

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

Tape 3

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(Video Time: 2:58.34.22) Ron Laliberte: Peter, if I can ask you about your, the role of your brother, Rod, in and the you know. Could you comment on his contribution to the Métis people and you know...?

(Video Time: 2:58.44.10) Peter Bishop: I certainly will. But before we get started again I just want to add a little bit to what Nora said about Clarence. Clarence was a very caring, compassionate man when I knew him. If he saw a guy down on his luck he'd pick him up and say, "You're coming with me. We'll see what we can do for you." And the best way that he could, he picked up my Uncle off the streets of Saskatoon. My Uncle was an alcoholic, especially after he lost his wife and he had a bunch of children. Clarence told him, "You're coming with me. You are. I'm going to get you straightened out. We're going to put you in a program. It's called Native Alcohol Counseling program." He put my Uncle there for a period of time for him to sober up, eh. And after that he put him to work as a care taker and my Uncle would be forever grateful. That is until he died too, as well. That is what Clarence did. That's the kind of man he was you know. If he, thought he could help a person in some way then any way he was able to, that's what he would do. Another thing you could always count on Clarence if we were going to have a, a demonstration let's say in Regina. Clarence would never pass that up.

He'd even hire a bus load, or he'd hire a bus and bring a load of people from Saskatoon to Regina for this demonstration. We had a two day camp out in Legislative Buildings, I'm not kidding. People were sleeping in that main meeting room, upstairs Legislature, first floor. And they were eating Kentucky Fried Chicken.

Ron Laliberte: You know that's something there.

Peter Bishop: I'm not kidding...

Ron Laliberte: That's something we forget, you know...

Peter Bishop: Yeah.

Ron Laliberte: ...when you talk about the politicians back then, I mean they didn't have the, you know the travel accounts and they didn't have the honorariums and the per diems and so on. A lot of this money came out of their own pockets, that's the type of...

Peter Bishop: That's right, yeah.

Ron Laliberte: ...people that they were. They had to do that.

Peter Bishop: Yeah. Yeah. He, he paid for all the food that time.

Ron Laliberte: Yeah.

Peter Bishop: And Nora discussed issues on people's, what producers, Co-ops, and those other programs that were, you know, that we were trying to get the government to have a look at. But then they were busy in the Legislature. So we decided well, we'll hang around. Sure enough two days we hung around. And never did Blakeney ever, ever call the police. He knew better. That he figured some of these guys are just waiting for a confrontation with the police. That would make good news.

Ron Laliberte: Yeah.

Peter Bishop: And it would make us look bad.

Nora Cummings: Remember we had the red carpet? We used to laugh because it was the red carpet and we said, "Oh, they even put a red carpet for us."

Ron Laliberte: Knew you were coming, eh?

Peter Bishop: You know, you remember the rotunda? Used to be open most of the time.

Nora Cummings: Yes.

Peter Bishop: And then they'd cover it.

Nora Cummings: Yes.

Peter Bishop: That was our table. Oh yeah they, we used their facilities and whatnot.

Ron Laliberte: Oh yeah.

Peter Bishop: You know, no problems. No. That's the kind of fella he was.

(Video Time: 3:02.18.09) Nora Cummings: And, you know, just to say that when you talk, Peter mentioned touched, when we used to travel, Clarence and I and my mother and Tony Camponi and I have to give Tony Camponi a lot of credit. He was another man that worked very hard. And we would travel and we would get our lunch. We'd build, we'd make, I'd make the lunch. I was the lunch maker, and of course, the tea and the coffee, I don't know how many cars the old cars we put in the ditch organizing. These people would be from up there, us from over here but we would do this and

we'd sell bottles to get gas money. And you talked about per diem, we didn't know what a per diem was.

Peter Bishop: No.

Ron Laliberte: Right.

Nora Cummings: Yeah. And, and that's how we organized, that's how, how our Locals throughout the province have been organized. And now there's about 120 some locals across this province. So it was people like Clarence and my mother, Irene Dimick and, and Tony Camponi we, we never ever once said, "Well I don't think we could do it." Rain, snow or shine and, and he talked about these demonstrations. Remember when we went to the Legislation Building we had to stay an extra two days 'cause we got snowed in. We couldn't come back. So, of course, we all, it was like a family, I think, the Métis across Saskatchewan.

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