

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

Tape 1

Start Time: 11:29:50.26

(Video Time: 11:29.50.26) Ron Laliberte: Okay, if, I'd like to sort of go back to what you had to say Frank, about Brady and Norris. There were some interesting things there. Obviously they had a lot of influence on your political views. Some historians like Dobbin and others, you know, talk about their socialist influences that they had on their, their political work. Did you see much of that? You know, I mean, during that period of the depression and so on there was this sort of wave of socialism in Western Canada because of the depression and so on. Did you witness any of that type of rhetoric from Brady and Norris and that kind of thing?

(Video Time: 11:30.28.12) Frank Tomkins: Well I was pretty young when, when this whole thing started up. And I have no recollection at all of them talking about anything of that nature. The only thing that I remember was the conditions that people were living under. And they had to, the only way they can get out from under that was to organize and get some political clout and go to the people that was in government and, and take the concerns to them and see if they'd react. And as far as belonging to any political party I don't recall any of that in those days. Although later on the, they were with the, supporting the Social Credit because Aberhart was quite socialist, quite a bit of a socialist. And there was not doubt that if it hadn't

have been for Aberhart, it's very unlikely that they would have been able to get any kind of a Métis settlement. At least that's what I think. Very unlikely that they would have got anything. The conditions were right and the, we had the right kind of people to do something about it. And that's just about what happened. These things have happened two or three times in, in, in the last hundred years. Take for instance, like Riel at Red River, he never would have got what he did wouldn't be in, in the *BNA Act* if it hadn't been for the conditions at the time. Macdonald, of course, oh hell we'll give it to them and then we'll over run them with a bunch of white people. And I think the same thing pretty well applied at a, at Batoche. You know, they didn't really care, they weren't going to give in like they did at Red River. With the Métis settlement the conditions were right, the people were just desperate for, for something for change. It was easy to organize and, and then of course Aberhart, he was socialist minded and, and the people that were running for politics of course they wanted the support of the Métis people. And that's how they were able to, to get any change.

End Time: 11:32:45.28