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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Reflections on loss of spiritual and cultural values and the role of education in this.
- Evidence of previous and planned oppression by non-Indians.
- Revival of interest in traditional values and the role of elders as source of knowledge.

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John Tootoosis: ...more than they need. Because God put them on, here on earth for our own use. If we destroy more than what we need, we offend him. We're not doing according to his law that he laid down in this world. So when they come to the shores, walking on their hinds, Indians thought they were human. They accepted them. Some of them would have died out if the Indian hadn't helped them. And as soon as they had a way to fill their stomachs three times a day, they started to kill the Indians. You read that in the histories. You can't hide it. They started to kill the Indians in eastern Canada here. As they come, taking our country, countries in the areas just by promises. That's all the pay we got, promise, promise, promise. We are still holding the bag for those promises. What about that? You call these people, you want to be like them? Crooks like they are? It's awful, terrible. Of all these powerful nations came to these continents, were on the same game - to destroy the aborigines and get the land from them.

Now you take South America today, what's happening? My daughter here, Jean Goodwill, she was in Ottawa, she worked for the Minister of Health. She went to South America this summer to see for herself. She said it's terrible. Unbelievable. They are killing the aborigines up there every day. Spanish, they're killing the Indians. That's what happened here. The clergies of all different denominations that came across came along with these people. They knew what was going on and supporting the system that was applied to the aborigines, to be killed off. Where does the ten commandments come in? Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal - they stole our country. They don't say nothing. They think they're smart.

Today, the same thing is going on. They have long range programs so that the days to come there will be no Indians, (inaudible) the Canadian race. No regulations, no rights. To be treated like strangers in our own lands. That's coming. So far we have got every reason to get together and discuss these matters, how, ways and means we can help ourselves to protect each other. Try to live under the life that we're expected to live on. Or if you want to go down where they claim they go after they die, you'll go along too. They talk about hell, fire, but they're not afraid of that fire, that's just a talk. Or they would have led a better life than what they did. Well, in our Indian belief there is no hell, we have a place to go

when we go, when we're parted from this earth. And if you lead a bad life, you'll never get there, you'll be on the way, held up. That's the Indian belief. This has been proved by spiritual advice.

I'm just going to tell you one little story while I'm on this question. There was a man in Hobbema, I know the man. He was very sick. He had two boys and these two boys got together with other drinking young men and got into an accident, all killed out. So this man lost two boys like that. So, one day

he took sick. He was just about dying. So while he was in sick bed in hospital, he knew as he was going, his soul was going to this happy place. When he got there, somebody met him and said, "It's not time for you to come here but before you come, you gotta go back. Go and tell your people how you see things here. In order to lead a better life than what they're living on in order to get here. A person has to keep on instructing their children, never quit talking to correct them; that's our duty."

So he woke up again but he was old. He says, "Tell somebody to spread this news to other fellow Indians." So when I heard about it, I got a brother living in Hobbema, he come and he told me about it. "Geez," I said, "I would like to hear it myself." Jonas Saddleback is his name. Sam was there in Hobbema. This man drove over to come and tell me this story, this yarn. That's how I know. So he picked out Jonas Saddleback, the man to relate what he saw, what he was told. So when Jonas went and saw the man, he was pretty sick. He thought he was dead in the bed when he walked in the ward. So he said, he opened his eyes and looked at me and I couldn't hardly hear him talk. He says, "I've been waiting for you for a long time. You're suffering me. I got something to relate to you. And after I relate this to you, I'm going to go. It's very good up there, very nice. People are happy. But on the way going," he says, "just like a cloud, all the drunken people are there. They can't go any further." He says, "My sons came out of this kind of mist, this thing where they're in, crying, see me going by because they couldn't leave, they were drunkards. They lived on the drinking all the time. So I went by."

He said, "There is only two things I'm going to be held up with. I don't know how long. I used to gamble with cards, betting for money. I won money from people. That money was needed by their children to buy clothing and food. And I won the money, got the children to be hungry. I ought to be punished for that. I got to be punished because I didn't instruct my children enough. That's how they killed themselves. I'm going to be punished for that. Although," he says, "during my life I was pretty fair, pretty good life. But that's the only two things that's going to interfere with me." He says, "Every person that has children has to instruct his children to lead him to a better life. That's our duty which was given to us by the Almighty." He says, "We got to follow through. If you don't, you're going to be punished for it."

Indian people in the olden days, they had two fears. Because they were living as brother and sisters on earth, practices human, Indian human rights. To offend their own fellow Indian, that's what they're ashamed to do. And also, they had to lead a better life in order to be saved after they're gone. So they had two fears, a fear here on earth and a fear of that spiritual world. Today, a man murders and if there is no

evidence good enough for him to be punished, he's cleared. "Oh," he says, "I'm clear. Nothing they can do with me. Yeah, clear." He'll be punished when he gets to the other end. He won't get away with it. Because God knows all what we're doing. We believe that. He knows what we're thinking, he knows what we're saying. He'll be punished when he gets above. He won't get away with it. Today it's different. If you can get away with it, you're clear. That's the way the people are brought up. Or they go to a priest and tell the priest and he says, "You're forgiven." So we have to do everything to try and build the Indian nation to be a better nation. We all have to work hard, talk a lot to correct those things, lead a better life. You know, it's awful hard to do things right, to do good things, anything good. But it's mighty easy to go wrong, doing bad things. Very easy. So that means that the reason why I say this, we all have to try all we can to lead into a better life. But ask for help. Night and morning, ask.

What we do now is we all have sweetgrass at home. We burn sweetgrass at night and we pray, so our children and grandchildren to be blessed to lead a better life. In the mornings, we have to do that. Never forget the Almighty, to help you to lead into a good life so you can help your fellow Indian to lead a better life. Now that's all I'm going to, for the time being, that's all I'm going to say about ourselves, our people. But I was on the question of the white race, of it's long range programs I said, here. I'm going to go through that before twelve if I can. And I would like you people to listen. Don't think of anything else when a person speaks. Not only to me, because it's me, no. You have to concentrate what a person is saying, think of what he's saying, listen. If you don't, all you hear if you were thinking Sudbury, thinking about Toronto or Winnipeg, your mind is up there. Not here. You'll hardly remember what's been said at this meeting. You're just appearing here to please people that you came to appear. But you're not taking in. Make this trip be useful to yourself and to your children and people yet to be born. That's the trick of learning. You got to think when a person is talking to you. Don't think of anything else, it's just like a flashlight, I turned this flashlight to Little Current, I'm not here, my mind is up there, I'm just here in person not taking anything in. Well, that's the way, that's a trick. We have to be careful in order not to waste time coming. Now I want to talk about these white people because everything went wrong ever since they came down here. Now, I got a hold of a document here what I'm going to read. I came to La Pas in northern Manitoba to come and speak in 1936, 1935. And while I

was talking at noon, the chief give me this copy. He said, "Have you got this copy?" I said, "No, I never saw this copy." "I thought you had it," he said, "the way you were talking."

I said, "No." He said, "What I'm talking, what I've experienced through my studies. You can have it." So I took it home. I've still got that old copy, very old. But I got a copy here which I'm going to read to you to prove to you what kind of people we're living with. It starts out this way, "For all citizens of Cree Indians of organizations..." It's not the Indian organizations they are referring - Department of Indian Affairs and the Church organizations and the whole works.

"The Indian officials shall believe changes will be brought about gradually (inaudible) April 28, 1936. Full citizenship rights for Canadian Indians and abandonment of the closed reserve system is forecast by officials and organizations directly concerned in the work among the red men." That's the churches. Working amongst us. They are right in the game. The transition will require a long time. But the time is now fairly definite." Said Ann Christiansen, Department of Indian Affairs, Inspector for Alberta and Northwest Territories. "Gradual lessening of regulations and breaking down geographical barriers has for years been the object of the department and slowly and surely, integration is bearing fruit."

How does it bear fruit? When I first came out of this residential school I have just referred to, those fruits were ripened. I was so darn brainwashed in that school it wasn't funny. I wasn't an Indian anymore and I could relate to you if I have time later, how we were brought up by my father and mother. But after we broke away from this ring where parents and child love went to the residential school, I was out. They brainwashed me up there, just like put me in a washing machine and pressed the button. When it was time for me to come home, they wouldn't any longer; they pressed the button, stop, and I went out. Went home, water dripping out of me, out of the brainwash. That's just the way it was. But when I learned this, Dad got after me because there were already three graduates, I'll say graduates, that had finished their time and came out to the reservation. They were already there. And he pointed to me, "Just watch these guys," he said, "what they're doing. You are in the same boat," he says. So after a while, I learned how I was, I got into self-awareness and I started to look at myself. Holy smokes, I was in awful shape. Then I got mad, holy max, terrible. And I looked back at the path of life my parents were leading me on and from there I led to this brainwashing machine and the kind of life I was on. Really mad, now I'll go on, next paragraph. That's where this fruit of education was ripened, when I left the school. I wasn't an Indian, I was nothing. I didn't know myself. I wasn't fit in my home community and I wasn't fit to go amongst the white people. I didn't have enough education. Today it's different. You people, a lot have good educations but that don't mean you should turn into white, trying to be a white man. You should

study your old Indian culture, and use this education to fight your rights so the white man don't win on you and to make a living out of this education no matter where you go, but remain, be an Indian. Live, be loyal the way that God created us here on earth. Be honest, too. However, it says here, "As the Indians become better educated they will, with reserve restrictions removed, associate more closely with the white people. Day schools will probably replace boarding schools. Voting rights will be granted and high educational facilities made available to the red man." These things have happened." Similar objectives and ideas were expressed by Canon F.H. Middleton of Car...."

(break in tape)

John Tootoosis:schools. And this is written, black and white, they can't deny it. I often wonder, when I think about you people in Eastern Canada, when I'm studying at home. I'm never idle at home. When I have nothing to do, no place to go, I study these kind of questions, how ways and means to help my own kind. I pray to get the spiritual help. Put in my mind to lead my people into, to be better people, better children for the Almighty. Him all the time, never forget. Don't blaspheme in his name anymore. Now this one says, "Canada's Indian policy. Detribalization policy of 1840." "Canada's first policy was to destroy Indians probably through religion, social, and education institutions. This was done by confirming legislation, boarding schools, and often controlled by Indian nations." That was a long range program. This was passed in the legislation in 1840. Just imagine. I often wonder how, why you people lasted here so long. Some of your prayers must have been heard for you to be protected by our Father. The reason you are around here on your own lands. At home, where I come from, we've been with them a little over 100 years. Now - "1947. This plan was presented to parliament by the standing committee on Indian Affairs hearing, by Doctor Jameson. The plan for liquidation of Indian lands, a wholesale integration and enfranchisement of Indians, and diffusion of Indian programs to other departments and the province...." Another long range program! Today, the province has taken over a lot of programs for Indians. We're coming. Liquidation of our Indian lands. They believe that. The day will come there will be no reservations, no treaty rights. No Indians. We'll have the skin but we'll be treated like strangers in our own country, in our own lands. That's what they're after. We had no right to vote. Because when these countries were ours, just like this area or my area I'll refer to. When we signed this agreement, Treaty #6, Indians were asked, "You going to keep a piece of land to live in?" They said, "Yes." "Okay, go and choose the land and we'll mark it." That piece of land is not Canada. It's not Saskatchewan. That's my aboriginal piece of land, that's mine. That's another country. See, when these treaties were signed, they agreed a nation to be within a nation. A nation inside of another nation. That's the position we're in and we got to believe it. But they'll never tell us that we have that right, because all those long range

programs, they're doing it so slow. We're shifting towards. Before the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution, Trudeau had said in B.C., I haven't got that clipping with me but he said, "I'm going to put all people on the same level in Canada when I get that Constitution. None of the people will have any special rights." Who's got special right? We have. That's the very thing he planned to do but it didn't work that way. But now he's got another way to do it, if we don't watch.

In March when we appeared on there, Indians appeared, Trudeau has said, I've heard him say. He said, "We got to do away with that Indian Act." There is a lot of rights, our rights and our protection in that Indian Act and that's what he wants to do away with. You got to study those things. You got Indian lawyers here in Ontario, but you got to instruct these lawyers of Indianism and what we believe and how the treaties were made. To fight on that grounds. We've had lawyers in Saskatchewan, white lawyers. They didn't keep them very long. Every time they ask him a question, he refers to provincial law, they refer to federal law. I said, "No, that's not what you were asked. Our rights, what've you got to answer?" So they were useless to us. We had to train them, understand in order to, they can do the talking. They got, they can talk, they know the language, they can fight.

Third paragraph: A new Indian policy: this policy white people called for - five years phase-out of the Department of Indian Affairs with the Indian services transferred to the province. It followed closely, disastrous domination policy adopted by the United States. You had a big Ojibway here talking all the time Ojibway. He claims he's a school teacher. I was going to ask him certain questions but I understand he's gone back. About discrimination policy. I want him to explain that to us. Whether we understood right. And Menominee tribal case, when the United States government took the land away from these Menonimee tribes. We got a film in Saskatchewan that shows just what happened. The Indians were hired by the United States government to beat their own kind just for the sake of a few mighty dollars. They were really the ones that were fighting. The Indians presented their treaty with the United States nation. They didn't go by those treaties. It's a very good film to have; what could happen here. So we have every reason to unite, unite our minds, unite our prayers for our future betterment, for your children and grandchildren and all the future grandchildren, so they will hold their hands

together and support each other. Don't have to think about the provinces, no. We're North American aborigines. I don't believe in people to divide. We got no time. But these organizations I've referred to here, with the other documents, they're the ones that are causing these divisions because the Indians don't divide, working on the ground, work they're doing amongst the Indian people. Because that's the only way they can beat us, to be divided. To be divided, we lose. We unite, we gain. Let's change our points, let's change and take all the same action towards the same direction and all pray for this blessing, that the Almighty had put us in this land to

bless us, to protect us. If Canadian people create this human destruction in this continent, if we are good children of God, of the Almighty, he'll protect us. The same way with what happened to Noah. The whole works were on the water, he was saved. Who saved them because he was good? God Almighty saved him. That's a good example there. So we got to think broad. We got to think deep. We haven't got time to be gossiping amongst ourselves, no. Get busy and bring these out to be understandable to other tribes. We haven't got time to be playing like kids, fighting and dividing ourselves. We haven't got that time.

Four. Local government guidelines, 1975. These guidelines ignore the development of the Indian government. Now, we have a right. I'm referring, new reservations to little countries of itself. You have a right to have your own self government, your own laws in there, in that piece of land. That's what we believe in, that's what we're working on. We talk a lot about self government in our conferences. Sometimes I think maybe the Ontario ones should go and listen to these other conferences and we come and listen how we're going to do and how we're trying to protect each other. If we don't do that, some parts of this continent, the Indians will be perished along with those bad people. They are bad now. They got nothing to be bragging about them. Sure, they make everything, they even go to the moon and back again but that's what that snake was talking about when he persuaded them to eat that fruit. That's what's happening now. Sure. Digging mines in northern Saskatchewan for uranium. What's that for? That's for human destruction. So on, all over. Whenever they can get poison, they can that and close it up, save it to kill somebody. These guidelines ignore the development of Indian government and called for the municipalization of Indian lands and institutions. They were basically administrative guidelines designed to complete the policy of the 1969 White Paper and 1947 plan. We have to study those documents which you passed in your conferences and study ours, study Alberta's and so on. In Saskatchewan, when I first started in the organization working in 1932, got into the executive, we were

three groups in Saskatchewan. 1946, April 24th, we met in Saskatoon. These other groups decided to join us and form one provincial organization. The first organization which I came into in northern Saskatchewan was the organization that was brought by Fred Law from Six Nations. As he went from Elphinstone down to Thunderchild and Samson Reserve, Alberta, he planted seed into the minds of the people what to do. Ways and means to protect each other. Ways and means to protect their rights. That man done an awful good job for his own kind. But he was abused by the government. Finally, we never knew where he went but he was here, abused by the government. Everywhere he went, there was an RCMP there. He had one big conference somewhere around here, maybe on this island, or Sault St. Marie before he went west. I got a copy of his whole life history at home. I always wanted to know how he started and how he finished. He was a great man, a Mohawk. He done a great job. And that's when we started to organize because the

seed was in the minds of the people. They have to organize in order to be heard, in order to gain results in their work. I'm looking at it, not because I'm hungry but to have time. So, Mr. Law has done a great work. He was a smart man. I went with my father when Law came to Thunderchild Reserve in 1921. I was 21 then. But I got in their organization work in 1932. But I was already scrapping with Indian Affairs because I didn't take no dirt from anybody. After I found out when I went in school what they done to me in there and where I was heading for through their system. When I said I got mad, I was mad. I'm still mad, that's the reason I'm here, I need help from you people to defend my people in the west.

I'll continue on the Mohawk question with your permission, chairman. A little out of this question I'm speaking on, but it's on behalf of all of the Indian people across Canada. I was invited on the 16th to be at the Niagara Falls, New York to join this walking across the boundary. So I went. I flew over. And I had a meeting with those people and I spoke at their meeting right after we finished crossing. That's what they wanted me up there for, but they wanted all Indians to join them across Canada. See, when they first started, I think it's 1926, when they presented their case to the United States president so the president at that time reaffirmed what's on the treaty, that Indians can cross back and forth freely. And we need this freedom now, since we're trying to work together. Like your celebrations, you have a lot of United States people here. These people to be here, to come across also in our aboriginal beliefs. They can come and tell us what they plan to do. So in that case, they wanted to join their movement.

It's not because they want money. They got their own money. Mr. Rickhard and Mr. Hill, these two guys that started up this, they didn't want no grants. They were offered grants by the government to have those meetings and crossing the boundary and so on. They don't want any money from the government for fear some day to be cut off so they would be handicapped, or controlled by the government. So they refused. I think they were very smart people. We experienced this last few years. When we were fighting against the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution, we were getting all kinds of grants. The government said, "Bang, cut off." We were going to put England into court. We had a good case on them but we didn't have the money. We didn't have the support from the people of Canada. If we had, we would have had them in court. That's the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians I'm referring to. And Alberta stepped ahead and presented their case but their lawyer beat them instead of - in other words, made a full case out of it. But in this case, Canada don't agree with us, of Indians freely crossing the boundary. That's where the trouble is. But if we join these people across Canada, even people in the Yukon... They have trouble to cross the boundary between the Yukon and Alaska. We had a man, that's one we met in Toronto....

(End of Side A)

(Side B)

John Tootoosis:because it's not always going to be a Trudeau government in this country. There are going to be changes of governments. We might have a better, more sympathetic premier next time. We don't know. Maybe he just let us have this right which is ours. We can't afford to let our rights go to pieces like that, to disappear. We have to regain every bit of right we got. That's what I wanted to mention before. I'll go on this next topic.

(Inaudible conversation)

Now the time is catching up. And I don't, my old watch says 11:51. But I want to read this document, just a little bit of it. I don't think I'll have time before I leave. We got two more speakers that are going to speak. This is, this came up in the legislation in Regina on March 22, 1957. When NDP government was in power. In other words, the CCF government. Now this is what the man said that brought this case in, Mr. Blewaski(?) - "that this assembly commends the government of Saskatchewan for the interest it has shown in the problems

pertaining to our Indian population" - and he urges that the government take steps to, "negotiate with the government of Canada with the view to implementing such programs as will lead to an effective integration and advancement of Indians - prepare and draft and legislation tending to place the Indians on the basis of equality with the citizens of this land, of this province. Consult with the representatives of Indian bands throughout the province on all matters having to do with the aforesaid."

It was going too slow so this government presented this to the federal government to push it and get it done quick. That's the reason we notice now, they are working on it all the time. And there is one place here it goes on to say that they should... I'm just going to read this paragraph. He said, "I hope, Mr. Speaker, that we can approach this problem in a social, moral, and scientific attitude, free from all thought of personal or political (inaudible) or advances. If we do, we can count on the support of every socially minded citizen of this province, on the support of the churches and organizations, on the support of this Indian and Metis themselves." You see, he mentioned churches supporting this, to do away with everything, to rush it. And he goes on to say on the next page that we Indian people should be given the vote, federal and provincial vote because, ... I'll read that paragraph, ... "there are certain things which we can and should be forthwith. First, we can, as an example, and it is our intention to extend to the Indians, provincial franchise and I hope that we can persuade the federal government to do likewise. This would constitute a step towards citizenship."

That's all this vote is for - to work ourselves into full citizenship of Canada amongst the white people. It's not helping us. I never vote. Why should I be voting? For a

country to be administered by a government which is no more mine. When we have our band elections, nobody comes in there, just the Indians. That's our government. Because that's our country. No white man has the right to come and vote into another country which is no more his. Not anymore than the United States can come and vote in Canada for a government or Canada go and vote there, choose a government in the United States. We have that right. That's all for now. Thank you for listening.

(applause)

Speaker: I think the other two speakers won't be quite as long as John here. He is really in the political scene for too long. Well, anyways I would like to call on Louis Bruce, a Saulteaux from Saskatchewan to come up and say a few words.

Interruption: Mr. Chairman, may I take this opportunity to ask our people not to talk. Don't talk.

Louis Bruce: (Saulteaux)

Sid Fiddler: Before I call on the next speaker, Lawrence Tobacco, I'd like to maybe take this time for a few minutes. Since I'm the chauffeur for some of the elders over here, I think I came along here a little bit like what John said. It's not by luck that I came down here, too. It was meant that I come down when I was having a sweat with Lawrence Tobacco and he said, "Oh, I'm going down to Manitoulin Island." He said, "But I need a driver." And I said, "Well, geez, if I could swing it, I'll go with you and I'll drive for you." And now that I've come here, I'm here. And I'm thankful to the Creator that I've had the chance to meet some of the people here. That I've had a chance to listen to some of the talks, the speakers that have come here, had a chance to observe some of the ceremonies that have happened here and I've - academically, I always think about - you read about Ojibways - but that I never really know how close we were in the way we do things. And some of our rituals. Even as I listen to some of the language, the expressions that are heard, especially about when we're praying to the Creator. The similarities are so close that I feel a lot more closer now than just saying well, we are brothers with the Sioux, with the different people. Now I feel it. And that's been one experience.

One of the things that I'd like to mention when we were listening to John Tootosis here, in going through the education system and going through the political development of Indian people back about 400 years over here and 100 in the west, is that the dependence that we've had on the white people, we've depended on them for spiritual salvation, we've depended on them for political leadership, we've depended on them to do our thinking for us. We've let our own minds go because this is the way we've been taught ever since we've been small, you know. Like, we've been socialized to think that way. It's created a vacuum in that. That's what we say when we talk about the loss of our culture. We've created a vacuum

inside of us. Each has individual greed, which created a vacuum for whole nations, for whole tribes. We don't know ourselves. We don't have no more strength, we don't have no more pride. And consequently because of that, we have listened to that speaker that came down from St. Paul, Minneapolis and that the social/economic conditions of Indians, the suicide rates, the rate of alcoholism, health problems, the amount of people that are in jail are all some indication of the vacuum. Because we don't know ourselves, we don't know how to relate to the spirit, to the Creator no more. We don't know.

We've lost a lot that have given our Indian people, no matter how poor they were economically, a lot of strength within them,

a lot of pride, a lot of determination and that made them strong as they were growing up. We were listening to some of these elders speak about how to raise up their kids, about how to take responsibility, how to be self-disciplined and all of those type of values that are not traditional as much as they were part of Indian life. Because a lot of times when you talk about traditions, sometimes we tend to talk about things, our minds, our attitudes, it's a thing of the past. Like anthropology like one of the speakers was saying, it's a thing of the past. And we've helped it no longer applies to today. We can't go back to that lifestyle no more. That's the way we've been taught through the education system. It's insinuated because of the lack of Indian contents in the education system for our younger people, the lack of involvement by our community. Slowly, I think we're realizing that we have to go back and we have to turn back to our ways; That no matter how educated we are; whether we're lawyers, doctors, in the area of social work, education, that that type of education that you use to tap the knowledge skills, articulation, that you use in those particular areas of specialties that we get into in the white man's education; that those are just tools; that they shouldn't take you away and try to mould you into something that you're not. That you still remain Indian, that you still feel Indian, that you still have that relationship that you still go to the elders and that if you ask them for some help, if you ask them for something that you may want to go give them some tobacco and say, "I'm lost, I don't know too much. I need your help to help me in this particular problem that I may have right now."

Sometimes quite difficult for us as younger people I think because, like I'm no different from a lot of you in terms of the type of, the residential school life, from the type of education and some of the attitudes that I've had that I've had to change. I think that all of us have experienced it. A lot of our elders have talked about it and have said the same type of thing. We're seeing a great deal of revival, almost a rebirth. Indian people are almost getting reborn. To find out about their ways and just by listening in different workshops that are happening all over Canada and I'm sure they're happening in the States too, that this type of education, Indian education. Knowing about ourselves, listening to the

different speakers, we gain a better understanding of ourselves, we gain a better understanding of our culture and we become more whole, more whole people. We become a little bit more wiser and stronger. Perhaps we'll take something home that's going to help us in our individual life or for our own people. Something in what somebody said. A perspective. So that type of consciousness, they call it, "consciousness", goes on forever. It goes on, I think in, throughout our whole life,

even some of the old people that are strong in the Indian ways, they are continuing on there. They are not finished their growth and development. They are not finished the type of education that life has to offer them here. It goes on, it goes on.

And I'm glad for the organizers of this conference here because it almost reminded me of the type of organization that I was involved in back in my reserve about six years ago, in starting this type of cultural revival. Talking and getting some of the elders involved. Getting them involved in pipe ceremonies so that people will be able to understand what it means to be able to understand how we can help people to rid them of their misconceptions. There is fewer types of exactly what those type of things mean. So they can know things about, like offerings. What do they mean? Sweats, the different kind of sweats. What do they mean and exactly in what area can it help you? The meaning of the Sundances, the philosophies of our people, all of these things are - this is just a start for all of those types of things. It's a very good start and I'm encouraged that not only in Saskatchewan, in Waterhen where I come from, that this type of thing is happening, that it's....

(break in tape)

Sid Fiddler: ...make to accomodate our culture, to accomodate the type of things that we want as a community right within our own - whether it's the Birch Island Reserve or whether it's Waterhen Reserve or other reserves right within the community - to get the people reawakened, to get them moving, to get them involved in the community, in what type of life we want for our kids. Besides the academic education, learning the skills in the English language. Also, that education about life, about Indian life, about Indian culture, about Indian philosophy, to introduce that so that they can become whole people and go into the working force, into whatever area that they may want, strong in themselves, strong in their identity, strong in their belief and not have to compromise any of their culture to satisfy what is expected by the outside society. Not to give in to the very subtle forms of coercion into the white culture through the way you dress, through the type of racism that we may run into, discrimination that we may run into where we start, where those little type of the things start bothering us and we start having self-doubts about ourselves or of our own culture and maybe feeling a little bit ashamed of it. Because that's the type of negative things that come out whether you're conscious of it or whether you're unconscious of... those type of things do happen and it does affect you as you go out.

Maybe not so much right on the reserve but once you go out of the reserve communities, those types of things happen. And to combat that, to offset that, this is the type of education,

this type of activities and also having that suited so that the rituals, the ceremonies, to some extent are Ojibway in content.

We have our own way of doing things, in the Cree way, but the commonality of it is that we're all praying to the same Creator. We're all asking him for the wisdom to give us the courage to continue on, to continue on not compromising ourselves, not compromising our culture. To give us the strength to continue to be Indian people, and to continue our search for knowledge, our wisdom that is passed down through the elders. So this is all I'd like to say, all I have to offer. I have very little. I have very little to offer but at least I can share some of what I do know. I'd like to call on Lawrence Tobacco now to come up and say a few words.

Lawrence Tobacco: First of all I'd like to thank the director and the coordinator of this group. And at this time, I'd like to express my sincere thanks through our request from Mary Lou, director of this Cultural Foundation and also our good friend, the coordinator, Ernestine. In the past, I have made this journey in order to try to express myself to the value of our culture movement. At this time I'd like to express to you the very feelings I have that's within me at all times because when I recall our members in the days gone by that was expressed to me by my elders.

Today, being employed in the Federated College of Regina, a lot of times I have assemblies with this concern, and here again, a lot of times I'm requested to go into the field, areas where I could express the very feelings, the feelings that were given to me at one time. I believe at this time, we need a lot of assessments towards looking to the nations of our Indian identity, our heritage. I believe at this time, we have in our minds, and bear with us at all times taking out the future of our children.

When it comes to me, a lot of times when I sit in my room, I meditate on the future, of what's going to happen to the young people of today. As you all know, especially in our area which is varied to an extent. I don't know how great it is but we sure need assistance towards this kind of a purpose which we are having here today. So in regards to that, the feelings that I have brought from Saskatchewan, to come and share with you the glory and the purity of our minds, the way we humble ourselves in time of need, in time of prayer. Paying our respect to these pipe ceremonies which in no way at all different in all tribes, they are all similar. And I believe today, all these happenings are witnessed all over the continent of this North America.

A lot of times, in time of the past, I talk about values, the value system of Indian education. But not going beyond that, I want to say first that a lot of times when we call upon an

elder, no matter where he is, no matter where we are, when we

have a convention with this concern or a gathering, we call upon an elder. In time of the past we have come and learned the words and the wisdom and knowledge of our elders of yesteryears. And here at times, it bears my mind the words that were given to me by my elder people, which I would like to approach. From it I give information. Through that concern which is very deep in my heart at all times, I like to build that foundation. That foundation which our elders had at one time. As the old saying goes, all the elder people at one time of the Indian nations of this continent lived in harmony with nature, how they lived upon the face of this land. At that time there was no white people. At that time, the Indian nation of this continent didn't know what were the white men.

In terms of that, we have heard Mr. Tootoosis and also my good friend, my chauffeur, express the feelings what went beyond at that time when the natives of this continent seen the image of a person which was different in skin and the interior part of that said person. Which was in no way similar to our kind. We Indian people, we have our own ideas. We sit with one another. So, getting back, I call you back again on the elders. The elder people, they are our instructors, our teachers, in our kind of areas that is. They are the people with understanding, with the knowledge of the past because talking about a past, they have come to live the ways and means of survival that was given to them as a gift from our Creator. This is where the people, the future generations that is, have gained freedom of knowledge by approving all these informations from the elder people.

To this concern, we go on. They were the people that conducted all these tribes. They were the big bosses, they were the leaders. If there was any implementing to be done, they were the ones that looked into these matters. And persons, at this stage at that time, they were recognized from their people because in ways and means, they had a knowledge and wisdom. By doing this, they gained obedience from their peoples. In regards to that, I'll say this, a few years back, I'll say in the late sixties, all of these things were on the verge of being perished.

I got a call the day before yesterday when I was sitting out there in the shade. A good friend of ours spoke about a fire. I believe at that time, the people got together, they recognized there should have been a fire, a flame. But what happened to that flame? There was just a little spark that was left. That meant us people. We had to identify ourselves by that time. We had to know all these things, we had to solve our problems. So, what must we do? We call back on our elder people again. Because they were the ones, they were the resource people, they were the leaders at that time. We have forgotten those. And it came to light at that time, at that certain moment of losing our precious life. And today my friends, I went to a little gathering concerning about a

culture meeting of this kind and I heard a lot of elders talking about a flame which I just listened to a while back. Today I believe that flame is coming back again, that spark is coming back into a flame again which I am very glad. I want to say from the bottom of my heart, to come to this meeting of this nature, to come and see the feelings that you have towards the young people. I think we have a lot in common which we could exchange ideas. I believe this is the cause, I believe there is a meaning of why we come from different places, different areas. I know in a group here that I talked to a lot of people coming from the USA. I believe it was the intention of our Creator that we are here, at present, to accommodate with each other the ideas, exchanging of ideas. The definitions we got to iron out. By doing so, we got to unite. As you all know, a little while back Mr. Tootoosis said that we are a nation, a strong nation at one time. I believe I understand we are forming a nation once more but stronger and bigger. With that determination, with the future my friends, I think we're getting somewhere but we must never forget with the aid of our elders, we got to pay to that one above us. Because he's the one that gave us a mind, a true mind to work with at all times.

And here, wherever we go, a little further, when we talk about the young people, when we talk about technology, of education, philosophy of education, I believe this is where we can get assistance through the elder people all through the resource people. Today where I'm employed, this is what I do, this is my job. I'm trying to build a foundation for the young people so that they could understand and maintain for the future of their lives, for their children to be and grandchildren to be. When we talk about education, philosophy of our education, an Indian, I think it means a lot to a lot of people to understand the values that we have. The values that we've got to respect day in and day out. Here at one time when I was working up in Saskatoon, I sat with the elder people, the Saskatchewan elders and here we came upon a system. Because at that time we recognized anything of that nature wasn't recognized anymore back in reserve level. So we had to promote something. Something of value that we could extend to our present the future students of the college. And here we came upon, after so many days of discussion and planning, here we found a tipi, a tipi with fifteen poles. The value system, the one we talk about and this is where we based our lectures, our counselling. And I have brought with me a picture of this tipi and these poles represented of virtue. A virtue, a value of our lives, every day lives. Today my friends, we have a lot of problems. No matter where we are, no matter what tribe we are.

We got to find assistance somewhere, so in going back to what I mentioned, the values and the virtues of the poles, the tipi poles. I have brought with me a picture of this tipi. I don't

want to take too much of your time but here, probably, maybe some of our friends would like to know, would like to see the system we use with some of our students up in Saskatoon. And also today, this is a system we use, I'm using, in Regina. The

value system. Each pole represents a virtue. What we must do every day of our lives, what we must teach our young people, our young children and grandchildren. First, we talk about obedience. I believe we got to do a lot of talking to make these young people obey us. Especially in our area. I went to a lot of places and tried to conduct a meeting like this. A lot of times I have just a few, maybe ten, twelve, fifteen. Is that obedience? No, it's not. A lot of times I recall in my memory when I was given a little past when I was a young boy from my father and mother. I have gained experience ever since I was small. When I left school in 1934 we were living in a village. One day my father spoke to me. He was absent a few days. I didn't know where he went. And here, he told me one morning, "Son, we're going to..."

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