

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

Tape 1

Start Time: 4:52.39.01

(Video Time: 4:52.39.01) Peter Bishop: So they had to shut it down. But there's so many things that my Dad was involved in, in the community, that made a difference in the lives of these people. Made a big difference as a matter of fact, because they didn't go running to the priest. They are the ones that told them to vote Liberal. They never went running to the Liberals, they wouldn't have helped them. But it was my Dad that made sure, if it wasn't vegetables from his garden or meat or fish, most of it was dried meat and dried fish, a lot of those people just starve. That's one thing we never did. Another thing my mother used to do. She used to pickle our vegetables, go berry picking. So we used to have a lot of berries and stuff like that. She'd give them away too, as well, to needy people. These are some of the things that my parents did for the people in Green Lake. I often wish when at that time that my father instead of running around acting as an interpreter for the white candidates that were running. He should have ran because he was self-educated. He learned so much from the, from being in school but he only went as far as grade eight. But he was self-educated by being involved in politics. I saw a letter one time that my brother Rod had, that was written by my father. He had written this letter to Tommy Douglas and you could have sworn that it could have been written by any university graduate. He

was, he was that good, my father. So he did, held a lot of influence within the CCF party. How else could he shoot a moose and get away with it? No that, so he did influence and later on course it was Rod. And, of course, although Rod was not a, you might say a, a supporter of any political mainline party, he yielded quite a bit of influence though as well. But he had his reasons for not supporting the CCF, my brother, Rod. He ran for two elections.

Ron Laliberte: For?

Peter Bishop: Independent, Indep-, Independent Native...

Ron Laliberte: Okay.

Peter Bishop: ...Labour candidate

Ron Laliberte: Okay.

Peter Bishop: Now he wouldn't run for the CCF or the Liberals or the Conservative. He ran as an Independent, you remember that... And in 1975 was the first election that he ran in. He came in third. I went with him that time, campaigning with him.

Ron Laliberte: What was most of the community then? If he came in third, what did they vote?

Peter Bishop: They voted for...

Ron Laliberte: Was it CCF?

Peter Bishop: ...at that time, yeah, already it was NDP. Freddy Thompson was...

Ron Laliberte: Oh yes, oh yes. Okay.

Peter Bishop: Yup.

Ron Laliberte: Yeah.

(Video Time: 4:56.08.02) Peter Bishop: But Freddy Thompson used to intimidate the people. Those was, much like the priest was, he used the same methods. That's why had no choice. Besides he had the NDP machine behind him. But in any case, Rod would go out, you know. He's, he's running and he's working his, you know, his campaign. And I went with him. And we visited mostly Native communities. And then Rod would sit down and say, "I'm Rod Bishop from Green Lake and I'm running, you know, as an independent." And he'd ask, "Who are you going to vote for?" "I'm gonna vote Liberal." "Okay." So I said, "Why are you voting Liberal?" She couldn't tell me but she was devoted to the Liberals. This is what the church had done to her. Visited another woman, the same thing. Like we spoke in Cree. "Going to vote Liberal." "Why are you voting Liberal?" I wanted to know. I mean there is a reason why you are going to vote for a political party but like I said before those were so apolitical anyway to begin with.

End Time: 4:57.42.09