

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

Tape 2

Start Time: 6:22.29.02

(Video Time: 6:22.29.02) Ron Laliberte: Okay, maybe we can look at some more contemporary Métis politics and talk about the *Constitution Act* of 1982 and including the Métis in the *Constitution* as one of the Aboriginal groups of Canada and, of course, Harry Daniels' role in all of that. How do you, how do you see that impacting on Métis politics and from your point of view, how important was that to the Métis movement?

(Video Time: 6:23.00.18) Nora Cummings: Well I think in 1982 when they, we were intense in the *Constitution*, Section 35 in the *Constitution*, I think, that played a, that was the beginning, I think, for us as Métis as being recognized as a people of our own, as a Nation, as Métis. Prior to that we were never really recognized as, as, as a people. And now that that is entrenched we do have, have a status, I guess you'd look at us as. And I think it's, it, at that time as it was exciting for me, I know, because for the very first time government had recognized us. But not without the work of our, our leaders and, and I say that with, 'cause I always feel that if it wasn't for people like Harry Daniels, Jim Sinclair, and Clem Chartier, people that were in the forefront of making sure this is happening. I'm grateful as a Métis because I think it was them that made it possible, and as well as Tony Belcourt. And I think a lot of times people don't recognize on the national

level at one time there was the Native Council of Canada which was recognizing status and non-status and Métis. Or non-status and Métis. And, and again our Nation, our provincial level was as well as that but as time turn, went on it, it then became the Métis National Council. But before that it was these people that made that happen for us. And I recognize these leaders with, with a lot of respect. Because without them it would never happen, and they all played a very big role in this.

Ron Laliberte: You mentioned earlier, if I could go back that, that when there was that split between the Métis and the non-status that you had a conversation with Jim Sinclair about how you felt about that. Could you just sort of touch on that again? I, I can't remember if you were talking about that in regards to AMNSIS? You might have been I think.

Nora Cummings: It was, it was then when we in 1982, I believe it was, was it '82 we made our division or '83? Peter?

Peter Bishop: I think it was shortly after, I think....

Nora Cummings: No, no. It was in – it was in '80, '87 when we made the...

Ron Laliberte: Yes, I think that's correct.

Peter Bishop: Yeah.

Nora Cummings:made the Métis, decided that they were going to then...

Peter Bishop: Split.

Nora Cummings: ...to make that decision to split with the, with the non-status. And Jim Sinclair had, and I were very good friends. And his wife, Est-, Agnes. And when Jim and I, when, like I said, I give a lot credit to Jim. He was a great leader to us. He's done a lot of hard work. And then of course he

had the people's support and he had good people working with him, such as Rod Bishop, you know, all of these people that worked with him. But in the, all and all when it came time after this taking us to the, all this, to the talks, I always call them. It came time then that the Métis really felt that we had to then start recognizing ourselves as ours, as our own people, as Métis Nation. Our own....

Ron Laliberte: That stemmed from the *Constitution* 'cause....

Nora Cummings: Right.

Ron Laliberte: ...they mentioned the Métis in...

Nora Cummings: Yeah.

Ron Laliberte: ...as one of the Aboriginal groups.

Nora Cummings: Yeah.

Ron Laliberte: ...in Section 35, 2 Indian, Inuit, Métis...

End Time: 6:26.52.08