

The Métis in the 21st Century Conference

June 18-20, 2003

Saskatoon

Dinner and Play

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Norman Fleury: I guess when we said we were a lost culture, we never were a lost culture. We always had it, but we, we filed it away. And now we've learned to find it. We've learned to look at our resources, and those resources are our own people, ourselves, our elders. Those are our main resources, and so those are, that's why when we're talking about the Michif language and the Michif culture, I didn't have to practice it. I was raised in that environment. I grew up in that environment, so that was a plus for myself. And I know I have some young children at home, and that want to learn, and they want to learn the dances, and they want, they want to learn the legends and the stories. I know, Paul, coming back to, Paul Chartrand, when we are at the annual general assembly of the Manitoba Métis Federation. I gave workshops on the Michif language, and we were talking about Nanabush and Wesakejack and Chi-Jean, but we, we can't talk about those stories now, it's summertime. Those were winter stories, and they'd say, **[speaks Michif]**. So those were, and there's good stories, like real life stories of, of Nanabush and Wesakejack.

But our people also like to eat **[speaks Michif]**, like the stomach of the animals and the intestines and the heads and the, and the legs, so there was these people back home. They went to a Virden, Manitoba, and there was an abattoir, there, there's a slaughterhouse. And they went, they were drinking a little bit and they were, they said, "Well, we'll go and get **[speaks Michif]**, you know, at the butcher shop on our way home." So they went to the slaughterhouse, and they got a, an animal head, like a beef head, and they got some legs and some, the tripe and the stomach, and they were going home. And I guess the driver was a little too tipsy. He was drunk, so they hit the ditch and the trunk flew open, and the head was over here and

the leg and the guts. And, of course, the police came along, and they said, "Hey, how fast were you going when you hit that cow anyway?"

So, like, those were some stories that we have to tell about us. And it's, there's more stories. It's like this lady that was walking home, and she, she stopped for a rest at this lady's place, and she was English. And this Michif lady, and so this English lady was making tea biscuits, but it was starting to rain, so this Michif lady looks out and she says, "**[speaks Michif]**." So that lady gave her a, a piece of a little tea biscuit, and a little while after she said "**[speaks Michif]**." So she gave her another one. And then again she said "**[speaks Michif]**." She says, "To hell with you. I'll give you another one. I gave you one already." So it's just the communications of Michif and English. I'll give one and **[speaks Michif]**.

So, but anyways, there's, I'd like to, I know there's things that I was wanting to talk about, but we've talked about quite a bit, like people were talking about les boulettes and les bangs. And one lady said last night she never knew what boulettes were or les bang. Well, actually, les boulettes, that's the meatballs and that's what they call les boulettes. And that's a traditional food and it's something we, when we gathered at my grandmother's place on Sundays, every Sunday, and it was fast. You could cook it quickly, and you had a lot of hamburger, which you made with the rabbit or whatever you had. And, and that's what we ate, les boulettes and bannock, les galettes puis bangs. And they also ate, like, beans. My grandmother used to make a big pot of beans, and that's what people, and then they'd laugh, and they'd say **[speaks Michif]**. Just different things like that, you know. And they would laugh about it.

But, anyways, with that I would like to say that it's been an honour to talk about different things, and I think people are starting to want to know more about their stories and their history and their language. And it's through our language that we find different things. So I'd like to thank you again for your time, and, and have a good trip home, and I hope you enjoyed yourself. I certainly have. Thank you.

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