HIGHLIGHTS:
- General account of his life

Victoria: Did the priest come out and visit the homes in your community back then?

Alfred: Yes. Yes, not too much but they did.

Victoria: Do you remember the things they talked about and that?

Alfred: No, I don't.

Victoria: Do you remember if your parents voted? Was there a place to vote up north there where you lived?

Alfred: Oh yes, we always voted. That's the only time we seen outsiders was election time, that was the only time...
Victoria: How did they go about setting up their... Was it a regular voting poll that they had?

Alfred: Yeah, a regular voting poll, yeah.

Victoria: Whereabouts did they have it?

Alfred: They have it right in town. They had it right in town, in Beauval there, and everybody generally voted for one person.

Victoria: Did you ever get involved in the politics, or your mom?

Alfred: Yes, I was involved in politics, yes. Especially at Ile a la Crosse when I had a store. You know, one time, the second time, the first time that the CCF won they didn't have a single vote. It was all the Liberals, and I don't think there was a Conservative either. But the second time, well, four of us voted and we talked about it, because they had done so good over there. We had a lot of work done by them, by the CCF. The second time we said we should vote for them because they done so much for us, you know. And of course people wouldn't listen, they always voted for Liberals. Well, they voted Liberal. But there was four votes that were CCF, so they knew who it was -- one of them was me and the other one was George, one was Tom, and then the other one was the man that works for the government there, you see, so they knew who it was. So everybody celebrated. There was a big dance, you know, but I couldn't go, we couldn't go. We stayed at home in my place; we was scared to get out.

Victoria: What party did your mom vote for, do you know?

Alfred: Oh, she was Liberal all the time, yeah.

Victoria: You must have scared to go to your mom's too.

Alfred: Yeah, she was Liberal, she died Liberal.

Victoria: What do you think influenced them, you know, the people, you know, that they knew? What made them vote that way?

Alfred: Well, I don't know. I think, sometimes I think they didn't know any better, or...

Victoria: Do you think it was maybe it was because of the, like the promises that they made to the people?

Alfred: No, they never went to any meetings, they never went to any meetings. There was no meetings.

Victoria: Just on election day?

Alfred: Yeah, election day, just election day.

Victoria: There never was any visiting?
Alfred: Well, look at Quebec now, they are Liberals. Well, they come from there so they've been Liberal. He says the other ones that vote another way, they call them turncoats, you see. Well, I was the first one to be turncoat, you see, because I voted for the people that did something.

Victoria: So they never even went around visiting before election time at all, eh?

Alfred: No, no, there was no... we never had a meeting.

Victoria: The church wasn't involved in any politics at all?

Alfred: Oh the church, some, but not in church. But they talked about it, you know. I had an argument with a priest once about that, because I voted for a non-Catholic. There was a Catholic running and a non-Catholic, well, I voted for the non-Catholic because the Catholic was worse than the non-Catholic. You know, he was staying with a woman that didn't belong to him. And not only that he was crooked as hell, so... Well, he didn't like me voting for the other one. So I had to straighten him up a little bit.

Victoria: When you moved into town, Alfred, do you think your relationship with Metis people or your involvement in the Metis community, did it get stronger or do you think it sort of weakened after?

Alfred: I didn't quite understand. You mean now?

Victoria: Like, when you first moved from the north into, like, P.A. there, did you still keep in touch with a lot of the Metis people there?

Alfred: Oh yes. Not only the Metis people, the Indians. I went to the Indians and talk Cree to them and they couldn't understand me. Yeah, I had an argument with Indians many times. They didn't know their own language, and I wasn't an Indian and I could speak their language. Yeah. The people from John Smith Reserve, there's none of them that can speak Cree.

Victoria: How was the Metis community or even the Indian community there, was it spread out in P.A., or did they sort of all go into one area of the city?

Alfred: No they don't go to one area now. They don't congregate. Like, maybe they congregate in one place in here, at 20th Street, because it's so small in there. They just do their business, they just do their business in town, and they don't... I never seen them anywhere...

Victoria: Do you think it's different here in Saskatoon?

Alfred: Yes, I think so. But in Prince Albert the half-breeds or the Metis did, because north P.A., what they call the Fox Farm -- remember the Fox Farm? That was all the
Metis people that lived there across the river, and I don't know if it's still the same.

Victoria: Yeah, I think so. You see when you go by on the highway, they've got their little mailboxes. And you think in Saskatoon it's quite different then, eh, like, the Metis community?

Alfred: Right in town, yes, I think it's different. Because in town, well, they go on the 20th Street because that's where the Metis people are, and maybe that's because the Salvation Army, the Sally Ann is there. But I work for the Sally Ann there, and there's a lot of Metis people and Indians that go there, and white people.

Victoria: Do... were you ever involved in the 1930s elections, like for the, I believe then it was called Saskatchewan Metis Society? Alfred: No, I never was involved.

Victoria: There was no locals at all in your area?

Alfred: No, no. The only time that I knew there was a Metis Society was one time I come to Green Lake and talk to Alec Bishop, and he told me about the Metis Society. That's the only time that I knew there was a society.

Victoria: What year was that?

Alfred: I don't remember what we talked about. But I've always wanted to join the Metis Society because I was interested in the Metis people. But I didn't know who to contact or where it was because nobody ever talked about it.

Victoria: Do you remember what year it was then?

Alfred: It must have been in the '40s, yes, because I never heard anything in the '30s about it.

Victoria: Do you remember any names like Joe LaRocque?

Alfred: No.

Victoria: Joe Ross?

Alfred: No.

Victoria: Tom Major? Joe McKenzie?

Alfred: No.

Victoria: Soloman Pritchard?

Alfred: No.

Victoria: They were all involved in the early Metis Society.

Alfred: Oh yes, no.
Victoria: Why do you think that it was that nobody had heard of the Metis Society?

Alfred: Because nobody ever told us anything about it. I'm sure people would have been interested and joined up in the Metis Society if they had known it existed. Nobody knew it existed, because everybody was glad and proud that they were Metis, and they would have been glad to belong to a society like the Metis Society.

Victoria: Do you think it was because they were too far north?

Alfred: Yeah, it was inaccessible. People couldn't get there.

Victoria: After you moved to P.A., was it different then? Was there anybody that came around talking about the Metis Society?

Alfred: No.

Victoria: How do you think things are different now from back in your parents' time? Is there some things that you think are different about their way of life?

Alfred: Oh yes, a lot of difference. In the first place the housing, houses are different, electricity, and the water, running water in the houses. And ready-made furniture which we never had, it was all made. Now over there up north it's all bought furniture. Before, even when I came here, there was hardly any. There was some iron beds, that's about all the bought furniture there was. But the rest, like chairs and that, I don't think there was any that wasn't, in the '40s.

Victoria: What kind of life, how would you class your life, Alfred, would you say it was interesting, difficult, satisfying?

Alfred: Very interesting and very satisfying, yeah. But I made a lot of mistakes that I wish I could start over again to prevent. In the first place I didn't know enough about the business. There was enough business there to be a millionaire if I had known how to go about it, if I knew what I knew now. And I'm too soft-hearted to have a person be short of something. I think all of us half-breeds are like that, poor business people because we help each other too much. I've seen people at the Salvation Army, they give their meal tickets to the ones that didn't have any -- that was their meals. They were given three for the day, you see. Well, I've seen them giving it too, or their last dollar. Yeah, they are so hospitable.

Victoria: What are some of the other things you would have changed in your life if you could go back and relive your live over again? What are some of the main things you would have changed?

Alfred: Well, it's pretty hard to tell things. They'd be too
intimate to repeat, I wouldn't want to say. I had a good wife, that's one good thing. I had a very good wife and I spoiled her. Well, I would have changed that. And I think I was too honest in believing that the other people are too honest. They took advantage of me. Like my fish that I was selling, well, I was losing on it because they were deducting too much over there. They were taking all my profit. I was being robbed of all my profit. And I didn't mark things in my book until at the end of the year and I was way short.

Victoria: You were selling to who then?

Alfred: Selling to the Clark, to Meadow Lake. You heard of Clark?

Victoria: Yeah. That was a fishing... yeah, fisheries.

Alfred: Yeah. Well you see, you have to give it. They give you the cash to pay the, to buy the fish. Any amount of cash that you want, well, they give it to you, but you have to give them the fish. So I was kind of obliged to give them the fish. Now if I had had enough money so that I could work independently and then sell the fish wherever the market was high, then I would have been better.

Victoria: They weren't fair then, they were cheating the people?

Alfred: Oh, they were cheating, yeah. They were cheating the people a lot.

Victoria: Was this...

Alfred: They were not cheating the people, they were cheating me. I was giving the right measure and the right price to the people but I didn't get the right weight from them.

Victoria: Were they an independent company or did they work for the government somehow?

Alfred: Oh no, they were independent, yeah, independent. And when I complained about it I couldn't find the... Clark said, "Well, I'm not the one that weigh your fish," he says. "Go and talk to this fellow." It was a Frenchman, I don't remember his name. I went there, to where they weigh the fish. It says, "FOR STAFF ONLY". I went in anyway and ask for the man that run the place. Well, they told me that he wasn't there. So I couldn't stay there any longer and wait for him, I had to go home because I was running a business.

Victoria: What is the most important things that mattered in your life, or people, whatever? What is the most important things about your life?

Alfred: Well, it isn't money, that's one sure thing, because I never... when I was doing a job I never thought of the money that I was earning. I was trying to do the work that I was doing as good as I could. I used to say that if he can do it,
I can do it better, and I always did better. And I didn't want to be rich. I don't know what would be, what I could say, I guess...

Victoria: What about your family?

Alfred: My family, well, I didn't stay much with my family. I didn't stay much with my family.

Victoria: How about education, were they some of the important things?

Alfred: Oh yes, yes, I would have liked to be more educated. I would have liked to go to university. But there was no way of going to university, you see. I learned telegraph by myself, and I learned accounting by going to the business course in Prince Albert and that was by myself. And I had to earn the money to go there.

Victoria: What do you think is the most important need that they have in the north, or even in any native community?

Alfred: Yeah, education. I think it's education.

Victoria: Housing?

Alfred: Well housing, they did need housing very bad. But when I went to the north last time, well, the housing was pretty well licked. I didn't see any shacks any more like there used to be. If there is any, they're not in town, they must be out some place.

Victoria: The housing in the old days up north, was it poor?

Alfred: Oh, very poor. I mean, at the time it was the same like at Batoche, or they had here at the beginning, sod houses and that. But then it was (inaudible) maybe with an upstairs. They were the stereotype, you know, with an upstairs, two rooms upstairs, and with a lean-to behind for the kitchen -- they were all the same.

Victoria: What do you think about medicine and that? Is it an important thing to have in the north?

Alfred: Oh yes, yes. I think we lost a lot of people by not having a doctor or a nurse. We lost a lot of babies and a lot of women died in giving birth, in labor. I think that's very important.

Victoria: When people got sick up there in the old days how did they bring them out, how did they get them to doctors?

Alfred: To the hospital you mean?

Victoria: Yeah, or in to a doctor or to the hospital. I imagine they would have to be pretty sick.
Alfred: Yeah. Yeah, you had to be pretty sick.

Victoria: Do you remember of any time where they had to bring them out?

Alfred: No, I don't think anybody went to the hospital from Beauval that I can remember. And with me, well, I was sick at the seminary, so the doctor came there. The doctor come there and look at me, and he said that I had T.B., and he made arrangements in here to get into the sanitorium. It was hard to get into a sanitorium because there was a long waiting list.

Victoria: How long did you have to wait?

Alfred: I didn't wait at all, they took me right away.

Victoria: They just sent you right in, eh?

Alfred: Yeah. They send me in and there was no bed in here. There was no bed, they put me in the hall.

Victoria: There was that many?

Alfred: Oh, it was full all the time, all the halls. At the end of each hall there was a bed. There was that many.

Victoria: Where were the people all from?

Alfred: It was right from around here, all white people. They didn't have no Indians, they didn't have no room for Indians, no. No half-breeds, I was the only half-breed in there.

Victoria: Well, why do you think that was?

Alfred: Well, because there were too many. They were dying. There were two or three dead every day, practically every day. It was something that had -- I don't know if it had been neglected or we didn't know, you know, when one family has it they were giving it to the others. If one had it in one family it would infect the whole household.

Victoria: Why do you think there were more whites, though, than any native pople?

Alfred: Well because they didn't go to the reserves. Even if they discovered T.B. in the reserve they had no place to send them.

Victoria: So I guess they just didn't bother.

Alfred: They were the last ones to be looked after. That's why now when there's T.B. it'll be in the reserve or in a remote area, because they looked after the white people first and the Indians the last. The last time I was here in the sanitorium in '67 it was all native from the north. There was one or two white people, the rest was all Indians. In Prince
Albert it was the same. The last few years it was open it was all Indians.

Victoria: Do you think that native people, like, in the future now as things are changing, do you think it's going to be better for them in the north or in the cities, or out in the country some place?

Alfred: Yeah, I think it will be better all over. But I think education is what is going to improve their lot, but nothing else. If it stays like the way it is now, keeping them in ignorance, we'll have trouble in this province, because the Indian population is growing and then the white population is going down. So look at the cities now. Regina, there is a big native population, and in Saskatoon is the same. So they say that in so many years from now there will be more Indians or more natives in Regina and Saskatoon than white people.

Victoria: How do you see your future? Do you think it's going to improve, or...

Alfred: No, I'm going to be the same. Well I'm old now, you know, I can't get younger. I wish I could get younger.

Victoria: Okay, thank you very much for the interview, Alfred.

Alfred: Okay.

(END OF SIDE A)

(END OF INTERVIEW)

INDEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEX TERM</th>
<th>IH NUMBER</th>
<th>DOC NAME</th>
<th>DISC #</th>
<th>PAGE #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHRISTIAN CHURCHES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Catholic</td>
<td>IH-SD.15</td>
<td>A.DUROCHER#2</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>2,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISEASE AND ILLNESS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-tuberculosis</td>
<td>IH-SD.15</td>
<td>A.DUROCHER#2</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>9,10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-self-taught</td>
<td>IH-SD.15</td>
<td>A.DUROCHER#2</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-upgrading</td>
<td>IH-SD.15</td>
<td>A.DUROCHER#2</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FISHING</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-commercial</td>
<td>IH-SD.15</td>
<td>A.DUROCHER#2</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOUSING</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-furnishings/equipment</td>
<td>IH-SD.15</td>
<td>A.DUROCHER#2</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOUSING</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-improvement of</td>
<td>IH-SD.15</td>
<td>A.DUROCHER#2</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Metis Society of Saskatchewan</td>
<td>IH-SD.15</td>
<td>A.DUROCHER#2</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>4,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLITICAL PARTIES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-CCF/NDP</td>
<td>IH-SD.15</td>
<td>A.DUROCHER#2</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>2,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLITICAL PARTIES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Liberal</td>
<td>IH-SD.15</td>
<td>A.DUROCHER#2</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>2,3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VALUES
  -sharing       IH-SD.15  A.DUROCHER#2  150  6
VALUES
  -the right way to live IH-SD.15  A.DUROCHER#2  150  6-8