

Jim Sinclair, Jim Durocher, and Ron Laliberte:

Métis Political Activist Interviews (April 17, 2004)

Tape 1

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RON LALIBERTE: Do you see a different type of leadership now in comparison to those people that we, that, you know, when you look back on, on all of those grassroots people and the way everybody pulled together and you take a look at the leadership now, what are the sort of changes, differences in the leadership or are there any?

(Video Tape: 4:46.54.16) JIM DUROCHER: Well I don't see a whole lot of community involvement. I don't see a whole lot of, you know, people that, you know, dealing with those issues at a grassroots level. They spend an awful lot of time on, on programs, you know being concerned about programs or trying to get, you know, program money for this, program money for that. Which is alright, I got no problems with that but they forget, you know, a lot of the leaders today, they'll forget the community. They forget the grassroots, you know, what people are concerned about the grassroots, you know, at the grassroots level. You know, they forget the bread and butter issues, you know, or what I call the bannock and lard issues. And, you know, those are the issues for housing for example. They don't deal with a whole lot of stuff about, about those kind of things eh. And, you know, which we consider rights issues. You know, they, they, they spend too much time, far too much time in trying to run, trying to administer programs, you know.

JIM SINCLAIR: Same problem as FSIN.

JIM DUROCHER: Same problem as the FSIN yeah and, you know. And they need, they need to refocus their attention at the community level. I mean, you know, otherwise, otherwise we're going to lose, you know, whatever political momentum we had, we had, you know, going for us, you know, in terms of the politics of the thing. Because the Constitution is not, sure we're not talking about the Constitution now, that probably won't we open for, open up for another round...

JIM SINCLAIR: We don't need to.

JIM DUROCHER: Yeah, they don't need to do those kind of things, you know, because it's, it's there already and, you know, everything, that, that, that was fought for by, you know, by, you know, people like Jim Sinclair is there now already, you know. And we, all we need to do it do something about it, let's, let's move on it.

(Video Tape: 4:48.37.09) RON LALIBERTE: Do you, do you think that the funding, when you look back on it played a huge role in that, in terms of not being accountable to the communities? Because now you're accountable to politicians in regards to where you're spending this money, money and so on. Is that, is that, is that been something that's really big...

(Video Tape: 4:48.53.28) JIM SINCLAIR: No, no, I think that time we were still responsible to government more so than you are now, but we walked the fine line. See what we did in the old days, and this is where you, you, really don't see in the days, and I work a lot with Treaty Indians. Treaty Indian gets their honorarium, goes to a meeting and they go home after the meeting. We would hold a meeting and do our duty. If there was a meeting about education or a meeting about social something, we do our meeting, but we would stay after the meeting and we would hold another big session about our political awareness, about what we're going to do.

JIM DUROCHER: We'd tie it in...

JIM SINCLAIR: We'd tie it in. So...

JIM DUROCHER: Or piggy back on it.

JIM SINCLAIR: Piggyback on it. So we never wasted a buck on that. We never wasted a dollar on that.

RON LALIBERTE: And today you'd have two separate meetings.

JIM SINCLAIR: That's right we, we'd do our job, we'd do our meeting with the, then ask the government for our money...

(Video Tape: 4:49.37.00) JIM DUROCHER: If we had a meeting, if we had a meeting about, about education, for example. We'd get some money from educat-, from the Department of Education to do that meeting. Okay, so we'd have it. And we'd make sure that you know, it's done.

JIM SINCLAIR: That stuff's done.

JIM DUROCHER: But then right after that meeting then we would say, "Hey lets have a political meeting, let's talk about politics here."

JIM SINCLAIR: And then we'd go at that for hours and hours...
(inaudible)...

JIM DUROCHER: Two birds with one stone and people knew that.

RON LALIBERTE: And you'd invite a lot of people from the community. Now you sort of, how is it, how is it done, I mean...

JIM SINCLAIR: I don't really know, but you have to have....

RON LALIBERTE: Is it done more with the executive and people in, in positions of the affiliates as opposed to, I'm not sure myself.

JIM SINCLAIR: We were all community meetings in those days, everything was community.

RON LALIBERTE: Everything was community meetings?

JIM DUROCHER: Yeah, and there was no, you know...

RON LALIBERTE: And that way you were more accountable?

JIM DUROCHER: You didn't have, you didn't have that big, you know, "I'm an executive," you know, attitude like, you know, like Jim was the president but he was still just a half-breed.

JIM SINCLAIR: (Inaudible)

(Video Tape: 4:50.32.22) JIM DUROCHER: You know. Jim get in here, you know, we need you, come and, you know, let's talk, let's have a meeting. And but now, well they try to make a big deal out of it, like the president is coming and such and such and then they, you know. And that kind of turns people off, you know, at the community level. People don't buy that, they don't, you know. You got to be one of them, you know. It's, you know.

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