

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: JOE BELLEROSE  
(FIELD REPORT)  
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS:  
INTERVIEW LOCATION:  
TRIBE/NATION:  
LANGUAGE:  
DATE OF INTERVIEW:  
INTERVIEWER: JOE BELLEROSE  
INTERPRETER:  
TRANSCRIBER: JOANNE GREENWOOD  
SOURCE: OFFICE OF SPECIFIC CLAIMS  
& RESEARCH  
WINTERBURN, ALBERTA  
TAPE NUMBER: IH-262-262.3  
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC 39  
PAGES: 8  
RESTRICTIONS: NONE

HIGHLIGHTS:

- A series of interviews with four elders in which they are asked to tell how they understand the treaties.

FIELD REPORT BY JOE BELLEROSE

Left March 11, Monday for Smallboy's Camp.

Regarding land lease. Meeting Tuesday night to discuss this, requested to go back Saturday to obtain reply.

March 12

I was at Machinaw Camp regarding hunting but only women left at the camp. Also later in afternoon was at Sunchild Reserve but to my finding, the slaughter of moose didn't involve this reserve. Because no one hunts, except Saskawen and Hobbema Indians are the ones that are slaughtering the moose.

March 19

I was requested to go back to Chief Smallboy's Camp for the week and regarding their land. Whereby I was there Saturday and Sunday. And then Monday morning I attended the trial of Tommy Okimaw but postponed to April 1.

March 1, interview with Frank Cardinal, Sucker Creek Band.

I wonder, if you can tell how you understood the treaties?

I remember my grandfather and my father saying of these promises that we were not to lose these rights. This has been passed on from generation to generation but now, these promises have been broken. Before the signing of the treaties, hunting was free. But since that time it seems that we have to look around for a game warden, when hunting was free to us. Because this is one promise, as long as the sun shall shine and rivers flows and grass grows, these were used as comparisons. Deep freeze and fridges were not used at those days; preservation of food was done by drying or smoking. This is how preservation was done. The white man is teaching us to hunt our game. But his teaching is done only as trophy hunting, and by this has changed the laws and regulations to suit themselves.

And as for fishing, there was no mesh size required so long as this was being done for survival. The same goes for ducks. There was no restrictions of when killing these but now it has to be only in season unless they happen to be on the reserve. There was no license for ducks because it was free for us. Ammunition was supplied and still is but now regulations are made and changed so with this have interfered. The time of the treaty there wasn't that many population, as it is today. That time the chief had authority to decide what was right or wrong

for his people. The white man has changed this every which way possible, because now they are in control. Trapping was free to Indians, but changes have been made by paying fees to get traplines. Now it seems the white men will be the successors of these benefits. The elders didn't have education but they had predicted for the future. So in this regard, that's the reason they kept the wild life and forest for themselves and didn't sign them away because the future generation could be able to benefit with this preservation.

The white man has changed regulations towards trapping whereby the holder pays fees, can sell his share to anyone with this, I don't think that's right at all especially if it's a white man or Metis involved. I would like to request the Fish and Game officials to go out to the traplines on foot without skidoos and see how it feels to plow through the deep snow for trapping - especially when there's no fur-bearing animals in some areas. And as for fishing, the elders have stated they didn't give the fish away. These were kept for themselves. Fish and Game officials were not present at the time of signing of the treaties and no mention was made that they take control of this right. There was exchanges made for dry meat, pemmican, sinew, smoked fish for other items with the Hudson's Bay Co. But now, it has really affected us with all these changes of laws and regulations. It seems we are losing the rights, that were promised to us. Especially when the moose is rightfully ours. Our grandfathers didn't sign them away. The only thing that might belong to the white man would be the crows, magpies, flying squirrels and the whisky jacks because these have never

been mentioned. As for the moose hide, this was used for everything: hide for tipis, moccasins, jackets, vests, gloves. Where there was a time the grain on hide was used because shortage of food even then it was not thrown away. All of these such for hunting, fishing and trapping are done for survival not like the white man. Goes out after trophies and the rest are being wasted.

February 27, interview with George Okimaw, Drift Pile River Reserve, age 80.

I would like you to tell me the history of the treaties.

I was young of signing of treaty, but my uncle Mustus said that we were promised that in no way we were to lose our right of hunting, fishing and trapping and that the white man was not to interfere with this right. Also the only thing we want from you is 6 inches of land so to farm on this. The rest still belongs to you. In exchange, you will get ammunition and tools, net thread to make nets. This they were made to understand that

no white man was to interfere with you, you will still be free as before.

#### Hunting

We were able to hunt anywhere as long as the meat was used usefully until changes were made. We were able to trade the dry meat, pemmican, and the back muscle, to the Hudson's Bay Co. in exchange for other items.

#### Fishing

Fishing thread was supplied and there was no mesh size, preserve these fish for household use, feed for pack dogs. Hangers were made for future use.

#### Trapping

Muzzleloaders were supplied and ammunition. There was no restriction of place to trap. No registered traplines. Traded furs in exchange of food. No licenses involved. Information passed by Indian Affairs that they would not lose any of these rights.

#### Effects

Treated like Metis or white people, losing all rights, because of changes and misunderstanding of treaty.

February 28, interview with Chief Sammy Young, Bigstone Band

He informed me that there's any elders anymore in his area. But he informed me that he might be of some assistance. He mentioned Alphonse Auger for an interview but he wasn't home.

I wonder if you could relate to me your understanding of the treaties that were signed by our grandfathers?

As far as I have known, when my father used to tell me that in no way these promises would be broken because of exchange of land in regards to promises to last as long as the sun shines, the rivers flow and grass grows. Where years ago, white man and Indians used to exchange things between or amongst them, but now that has changed because of rules, regulations and laws. Even to this day, you can't even share a meal with a Metis, let alone give him anything in exchange without stepping on some law. This has really affected my people because the government has changed everything. There are 5 reserves on this place,

all along or around the lakes. Whereby people used to make their living by fishing, before the domestic and commercial licenses came about. Now we are only allowed 24 hours to soak in our nets, whereby we are not allowed the mesh size required to catch. This the white man informed me.

What does the Fish and Wildlife require size mesh for your use?

South Wabasca, on one lake, the white man is allowed to fish with a 4 inch mesh for mink feed. But for us to use as food we require 5 inch mesh whereby the fish is too small for the required size. This is on a domestic license. North Wabasca, this lake is used for commercial fishing by the white man, where they use a 5 inch mesh. And in another lake, they gave us Indians for our own use, but with this, we required a 4 inch mesh where in this lake, the fish are too big. So this way, it's impossible to catch anything.

Does this affect your people in making their living?

Yes, because years ago we were able to fish without a license but now that's different because of some white man's decision on what size mesh is required. Like for example, Chipewyan Lake was open for fishing years ago but that lake has been closed.

Do you know how the Indians used these fish?

They used to build hangers to dry and preserve these fish because I helped my father and I saw this being done.

Were all these fish used?

Yes, they were used for household. Also fed the dogs, when used for packing.

How do you consider angling?

As far as angling is concerned we use this for a livelihood, but to the whiteman, it's a sport. Because I saw with my own eyes, where there's anglers all in a row in the summertime, but after they leave you can find fish lying on the ground.

How about hunting?

At the present time, we don't have any problems except for one. We are not notified of changes regarding regulations.

Do you know that you require a permit before selling moose hides?

No, this is the first time I have heard about this. How come this is coming about, because there's some cases where a person trades a hide whether it's raw or tanned in exchange for food or clothing.

Did the Indians use everything regarding their kill?

Yes, because they don't kill moose for nothing, they do this to feed their families.

Can you tell me about trapping?

I went to a meeting and was informed by the Slave Lake Forestry that if a person pays for registered trapline, has to show production or else lose this benefit, when years ago the Indian Affairs paid for these fees. Then they said, that they were paying for too many traplines, not being used because there was work available. That's the reason why now that each holder has to pay these fees in regard to registered traplines. Also in some cases there's no fur-bearing animals. Disturbed by lumber camps or oil companies.

When work quits, (like break ups) does these holders go to their traplines?

Yes, because there's lots of beavers and muskrats and this way a person is able to keep on supporting their families.

Can you tell me how you understand. How our grandfathers said regarding this land and the animals?

You can kill anything anyplace as long as you use these kills usefully. This is one promise that the elders have stressed to us. They haven't given away the land, also the animals. They kept these for themselves, and there was no mention of white man handling these. Also there was no traplines because people used to move from place to place where there was game and with this regard were able to look after the animals and their habitats including the fish.

Does this affect the people regarding through regulations?

Yes, because it's no longer a free land because there's laws wherever you go. It seems like you're forever stepping on some law; as if the white man is always setting snares to get Indians. With this the promises are broken on behalf of the treaties, as where it was stated that we would be free as before signing the treaty be able to hunt, fish and trap wherever we pleased. Even the federal government doesn't want to get involved with this

problem. It's the provincial government that are enforcing these regulations. It should be the federal government to decide because it's responsible for us.

March 5, interview with William Okimaw, Grouard.

I wonder if you could tell me your understanding of the treaties?

At the time of the treaties, they had a three day conference, to talk and to be made understood by all who were present. There was an interpreter at the time of the treaty. Also we were promised \$12.00 to each person but that has changed also. We were promised that this signing of a treaty will not affect your hunting, fishing and trapping - that we would be free like before the signing of the treaty. No one or white man was mentioned to look or control these rights because they confirmed us that these were ours; we didn't sign them away. Also what we used to do preserve our food in the summer time, build a dry rack or hanger whereby dried moose meat or smoked fish and with this preservations used these to the traplines where at that time we were able to trap anywhere, anyplace, anytime. These were promises at the signing of the treaties, as long as the sun shines, the water flows, and the grass shall grow. These three were used as comparisons to last not by life. When killing a moose, this meat was shared amongst the tribe, those were the days when everyone shared with each other. They were informed that there was to be a store, provided by the Hudson's Bay Company to be able to trade their furs. But at that time they were cheated of their furs because their pelts had to stack up to measure up to the size of the rifle before obtaining this as this was hard to come by. And that was the only way we were able to get this.

An Indian Agent was mentioned but he was only to look after the money regarding annuity. At that time trapping was free, because there was no such thing as registered traplines and no fees involved, because to us we were free to hunt, trap and fish anywhere, anyplace, anytime. We were not told that we were to buy traplines so in regards to be able to trap because this was one of the promises. Those days, clothing was hard to come by. Also furs were cheap and there was plenty but they didn't amount to much for pay. But still this was one survival. No white man was mentioned to control the animals and the forest because we were told that these belong to you. "The only things that we want is some land for farming." So with this they allowed him 6 inches of dirt to farm for its' living, but they also were informed that they can have access to these lands for their livelihood. They have broken these promises since the time of the treaty, so with this it has really affected us.

The reason that reserves were chosen is because there was lots of moose, muskrats, fish, ducks, deer, and everything that you can think of. And by this, hoping to be able to survive by, that these would be rightfully theirs, as long as the sun

shines and the river flows and the grass grows. If in the future, population should increase, the promise was to increase the reserves by 50 miles square for each reserve. At the time, the Hudson's Bay Company store at Grouard we were able to exchange dry meat, smoked fish, pemmican for another items such as groceries. But now, that has changed. Also one of the promises was that assistance would be provided to the old people. Also a medicine man (doctor) will be given or supplied to you. There was no laws before the signing of the treaties, regarding hunting, fishing and trapping. But since that time, these promises have been broken time and time again. Indian use to make dry meat, pemmican, fat turned to lard or grease, smoked the fish so to preserve these for future use. Hides were made, to be used for tipis. Now it seems we are being deprived of our hunting rights.

(End of Report)

#### INDEX

INDEX TERM	IH NUMBER	DOC NAME	DISC #	PAGE #
CLOTHING AND PERSONAL ADORNMENT				
-pre-European	IH-262-262.3	FIELD REPORT	39	3
FISHING				
-regulations	IH-262-262.3	FIELD REPORT	39	2,5
FISHING				
-rights	IH-262-262.3	FIELD REPORT	39	4,5,6
FOOD				
-preservation of	IH-262-262.3	FIELD REPORT	39	2,5,7,8
FOOD				
-sharing	IH-262-262.3	FIELD REPORT	39	7
HUNTING				
-regulations	IH-262-262.3	FIELD REPORT	39	2,5
HUNTING				
-rights	IH-262-262.3	FIELD REPORT	39	4,6
MOOSE				
-dependence on	IH-262-262.3	FIELD REPORT	39	3
RESERVES				
-expansion of	IH-262-262.3	FIELD REPORT	39	8
TIPI				
-construction of	IH-262-262.3	FIELD REPORT	39	3,8
TRADE				
-practices	IH-262-262.3	FIELD REPORT	39	7
TRAPPING				
-as livelihood	IH-262-262.3	FIELD REPORT	39	6
TRAPPING				
-regulations	IH-262-262.3	FIELD REPORT	39	3,6
TRAPPING				
-rights	IH-262-262.3	FIELD REPORT	39	4,6,7
TREATY #8				
-interpretation of	IH-262-262.3	FIELD REPORT	39	2-4,6-8