

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

Tape 1

Start Time: 11:58:22.18

Mike Mercredi: Yeah. I went to La Ronge in 1979. And it was at that point I started getting more, more active. So I was sort of late comer, coming into Métis politics. And I came into the, to the local ,perhaps no idea of what we needed to do. But one of the things I recognized very rapidly is that we, we need to have resources and we needed to have resources that were our own. Not the resources, the money, the gifts that we get from the generosity of the, of the provincial government. And I keep telling people is that every time we seek funding, or every time we accept funding we crawl under the thumb of the government. So that they keep more control on us. I was working for the Aboriginal Affairs in Alberta in 1990 and my job was to go around and visit all of the Métis locals to try and get them interested in creating businesses. So I traveled from one end of Alberta to the other, up north and down south and all the points in between. And it was the same message all along. It was that they needed the money, they needed the resources. So my perspective on this is that we have a political movement, a local political movement, we're trying to do that in La Ronge right now. We should also have revenue ... **(Inaudible)** ...generating arm so that we can create our own dollars. And would you believe it I just drafted up a proposal requesting money from the government for a thousand dollars to do a

strategy workshop in a couple weeks. Our local didn't have any money. They've done the bingos, and they get pennies from that and, you know, we try to give it out to, to the membership to help them out. But there's nothing coming back and once you give it out, it's, it's gone. So you turn around and go to the government again and say give us more money. McKenzie he was the Secretary of AMNSIS, what was his first name?

Frank Tomkins: Neil?

Mike Mercredi: No.

Frank Tomkins: Wayne?

Mike Mercredi: Wayne McKenzie.

Ron Laliberte: Wayne McKenzie.

(Video Time: 12:00.56.19) Mike Mercredi: Yup. And, and in the 1980s, something like that, Wayne came up to northern Saskatchewan and he was visiting all the locals. And according to this perceived agreement we're going to get with the government, there's going to be lots of money for the Métis. So, of course, we listened very closely and I never heard this verbatim but somebody was saying that Wayne was saying he's going to come around with a satchel full of money and go to the locals and give them money to start things. Of course, that never happened and I think it was a, a dream of whoever was telling that story, you know, hoping that somebody would come by with a satchel full of dollars. But just suppose you were coming to a community, coming to La Ronge right now and say we'll be back here in a month or so with a satchel full of dollars. That guy's got our support. And but again so we're relying on, again, the generosity of the federal government,

provincial government and we need to create our own independence and we need to do it by working hard and working together. We cannot take off in different directions.

End Time: 12:22:10.09