

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: CHARLIE BLACKMAN
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: COLD LAKE RESERVE
ALBERTA
INTERVIEW LOCATION: COLD LAKE RESERVE
ALBERTA
TRIBE/NATION: CHIPEWYAN
LANGUAGE: CREE
DATE OF INTERVIEW: MAY 14, 1974
INTERVIEWER: LOUIS RAIN
INTERPRETER: LOUIS RAIN
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Charlie Blackman, aged 68, describes his understanding of Treaty #6.

My name is Louis Rain and I'm interviewing Charlie Blackman from Cold Lake, Alberta.

Louie: Okay, first you state your name, age, and place you're from.

Charlie: My name is Charlie Blackman and I'm from Cold Lake. I'm 68 years old. Of what has been said, I will elaborate some things too, regarding the first signing of the treaty (6). I have heard in many places that I have been, and I've heard a lot the time the elders assembled at Duck Lake, Sask. Elders were called up from many parts of the country. The expression the elders gave then was the same as to what we have been saying. And they could not have lied, especially that many people in assembly. Of all the leaders that had spoken have stressed the same facts as it is. When the first signing of the treaty, the Queen's representative, not herself. She had sent her government official to come and negotiate on her behalf. They had said, "We've been sent by Her Majesty to come and negotiate. What the Queen had said will be said here. We didn't come here to buy everything from you (Indians). What we want is land. Six inches deep, trees, and grass. That's all we came to buy from you. Anything that you lived from will still be yours. These all belong to you. We're not

concerned about these. And never mentioned any minerals that are under the ground to have bought those. These will all be yours." And the lakes too, he never mentioned if he wanted those too. And the mountains. It is never known if he had bought them. And we own these mountains yet. We have to consider that we still own them. We own all this land yet. And we still do. And anything that is under the ground, oil, and all the minerals, we should be asked first if they're going to drill for oil.

But we're not being considered of those things. They just went ahead. And we've never been considered that we should be part owners of everything. And he had promised that as long as the sun shines and the rivers flow, these agreements will never be broken. If you select a good chief, of all the good things I have given you, if the chief is no good, then I did harm to you. This is what he had said. And today it looks as though he was right. Everything that we lived from, we shouldn't be pressured from there. We should be asked first, about our livelihood. We too should be considered. We were told we couldn't sell meat. That was to be our own use. But today the white man sells the meat, and sells them alive too. He sells fishing permits in the fall he sells hunting licenses to hunt and from this concept he has sold the game animals alive also. And yet we're not allowed to do that. So, as far as I'm concerned, I'm deadly against that. It doesn't matter what

consequences I encounter. Even if I have to go to jail, I'll go to jail if I'm caught killing game animals for my survival. Simply I still believe I have the rights to hunt anywhere, even if I have to go to jail for it. When I'm released I can do it all over again because I'll still think I have the rights. Perhaps they'll leave me alone some day. And we should pursue the same thing together, my friends. We were never told in the treaty there would be such provinces as Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba as they are now. If we find ways to make a living throughout the country was our own discretion. We could go anywhere to hunt. And this is what I wanted.

In the future our children, if we don't do things right today, our children are going to be affected deeply. They'll be poor. Our forefathers were prudent in the olden days. They've lived in harmony. But today we are being pressured. Therefore, we are poor. The children might say we don't try hard enough to fight for our rights. This is why now we should try our utmost. Together as a whole, pull towards to the betterment of our children. That is why I'd be very glad if we could work together, not to do things differently. As we are here who's different - as I'm Chipewyan, does that make any difference? What is the difference? I'm talking in Cree, there is no difference. What we could do is to walk side by side as one on the earth. I think this is the only way we could save our children's future. This is what I wanted to elaborate on. And I can't add anything further. Grass, trees, and the land six inches deep was what he had come to negotiate for. Nothing else, nothing. This is what I've often been told. And further to that, I've heard elders express it this way. Even though I

wasn't smart enough then, but I've listened to a certain extent. As I've heard, the elders stressed the same way and same things, not otherwise. Therefore, that's no lie. This I've wanted to tell.

Louis: Is that all?

Charlie: Yes, and what my uncle had just said here. A white man takes a woman off the reserve. He is willing to support that woman and then he'll keep her and support her. He can't expect us to feed him and the woman. That's not right. If he can support her he can take her out or off the reserve. And on the contrary, where an Indian marries a white woman, she would automatically become a registered treaty. I have not heard if schools and hospitals were promised, and what we were told at the signing of the treaty was when the payment we get, they've received \$12.00 to each person. A chief gets \$25.00 and, no, he got \$50.00, and a councillor got \$25.00. But they've reduced those payments to half. A chief gets \$25.00 and a councillor gets \$15.00 and we common people get \$5.00 each. There then in

the future, schools, hospitals that we could use from the money that was cut to be used towards these. That's how I've heard. This is what I wanted to tell. I am very glad that we have to help one another. Today you've heard me tell the things that he had requested. He didn't buy many things. Perhaps you'd tell these things to other people, as time goes on, that he didn't buy very much from us (Indians).

Louie: Thank you very much.

(End of Interview)

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