

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

Tape 3

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**Ron Laliberte:** Now you touched on it a little bit there and that was my next point or question was what are the negative things now that you see? Is there something that you see now you, you talked about the media that blows the, you know, our, you know, some of the negative issues out of proportion in comparison to mainstream politics? Anything else there that you see that, you know, like you say gee, you know, I don't like what's happening here when I look at the movement today?

**(Video Time: 3:31.59.18) Nora Cummings:** Well, I think, I think, it's like anything else. We, we as Métis people and, and very openly and I'm very honest about this, we have our hacklers within our nation. I mean, we're no different than any other race. We have the people that are in the political world that want to gain their, become leaders and yet in some way or shape or form those people are, are more brutal than what some of the others are. And they will do anything to gain that power and when people sometime hang on to power it becomes to me, an illness that they'll stop at nothing to, to run people over to get that. And, and it's a sad thing because I remember when we were organizing, and I think Peter will remember, our politics are so different nowadays than what they were in the early '70s. When those people were out politicking, those people politicked on issues. Nowadays it seems to

be power for our people. And we always used to say we have to educate our young people. We have to make sure there in a good leadership role. But sometimes I wonder, of course, I, I guess I'm still from the old school but I, if it bothers me, I, I'm, I'm, I'm know the times have changes but when I see our people go out and destroy one another I don't think that's good leadership. I think they should maybe revisit how they are going out and doing their politics. I, we don't need that but on the other hand, that's their way of life and again it's no different from learning from what's happening in the non-Aboriginal politic world. And I'm talking about the governments, if you look at all, it's, it's a vicious world. Even then there's a change and I can remember growing up and watching the politicians as the elections and I'm, I follow the elections and I see it year after year; it is getting worse instead of better. But then at the end of the day for us as, as Métis, when I vote for somebody, I look at that person, what they can do for me. When I hear them giving their speeches or going into their meetings, I want to know what they're going to do for us as Métis. I don't want to hear all the garbage that's out there about so and so and so because that tells me nothing. That tells me that, that's not a good leadership role. I want to look at people that will do things that would set the institutions like the Gabriel Dumont Institute, the various affiliates. Like there's SNEDCO, MEDFO all of, you know, all of these things that are happening, I want to see what they're going to do and I want to know what they're going to do for us as people, for our rights. The rights are an issue right now. How will they lead us into the next centuries? I want to see all that. But that's the kind of leadership I would like to see. The

negativity part of it I don't, I'm not interested in. And I think sometimes we dwell too much on that. And I look at the leadership role as women, I'm concerned about what's happening with women. I'm concerned what's happening with our youth, our children, our housing and the economic developments. All of these things, it will never go away because we have to be on top of that. Those are the issues I look at and I have had an opportunity because I was in the, was, was one of the founding members of the women's movement, I'm very concerned that our women would continue to be involved and at this point in time if you look at our, our women within the nation there's very, very few and I have said to our women, "If you want to become a politician and you want to become a leader, you have to become politicized and you have to be able to be healthy and willing to take on that role. You can't be petty. You have to look at issues that are affecting not only women but people in general." I'm a firm believer that as a woman, we as women, as Métis women, and it goes back in history, we were always equal with our men and we worked with our men. I always felt that we do not go up there and stand and criticize and run down our men because we are still Métis. I don't care what gender we are, we as a Métis we're, we're a people of our own and it's important we stand together and fight together for the issues that are affecting our people and the generations to come. And if we can get some good leadership and gender that down for years to come, I always say there is nothing that is going to be too big that can stop our leadership.

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