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EDWARD SHEARER

Edward Shearer worked in the La Ronge area in the late fifties for the Department of Highways. He later moved to Prince Albert where he was associated with the Indian/Metis Friendship Centre. He was a friend of Malcolm Norris.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Malcolm Norris: his style, his personality, his standards, his politics.
- The Norris family.
- The Prince Albert Friendship Centre.

Murray: I'm talking to Ed Shearer of Saskatoon. Ed, could you tell me a bit about how you first met Malcolm Norris and what your impressions were of him then and what they were as you were to know him?

Ed: Yes. I met Malcolm first in, well I can even remember the year. I think it was 1958 because it was the fall of 1958 that I first went up to La Ronge. And at that time, I was working for the Saskatchewan Department of Highways, and that was the year of John Diefenbaker's great northern vision, remember. Well, I really volunteered for the job and I was never sorry that I did so, but I had been working down in the

southern part of the province, way down around Estevan. And when I heard that they needed somebody to engineer the road north of La Ronge, which was at that time called the Uranium City road, I said I would like to go up there. I had had some experience in the north, because I worked on the railroad line to Lynn Lake for the CNR for a couple of years when I was going to university. And so it was in about September and October of 1958 that I first met Malcolm. I had to hunt him out. See, we went up there with virtually no equipment to get going on this survey thing, and we needed a canoe. And someone said, "Well you can probably borrow one from Department of Mineral Resources, but the guy you'll have to see about this is Malcolm Norris." And that's the first thing I find out about Malcolm is that he was exceptionally careful about how he kept track of equipment and made sure that anything that was taken was brought back in good condition. In short, there were no rip-offs from Malcolm Norris, you know, he looked after things very well. So I recall just almost the spot in the main street of La Ronge there where I ran into him. And someone was along

with me. I think it was Tony Wood who came along with me and introduced me to Malcolm. Well, Malcolm introduced himself to me, because he said, "I'm Redskin Norris," is what he said to me. That was his first words. So I got an immediate impression of him but I think I immediately really liked him. Of course, I suppose, I knew something about him, and knew that he was a socialist, and knew that he had a very deep concern for the Indian people and had done a lot of work with them. Anyway, I did manage to talk him into getting a canoe for our use and I think we returned it in good shape (laughs) probably the following spring when Department of Highways broke down and got their own canoe. But that's when I first met him, and of course, that was just briefly. And then, well I used to occasionally see him when he was up at La Ronge after that, because I was up there for three years working on that highway in La Ronge and north of La Ronge. But that's what I recall of my meeting him.

Murray: What kinds of experiences brought you together after that when you were in La Ronge? Did you look him up when you went there as a friend?

Ed: At that time there was still that Prospectors' Assistance Plan and he used to come up, I think it was in the spring of the year, and stay for several weeks looking after this plan they had for prospectors. And I think that's when I would get together with him and he'd drop in over to my place. At that time I lived in a house trailer there. And the first year, I guess, I was parked right beside the La Ronge Hotel there, sort of on the main drag. And then in subsequent years we moved our trailer in the summers up the road to the

Department of Highways campsites, and everything there. And I know Malcolm had a cabin over on what was called the point there, and I had been there several times, but I suppose my visits with him were fairly brief really. And occasionally I do recall getting together with both Malcolm and Allan Quandt.

I expect when that happened I didn't contribute very much to the conversation compared to those two fellows.

Murray: They're two of a kind, you know.

Ed: Yeah.

Murray: What kinds of conversations would you have with Malcolm? Were they always political conversations or did they involve all kinds of topics?

Ed: Well, I think they were, yeah, they were very much politically oriented, and oriented towards the plight of the Indian and what Malcolm saw as being wrong with the society that had developed and with the Indian's role in it. And, of course, I expect anybody who knew Malcolm would say this about him, and that is, it hurt him so deeply for Indian people to sort of let him down and not carry through the way he thought Indian people should do. And he didn't hesitate - of course, Malcolm didn't hesitate about criticizing anything that he didn't like - but he didn't hesitate sort of ripping a strip off an Indian person whom he felt didn't quite behave the way that he should have.

Murray: Was that true of any native person or certain native people who he had greater expectations of? Or was it pretty much anyone who didn't operate the way he thought they should?

Ed: I think it was true of every native person that he was in contact with. That's something that sort of amazed me, I think, that he never really reduced his expectations for people, you know. He just sort of continually assumed that, well, he thought people should say to themselves, "I'm an Indian and I've got to gain this understanding of my situation and fight back every side tracking issue." And that was one thing quite amazing. He didn't seem to ever let up on that, you know.

Murray: He didn't adjust his approach at all to who he was talking to? Or is that true?

Ed: Malcolm was a sort of a shock therapist speaker, you know. He just enjoyed, I think he enjoyed, shocking people with the things that he had to say. And he said them in a very, very sharp, very abrupt way that, of course, turned many, many people right off.

Murray: Including native people?

Ed: Oh yeah, that's what I say. He didn't seem to ever hesitate, you know, just being extremely critical of people and telling them exactly what he thought they should be doing, and I suppose he did it in a way that, well, somewhat ruined the possibilities of him making progress at that time, you know.

Murray: Defeated his own purpose to some extent?

Ed: I think it was a purposeful thing. It was just an approach that he developed and I mean that was just Malcolm Norris. And I know numerous occasions, you know, I've said, "Well, Malcolm, maybe you should just take it a little easier. Maybe you should be a little more diplomatic." You know, I'd try and tell him that and, in my view, Malcolm always accepted criticism in a way that, you know... I mean, he'd never be mad at me for suggesting that you should act a little bit better, or something like that. You know, he accepted criticism in a very good way, I think, but still he just couldn't seem to shake that approach of just sort of shocking people and being really abrupt.

Murray: Did he ever see that approach as being perhaps not the correct one, and being unable to change it? Or did he stick with that approach because he thought it was correct?

Ed: I imagine he stuck with it because he thought it was correct. Well, he must have.

Murray: What would he say when you would suggest that he be more diplomatic? What were his thoughts?

Ed: Well, he might accept that criticism and he might say, "Yeah, maybe your right." I think perhaps he has said

that, you know, but I just couldn't see that there was any appreciable change in the way he did things, you know.

Murray: It was in his chemistry?

Ed: Yeah, I think it was. It was in his chemistry. (laughs)

Murray: What kind of goal did Malcolm have, do you think, for native people? What was his view of integration? Was that what he saw as necessary for native people, integrating into white society eventually?

Ed: Well, I think he must have accepted that as being inevitable, yeah. Because after all, you know, he was very well-integrated. I don't know if you want this very chronologically or not, but I did want to mention at some time the fact that might not be all that well known, that he was president of the Home and School Association for Vincent Massey School in Prince Albert for a couple of years. And (laughs), he gave that Home and School Association a really rough couple of years, I must say. But, you know, he was integrated and I think he accepted the fact that there would probably have to be an integration of the Indian and the white ways. But he just wanted to do anything he could, I suppose, to retain the old Indian integrity and honesty and cooperativeness and everything that you can think of, if you go right back to when the white man first came. I remember him many times going back and talking about the way life was before the white man came and he had an excellent understanding of just what that society

was like, I think. Probably he had an understanding of it that I can't even properly comprehend. Because, you know, he'd excuse things. For instance, the fact that maybe Indian people do tend to, when they live in a place, they leave it kind of messy, you know. He always related that to the fact that, well, that's their way of life, nomadic life, where you move your living place. Leave your mess behind and start over again.

Murray: You mentioned that Malcolm was often quite critical of native people. Can you think of some instances? What kinds of things would upset him that native people would do that he thought they shouldn't do?

Ed: Oh, well, I suppose, you know, the perpetual, it seems perpetual, problem of drinking, of course. Malcolm enjoyed a drink and had no particular thing against it. But he was a guy who's really under control and I don't ever remember him having had too much to drink, you know. He was always in complete control of himself. So, I guess that would be one of the things. But maybe more than that would be someone who just reneged on the basic honesty situation. I just can't think of an example, an actual example. Well, maybe I can think of one. For instance, when he was in the Indian-Metis Society in Prince Albert and he was the director, some equipment was bought for the Indian kids' sports. And I forget the expenditure. It was one or two hundred dollars anyway, and the fellow looking after this equipment didn't return it all to

the Centre at the end of the hockey season, I guess it was. Well, Malcolm just couldn't accept that, you know, and he went right after the individual involved there and had other people get involved with it, too. It seemed, when you talked to the chap who had been looking after this equipment, he'd probably done a really good job, but maybe he just hadn't been as concerned as he should have been about this. And well, some stuff had gone missing, I guess. And that sort of thing really bothered Malcolm. He felt that everybody and, I suppose especially Indian people, they should assume that responsibility of looking after something that they had been loaned or given. I guess I can't think of too many other examples.

Murray: He applied his own standards for himself to everyone then, basically?

Ed: Yeah, I think so. Yeah, I guess that's right. See, I suppose his job with the Mineral Resources, that was part of it was looking after that equipment and I'm sure he did a real good job of it and I guess he expected other people to be able to do as well as he did.

Murray: Would you say he was sort of intolerant of any weakness in people at that sort of level?

Ed: Oh yeah, I think he might be a little intolerant of weakness, yeah. Certainly not hesitant about criticizing.

That was just part of Malcolm; that's just the way he operated. You know, he would come right out and say to someone's face or about someone, "Well, he didn't do that right." Yeah, he didn't pull any punches when it came to that.

Murray: So you had to be a fairly strong person to be able to handle the kind of criticism that Malcolm might dish out?

Ed: Yeah. Yeah, I guess you had to recognize the real gem of a man that was sort of behind it, you know. Because if you were a person who found criticism hard to take, you would have a tough time maintaining a lasting friendship with Malcolm. Yeah, that's right. Oh yeah, I'm sure he made a lot of enemies, you know, through this way he had of criticizing.

Murray: Enemies not just among reactionary whites, but among a whole broad spectrum of people?

Ed: Yeah, I guess that's right, yeah. I don't know if you want this on tape or not, but it's an interesting thing. Malcolm's political alignment is a little uncertain because his main concern, I think, was with the Indian people and seeing that the Indian movements progressed. But there's no question that he was a socialist. But I remember being at a small gathering with several people including some Communists, one of them who had been in Saskatchewan; Nelson Clark, was his name. He had been in Saskatchewan for a number of years and then moved down to Toronto. And this is just so typical of Malcolm. This chap had put on a few pounds and he was a little heavy and Malcolm would just sort of abruptly come out and say something like, "Oh, you guys down east there. You're getting to be fat cats. You're living high on the hog down there." And this chap, well, didn't really enjoy getting that kind of criticism.

Murray: He wasn't used to taking that.

Ed: No, he wasn't used to taking that. Oh yeah, Malcolm used to love needling people. He got a particular pleasure out of needling people, I would say. I don't know, maybe I was lucky, I just don't recall him particularly needling me. I guess some people he sort of felt that his viewpoint was close enough to theirs that he could sort of lay off a little bit, I don't know. (laughs)

Murray: Was he the kind of person who wanted people to be aware that he was an Indian with some brains? Was that part of his attitude do you think?

Ed: Yeah. Yeah, I think so. Well, as I said, when I first met him he said, "I am Redskin Norris." And so I expect he met many people in that same way and he wanted them first of all to understand, well, I'm a Canadian Indian and I'm a guy who's prepared to carry out the old idealism and upstanding qualities of the Indian, you know.

Murray: Did he have a bit of a chip on his shoulder do you

think?

Ed: Oh, yeah. I've said it several times before and I guess it's no doubt, yeah, yeah, he carried a heck of a big chip on his shoulder, yeah.

Murray: He was ready to jump at any situation if he thought it was...?

Ed: Yeah, you just had to make some small, slight remark about Indian people and he would jump right in and defend them. But he would very readily just criticize the hell out of some of his Indian friends or some people who didn't behave as he thought they should.

Murray: So even if the criticism on the part of a white person was basically correct, he would defend the native person?

Ed: Yeah, that's right. That's right, yeah. And especially if it was someone like, well, as I mentioned that situation where that small meeting and someone, for instance, would come from Toronto, and someone who'd be really interested in trying to probe this question and seeing what the approach should be to the Indian. Well, he was very, very quick if they made a remark which he felt was antinative, you know. He was very quick to just jump right in and defend them.

Murray: Do you recall many of these meetings? Was he active in the Communist party as far as you know?

Ed: Well, I don't think he was really very active, but he was the kind of fellow who would never hesitate to meet these people, and he loved to discuss things with them because, you know, I suppose they were on a similar intellectual level. I mean, Malcolm was really a very intellectual person I would say, and he loved to discuss politics and policy and everything

like that. And whether he was a member of the Communist party, I'm really not too certain. But I mean his ideas were socialistic and, yeah, he loved discussing with those kind of people. But I wouldn't say that he was that active, you know. I think that the Indian question came above everything else.

Murray: Took up most of his time. I want to get back to something that I touched on earlier. I was trying to get a feel for the kind of standards as far as life style was concerned that he had. Did he project his life style on other native people? Was this the kind of thing he thought? He had a pretty much middle class life style, from what I understand.

Ed: Yes.

Murray: Was this the kind of thing he felt that people should work towards? Would he be critical of life styles that didn't

go in that direction?

Ed: Well, gee, I don't know. That's something I'm not too certain about. I don't think he really wanted everyone to accept his life style particularly. You know, he seemed to be at home in a ramshackle cabin as much as he would be in his own place. And I expect, although I'm not really familiar with his life at home but, I think that maybe his wife had to do quite a bit of picking up after Malcolm, you know, because he had that tendency to just sort of let things slide at home. In spite of the fact, as I say, that his filing system was marvelous and

he kept track of everything, all his written material and everything, so very well. Perhaps if he were living alone he mightn't keep his place quite as tidy as the rest of his family liked.

Murray: Did he talk about his family much? What was his attitude to his family in terms of commitment and the standards he set for his children and that sort of thing?

Ed: Well, I didn't know him in the years when his older children were still at home. I knew him in Prince Albert. Well, let's see, that would be 1962 that I moved back to Prince Albert, and then I left in 1966 again. So there were four or five years over which I got to know him a little bit better, I guess. And he liked his kids, I know that. I knew his two younger boys best of all, I guess, Russell and Donald. Yeah, Donald and Russell. Well that was funny. Donald was a very dark skinned fellow and Malcolm used to call him Black Donald. (laughs) That was his little pet name for him. I don't think Donald liked that name too well, but Malcolm used it anyway. I think there were tensions in his family life actually. I think his wife just couldn't agree to the activity that Malcolm... to the extent he was involved.

Murray: The time he devoted to his politics.

Ed: Yeah. No, she couldn't quite accept that.

Murray: She was not a political person?

Ed: No, I would say not, no.

Murray: Did he project his standards for native people in general onto his family? Did he try and establish that with his family as well as outside?

Ed: He must have. And I don't know how all his kids turned out. I'm sure they turned out, you know, very well. I mean, they're quite well-adjusted members of society and so on. I doubt if they're quite carrying the torch that Malcolm carried, you know, because I think they must have seen the tensions that developed over his extraordinary intense activity, you know, and mind-centering attitude on this Indian question. So I imagine that they perhaps decided that I'm not going to get as involved as my dad, you know.

Murray: Right, right.

Ed: But I don't know that for certain.

Murray: He didn't talk to you much about his family other than his affection for them and that sort of thing?

Ed: Not too much, no. No, not too much.

Murray: Do you recall what his activities were in Prince Albert when you were there as far as the CCF was concerned? Was he active in the party at all?

Ed: Oh, I don't know if he was a member of the CCF or not. He might have been but I couldn't say. But yeah, he

used to get involved and I imagine many other people could tell you so much more about the things he used to do in the political campaigns for them. I don't think Malcolm, though, from what I know of it, and this is mostly secondhand, I don't think that he was such an effective campaigner for getting the Indian vote to vote CCF. Because I think that it was just this extreme criticism that he seemed to have; I mean, I don't know if he would swing very many votes, but I do know that he went and spoke to people in Cree and everything. Now his mastery of the Cree language, that's another thing I don't know. I think he was very good and very fluent in Cree, but whether it was just exactly...

(END OF SIDE A)
(SIDE B)

Ed: ...Thatcher government came in in 1964, was it? And, of course, that's when Malcolm's big problems started up. And I will try and tell you what I can remember about that, but, anyway, it must have been... Well, Malcolm didn't take on that job as director of that until 1964. So in the year or two prior to that he was active in it, but he wasn't in a paid position or anything. At that time, of course, there wasn't a director. It was just that there was a little place where people could go and I think it was mainly volunteer work. And oh, Fred, Fred Tomkins, what's...?

Murray: Frank?

Ed: Frank Tompkins. Was that the father or the...?

Murray: Pete Tompkins was their father.

Ed: Pete was the one I'm thinking of, yeah. He was director of that for several months, and I'm not certain about this, but I think he would have been the first person who had had that position and it involved some remuneration.

Murray: What were the objectives of the Centre as you recall

them at the time?

Ed: That's something I think that has perhaps changed a lot over the years, not that I'm very involved with it now myself, but it really seemed at that time that it was just a place where Indian people could go and sort of feel at home in the city of Prince Albert. And I would say, it didn't have any highly idealistic objectives or anything like that. It was just a place where people could go and feel at home and there were activities carried on through there. Like, there were socials put on and so on, and that's where I got fairly busy at times, was just going down and being kind of a chaperone to some of those socials. They were carried on at the city recreation centre there. I hadn't stopped to think about the names of some of the people involved there. I'm afraid I can't remember a lot of them, but there were some really good social goings-on there.

Murray: It was a place for native people to sort of gather and get together?

Ed: Yeah, right. Sometimes they'd bring the drums and everything and the Indian music was on. And then there'd be an orchestra usually and sort of the old-time type of music and lots of dancing, and lots of fun.

Murray: It was in '64 that Malcolm took over the director-ship. Could you describe that year in Malcolm's life? It was fairly traumatic in some ways.

Ed: Yeah. Well Malcolm worked it in a kind of a way that might have brought on some objections from people like Pete Tomkins. When he got sort of ousted out of his job or given an early retirement you might say, which he didn't want... I don't think I can get into too many of the details of that fight, but you know, he was put out of his job simply because he had been active in the CCF, and he'd been a... Well, as I say, Malcolm was a needler and he needled a lot of people that...

Murray: They got him back.

Ed: Yeah, I think in the civil service he didn't get the support that he should have. And of course, Dave Steuart and Allan Guy, those two people for certain wanted to get Malcolm Norris out of his job and were prepared, I think, to do almost anything to get him out of there. And there wasn't quite the support that there should have been for Malcolm in the civil service, because I think he had done a wonderful job in the years that he was in there, but he had, I suppose, rubbed a few people the wrong way. So he was let out of that job and given, I think, a small pension, an early pension of some sort. And he couldn't really support himself with that so he - I have to say this, it's a criticism of him, I guess - but he did sort of work himself into the job of director of the Metis Society in a way that, well, I guess he sort of somewhat forced Pete Tomkins

out and sort of put himself in. Now, I mean, he couldn't have done this without the board acting on it. And, you see, I think everyone recognized how efficient Malcolm was and felt that he could do a good job in there. And I think he did do a good job.

Murray: But he had to force someone - someone had to be forced out from there?

Ed: Yeah, he had to kind of ease it in that way. Now I'm afraid I just can't recall all the details of that.

Murray: Was there any bitterness in the part of Pete Tomkins over that?

Ed: I don't know. I've never heard Pete tell me that, but then you see I suppose he knew that I was a friend of Malcolm's and he figured that there would be no use in saying anything too critical to me about Malcolm. But there was a little feeling on my part that he'd sort of forced himself into there. But once he got in that job he, you know, for a man his age, he just took hold of it and worked very hard at it. And he did a lot of things. And, of course, Malcolm's big desire of course was to - what does he say in that? I'm just looking at this letter, this last letter I ever got from Malcolm. And it's just a little note and this is what Malcolm loved doing. In connection with his illness, made him neglect his "major correspondence in connection with rocking dominion and provincial boats." Well, you know, Malcolm always wanted to do that. He wanted to rock people and really...

Murray: It was for the rocking, for the sake of it.

Ed: Yeah, yeah. So when he got into that job, he began writing letters and he did all this with - well, there might have been a few things that the board didn't exactly approve of - but he (laughs) informed the board of the Indian/Metis Friendship Centre, you know, what he was doing and everything. And I don't think people were too perturbed about it. Compared to the militancy in the Indian movement today, in 1976 and the '70s, I mean what Malcolm did wasn't very much really. But he was sure a vanguard of this Indian militancy which has developed. Yeah, there's no doubt about that.

And he loved writing. He loved writing letters and putting things in a very emphatic... And I couldn't call his prose poetic, it isn't that. It's just that he liked the sharpness and the pointedness of putting things down in a letter or something like that. So, yeah, he attacked the dominion and provincial governments and in many ways when this (inaudible).

Murray: Did he write a lot of letters to government, to ministers and that sort of thing? Was that part of his activity?

Ed: Yeah, I guess he did. Those files aren't available

any more, I suppose.

Murray: Well, government files would be, I think. I haven't gone through them yet.

Ed: Yeah. I was just wondering if any of those files from the Indian/Metis Centre... It's hard for me to recall

where all he wrote, but certainly, yeah, he wrote letters to ministers and to people who could apply pressure to the government. When I think back of why these people - as I say, Dave Steuart and Allan Guy were two people who were very anxious to get him out of there - whether they were basing that anxiousness on past things that Malcolm did, or whether they were basing it on, you know, more recent things, I'm not too sure. But oh, I think it goes back more to his past maybe.

Murray: They eventually forced him out of the Indian/Metis Friendship Centre as well.

Ed: Yeah, that's right. I wish I could just step by step recall everything that happened there and now I just can't seem to do it. But they did force him out, yeah.

Murray: How long after he had taken the position would that have been?

Ed: Oh, let's see, that would be about a year, more or less.

Murray: Did he visualize any different or broader goals for the Centre than they had had up until that point? Did he change the Centre at all while he was director?

Ed: Well, yeah, I guess maybe he did change it. See, I think that Malcolm wasn't the man to have in there if you just wanted to have it a real homey place for people to come. Because, you know, his criticism of people was just a little too sharp for that, and he wasn't a man that found it easy to just make people feel at home. So I would say perhaps there were less people that sort of came to the Centre and just used it as a place to relax when Malcolm was there than when Pete Tomkins was there.

Murray: He might have frightened some people off, do you think?

Ed: I guess he might have, yeah. I'm not sure about that, but he might have, yeah. I'm just trying to recall some of these incidents. He told me a few things about people that came in there on occasion. And he (laughs), as I say he wasn't quite ready to accept the people's failings the way some people might. You know, I mean if somebody came in and we'll say was drunk at the time, I'm afraid Malcolm might be a little short with him and just sort of sent him on his way in effect. Compared to maybe somebody like Pete Tomkins who could handle

it. But I don't know. You know, Malcolm never could alter that feeling that he had that if you are an Indian you've got to evidence the good side.

Murray: Of what that means, yeah.

Ed: Yeah. But boy, I didn't realize just how difficult it is to recall these things now. Not that I was down there all that much in the daytime hours, because I was working, but Malcolm did relate things to me but some of those details are a little hard to...

Murray: Drag out.

Ed: Yeah, to remember, yeah.

Murray: Right. One thing I was wondering, was the Centre financed from the beginning by government or was it a self-financing or privately financed thing to begin with?

Ed: No, the government financing just sort of... There was a little pressure for it to increase. I can recall one of the very early meetings that I attended there and in fact, maybe it was close to being the founding of the Indian/Metis Centre, and that was held at that recreation centre there. There was very little in the way of funds. I think maybe the city kicked in a few dollars and the province, well, a few. But it wasn't very much - nothing like, I guess, it is nowadays. But that was one thing, of course, I think that Malcolm helped to, you know... He was pressing always for more financial assistance. Sorry that I don't have any records or anything that I can just look at and say well, you know, in such and such a year so much was given.

Murray: But when do you think the provincial funding started? Do you recall that at all? Wouldn't have been '62, or would they have had some money at that time as well?

Ed: I don't know. It wouldn't have been very much in '62, but I think by the time '63 came around and '64, at least prior to the election,... And I don't think the Liberal government did just immediately cut right off. But what they did was begin to question. How much it was I'm not certain, but it might have been four or five thousand dollars at that time. It might have been that much. They didn't cut it completely off, but I suppose they figured that...

Murray: They still had their eye on Malcolm Norris though. That was part of it.

Ed: Yeah, right.

Murray: This last letter you had from him was '66. What were his final years like? Was he still as strong a fighter for native rights or was he becoming increasingly frustrated in that fight? What was his feeling about the thing?

Ed: Well, I think he was a fighter right to the end, I think. I don't think there was ever any change. Of course, he physically, I guess, got so ill that he just couldn't do anything. But even after numerous heart attacks, which he had. You could see why he'd get them, because he would get himself all tense. And this last stroke that he had I think resulted from the fact that he had gone to the west coast on a kind of a holiday. But see, that man found it pretty tough to relax and really have what you'd call a holiday. In fact, I believe

on his way back they stopped at Calgary and they had relatives or friends there in Calgary. But Malcolm stopped in Calgary mainly because there was an Indian conference of some kind going on there, and he went to that. And in his usual style, I think, probably got up and spoke once or twice and gave the big harangue and so on. And got himself all tense and anxious and everything and then it was just after that that he just got home from that, and he had this stroke.

Murray: That would have been the summer of '66, I think you said.

Ed: Yeah, I think so. That would be in the early summer of '66. Yeah, that's right. But it seems to me it was about two days that he had been in Calgary and Malcolm had spent practically the whole two days at this meeting, you know, convention, I'm not to sure what it was.

Murray: And it was within a few days that he suffered his first stroke?

Ed: Yeah. I think he just barely got back and he took sick. It seems to me it just happened in his sleep. He just woke up and he was paralyzed, half his body was paralyzed. And he was a man that just couldn't accept that, you know. I guess everybody would find that condition hard to accept, but Malcolm would fight it harder than many people because there were just

so many things that he wanted to do and just being confined to a bed was very hard on him. And then I don't like to be particularly critical of his wife. I already mentioned the fact that there were family tensions there, and I think even when he was in his hospital bed that, you know, those tensions continued. And I think his wife was really quite extremely angry over the fact that she felt, I think, that his latest attack was brought on by his activity in the Indian movement. And, you know, she would have preferred him to just forget it and...

Murray: Be at home.

Ed: And actually as his friend, I suppose, I felt the same way. I wished that he could, at least for a few months or something, just sort of forget it and concentrate on something which would stop the anxiety that seemed to be a part of him, you know.

Murray: But he never slowed down even after that?

Ed: Well, I don't think so. He kept his mind on that same thing all the time, you know. That never, never left him. And he was always full of questions when you'd go and see him in the hospital. He was always questioning things like, you know, what's happening in the provincial government? What's happening in the country as a whole and in the world? And, of course, Malcolm was quite an internationalist too, very interested in goings-on in other countries and so on. Socialism and that sort of thing and so on. I would say he always was questioning and always wanting to discuss things

like, you know, what's happening in Cuba? The Soviet-Chinese problem, what's happening there? You know, he kept a keen interest in those things up to the the very end as far as I know.

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