

Gilbert Pelletier, Norman Fleury, Sherry Farrell-Racette

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Start 11.17.34.15 SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - Well, now, what are you, like what are you doing now when you, when you're looking sort of forward to things that you can do to preserve the stories or the teachings and the language, you're, you're involved in different things.

40.0 GILBERT PELLETIER - I'm teaching my, my grandchildren the language, the Michif language. You know, and they're anywhere from 2 years old, just about not even 2 years old to 22, 24 years old, and they're, and I'm teaching them to speak the language. And, you know, and I'm telling them, never be ashamed of who you are. You are who you are, you're Métis so never be ashamed of it. And I don't care where I am, or how many people I'm with. I'll always admit who I am. I'll always admit my traditional foods. You know, I'm not ashamed of it.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - Speak your language.

GILBERT PELLETIER - I'm not ashamed to speak my language, it's my language. Why should I be ashamed of it? You know, if I'm in the, if I'm in the White world, there's nobody else but the White, they're not ashamed of their language, why should I be ashamed of mine?

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - Do you think that's why people stopped speaking it partly?

GILBERT PELLETIER - A lot of it I think that's what it is, they're ashamed to speak they're own language. And a lot of it because we weren't allowed to speak our own language in school.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - So the Michif were also not allowed to speak their languages?

GILBERT PELLETIER - We were not allowed to speak our own, when I went to school we weren't allowed to speak our language, I don't know about Norman but, we weren't allowed to speak our language in school.

(Video Time: 11:19.00.03) 41.2 NORMAN FLEURY - Well it wasn't acceptable there because they spoke only English and, and if we tried we wouldn't even, nobody would listen to us. Like so, like it, it was, and you always had to be, I think like I was always an advocate of the people, the Aboriginal people, the First Nations people, the Métis people. I've always been sort of like a, a teacher to teach people that are not aware of our culture. Even our own people are not aware themselves, and, and such a rich, rich heritage that we have, that we don't have to borrow somebody else's, we have our own rich culture. If we abide by our rules, our regulations, and what our fore-fathers gave us, we have so much richness in our lives and part of our culture. So I've always been a teacher, like I, I live in the community where it's mainly Anglo-Saxon people in that area. But they've lived by reservations, or reserves, and they're not, and one particular person didn't even realize that those were Dakota people, they were Sioux people. He thought they were Crees. That's how much interest. Like there is racism.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - Yes, there is.

NORMAN FLEURY - And there is, we can't say there is no racism. Another thing we have to do as Métis people, we have to tell other people that look, we, we don't live on reserves, and we, we, we don't have these rights, and we don't have this because people are still thinking that we get things for nothing. And there's not such thing as receive anything for nothing. Like I know where we live, when I bought cattle and horses and I bought land. People in that area and this friend of mine who is, is none, not a Métis

person, he told me, he said, "You know, people around here," he says, "I straightened them out because they say, well Norman got that land for nothing." And, and somebody came to my wife at the school, she teaches school, and this person said, "You're, you're kinda lucky aren't you." And she says, "Well what do you mean?" "Well, your husband, doesn't he get all those things that you got for nothing?" And she says, "Listen here," my wife's not a Métis person. She says, "Norman has, has a number, same as you, and that's a social insurance number. And he pays all his dues like everybody else and that land is on Norman and Ruth's name, it's nobody else's name. We pay our taxes, we pay all our dues." So there's just, you call that ignorance or, you know, it's people that don't know their culture. And I remember one person that I was talking to said, "Well this man over here is a Métis, he's got his number now." I said, "What do you mean, his number?" "Well you know, that number, the treaty number." I says, "Look it, he's a Métis." I says, "He hasn't got a, a treaty number, it's a, a Métis card which identifies him with a certain local in a certain region belonging to the organization." That's basically what it is. It's a membership card. So you see, they have a lot of work to do, we have to tell people who we are as Métis people, what's the significance. Like what do we represent and, and, and it's with pride that I do that.

(Video Time: 11:22.26.26) 45.0 GILBERT PELLETIER - A lot of people don't realize that we pay taxes like everybody else eh? That we pay our taxes too like everybody else. We buy something we gotta pay taxes. We don't get things for nothing. We go to the store, buy something, buy clothes or something, we gotta pay our taxes. We go buy a car we gotta pay taxes on that car as well, you know, as well as anybody else. But they'll say "Oh, there's the guy that's spending our tax dollars."

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - Oh right, that's the perception...(Inaudible)...

GILBERT PELLETIER - We gotta change it, and there's an awful lot of work to do that because there's so many people out there that, you know, wanna look at you and say well, here's where our tax dollars going, look at the car that guy's driving, you know.

45.8 SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - So you see that as part of it, so part of it is trying to preserve the traditions but also always addressing that ignorance and racism so that people are feeling bitter and...

45.9 NORMAN FLEURY - But you gotta do it in, you also gotta do it not with anger.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - That's hard.

NORMAN FLEURY - You've gotta do it, you know it is, well, but I mean I've learned to overcome. As a matter of fact, this lady, which was an older person told me, your criticism that you receive take it positively and use that as strength, and that's what I did. I used all the negativeness as strength, and it's good because you don't turn to foreign things such as alcoholism. You don't turn to drugs. You just keep going, you use your spirituality, you, you use your good upbringing and your morals and standards in life and that keeps you going straight and your head above water. I know Mom still says today, "Keep your head up. Don't go around walking with your head down, be proud."

GILBERT PELLETIER - Yeah, be proud of who you are.

NORMAN FLEURY - And that's what you have to do.

End 11:24.11.04