

Jim Sinclair, Jim Durocher, and Ron Laliberte:

Métis Political Activist Interviews (April 17, 2004)

Tape 2

Start Clip: 7:00:08.03

(Video Tape: 7:00.08.03) JIM DUROCHER: We used to have meetings, we used to have four or five hundred people in Green Lake, little Green Lake, Saskatchewan, where you're from originally, you know. And we had, you know, your dad was in many of those meetings, you know, and lots of the elders that, you know, that were there, the Fiddlers. Remember the Fiddlers? They were there yes.

JIM SINCLAIR: Old Tom Fiddler's still alive isn't he?

JIM DUROCHER: Yeah, old Tom is still alive yes, absolutely.

JIM SINCLAIR: So, you know, we, we had, we had these people would come to meetings, places like Pine House, you know, Phillip Martin...

JIM DUROCHER: Yeah, Martin, Martin Smith and, you know, his wife, Martin Smith's wife. And Tinker's, you know and Tinker's wife, you know, they're, they're...

(Video Tape: 7:00.48.07) JIM SINCLAIR: I remember going to Cumberland House where we had five, six hundred people at a meeting. You can't do that today. You cannot do that today no matter what you do. And, and people like, Durocher that's where you talk about making the bannock and the moose meat. In fact, Durocher was one of our leaders and he had to go haul water for the ladies, to make damn sure they had enough. (Inaudible

due to overlapping talk)... haul water by the field to bring it on to help them cook their meals, so, you know, everybody participated.

JIM DUROCHER: We had running water but you had to run down the hill to go to the lake to get some water.

RON LALIBERTE: Well, I remember looking back on those conferences and it gave me a feeling of pride, of being a Métis person, because...

JIM SINCLAIR: Oh yeah, it should.

(Video Tape: 7:01.25.13) RON LALIBERTE: You know, that's the first national forum we've had, you know, since probably, you know, 1885 where they, you know, there was all that negative stuff about the Métis, but certainly I was, I was just, when I saw that, you know, the leadership and all the work people like you did, I was really, really feeling proud about that. If I could talk about the conferences, how did you feel about, you know, the first conference? Did you have a sense of, you know, now we're going to get something done? Were you really, were you really feeling like, you know, this now is our opportunity to, you know, move forward on self-government and, you know, or Aboriginal rights and so on? How was the point were you, were you feeling like, you know, you started out really, you know, high hopes and then you got bashed and you can see a sort of trend setting in?

JIM DUROCHER: There was a lot of, you know, a lot of, you know, we're not sure...

RON LALIBERTE: Were the Premiers, were the Premiers really uptight saying no, no, no, I don't want to listen... **(inaudible)**...

(Video Tape: 7:02.16.04) JIM DUROCHER: Well, you had, Jim had some pretty good arguments with some of the, because he sat at the head of the,

you know, the Métis Delegation. And, you know, a lot of the Premiers, for example Vander Zalm, you know, a lot of those guys didn't really understand, they didn't really know. So there was a little bit of educating to do, you know, and how do you get, how do you educate people, for example, who are so used to having authority and not having to listen to anybody like, you know. A lot of these Premiers had that attitude. And so you had to do something like bang the table and get their attention and say listen, here is what we're all about. Here is who we are and here is what we want. You know, those kind of things. And that's where, you know, Sinclair, you know, was able to do those kind of things, particularly when he went after, he got a lot of attention when he got after, after Devine for example.

RON LALIBERTE: That was in the last meeting wasn't it?

JIM SINCLAIR: That was the 1987 conference.

JIM DUROCHER: That was in the last meeting, that's right, you know. And we got a lot of attention out of them because we weren't getting, we weren't getting the kind of attention that we, we needed to have to, you know, to be able to make our points, to be able to make our, to, to make our arguments and to be able to have a discussion, to, to discuss, have a good discussion about the things that we were putting on the table, you know. And, you know, things like real, real attention getters. For example, Sinclair used the analogy, in Saskatchewan, in Uranium City, you pay the same amount of money for a forty ounce bottle of rye as you do in Regina and yet, you buy, the milk is, is, is at least two hundred percent more in Uranium City than, than it is in Regina. So you're subsidizing booze and you're not subsidizing food for babies, you know. Those kind of analogies and that really caught on and it really, you know, really helped put our message across. And you better believe it, Grant Devine paid attention after that, you know. A lot of it was negative. When we got home we got cut off our funds for example, you

know. Within, within two or three hours we got cut off our funds. As soon as Sinclair was finished I think, you know, Grant Devine went to the phone.

JIM SINCLAIR: Before he was finished yet.

JIM DUROCHER: Before he was finished somebody ran to the phone and said "Hey cut these guys off," because we got back and there was no money.

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