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BOARD MEETING

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INTERVIEWER: DAVID STARR

INTERPRETER: DAVID STARR

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HIGHLIGHTS:

- A meeting of representatives from communities in northern Alberta, lying between the Peace and Athabasca Rivers. Discussion of their claims to mineral rights and to compensation for damage to environment by drilling crews, damage to trap lines, and removal of timber.

ISOLATED COMMUNITIES ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Held at S.L.D. Building

February 10 and 11, 1976

PRESENT

Jerry Noskiye
Archie Christien
Evelyn Carifelle
Bernard Aminayak
William Beaver
John A. Cardinal
Melvin Beaver

John P. Cardinal
Gordon Auger
Rosie Auger
Leon Carifelle
Walter Whitehead
Felix Noskiye
Sammy Richards

Ruby Faron

George Noskiye

David Starr, Interpreter

GUESTS

Lorne Larson (P.S.S)
Richard Price (T.A.R.R.)

Report from Richard Price about the Indian Association on behalf of Mr. Bob Young, lawyer for the Indian Association of Alberta.

Richard: First of all, I can give you a report from the Indian Association as a replacement for Bob Young. He sends his apologies for not being here this morning. He phoned me this morning, he's got the flu. Very sick. Bob Young is the lawyer.

Interpretation:

Richard: He and I have discussed many of the things that he was going to report to you so I can make the report on his behalf today.

Interpretation:

Richard: You will remember last October that the leaders of your communities signed a caveat in Edmonton. At the end of October, that's when we were meeting and having discussions there. That caveat went to the registrar of the land titles office in Edmonton and he referred it to the Attorney General of the province of Alberta. The Attorney General had three different options. One was to reject the caveat out of hand, the second was to allow it to be filed against all the land titles in the northern area or the third was to refer it to a judge.

So what happened, on December 15 last year acting on the advice of the Attorney General, the registrar referred the caveat to a judge. I think we can see right away by referring to the judge it shows that the province and the registrar are taking this caveat seriously.

The judge's name is Legerman and this issue came before him in December. It appears that Legerman is a sympathetic judge. First of all, he will probably be, in a way, sympathetic for at least now. I think he is on the right track as far as the court system is concerned.

What happened at the first hearing in December was that the province, the Attorney General, came with an argument saying, "Well, there are all these problems with this caveat. We don't think it should be filed, we think that the courts now should throw it out." Bob Young on the other hand said, "No, wait a minute, we think that it is a valid caveat and an important document and that it should be eventually filed," but first he recommended that there should be hearings in these communities.

Bob pointed out to the judge many of the things that you

have told him. That your concern for the developments that are happening in the north. The concerns, for example, for this road going through. He pointed this out to the judge and thinks the province is responsible as well and it's not a very

big road but Young said, "Well after all, it's going right through the communities," and he did feel it is important and the judge as well thought it was an important development and that he could quite understand how you people would be concerned about these developments and would want to be involved in any process that affected your communities.

So what the judge has decided is that he will hold hearings in your communities in the summer or the fall of this year. At those hearings it would be similar, for example, as those hearings we held in Slave Lake with the two elders. It will be with the community members, with the head men who signed the caveat, and also probably with some of the elders to get the real story of the history of your communities, your concerns. So that will be taken in the form of evidence.

Ruby Tarren: Richard, can I say something? I understand that this has taken place before the community filed, before the caveat was filed.

Richard: I think that you shouldn't underestimate the importance of these hearings. The fact that the judge has agreed to hold the hearings in your communities is very significant and underlines the point I made earlier that the whole issue is being taken quite seriously. So I think about what I've been talking about up to now is how the legal process has been unfolding after the caveat was presented to the registrar in October. That's the way the whole thing has developed so far and the way it stays now for the next six to eight months. And I think one can say the thing is coming along well.

I guess, probably Bob Young might have pointed out too in the fall, that what the caveat means is that it's pointing out to everyone that you have an interest in that land roughly between the Peace River and the Athabasca where your communities are located. Also your hunting grounds. It is pointing out to everyone that you have an interest in that land. Now, if the caveat is filed for, even now in the process the way things are looking now in these hearings, it gives you also quite a bit of help, I think, in going back to the governments and negotiating with them because the court is taking you seriously. It is clear that you don't have a previous claim. Some of the developments in Fort McMurray as I understand, for example, some of the oil companies are having difficulty with their financing. So all these things are working in your favor in relationship to your dealings with the federal government and the provincial government.

Along the lines of more negotiating with first of all the federal government, a preliminary meeting was held with the

minister of the Indian Affairs, Judd Buchanan, as I recall

early January between Harold Cardinal and Bob Young acting on your behalf. They put forward, as I recall, two or three demands. The first one was that you placed a high priority in settling the land issue. The second was that any development taking place in the area, that you people will be involved in the royalties from that development. Those royalties, thirdly, would be used in economic development and training of your people. So that was put forward to Buchanan and said, "We had understood," and what Harold understood, the chief concerns of your people. And as I understood it, around the middle of this month we'll be given his initial response to that yet, of the land.

So, I would say then that the things are proceeding well along the front of the negotiations with Buchanan and along this legal court case.

Another thing I should say is that these things will take time and it will no doubt be difficult. It won't be easy but my impression is things are going along very well and that a definite priority is given to this issue.

I know from my point of view, from the point of view from our own research group, after the meeting in October, we had contracted David Starr to go into your communities and interview the elders again. So we got clearly the understandings of the treaties. Your head men that represent it, got clearly the areas of your hunting grounds. And pleased to report that he visited all your communities except Little Buffalo and he will be going there shortly. And the interviews he has come back with are extremely good and will be very helpful in the hearings. So I think things are proceeding well. Perhaps I have done all the reporting and if anybody has questions...

Another thing I should mention is that William Beaver frequently has meetings with Harold Cardinal and so I think there is a fairly good communication that way and I'm sure that William is reporting back to you, as well, on the developments.

This is certainly a very important thing for the Association to maintain these open links of communication with you. Through William is one way, and reporting and working with you is another, and through these meetings, of course. So, if anybody has any questions....?

(Some discussion follows)

Interpreter: So, I guess they understood what is going on and just how you are preferring the procedures.

Gordon Auger: I just have a little question here, talking about those royalties. Since all kinds of companies in the

communities, about 2% of employment is taking place in the communities, so what is the procedure that could be done on it? Like, I've heard a lot of trappers say timber crews go over to their traplines and are cutting openings in their traplines. And for trapping you might as well take a tractor to the openings and make a garden out of it. So, therefore, something should be done about it.

Richard: That type of thing is very important to bring up before the judge, but before that we would like to have more extensive information about that and maybe you can channel it through David. You know, it would be very helpful for us to know the specifics of which companies are involved, which traplines, which men are involved and all that.

John Cardinal: I guess the logging that has been done in the past years in the area, cutting timber and receiving nothing out of it, and disturbing trapping and that, could be a little maddening.

Richard: That would be very important to Bob Young, your lawyer, to have this information ahead of time and that's why I'm suggesting that either through William or through David you can forward this information. So when the hearings come to your communities, Bob will have in his mind these things that are happening and he'll be able to ask you the right questions, and so he can give the right story to the judge.

The other thing that occurred to me is that if you get this information to Bob Young, about these things that are happening, perhaps involving private companies, there might be a possibility of legal action before that time. And I myself don't feel in a position to advise you right now but that would be important to get that information to Bob.

William Beaver: I've got some maps here that Bob thinks are being planned already. I've got several maps here and there. But what I'm interested in is that people should have the first chance for the recreation resort, a chance to pick their resort area where they want to set up for sports and other recreations.

Felix Noskiye: It is true, we should make a report for him because like us, our traplines are all broken up where we trap. There are two things that are broken up, trapping and the lumber that's been taken out where we trap and nothing left but a clearing.

You see, the government is taking away all the ways of the Indians of making a living and then they turn around and ask them, "How come you want to live on welfare?" They're taking away all the resources from them.

Mr. Larsen: I am sure this is a matter of why we have to give a documentation in and the lawyer works on, but I suppose the whole thing is strengthened by the fact that in McMurray area, which is where everything in Alberta starts, is becoming to have difficulties.

Felix Noskiye: There is also one very important thing is the way they leave their oil outfits behind that has been through there. The stuff that hasn't been buried right and spreads around all over the bush. The fact is that many of the horses are poisoned in campsites and that it probably is poisoning the moose too. It does come up, you know, that this is something they figure they have a right to be compensated for. They're not only affected in their trapping but what it is doing to the environment.

Ruby Tarren: I would like to add something to that, David. I think some of those complaints have already gotten to the government people because the regulations this year are quite changed. When an oil site is cleaned up after they're finished, it is to be brought back as close to nature as possible. Some sites are completely cleaned. Not even one tin can can be left laying around the scene of the drilling site. The regulations are real, real strict this year.

Richard: One thing I really want stressed is that on your, you know, I talked about documenting those things. When you are doing that it would be very helpful if you had a map and showed exactly where those things happened. If you know who was involved in terms of the oil companies or (?) and then on the other hand, who on your communities were affected by it, who lost their traplines.

The way these things work is the more specific, the more direct, the more concrete information you can give us on those lines on the map. Who was involved on the other side and on your side. Those are the two things that would be very helpful.

David Starr: The gentleman here from Trout Lake said that there is something that they couldn't understand and he had spent most of his life in the bush and hadn't quite seen that kind of result but the animals he killed from last winter on to this winter, that the wolves and the coyotes are just losing their fur and practically running around bare naked. So, who knows, it could be that it is the result from that.

(Discussion follows on where the disease could have come from. Someone said it was a disease called mange and over-population. Some thought it resulted from the garbage left by the oil companies or other companies.)

David Starr: It is very hard to say, because these outfits are pouring everything all over the bushes when they put up their power lines to wire up their rigs and now most of them are running on power. All that stuff that's been poured around the power lines, anything could have affected these animals. This is of concern to them.

Richard: One of the thoughts that I have had is that when you have these documents together, when you document what has happened in relation to these developments, I really think the best thing is, the way we have discussed here, is for you to take it directly to William and discuss it with William and give him the full particulars and give him the documents of what has happened and I think, William, it would be a good thing if you could be personally involved on these things and take these concerns to Bob and say, "Look, here's what happened in Trout Lake. They have these problems," like say, lumbering and other cases. This is the best way of channelling your concerns and I am sure Bob will know how to deal with them. Like I said, either at the hearings or perhaps before that.

Ruby Tarren: Talking about the people receiving royalties or

compensations for the natural resources that are going out, I have heard on the radio that Alberta is getting about \$132 million for gas and oil sold out of the province of Ontario and that's a lot of money. Like, couldn't the people living in those areas where the gas and oil is coming out benefit from some of that money?

Richard: This is partly of what the claim is all about is to get access to those royalties.

I have taken notes of some of your concerns and I'll let some of the people, especially from the Indian Association, know about our meeting today and I'll let Bob know, too.

Respectfully Submitted
Miss Frances Starr
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