

Mike Mercredi, Frank Tomkins, Ron Laliberte
Métis Political Activist Interviews (Jan 24, 25, 2004)

Tape 1

Start Time: 11:36:38.02

Frank Tomkins: Malcolm with his education, his background, and his thoughts for doing justice for the, for the Métis people. Brady the same thing and Brady was, you know, he wrote down everything that happened. You know, he was really dedicated to recording history as he saw it as though it transpired in his day. My father was an organizer, he was a real good organizer and they depended on him to go out and organize the people. And then they had their thing as well so that the combined effort by these guys they were able to accomplish a great deal in, in Alberta. I, I don't say one crowd deserves any more than the other because I think it made a bit difficult to be able to do anything if it hadn't have been a combined effort. And there was people on the, from the church that was, that was, you know, sympathetic at the time. The Bishop was, the Bishop was, he seemed to be anyway because he was part of the Royal Commission and then there was Father Falair, he was quite, quite sympathetic to the Métis cause as well. So I think that's like at the time I think the only political organization that they favored then was the Social Credit. Because the Social Credit was the ones that was, you know, Aberhart was, was Premier and the, no question that they wanted to do something. They had some good people in Dr. Cross, was the Minister of Health and Dad was able to, to get Dr. Cross and, and medical

people to come into Grouard when I was just a kid. I was two years old and there was quite an outbreak of syphilis at the time in Grouard and my father got, you know, what pull he had with my grandfather as well, I suppose, and along with Malcolm and Brady, they were able to get the doctors to come in from Edmonton to, you know, treat all the sick. And I was two years old at the time and I'm told that I got my adenoids and my tonsils out at that time. And that was free of course. The government did this on their own. So this is the kind of thing I suppose that helped the Métis movement, you know because these guys did something for the people. Let's support them, let's get organized and be behind them all the way. So I think, as far as either one of them influencing me, you know at that time, I was just a kid you know, and, and, you know wasn't really too much involved in, in politics at all. None of us kids were, were, and I think back now, I think where the three sort of failed is they didn't get the younger people more involved. More involved in, in what they were doing because, you know, after, when the war started everybody sort of went their way there was really nobody to carry on the movement as, as it was. The government, of course, then as well sort of when they got rid of my father as supervisor of the settlements they got a white supervisor in there and they just sort of held the people down for a quite a number of years. And it's only through the education system that, let's face it, 1939 there weren't too many people educated that were on the settlements, very few if any. Most of them didn't even speak proper English. But thirty years after, or fifty years after there's a lot of educated people now. And they've kind of taken over the Métis settlements and they call it the

Federation, Métis Federation, I think it is, what is it now, Federation, anyway, in Alberta. And they have quite a bit of political clout, and I think they're, except for the fact that, that like everything else, a large family sort of controls the settlements. You know this happens on Indian reserves as well. Which is, which is not the best way to run a community or town or village or, or settlement, or, or reserve. But they come a long ways. I've, I've been down there to see the settlements and they've grown tremendously and it's, the main reason of course is the education.

End Time: 11:41:25.14