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DONALD SHERIDAN

Donald Sheridan worked in the Department of Natural Resources in northern Saskatchewan. He was associated with the school for prospectors and with other government programs. He was a socialist and a close friend of Malcolm Norris with whom he worked.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Schools for prospectors in Saskatchewan.  
- Malcolm Norris as teacher, philosopher, worker for native people, socialist, family man and friend.  
Murray: I'm speaking to Don Sheridan of Regina and formerly of the north where he was active with the Department of Natural Resources in the Minerals Branch. Don, you knew Malcolm Norris, of course, because Malcolm worked for the department as well. Can you recall when you first met Malcolm and in what context it was that you met him?

Don: I think I first met Malcolm when we were working together on what we had then as a prospectors' school. It was an adventure, as a matter of fact, that we had entered into. We conducted prospectors' schools in the south which, at that

time, was a sort of a new thing. So what Malcolm and I and others involved, too - he was mostly responsible for putting things together - we used to conduct prospectors' schools in Saskatoon, Regina, Moose Jaw, all the so-called settled areas of the province. I guess that's where I first met him. That would be about, oh, '47, '48, somewhere in there, '49.

Murray: Do you recall who took the initiative in establishing the schools? Was it Malcolm's idea?

Don: I would be 95 percent sure it was Malcolm's idea, yeah.

Murray: And this was tied in as well to the Prospectors' Assistance Plan, was it?

Don: Well, the Prospectors' Assistance Plan probably was an outgrowth of this.

Murray: Of the school?

Don: Yeah, right.

Murray: That developed later on then, did it? After the school?

Don: Yeah, it developed later on. The school continued and grew, then they had the Prospectors' Assistance Plan, which is another outgrowth probably of the school.

Murray: The school was the first institution to be developed?

Don: Yeah.

Murray: Could you describe that for me a bit? Was it going on all year? And how long were the courses, that sort of thing?

Don: No, they were night courses because, I suppose, an awful lot of people that came to them were probably investors who wanted to know a little bit about what went on in mining and this type of thing. And so, of necessity, they were night courses and they would run from a week to two weeks. And as I said before, they were in Moose Jaw, Saskatoon, Yorkton.

Murray: So you'd be moving around the province all the time?

Don: Yeah, right.

Murray: Were they held in the north as well?

Don: They were, on sort of an intermittent basis. As a matter of fact, I think Malcolm, and maybe myself at times, were probably the only two. When we had them in the south we

had some of the people in the department, geologists and

whatnot, you know, to assist.

Murray: Right.

Don: And in the north once in a while you'd have the resident geologist if we had one at that time. We did at Uranium City and we did at La Ronge for periods of time.

Murray: What centres in the north would you have held those classes? Do you recall?

Don: Yeah. Wherever a plane could land almost. Beauval, you know, Uranium City, Stanley, La Ronge...

Murray: Cumberland?

Don: Cumberland, Creighton.

Murray: How did you get people interested? You notified communities that this was available and then wait for a response?

Don: Actually what happened was Malcolm would probably send up a smoke signal and this is how we got people interested. It wasn't a very formal arrangement, you know, but once they knew Malcolm was in town... and he'd probably go ahead and make certain arrangements and we'd land there and we really had no problem as far as...

Murray: So as far as communications was concerned, Malcolm handled that as a one-man show?

Don: Pretty well, pretty well, yeah. Because he knew the people.

Murray: Right.

Don: And he had contacts throughout.

Murray: Right. What were the objectives of the classes as far as the north was concerned?

Don: Well, I think the objectives then, and maybe even today, were to try and make the native people, or get the native people interested in prospecting. And he thought, and so did I, that they were a natural for it, you know. They knew the bush. They didn't know too much about rocks, but they knew how to survive. You didn't have to teach them how to paddle a canoe. You did how to run the Geiger counter but that was about it. The objectives, basically, were just the...

Murray: To get people jobs eventually, I would say.

Don: Yeah.

Murray: How successful was it? What was the response of native people to the program as you recall it?

Don: As I recall. As far as the native people are concerned, the response was pretty darn good.

Murray: Did people stick with the classes?

Don: For the most part yeah, yeah. Again, we didn't conduct them on a school time basis.

Murray: Formal basis?

Don: No, no.

Murray: You would go into a community, how long would you stay?

Don: It varied. Because of the job that I had at the time, I would come in, go out, come in, go out; and Malcolm would probably be there for a week, ten days depending, you know. And he'd take them out into the action, into the field, show them rocks, show them how to drill and this type of thing, how to blast.

Murray: How to use a Geiger counter, all those things, eh?

Don: Yeah, yeah.

Murray: So there was field work as well as classroom teaching?

Don: Yeah, teaching, yeah.

Murray: Was it equally divided, do you think?

Don: I would say probably, oh the better of forty-six split, maybe.

Murray: With more in the field?

Don: Yeah. Right.

Murray: How many people would you normally get out to those classes in a place like Beauval or Stanley, do you think?

Don: Oh, I don't know, ten to twenty-five. Somewhere in there.

Murray: You get as many as twenty-five, eh?

Don: Yeah.

Murray: That would be quite a high percentage of the working population in a town.

Don: Yeah, yeah it depended on the... I think Island Falls, for example... I suppose it would depend on the proximity to a mine or to mining. But at that time, you know,

there was a certain amount of glamor with respect to uranium.

Murray: So there was a bit of consciousness of minerals at the time, even among the native people; although they hadn't been involved at that point?

Don: Yeah. Very, very much so. That's right. But this is the thing I think we kind of lose track of, that they are very conscious of, you know, what's going on.

Murray: Right. Even if they are not directly involved, they know what was happening?

Don: Right.

Murray: Were there many native people, before those schools started, active as prospectors?

Don: No. I think the answer is no.

Murray: Pretty much restricted to whites?

Don: Yeah, right, yeah. And which was I think, a breakthrough as far as Malcolm was concerned, that he was able to convince, if not companies, company representatives, you know, to hire some of these people, which they did.

Murray: He was active. Could you elaborate on that a bit about his connection and his attempts with the companies?

Don: Well, again, it was on a very informal basis. It could be, and was for the most time, over a bottle of whiskey or something, eh. And he knew all of the company representatives who would be working in an area. And even from his past time in the north. I think at that time he lived in Edmonton. But, and he knew these people, and he made contacts. And they would come along and say, "Have you got a good man?" And this is one of his ways of placing them.

Murray: So he was constantly on the move making arrangements, teaching as well as getting them jobs?

Don: Yeah, right, yeah, yeah.

Murray: Were the people successful in getting jobs with the companies?

Don: Yeah, they were. Yeah, to a little degree they were, yeah. There was no money involved. I mean, as far as programing, as far as government was concerned, there was no money involved. He did this purely on his own.

Murray: As far as contacting the companies were concerned?

Don: Yes.

Murray: What was Malcolm like as a teacher? I've heard from numerous people that in many ways he was a very impatient man. What was he like in the classroom, as you recall, and in the field teaching the native people?

Don: Oh, I would say he was probably patient. Which is maybe contrary to some of the stories you have heard. Very patient, he was. Even with me.

Murray: Did the native people respond to him well? Did they consider him a friend as well as a teacher, do you think?

Don: Oh yeah, yeah. A little more than a friend, as a matter of fact.

Murray: Could you elaborate on that at all?

Don: He settled disputes and, you know, a father confessor - let's put it that way.

Murray: He was?

Don: Yeah.

Murray: Can you think of any specific examples of that?

Don: Oh yeah, there were many. Well without mentioning names, I mean, patching up home quarrels and this type of thing, you know.

Murray: So he had his finger in everything.

Don: Yeah, right.

Murray: Was he considered a leader among the native people?

Don: I think so, yeah.

Murray: Were his classes always restricted simply to the technicalities of prospecting, or did he ever inject a bit of politics into the classroom?

Don: Oh, I'm sure he did. I'm sure I did. I mean, you have a philosophy, I don't see how you can get away from doing something. Yeah.

Murray: What kind of things might Malcolm say to the people he was teaching, as far as the political aspects might be concerned?

Don: Well, I think he used to make them aware of what was going on on the whole political spectrum and, without getting too specific, he had a socialist philosophy, as have I, and that was it. I don't care who you are, it's going to come through at times.

Murray: So when he taught it was in the context of a socialist...

Don: Actually, yeah. You know, it depended what was going on. If he was talking straight prospecting geology, maybe it didn't. It depended. We used to have a lot of, I suppose you would call them rap sessions, which we got more out of than sometimes the formal classes. And we could sit for hours with them going, you know.

Murray: With the students?

Don: Yeah.

Murray: And what kind of things would be...?

Don: Everything. Everything. It usually started out with prospecting and you'd get into the whole...

Murray: It's hard to remember that far back, but I'd like, if you can, to think of some specific things that might have happened, any conversations that you might recall on any specific topics.

Don: Well, I think one of the things that he constantly dwelt on was the down-trodden Metis. This was almost a fetish with him.

Murray: That was always in his mind?

Don: Yeah, right.

Murray: Would he sort of preach to the Metis people about their position?

Don: Oh, yeah.

Murray: What was their response to that? Did they see themselves then, do you think, as down-trodden or did it take quite a bit of convincing?

Don: Oh, I think it took quite a lot of prodding and whatnot. But certainly he sewed the seed. That much I am sure of.

Murray: Did he ever get impatient in that sense, talking to people about their oppression? And if they didn't respond to that suggestion what was...?

Don: Well, I don't think he'd get impatient, but if somebody wanted to give him an argument, you know, he was prepared. So whether you want to call an argument impatience...

Murray: Right.

Don: Depends.

Murray: Could you tell me your impressions of Malcolm as a person? His characteristics.

Don: Well, I would say that Malcolm was ahead of his time. As far as not only in the mineral prospecting field, but also as far as the whole rights situation is concerned. I mean, it wasn't a thing at that time, was it? Much ahead of his time. And he was very, very dedicated to this cause and he spent many hours of his own time, and many dollars of his own money, you know. And as far as I am concerned, a very genuine person.

Murray: Did he ever talk to you about what he would like to see in the north in specifics? What kinds of visions did he have of what the north would be like if the problems were solved?

Don: Well, I suppose on many occasions, since we lived together for a long time. Yeah, sure. I suppose in a very general sense he would have liked to see the native people have a bigger say in what went on in the north.

Murray: That was one of his main objectives.

Don: That's probably over-simplifying the thing, but that's what he wanted.

Murray: So more than specific things, he was thinking in terms of some control of decisions in the north by native people. Would that be an accurate description?

Don: Yeah. Fairly accurate, you know. Remember we're talking about what twenty-two, twenty-three years ago, maybe more. And that's what he wanted.

Murray: Right. Did he seem to be optimistic, at the time that you knew him, about those changes taking place?

Don: He was a man of many moods. Sometimes yes, sometimes no, I mean. So he had many heartbreaks as far as, you know, the job was concerned.

Murray: Can you recall some of his disappointments that he might have described to you?

Don: Yeah. He'd recommend certain people for jobs to mining companies and whatnot, maybe they wouldn't show up or something. There may be a valid reason, but this always hurt him, you know. And he'd always go back and investigate, on his own time, find out why not, you know. And sometimes give the individual hell.

Murray: Do you think that he gave him hell partly because he had let Malcolm down himself?

Don: Oh, I suppose, partly. I suppose that there's a little bit of egotism in all of us, but I think mostly because



he had this dream. He wanted them to become self-sufficient.

I mean apart from the trapping and the fishing and all the (?). He wanted to get them involved in the mining scene.

Murray: Right. Did he have a vision too that he wanted native people to have a same sort of responsible attitude, say, that is well regarded in the white society?

Don: No, no, he didn't. He was very, very definite about that. He knew that it would take a long time, and he never did try to equate the whites, you know, the so-called white society, with his own people. And I should probably mention here, for the most part when he was in the north, he didn't differentiate between the Metis or the native people.

Murray: The treaty Indian and Metis were all the same as far as conditions were concerned, so this is how he viewed it.

Don: Yeah, that's the way he viewed it.

Murray: There were treaty Indian people taking these classes as well?

Don: Oh, yeah.

Murray: So there was no problem there?

Don: No, no problem at all.

Murray: Do you recall any incidents or anecdotes that might reveal something about Malcolm Norris?

Don: Well, as I said, we worked together for quite a few years, and they used to have, and still have, what is called a Prospectors' and Developers' Convention in Toronto. So I guess for maybe ten, maybe twelve, consecutive years, Malcolm and I used to go down. So we always went down by train. And so you'd have lots of discussions in the smoking compartment of the train and whatnot. And I remember one particular incident. We get off at Toronto and he says, "This will never be a camp," he says, "this will never be a camp."

I remember another incident, I used to relate this to my wife. I could get lost in the bush quite easily, Malcolm used to get lost just walking around downtown Toronto. (laughs) It may not seem too humorous but...

Murray: (laughs) He'd never get lost in the bush, but he'd get lost in Toronto?

Don: Right, yeah.

Murray: Could you tell me a bit about those conferences? Was Malcolm active? Did he ever speak at those conferences or give papers?

Don: Yeah, I think when the Prospectors' Assistance Plan came into effect, which I think was around '50, he gave for two or three years running, first how the plan evolved and then subsequent years, you know, what had been accomplished. And at that time we had a director, his name was W. James Bichan and he encouraged this kind of thing.

Murray: He was director of...?

Don: Mines branch.

Murray: With DNR?

Don: With DNR.

Murray: And his name was...?

Don: W. James Bichan - B-I-C-H-A-N.

Murray: Can you recall what the response was at those conferences, to the idea of the assistance plan? Was it the only one in Canada at the time?

Don: At the time it was, yeah. It was the only one. Oh, I'm sure that some people are a little skeptical (a) because it was sponsored and funded by a socialist government, and I think at that time probably the only socialist government in Canada.

Murray: Some mining companies were not exactly friendly with them?

Don: Yeah. They weren't exactly friendly. They didn't want to climb aboard, as far that went, but they trusted Malcolm. They trusted myself probably, and Bichan.

Murray: So it was a somewhat ambivalent response to the plan?

Don: Yeah.

Murray: Do you know if other plans such as that one developed in any other parts of the country after that?

Don: Yes, yeah. In quite a few parts of the country, as a matter of fact. Maybe under different names and different guise.

Murray: Do you recall what provinces?

Don: I think the federal government had one as a matter of fact. I think Quebec had one, Ontario had a modified thing where they - oh, it was probably free recording for mineral claims, maybe free licenses and this type of thing.

Murray: Right. And do you think this was prompted by Saskatchewan's plan?

Don: I think so yeah, yeah. You see, at that particular point in time the Prospectors' and Developers' Association was probably THE voice, you know. I don't think it has the same clout now that it had then, for mining - not so much mining as prospecting.

Murray: It was a professional organization, basically, at the time was it?

Don: Well, it wasn't really. It was a semi-professional organization.

Murray: So it encompassed quite a few different kinds of people?

Don: Yeah right, yeah. Quite a few disciplines, as a matter of fact.

Murray: Right. I'm interested in finding out how Malcolm reacted to the city. He came down to Regina quite often, did he? What kinds of things would he do in the city beyond just his job that he liked? Did he like city life, do you think?

Don: He liked city life in P.A., yeah. I don't think he was in Regina... Well, I know he just did not like living in hotels. I don't know if we even had motels at that time. He used to stay at my home. I knew this. He just couldn't stay in a hotel. But city life in P.A. he liked, because his family were there.

Murray: What kind of things would he do in the evening after work in Regina? Would he read or listen to radio or...?

Don: Read. Either read, talk politics, talk about the native people, or get into philosophy, depending on how many drinks we all had.

Murray: But he was always talking about something, eh?

Don: Yeah, he was a great talker.

Murray: What kind of things, besides the plight of the native people, seemed to interest him? What political issues might he take an interest in?

Don: Oh, I guess Medicare, long before Medicare came into being. An awful lot of, an awful lot of things. As I say, he was a socialist, but a different type of socialist than maybe what we see in the world today.

Murray: How do you mean? Could you elaborate a bit on that?

Don: Yeah. He was a, I suppose the best way to put it is

unselfish socialist.

Murray: So it was a genuine concern for people on the part of Malcolm?

Don: Yeah, and in my opinion, very genuine.

Murray: Do you think he was motivated by wanting to live in a better world, as opposed to an altruistic sort of thing? Did he view the world around him as being a largely negative world?

Don: I think really he was motivated by what he saw in the north. Even prior to coming to Saskatchewan, I think he was motivated by what went on in his childhood. I know he was. He was motivated by what happened to his family, this type of thing.

Murray: Did he talk to you much about his childhood?

Don: To a degree, yeah.

Murray: Can you recall what kinds of things he told you?

Don: Well, they suffered a certain amount of abuse because of bias, and, you know. And this is probably one of the driving forces. He was determined that his family were going to... He didn't agree with the rules, but his family were going to get the best in the white man's world. Which is one of the reasons that Billy, his son, became a Ph.D., and all of his children, as a matter of fact, did very well.

Murray: Do you think there was any contradiction at all in him sort of trying to bring up his children to fit well and extremely successfully in the white world; and is there a contradiction between that and his view of the deficiencies of the white world?

Don: I'm sure there was, I'm sure there was. And I think that Malcolm would have been probably the first to admit it. But he did this because he knew that he wasn't going to be around, and he had to do the best for them. And he was trying to do the best for the family, the best for the people he represented, and this is the way he used to put it.

Murray: Right. So he wouldn't have at all imposed his political commitment on his family? That would be part of that.

Don: That's right. When you say impose, no he didn't, but I'm certain they knew...

Murray: They knew, of course, about his politics.

Don: And it rubbed off. Obviously it did, because, as I say, I lived in their house and he lived with me, so I know

what went on. You can't help it because he used to talk politics even at breakfast at times.

Murray: Can you tell me anything about the relationship between Malcolm and his family, as you saw it?

Don: Between Malcolm and his family. Well, I don't know. I hope you're going to edit a little bit of this. Malcolm had been married twice. Now I think the first time was a sad situation as between Malcolm and...

Murray: His first wife.

Don: His first wife. Not as between Malcolm and the children. So I think he made a special effort the second time - I know he did - to be around, and to cajole, to...

Murray: To be a father.

Don: Right. A very special effort. That I'm very sure of.

Murray: And this was partly in reaction to the misfortune of his first marriage?

Don: I think so. This is my opinion.

Murray: He didn't explicitly state this.

Don: Well, on occasions he did, sure, yeah.

Murray: He expressed his unhappiness about the memories of his first marriage.

Don: Yeah, he did. And he didn't lay too much blame on either party. He was away an awful lot of the time during the first marriage, you know. And later on, on the second one, he made darn sure... Because I know, I've driven with the man. We worked together, we'd probably finish up about 11:00 or 12:00 o'clock in La Ronge, and he would say, "I got to be back in P.A. Number one son," he used to call them number one son, number two son, "he's got something." And he'd be there. He had to be there for a P.T.A. meeting or whatever it was.

Murray: So he might drive back at midnight?

Don: Many times we did, many times.

Murray: So this was an important thing in his life. Do you think that he may have sacrificed some of his political commitment to the commitment to his family?

Don: Oh, I'm sure he did, yeah. I'm sure he did. Remember, at that time we'd do a lot of flying after we got to La Ronge. But we didn't fly from here to... well in my case, we didn't fly from here to P.A. I used to get on the train at midnight, which is no sacrifice, because you had a bed and this

type of thing. But, yeah, sure. The answer is yes.

Murray: And this would be in contrast, from your understanding, to the situation in Alberta? Is that an accurate...?

Don: I guess so, yeah. He didn't talk about that, even to me, that much, you know. And I knew him right up to the end. But, yes I would think that was a fair assessment.

Murray: His memories of his first marriage then were quite painful for him. Was that true?

Don: I think so.

Murray: Is that why he wouldn't have talked about it?

Don: Probably, yeah.

Murray: Or would he just not normally talk about his personal life that much?

Don: I think they are probably more painful. He talked about his personal life to...

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

Don: At the time Mary had some children. Well, they were "his," "hers," and "ours." And well, I suppose if you were picking a father of the year, I would have picked Malcolm.

Murray: He took an interest in everything his children were doing.

Don: Yeah.

Murray: I'm trying to get a feel for what it was like in Malcolm's house, between him and his children. Was he always talking to them? Was it a pretty close relationship between them?

Don: Very close, very close. And with his wife, too. With Mary.

Murray: Were the children young at the time you knew Malcolm?

Don: Well, as I say, there were three groups. The what he'd call "ours" were young, yeah. But the others, well Billy was growing up. I remember when Billy was going to school in Toronto and he'd go down there and give him a pep talk as far as, you know, the Ph.D., "Make sure you get it," and all of that - well, more than that. Yeah, there was a rapport, continually.

Murray: Did he try and save money to support his children in university or was that possible?

Don: Yes, to a degree. I think I'm getting into a realm here that I'm not too conversant with. But yes, in this way that if you made a good investment, let's say, you know, then he used to share that.

Murray: Right.

Don: And he always told me, "Well, this is what us native people do," you know. And I think he did, yeah.

Murray: Did he, in your experience, instill in his children a pride in their native ancestry?

Don: Very much so, very much so, yeah, yeah.

Murray: Can you recall that actually happening while you were there or was that something he would talk about?

Don: Yeah. I can recall one very vivid example. One of his girls entered a beauty contest. It was sponsored, I guess, by the radio station in Prince Albert. And he said, "Don't forget to tell them that you're an Indian." This type of thing, you know.

Murray: And how did they respond to that?

Don: Totally.

Murray: No hesitation to follow that.

Don: No hesitation to follow that direction.

Murray: What about Mary? Did he talk to her a lot about that as well?

Don: Oh, yeah. Very much, a lot.

Murray: What feeling did you get about Mary's response to his political involvement? Was she a political person at all?

Don: No, she wasn't, but she was an intelligent person, but not a political person in the sense that, I think, we're talking about. She knew what was going on in the world, and I think, for the most part, she felt that Malcolm was right. She probably didn't always agree with the way he went to do things.

Murray: What kinds of things might she have disagreed with him in his approach?

Don: Well, he was bombastic, and she probably would have liked him to be a little lesser. Would have liked him to be, at times.

Murray: Was this criticism on her part on the basis that she thought he would be more effective if he weren't so bombastic?

Don: I think, I think that was her thinking. I didn't question her too much on that because I was a guest.

Murray: But she would make comments along that line while you were there?

Don: Yeah.

Murray: What was Malcolm's reply to her criticism?

Don: He sometimes would put up a pretty good argument. Other times he would say, "You're probably right, dear." You know, something like this. But there was never any hostility.

Murray: Right.

Don: I can never remember, in all the time that I stayed with Malcolm, any hostility.

Murray: Any tension.

Don: None. None at all.

Murray: It was a happy household.

Don: It was a very happy household, yeah. My wife used to say the same thing, you know. Mind you, there would be crises, you know. I mean you have a large family, well, I suppose this happens.

Murray: Can you recall any particular crisis that you saw happen?

Don: Oh yes, I suppose there were many. I don't know if we should get into this too much. Yeah, there were quite a few of them.

Murray: But did the family all hold together well in response to those?

Don: Yes, right, yeah. Yeah, they did.

Murray: Can you think of any other aspects of Malcolm's life that would be worth recalling?

Don: Well, in latter years as you must be aware, he had heart trouble, and he was maybe too hard on himself. And he probably would have lived a little longer, but he was one of these chaps who used to boil inside and, you know, I don't think that helps at all.



Murray: What was he hard on himself for? What kinds of things was he critical of himself about?

Don: Well, it wasn't so much critical of himself, but things were going, you know - and even government-wise, or world wide. And he was a very well-read man. He used to get many, many publications and he'd read the publications. And he saw an article and it would bother him, this type of thing. And it really did bother him, and he used to kind of...

Murray: And he would rant a bit about certain things would he?

Don: Yeah, I'm sure it hurt him. I know it did.

Murray: So there would be a - would you say it was a sense of moral outrage in Malcolm about things?

Don: I certainly would, yeah.

Murray: That's the kind of thing that you're saying, that he would read an article and find something in that very disturbing?

Don: Yeah.

Murray: From a political or moral point of view.

Don: That's right. Or even in everyday life. I remember one instance where he walked into a cafe one day, or somewhere, and this particular chap was abusing the waitress. And that really upset Malcolm. This type of thing, you know.

Murray: Did he do anything about that or did he just express this?

Don: Oh yes, oh yes, he did. At times he would. It depended, you know, on the mood.

Murray: Can you recall that incident?

Don: This incident? Yeah, yeah. He walked over to the guy and shook him. Let's put it that way.

Murray: He actually physically grabbed him?

Don: Yeah.

Murray: What was the fellow doing to the waitress, just bawling her out?

Don: Well, you know, yes. And I suppose you'd say giving her a hard time.

Murray: This was a manager was it?

Don: No.

Murray: What was it, a customer that was doing that?

Don: Yeah, right. One of the chaps at the counter.

Murray: So Malcolm's sense of justice, if you like, was always right at the surface?

Don: Yeah. Regardless of who it was, you know. I mean, primarily it was because he was in the north and he had dealt with Indian people, but it didn't make that much difference. If he saw something went wrong somewhere, it bothered him.

(Break in tape)

I can't remember the chap's but there was one particular fellow. I guess he was in Yellowknife, Malcolm, at the time and this one geologist, who later became, I think, a fairly wealthy man - not that that's a criterion, well it is to a degree, I suppose - but anyway, this chap.

Murray: In what way did he influence him, politically then?

Don: Maybe politically, not politically politics, but he had an influence on him, yeah. I guess Malcolm worked for him as a young man and this particular gentleman probably had similar qualities to Malcolm. He used to be outraged at, you know, injustice, let's put it that way.

Murray: So he found in this man a sort of common ground with him?

Don: Yeah.

Murray: In what way did Malcolm influence you? What kind of things did you learn from Malcolm?

Don: Well, I suppose I learned maybe a little, a little bit about tolerance. I learned a lot of things - I'm sure I did. I learned a lot about prospecting. I knew something about it but I didn't know that much. But oh, I guess I learned a lot.

Murray: Was he a teacher in that sense that he was always trying to influence people?

Don: I can only speak from my own experience. I don't think he tried to but you couldn't help... I'm sure that most people can pick a phony from a non-phony. And if you worked and lived with a man, you can tell what he is. You begin to think, well, now this guy is no phony. So you watch and you listen. I was younger at that time...

Murray: Do you think he influenced other people as well?

Don: Oh, I'm sure he did - I know he did. I'm sure that he was the one that probably lit the spark as far as native people becoming interested in rocks, if you want to call it that. Because they weren't at this time, with very few exceptions.

Murray: What about white people outside the north? Did he influence them, do you think, in terms of understanding the north?

Don: I think he helped, I'm sure he did. He helped considerably. I know that the MLA's for the northern constituencies - there was a chap by the name of Bill Berezowsky was one - and sure, they used to come and talk to Malcolm, you know.

Murray: And get advice from him?

Don: And get advice, yeah. Whether they always took his advice, I don't know, but I know they did.

Murray: So he was a man who was consulted?

Don: Oh, yeah.

Murray: Quite often? About political things as well as...?

Don: Oh, sure. Yeah. He was the man on the spot, he knew the people, he was the barometer.

(END OF SIDE B)

(END OF TAPE)

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