

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

Tape 2

Start Time: 6:26.52.09

(Video Time: 6:26.52.09) Nora Cummings: Right, so that decision was made by the people of the Métis. And they had a meeting called in Prince Albert. And again, you know, the politics kicked in when that came along because some were saying, "Well no, I don't think we should split at this time." They were supporting Jim, some of our Métis people supported Jim. Some of them didn't and it wasn't, I, I never ever felt that it was a personal thing. I think it was just something we felt we needed to do now. And it comes a time in our life sometimes we have to make a decision whether it's good or bad, but it's, I think, for the best of us as Métis. And I was feeling very sad about that day and I got a call from Jim and we decided we would meet for dinner and, and we did this. And, you know, Jim being the good old politician he was he, I guess he, well I don't know if he was ready yet at this point in time for it, but we discussed it and we talked about it and over lunch and, and I think he was asking my support and part of me wanted to say, "Yes, Jim, I'll support you because, you know, I idol you as a good man." But, on the other hand, in my heart I knew I had to make that decision. And I did tell that to Jim and I was very up front about it and I said, "Tomorrow Jim, when the time comes I'm going to have to make my decision and I'm going to make that decision then." I said, "I am a good strong Métis. I

believe in my, my culture, my, as a Métis." And I, and he said, "Well, you know Nora, I am an Indian and I am proud of who I am." And I said, "I respect that as I hope you respect who I am." And we shook hands and, and we agreed that that was what, you know, whatever ca-, out came we would still remain friends. And after we had done we went to this meeting and then when the referendum came there was a court challenge. I was feeling really bad because I know Jim had called me numerous times for my support but I knew in my heart I had to stick with my decision. I couldn't take the chance of, from my own self by saying, "Well gee Jim I guess I, I done wrong or I want to go with you." Part of me wanted to say, "Yes Jim I'll support you." But I knew again I had to stay with my decision. And I felt bad. And when we went, I went to the courts in Regina and that decision was, unfortunately had to be made by the courts and that's where it was at. And it, it caused a division within the Métis. It caused a division not only in the Métis but within family members because that division came without, with a lot of pain in, in some cases where families were never talked to one another for how long after. Or for some of them passed on they didn't talk to one another.

Ron Laliberte: Did that happen, was that, was that debate on prior to the Constitution when you take a look at AMNSIS, which included the status and the non-status?

Nora Cummings: No that..

Ron Laliberte: And the Métis. Was that, was there, was there that division within AMNSIS prior to the *Constitution* or was everybody on the same page then...(I **inaudible**)...stick together?

Nora Cummings: No they were on the same page at that time.

Ron Laliberte: Yes.

Peter Bishop: It was leading up to it eventually.

Nora Cummings: Yes.

Ron Laliberte: Yes, but the *Constitution* certainly started driving that wedge between them.

Nora Cummings: Right.

Ron Laliberte: ..when you, there was no mention of the non-status.

Peter Bishop: Yeah.

Ron Laliberte: And then when you fast forward it to '87 and then this is the, this is what happened with you...

Nora Cummings: Yeah.

Ron Laliberte: ...and you were talking to Jim about supporting the....

Nora Cummings: Yeah.

Ron Laliberte: ...the division.

Nora Cummings: Yeah.

Peter Bishop: Right, yeah. And if I may add to that Ron, see prior to that it's the Canadian Government that wanted to bring back the *Constitution*.

Ron Laliberte: Right.

Peter Bishop: To Canada. It was called the *BNA Act* and now what is it called, *Canada Act*?

Nora Cummings: Yeah.

Peter Bishop: I think that's what it's called.

Nora Cummings: Yeah.

End Time: 6:30.55.29