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JAMES CARRIERE

James Carriere is a resident of Cumberland House. He worked as assistant to Jim Brady when the latter worked in Cumberland. He is active in various community activities.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Jim Brady: his strengths and weaknesses.
- Incidents illustrating Brady's life in Cumberland House.
- Speculation about Brady's death and his links with the Communist party.
- World War II: returning veterans and their impact on the communities.
- Comparison of Brady and Norris.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Jim Carriere is a resident of Cumberland House. He worked for Jim Brady when the latter was a field officer for the CCF government. He and other members of the Carriere family have been active in community and commercial activities for many years.

INTERVIEW:

Jim: You may find a slight difference between me and Pierre. I am more or less, I don't think very much when I am talking. I just go ahead and shoot.

Murray: That's fine, whatever.

Jim: I just go ahead and shoot.

Murray: I am talking to Jim Carriere about Jim Brady. Jim, you worked with Jim Brady when he lived in Cumberland. Could you tell me a bit about those days?

Jim: Oh yes, yeah. Back in the early fifties I worked about three and a half years with Jim Brady, under Jim Brady that is. Because I started off working for Joe Johnson, which is passed away a few years back now, and then when he moved out of here, Jim Brady took his place as the conservation officer in Cumberland House. And we thought with his background with the cooperatives that he started with Malcolm Norris that he did a good job at La Loche, I mean...

Murray: La Biche?

Jim: La Biche. Lac La Biche he used to call it, you know. And they did very well. They were working along with the priest there that was very active in the community development, organizations and things like that. And these two people, to me, more or less give us a lot of good points and good ideas how the people should sort of work in their own communities and how to develop it and how to get everybody going to stand on his own feet and all that. And in our family at least, we more or less stick to that. And I believe as a Metis, which Jim was and Malcolm was, they gave us a hell of a lot of good points. And that is where we took over from. Eventually Jim was more of a self-disciplined person and if he would make a comment, he thought that was good, he would stick to it. He would never change his mind. And I think, knowing that you have to get the story from both sides of the fence before you agree to something solidly, that I think this is where he made a few

mistakes in his life. Because you certainly don't know everything by yourself, you know. And with a lack of information and a lack of, you know, that things you don't do, well, naturally you are not going to be right. So this is where the downfall was on Jim that I know him for, let's say, a good six, seven years.

Murray: He was a stubborn man?

Jim: Yeah, he was a kind of a stubborn man. But I tell you, as far as history is concerned, he had books stacked oh, a mile high. Because anything that you ask him in history, Jim Brady knew it. Anything. Because he took it out from those books.

Murray: Did he read a lot while you were there?

Jim: Oh, man. I never seen a man that could read that much. You know, I used to like reading when my eyes were still good. I'd lay in bed, you know. When I had time to do it, I would read, you know. But I never seen a person like him. But the knowledge that he had on his books and the history, the knowledge of the history that he had, I've never seen another person to be that great. Because at the moment that you bring

out something about history, Jim Brady had it. And he would answer you right away. So he was that great.

Murray: He had a memory too, eh?

Jim: Oh yeah, very. I know the good part of him, you know, that I used to study him. He would tell stories about people, what they were doing, and the funny things that people were doing and things like that, and the bad things that people were doing. These stories he used to tell and with the years that I've worked with him and the years that I've known him, he would come out exactly the same way to telling these stories to these different people. And I thought, well, that guy can't be lying, you see. So he was telling the truth every time because if you were lying, sooner or later you get caught up, you see. So with him, he'd never got caught up. You'd never catch him because he'd tell exactly the same story that he told to the guy that I've heard before. And that's what I liked about Jim because he was very honest about that. But the only bad thing that we said before, he was stubborn. And this is his downfall with the department. Because with the department, with the government people, as I know now... I didn't know nothing about them then. I was working under them as a patrolman and Jim Brady liked me to work with him because the fact that I was a hard working man. I was brought up to be a hard worker and the facts that I was pretty good knowledge with the things that

was going on in the community and the things that were going on with different organizations in different places you see, and different communities as well. And I've travelled enough of that to know it, you see. To be able to judge where is the downfall and where that you are going to make the grade. And this is where Jim was very good at it. And to me, if he wasn't so stubborn, he would have been a great man.

Murray: He would have been more effective then?

Jim: Oh, he would have been more effective because naturally if you were wrong - I'll tell you, one time there was some kind of a lot misunderstanding in the community. And I think there was connected with a few lots that Jim didn't agree with the department. And he'd send a message and he'd receive it back pretty well the same as it came out the first time. But then he would change it to try and prove it to them that the government was wrong. See, those things don't go with the government. Because they know once they lay it out, well, that's pretty well it, you see. And Jim was going to change that and he sent message after message and I was the guy that was sending them out on radio. (chuckles)

Murray: He wasn't going to give up?

Jim: No, no he would never give up. And to me, that was the downfall. And I'm sorry to say this a few times but you know that when you are talking about different things you are certainly eventually going to get to know the guy, what is bad about him, you know.

Murray: What's good and what's bad, right.

Jim: But as far as honesty, he was an honest man.

Murray: And he was a man who would help people, eh?

Jim: Oh, definitely. Definitely he helped a lot of people here. And I think again there that was his downfall, being too good to people which the government, all those bureaucrats don't go along with. The government has got to be like that; they are always like that, you know. There is bureaucrats and good people in the governments. The good people don't last too long with the governments because they are too honest. And I'm sorry to say this but...

Murray: That's what happened with Jim?

Jim: That's what happened to Jim. He was too good to the people and he eventually lost his job.

Murray: Can you describe how he lost his job? Do you know much of the details of that?

Jim: Well, the details of that I think, he didn't want to go to this certain area that he was sent to. He didn't like it. He figured he was discriminated by the government because he couldn't find anything wrong that he had done, see. That was the whole problem. And to tell you the truth, how honest the man was, you know... I didn't like the job I was doing because I was always a hunter and at that time, with the small amount of money that I was getting.... I was getting five dollars a day which was damn small. And I couldn't make it go so I had had to get out and shoot something in order to keep my credit, you know, pay it up each month. So, I told Jim, I says, "I went out shooting some ducks. Keep it under your hat and everything will be fine." Well this was getting on close to the open season you see and eventually it leaked out and Jim would never let me go.

I'll tell you an instance when a funny thing happened. We went down to The Pas and picked up a bunch of sandbags. There were people building damns in here, you know, and Jim and I went down to The Pas to pick up. Of course, there was no transportation at that time. There was no road. You had to go down by boat to The Pas and back again. But we had a 22-horse Johnson, the biggest motor that came out at that time. And we had a speed boat and it was pretty damn fast. So anyway, we went down and had a party. He used to go to parties with me, you know, but he was a man of control. He can control himself and when he had enough he would go to sleep. But me, I was a goer, you know. I spent more time and well I want to live it up when I'm down at The Pas because there was no liquor up here, you see. So we came out, more than half drunk really, I was. So I bought some liquor to bring it up to Cumberland here. And geez, I was sneaking drinks while he was facing the other way. I was sneaking the odd drink here and there, you

know. Eventually, not sleeping through the night, the night before, it caught up to me. (chuckles) So, by gosh, the next thing I know, we were up on the bank. We were lucky enough to...

Murray: You were supposed to be driving?

Jim: I was driving. (laughs) I was driving. Here I come headfirst, way over my head and landed right beside him and I just about broke my back, you know. And I laid there and I couldn't move. And he cursed me down, "Jim Carriere," he says,

"you're fired right now." I said, "Thank you, Jim." I could hardly get the words out because I was hurt so bad. (laughs) Anyway, we didn't break the motor. We slept there for the night. He said that, "You couldn't run the motor, you are too damn drunk." He said, "Let's stay here for the night." So we stayed on the bank there and slept under the stars. And the next morning we started out and I never said nothing. I figured it was my fault. Naturally I shouldn't have went to sleep on my job you see. So we came up and so when we got to the Bigstone here and I says, "Well, Jim, I guess I better go home because you had me fired so what the hell, I don't care less. I don't care for the job anyhow." So anyway, he never said nothing. He laughed a little bit, went on back to his office and the place where he lived. I came home. About an hour after, he came over to my place and knocked on the door and walked in. "How are you, Jim?" "Oh, fine thank you," and that you know. And made him sit down and he says, "Well, I was thinking it over, Jim. By gosh, you have been pretty damn good to me, you know, and you done a pretty good job. You kept things pretty active, you know. I know that you're not getting very much money but you can always get up there you know and you don't have to stop there." He says, "You can get up there even where I am now," you know. "Well," I says, "To be a game warden, Jim, that's no good to me. We'll leave it at that." So anyway he didn't fire me but somehow the story leaked out, you know. And Jim kept on.

Murray: The story that he didn't fire you?

Jim: Yeah, he kept me on. He kept me on the job. He just more or less got mad, you know. He was a very fast; he was a hot-tempered man. He could get mad and just, you know...

Murray: But he wouldn't stay mad long?

Jim: No, no. He wouldn't stay mad very long. He would forget it, see. But what a great humor that guy had, you know. And the things that he would talk about. And what I used to like - one time we were sitting down, we went up to check the dams the boys had built. And we went up the river and we slept under the stars that night. He used to like that, you know, sit by the campfire, Indian style. He would cross his legs like that and sit by the fire and talk. So I said, "Jim," I says, "we've been through the war." We'd been through the Second World War, you know. I was in the army almost five and a half years and

he was about four years, I guess. And we were talking about the places that we were at and how the things were, how bad they were, and how good they were in places, and all that. And

eventually we come to a point and it was getting along pretty late at night. We are sitting here, stoking up the campfire. And I said, "Jim, what do you think about the situation? What do you think about Russia?" "Well," he says, "to tell you the fact, Jim, I have been reading a lot of things about Russia." He says, "That's the next. The next war is going to be between Russia and the United States," and you know, all that. The allies, that is. "Oh," I says, "what do you mean? I thought it was going to be China?" To me it was going to be China. "Well," he says, "I wouldn't come out truly and admit that," he says, "but you got to watch China. You got to watch China because there are millions of people in there. But Russia is coming up fast and he is going to take country and country over and eventually he is going to take the whole damn works. It is going to take a few years, a few years, but as far as the way that I have been reading about them, the things they said about the world, eventually they are going to be controlling the whole world. Communism is going to control the whole world." So I don't know, kind of to me now, you know, it kind of looks that way. You know this is the prediction he made a way back in 1949.

Murray: Did he say that was a bad thing or a good thing or did he talk about that at all?

Jim: Well, he figured it was a bad thing you know, to be, everybody be living that way. Eventually there is going to be revolutions here and there. That the people would never get along even after the Russians took over because the way we were brought up, and the way the Americans were brought up, the way they lived all those hundreds of years, you are not going to change it. So there is going to be revolutions there always. And I kind of believed him because, you know, the way we live, we got her made in this country. Gee whiz, we got everything we want. Sure it's high cost living but still we're having a damn good life.

Murray: Right.

Jim: And we got everything we want and we are free, you know. Which is a great thing.

Murray: What other kinds of things did Jim talk about around campfires and that sort of thing?

Jim: Well, he talked about the people. The people of...

Murray: The native people?

Jim: The native people. He said that eventually the native people are going to get back on their feet and it's going to take a long time before you get a person that was as good as

Riel. He said, "Riel was a great man and I admire him and I would say that in any day." And I would do the same thing. Not just because I'm a Metis but just because I believe Riel was right, you know. So everybody thinks now. At that time, you know, he was still a murderer and a traitor and stuff like that. But to Jim, he figured he was one of the greatest men.

Murray: He talked about that a lot, eh, about Riel?

Jim: Oh, he certainly did. He talked about Dumont and all those people all the time.

Murray: Did he talk about the history of the Metis people too?

Jim: Yeah, oh yeah, the history, he knew it all. He knew it all. And the thing that kind of amazed me is the pictures that he took about people and the things that he wrote about people, you know. There could have been something behind it, you know. Of the things that he had said about Russia. Now, this is between you and I. Of course, if you want to write a story about this well, fine. But to me, now I often think to myself, you know, because I'm a great thinker. I always think about the world, I'll always think about the conditions of people in different countries and all that because I've been in different countries, a lot of different countries during the war. So, there I think that he might have had something to do with the Russians.

Murray: Or the Communist Party or something like that, eh?

Jim: Or the Communist Party. There might have been something there. Because he would, well, I don't know, "Jim," he would say, "I got to get some money first." And he would never tell you, you know, as close as I was with him, he would never tell you where he would get that money. But eventually, somehow all of a sudden he had money.

Murray: More than he would get from just his salary?

Jim: Well, that's right, yeah. And this is not baloney here. This is the fact that I've known Jim, you know.

Murray: Right.

Jim: But I never said anything to other people about it because to me, I didn't want to jeopardize the job that he was doing. I figured to be a conservation officer as a Metis was a great thing that happened to the Indian people, you know, because at that time,...

Murray: It was mostly white people.

Jim: Mostly white people were running the communities as far as the department was concerned. And I thought that was a great thing for a person like him to do this. But from there, the things that he had done, the things that he had said, and

me knowing the knowledge of what was going on with the war thing, you know, with the experience I had with the wars, that I had an idea he had something to do with the Communists.

Murray: What kinds of things would he have said maybe that would've made you think that? Can you remember any particular things?

Jim: Well, not exactly. There, I couldn't tell a lie, wouldn't want to tell a lie, because he would never commit himself to that, you know...

Murray: Those ideas.

Jim: Those ideas. To come that far and tell me because knowing that I had a pretty good knowledge too, what was going on with the world. So he wouldn't dare come out. He would come out so far and that was it. And he would turn around and talk about something else. He was very smart. He was a real smart man, you know. But that was his downfall and I think eventually he ended up... He was a very good prospector you know, and that's the last thing he had done I think. And Malcolm Norris of course, as you know, that he was a damn good prospector.

Murray: He taught prospecting.

Jim: Oh yeah, and he knew about rocks and everything that you can think of, you know. And as a matter of fact, Malcolm had a better education than Jim had. But they all spoke very fluent English. Always.

Murray: They were both self-educated men.

Jim: Oh, self-educated people. Well, more like myself. I am self-educated, you know.

Murray: I'm interested in this thing about the money. Would he use the money for projects in town? He wouldn't use it for himself.

Jim: No, no, no. The money that he got from the projects, well, they came from the government. But the money he used himself, you know, that...

Murray: The money, you didn't know where he got it?

Jim: Yeah, I didn't know where he got it because he...

Murray: What would he use that money for?

Jim: Well, for his pleasure, for his good times.

Murray: Oh, I see.

Jim: Yeah, that's right. Because he was a great man to serve

you a hot toddy any time, you know. He always had a bottle to talk about, anything that you wanted to talk about. He was right there. And you'd talk about history right there. He was 100% and the first thing he'd come out with a bottle and "Let's talk it over. Let's talk then." And he could read all night and he could talk all night if you gave him a chance.

Murray: Never got tired?

Jim: Never got tired talking. He always had something to talk about, you know. And I think he really knew what was going on in the world, really.

Murray: There were lots of people that used to go to his place and listen to him talk or talk with him?

Jim: No, no, not really because at that time there wasn't too many of us spoke very good English, you know. As a matter of fact, we still don't speak perfect English but at that time we were limited because mostly the boys that really uh...

Murray: They all spoke Cree.

Jim: Well, they were all mostly Cree, eh. But the boys that did speak fairly good English were the boys who were in the army, had came out from the army. So naturally there was quite a few of them here and it's still proven today that they were actually still the backbone of Cumberland House.

Murray: So after the war, it was the veterans who became the leaders in the community, is that right?

Jim: Right. Oh definitely. Pierre was a leader for many, many years. A leader in sports and a leader in local affairs and all of that. And I think Pierre has done more for this community than any other man that I ever know.

Murray: Right.

Jim: Not only because he's my brother but...

Murray: Just the facts.

Jim: Just the fact that he brought up a very good family. You know, all of his family is educated. More so than anybody else.

Murray: Yeah, he told me about that. It's impressive.

Jim: Real impressive. And I've got to admire him for that. With the condition that he was in after he...

Murray: He had to fight.

Jim: Yeah, yeah, he had to came out in the war. And I gave him a hand once in a while because I managed to keep enough money rolling to help him out now and then, you know. And I didn't mind that because I was a bachelor anyway. So with him

and Jim, we used to sit down together and talk about the Metis people. And eventually somebody was going to come out and...

Murray: And lead them.

Jim: And lead them, yeah.

Murray: That's what you used to talk about?

Jim: Yeah, and that's what he used to talk about. But he says there is going to be a good many years before a good one like Riel will come along.

Murray: Did he see himself as a leader?

Jim: No, not really. Not really but he was willing to put himself in that category because with the knowledge that he had with the Metis people from a way back in La Biche, you see.

Murray: So he spread ideas, that was his job sort of, eh?

Jim: That was his job, to spread ideas and we used to sit down in the evenings, like, a bunch of the guys would be sitting down outside of the house maybe and he would come....

Murray: Or at the DNR office?

Jim: Or at the DNR office or in our house you know, and he would come in there and eventually, the first thing you know there is a bunch of guys sitting around talking things over. And he was great for that and he would be the man that would be doing the talking, you know. And he would give us ideas. This is what you do and this is what you should do and all that. He was always willing to help out. And that's what I liked about him. Because he was a great man for building, you know.

Murray: Right, into the future.

Jim: Development, economic development, yeah. That's right, yeah. Something like Quandt was, you know. But I think the greatest man on that is community development person is... a lot of people don't care for him but I do and I think the heads of the departments now are more or less kind of reluctant to be with him, or listen to him more, is Art Towill(?).

Murray: Oh yeah.

Jim: He was a great, he was a great develop economic man.

Murray: He worked for a long time before DNS came.

Jim: Yeah, that's right. Before DNS came. He worked for the department, as a matter of fact. So, a man like him and if Jim Brady would be here today working together, by golly, there certainly could be a lot of things accomplished with the Indians. As far as the Indian people and the Metis people is concerned.

Murray: Do you think Jim influenced a lot of people by his talking and encouraging people and that sort of thing?

Jim: I think so. I think it's really influenced us anyway, for sure. And I think the places like La Ronge, he certainly influenced a lot of people there that makes them stand on their own feet, talked like that.

Murray: Did he talk a lot about native people being proud of their ancestry and that sort of thing?

Jim: Oh yeah, oh definitely, definitely, he was all for that. He was proud of his nationality. So, this is where I took it from, you know. And, of course my Dad was a great man. He was a great builder, he was a great worker. And with him, he didn't have any education, so he would be talking about from day to day work really. He had no real management mind like Brady had, you know. Brady was more like Pierre. He was a deep thinker you know. And he was always looking for the day, you know, the days of the future.

Murray: He was a good organizer then?

Jim: A good organized man. A very good organized man. Because we had something going here all the time. We had works going all the time. At that time...

Murray: Do you remember some of those things?

Jim: Yeah, the government, well, we were building trails and stuff like that for trappers, and building dams here which produced thousands and thousands of muskrats where it never would otherwise. You know, he got money for the boys to work on different projects. He had money all the time.

Murray: He was always getting the government to help.

Jim: Oh yeah, oh yeah, he was always getting the government to produce, you know. I don't know how he got it but he, being the determination and the track, "Well these people got to live, they got nothing here." The trapping was poor them days, you know. The price of furs were...

Murray: Resources were down too.

Jim: Resources were down. The beaver had just come up a little bit then. We still were not trapping them. And another interesting thing I should tell you here. I think he's the first man that got... see, our moose season was closed for many years. And then Jim came along and we used to go out together. And I said, "Well, Jim, I think it's about time the government should open the season on moose." I says, "Instead of closing it, you know. Gee whiz, there is moose all over the goldarn place. The first thing you know," I says, "there is going to be another disease and these animals are going to die off. So

let's try and work on that." And he says, "Sure, we will." So the first thing we did after freeze up, after the snow came.

I had to organize, try and get a plane to fly me around in the country. Knowing the country so well and just the general area.

Murray: You were spotting for...?

Jim: Spotting for moose and count them. So the man that flew me was in an old Stinson (I think some of them are still around), was Stu Miller who eventually got killed in a plane crash. To me, that person was a very nervous person. He was always fiddling around with the instruments. With that kind of people to fly with, I don't care to fly with them very much, you know. (chuckles) I got no confidence in them. And he was that kind of a person.

Murray: Right.

Jim: And very high strung. Eventually he killed himself and some other people. I think eight people altogether died in that. And that was the guy, and that's how it started. So, we had a meeting, I think Earl Dodds was one of the conservation officers at that time. I think he was more of a supervisor. I think his position was, he was next to, who was it now? Quandt. And when Quandt quit I don't know which guy that took over, a Cham McLean I think he was. Yeah, that's right Cham McLean took over. Northern Administrators they call them at that time. And to Jim, Cham McLean was the best organized man, you know, after Quandt. So, anyway....

(End of Side A)

(Side B)

Jim: But naturally it's going back the other way now with the leaders that we have who are not as...

Murray: Not as strong as...

Jim: Not as strong, really. That it's going to go the other way again. Until they get old enough to know better that by gosh, we made a mistake here, we better correct it and go the other way, you know. Until that time comes... We often talk about this between my brother and I and geez, they are just doing it the wrong way, you know. You are throwing money here and just a waste, you know, and there is nothing. Too much money around.

Murray: Too much money around without hard work.

Jim: Yeah, withouth hard work. Yeah, and this is the downfall of the people because that's the way they are going to expect it all the time.

Murray: Handout.

Jim: Handout, handout all the time. Everything they do now is handout. And it just breaks my heart to see it that way because to me, I'm a self-employed person. I do things seasonally, you know. I trap, I fish, I guide and I got my own tourist camps now and that keeps me going and I make enough money there to keep me going until the trapping starts. And when the trapping starts then I go trapping for two months and then when I quit that and then I work on different things with the governments. I am the president of our Northern Saskatchewan Trappers' Association. I do a lot of work in that, you know, and go to different meetings in different areas. Then comes spring trapping, then I go spring trapping again, you know, and all that. Just from seasonal work that I make my living. I don't make no fancy living but I make a living.

Murray: Right.

Jim: And I think as long as you are making a living, by golly, you are not asking for money from the government, eh. Or anybody else. So by thinking that way, and I'm always thinking about community development but at the moment I just can't work with these kind of people. Too much handout and I told that to the government people too. "Too damn much. You got to stop, draw the line here someplace, you know."

Murray: Right. Get people working again.

Jim: Get people working again, you know, for what they're worth.

Murray: You mentioned the Trappers' Association, how long has that been going? Did that start up about the same time that...?

Jim: No, no, not really, not really. The Trapping Association I think started about eight years ago I think. I think it's been in existence now for eight years.

Murray: Just eight years, eh?

Jim: Yeah.

Murray: I thought it was older than that.

Jim: Well, not the Trappers' Association. The trappers, the fur...

Murray: They had trapper conventions, didn't they?

Jim: Yeah, they have been going for many years.

Murray: Right.

Jim: Yeah, but that was the conservation area.

Murray: Right.

Jim: The people from the conservation area used to go to a meeting in Prince Albert you know, once a year.

Murray: They weren't members of an association, they just went to this meeting.

Jim: No, no, they just went. They were just people, trappers from the north, that's all.

Murray: What happened at those meetings?

Jim: Ah, well, to me I think it has values in certain aspects of it and I think a lot of it is baloney too. To start off with these people used to come down there for a big drunk. And hell, it would be just a few people talking, just the government people and...

Murray: Everybody else got drunk.

Jim: Yeah, well, yeah. Hung over and the only guy that would give you a little static each time would be Pierre because he was strong in his mind that this is the way the conservation should be handled, you know.

Murray: Did Jim or Malcolm ever go to those meetings?

Jim: Ah, yeah. Oh yeah, yeah, but being working with the departments that they never really had too much to say. They would be speakers and stuff like that, you know.

Murray: They would sit back and...?

Jim: Yeah, they would sit back and listen. They would be speakers and giving us talks and things like that like the government people do. And so, this is the way it went. So eventually, when the organization started eight years ago then it came into existence then. And it never got on its feet really you know. Because nobody, well, what is a trappers' association anyway? What has it done for me? It hasn't, you know, it hasn't done a damn thing for me really.

Murray: It hasn't been a significant organization?

Jim: Yeah, right. So, when I took over five years ago, we gradually got ahold of people that we worked with. You know, very good, good thinkers and good development. The community development people. And now I got in the organization that all these people are non-drinkers, most of them are non-smokers and these are the directors that we have in the organization.

Murray: Hard workers?

Jim: Hard workers. And now today, I think I am proud to say

and I think I'm safe to say that our organization is building. Building, you know. We got over a 1000 members now and right now we are on a process of getting a new fur program, new federal/provincial fur program. And we are on the process of working out with different trappers' associations from different provinces.

(break in tape)

Murray: People are more confident now to do that sort of thing, are they?

Jim: Yeah, that's right. That's right. They are more confident and they think more independent. I think now they see, "By gosh, maybe we got something good here," you know. And I think when they start thinking that way and with the meetings that I had with them this summer. We call it an information trip. And I think they could see it now, that if they support the organization, by golly, we can get money now from different departments of the government and also from the federal. It would be a lot easier to come because if we have a strong organization of 2000, by gosh, that's pretty strong. Now we have way over 1000 and we are going to have 2000 members before the year is over, I'm sure of that.

Murray: Right. I want to talk to you a bit about the war. The war experience seemed to have quite an effect on a lot of

Metis people. What kind of things do you think that people learned from the war? People who, like yourself and Jim and a lot of Metis people, who hadn't really been outside the north, what kinds of things did you bring back to the north? What kind of knowledge and...?

Jim: Well, as far as the war is concerned, to talk to them about it, well it was something that must have been terrible, you know. Well, I really, never really came out and talked about the things that I've seen except the things that I've seen where the war was hurting the people in the area that they were living.

Murray: Right.

Jim: And how bad it was. The way they were starving and the way their houses were being torn up by shells and bombing and all that, that it certainly demoralized the people all the way down the line wherever the war was at. I never said anything about how great I was, how brave I was or anything like that because to me, I was scared a lot of the times. And I never, very seldom talk about that. But I talk about people, when they were starving. When the kids used to come out and the least things that we had, you know, what we had to eat was, I wouldn't look at it today. I wouldn't eat it. The things that we ate in the army. That's how bad it was.

Murray: And they didn't even have that.

Jim: Yeah, and they didn't even have that. And you know, they used to come out and eat from our garbage. And a good many times that I split my meals with a poor kid because when you see a starved kid there with just a little pot belly and nothing in him at all, all skin and bones, by gosh, if you got a heart, you certainly are going to give him your share. I used to give them most of my shares, you know. Eventually I got down myself in weight. (chuckles) And then I started realizing, by golly, you certainly got to try and make it go here. But oh, it was terrible.

Murray: Someone who told me about Malcolm Norris said that when Malcolm came back, he didn't actually go to Europe but he was in the air force...

Jim: Yeah, in the air force, yeah.

Murray: In Canada. But he really hoped that the veterans coming back would be community leaders. You know, that's what he was hoping for. Why do you think that did happen? It happened in Cumberland. What was the experience in Europe that made people come back and become community leaders? Can you figure that one out?

Jim: Oh yeah, oh yeah, definitely, because you naturally had that experience before you went over there.

Murray: That's why you went, I suppose.

Jim: Well, certainly. That's why you went and fought for your country. On top of that, you wanted to see the country, you know. How it's like over there. I'm going to sign my life away here but that's all right. If I go, I go. So, I think as long as a person thinks that way and thinks that strong about it, by golly, he is certainly going to come back with a frame of mind, well I am going to work in this community as a developer and work for the people in the area I live in and all that. And it is just going to come natural and he is going to become stronger. And I think this is what happened with Pierre because, to me, I was never involved in the community affairs but I was always involved in the meetings. Whenever the government would bring its people here and trappers' meetings and stuff like that or fishing meetings, I would be there. You know, and I would ask questions. "What's wrong here and what gives here." And I think I'm not lying there because I am an outspoken person and anything that I don't like, I will....

Murray: Let people know about it.

Jim: Yeah, I'll make people know about it. And I don't think any government people will say that Jim Carriere is a damn liar. He never did that. I am safe to say that I have proven that. But I never, to be a one-track minded person. I always look at both sides of the fence first before I agree on anything because there could be problem here and there could be good over here. So, naturally how it's going to affect both is what

I would agree on, you know. And Pierre is a little bit similar like Brady. He is a little bit stubborn in a lot of ways. Yeah, his views, he would make them too strong. He would make them too strong to the government and he is an outspoken person at that. And I don't think that that builds the community. I think certainly, you don't need to do that, you know. You need to work it out in such a way that everybody

could understand, not only you. Because when you come out with something, sure you think it's right but a lot of people won't agree with it, you know.

Murray: Do you think it's partly because they don't understand exactly what it is?

Jim: Well, I think possibly that's true. I think possibly that's true.

Murray: Did Jim try and explain things that way or...?

Jim: Yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah. Yeah, a lot of times. But he was such a deep thinker that you could never - sometimes it was too deep for you.

Murray: It was above your head sometimes.

Jim: It was above your head because you didn't have the knowledge he had.

Murray: And he tried, but sometimes he didn't...

Jim: Yeah, it's too bad actually, the way he actually went really because all of a sudden... He had a little shack there up at La Ronge and he used to work with the department there, you know. And a little bit now and then, he would prospect and a little odd jobs and stuff like that, you know. And eventually he didn't pan out too well, really.

Murray: I think he was pretty unhappy as far as...

Jim: I think in his last years he was pretty self... He didn't associate with anybody too much and he stayed in that shack and he lived there just as like an ordinary trapper. And I think, with the knowledge that he had, as far as I was concerned, I would have built myself a nice house. And by golly, if I can talk to people the way he did, today I would be...

Murray: He could have it right where he wanted.

Jim: Today I would be sitting in the parliament buildings. You know, running the affairs of the people.

Murray: Because he had that knowledge and ability?

Jim: Yeah, he had that kind of knowledge and ability, you know.

Murray: Maybe he didn't have a desire to have power. Do you think that was part of it? Why do you think he didn't follow that sort of direction?

Jim: Well, I think to me he was too self... much of a person like, you know. Anything that he had to do, he had to do it himself. He didn't want anybody to help. But with the people changing every day, you know, a different quality of people as you go along.

Murray: Right.

Jim: Nowadays you have to go along with the people the way, their lives today. See, what he intended to do, he was trying to bring back the conditions of years back for the people and you couldn't do that.

Murray: How do you think he was trying to do that? That's the kind of thing he would say was it?

Jim: Well, more or less. The things that you would say it that way and...

Murray: What kinds of things from the past that he wanted to see? Like stronger communities or was it something different?

Jim: Well, no I would think stronger communities. I think that's what he was driving at, you know, really. But he didn't have really, the push behind him to make him go. He was too much...

Murray: A lot of thinking went on.

Jim: Yeah, lots of thinking but he was too much to himself.

Murray: Malcolm was more the man.

Jim: Yeah, that's right. With the push, you know. He had more push in him than anybody else that I know of.

Murray: He was always....

Jim: Oh yeah, he was always with the ideas and all that, you know, how the people should do about it. One time we were out there in a fishing camp, me and my brother Bill. And Malcolm was there, up here at Sturgeon Lake, and he came down there.

He was working for the fisheries then, you know. The Fish Board they called it then at that time. The CCF was under the power then, the power of Saskatchewan, the province of Saskatchewan and they call it the Fish Board. And he was working for them. I think that's the first job he got when he came to Saskatchewan.

Murray: I think so, yeah. Right.

Jim: So, oh did he used to talk, you know. And talk about how the fishing should be and how the market, you know, and all that. And he was great but...

Murray: (Inaudible)

Jim: You're right. But he would never follow up. You got to follow up on these things in order to make them go and I think that's their downfall. They never followed up, you know. They would try something and if it bogs down along the line here with the bureaucrats, it would stop right there. And I think this is the downfall of our people today, the Indian people.

Murray: They don't fight hard enough or...?

Jim: Well, like anybody else, like white people the same way, in different communities there is not enough push there. They don't continue. If they ask for something and they fail well, they drop it off. And it's the same in our organization. That's the problem we're having in our organization. We just don't give enough push here in order to make it stronger, you see.

Murray: You've got half a push.

Jim: You got half a push at the moment, you know. But now the people, as I said before here, the people are starting to understand a little more. Now the push is starting to come from the people and pushing us to get there.

Murray: Right. So maybe it was hard for a person like Malcolm perhaps to push when the people themselves wouldn't push.

Jim: Well that's the same with me. The position I am in today. A president of the organization and a Metis person.

Murray: You've got enough push but the people haven't?

Jim: But the people haven't you see. And that's where I'm bogging down. And once I start, once they start to realize by going to meetings in different areas, the president there you see. Well, then they start to realize, by gosh, maybe that's what Jim has been talking about. This is the right, they were on the right, slowly gradually going, see. And this is where these fellows kind of slowed down. "Well, to hell with it. If I can't make it go, well I'll make it good for myself." You know. To hell with it, you know.

Murray: So you think that Jim and Malcolm maybe stopped too soon?

Jim: Stopped too soon. And I think then they were thinking, "Well, if I can't make it go with the people, well, I'll make it go for myself." And I think that's what happened to Malcolm. But Jim, he more or less kind of slowed down and then concentrated on, well, I'm going to start something new here.

He was all thinking about the new thing but he could never bring up his mind how he was going to do it, you know. And I think that that was the downfall. And by being alone too much and not talking to people, naturally where are you going to get the experience or the, well the people, what they think you know. You are not going to get the people's thinking.

Murray: Did he stay to himself quite a bit, even in Cumberland?

Jim: Well, he stayed to himself quite a bit. Alone by himself, you know.

Murray: But he did talk to people on these ideas and things?

Jim: Oh yeah, he would go around. Another funny thing here happened that he went and he took pictures of everybody.

Murray: He's got hundreds of photographs.

Jim: Yeah, hundreds of photographs. I got some put away someplace here. But he took pictures of everything. I used to go with him, you know, and then he would write a little story about how the people were. He was a great man for history, as I said before. And he would tell you to write down the history of what these people know, their knowledge and all that. And eventually I guess what happened, just like what you're doing now.

Murray: He wanted to write a book?

Jim: He wanted to write a book. And that was his main goal at the end. And that's why I think he was more to himself at the end where he should never have done that. I think he should have, with the experience he had, he should have kept pushing the people.

Murray: He could have been a great leader.

Jim: He could have been a great leader eventually if he would have kept it up. But he didn't so that's where eventually he...

Murray: Do you have any clue as to why he didn't, something in his personality that would have stopped him from being that?

Jim: No, I don't think so. I think he coped with the white society. I think he didn't have anything against that but his main goals was to have things for his people, for his own people, the Metis people. I think that is what he was after really. But the big thing was to write a story and he never got around to it and eventually he got lost along the way.

Murray: That was something I wanted to ask you too. You knew Jim personally pretty well. Is he the kind of person that could have gotten lost in the bush or, what do you think happened to him?

Jim: No, no, never. Never. He was a great bushman. Mind you, he was not a hunter. He never liked to hunt. The time that I knew him for six years, I have never seen him shooting a moose down. He shot a few ducks and stuff like that but to be a hunter like I am, like a lot of fellows I know, that he never was.

Murray: It didn't interest him.

Jim: No, yeah, and he had no interest. He had no interest in trapping but he had interest in people who trapped.

Murray: Right. So a hunter would be the best bushman. So he wouldn't be as good a bushman, say, as a hunter or a trapper?

Jim: No, no, like myself, eh. He wasn't as good as me.

Murray: But he would know what to do if he was lost?

Jim: He would know. He would certainly know what to do if he was lost, certainly. Because not only that, he was a more or

less of a bushman and a community developed man you know, but he knew where he was at all times. And I think no matter where you are, if you know where you are, you know where the north is, east and west and south, I don't see where a person could get lost, you know. So there must be something behind the story. Whether...

Murray: Something happened that we don't know about.

Jim: Something happened that we don't know and we'll possibly never know. He will possibly be never found. And this is where, I think, where this idea of mine, just a personal thing you know that, by gosh, maybe he did have something to do with the Communist party.

Murray: Yeah. Something like that was behind it maybe.

Jim: Right. Something like that behind it.

Murray: Someone offered the opinion that the - I know you mentioned he was stubborn - and they said that maybe he was stubborn enough not to light a fire to try and attract attention, that he maybe tried to find his way out rather than attracting attention for a plane.

Jim: Right, yeah.

Murray: Would he be that kind of person, that didn't want to bother people and would say, "I can get out of this myself."?

Jim: I think possibly, maybe that's got something to do with it, you know.

Murray: That rather than sitting by a lake and building a fire, he would plunge ahead.

Jim: That's right. Well, certainly somebody would pick him up right away because there was, at that time, always in the area where he was lost. And there was planes flying around all over the goldarn place, you know. There is no way if a person was alive, hell, they'd find him right now. Because they did have a canoe and that canoe was turned over on the bank, I think. It wasn't in the water, it was turned over on the bank.

Murray: So they weren't drowned.

Jim: They weren't drowned. You couldn't say that they were drowned. They just almost naturally disappeared in thin air.

Murray: That's right. They searched a long time.

Jim: They searched a long time and dogs couldn't do nothing, you know. So that's why I kept thinking back, you know. By golly, maybe the guy had something to do with it, you know. Just personally, like, you know. I'm not trying to...

Murray: Right, because it's so hard to figure out what could have happened.

Jim: Yeah, right. Because I couldn't prove nothing, eh.

Murray: Right, right. The one thing I meant to ask you earlier too was about Jim's activity in the Legion. Was he an active Legion member?

Jim: Oh yeah. Yeah, oh yeah. He was very active.

Murray: What kinds of things did the Legion do when people came back from the war? What...?

Jim: Well, I tell you, we were the first Indian Legion organization there was. You know.

Murray: In the country, eh?

Jim: In the country. And I'm proud of that you know. And we still in existence, you know. Mind you, we are getting short of members all the time because all the members are gradually dying off and I don't know how in the hell we are going to bring it back. I don't think we have 20 members now, you know. But we are still got our own Legion hall and we are still running our own shows right from the time we started and it's...

Murray: Still have movies and things, eh?

Jim: We still have movies for the community.

Murray: What were some of the other things that you did when you first organized the Legion? What sort of activities and help did the Legion give the people?

Jim: Well, they certainly helped the sick people. Anybody who was sick, we gave them money to go out and transportation and stuff like that, we'd pay for. And that still goes, you know. The person isn't active, that he can't do nothing for himself, he can't work for himself, we still help him, you know. And of course, we have a poppy fund which goes to that. Looking after sick people.

Murray: Would people come to the Legion with all kinds of different problems that they had? Was that the kind of thing people would do?

Jim: Not exactly, not exactly. And I think we weren't big enough to really support a lot of things, you know.

Murray: What kinds of things might a person come to the Legion to get help with?

Jim: Problems with the inability of, you couldn't support yourself. That, or sickness, or something like that you know. That he couldn't do that kind of work to...

Murray: You might get some work to help him or...?

Jim: No, no. Through Veterans Affairs. Through the VLA and all that, to see if we can contact those people for him and all that in order to get a benefit from it so it'll keep him going. And this is what the Legion does for the community in Cumberland House. So, it actually, more or less give us an opportunity to be able to run our own affairs, you know, organize things like that.

Murray: So it was almost like a Metis Association in Cumberland?

Jim: Yes, right.

Murray: Doing the same sort of thing that that would.

Jim: Yeah. Speaking of the Metis Association and stuff like that, I think possibly Jim would have been a very good leader. But with the temper that he had and all that, he couldn't have taken it very long. Because he was a very hot-tempered man, you know, but he would forgive then quickly. But a lot of times that hurts.

Murray: The effect was already done.

Jim: The damage was already done before he would get out of it, you see. So, to be a leader you got to be strong and I don't really think Jim was that strong. Because what the self thing that he know is true, the facts and all that, you know. He was right every time, that he would never make a good leader. He wasn't that strong.

Murray: In what way, what do you think he would have needed to be a good leader that he didn't have?

Jim: Well, he had the knowledge to have that but (phone rings, break in tape).

Murray: We were talking about Jim and you said you didn't think he was strong enough to be a leader. What were his weaknesses in that aspect?

Jim: Well, I would think that he didn't have the 'go', you know.

Murray: The energy or...?

Jim: The energy and the real strong builder. To find different ways. If he didn't agree with that, well he said, "To hell with it." He was that kind of a person. He would drop it, and I think that's what makes a poor leader. And take for instance, Jim Sinclair. You know, he is a great speaker and all that, very good speaker, but he didn't find the background of the people's thinking before he...

Murray: Started talking.

Jim: Started talking. You've got to get to know what the people thinks and what they are doing.

Murray: And what their needs are.

Jim: And what their needs are before you can speak your damn mouth off, you know. I, myself, I know more about people's problems than he does and he is our leader in Saskatchewan. You know, I'm just the president of our organization which is pretty small; it's just a little over a 1000. But boy, we make things go, you know. Because to be a leader, you got to see everything. The problems, the good things, the halfway things, you know. You got to put them together in order to make it go. If you can't put them together, 'to hell with this guy, to hell with that guy,' then you're in trouble, eh. And I think that's the downfall of Jim and also Jim Sinclair.

Murray: Brady wasn't out enough to see all the problems of the people, was that the problem?

Jim: That's right, and he didn't think for himself really. He would talk about them people, but you know, sometimes those

people will turn against you and say, "To hell with you, I'm not going to support you." And then it would drop right there. And you can't let that happen. If you want to be a leader, you've got to prove it to them that there is something good here to make it go, you know. And Jim, well he'd say, "Well, if I can't talk to him, well, I'll drop it," you know. And I think that's the downfall he had.

Murray: So then he didn't try and explain things...?

Jim: He didn't try and explain, that would be a downfall area along the line.

Murray: So he'd get discouraged, would he?

Jim: Well, yes. I would say that he would get discouraged because I used to hear him saying, "Well, gee whiz, I don't know how we can do it, Jim."

(End of Side B)

(End of Interview)

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