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ALLAN QUANDT

Allan Quandt has lived in northern Saskatchewan for over 30 years. He was an active member of the CCF and ran as a candidate in the 1960 provincial election. He was a friend of Malcolm Norris and Jim Brady.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- The disappearance of Jim Brady and the theories on what happened.
- The CCF party in northern Saskatchewan.
- The single agency concept and what went wrong with it.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Allan Quandt was Jim Brady's closest political confidant in his years in La Ronge and in the first part of the interview, he discusses Brady's disappearance and death, giving his opinion that Brady was murdered. Quandt was perhaps the only person in La Ronge who was an active CCF supporter consistently over the years from 1949-1970. He talks about the CCF, the nature of the elections and the attempts to get the CCF-NDP to develop more

progressive policies toward the north.

INTERVIEW:

Murray: I'm talking to Allan Quandt of La Ronge. Allan, there is still, allegedly at any rate, a mystery surrounding Jim Brady's disappearance and death in 1967. Could you recall the investigation of that disappearance and the official results of it and what you feel about those official results?

Allan: Well, the disappearance actually was brought to my attention, it came about in this manner. I happened to be working at Otter Lake on some gas equipment or the installing of a tank and Berry Richards came over and said to me that he feared that Jim Brady and Ab Halkett were lost because he had just made a field trip to the Foster Lake area. The area that he instructed them to go to to use as a camping area, which would be close to the mineralized area that they were supposed to be investigating, apparently wasn't in the spot and they had been wrongly located. They had been dropped in in the wrong place and when he looked at the camp, he didn't see any evidence of people being around and so he returned to Missinipe and felt that something should be done by the way of organization of at least a preliminary search.

Murray: There had been a number of days had passed since they'd been set down at this point.

Allan: Yes, I can't recall the exact...

Murray: I think it was seven or eight but I'm not sure.

Allan: Yeah, I can't recall, but the date for his first servicing of the camp was to take place. He had agreed, I suppose, as they do in these types of situations, agree on servicing an area at a certain time and then usually the fellows are back in camp. So, they weren't there and at that time we discussed it and he indicated that he was going to go back to the air firm and suggest that they probably go up. And I think it subsequently followed that they didn't express too much concern and certainly weren't very cooperative at that point and so Berry came back and I think that he engaged La Ronge Aviation. I believe he discussed with Russ Ronning who said to Berry immediately, "Well, sure, you know, we'll go out." So that was the beginning of the search.

Murray: What developed? Was there a large search? How long was it before the RCMP got involved in the search?

Allan: Well, I can't just remember all of the details of it and I wasn't that closely connected with it at that time other than it just happened that I was there and Berry came back and we discussed it briefly. And he had pretty well made up his mind what had to be done initially. Now, after that was done, then Berry, when they had ascertained that they certainly weren't anywhere to be found, and Berry was able to check at

the camp and determined approximately when they were last there, then I believe that he went then directly to the RCMP. Then a full-fledged RCMP investigation started. And I can't

tell you just how elaborate that was. You would have to get that from them, how elaborate. But I do know that they made every effort at that time. The RCMP put members of their own force in and I think they also possibly used other people in the search while they were officially in charge of the search.

Murray: Right. As you know, there is a theory that many people believe that Brady and Halkett were in fact murdered by a Mr. X, if you like. Now, can you recall at the inquest just what credibility that theory was given and how it was viewed by the official search party or by the RCMP?

Allan: Well, I don't think that anything, from what I can recall, happened at the inquest where this theory was brought up other than there was some suggestions of foul play, I think, at different times as they were trying to get down to the facts surrounding the case. But I do know that at one particular point I stated to the lawyer that we had, on behalf of the Brady family, had talked to about handling the actual family's interests at the inquest. And it was pointed out that normally this isn't done at an inquest, at this stage, but it so happened that the lawyer was in La Ronge at that time and while he was there, I know he was sitting right at my elbow and I suggested to him that certain questions should be asked and the coroner did allow this. And also, while the coroner was there, actually the crown had someone representing the Attorney-General's department there and he was assisting in this.

Murray: Do you recall his name?

Allan: Oh, it was, is it Archambault? I believe the name was Archambault. I'm not just certain on that. But the lawyer's name that I'm talking about, that I had discussed the matter with was Marcel Simonot from Prince Albert. So Marcel asked the question of the RCMP as to anybody else being located on the lake at that particular time because this hadn't come up in the inquest. And at that time Corporal Conrad said, "Oh yes, there was someone else on the lake. There was a party there that had been acting as a guide for Thompson's camps." So there were other people present on the lake, that was brought out. I think also they asked whether they had spoken to these people and he said yes, they had spoken to the people. And also I think it was asked was there firearms present in the camp and I think also they said yes, that there was some type of firearms present in the camp.

Murray: This was in the camp of the other people that were...?

Allan: Yes.

Murray: Right. Was there suspicion at that time that the

person involved in this party had killed the two men? I know that there were rumors coming out of that area from the native people. Was that before or after the inquest?

Allan: Oh, I think that that was before the inquest but then you see, a considerable length of time had elapsed. And of course, you know, in a situation like this, all sorts of rumors take place and so that rumor actually was present at that time. But over the years, the rumor has persisted in this one particular direction. And you know, personally I feel that it's unfair to prejudge particularly, you know, when you begin to name names. And it's got that way that actually names are named and that, to me, is very wrong and yet this does continue to persist.

Murray: Does it persist, do you think, because it's so difficult to explain their disappearance in any other way? Is that part of your feeling that it may be an accurate description of what happened?

Allan: I think that probably it is because of the type of disappearance. I know that quite early in the search, while I didn't have anything to do directly, I didn't spend any time out in the field in spite of the fact that I was a close friend of Jim's. My involvement in it was later when we raised money. After the RCMP had discontinued the search, then the search was continued on a voluntary basis and this meant a certain amount of funding. We had to get money for supplies. People went up at no cost but we still had to supply them with food and at that time the search was mainly conducted by Lloyd Mattson who spent the entire summer, the minute school was out - he teaches school - and he spent all of his time up there. He came out of the bush, mind you, he came out of the bush in between, but he went right back in again. You know, there was some organizing to do out here and then he went right back in again with a number of searchers. But actually there was just about a day ahead of his school term starting again and I remember him making the remark to me, "I don't even know whether I've got a job or not." That's how much time he dedicated to the search.

Murray: In his part of the search was it organized sort of by a group and decided by a group that this area should be searched or was it largely on his own that he decided that he would look into this area or that area?

Allan: I think that it was a consensus thing. I don't think that Lloyd, you know, just took... I think that there was group discussion and so on. I can't say exactly but I know that he discussed this with me. We discussed areas that you'd consider searching and I know certainly he did with Berry Richards. And so I don't know. Probably he made some personal decisions in there, I'm not sure about that.

Murray: Can you recall the details of what the searchers found? Like in the camp, it seemed to me, from my impressions

so far, that they determined that they hadn't been in camp long before they disappeared. Is that your recollection?

Allan: Well, it seems from what Berry indicated to me that was true, that they weren't in the camp too long. And probably one of the things there that sort of led to the theory that they were lost, that they were away from the camp, was that it was discovered that they had been put down in the wrong place by the pilot. It was pilot error. And when they were put down in the wrong place, of course, they were going to go out and they had a map. Immediately there would be certain characteristics in the map that wouldn't check out with where they were. So immediately, you know, they would probably want to do a reconnaissance or something. Because the area probably had certain similarities to the area that they were, like a creek running up. One was more of a rushing creek and the other was a slow, meandering creek. The thing is, this would be in their mind. They would go and think, well, here we are, we are here at a certain spot. And it could be quite easy to become lost. Because, you know, if you are departing from a certain spot and you've been dropped there and you've got it in your mind that I'm here and then you....

Murray: They weren't cognizant of the fact they were lost at first, were they?

Allan: No, they certainly wouldn't be. They'd have to discover this at some stage. So this is why I think that there persisted, among a lot of the fellows like Berry Richards and Vern Studer and the fellows that had prospected and so on, would say, "Well you know, what I'd do under similar circumstances." And so they proceeded then,....

Murray: On that basis?

Allan: On that basis.

Murray: What would they have done? They would have gone around to try and find out where they were?

Allan: Well, I would think that they probably would then start to check to see if there are any visible signs of where the fellows had been. That would be such things as blaze marks on trees or broken brush or you know, any number of different ways. Now, I have to say at this particular point that I have never subscribed and quite early in the search, I had made up their mind that there was mysterious disappearance and that somewhere in this mysterious disappearance, there had to be an answer and the first one that comes to my mind of course, is foul play. And I've had this argument, I've argued it with Berry and I still maintain this argument today, that they simply were not lost.

Murray: It seems to me that it would be difficult for two men who are, if they are not experts in the bush, at least familiar with the bush, to become lost and not identify themselves

somewhat.

Allan: That was my main argument. My argument is this, that the first thing that comes to mind when you're lost is to maintain your calm and cool and to fight any panic. I've only gone through the situation once in my life and I was lost when I was prospecting and I know what I went through. Now, it was a relatively short period of time. All I had to spend out overnight under miserable circumstances was a night. I was gone a day and a night. That night, when I sat down, I went through everything in my mind and it was just through my own stupidity and not guarding closely enough, my orientation when I became separated from my partner and I didn't have a good enough map at that time. But remembering back the landmarks and everything that happened, I oriented myself and I started back the next morning at daybreak. It was in the fall of the year and it was wet and raining and I was soaked to the skin. Now I, luckily I got back and when I said to myself, "Now, I'm going to break through these willows down at the shoreline here and I should see a claim post across on the other side." And when I came out there, here my partner was, paddling in a canoe looking for me. Now, I was lucky.

Now, putting myself in that position, I thought back of what these fellows would do. Now, I think that after you spend any amount of time there, the first thing you say is you're going to identify yourself to someone somewhere. And to me, that's got to be ax marks, blaze marks, it's got to be a fire, you light a fire. I recall one time talking to an old time prospector here that took Dr. Maudsley into the field here before there were any maps of the area. A fellow by the name of George Gillis. George is still living and they got up on a lake and he got temporarily lost and Maudsley put the question to George, "What would you have done? How'd you work your way out of this thing?" George says, "I got matches," and he says,

"you see that island out there. Well, that island would be a fire pretty damn fast." Now you see, he's thinking ahead and that's one of the ways that I think that they could've identified themselves because there were aircraft flying over that area all the time. And the thing to me is that any kind of a fire....

Murray: Would be reported.

Allan: It would be reported. Or let's say that it would've got down to where they would've felled trees off in. When you look from the air and you look down and you can see along shorelines where somebody has cleared an area. You drop, just drop a few trees down into the water. Or blaze marks. You know, there's several different ways you try. But there was nothing that indicated from the people that searched that outside of, oh yes, they said they saw some blaze marks and then they said that they saw a raft. I know that they said these various things. I admit, I wasn't on the spot, but I just don't...

Murray: None of those things seem to be definitive to you.

Allan: They just do not fit the pattern. Again in arguing this thing, I know that Berry said, "Well, Jim was a very stubborn individual." And he felt that if he got himself into a jackpot like that, he'd work himself out of it. But I said there is one further thing to this. Jim is a very intelligent individual. And there is going to be a point where he is going to turn around and say, "Look, I'm not getting anywhere in this. I'm going to pursue a course where I'll now try to bring all at my command to try to get people to discover where I am."

Murray: Right. And would the fact that he was with another person tend to temper his stubbornness in terms of responsibility for that person's welfare as well?

Allan: Yeah, I don't know. I would think in a situation like that, Jim knew Ab Halkett very well and again, Ab Halkett in his own right was a bushman of wide experience. Both of them were bushmen of wide experience. Again, people that knew them individually would point flaws out. I've talked to individuals that said, "Well, I've been out with Ab Halkett prospecting and, by golly, Abbie could get more confused and he could lose himself." Probably he can, I don't know. I was never out in the bush with Ab Halkett although I spent some time and knew Ab intimately. I know at one particular time that he did a job that I was involved in where he went out prospecting with three other fellows. They did a marvelous job. And he did a lot of prospecting. Not only that, he trapped and he knew the bush. Now the thing is that even if you have lapses of memory and you turn around and you say okay, all of these things can happen, it all boils down to where you've got intelligent individuals and they're finally going to come to this stage of where they are going to say, "Well, look, you know, we've..."

Murray: They are hopelessly lost.

Allan: "We're hopelessly lost. Now we have to do something." And that, to me, is trying to identify yourself to someone else.

Murray: In my thinking of the thing, I put myself in the position of saying well, okay, just for the sake of argument, let's eliminate the theory that they were killed. Something dramatic had to have happened to them in those first couple of days. In your knowledge of the bush, is there any possibility

that something in a dramatic sense, other than just being lost, could have happened to them that incapacitated them?

Allan: Well, you could let your mind, you know, sort of run amok and say it can go to the simplest to the most bizarre. I have heard all kinds of really weird things, you know, from the one where there was foul play, they were done away with; that's the most persistent one. And people even turned around and got very rational explanations for the way it happened and all.

And then you can go to where, okay, fellows were drowned. Now, the drowning thing, the canoe was pulled up and it was beached. Now how would you drown? You'd have to jump into the water. The only other thing that there was at one stage, they said they found what they considered was an old raft. Well, why would these fellows turn around and set out afoot? Now they could possibly do it, I suppose, set out afoot and go out and, because they started from a point that wasn't clearly identified to them because of their being placed in the wrong place, they could follow out there and then not get back to their canoe and then make a raft. And they could've fallen off and they could've drowned themselves. The likelihood of two of them doing that would've been unlikely. Then the other thing is that they say the bears got them. Or the other thing is that you panic and you ran yourself to death in the bush. I've even heard the story that there was supposed to be a UFO dropped in there and transported them, somebody said, "Yeah, they transported them to Cuba." And so, you know, you can just let your mind go and...

Murray: You consider the likelihood of them panicking to be pretty remote, knowing the two men?

Allan: Knowing the two men, I would say that their panicking would be very unlikely, very unlikely.

Murray: Let's get back a bit to the RCMP. Now they did question these two men that were allegedly on the same lake. They dismissed this as being unimportant? Did you think that that was an honest appraisal on their part of that situation? What was their response to the obvious suspicion at least that something, that...?

Allan: Well, they just responded by saying yes, they had been up to the camp and yes, they had spoken to the people and I guess satisfied themselves to the point where they felt that this didn't have any bearing as to these fellows disappearing.

Murray: Was there any detail, as far as you know, regarding when these two men left that area where Brady and Halkett disappeared?

Allan: No, I don't know because I would imagine they may have been taken out of that area for a certain period of time because if they are in there guiding, it could be that they could go back with a plane. Let's say that if there wouldn't have been someone booked into the area, that they could've gone out and then come back again. So I don't know how long they stayed.

Murray: That would be the only way that they would get in there if they were guiding is by plane. It's too far from Otter to go by any other...?

Allan: Yes.

(Break in tape)

Allan: And I said, "You know Lloyd, I've said this all along and I know that you don't agree. I've maintained that something has happened to them that is out of the ordinary. It would appear to me that it would have to be some foul play." And he said, "Look, I couldn't allow myself to think that way or I couldn't have carried on with the search." And that I can respect. I think that he had this in the back of his mind but he cleared it out. Because he kept on. He said, "If I wouldn't believe that we were going to find them, either dead or alive, you know, someplace in the bush..." But he would believe that somewhere they were out in the bush, not as I believed it, there was foul play and...

Murray: They would have been disposed of?

Allan: They would have been disposed of.

(End of Side A)

(Side B)

Allan: I think that was pretty true as far as La Ronge was concerned. I certainly knew people or learned to know people later on that held CCF memberships and had been old country socialists. One of the people that I became very well acquainted with and had a long time standing friendship until he passed away was Bert Vandercraft, who was an old country bricklayer and had come to this country and had joined the Canadian forces in the First World War and came back and came into the north and he always supported the CCF. I also know of people of Indian ancestry. John Bird was a supporter for many years. I worked with John Bird and Bert later on and we didn't have that much active...

Murray: There weren't regular meetings or were there?

Allan: Not really. It was really an uphill struggle and it should have been an extremely good area to do political organizing in. It was lack of funds. It was the lack of really basic support that you required from the south to carry on the program of education, of political education.

Murray: Did you make efforts to convince the party in Regina that that was what was needed and if you did, what was the response to that?

Allan: Well, I think that at the time when we first moved here, we had more people coming up from the south and we did have a small nucleus of party membership here.

Murray: Basically southerners?

Allan: Basically southerners, right. We had some people here that supported us from the Indian-Metis community. But things

began to take place here that... there was a superimposition of some of the ideas. This, I think, was a fault of all of us that came to work here in the north before we moved into the area and lived here as permanent residents and begin to form an attachment to the area and a commitment to the area as well as the people in the area. I know when I worked in the civil service it was a matter of taking some of the principles of the CCF and, through lack of education, we superimposed these ideas upon people, saying it was in their best interest.

Murray: Telling them.

Allan: Really telling them what they required. And this reacted against us. The thing is that in the next election, I'm not certain whether Leslie went in for two terms but that would be the longest. He was then defeated by a Liberal. And that again was just a reaction to the superimposition of ideas and very much the same way they were fed up with the Liberals. Then they felt that some of the things that were being done were not in their best interest. And of course, election campaigns in those days, there was many forces at work and money flowed quite freely and you could buy a lot of your final results with dollars.

Murray: Could you expand on that a bit? That's an interesting part of the northern history is the nature of the elections. Could you expand a bit on the forces you've mentioned?

Allan: Well, I think that there were all sorts of things come into being where people have got money. Favors are bought. Everything enters into it, all the way from direct small amounts of money as direct bribes right down to the use of booze.

Murray: And what were some of the other things? Promises of jobs? Would there be threats involved?

Allan: There is all sorts of things that take place. Threats, coercion and the idea of where people, particularly people that owned stores, trading interests and this type of thing, because many of the things that were inaugurated by the CCF actually worked against their best interest in the fur trade, in the fish trade. For lack of understanding, people would be told that they would lose things like the old age pension and these kind of things that they didn't understand.

Murray: If they voted for the CCF?

Allan: If they voted for the CCF.

Murray: And there wasn't a large enough organization of the CCF to counter that kind of propaganda.

Allan: It becomes difficult to counter that type of propaganda when people that they had identified with over the years, had learned to know, and they felt that basically, this individual

was telling them the truth because they had known him and...

Murray: That situation was, by 1952, that people had sort of been turned against the CCF government in the north?

Allan: Yeah, I think that you were beginning to get into the backlash by that period of time. It sort of carried on from then although there was again the thing taking place where people would go through this stage of getting their fill of the other fellow too. So then they would revert back again. So we got into a series of where there was an exchange. First you had a Liberal who was a sitting member, Dick Hall. Then you got into Les Lee, then you got into Ripley, and from Ripley you went Harrop.

Murray: Ripley was CCF?

Allan: No, Ripley was Liberal. He came from Sandy Bay. Then you got to John Harrop. And John Harrop came from Uranium City. And then I think it was the 1960 election that I contested as a... we were just into the change of where some

people within the party ran as CCF, some CCF-NDP. That was at the time when the change was coming to the party name from CCF to NDP. So the thing is that I ran in 1960 and at that time, I was defeated by Allan Guy and Guy, as a Liberal, became... oh, I forget how many, I think three terms that he actually was in office.

Murray: Did the CCF party in La Ronge ever get larger than the first few years you've described? Did it pick up a bit after that?

Allan: Oh, I think that of latter years. Finally, following the Thatcher regime, the NDP picked up considerably and for the first time people could grasp what the potential in the north was as far as giving people a completely new concept in government and participation in government. And we had a new program that was endorsed by the party and we gained a lot of support and we got a lot of local membership and we began to get across a real understanding and feeling towards what change could really do for this part of the country by applying socialist principles in a new direction and particularly with the involvement of northern people in their own affairs. The decentralization process, the process of people becoming directly involved in forming a new department, of which they would be part of and they would decide the directions it should go, rather than sort of a civil service structured, bureaucratic structured... They had had enough of this. They had had it in the past, both parties. Now this is a new concept. Unfortunately it hasn't worked out that way because the NDP just reneged on this and they have set up a more rigid bureaucratic structure than ever.

Murray: This was the single agency concept.

Allan: Well, they referred to it as the single agency concept.

I think this is the way the present minister always saw it but this isn't really what they agreed to in principle. We laid down certain things that we felt should be followed which was endorsed by the executive and subsequently used as party policy and then it was followed and endorsed by convention. And this is the idea of what we felt was a concept, a new concept.

Murray: It was an anticolonial concept was it?

Allan: Well, it was basically a decentralizing process. It wasn't a matter of just taking all of the various departments involved in the north and putting them into one single agency. True, you are going to have one governing body but there was a central theme that ran through at that time. We said there were certain approaches that could be made but first of all, as the department came into being, that the people that actually would decide the direction that it would go and its form would be that of northern people. Not that of a civil servant or a group of civil servants coming up and saying, "Look, this is your administrative structure, this is the flow chart, this is what's going to happen. Here is the minister..."

Murray: Regardless of how well-intentioned.

Allan: Right. "Here is the minister, here is the deputy minister," and so on down. "Here is your line of control." The thing is that we didn't ever see this idea of even a deputy minister. What we actually looked at at that particular time was that we were going to have something comparable to this idea of... they speak of a northern municipal council now. Well, it's true, they have a northern municipal council but it's powerless. It sits there and the thing is that this

transfer of power is never going to come about. It becomes obvious as time goes on, day after day, it isn't going to come about. We actually felt that there would be either this type of council, which would be elected by the people, or a commission form, again elected by, but a group of people that would actually take their direction from the communities. And we didn't look upon some great giant thing coming into being in a few years where there would be a whole influx of people from the south. We thought that this would evolve very slowly. As people dealt with their problems, they would make them known. You would add staff and the main thing was support, resources support people that would give the expertise if....

Murray: When asked for.

Allan: When asked for.

Murray: When did you start working on that concept? When did that consciousness of what was needed start to develop in the minds of CCF and progressive people in La Ronge?

Allan: Well, I'm trying to think back as to when the Blakeney government took over from Thatcher...

Murray: 1971.

Allan: From 1971. Well, we would've been working on this just prior. The time was very short. What actually happened is they didn't have a northern policy. And there were many of us, because there was just a handful of people, many times our family practically stood alone up here at election time. And the organization was very haphazard and something that was

brought about very quickly. And, I protest, no longer held a party membership. But at that time, you could see this seemed to be the only chance of defeating the Thatcher government and certainly, even when I didn't hold a party membership, I always went out and helped organize and get elections going here and did whatever I could to get organization going in the area. And so there was several evening discussions that I had with Bob Dalby who eventually became the candidate and who was not a member of the NDP but who felt a close attachment to the north. He had lived here for about 15 years. We spoke of things that we felt should happen here to get away from this sort of imposition of bureaucratic power on the people and that we had to decentralize, we had to give northern people a chance to do things for themselves, and to correct some of the ills and that went all the way from the process of the administration of resources right to education, health and all. After coming up with some of these ideas - that time Glen Lindgren was here as school principal and he and his wife had always been a supporter - and we got together and discussed this and actually, there were three people. Now this wasn't too democratic but you want to realize there wasn't an organization anymore here.

Murray: It was as democratic as it could be at the time.

Allan: It was as democratic as it could be. And what would happen is, elections would come along and an organization would sort of spontaneously arise and then we would fight an election. It wasn't well-organized and you might win or you might lose. I know that at Uranium City there was always the union people there who were certainly always on the side of the NDP in an election. Now you always had this group but again, in between, the organization just sort of disintegrated. And in many ways, you know, I feel that, as the party was

constituted, they could've cared less as long as they stayed in power. They certainly didn't listen to you in between when you talked about some of these ideas. But we came to this point and there was just the three of us that actually asked to have this program or this concept aired.

Murray: Who did you convince in terms of the actual people in the power of the CCF?

Allan: Well, we contacted Ted Bowerman, Gordon MacMurchy and Don Farris. I think the three, these were the first three people that we went down and met them. And we subsequently had one or two meetings and it finally sort of gelled and they

listened to this and they thought that the idea was a good idea. The north no longer had, you know, John Harrop had moved from the north. He had been an MLA for years. He was now down living in Regina. They actually didn't really have any organization in the north at all.

Murray: Or any policy.

Allan: Or any policy really. Their resource policy for northern development, they hadn't ever really challenged the position of any of the mining companies. I think that they felt that probably, in the back of their mind, they felt that they were going to have to make some new changes. Now, mind you, there were all sorts of things have taken place since then with regard to, you know, what has happened as far as potash is concerned. And yet they still aren't taking any lessons from that particular type of development and here they are going into an area up here where certainly... When they came into power finally in that 1971 election, we didn't have a mine in northern Saskatchewan with the exception of one crown-owned

mine and that was Eldorado. It was owned by the federal government. And Gulf hadn't come into being yet. I think that was still at the stage of negotiation. They couldn't find out too much information about what the Liberals had actually promised these people. As we presented ideas to consider the share position with Gulf, it seemed that they always came up with ideas as time went on where they were digging these out somewhere and said, "Oh no, well, there are certain things that have already been finalized and we can't do that." Even to the point, at last, in trying to inaugurate a policy on Gulf where they were going to look to employ northern people and to try to train northern people to take these jobs, where even this was falling on deaf ears.

Murray: The concept that you finally sold to the NDP, my impression was that talk had actually begun about that sort of thing back as early as the late fifties.

Allan: Oh, the single agency concept had been going for a long while. Well, actually we can go back to Joe Phelps's time and he was the original Minister of Natural Resources. At that time, they were bringing in a policy of bringing some form of municipal government to the north. They set up a northern administrator, and a secretary and I think that idea of trying to bring more democratic local control already had sort of started. And it went on so far and then there were some changes and as the bureaucratic structure began to change and through the civil service structure, I think that they could see this probably as a threat to their power. I suggest this because I don't know why it wasn't pursued at that time. But it finally just fell by the wayside. I think actually was sort of forced out, the idea. But I know that there was subsequent... I think at one time, I believe Gus MacDonald

spent a short period of time as administrator, if I'm not mistaken, and I think that he always had this idea.

Murray: He was Director of Northern Affairs. He may have been administrator as well.

Allan: He had this idea that a single agency rather than a series of government departments operating in the north, that they should come under a single agency. So the single agency idea was...

Murray: Was always there.

Allan: Yeah, was present for a long period of time. And I'm convinced today that the now deputy minister or the now minister of Department of Northern Saskatchewan didn't ever see it any differently.

Murray: It was simply an administrative concept.

Allan: Yeah, just an administrative concept. I don't think he saw this as something that was going to be new, to give people power through a decentralizing process where you went back to the community level and that people were going to be able to have certain power to administer certain given areas.

Murray: There was a paper produced by a group in La Ronge, including yourself, about the single agency. That was in the late fifties, was it?

Allan: Well, I can't remember the actual date of that but this goes back to when, I think Olie Turnbull was the minister of Co-operation and I know that we discussed this idea with him at

that time following one of the elections. And again, you know, in the heat of an election everybody is buoyed up and then the election is over and people want to do things right away. Then a period of time goes by and then finally everybody just sort of gets into place and then they forget all these things. I can remember one time we had a meeting here with him and at that time, I think there was Jim Brady was present, Malcolm Norris was present and we had...

Murray: Dalby was present too, or was he?

Allan: No, not at that time. That goes back earlier. But at any rate, we made some of our feelings known about how they just weren't carrying through with this. And I remember Turnbull stomped off in high dudgeon because we said to them, "Look, you just turn around and listen at election time and then after it's all over, then you turn around and just leave us here. It just becomes a bureaucratic structure, the civil servants again take it, there isn't any input from people, and people are fed up with this. And this time the thing was to change. And we'd discussed this before the election and you said certain things are going to be done." And I can remember at that time, it was rather interesting because Malcolm Norris was a very volatile individual and no way would he take anything from anyone if he felt that he was right. And in that

particular instance, when Ollie Turnbull stomped out of the house, Malcolm followed him and said, "Well, look here, I'll give you a ride in the car back to the..." After that we really gave Malcolm hell over how he started kowtowing again to the white man after he had taken that, you know... actually, that was a really prima donna act, you know. My opinion of Turnbull after that thing just fell to zero and I never did change my opinion after that.

Murray: Right. I want to get to Malcolm and Jim's contribution as far as the CCF was concerned but before that, I want to find out what kinds of directions the CCF gave from Regina in terms of, well, for one thing, in terms of choosing candidates. That, I've heard, was a source of conflict between local people and the party headquarters.

Allan: Yeah, this was true and sometimes we really had to sort of assert ourself on the local basis because there was some manipulating. And there has certainly been cases where people have gone out and they did a lot of campaigning, particularly people who were attached to the civil service structure. I know the time when Cham McLean ran, he had people going out, selling memberships and that. That didn't sit too well with people up here who were on the spot and so on. But those wounds sort of get healed when your common enemy is the other political party that you see as the one that you have to defeat. I know at that particular time, for an example, Cham McLean did all sorts of things to try to get Jim Brady eased out as a field officer in Cumberland House, some things that I consider pretty low. And Jim knew this and eventually he saw that he was in sort of an untenable situation and he just resigned. And he stayed at Cumberland and he worked down there, worked with the cooperative that they set on producing wood and cordwood. And at the time when McLean ran, Jim was up here in the La Ronge area and he was caretaking over at Nistowiak. There was a mining company, La Ronge Uranium, that had set up there and was doing some experimental work with ore and it was a radio-active pegmatite type of ore. And Jim had every reason to stay away from the polls or to go out and try and defeat McLean on a personal basis. And he walked all the way to Stanley to cast his vote and I questioned Jim about this

later. I said, "Well, why would you do such a thing?" "Well," he said, "it was quite obvious. It was important for any ordinary citizen at that time," he said, "the most important thing was to defeat Tucker as a threat," who was then running as the leader of the Liberals. And he said that was a force far worse than having to have McLean inflicted upon him.

Murray: So it was a simple political decision.

Allan: It was a simple political decision as far as he was concerned. And he always rationalized on the basis of what was really best for the ordinary person.

Murray: Right. What was Jim's involvement with the CCF during the time that he was in the north as far as you were aware?

Allan: Well Jim was a socialist and a left wing socialist and his commitment to working people and people of Indian ancestry was never to be questioned at all because he was always solid. And therefore, he saw that the political force that was the most viable political force in the north was the CCF and later the NDP and he always...

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