

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

Tape 2

**Start Time: 6:31.23.27**

**(Video Time: 6:31.23.27) Peter Bishop:** ...as well. And of course, the status Indians had their own group too, as well. And they're trying to meet with the House of Lords in the British Parliament. They wanted their rights entrenched in the, in the *Constitution* by the House of Lords before it came back to Canada. They were afraid that if it went back without their endorsement then, you know, our rights once again would be ignored. As it happened, the House of Lords wouldn't endorse it. It came back the way it was, but then they started dealing with it after. That was the year of 1982 when Pierre Trudeau and the Queen signed the...

**Nora Cummings:** The Accord?

**Peter Bishop:** The Accord, yeah, that time. Okay. Now we had our own Constitution. But in it, it said that the Métis, the Inuit and the Status Indians did have Aboriginal rights. Aboriginal rights that Status Indians had for years and years and years. Inuit, yes they had their rights recognized too, as well. But it's the Métis' rights that they were pushing for were not recognized. We're pushing for land tenure like we did a long time ago. Our own land. Same kind of rights that the Indians were having, like fishing and hunting rights. These are some of the things that we thought as Aboriginal people we had the same right to them, than say our Indian brothers and sisters. So

eventually what came out of that was finally the Saskatchewan government recognized the fact that the Métis had hunting rights. But see what happened they included the whole province, especially hunting and fishing rights. And we wouldn't have had that if it wasn't for Clem Chartier going to court for this one Métis from Yorkton. His name....

**Ron Laliberte:** Grumbo?

**Nora Cummings:** Grumbo.

**Ron Laliberte:** John Grumbo yeah.

**Peter Bishop:** Yeah that's the fella. Yeah. If it wasn't for him then we wouldn't have had those fishing rights and hunting rights.

**Ron Laliberte:** For two years anyways. Yeah.

**(Video Time: 6:33.54.26) Peter Bishop:** Yeah. Anyway what was happening after the Saskatchewan Métis got those rights there was the Métis from Alberta and Manitoba were coming into Saskatchewan and going after our game. Because it was the Saskatchewan Métis that were granted those rights. They didn't grant those rights to Manitoba or Alberta Métis. So the government decided to scrap it and say no we can't have it. That there's people from the outside that are coming in there and killing our game. Well I think it was the Saskatchewan Métis were complaining too, as well, especially from Northern Saskatchewan. So the government decided to make changes and now they still have rights in Northern Saskatchewan for hunting and fishing. But you have to be a resident of Northern Saskatchewan in order to exercise those rights. The southern Métis were left out again. But now recently where there was that court case in Sault Ste. Marie where the Métis

were accorded hunting and fishing rights, but in just one general area around the Sault Ste. Marie area.

**Ron Laliberte:** The *Pawley* case, right.

**Peter Bishop:** But now the Métis are using that to further their agenda and say if they can get those rights, the Métis from Manitoba, the rest of Ontario and parts of Saskatchewan and Alberta, and who knows maybe in British Columbia, they want to have those same rights too, as well. Because if you recognize one group of Métis people in this country, you have to consider that there's other Métis groups that are going to question your decision. And they're going to fight to try and get those same rights. We've had the two Accords, was it, there's a Meech Lake Accord...**(Inaudible)**...

**Nora Cummings:** Initially.

**Peter Bishop:** Initially. And then the other one was in Prince Edward Island, I forget the name...

**Ron Laliberte:** Charlottetown?

**(Video Time: 6:36.04.17) Peter Bishop:** Charlottetown, yeah. But I remember the time when they were discussing those rights – the Meech Lake Accord. Grant Devine was the Premier of Saskatchewan and Vander Zalm, Bill Vander Zalm was the Premier of BC and we needed the support of seven provinces so that we could pass the Meech Lake Accord. In that Accord the Métis were given certain rights, such as hunting and fishing and rights to land ownership....

**Ron Laliberte:** Self-government.

**Peter Bishop:** Self-government yes.

**Ron Laliberte:** Enumeration, yeah.

**Peter Bishop:** And, two provinces turned us down. There was BC and Saskatchewan. That's when Sinclair got up and he pointed fingers at those two guys and I'll never forget because it's on tape right now. It's in the archives. I know that, I've seen it. And I was watching TV when that announcement came. Jim Sinclair turned to Devine first and he told him in no uncertain terms that you've never, ever tried to work with us, or tried to fight for us for our rights. And yet, when you knew when you were going to it, election, you phoned Mulroney and he bought you a billion dollar election. That really embarrassed Grant Devine. He didn't know which way to turn. And then he got after Bill Vander Zalm. He said, "You, a man from a different country," that's when he'd been here for a short while, "You're telling the people and the government of Canada that we don't have those rights. You're lucky that you do have certain rights here in Canada now that you're a Premier of British Columbia. And yet these are the same rights that us, Native born Canadians are looking for rights, and you, you're refusing us?" You know, access to those rights. And, of course, those two premiers they just didn't know what to say after Jim Sinclair. And after that was over you should have seen all the people behind, including the status Indians, they all rose up in support of Jim Sinclair.

**End Time: 6:38.33.34**