

Mike Mercredi, Frank Tomkins, Ron Laliberte

Métis Political Activist Interviews (Jan 24, 25, 2004)

Tape 3

Start Time: 9:47:21.23

(Video Time: 9:47.21.23) Ron Laliberte: It's just interesting when you look back, you know, the reasons why Métis people became enlisted and then, you know, how that changed our attitude once they got out. I mean here they are overseas, or wherever, fighting for freedom and then they come back and then there is all these restrictions against you if you are Aboriginal, whether you're Métis or whether you're First Nations and how that politicized people, I think, in terms of, you know, of coming back and, and experiencing oppression. I think that, I mean, obviously there were a lot of people that became political activists after the, after the war and you're, I think you're two prime examples of that. You know, when you take a look at those people that came back after the war you think there was any influence from amongst those people in creating some of our political institutions now like Gabriel Dumont Institute and becoming politicians that worked for the Métis people and their communities to create a better life for Métis people? Do you see any of that linkage there?

(Video Time: 9:48.18.14) Mike Mercredi: You know, like today the names I can think of in that were in the military is, of course, you Frank, and Sam Sinclair from Alberta, and in First Nations there was David Ahenekeew. The leaders that made it to the top of our organizations had little or nothing to do

with the military. So when I start reflecting back I, I, you know, your question is very difficult for me to, to react to, is that did they gain any political astuteness in the military that they could use on civie street? I'm not sure. I think there's a whole lot of skills that we all learned in the military that stood us very well when we get back on civie street but with respect to being a political activist, I don't know. I don't know. I think, one of the things, I'm sort of commenting from my own perspective is that contrary to what a whole bunch of people believe is that I gained a, all the soldiers, when we were all trained, almost to be independent of anybody else. At the same time we were a very tight team. And so we come back on, on particularly say by the time I was going to get out we, when we hit on civie street we started to realize, started thinking an awful lot about how things were and how things could be. And maybe some of the competence that we learned in the military we start using in being a political activist. And I'm not really sure what a political activist is, Ron. We, we've been talking about that for a long time now and I'm not really sure what it is but, I think there are, there are the opportunity for more military people to speak up. Boy I don't know how, do you know of any in the, in the Métis, Métis Nation?

Frank Tomkins: I know some in the First Nations...

Mike Mercredi: Yeah.

Frank Tomkins: Personal friends of mine that got involved politically.

Mike Mercredi: Yeah.

Frank Tomkins: And particularly in the, on the, on the veteran's side was Walter Bear, personal friend of mine. And I've known him, for approached

about forty years, I guess and he made a career out of it, you know, stayed in the army after the war or at least joined up again. There's Walter Deiter that was involved in the Second World War and David Knight and they were all pretty political...

Mike Mercredi: Yeah.

Frank Tomkins: ...when they came out. They had reasonable good, like always seems to go back to an education 'cause then you had to communicate with the powers that be in order to, up the same ...

(Inaudible) ...for the people that you were representing. So those, the three definitely that I knew, very close friends of mine as a matter of fact, that were involved on the Status Indian side politically. And with the veterans and, of course, on, on, on the, the Métis' side have already mentioned the top ones and there's others, of course. But, you know...

End Time: 9:51:32.10