

Nora Cummings, Peter Bishop, and Ron Laliberte:  
Métis Political Activist Interviews (Feb 28, 29, 2004)

Tape 1

**Start Time: 4:29.20.07**

**Ron Laliberte:** Sounds like you had to have a pretty tough skin back then to actually be that brave to go out there and throw your hat in the political ring and, and, you know, all the experience that you had with that?

**(Video Time: 4:29.29.28) Nora Cummings:** It, it was, not only was it for, with, within the...**(Inaudible)**...even with our own men. I remember speaking at a conference one time, 'cause traditionally our men believed our women should be at home. And I remember one older fellow got up and said to me, "You woman should be at home baking bannock and raising your kids. You have no damn place to come and speak here, to be a politician." And it really frustrated me and I thought and I, you know, but again with respect I, so after I went down and I talked to him and I said, "I'm really upset, that how you treated me up there. Would you, you know, when you talk about women you're talking about your mother was a woman. Who brought you into the world?" And we had a good talk and after that he shook hands with me and he said, "No woman ever come and talked to me like that, but I, I respect you for that." So from, so we kind of built that relationship. And then I think if I would have stood up there and yelled at him or hollered at him then we wouldn't have been able to do that. It was just how, but I, we traveled and we work in the circles with all of these guys and, you know, I

work very well with the, with all of them. I was just like one of the guys because you learn and, and I remember Clarence and Sinclair and Rod Bishop was another one, his brother. They would say to me, "Nora I know it's tough but be like a duck and let it just roll off your shoulders and just keep going. Don't give up 'cause there's a lot of work to do." So I had a lot of encouragement from these people and that meant a lot to me.

**Ron Laliberte:** Yeah. I, I see that, you know, you got a lot of people that helped that, you know, encouraged you, like Rod and Jim and, and others like that from the Métis community. Where there any, you mentioned Roy Romanow and Diefenbaker. Were, were these people that inspired you, politically to, to become involved? Or did you look at them or admire, admire any of their attributes as politicians and say, you know, "Gee I'd like to be like that." Did they inspire you to...

**(Video Time: 4:31.25.17) Nora Cummings:** Do you know, I, the person that I really, really inspire, well I liked old John Diefenbaker, but on, the more one I really liked, it was Prime Minister Trudeau. Any why I say that is I, I came down to the Midtown Plaza. He was speaking here one time and they were never liked in the west. But he did come one time I remember and I wanted to go and see him. I wanted to hear him speak. I've heard of him, and I went down and I listened, and oh, he got such a rough time. But, you know, I admired him for standing up what he, his beliefs, I felt, what his beliefs and he was able to stand there and, and take the knocks and I thought, "Wow, I wish I could get strong like this guy someday." And that's how I, I felt, you know, I admired his strongness.

**Ron Laliberte:** Courage.

**Nora Cummings:** Yup, and I always, I, I didn't like the party but I admired him as a person. You know, and also John Diefenbaker. Romanow, he was alright but I was never really a, to say that I was a fan of Roy's. I wasn't. I think it's just that Roy and I kind of had, when we just didn't hit it off and I don't know if it was because, I think it was just the way he, he presented himself to women. I thought, I, I just felt that he wasn't really a supportive person. Mind you Clarence would say to me, "Naw he's a good guy, kid." He used to always call me kid, you know. So then, "Well, that's good. That's your buddy," but, you know.

**Ron Laliberte:** Well, he was a west side boy.

**Nora Cummings:** Yeah.

**Ron Laliberte:** Wasn't he?

**Nora Cummings:** Yeah.

**Ron Laliberte:** Romanow?

**Nora Cummings:** Yeah.

**Ron Laliberte:** Grew up Westside.

**Nora Cummings:** But, you know, and I admire now when I see a women in government.

**Ron Laliberte:** Yeah.

**Nora Cummings:** You know, it, it, it inspires me to say well I think it's good. And I always think that it was women like the Josephines and the Alice and Mrs. Fiddler and all of these people that encourage and even myself, for that matter, to make sure that these women now they become...

**Ron Laliberte:** Sure.

**Nora Cummings:** Very strong and, and I, I admire them that they would take it. I have, I don't have any respect for women that are petty. Because I think the issues are there to deal with. I don't feel, I think we're here to do, to work on, on issues. We don't have room for pettiness.

**Ron Laliberte:** I think, I think the Métis Nation and the Métis people would agree that you've been a strong role model for women in politics.

**End Time: 4:33.48.11**