

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

Tape 3

**Start Time: 11:32:26.21**

**Ron Laliberte:** No, that's good. That's good. How about you Frank, any thoughts on northern development and how it affected Aboriginal communities?

**(Video Time: 11:32.34.22) Frank Tomkins:** Well definitely an improvement from what it was in the, in the '40s let's say. In the late '40s when again we got to go back to the very same people that started the Métis organization in Alberta. They, Malcolm and Brady, together with my father, they helped and developed fish marketing services, for example, and a fur marketing service, and the stores. They started with government stores and this is all a, a great improvement over what it was before. And definitely it, it was a big improvement. And they continued to improve but like Mike says, you know, as they get bigger things get better but they also have a negative side. But you can't say this, you can't say that the north was any different than we have in the city here. You know, we have growth in the city. You know, we have a lot of economic benefits here but then we still have a social problem. So it, it not, it's all over. It's not, you know, it's not only the north. Certainly there has been an awful lot of improvement because I've seen so much improvement there in my fifty years in the north, an awful lot of improvement. And 'cause, when the early, when I first got here I, because of

the type of work I was doing, I flew into practically every community in the north. And I, I knew what the conditions were because you could see them. They were visible. As, as time went on things improved a little bit, improved a little bit, improved a little bit until now there's a thriving community in just about everyone that I saw as just a little village when, when I first went up. And certainly, you know, in this progress and there's also the negative side. But then I say again that's no different from Saskatoon, Regina or any other place. You know, they have the good and the bad.

**Ron Laliberte:** Yeah. I, when I think back on my, when I was young and used to go up to La Ronge, there used to be nothing but a gravel road. You know, wasn't that developed and, and I just went up for this summer and I was, I too was amazed at all the development and how the community has grown.

**End Time: 11:34:56.23**