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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Several interviews with elders (male and female) of Cold Lake Reserve.
- Describe self-sufficient lifestyle of trapping, fishing and farming which existed before D.N.D. leased their lands for a bombing range 22 years before; subsequent deterioration in lifestyle and quality; failure to introduce agriculture; dependence on welfare; misunderstandings over documents signed.

Interviews with the Cold Lake trappers. Discussing their means of livelihood when they trapped in the area of Primrose Lake before it was taken over by the Department of National Defense.

My name is Richard Lightning and I'm working for the Treaty Research Group for the Indian Association of Alberta. I'm here at Cold Lake to interview some elders regarding the Bombing Range. The date is February 12th. I'm here speaking with Alex Metchawais. He will relate to me what information he has regarding what happened with the bombing range and how it affected their livelihood prior to the National Defense taking over.

Now that I'm about to talk to you, you can start by giving me your name?

Alex: Alexan Metchawais.

Richard: What is your age?

Alex: I'm past 76.

Richard: Where were you born?

Alex: Mystic o scow Lake in Saskatchewan.

Richard: Is that the Cree name or does it have an English name? I mean the lake.

Alex: Mystic o scow is the Cree name.

Richard: What is the English name?

Alex: I don't know, I don't speak English.

Richard: Now I will ask you a few questions about your knowledge and how the transaction for the bombing range took place. How the government people dealt with the Indians. Would you now tell me what took place?

Alex: It is this next month of March that they first started, the white people were taking the bombing range. It was ours before that and the bombing area belonged to us. It was allotted to us by the government. There was a time when there were some white people there with us. And it happened also when the bombing range was taken that we were told we would be paid for 20 years and then we would receive another payment again. But we never had any document stating that this is what we were

told. I'm saying that we were informed verbally about this business transaction. And today, we are approaching 22 years this spring when this happened. It is now 22 years and that is the reason we are still talking about it. We made our livelihood from that area and it was a good living we made from it. Nobody can say how well they lived or ask who made a good living. It was us who had a good form of livelihood, the people from Cold Lake. The Chipewyan also, it was the land of our grandfathers and we in turn made our living from that land after them. Today, all we do is reach out to get fed (welfare). Even the young people of today, there is not place for them to trap for a living. But I would like very much at my age, and there are people here, about 10 or more who know that business thoroughly. Why I say this is because, if a young person discusses this just from hearsay, that will not be the truth, not the truth. It is the person who worked there and saw it, and who experienced hardship during those times, he is the one who knows what is going on. Every effort should be made to find these people to explain what should take place. This is what my fellow senior citizens are saying, this is what they tell me. "We should be given that money today, so there could be something seen on this reserve, an improvement." "Because the reserve is so poor," this is what the other senior people are saying. That is the reason we were thinking before, that we should have been consulted first regarding the bombing range. I'm not talking about the other money, the overall

amount, I'm not talking about that money. But for us elders at our ages, if we were to receive that money in our hands we would know how to spend it. That is all I'm going to talk about for now.

As for my friends who are to be interviewed who were selected to relate their knowledge of this business. Think of this seriously, think of your children and yourselves. True, if anything is going to take place, it won't be tomorrow. But let us think as a group for ourselves here on this reserve. The reserve is in such poor circumstances. We look down the road, this bothers me a great deal. We should have money coming from our former trapping areas, where we trapped long ago, that would look good. Think of this carefully as to what should happen. Personally, I feel these people should run this tape of what I'm saying and the people could listen and from there you can say whatever you feel is necessary. That is for the people, who are going to be interviewed. I want my grandchildren (interviewer) to play the tape. After you listen you can say whatever you are thinking. I'm not trying to persuade anyone or tell you what to say friends. This is not what I'm trying to do. This is for the people who are to be interviewed. Because you understand already that you are to be interviewed. That is all I'm going to say.

Richard: The other thing I am about to ask you, prior to the bombing range being established, you as a trapper made money. You also said that the livelihood was very good. If for any reason the bombing range wasn't established, how would you see it today, in terms of making a living?

Alex: Our livelihood would be much better. As an example we used to go trapping at Primrose Lake on March 15th. I would spend three weeks there and I was able to make \$1,000 and sometimes more. I say this because I worked at it and also my relatives. We went through some hardship when we came home with packs on our backs. Sometimes we used boats. That is how we made our living, and today those days are a long ways away. But with the great number of muskrats there and today's prices, we'd be still out there and our children would be making their living out there. Because we would show them what to do. We would explain to them the terrain and tell them where the lakes were located. From there they would locate them themselves. Because we know that part of the country, we didn't see it in a dream. Nobody told us about it, we know it ourselves. If I was to sketch Primrose Lake I would make it exact. I could mark everything around the lake such as cabins and how many, even Long Lake and how many others that are there. Even the rivers and where they are situated. All of us within our age group would be able to do this. But if someone else was asked he would just take a map, these maps are not of greatest accuracy. They are not accurate and I'm positive of that. I say this because I was raised in that area and saw all these lakes. All of the other elders also know their way around there. There are names for all the lakes in that area.

Richard: How did the Indians find out initially that they would be affected by the establishment of the bombing range? Who told them that there would be some kind of agreement that would be made with them?

Alex: There was one Frenchman who came to that area in an airplane. His name was Charlie Vincent (?) was his name; he used to be concerned about us. He used his airplanes for such cases as sickness or anything like that.

Richard: Was he an agent?

Alex: No, he was from here at Cold Lake. He would fly in there and be of concern where he was required. There are many dangers while living in the bush such as falling through the ice or illness. Even when a woman had a child it wasn't easy just to bring them out. Because it is about 70 or 80 miles to town and it isn't very easy to walk all that distance. The

rivers flow rapidly and during this time of year the snow is very deep. When the snow is about three and a half feet deep, a woman cannot walk; only a man could do it.

Richard: What was his job and who was he employed by?

Alex: I don't know, but he was concerned about the Indians, when he flew in to see us. We don't know if he was employed by the government.

Richard: You said he was the man who informed the people as to what was going to take place?

Alex: He told us about it. There was one old man whose name was Martial (Martel?). I was living on an island when the airplane came to land. I was there with my son Joby when he told us that the area would be taken for a bombing range. "It was purchased from us." But he told us to be prepared for it. That is what the Frenchman told us. He was French but that is the same as a white man. Then he left us. There was this other old man there not too far away, possibly about 7 miles, he landed there. That is where Martial made his home also during the summer and all winter. He was very old, about 70 years, and for him it was very difficult to stay here on the reserve even for 2 months. That was his home, in the bush. He drove with horses to my place to inform me of the bad news which he had heard. I asked him what it was. And he told me the white man was about to take the land. He had been just informed too. He came to inform us, but we had already heard about it. So I told him that I didn't know what would now happen. He said that, "it would now be very difficult." But he's realized he was old but he would be there until the end and then would leave. He finally died but I think he did receive some money. But nothing else happened for him as he was very old. That is how I saw it.

Richard: Who was the chief at the time when this was happening?

Alex: I'm not certain who was chief when this was taking place. We didn't pay much attention as most of the time we were out trapping in the bush. We didn't bother with one another like people today.

Richard: And who was the agent?

Alex: The agent? Who was the agent (asking his wife)?

Mrs. Metchawais: We don't know anything about those things, the English names.

Alex: We don't use those kind of names.

Richard: Was this transaction handled properly as far as you know, by the Indians and the Indian agents?

Alex: No, it wasn't handled properly. We were given money three times, like trapping money. That last time it was handled by the leaders and they purchased some old implements. And we received... like myself I received \$80.00 worth of tools and hoes. The agent was to pay for them. We won't receive cash that was his decision, that was what they decided.

Richard: Who were these people?

Alex: He was the agent at the time. They knew what was happening, and they made the decisions themselves. As far as the money was concerned anyway. At first we were asked how it should be done. There was one winter we were allowed to fish all winter at Primrose Lake and we also fished all summer. I didn't fish but my son Joby fished all winter and summer. I'm not sure how many were there, it was 10 or more fishing all summer and winter. We were told to take all the fish out of the lake as we were using the lake for the last time. But they never took out all the fish as the lake is big. It's about 35 miles long, the white people say it's 40 miles but it isn't that long.

Richard: Was the trapping good in that area?

Alex: The trapping was very good, also the fishing. I'll tell you a story. Once I was there with my wife for a month, and when we came home with our muskrat pelts in large bags, my wife had smoked the muskrats. They had a big meal on the way home with smoked muskrat and boiled fish. The muskrats are very fat in March, they are also very big, that is the reason why I felt sad about it. I just wish that the young people were allowed to trap over there, they would do very good, it's easy. We, as old people, would show them the methods of killing a muskrat. We have the know-how and we are used to it.

Richard: I understand also that the agents later on made some agreement that you people would be taught agriculture, farming or some other source of economic base for a livelihood. What happened to these agreements?

Alex: Yes, this is what happened, but... this is what happened! They purchased the implements for us, also wagons and tractors. But during that time there was no welfare, and

our former trapping areas was rich with resource. But to come back here and try to learn something new, we couldn't understand it. Some of us knew how to sow grain because we made our living in both areas (trapping and farming). Why I say this is because there is a threshing machine sitting out in the yard which I purchased myself when I was a younger man. I bought with my own money, not money received from the government. You see it sitting there, all it is now is a souvenir, a thing to look at. Several of us had these things such as tractors. But before that we used horses, four horses, and today we are crying over this. We would still do it today, and also the young people.

Richard: I wonder if your leaders were aware or understood what was being presented to them?

Alex: No, they didn't understand, that is why. They didn't understand.

Richard: Why was that? Was it not clearly interpreted?

Alex: That is probably the reason, that is what happened. That is why there is a misunderstanding of that business today. But if you see the other people, they too will be telling of how they feel about this. I'm referring to my fellow elders, so go and see them. You must have about six more people who could say something. They are all Cree people.

Richard: The Indians who live in Saskatchewan, did they suffer any loss of livelihood as a result of the bombing range?

Alex: They too trapped in that area long ago, but when it was closed, they no longer went there. That was their livelihood before. But today, they only go a short distance, not to the boundary of the range. And that was their trapping area before.

Richard: There is another matter which is not being successful, that is fishing for you people. My understanding is that you are not allowed to fish in Saskatchewan?

Alex: We do fish there during Christmas, during the season of midnight mass. We go there, as it is open for about three days in the bombing range. We went during that time. I'll explain how that came about at first. We had requested that we be allowed to go there when the pilots weren't flying and were away (no activity on the range). That is the time we requested for fishing, so that is what happened. It was commercial fishing. We sold in Saskatchewan which had a co-op, we never did see any money from there. We weren't told "Here, this is your money." Now that is over 20 years ago. The white man has

not handed over that money to us yet. Once they were even after us not to go any more for fish. We were told flatly not to go there for the purpose of fishing. But we went anyway. Now, today, it has been three years since I've kept fishing nets. Today there are only about three Chipewyans who are fishing. We do have about 40 licenses for fishing during Christmas, there are two here with me and my son, which we are still holding. There was also a time we were allowed during Easter, in the recent past none of this has taken place.

Richard: Are you now referring to Saskatchewan?

Alex: Yes, Saskatchewan.

Richard Not here in Alberta?

Alex: Here on Primrose Lake.

Richard: I meant here in Alberta.

Alex: Yes, we went for four days during Easter, but today there is none of that.

Richard: There are many aircraft flying overhead everyday. How does that work?

Alex: Everyday, even right here where I'm living, sometimes about 12 airplanes fly very low here and around the reserve.

Richard: Does that bother you in any way with your daily activities?

Alex: In one way it does. Some time ago two aircraft crashed here on the reserve. We just heard that they crashed within the reserve. One was close by, not one half mile away. The other one was about one and a half miles away from here. But that is the routine. They leave the base, they fly in this direction and head back towards the north. They often fly in a group of twelve; this is both day and night.

Richard: Is there any employment at the air base where native people can be hired?

Alex: At this one here, I don't think so.

Richard: Something that would replace your livelihood as trappers?

Alex: Nothing, I haven't been aware of anything.

Richard: In your own mind you still feel that some other agreement or business should take place?

Alex: Yes, there should be more discussions.

Richard: It wasn't handled properly?

Alex: Yes, it wasn't done properly. The agents not us. To make a living then wasn't too difficult.

Richard: Here on the reserve, how would your fellow elders and trappers think about this?

Alex: Their thinking would be the same. How can they think differently?

Richard: I have asked all the questions I wanted to ask you. I thank you for talking to me.

I will now be talking to another elder. It is regarding the former trapping area and the bombing range. He will relate to me what agreement was made with them by the government.

Richard: First of all tell me your name and your age?

Ted Scanie: I'm very pleased that my friends have arrived here. I don't know them but we speak the same language. They are requesting me to assist them with information. My name is Ted Scanie, I'm a Chipewyan from Cold Lake. I'm over 75 years of age. I'm here with them now to discuss the transaction of long ago. Anyway, that business (Primrose Lake)... years ago we didn't receive any assistance. The old people made their own living on the traplines. So today we don't know where to go in order that we can trap. We are stuck to tell the truth. I'm not saying this for myself but I'm referring to the young people. At the time when the government people arrived to request for our land, the government people arrived to borrow our land; "We are not buying from you, but we are going to borrow it," is what we were told. We agreed to allow them there for 20 years and that is what happened later on. True, we were paid later on, but nobody received equal amount; the payments varied. That is how the payments came about, and finally the final payment which we weren't aware of, on a table there were papers spread out. Mr. Knapp and Mr. Eckland came in and said, "Sign on the paper, you are going to receive a payment," it was the final pay as they told us. They made the cheques there as we signed our names. Today, it appears that there is no more compensation.

Richard: Were the Indians not made to understand what was taking place?

Ted: No, there wasn't anything which was properly explained to us.

Richard: Who was the chief here on the reserve?

Ted: It was Abraham Scanie. He is now dead.

Richard: Did he arrange a meeting to discuss this matter with

the people?

Ted: No, not really. It wasn't a general meeting. We did gather... it was about the money, we were told that we were to receive money. But to discuss and get everybody's opinion on what should take place in the future, there was no discussion on that at the time. Because when the younger people realized they were to receive money, they were really happy. For that reason it didn't turn out well, as nothing was mentioned about the future.

Richard: Now, the two gents you mentioned, were they helping the Indians or...?

Ted: If they were to help them they would have explained to the Indians exactly what was going to take place. They should have issued cash, but that is not what they did. What they helped the people with was getting them old things (implements) and they charged them. Some paid \$80.00, others paid \$500.00 and \$300.00. Myself, I bought a second hand tractor for \$800.00 and already that is a large amount. I couldn't get much more after that out of the \$2,000.

Richard: You alone, how much money were you paid?

Ted: That is what I mean, in last payment was \$1,000. But that money was used when I purchased machinery on credit, so it all went back there. There was nothing left over.

Richard: That money you received, in total sum, does that replace your source of livelihood of trapping long ago?

Ted: I'm not certain of that.

Richard: What I mean is were you compensated enough for giving up your trapline?

Ted: No, no, not even half, that total of \$2,500 I was promised, which was the amount to be given to us, but in one year... about \$2,000 sometimes \$1,500 or \$1,300 is the amount we made from that land. That is how we made our living, this happened every year. The amount they gave us was like cutting off our livelihood, that is what it looks like. So there is no more I can say, or make up anything else, but this is what happened. That was the main source of livelihood for the Indian people, fishing and trapping. The people used it in many other ways. Long ago, perhaps 300 years back, the land was used until today as I sit here.

Richard: Were there many people like yourself?

Ted: There were many, they took up the whole area. There is a large lake there called Primrose Lake; the Indians were all around it trapping. That was long ago.

Richard: What do you think it would be like today if the

bombing range wasn't established? What type of living would the Indian have today?

Ted: I think the people would still make a good living today, because everything is priced high today. The pelts would bring a good price. It won't take more than a week to kill one thousand squirrels. From there you already have over \$1,000. Today a squirrel is worth \$1.30 and rats (muskrats) comes to \$4.00 right now. This is what would happen. A person wouldn't have to kill too many animals, he would already have \$1,000. Many young people would like to do that but there is no place to go. Like I sit here today, after a period of four years when we lost our trapping areas, I bought my own trapline. I still have that trapline. I myself have a trapline...some others don't. There are two of us there, the other person is Sam McFeeder and myself. We have our own registered lines. And today many Indians are making their living from there. I allow them to hunt there. They can camp there and pick berries too. They can go summer and winter I allow them because that is the only place that the hunting is fairly good. As soon as an Indian goes to a white man's registered line, they send them away immediately. They don't want them there. So ours is available, and they can go there for some means of livelihood.

Richard: Perhaps you can relate to me what you said earlier when the game warden approached the Indian people about hunting and other matters related to it.

Ted: That was long ago, but it is true, I've seen this all along. When they are in charge of it, they allow the white trappers in, but when the Indian goes to his traditional area, he is sent away. They would rather place white people there. I spoke to the warden myself once, and many people know that the Indians were kept away from there, because he was favoring the white people while the Indians were not allowed there. That is the same traditional area, that was quite a while ago, about 1949. That is when that took place. Now I can't say too much else at this time or make up anything. This is how I saw these things.

Richard: Wasn't there something from the government offered to the people where they would be trained in areas of agriculture or some other means of livelihood? Were they introduced to the Indian people, such as programs related to economic development as they are known? Something in the farming or cattle raising project? This should be in return for giving up your trapping area - did this happen?

Ted: Yes, it took place. But when the time came for us to have machinery, we didn't have the land. But we were encouraged to have our own land (farm lands). It so happened that I was involved with that, where the people could begin farming. They ranged in sizes of 10, 60, 80 and 200 acres. This land was broken for them here. They worked for themselves for a while, it worked good for about six years. We had granaries at the agency and they were always full. But

gradually as younger chiefs were getting elected, this came to an end. That land which was cultivated is no longer used today, that is what happened. The reason for this is that the people started to receive welfare, and they depended on that. The younger people didn't want to work for themselves. That is the reason why this happened. I cannot find anything else that I could relate to you. I don't want to be repetitious but I thought I would let you know of this.

Richard: The other thing is, during that time quit claims were being signed. Did the Indians realize what they were signing was quit claims?

Ted: That is what I mean, that is where they missed. Finally, they didn't understand it was the final payment.

Richard: That would be the final transaction.

Ted: Yes, that would be final! Isn't that what they are saying? The people would not receive any more help?

Richard: That would be the last form of business.

Ted: The end of it, isn't it? That is what happened.

Richard: Was there nobody who could fully explain to the Indians, such as an interpreter?

Ted: At first, the agreement was that we would receive help like every year. We weren't told that we would receive help for five years. From the time we were paid, and including five years. We were to be helped all along. But we just received two payments, the first and the second. We received that and we were told it was the final pay. That was what happened. It was Mr. Knapp who made that deal, he was the agent. I think he now works in Ottawa. Also Mr. Eckland, he was the boss in Edmonton. They were responsible for that action. They handled all of the business. They handled it from the beginning to the end. They know about it.

Richard: In your own mind, how do you think this can be dealt with properly to finalize it?

Ted: No person would be unhappy. I would not be unhappy if I were to receive compensation. To receive assistance, it would not bother me. I would be happy, because it is only money that people are making their livelihood with. All of us who received money, I had record of that, I kept them. It wasn't long ago I gave my son all the papers where it states we were all paid. I had kept all of them. I gave them to my son. I don't know if he destroyed them. I kept the papers for all the people who received money.

Richard: For the money they received?

Ted: For the money and for every other type of business. I

had them, but I gave them to my son Norman who is a councillor. I gave him a paper for everybody who got paid.

Richard: Did the trappers get a fair deal? You people who were doing trapping?

Ted: Yes, that time they were properly assisted.

Richard: To say it in English, were you paid enough?

Ted: No, nothing even half. I said that was our livelihood, there could be no end to that livelihood. Where else would they get money? If you make your living with money and it is cut off, where will you make your living from? That is what it looked like for that trapping area.

Richard: At one time the Indians who were fishing received licenses. I believe that originally there were about 68 in number, but when someone died the license was not replaced to a son or anybody. Today there is only about 10 left who are fishing. How did this happen?

Ted: I really can't say.

Richard: I understand that they went to Saskatchewan to fish.

Ted: Yes, now you reminded me.

Richard: They used to be a large number, today only a few are left.

Ted: Yes, you have reminded me. I'll tell you one thing, during the time the bombing range was taken. There were three of us who requested this. There was Charlie Blackman, Harry and myself. We went to the base and we requested that we be allowed 10 days to trap, fish and hunt in that area.

Richard: Are you now referring to Alberta?

Ted: No, Saskatchewan, both sides. To be allowed to both sides of the lake. We were told that they were agreeable. We were to have access when holidays were being taken. We then could go in to hunt and trap. But they told us that there would have to be always someone there watching (controlled access) while we were hunting. We agreed and we enquired how one could exercise safety. "You will not be noticed, but I'll give you a flag 12 feet square, which will be visible night and day. When the flag is noticed then they will be aware that the Indians are down there, so they won't bother you." That is what they said. We agreed, the trappers were to have possession of these flags. So I was given the flag. There was no white man going there, just us, we were speaking for ourselves. So when I received the flag, I took it with me to the bush in an area near Primrose Lake where the moss was plentiful. I spread it on the ice, and I could see it for a long distance, about eight miles. It is still here, I still

have it. While we were making that agreement, people from Saskatchewan, both Indian and white people arrived at Cold Lake to arrange access for them as well for fishing purposes. The Indians and whites had some meeting. We didn't agree with this but some of our people dealt with and agreed with Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan got access and they didn't care about us. That is what it looked like, so that is how we lost that area and today we cannot even set foot on it. If the first

agreement which was made was still in effect today, which was made by the air base, it would still be open today to trap anytime. That flag they gave me is still here today.

Richard: How about the people who were fishing, why were the licenses not renewed?

Ted: I'm not sure, but it's the fault of the wardens. Today, no regulations come from Ottawa, it's all in the control of the wardens, the game wardens. They make the regulations. It doesn't come from the government, they are arranged by themselves. That is in Alberta, Saskatchewan, no matter what province. They are young people, and are making fools of the Indians. Weren't we told in 1985, 19 something, 18 something... weren't we told by the Queen that, "I'm not buying your fish meat I'm not buying from you?" Now today they are controlling everything. Today, everything should remain as the promises were made to us. They shouldn't have any authority over us. That is my way of thinking.

Richard: Would the young people today be able to make a living in the trapping area. If they were allowed in the bombing range?

Ted: Of course, today the people are waiting, waiting to see if they will be permitted to trap and fish. If one is to travel north of Cold Lake, it's all registered. The white people are being given all this by the wardens. There is never a time when a game warden will approach an Indian and say, "You are an Indian, do you want a trapping area for you to trap?" They would sooner give a white man a registered line instead of an Indian. That is what is causing the Indian not having any trapline.

Richard: Do they pay for their traplines?

Ted: I too pay for my trapline because it's white man's land I'm buying. I pay for it every year. I have a license right here. (Shows proof of license)

Richard: Is there anything else you have in mind that you would like to tell me regarding the bombing range and the trapping area? (question to Mrs. Scanie).

Mrs. Scanie: That is my greatest regret, that we lost that area. We used to both trap. When I checked my traps I would get 20 muskrats, pack them on my back; they were heavy. He was

doing the same thing at a different place. That is my regret, because we made such a good living, we were doing very well to

tell the truth, that is why I regret the loss so much. And today it's not there, I wonder what is causing it to take so long in coming, the reason why we are not receiving payment. It is our money! The first part of the information he related wasn't accurate. When Abraham Scanie was chief at the time, I too was sitting there not far away. He (her husband) was a councillor at the time. I listened while the agent, the other white man and the chief sat here, three of them. That is when he said, "You don't complain about the money. If you complain you will not receive any." That is why nothing was said. I heard that myself.

Richard: Who is the one that told that to the people?

Mrs. Scanie: It was the agent and the other man's name which was mentioned.

Richard: That was Mr. Eckland?

Mrs. Scanie: Yes, and also Abraham Scanie, he was the chief. Three of them sat at a table, that is when he said, "If you complain about the money, you'll end up with nothing." So nobody spoke up. So they received various amounts of money and nobody complained. That is what happened.

Richard: How about Abraham, did he understand what was happening?

Ted: He understood, but he was supporting the agent. Maybe he received more than the rest. It's not known how much he received, but he is now dead.

Richard: Would it be written down as to how much each person received and who was paid?

Mrs. Scanie: Yes, it should be written somewhere. When we were at Primrose Lake, we made a good living, even had a good house. We lost all our trapping equipment. It included a sleigh, everything such as boats and traps.

Richard: Who took all these?

Ted: They must all be sitting there still.

Mrs. Scanie: Traps, an uncertain amount, we never took one. We just left them there.

Richard: Were you not paid for this?

Ted: That is what I said our first payment was. That was supposedly our payment for our equipment. But when we received the \$2,000 they deducted the first amount of money we were given. That is what Mr. Knapp does. That is what happened.

Richard: I would like to thank you both for talking to me.

Interview with Marguerite Grambois.

Richard: Before we start this interview which deals with the bombing range, I will first ask you your name.

Marguerite: My name is Marguerite Grambois and my husband's name was Phillip Grambois. Ten years ago, I lost him.

Richard: How old are you at the present time?

Marguerite: 79, this coming summer.

Richard: Where were you born?

Marguerite: Right here.

Richard: Now you can proceed with the information you have dealing with the matter of the trapping areas on which the bombing range is now located. This transaction took place with the government. Will you now tell me about it?

Marguerite: When the white man made the request for the land, the councillor didn't know how to deal with it. I told my husband this, "It should be like the treaty payment. We should receive money every summer as compensation. If funds are used up, then there will be nothing." All the men went as a group when the payment was being made. I told him, "That is how we would be looked after." And my old man wasn't the one to speak at these places. He was more concerned about his own work. He was able to provide for himself here adequately, also in the bush.

Richard: Was the trapping a money-making business?

Marguerite: Yes, it was, we never had assistance (welfare). A person would leave in the fall until the time of midnight mass (Christmas). By then they had taken enough. Again at Easter in the spring, then it was for fishing. In one day even, we have made \$200. They would fish for a long time mainly at Primrose

Lake. When that was completed, they would then go to muskrats. It is a big lake. It is the way we made money, when that was completed, we would return home and then he would put in his crop. I never saw the agency (no need for her to go there) but now I'm an old woman. I receive a pension and today I am being taken care of.

Richard: What was the name of the lake?

Marguerite: Nis'ke.

Richard: What is the English name?

Marguerite: Primrose Lake.

Richard: That is in the area of the bombing range.

Marguerite: Yes, that is the one.

Richard: The hunting was also good there?

Marguerite: The same thing, meat, everything. We prepared our own fish and also the meat. During the summer, the women used very little money. The husband also worked on the farm.

Richard: How do you think it would work out today if there was no bombing range in the trapping areas?

Marguerite: I think that white man's business will never end. When the money was being issued, my late husband also went for his money. I didn't go with him, but I had heard earlier at the Cold Lake Hotel where some talk was going on. For twenty years the land would be leased. At the end of twenty years the people were to go back to the area. If the lease wasn't expired then we would be compensated again. This is what I heard.

Richard: The chief and council who were in at the time, do you think they understood this business?

Marguerite: The present chief, I'm not certain how his mind works, I think of him as a child. His mind has been sidetracked by other things. If a person works with his own mind, then that is a good thing.

Richard: I was referring to who was the chief when the government officials first came to make a deal?

Marguerite: He is now dead. His name was Abraham Scanie.

Richard: He is the one I was referring to. Did he fully understand what was happening?

Marguerite: He must have understood, but I couldn't say for sure. I forget who the councillors were. It is over 20 years now.

Richard: Were the Indians given adequate compensation for relinquishing the trapping area?

Marguerite: No, no! When the white man first spoke, they talked like it would be a lease with the Chipewyans. That is what they took it as, a lease. Like saying, lend it to me.

Richard: Would it be like relating a misunderstanding to the Indian?

Marguerite: It could be, because for us long ago there were no

schools. They could understand a little, some of the young people had schooling. They were taken by surprise when they were approached. It looked like an act of dishonesty. I think this is what happened.

Richard: Did you know who the agent was at the time?

Marguerite: He wasn't there, somebody else was there. Did you go and see Ted Scanie? He knows.

Richard: He mentioned two names, Knapp and Eckland. Do you recall these names at all?

Marguerite: No, I don't remember.

Richard: How do the old people today look at this business which took place?

Marguerite: Many of the people who signed for that agreement are now dead but some are alive including children. I'm alive too. We decided it would be the only thing. My son, Larry, was there too. There were some women also. My other son went later to the lake to fish. They hunt and fish in the same area. They used to make money there, but since it stopped nothing happened. Nobody bought horses or anything. When they came back from the bush, they could purchase anything, they were never short.

Richard: Did you and your husband have a trapline there and all the equipment?

Marguerite: Yes, we did, that is what we were paid for at first.

Richard: Was the payment adequate?

Marguerite: Yes, it was, the first one.

Richard: Did you receive enough money?

Marguerite: That wasn't so bad. Instead we were to make our livelihood at farming. The next time we received money. Some people weren't thinking of the future. It didn't work out.

Richard: And the other trappers who lost equipment and traps...?

Marguerite: We weren't the only people, we were paid for the trap, cabin and trapline area.

Richard: Did you receive enough money?

Marguerite: That was alright, that came first. Later it was for the lease of the land for 20 years.

Richard: Did you also receive payment for that?

Marguerite: But I never kept any money. My old man handled the money. He paid some bills and he bought some equipment. He never wasted any money.

Richard: Which would you prefer, your present way of life or would you prefer to live in the bush?

Marguerite: The bush, that is good, we don't have to take much food with us. We were never short. In the spring we come with meat and money. I sit here receiving assistance. If I didn't receive that I wouldn't be alive.

Richard: If the young people were allowed to go to the trapping areas, would they be able to make a living today?

Marguerite: Yes, they would, many of them. Even during the time we were there they were doing fine, looking after themselves. They could fish on their own. Even the women were able to trap. If my husband wasn't finished his fall work I would go ahead of him and trap and he would come out when his work was done. I wasn't the only one who did this, but it was very good. I regret it very much.

Richard: Have you lost all this now for good?

Marguerite: Yes, there is nothing....

Richard: Is there no other way that this matter could be looked into?

Marguerite: The only thing is that they said, "For only 20 years." That's the only thing.

Richard: That has already expired?

Marguerite: Yes, but there were discussions before, but they were not making any progress. Maybe it's the chief's fault. His thinking is not along these issues, that is the reason. Last spring, a Cree Indian came here, I think his name was Harold.

Richard: Harold Cardinal?

Marguerite: Yes, he was talking about these things. He was going to talk on behalf of the people here. That is what I heard.

Richard: Is there anything more you'd like to say about the bombing range?

Marguerite: Yes, the trapping area we left behind, I'll never forget it as long as I live. I am hoping my children and grandchildren or the people on the reserve who had already received money, can receive further compensation. That is what I want.

Richard: For them to be able to go back there?

Marguerite: To gain access?

Richard: Yes, to hunt and fish.

Marguerite: Fishing is allowed, but gaining access would be okay. That would be good.

Richard: During the time this transaction took place, were the people trained by the government to learn farming or were they given implements to work with?

Marguerite: Some people were doing this, but my husband looked after himself. He had his own tractor and farm implements. There were too many people using the other implements.

Richard: Did he buy them from his own money?

Marguerite: Yes.

Richard: It wasn't through the money he received from the trapline?

Marguerite: No, he already had them before. He used the money to pay for his other bills.

Richard: Were there other programs or training introduced here after the trapping areas were taken from the Indians?

Marguerite: No, there was nothing. I just don't know, the former chief worked and looked after these things. That was the old Chief Harry Janvier. There was work for the young men at the time. Today there is nothing.

Richard: What are the young people doing today?

Marguerite: The only thing they do is clear brush just to make enough for wood. They were told they wouldn't receive welfare.

Richard: I think I have asked you all the questions.

Marguerite: There is one more thing I'd like to mention. About welfare, as it is winter now, the welfare should continue until spring, that would be fine. The other thing is, I heard that the Indians were not to use a gun or do any trapping, that is what I heard.

Richard: You mean it would be restricted?

Marguerite: Yes.

Richard: Are they going to enforce it?

Marguerite: That is what I heard. One more thing, with all

the Indians in this country who owned this land, before the white man and finally we were being crowded by the settlers. They were depriving the Indians of their land. I think about this a lot. They work together, we too should work together.

Richard: Thank you for talking to us.

Richard: I will now be talking with Charlie Minnos.

Richard: What is your present age?

Charlie: I am now 72 years old.

Richard: This interview relates to Primrose Lake and your knowledge of the bombing range which was your former trapping area. You can give me your information.

Charlie: They only paid for a period of 20 years.

(English) We've been trapping a long, long time. Since I was about 15 years old, when I was still with my dad. We were fishing, trapping, that was the way we lived over there. So after that loan, I was hoping it would be the same way. The old people used to go there, everybody used to go there. My dad was there before old man Grady was there. It was a long, long time, we don't know how many years before. So that is why you see, and after that the air force took it away from us. We have no more place to live on. That is why they paid us for it. They paid us for 20 years, we are at the end of 20 years right now.

Mrs. Minnos: They are treaty Indians who gave it up.

Charlie: That is why they paid us for 20 years. So they took it for 20 years. Now it is 20 years already, and now we will get paid again. I don't know how many, but there were over 80 trappers anyway. Some of them have died, but they still have their family. Some have wives, something like that, so we will get paid for it. But others from here weren't trappers, they had no traplines. So that is the ones we don't talk about because there are too many people (per capita share). If we do it that way, well we won't get nothing. We'll be just giving it away.

Richard: Did you lose your trapline, traps and cabin?

Charlie: Yes, everything.

Richard: Did you get paid for that?

Charlie: Yes I got paid for it.

Richard: Did you get enough compensation for that?

Charlie: Well, I got \$600 for it. That was for the shack, the traps and other things. I got \$600, besides that I got traplines and how to make a living. That is why they gave us so much. But we didn't get no cash. We just made the orders

when they came here, so they gave us the pay - we never saw no cash. That was only the last time they paid. I've got one bill here that I can show you after. So I tell you... I got \$600 first, for that trap and everything around. I got \$600 pay. My wife brought the cheque to Edmonton. I was in hospital that time. The other trappers received so much too, but I received \$600. They said, "This is your cheque for your trapline, shack and everything you lost." He said he wouldn't take nothing, he would first give it to me. After I got paid I was still in the hospital, so after I came back around March, I received a paper. It was a total of \$3,850 or something. I've got one bill there. They paid them that much for the first year. Well, anyway, he took \$600 out of this one, it's marked there. I've got a paper. Anyway the next time they paid me the same again and they took \$600 off again, I don't know how they work that.

Mrs. Minnos: You know what it means, it's the first payment for the outfits that they bought. That guy who gave the money said, "If you spend this money before 6:00 p.m. today, it doesn't matter, nobody will talk about it." It was paid to the poor people in the dance hall. It was Mr. Eckland who said it. I was there too because I understand it that way. And he said, "This money we're giving you, the first payment for your trappers, what you left in the north, your shacks, your traps and whatever you left. If you spend it tonight, nobody can come and tell me. It is given to you." And when we received the next payment the \$600 was again taken out from there. That is what he means.

Charlie: They took it three times, so they got \$1800 from me, they got it back.

Richard: Who was the Indian agent at the time?

Charlie: It was Mr. Knapp and Mr. Eckland. I'll show you that paper, I've got a one payment paper. There was the chief and also Charlie Blackman who did not like working that way. But anyway, us we wanted to get paid. We want to get paid again the same thing like what we got. That is what we trappers want. But the other guys want to get paid also (per capita payment). I don't know what they want to get paid for, they never trapped.

Mrs. Minnos: They didn't trap or nothing. They just want that money and now they are fighting over it.

Charlie: That is why they are talking about it all the time. Old Harry can tell you just as much as I can. Maybe he can

tell you more than me because he knows it. He didn't get it

but he talked for us, Harry Janvier.

Richard: Did the Indians understand what they were doing when they were making these deals?

Mrs. Minnos: No, they don't understand anything about the government coming in an airplane where the Indians were trapping. The Indians were told that the land would be taken for an airport. You'll get paid for it for 20 years. When the 20 years is over, you'll know what to do again. That is why they are fighting over it now. They want to get paid, that's why. This fellow Fred Martel was there, he knows; but he's deaf. He was the one who was approached at Primrose Lake.

Charlie: I was in the hospital the time they made the deal. I didn't know what was said. But Fred should know.

Mrs. Minnos: You'll find out from the people, everybody knows it.

Richard: If the range was not there today, how would the livelihood be today?

Mrs. Minnos: It's already gone to the government, so they won't let them get back there anyway.

Charlie: Do you know that in one winter the storekeeper over here took in \$38,000 worth of rats, that is rats only. That is not fish or anything else. That guy is still there today.

Richard: Who is he?

Charlie: He is Charlie Wildon, that is what he told me long time ago.

Mrs. Minnos: Do you know that the Indians never paid one cent for trapping and fishing. That is all summer and all winter. They never received relief, no pension for old people, no family allowance, nothing at all. Just the ones who were farming a little bit, they had children. They were the only ones who received money. There was no family allowances, no relief. The people made their own living. All of a sudden they started making the people pay for licenses for trapping. When they started it was \$25 a license, but the Indians didn't pay. Only the halfbreeds paid because my stepfather was a halfbreed. He was trapping and he would pay for it.

Charlie: George Martial paid but he got his money back.

Mrs. Minnos: Now all of a sudden they have started, they want all the trappers to sign all their names. They put it up that way. Because they didn't buy any more furs that time. The people thought that they have stopped buying furs, so they gave up. Now they want to get paid for it. They wanted to get paid for it in 20 years time again. Now they want to fight over that.

Richard: How do you think this problem can be solved?

Mrs. Minnos: I don't now, I know nothing about these things.

Charlie: You know there were white people trapping there too with the Indians in that area. They were there after the Indian but they stayed there for I don't know how many years. But they got paid right away, for everything, they got one cheque. They then moved from that place. The Indians were told that they would receive money again in 20 years time.

Charlie: We didn't age half of it. That is why the people didn't get any cash, they wanted to buy some old things. I don't know what kind of old things they bought.

Mrs. Minnos: They didn't receive any cash. You know that is the time Abraham Scanie was the chief and he said, "You people, the way you are now, if you find a team of horses, come here and we'll make a paper for you. Anything you find to work with, anything. Just come here and we'll make a paper for you, no cash." So that is what they did. Some people paid up to \$600 for an old tractor, and some people got old harness, which they couldn't use, they were all broken. Same with the plows and the binders. One guy bought a binder from Elk Point, and he couldn't do anything with it, it was an old one. Charlie bought it for \$100. That is why we spent so damned much money that way.

Charlie: I got one paper here, since the first payment, I still have one bill here. Maybe I can show you that.

Richard: Thank you for talking to me.

Mrs. Minnos: I remember everything because my husband was in the hospital for three years. He spent three years in the Camsell Hospital and never came home for three years. I stayed home and looked after a bunch of cattle, my children were smaller then. After three years, he came back, but we spent everything.

Charlie: You see I've got this bill here, it's wrong.

Mrs. Minnos: They wrote on the paper that we bought horses two times and a tractor two times. We didn't buy no tractor that time.

Charlie: The other guys lost all their bills.

Richard: Thank you.

Interview with Harry Janvier.

Richard: As we start this interview, I will first ask you your name.

Harry: My name is Harry Janvier.

Richard: How old are you?

Harry: I'm 76 years old.

Richard: You are aware of the information I'm about to ask you as you were there at the time when the government approached the people about the trapping area and the bombing range. So now you can relate to me what you know about it.

Harry: The first people who approached us told us that we would receive assistance since the trapping area would now be closed. This is what we were told. They told us that there would be an agreement whereby compensation would be made for our equipment, cabins and everything else. We would receive this payment first. After that took place, we were told that more money would be forthcoming for the people. They weren't able to tell us for how long we would receive this money. "It might be money you are to receive all the time, as your main source of livelihood was taken away from you." That is what we were told. This agreement would last for twenty years and then the people would be allowed to go back to the trapping area. If the lease was to continue after that time, a new agreement would then be made. That is what he told us.

Richard: Who is the one who made this arrangement?

Harry: It was an agent whose name was Taylor. The main one, I forgot his name. He wasn't the only one.

Richard: The other elders I spoke to today mentioned some names. One name was Eckland.

Harry: He was one who was in charge of it. And the agent was Taylor at the time.

Richard: The other name which was brought up was Knapp.

Harry: Knapp, he was later on. It was during the time Taylor was the agent when it started. Knapp was later on.

Richard: Did Taylor handle the matter properly?

Harry: The way they talked about it, it seemed as though they were doing it properly. We were paid the value of our cabins, traplines; we were paid for everything, including traps. That is what we were paid initially, that is what we were told. Later on, I was no longer chief. The other person was then chief when the money arrived. The business was done at St. Paul. At first there weren't many of them.

Richard: Were you a chief at that time?

Harry: No, I had already been the chief. The chief's name was Abraham Scanie. He was the one who was doing the business. That money we received was in various amounts. The people who were dealing with the agent gave themselves larger amounts of money. Some of our people didn't receive enough money.

Richard: Were they not paid according to what they owned such as traps, cabins and equipment?

Harry: Yes, that is what I said, that was the initial payment. We were told it was for that purpose.

Richard: Was that the initial payment?

Harry: Yes, but they told us this money was not what we were actually promised. That money was for compensation of cabins, traplines and other things. The other sum of money would be forthcoming later. That is what I was talking about when I said they were doing business in St. Paul.

Richard: Was it a good money-making proposition in the trapping area?

Harry: Yes, it was very good the people made a good livelihood from there. They made money, they killed game and fished at Primrose Lake. They trapped and fished there and made plenty of money. The people were able to use the money all summer, most of them did.

Richard: Since the bombing range was established, how much of a loss have you seen?

Harry: As I see it we lost a great deal since we cannot make our livelihood from the bush. We must stay here now and make an attempt in farming, but the young people don't think much of it. So we experienced a great loss. And the people who were working on this wasted plenty of money. Some of the dealings weren't very beneficial. I'll mention a few; branding irons were made from 1 to 100. We were to use those branding irons for our animals. That money used to make the branding irons was a waste. During that time my oldest son was at Battleford. I was given \$200.00 - his tuition was \$370.00 which I was supposed to send to him. When I first paid for it and inquiring through my son he didn't know anything about it. I don't know what happened to it. Many of the business matters were improperly handled. But it was the agent who they were depending on. He was supposed to have been honest with good leadership. That was what the elders thought of the agent long ago.

Richard: When that bombing range business was agreed upon, they were to have training programs for the people on the reserve so they could learn to make their livelihood by other means. Did this take place?

Harry: That is another thing. There was a building here where

the young people could be trained in various vocations for employment. That building is still there. They were trained for a while. It didn't work out properly so they stopped it.

Richard: What was the reason for that?

Harry: It wasn't well organized, I don't know. I had nothing to do with it. It was mentioned to me in the beginning, where the young people could learn and receive help as he needed it. So he could make his living from it. But nothing happened. There were a few who started in carpentry. There was to be a welding shop also where they could learn the trade. That building was on the hill but it was never used.

Richard: When this transaction was brought to the people years ago, did you yourself understand the term "Quit Claim", the type which was signed by the trappers?

Harry: No, I don't understand that or what it means.

Richard: When you sign your name on a paper, in this case the "quit claim" as it was referred to by the federal government.

Harry: Oh yes, you mean what took place then?

Richard: Yes, that is what I mean.

Harry: That is when they received the final payment.

Richard: Did you understand what you were signing at the time?

Harry: No, I didn't understand it.

Richard: Did someone explain it to the people?

Harry: I tell you what happened there. There was a meeting taking place, and I didn't leave my house until later on and the meeting had already been in session for a long time. They were discussing the final payment they were to receive. They were told that if they wouldn't sign their names, the money would be taken back, and they wouldn't receive it. But if they signed, the money would be allotted to them. Many of the people were convinced of this and when I arrived, many had already signed their names. There were three elders there, one was my brother-in-law. He told me that the signing of names had to do with money allotment. He told me to sign, it was a way of knowing who received money. I didn't like this idea, but I put my name on it. There was a nephew of mine who was translating there, so I put my name down as well. So after the meeting I asked my nephew what was the reason for signing our names on the paper. He explained to me what was written on the paper. The money I received today will not allow me to discuss my trapping area in the future, after I accept this money. This is what was written on the paper I signed. My nephew said he explained it to the people but they signed their names anyway. I noticed what was taking place but it was almost completed already.

Richard: Who was the interpreter you mentioned?

Harry: It was Pierre Muskego. He was the interpreter.

Richard: You mentioned another elder, what was his name?

Harry: His name was Muchias Janvier, he is my brother-in-law.

Richard: And they all signed their names?

Harry: Yes, it was almost completed. I was the last one to arrive there. I thought that if the money was to be issued, I would also receive some. That is where I misunderstood, maybe they didn't want to tell me. Because if there is something I'm

not certain of, I will not go ahead to accept it. The people know this, maybe that is the reason why they didn't encourage me to sign. They also said they weren't told. The money was for the trappers who signed their names is what I was told. That is where the misunderstanding came from.

Richard: There were purchases made within the surrounding area, the purchase of plows and other things. How did that work out?

Harry: There was one person from Bonnyville who was selling here. He had hay mowers, hay racks and Bennett wagons and harness. Some people bought horses, the people purchased a lot of equipment. Some people also bought tractors. That was the first payment; and the other payment - we received three payments in all. But the first payment was meant to be for our trapping, traplines and for fishing nets. They are all still out there, nobody brought anything back with them. That was the first payment. When they received the other payment many implements were purchased. Every day new hay mowers and hay racks were brought including wagons.

Richard: I understand that much of that equipment was old, not all of the purchases were new?

Harry: The equipment I saw was all new, but some were buying from different places. Some bought tractors. I went along once when the people who were selling arrived here. Also I was asked to go along with someone who was to go and look at some machinery, I went along. I bought one tractor and one disc for the tractor. They are still sitting out in the yard.

Richard: Do you still recall anything you can relate to me which is related to the bombing range business?

Harry: That is the only thing which we were told, but it is for that reason that everything has come to a halt. It has now been 20 years this past summer. New negotiations should be started, but we were cheated by the way we signed our names on the paper. Maybe some were made aware of it, but you know when they saw the money and were also manipulated, the desire was

not there. If I were still the chief at the time I would have not accepted it. I would send it back because certainly it would have been back later (money). It was a dishonest maneuver towards the people.

Richard: Could anything have been done after the names have been signed?

Harry: Yes, but some of them were not aware of it. As I related to you I wasn't aware of this happening because they kept from me what they were told, if they were told anything. My nephew told me he read the agreement and explained it in Chipewyan carefully. Because he understands and reads English.

Richard: What are the young people doing here in order to make a living today?

Harry: Nothing, not a thing. Today this reserve is in a destitute state. It is poor as I see it.

Richard: Would the young people be able to make a living on the traplines and in the bush if they had access?

Harry: I don't think the young people would be able to do it. They wouldn't know what to do. When the old people were trapping then, that was the end of it. If access was obtained, it may be useful for hunting.

Richard: Today on the reserve, what is the feeling of the old people towards what took place with the range?

Harry: We as old people hope that we can be compensated, for those who are still alive. There should be a per capita payment. If that happens, it doesn't help us any. But I still have grandchildren here and also my son is still here. I have four children and if there is anything they could use to help them they could have it. I don't want anything myself. I just want this to be handled properly. That was what I hoped for most of all. But our leaders are dealing with matters on their own. They never call a general meeting, we never even see them. That is what makes it bad. They don't seem to be attending to the reserve. When I was the chief, we used horses to plow the field. You'll see all the open area here, all the people were putting in crops. They had horses, cattle, pigs and chickens, anything they could use for making a living. Today there is none of that, we only have homes built for us. They never even completed what they promised us. We were supposed to have running water and a bathroom inside.

Richard: How are the people in Saskatchewan affected by the bombing range?

Harry: It affected the trappers from that area when they discovered we were being compensated, then they turned against us. That place is known as Buffalo Narrows. We were from Alberta and we were being paid with money from Saskatchewan.

This is what they were thinking. But it didn't happen that way.

Richard: How would this problem be resolved today to gain access to the bombing range? Do you think that the people here should work alone or combine with the Saskatchewan people?

Harry: I think we should work on it alone because the people from Saskatchewan don't help us. It seems like they are jealous that I'm from Alberta. I'll tell you what happened about the trapping, that is another topic. When the boundary was made, a short period before that when the provincial government of Saskatchewan were dividing the land, it was said that we were not to enter the province. We weren't supposed to go there. But we were trapping there anyway, but we were required to pay \$15.00 in order to enter the province. I was the chief at the time before this business came about. Four of our people paid during the fall when it was time to move to the trapping area. One of my councillors came to find out what I thought of this. He said that whatever decision I made they would go by it. All the trappers are ready to go, but if we have to pay we'll try to figure out something. If I said no, then they would start moving away. I told them to start moving to the trapping area and not to worry about paying. I told them that this matter could be sorted out later. I didn't go along with them as I already had cattle to look after, and nobody to look after them for me. The one person who paid was George Martial, he was already at Primrose Lake when he sent me a letter. Everybody had already left. He wanted a fish net and supplies from the store.

So I left and I camped on this side of the lake where a white man had a cabin for overnight guests. In the morning I left. Just as I approached the entry point I noticed somebody coming from the direction of the lake in a dog team. They were the wardens. I knew who they were from before, they also knew who I was. The one in charge was George Revvence, he was the boss. They approached me right away and spoke to me in a loud tone of voice, "Why did you send your people over here? Don't you know that you have to pay \$25.00 to enter this province?" I told him that I knew it, "The police will pick up all those who didn't pay and they will be taken home and charged. You too will be standing there." He didn't like it at all. After he had finished talking, I told him, "If that is how you want to do it, that's fine. But I'll tell you what I think. Before the white man discovered this island (Canada) there were Indians at Primrose Lake already, before 2,000 years or longer, they've been here all the time. That is why the Indians are always trapping here at Primrose Lake. That is the one which straddles the two provinces. That is the reason why I couldn't ask them to pay the \$25.00," this is what I told him. I told him also that he was referring to a meridian line. "It was made yesterday, you white people also arrived yesterday. Where do you get the right to claim this land you are just visiting?

This is ours, like the trees you see here. That is how we grew up here. So, it will be fine if you send the R.C.M.P. here and

take all the people away and bring this before the courts. But we'll go to the highest courts and if your word is stronger than mine, you'll win. But if my word is better than yours, I'll win," this is the conversation we had. One nephew whose name was Patty had built a cabin there, because he wasn't going to pay. He arrived there when the warden was telling me how it happened. He was now talking more friendly. "It's the people of Big Onion Lake, the people from here used to go there to hunt, like Alexan Metchawais' father and his uncle, Sammie McFeder and many others. They used to go into that province and make a lot of money with trapping. It was their fault." Those are the people who took up names and gave them to the agent. They done that several times so we couldn't get access. "That is the reason it happened that way." But he told me whatever I said, they would go by it. Whether the charge would be \$2.00 or no charge at all. I told him that \$2.00 wasn't much but it would be better if there was no charge. From that time on there was no charge.

Richard: For the people to go into the area?

Harry: Yes, and also the access during Christmas. I was the one who made that possible. There was one buyer who worked for the government. He told me that if we requested permission to do some fishing that we would get it. He said he would approach the Department of National Defence. I was the one who made that arrangement. When we made that agreement, the people went to Saskatchewan and borrowed fish nets. So the people in Saskatchewan (Pierceland) knew about it and right away and the white people started collecting names, that is when Tommy Douglas was Premier. They gave him all the names and he took the list to Ottawa. That is the time they got in. The people from here tried to remove him earlier but they weren't successful.

Richard: You mentioned a fee of \$25.00. Was that to enter the bombing range or to cross the boundary into Saskatchewan?

Harry: It was entering Saskatchewan and going through a reserve. The fee was \$25.00 and four people paid it. There was George Martial and his brother-in-law and another person called Lefrelle and the other person I didn't know. But one of our councillors, Elaire Janvier, maybe you know him, he was one of the people who paid. He told me about it not too long ago.

Richard: Did they ever receive their money back?

Harry: They once approached me to see if I would do something about it. But I told them I couldn't help them.

Richard: One final question. About 60 or more people were issued with fishing licenses, and as the old people were unable to continue fishing or died, the younger people were not issued with new licenses. Now today, there are only about 10 who hold licenses. What do you know on this matter?

Harry: These were commercial, many had licenses, but that is long ago, I don't know anything on that. The people who were involved are now dead and their children were not issued with licenses. There was nothing done about it.

Richard: I have asked all the questions I wanted to ask, unless you have something to add.

Harry: That was the only thing where that whole business was mishandled. There should be other discussions taking place. We were told that the people would receive assistance until the bombing range was closed.

Richard: Are you receiving any form of assistance?

Harry: No, we are not. During the latest meeting, it seemed as though the money was just sitting there waiting to be collected. There was plenty of rumors going around.

Richard: Where was the error made by the Indians when the bombing range was dealt with, or was it the agents? In your mind what went wrong?

Harry: The mistake was made when they put their names on the paper. If they had not done that, the money would have been returned, and it would have been returned later on. And nothing would have happened. This is the problem now. The discussions during the past year should be resumed. But there are not many who are involved with these discussions. I'm never consulted. I was chief for a long time, and put a lot of effort into it. I was 27 years old when I became a councillor, I was in council for 2 years then I was chief for 18 years. I tried to understand what was going on and was aware of these matters. But today, an older person has no respect. That is the reason everything is going wrong.

Richard: I thank you again for this information.

(End of Interviews)

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