIAL ORGANIZATION				
-community leadership	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	8
SOCIAL ORGANIZATION				
-decision making	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	6
SPORTS				
-athletics	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	19
TRANSPORTATION				
-dog team	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	3,19
TRAPPING				
-regulations	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	13,14
TREATIES				
-treaty status	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	11,12
WORK				
-job creation	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	21

PROPER NAME INDEX

PROPER NAME	IH NUMBER	DOC NAME	DISC #	PAGE #
LA RONGE, SASK.	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	2-20
MONTREAL LAKE, SASK.	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	28-31
RIVERS, MAN.	IH-401	HARRY PAUL	98	21-28