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NORTH BATTLEFORD, SK
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INTERPRETER:
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BELOW.

Herbert: ...he was a one-legged man. He had, he had an
accident and he hurt his back and his leg at the same time. He
cracked the bone and the marrow decayed and they had to cut his
leg off. It bent; it dried up; it went crooked. But there was
a man by the name of Reuben Lloyd, he wanted to dock Henry. My
mother wouldn't let him cut off Henry (inaudible). Finally
they were working for that Reuben Lloyd. They was making
stones and breaking land. And he went to the expense on his
own and he cut Henry's leg off. They took him to the hospital
there in Davidson and he got the doctor to cut his leg off, and
he paid for it himself. He used to take Henry around all over,
drive him around. He had a car at that time, an old Model T
Ford (inudible).

Victoria: Was Henry able to walk after that?

Herbert: Yeah, he walked on a crutch. He had, he used one
crutch. And he got around wonderful. That man worked, he done
all kinds of work, he sheared sheep, he picked stones, he
logged, cut willow pickets, he done all kinds of work. Wood,

he hauled lots of wood.

Victoria: So all in all he took care of him, eh?

Herbert: Yeah, he used to ride broncs. Yes, he used to ride broncs, and he used to get a silver collection to ride broncs, that one-legged man.

Victoria: Is that right eh. What did you enjoy most about going to school there?

Herbert: Well, mostly was the priest was very fine and the teacher was good. I never had any trouble with the priest. He used to come and take me and we used to have big picnics, too, in the spring. We walk, oh, maybe ten miles (inaudible), a truck would come and they used to have, oh, a real feast, lots of steak and we barbeque steak, anyway you want to eat it cook it yourself. But there was salads supplied and everything, bread, butter, and pie and cakes. The teachers would bring all that stuff.

Victoria: Was there white kids going to school there, too?

Herbert: Oh yes, there was a lot of white kids. There was some other Metis kids, too, and... but mostly Crow Indians.

Victoria: How did the white students treat you?

Herbert: Well it looked like to me, of course I was awful young, but I didn't see any trouble. I seen the odd fight but the teacher always seemed to be around and he'd break it up real quick. But we... other than that I don't think we had any problems.

Victoria: So what do you think about your overall experience at school? Did you think it was good or...

Herbert: Well, I thought it was really good. I was... I really liked school, and the little I did go I enjoyed it really good.

Victoria: Did they teach you about any Metis or Indian history when you went to school?

Herbert: No, no, as I said, it was straight English classes, and well, like I said, you had to go to mass every morning and some on Sunday. They had high mass and we'd go to church then. Every morning, we went to communion and then after communion we go have breakfast. And then we'd, if we had some time we'd sweep the hall, like, it was a big gym there. You see, there was two of us that done that, we'd sweep and brush (inaudible) hall. And then we... nine o'clock the bell would ring and we'd go to school.

Victoria: Now, getting down into politics here, do you remember if your parents voted?

Herbert: Oh yes.

Victoria: What... do you remember what party they voted for?

Herbert: Oh, I don't know. I don't know.

Victoria: Were they involved in any...

Herbert: But mostly what I can remember they were Liberals.

Victoria: Liberals. Do you know if they ever got involved in any type of party politics?

Herbert: No. No they never did.

Victoria: What do you think influenced them to vote the way they did, you know, for the party that they did?

Herbert: Well, I don't know actually, but the people came there, as far back as I can remember most of the Metis was Liberals. Honestly, I think at that time they were influenced by Louis Riel.

Victoria: Did the politicians ever come around and visit your home, you know, your parents' home?

Herbert: Yes.

Victoria: Do you remember what they talked about?

Herbert: Well, well several there, they would, well the, the first time I can remember there were these politicians around, was when the CCF tried to get in. There was several of them. They had called meetings at the school and sometimes they came around and visited the places. That was Coldwell was the first guy that I remember seeing him at a school house. They had a meeting there.

Victoria: But what did he talk about mostly?

Herbert: Oh mostly farm and improving the farms, and finding jobs for people, and trying to educate the people.

Victoria: And do you know if your church was ever involved in politics?

Herbert: Not that I know of.

Victoria: What did most of the Metis people in the community where you lived, what did they think about politics?

Herbert: Well, boy, I really couldn't say.

Victoria: They didn't talk about it in any way?

Herbert: Very little if I can remember right. They would just come and go and vote and that's all as far as I know. I didn't know that much about politics.

Victoria: What about your voting over the years? What was it like? Did you stay with the same party or did you switch?

Herbert: No, I voted... the last time I voted was, was NDP. That was the one. I voted Liberal before.

Victoria: What changed you, what made you change your mind?

Herbert: Well, I'll tell you, why I changed mostly was the Conservative government. It looked like to me at that time, I don't know whether it caused it that time, that was when R.B. Bennett got in power in the federal government and that's when the hungry '30s (?) really got in fast. Hard times really got bad that time. And so the next year, the next four years it was Conservative government. That's R. B. Bennett was prime minister at that time, but the next session, well, they all went Liberal. So I went Liberal and I voted for the NDP couple 'a times. I thought they were not too bad.

Victoria: Did you really get active in party politics, you know, or elections of any kind? Did you campaign for any certain candidate?

Herbert: No, nothing. No, I never done it.

Victoria: Do you know of any friends that ever did?

Herbert: No.

Victoria: Do you think that the Metis people voted for the party, like, that promised them the best things?

Herbert: Well, it's possible. I wouldn't know that.

Victoria: They didn't really discuss it?

Herbert: No, no.

Victoria: Were you ever involved in the old Saskatchewan Metis Society. That would be some years ago?

Herbert: Yeah. Well, I wasn't one of the first ones.

Victoria: What year was that in?

Herbert: 1935.

Victoria: Where were you living at the time?

Herbert: Well, I was living at Balgennie.

Victoria: Who did you get involved with? I mean, who did you...

Herbert: Well, old Sol Pritchard, you see.

Victoria: How did he get you involved with the Metis Society?

Herbert: Well actually there was a fellow came -- he was a blind fellow, Joe Ross was his name -- so he came and... but Sol had gone to Regina and they had a couple of meetings and he made quite a little speech. I can't remember all there was but there was a picture on about him and then Joe Ross came. That was in '36 then. And we set up a board and old Sol was the president. And then we start to have dances and stuff, rake up money and we went to Regina. I didn't go at that time. My brother Sam went, Frank Cameron, Beauchesne, and Sol, Sol Pritchard, and they went to the government and they, I think that time they got \$7,000.

Victoria: They... they... what... where did they get the money from?

Herbert: Well, it was from the provincial government. They were supposed to dig up their rights from the federal government, what rights they had they were going to find out. But it didn't last very long. When the war broke out we kind of split up.

Victoria: This... this money that they gave them, was that to do a survey on themselves to find out...

Herbert: Yeah, research actually, see. But when the war broke out I don't know what become of all that money, but there was a couple of lawyers hired, Noonan and Hodgins, and the money went but there was nothing ever done. They spent all that money.

Victoria: The lawyers?

Herbert: Yeah, the lawyers and whoever was at the head of that society in Saskatoon.

Victoria: Where would these people be from?

Herbert: Well LaRocque had something to do with it and there was several different guys, Tommy Major and Mike Vandale, and they were provincial -- Mike was provincial president at that time. But like I said, when the war broke out everybody joined the army and we left off there, see.

Victoria: This, this Soloman Pritchard was he... when you said you formed the Metis Society then when this Joe Ross came down -- was it Joe Ross, the guy that was blind?

Herbert: Yeah.

Victoria: When he came down was that a local that you formed then?

Herbert: Yes, they called it a branch that time. There were several branches: St. Louis had one, Regina, several different places, and they used to call that Willowfield branch. That used to be our post office.

Victoria: And did you have regular local meetings?

Herbert: Yes.

Victoria: While everyone was still home.

Herbert: Yeah.

Victoria: About how many was in the local at that time?

Herbert: Oh, there was a big bunch. There was lots of people.

Victoria: What did they talk about at the meetings?

Herbert: Well, they discussed their problems mostly and try to better themselves all the way through, their livelihood.

Victoria: What were some of the problems that they had in the area at that time?

Herbert: Problems was unemployment, was the biggest thing. It was all... actually nothing but hard labour. They were trying to better themselves by teaching their younger people to go to school so they could better themselves, get better jobs. And that's what we were aimin' for most of the time, see. It was too late for me but the younger people, some of the them got educated, but it didn't seem like anybody ever got a real good job out of it.

Victoria: In this Willowfield branch there, was that a Metis settlement or...?

Herbert: Yes. Yeah, it was a settlement.

Victoria: Approximately how many Metis families?

Herbert: Oh there was a quite a few. There was all the Amyottes, and the Pritchards, there was Ouellettes and, well, Landries -- there was three, four different Landries, Jim, Henry, Sam, and myself -- and Parker. There was Parker, Fred, what was his name, George Parker, and Humphreville

Victoria: What Humphreville was that?

Herbert: What was his name? Bill? Harry? George, George Humphreville, he was there.

Victoria: There was quite a few of them that went to the meetings, eh?

Herbert: Yes, it was always... there was always a full house. We had a board set up. See, I was on the board, my brother Sam, Frank Cameron, Jim Beauchesne, and George Pritchard, Pat Pritchard.

Victoria: You had any kind of...? Did you raise funds? How did you raise funds for your...?

Herbert: Yeah, we raisin' funds by havin' dances, and pie socials, and cakes everything.

Victoria: What did you do with your money?

Herbert: Well, that was to be used when we had to go to visit Regina or Saskatoon.

Victoria: Oh, so it was more or less just for travelling and stuff.

Herbert: Yeah, travelling expenses. It was small money at that time.

Victoria: Had you ever in those days went to a convention?

Herbert: I don't think I done it myself. I went to Saskatoon to the meetings but there was... that's the time I think in Saskatoon they set up the provincial group with Tommy Major and...

Victoria: That probably was the convention then. You attended that one did you?

Herbert: Yeah, I did. There was a Klein and old J. Z. LaRocque, and Tommy Major, Mike Vandale. Oh, there was an O'Conner, I think, was one guy's name. He was on the board. There were several there then..

Victoria: Had you seen many of the people from the north attending that?

Herbert: No, there was nobody there. The only branch we had was St. Louis.

Victoria: That's the furthest north that they came from?

Herbert: Yeah, yeah.

Victoria: What about the south and the east were there very any branches?

Herbert: Yes, there was quite a few bunches of branches, but I didn't know them all at that time.

Victoria: Was, was this Metis scrip ever discussed at these meetings?

Herbert: Oh yes, they wre discussed quite frequently.

Victoria: What did they say about them? What was the talk about them?

Herbert: Well, as far as I can remember, well, we had a meeting at Rikson, that's close to Big River. We set up a board there after I moved to BIG River. And there was one guy by the name of Isbister. He brought up the question. He said

we'd have to find out if there was, if that was a true settlement, a complete settlement, when there was scrips made. Well, I had got a scrip. My mother never got one. She couldn't get a witness, see.

Victoria: What was this scrip about, what was...

Herbert: That was a money scrip or land scrip. They had to... they got 240 acres of land or \$240 cash. But that time living, they say, was so easy -- it was nothing to make a living -- and lots of them sold for nothing.

Victoria: So your mother didn't get a scrip?

Herbert: She never got a scrip.

Victoria: What did she have to prove?

Herbert: Well, she couldn't get a witness. She was... the witness they had, he had been telling lies and they wouldn't let him witness anymore, because they found out they weren't 16 years old. He had witnessed two or three witnesses that they weren't of age to get that scrip. So when they had that scrip in Maple Creek at that time she couldn't get it because they couldn't find a witness.

Victoria: Did you have to be Metis to get this scrip?

Herbert: Yes. Yeah, but there were scrips for Mounted Police, I think, and Boer War veterans, they got scrip.

Victoria: Now your dad, what type of a scrip did he get?

Herbert: He took a land scrip.

Victoria: A land scrip. So he got money then instead of... land instead of money.

Herbert: Yeah, but he eventually sold it.

Victoria: Where did he get this land at?

Herbert: At Cypress Hills.

Victoria: Cypress Hills. He got the 240 acres, was that...?

Herbert: Yeah. Well, they... my auntie got 240 acres, my granddad got 240 acres.

Victoria: That would be your dad's sister and his father?

Herbert: Yeah. And my dad got 240 acres.

Victoria: How old did you have to be before you could apply for this scrip?

Herbert: You had to be 16 (inaudible).

Victoria: What was more important then..., what did the people take mostly, did they take the land or did they take the money?

Herbert: Mostly they took money, quite a few of them.

Victoria: Money. So then... in other words then, they sort of... they sold... they bought them off with a scrip?

Herbert: Yeah.

Victoria: And they sold maybe, maybe sold their rights by accepting the scrip instead of land. This was government scrip, eh?

Herbert: Yeah. Yeah that was...

Victoria: So do you think it was easier for the government to give them money instead of giving them the land?

Herbert: Oh yes. There was speculators all over the country, they said, but I wasn't around there that time.

Victoria: Did they go into the houses or families and try to talk them into taking money?

Herbert: Oh yes, tried. They done their dirty best as far as I could remember. My dad said that they didn't want to take money. But when Charlie Trottier came from Montana he was pretty well off. He had quite a bit of money and he had lots of horses. "Oh," they said, "that Round Prairie, we'll settle in Round Prairie." So they had that land there at Round Prairie, see, but they were bought off too, as far as I can remember. The Frenchmen told them, "Well, we'll give you work, all kinds of work." So they settled in the sand hills and they starved out of that country.

Victoria: So they gave them worthless land?

Herbert: Worthless land, yeah. My dad homesteaded there for the second time. He got two, twice he homesteaded. The first time he moved, he homesteaded, was eleven miles out of Hanley, west of Hanley, and we went to the States that time. When he come back there was a farmer sitting on his land. They had made a mistake. And when he filed on his homestead -- he had a house and a barn and everything already, but he went to the States to pick up horses. So when he came back there was a farmer on there. Well he was, he was going to kick him out but that man had the land already.

Victoria: Title?

Herbert: He had everything. But he had... they went... my dad told him that that was his land, he had no rights to it. But the guy had the papers. He had the same rights as my dad had.

Victoria: So what...

Herbert: So what happened they went to Moose Jaw to the Land Office. My dad had them papers; he had his title, so, well, that farmer decided he'd buy my dad's farm. So he bought it... he sold it with the agreement with the Land Office that my dad could homestead again.

Victoria: You mean they were only entitled to one homestead?

Herbert: One homestead, yeah.

Victoria: How did they, did they pay money for this homestead or did you just go and...

Herbert: You paid \$10 and...

Victoria: And how much land did you get?

Herbert: A hundred and sixty acres. Yeah that's a quarter, they call it, see...

Victoria: Was just the man allowed that or was the woman, or the wife?

Herbert: The wife could allow it at one time, but later on I don't think they allowed it. It was only one person could homestead. A single woman, I think the way it worked, she was 18 years old she could file on a homestead, you see. But when... that's when my dad got a second homestead, in 1924.

Victoria: So he made a deal that he would...

Herbert: Yeah, he sold his land. That farmer paid him cash and he didn't want... like, he wanted the place. So when they had that mistake they agreed that, if my dad sold his land to the other fellow, he'd get a second chance for a homestead. That's when my dad homesteaded at Simpson. He got that 160 acres. He built the house and barn. We had quite a few cattle. He sold a lot of horses and bought cattle.

Victoria: So scrip and homesteading wasn't the same type of thing?

Herbert: No. It was a different thing all together. He sold... he could sell that scrip so my uncle Charlie, when he was just a kid, they were after... there was some fellows, they were after that land. So when old Charlie Trottier talked them into it to move to Round Prairie, see that's close to Dundurn, well, by gosh, they sold it. My dad sold his scrip and my grandfather and my auntie, they sold all that land and they moved. Well then they lived in them damn sand hills...

Victoria: At Round Prairie. How long did they live there, or how long did you...? You were with them at that time?

Herbert: No, I was not. See, I didn't remember anything except going to school -- and that was before my times. And going to school and comin' back and then we never went back to

Montana except to visit.

Victoria: In Round Prairie, was that a Metis settlement there too?

Herbert: Yes, it was a big settlement.

Victoria: Did they come from all over to Round Prairie? Was there people that came from the States?

Herbert: Yes, there was lots of them. There was lots of Trottiers, and my granddad homesteaded in here, he stayed there too, my uncle George and old Bill Trottier, Frank Trottier, John Trottier and Belcourts, and Kearns. There was lots of people there.

Victoria: So then they... Whatever happened to Round Prairie then?

Herbert: Well, it was... it was made into a community pasture. And when my uncle George got some land, they give him land at Brooks -- Rolling Hills, it's not very from Brooks. He got land, raw prairie in there. It was good land, real good land. He made a go of it; he done all right there.

Victoria: So they sort of all moved from Round Prairie then. Where did they move to after they left there?

Herbert: Well most of them moved to Saskatoon except Alex Short.

Victoria: And they would have sold their scrip then?

Herbert: Yeah. That wasn't a scrip, that was homestead. They bought... the government bought 'em out to make a community pasture, see. And Belcourts, they moved to Saskatoon. Alex Short, he stuck for a long time. He wasn't going to give up, but they finally gave him land, better land than he had in the hills. So he was one guy that stayed.

Victoria: Is he still there to this day?

Herbert: Yeah. And my brother-in-law Mac Short, he came... he homesteaded close to Renown. No, he didn't homestead, he bought. He couldn't homestead at that time, there was no more homestead. But he bought land and he farmed for years.

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

Victoria: These people then they were just sort of pushed off their lands I suppose you would say, eh?

Herbert: Well, it looked like it, see, but according to the

scrips there was a few of them like Armand Tours, and Berlins, well, they stuck with their scrips and their land. Well, they're all dead and gone now but the old... some of them I knew, a few, and they were old, and Sinclairs, old Babe Sinclair was one of the older guys that stuck with his land at Maple Creek. He stayed there all his life. And old man Gunn, he was another one that stuck.

Victoria: So you think that when the Metis people moved to Saskatoon, do you think life got better for them or do you think...?

Herbert: Yes I think it is a little better. But it was... it turned out... he didn't get... it got actually worse for a short period because...

Victoria: In what way?

Herbert: Well, I'll tell you. They weren't accustomed to living in a city, and the hard times come they had a hell of a time to make ends meet. They had to go to welfare -- they called it relief them days -- and they were having lots of problems. In fact, my uncle Charlie was one. He never asked for welfare, or relief, but we were... I stayed with him one winter. We were haulin' wood and sellin' wood all around town. We made a real good livin', we didn't make any money but we made a real good livin'. We had a little spending money to go to dances or picture shows or stuff, play pool. And finally they cut us off. They wouldn't let us sell wood unless we had a license and start a wood yard.

Victoria: What kind of a license were you supposed to have?

Herbert: Well, you had to have a license to deliver wood because there was licensed dealers and they were bucking when we didn't have a license. They shut us off unless we had. We had to have a certain size of a yard and we had to have coal, we couldn't sell only straight wood, so... And we had to deliver that stuff all over town, see, so they shut us off. And my uncle went to the welfare, he had one hell of a time. The police and everybody, the Inspector Mellon -- he used to be... he got to be the Chief of Police -- he had to come. When he went to welfare they were goin' to send him back to Simpson, because they figured he didn't belong in Saskatoon but he was livin'... you had to live, you be independent for at least one year before you could get help. So he was. For over two years he lived there before he... They didn't even know he left Simpson to come to Saskatoon. He was on his own, he was selling wood, plowing gardens and doing all kinds of work.

Victoria: So you had to be self-supporting for a year before you could go to the city to get any help from, like, relief or welfare?

Herbert: Yeah, you were from a different district, you see. That wasn't too far... wasn't too long ago they send one guy from Sundre. They moved him back to Saskatoon but he got his

old age pension in that time and he moved to Calgary. Yeah, they had to send him back.

Victoria: Do you know if that happened to very many of the native people in Saskatoon?

Herbert: Well, I couldn't say. I asked, actually the only one experience I had.

Victoria: So how would you class your life? Would you say it was interesting, satisfying?

Herbert: Well, I didn't know any better. To tell you the truth, I was always happy and always satisfied. Because I never had any money, I never had anything to worry about. I never worried about anything until now. And prices of stuff going so high, every damn thing it cost you, every time you turn around it's got to be money, see. And you depending on a pension, you have a heck of a time.

Victoria: How long has it been since you've worked now?

Herbert: Well, I've been working all the time, part jobs. (inaudible--both talking)

Victoria: Oh you're still working. What are you doing now?

Herbert: Well, I'm skinning coyotes and handling fur -- beavers and stuff. Soon as I get (inaudible) my boss phones me. Any time he gets a few coyotes, or a few beavers I go and skin them, stretch them.

Victoria: Who's your boss?

Herbert: Bill Higgs.

Victoria: When was your last steady employment?

Herbert: Well that last steady employment was at the Friendship Centre.

Victoria: That was how long, did you say?

Herbert: Yeah, I stayed there for 13 years.

Victoria: What, what was your job there, what did you do there?

Herbert: Well I was a janitor and I done quite a bit of carpenter work. I made lots of tables, I fixed up the chairs, and windows, broken windows, That was my job, I'd fix it.

Victoria: And what did you say about your life? Did you figure it was interesting?

Herbert: Yes, it was really good. To tell you the truth I seen the hard times but I never was hungry.

Victoria: You would say then your life, your own life, was far better than what your parents', your mother's or your father's was?

Herbert: I think so, yeah.

Victoria: How... what... why would you say it was better?

Herbert: Well, they didn't have the hardship I went through, they went through. They didn't have to travel... well, they went to Sheridan, Wyoming, as far as Sheridan, Wyoming, to pick up horses. They were travelling with a team in the mud, in the rain, in hail storms and they lived in tents. I lived in tents lots of time, but when I was working out I always had a house to live in when I was around North Battleford or Saskatoon. But when they travelled 1,000 miles with horses, just think that there weren't any highways, just trails, mud, every damn thing. They had lots of problems. Now we can use cars and we... Well, the life is a lot better.

Victoria: Totally different, you think, than what theirs was?

Herbert: Yeah. You know, I don't have any money. I haven't got any money in the bank but I get by. I'm never hungry; I always have lots of food.

Victoria: What are some of the things that you think are some of the most important things in your life, or that's happened in your life? Just some of the things that are outstanding, that come to mind when... you know, that you could say was of great importance to you.

Herbert: Getting married. Was one thing.

Victoria: What... what... how in getting married? How do you mean, in getting married?

Herbert: Well, I thought now, I had a wonderful wife and if you made a good living we was always... never hungry and we were always happy. We didn't fight. We had no trouble. And we raised a family, and they were all healthy kids. So that was the most important thing in my life, was getting married and raising a family and all healthy kids.

Victoria: Is there some other things that you can think of?

Herbert: Yes, there was lots of other things such as going on a trip. See, when we had a few bucks we'd spend money. We'd go fishing, and we'd go visiting, we got to B.C., and quite a few things. She never seen the mountains in her life. Well, I went there, see. Well, we had lots of good times; we picked fruit, and done all kinds of things.

Victoria: What about education? Do you wish that you would have had more education?

Herbert: Oh yes! Oh, I hope, I hope! You know there's a lot

of things I could tell you. It would be hard for me to tell you, but in my own mind, if I'd have had education I could have done a lot better for myself.

Victoria: How do you think it would have changed your life?

Herbert: But I'll tell you, when I was working at Ehrle's, I knew more about seed than the foreman does and he was getting \$50 a week when I got \$24.95, see, and I done all his dirty work and he didn't know a damn thing about seed that I knew, you see.

Victoria: So you figure if you would have had more education...

Herbert: Yeah, if I could have done the writing, write, figure out the books -- that's all he done, see -- if I could have done all that I could, I could have got better wages, see.

Victoria: You would have had higher positions.

Herbert: Yes, I could have made, I could have maybe saved a little money. I could have made a nice little place for all concerned.

Victoria: Built a house and...

Herbert: Yeah, better house. I bought an old house, a four room, but it was a poor house but that's all I had.

Victoria: What, what do you think is the, like our native communities to this day, what do you think are their biggest problems? Say, take for instance in North Battleford here, you know, you have a great majority of the people here are native people, what are some of their biggest problems that they have?

Herbert: Alcohol.

Victoria: What do you think should be done about it, could be done about it?

Herbert: Well, I think it's pretty hard to do, but... because they don't care, especially the younger people. I used to drink, I drank quite a bit but I quit. I learned to quit, you see. I'm still smoking. I should have quit that too, but you can't quit everything. But someday or another I don't... since I quit drinking I can see the ignorant part of it, the drunkards, I see them, and if I could do something I'd sure do my utmost to stop them.

Victoria: What do you think some of their greatest needs are? What are some of the things that they need the most?

Herbert: Well, jobs. Jobs is one of the most important things, you see.

Victoria: Is there anything else that would, if they had it would help them solve the problems?

Herbert: Yes, education, schooling is the biggest thing. They go to school but they don't go long enough until they finish, you see, that was a problem.

Victoria: How could we go about, you know, bettering these things?

Herbert: What... That beats me. But they got classes, they got some of them, but they don't stick with it. I seen, when I was working at the Friendship Centre, well, there was 14 or 15 of them taking different kind of classes but they never followed up, they never followed up. There was cooking classes, there was sewing classes -- nobody ever followed them up. You see, I think they would have done that they would have had a job for the winter. Nobody stuck with it. I didn't see one cook, I didn't see anybody sewing today. They're starting now again at the Friendship Centre. They're doing a little sewing, different things.

Victoria: Do you think your life would have been different if you would have been maybe Treaty Indian or a white person?

Herbert: Yeah, I think maybe... Well, I don't know. If I would have been born a Treaty, I would have been maybe the same as the rest. I don't know what I'd have done. But if I was Treaty now, even 20 years ago, if I could have been a Treaty, I'd sure as hell could have bettered myself a lot.

Victoria: How?

Herbert: Well, there's, look at all that land that they got around the reserves. Very, very few of them is using, making any use of it, very few, you see. There's lot of good land that could be broke up and farming and... But lots of them, there's a lot... I went to the one reserve, I wouldn't like to name the place, but I seen it. Last summer I went to the powwow and I looked at 20 houses was one time was some beautiful houses that are totally wrecked. There's nobody even living there.

Victoria: So they have no regards for what they've been given?

Herbert: No, that's what I say, that if I would have been Treaty all my life I would have, maybe, done the same thing, maybe worse, I don't know, or better. I could have been better. And there's lots of them that's better; they're in damn good shape. But if I would have had treaty 20 years ago I could have done a hell of a lot better, I could have... because I love farming, I love gardening. I don't see anybody growing gardens even.

Victoria: If you could have been born to something else, you know, than what you are, which would you have chosen?

Herbert: Well, I don't know. I think I would have been right there the same as I am, a Metis, up until the last few years

when I could see the end vanish. The Treaties had no tax to pay, no nothing, while if I could have been a Treaty, if I'd have known 30 years ago or 20 years ago if I could have got in as a Treaty... Well, there's lots of other things. I've made thousands of mistakes myself, I'm not saying I was perfect. All I ever thought... I thought of only one thing actually was food and clothing. When I made money working, picking stones or shearing sheep, I thought, I'll always have good food, clothing for the children so they don't get cold. So I was never interested in trying to get rich. I never thought of saving up or anything. I thought the main thing was healthy children and...

Victoria: What do you see in the future for yourself?

Herbert: Nothing.

Victoria: You don't think it's going to get any better?

Herbert: There's nothing my age, 70 years old, awful close to 70. There's no future for me. But I'm still happy.

Victoria: What if you won a sweepstake?

Herbert: Oh, I don't know what I'd do. I might drop dead. Oh, I won \$400 the other day, but I was pretty happy about that, see. I owed a little bill so I was happy to pay it. I paid it right away. I went today and I went and paid off my store bill, one hundred and some odd dollars. I owed \$50 at the Friendship Centre. When I didn't have money to buy a license for my truck, so they loaned me \$150. I was short \$150 to buy a license, they loaned me some. And the other day I made a little money skinning. I had \$100 saved up so I gave \$100 and when I won that \$400 I paid off the other \$50. And I went to the store and I paid \$100 almost, a few pennies short of \$100.

Victoria: What do you think it's going to be like in this city here, in North Battleford in the future? How is it... do you figure things are going to get better for Metis people or native people?

Herbert: No, I don't think it's going to get better. I think it's gettin'... it's worse for me anyway because the food bill is getting awful high, the gas, the lights everything is getting higher and it's hard to, when you only got a fixed income, make ends meet, see.

Victoria: What do you see for your children and your grandchildren in the future?

Herbert: Well I don't know, I hate to think of it.

Victoria: It won't get any better? Do you think it's going to be better for...

Herbert: I think of things like wars, having a war. That's what I think of lots of times, I don't sleep good. I worry

about that. I got seven boys and some of them got families. I'd hate to see them have to face that. See, I had two brothers in the war and boy, my brother Sam and my brother Pete, he was the second oldest boy. The other one died. He was in the army, but he took sick in Regina and died. And the other one got gassed and shell shocked and, oh, he was in rough shape, he developed T.B. from cold and wet and miserable. And my other brother Sam said he was stuffed. He was 23 months in the front lines, so...

Victoria: Do you think that native people are going to be better off in the country, or in the north, or in the cities?

Herbert: No, I can't see it. I can't see it, because there's no jobs in the north now. The few odd ones that... but I can't... There's so many other things that they lived on years ago that's not there now, see.

Victoria: Such as...

Herbert: Such as trapping, and hunting, the prices goin' bad on furs. There's lots of people not even trapping, see. And they used to be small little logging camps. You could take out timber and make a few bucks, saw your own timber and there's nothing. It's all government controlled now. You can't (inaudible), see.

Victoria: So you figure there won't be nothing left up there soon, eh?

Herbert: No, no, I can't see it. I don't see how they make a livin' at all. Of course, I don't know the ways of the far north but where we lived in Big River I was workin' like a white man the way... mill work, and loggin', and that's all.

Victoria: Yeah, and there was probably classified as the northern communities then?

Herbert: Yeah, yeah. That was it, yeah. It was all... it was jobs, not big-paying jobs but we made a living out of it.

Victoria: So you figure that your security for the future is just nil, nothing?

Herbert: Yes, there's nothing, there's nothing. There's no... if I didn't do odd jobs I'd be damn hard up, I'm tellin' you.

Victoria: And you're living on a social security pension?

Herbert: Yeah. See, we get about \$800 a month, a little better with my Canada pension, but figure out: I'm paying \$325 rent, see; as high as \$180 for power and water, telephone, cable. Well, I got nothing left.

Victoria: What do you think? They should raise the old age pension?

Herbert: Pardon?

Victoria: I said, do you think they should raise the old age pension?

Herbert: Well, if they raise it the prices would go up. They're talking about raising it \$25 a month. I just heard six percent they're raisin' on the food and 14 percent on clothing. Well, we'll be in the same boat.

Victoria: Same boat, eh?

Herbert: Yeah.

Victoria: Okay. Thank you very much, Bert, for the interview.

(END OF SIDE B)

(END OF TAPE)