

SD: ...a little bit of your background, like where you were born, and how you came to Vancouver and became interested in the union.

EN: Okay. So you ask the questions, I'll try to answer them.

SD: Okay. So, can you start by giving me your name?

EN: Oh, you have it on, now. My name is Emily Nuttall. I was born in Winnipeg in 1913. I didn't come to Vancouver until about 19, I think it must have been '44, in the early part of 1944, before the end of the war. But I had been interested in the trade union movement for a very long while. I came from a family that was trade union conscious, you sort of got it, you breathed it in, with the conversations that took place, and I had three older brothers who were also interested in the trade union movement. And it was just sort of a natural. I had been very interest, very active in the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union in Toronto, when I went there at the beginning of the war, and from Toronto I came out to the west coast, and naturally went up to the union office and became active in the union here.

SD: Ah, right. Where did you start to work?

EN: Do you mean for the union?

SD: No. I guess I mean before that, your first job, and what kind of reasons...?

EN: Oh. Well, I came out of a, I went through school in Winnipeg and high school, and I always had, at the back of my mind that I'd like to be a dietician, and I had a very

EN: (Cont) short period at the University of Manitoba, but it was the Depression years, it was 1930 and '31, and when I came out, when there was no money to continue these studies, I came out into the labour market. Money was needed at home, and I started the only jobs you could practically get, was waitresses jobs. And I just kinda gravitated to the restaurant business, and I became a waitress. Always remember one of the first jobs I had, I worked for 17½ cents an hour. (laughs) Bought your own uniforms. Worked under really barbaric conditions as compared to today.

SD: Were those the kinds of conditions that inspired people to organize? That why people began to form unions?

EN: Yes, I think it's true that, it wasn't only among people who worked in restaurants or hotels that felt this way, I think that the conditions that we had in Canada during the Depression; even the unemployed organized in those days. So I think there was a general feeling that that was the only way that you could benefit, get any benefits was through organizing. Certainly you never got them from the boss. (laughs).

SD: Right. So, in Toronto, did you become involved in the union when other workers were organizing in your restaurant, or?

EN: No, I was doing union work in Winnipeg, and then I decided to, I felt I would like to leave home and go out and strike out on my own. It was certainly time I did, and I went to Toronto. But I was already a member of the Hotel and Restaurant Worker's Union in Winnipeg, and so I just transferred to Toronto. And when I got there, I just went up to the

EN: (cont) union office, and wanted to work in the union shop. So, I became active in the union there, and really the same thing happened in Vancouver: I was carrying a union card, and naturally when I landed here, came to the union. But I didn't work for Local 28 right at the beginning. I came to the Local 28 and reported in, but, I had done a fair amount of work around union offices, one way and another, volunteer work, couldn't afford to pay anybody for office work. And

I heard that the Bartender's Union were looking for somebody, to help them in the office, and I had met some of the people from the Bartender's Union out at ^aTLC convention in Quebec city, so I went over to see them, and I really worked for the Bartender's Union for about a year, I guess. Then I went on the international payroll.

SD: Right.

EN: And worked through 28.

SD: So you came on as a staff person?

EN: Mnmhm. Originally as a staff person and office worker for the Bartender's, but then I wasn't too long, I wasn't with them very long, but then shortly after that I was working in Local 28, going to their union meetings and that, and we decided it was time we appealed to the head office for ^{some} funds, and we tried ev, really start going out ^{and} organizing restaurant workers, and there was alot of canteen workers during the war in the shipyards, which the Boilermaker's did a great deal of assisting to organize. But there was a whole field that was really, at that point, clamoring to be org-

EN: (cont) anized, they were practically handing them to us!

(laughs) You know, in the war industries where the machinists and the aircraft workers and all these people, you know they were organized and they were practically calling us up and handing...So there was a whole field and we were able to, without any difficulty get money from head office, and we started an organizing campaign. So I left the Bartender's, you know, as an office worker, and went in as a full-time organizer.

SD: For the Hotel?

EN: Yeah, for the Hotel and Restaurant Employee's Union, Local 28. And then, it wasn't too long, we became very aware that nobody had done anything about hotel workers. You know chamber-maids were making about, I don't know, about 22 or 21 cents an hour, oh, I think it was less than that, because the first agreement we signed, my god, was 19 or 19 cents an hour, so you can imagine the kind of money they made. And we were also running into the restaurant workers in the hotel which worked in the coffee shops and the cooks, so it became natural that you would say: "Well what about all these chamber-maids, the bell hops, the service waiters, the front desk, cashiers?" All these people had never been touched. Bartenders had been organized for a very long while, but they were pretty closed group, and they were just very happy that they were doing alright, and I really didn't feel that they were very interested in anybody else in the hotel.

SD: So they didn't, they hadn't taken on that whole project of

SD: (cont) organizing?

EN: No, no, no. They weren't interested in it. And really it took a bit of persuasion with the bartenders, that at least they wouldn't do anything to obstruct us. But I can honestly say they sure as hell didn't do anything to help us. (laughs) At least we neutralized them to the extent, and I shouldn't generalize, there were bartenders, individuals you know, who we got along with very well and who did help. But the policy of the Bartender's Union, they were doing alright and they were very happy and contented, and I don't know what they thought, but I think they kinda had an idea that the rest of the workers in the hotel were just maybe not quite equal to them.

SD: Right.

EN: Mnmhm, and they're men. Most of ., alot of hotel workers are women, alot of the people who work in the laundries and in the kitchens and so, chambermaids, so I really think that, I don't think they really thought about these people.

SD: Right. But you people did, and so you went and appealed to the international for funds, to organize and help work?

EN: Mnmhm, yes, and we had to, you know, we had to be able to justify by sending in new membership, and as long as we could keep going and expanding, we kept renewing requests for money. I remember when, (laughs), it seems silly now but I remember one time getting 200 dollars, can you imagine! A lousy 200 dollars, and it was supposed to do us, I don't know, for about three months. I remember that we, we

EN: (cont) did, I think they said would do us for two months, but we were trying to be thrifty, and, you know, I remember us working, organizing for about 25 dollars a week.

So
SD: you people were virtually paid nothing.

EN: Well, this was what we got, really, you know. The membership supported the business agent. And, at that point, we got to a point where we needed to hire someone in the office, so that we could be out, and there'd be somebody to, but really when we started organizing, our organizing drive, this was special funds from the International, and I think at one point we got up to 35 dollars a week, and boy, was that a lot of money!

SD: What year was that, was that '44 or so?

EN: Yeah, that would be around 40-might have been, I might have arrived at '43, but it was still during the war years, yes into '43 probably '44. And I'm trying to remember when the first hotel agreement was signed, but I have a hunch it was signed before the end of the war, shortly after.

SD: Right.

EN: I think we were already into organizing hotels.

SD: You went through kind of a series of organizing campaigns, that you were talking about organizing the canteens; what would it be like to organize in the war industry? Can you talk a little bit about going in there to the shipyards, or other industries and what you'd find?

EN: I think you have to be fair, we never really organized them. The workers, the war workers organized them. They really handed them to us. This was, you know, and they just didn't

EN: (cont) want any section of the war industry not unionized; and I'll say this, the Boilermaker's were not in the AFL, ^{of} our International was in AF of L, but we had full support from their group and from others, the Machinists, they were AF of L, but we really didn't have any conflict.

SD: Right.

EN: They just said, "look, we have a canteen, and we ^{have} 50 women working in it. When ^{are} you going to come in and organize these people?" And it was, I never, that was the simplest part, really; there was no problem in the war industry. But we had all kinds, you know, ^{of} problems in the individual restaurants, where, small restaurants where there'd only be a few workers, and some were a bit bigger. So we just tried to expand and organize more restaurants. I remember one time that we fought for--they had a habit of, on night shift, and on the night shift, they used to let the waitresses go home at two o'clock in the morning, and if it was a Saturday night and they were busy, it might be three o'clock in the morning, or, you know; but there was no control and these girls were just expected to change the uniform, put on their dress clothes, and how they got home was up to them. And we were, had already thought a great deal about it and thought, "well, time we did something about all these complaints. But it so happened, there was a murder, down in Kitsilano Beach of a young waitress who had come off shift, I think at two o'clock in the morning. And it just happened to give a great deal of publicity; there was great deal of publicity

EN: (Cont) about this murder, made it much easier for us. And ^{were} we able to get the Labour Department to pass legislation, which compelled the restaurant owner, that if they were let out now, I kind of forget, but I think that if they have to work after midnight, now it might have been 11 o'clock, but, no I think it was midnight, they had to pay cab fare home to the waitresses, or anybody, any of the staff that they let off shift late. So we managed to get back; and I remember they appealed it; and there was a big back-lash over it; and ^{they} did a lot of crying. And the Labour Board was forced to re-open the question. And anyway we prepared a brief and we appeared before the Board. There was some, they did make some concessions to the employer; and as I recall, they moved the hour, one hour further back. I, you know I've been away from it for a long time, and I haven't lived in British Columbia for almost 30 years; it's hard to remember, but we still did a pretty good job in front of the Labour Board. They thought they were just going to be able to get it repealed, that's what they wanted, but they certainly didn't.

SD: Right. Yeah, and was that for that clause or whatever, was that for women and men, who got off?

EN: Women, only women, only women. Yeah, yeah. But as I recall, you see, there was many people who lived in outlying areas, that where even the streetcars and buses weren't running at that hour of the night. And you were just let out, and you know, make your own way.

SD: People didn't have cars in those days.

EN: No, no. There was very little transportation. And there was many little things like that, you know where we were able to improve through legislation, fighting for legislation which would make it a bit easier. My goodness, for years and years, when I was young and, you know you had to buy your own uniform. They deducted the money. You not only bought it, but my God, you had to launder it, take it home on your day off; and you worked a six-day week then. You spent your day off cleaning your shoes, and getting, that you had to have for work, and your uniform. And anyway, we were gradually able to force them to buy uniforms, that became the first thing. We were still laundering them but, then we got that the uniforms were laundered, bought and laundered, and no deductions for any of this.

SD: Right. When you organized the canteens in the war industry, did you find the women who worked there really open to trade unionism?

EN: Well, yes. We never ran into any hostility. I think a lot of the women either had husbands, were married and husbands that worked in war industry, that were union members, or had a brother, or they had a boyfriend. I think most of the people, women that worked in these canteens really had some connection with someone who was a member of the union.

SD: Yeah. And, the small restaurants, were they difficult to organize?

EN: Sure, because, you know, if you're isolated into small groups,

EN: (cont) and the threat, you know of provoking the boss. But one of the things that made it easier, that was the beginning of certification. When the federal government realized they needed manpower and they needed co-operation, how could they run a war industry, or could they, we gear up for war, if we didn't have happy workers. So, in exchange for no-strike pledge, they gave us the concession that if you got 51% of the people, that the employer was forced to recognize the union.

SD: Right. So you became certified ?

EN: Mnhm. Yeah, we would get certification.

SD: Right.

EN: I think one of the reasons^{that} this industry has^{always} been difficult to organize is because there's a great turn-over: there's a lot of people who go into it and work for maybe six months, maybe move onto another city, maybe decide to stay home; so really, it's not as stable an industry, I think it's more stable now than it used to be, but it wasn't really that stable during those years. People moved around the country a great deal. After the war years people were moving much more, even than today.

SD: Mnhm. Right. And it was also a time when I guess when women could get jobs in some other industries for the first time, so did that affect the kind of...

EN: Yes, oh yes.

SD: people who worked in restaurants?

EN: Sure. One of the things that also made it easier is that

EN: (cont) there was other jobs, there was lots of jobs. So there wasn't the same fear. There was fear, but not to the same degree as there had been before.

SD: Yeah.

EN: And women were starting to go all over the place. And women are not stupid; they got as much brains as men have; they gravitated to where they could get the best wages. So they went to union shops, they tried to or, or to get the union to come in and to have a contract, so that they would have a contract protecting them. But, yes, there's no doubt it, that there was a big change in the atmosphere; the atmosphere had changed radically during the war years; and that was really as a result of the federal government and they knew they had to do it.

SD: Mnmhm. So people were, unionization, ^{no longer} was something that was outside ^{of} the laws of society or seen as?

EN: Oh, no, no. And once it got official sanction, then an employer who would do any thing to impede the war effort, who would make his workers angry, and have a sit-down, well you know, he was considered just as disloyal to the war effort as the worker was considered.

SD: So we've been talking a little bit about canteens and restaurants, what about the hotels in that organizing drive? How did that begin?

EN: (Laughs) Well as we expanded of course and organized in the restaurants, then we started looking at the people who worked in the coffee shops, in the kitchens, in the hotels; and we

EN: (cont) also had ^{people who} everybody was becoming more familiar with the trade union movement. It was no longer a boogey-man. And we had people who wanted to organize and we felt it was a field, my goodness, we had the bartenders and all the hotels organized, so we decided that the time had come. We had done quite a bit of work in the restaurants. And that was very interesting: that first drive we made against the Georgia Hotel; we wanted to, we felt we had to—we would have picked the Vancouver Hotel but they were under the Railway Union you know, but, so we wanted to pick a prestigious hotel, and a good-size hotel, there were certainly more favourable conditions probably in some of the smaller hotels where the loggers stayed and the fishermen and that when they came in, the camps and what not. They would have been less difficult. But we felt that were to crack the industry and to show that we really meant business, we had to, I think it was the right decision. In those days, the Georgia Hotel was pretty swanky hotel. So we went down, as I was telling you earlier. (laughs) We were being really decent; we went down and saw the managers of the hotel, and we told him he had some workers organized and he had not objected to recognizing the Bartender's Union, and we couldn't see why he would object to us organizing the rest of the hotel. "Hrrumph!" He was shook up. He, I always remember sitting in that room, (laughs) and he said to him, "You can either make it easy or you can make it tough, but this is what we're planning to do." So we were just a couple of young gals in our late '20's, and I think he thought, "oh,

EN: (cont) "a couple of skirts, what can they do!" You know, so they weren't much, he didn't consider us much of a threat. So we let him go along with what he had to say, and he didn't think it was necessary, and he hoped we'd reconsider, that it would cause a great deal of problems, and the workers would be more unhappy with the union. And you know, the old line. So we let him think he was selling us a bill of goods. And out we went, and we said, "well, he can't say we didn't warn him." So we had some very fine people in the union who had been helping us in the restaurants and we held a meeting, a committee meeting^{at} which we laid out our plans, and our plans where we, first of all we had to have a committee that drew up a leaflet. We got the leaflet printed. And then we decided that we would strike that hotel, and we'd really shake it to the ground. (small laugh) So we got union members to go in teams, of two. By this time of course we knew every entrance; we knew the entrances the employees used, the clientele used, the guests used; and we knew every door on that building; and we knew every floor plan, and the kitchen plan and the basement plan; we really knew that building; it was like casing for a bank robbery. (laughs) Anyway, we started at, as I recall I think six or it could have been seven in the morning. And we had teams and they went in half an hour apart for 24 hours. And we said, each team knew what their objective was: one would be to get into the basement and talk to them; one would be to try and get, maybe on the main floor; some would go up on the

EN: (cont) various floors to talk to chamber maids. And they had a furniture repair shop; they had a carpenter in there, furniture finishers; they had people who did carpets. It was quite an outfit. They had electricians; they had machinists in the building. Anyway, so there was lots of people for us to try and contact. And we knew that our people would be thrown out.

SD: Right.

EN: As soon as they were found out. We just kept the pressure on and everybody went armed with leaflets. And we, that day, because we knew that at some point, they would, management would start screaming, I decided to stay home and , I always remembered cherry jam (laughs). And we just kept a skeleton in the office; and that phone was answered and when they said, "What was going on?" They wanted to talk to somebody, and we said, "Oh, we don't know what's going on." (laughs) And we'd hang up the phone. "No, so-and-so isn't here, no I'm sorry, so-and-so isn't here." All the officers of the union just sat there, chuckling, while making it impossible for us to contact them. "Get these people out of here!" But they really, we organized that hotel in 24 hours. They were throwing them out the side door, and they'd come in the front door, and they threw them out the front door, and they were coming in the other door. Finally, I kept in touch with the office, and Daisy, the office girl, I can't remember, or May phoned over, and they said, "Emily, he's screaming, he's screaming! He insists we find you!" "So," I said, "I'll

EN: (cont) phone him." So I ended up phoning him about supper time I think it was. Anyway he said, "Get these people out of here! I have leaflets in the guest's beds, there's leaflets in the kitchen, ^{there's} leaflets falling in the soup, there's leaflets in the elevators, our guests are reading all these!" Oh! He was just 'fit to be tied'. Because, you know, as fast as he found two, there was another two-some in the hotel. Anyway, we had people at the back door, employees door, as they came out, we signed them up. And we really organized that hotel. And I said, "Well," (I'm on the phone) "we told you we were going to. I didn't know that they had planned to organized, you know to send in peop, you know." I played really dumb. And he said, "Get over here!" And I said, " I'm in the middle of making a, doing some preserving." And he said, "Well, please! Come over, drop what you're doing!" So I did go to see him, but I was ^{very} leisurely about it. I got to see him about eight o'clock at night. I just dragged the whole thing out. As long as we knew, that we were not going to stop, and we had to drag it until we were sure. Every shift had been covered, including the graveyard shift. As I recall, we went in early enough to catch the graveyard shift coming off. But that was really exciting!

SD: That's a really great story.

EN: Yes it really was. And he was, of course willing to almost concede anything just to get rid of us. So we said, "Well, fine; we'll pull everybody out." And we did. And of course

EN: (cont) we had no trouble getting certification. And then we started organizing some other hotels. But we were going to start right in negotiating individual hotel contracts, because this is the only way we knew that we could, you know get a certification in a unit, and sign a contract. ^{and the} B.C. Hotelmen's Association, by this time, had knew with their to the ground, knew what was going on, so they called us, and they were so frightened that we would strike a really good contract with some of the hotel owners who were favorable to organized labour, some of the smaller hotels.

SD: Why were they favorable?

EN: Well, first of all, some of these hotels were owned by men who at one time had been loggers, had been fishermen, or who had been miners, you know, who had built savings, and they weren't wealthy; they'd bought in partnerships and pieces of hotels; and the clientele that they had, the guests they had in their hotel were union people. And they had bartenders that were union, so they really weren't that hostile. We had a couple that were quite favorable, and we wanted to negotiate the first agreement with them, thinking we could make it stick for everybody else. But the Hotelmen's Association heard about it; and they approached us for a Master Agreement for the whole of British Columbia. Well, we had to make ~~concessions~~, we wanted a Master Agreement, was going to be terrific.

SD: That means you would have all the hotels organized?

EN: Any that organized, that we got certification, would come under the Master Agreement for the province. And it was a

EN: (cont) big decision: we knew we couldn't get that same kind of a contract with the B.C. Hotelmen's Association. We felt that it was, would be better if we did, you know, to negotiate every hotel, you know, even in the city of Vancouver was tremendous thing, you know, the hours. And we really wanted a uniform agreement. So we had to make concessions, and we did. We didn't get the same contract that we would have like to have, but, it was the first contract, and we said, "Look, if we can get union security, we won't get alot of money, get a few conditions and hours, broken shifts and that kind of thing, working conditions, then, we can't expect to get the wage increases that we would have liked to have had." I think it was the correct decision. It's still in existence.

SD: ^{Because} Nit established?

EN: Yes, it established the trade union movement throughout the British Columbian, among hotel workers. So I negotiated the first contract. I was on the negotiating, and we had the Building Service Employees, also helped in organizing hotels, because it was some people in the hotels fell under their jurisdiction, so they also in on the negotiations. But, yes, you know, I was once thrown out of the Belmont Hotel as a prostitute. (laughs) I could tell so many funny stories. (laughs)

SD: What happened?

EN: Well, we had a method or organized that seemed to work very well. By the time we got down to the Belmont, we, I was applying the same method. They didn't always know how tall

EN: (cont) the building is; you could count it on the outside but often we were dashing in and out of hotels and we couldn't remember how many floors there were. So we used to go in and head for the elevator and you got in the elevator, and you would say, "Top floor, please." And the elevator guy, then they didn't have automatic elevators, you had an elevator man. So, you'd just say top floor, you never knew how many floors, but you took the ^{elevator} to the top floor. So you'd get out of the elevator, and you would look for mops and pails in the hallway, and doors open where you'd see a chamber-maid, you know, working, or anybody that you saw at work, but mainly chamber-maids. And then you would talk and try to convince her that she should come into the union. And then you took the stairs, and you went down another floor, you see, on the stairs, and you kept coming down and down, hoping, you usually got caught, but this time I had only,

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EN: (cont) in the Belmont Hotel, I think I had come down two or three floors, and the next thing I hear, of course every time you heard the elevator you tried to dash into a room, like out of sight, that you weren't in the hallways. Anyway, we, I got caught, flat-out; he came up, and a great big huge burly dick, house detective, gets off. (Laughs) To me looked like 300 pounds. ^{He} Came stomping down the hall, "What are you doing in this building!" I just says, "None of your business, what I'm doing." And he said, "Well, I'm taking you out." He said, "You can come down with me on the elevator." But he kept persisting and asking me what I was doing. And I just said, "I am not breaking any laws, and I don't think it's any of your business what I'm doing." Anyway, he got down that elevator (laughs), and opened the elevator door, and here was this great big lobby with all the chesterfields, big chairs, and (laughs) there was people sitting all around. And I'll swear that from the elevator looked like a mile! I'm sure that it wasn't any more than about 30 or 40 feet, but to me it looked like a mile. And in a loud, loud voice, he said, "We don't allow you kind of women going up in our hotel, look, knocking on men's doors, and peeking (laughs), looking for business!" And everybody in the lobby turned their heads, and gave me such a look. Anyway, my, you see...

SD: (laughs)

EN: ... he really was telling me I was a prostitute soliciting business in the hotel. And I just felt that if he knew who I was, I may not get back in. I couldn't tell him what I was doing. Anyway I threw my head up in the air and marched

EN: (cont) right out the door. But I must honestly tell you that when, I've never forgotten this, I got out in the street, and the minute I got out on the street, I started to cry. That he should take me, it was my first experience at being taken for a prostitute (laughs), and I just leaned against the side of the building and cried, and all the time under my breath, said, "I will get you mister, I will get you when we negotiate; I am coming back to see you." And I did. We negotiated that hotel agreement, and one of the men that was on the hotel negotiating committee was the manager of that hotel. And during the negotiations, of course I told him about it, and I said, "Someday I'm coming in to see that guy." "Yes," he said, "I'll introduce you to him." (laughs) Sweet revenge! Sweet revenge!

SD: It's wonderful!

EN: Yeah. But we had many interesting experiences, organizing, yeah.

SD: So what year did you get this Master Agreement, was that '45 or so?

EN: Mnmhm. I'm not sure, '45 or '46. I can't remember, was the war over? I have a hunch it was. I think it was around, well, be late '45 or '46, because I met my husband who was also in the trade union movement, at a conference; and I met him in 1946, in August. And I'm not sure whether we were in, I think we were in negotiations when I met him, but in around that time.

SD: Right, okay. Do you remember the numbers of people who

SD: (cont) were organized in the bargaining ^{unit}, I guess in the Local at that time?

EN: Well, no, it's very hard, let me think, when I went into the Local, I think there was only, it had been kinda dormant; it had a nucleus of people in the restaurants who really stuck with the union, but I don't think that union was more than about 200 at the time. But we went up, I think we went up to over 900...

SD:

EN: ...through the, mainly the chunk we bought, I think we went to about 4' or 500 when we did the drive on the restaurants, which we, but then when we bargain the hotels, I think we must, as I recall we could have even had more than a 1000, but I know we went, more than doubled our membership.

SD: Right. Did you find the process of servicing the restaurants a difficult process?

EN: Yes, they were. We had shop stewards of course, but May, who was the business agent, May Martin now, she was called May Ansel then, of course I was Emily Watts then, that was before I was married. But May was one of those people who could never, never get up in the morning. She used to put a alarm clock in a big basin and still she slept through it. So we worked it out very well: she took the night shift, so she, ~~we~~, blocked off places that had to be serviced. She did the night shift, and she'd be in and out of those restaurants two and three in the morning you know, the all-night ones. I took the day shift, come in, and I did the servicing mainly in the day time and she

EN: (cont) did the night shift. It really worked out quite well, (laughs) thank goodness, because I was an early riser. And...

SD: What kind of servicing would you do? What kind of things would people want?

EN: Oh I think you'd get a phone call, you know, from ^ashop steward, and there was a complaint and she couldn't handle it, or he couldn't handle it, and problem. And so you said I'd be down today or tomorrow or whenever, the first opportunity you got, you'd go down and see what the complaint was and try to work it out.

SD: What kind of hassles were there from management? Were there violations of contract, or?

EN: Yeah, violations of contract, even sometimes just personality problems, you know, was many things, dispute over something, something to do maybe with uniforms ^{or} with hours, so, they had the union contract, was printed up; and boy, when I see the union contracts today, compared to what we used to have, they almost look like a Bible today. But they had the union contract printed up on a little cardboard that folded; and every union member got a copy of the contract; ^{we had} the two contracts, we had a contract for restaurants, and we had a contract for hotels. So they had, ^{the contract and} the shop steward always had a contract in her, you know on her, in her purse. So sure there was all different kinds of complaints. So you go down, try to iron it out. It worked very well as a matter of fact, as I recall.

SD: What kind of involvement was there from union members in union activity at this time? You organized people, did they

SD: (cont) come in and get asked to be on the executive?

EN: Yes, yes. We had an executive board; and the executive met; and we had, regularly, it's hard to remember how often, but we, our union meetings were once a month. And we had really, considering what union members are like, we had a pretty good turn-out. I think there was a lot of enthusiasm because a lot of people were being organized for the first time, you know, You know where our office used to be, in ^{the old} Williams Building, way at the corner of Hastings and Granville, and I see that building is all torn down now.

SD: Yeah, right.

EN: As I recall, we were on the top floor, gee it was an old building then. It had one of those gratey elevators, which has grates instead of like solid walls. And a little old man used to run that elevator; he was a dear; I'm sure he was about 80. We were on the third floor, and our union office faced right over the corner, we were in the corner. And we had an office and we had a hall, and the hall would hold, oh as I recall about 150, 100, 150 people easy. We used to get pretty good turn-outs; the hall was usually pretty full, on union meetings.

SD:

EN: Yeah, mnmhm.

SD: Was that in part a spirit of the times?

EN: Mnmhm, mnmhm.

SD: Yeah.

EN: And you must remember that most people that work in our trade,

EN: (cont) not all people ^{but most,} are young people. The predominant age is certainly not like some of the building trades for instance or anything. They predominantly were young people, and it was young people that were officers of the union, and running it. I guess we were full of spit and vinegar, I don't know, we were all very enthusiastic. We were young and had alot of energy; it was not, we didn't think it terrible if you sat up in an executive meeting till two o'clock in the morning, and back in the office in the morning, and on the go day and night. Oh, I think it was, had to do with the time; I think it had to do with alot of young people.

SD: Right.

EN: With alot of energy.

SD: Would you say that, like the organization that took place in this period of time, did this come primarily from a small group of people who got really enthused with the idea? Did it come from the people who worked in the industry itself? Was it a combination of those things?

EN: It was everything; it was that; it was poor working conditions, terrible wages, abusive bosses. Some of those restaurant owners were really pretty terrible. Yes they were. They had had a free rein. I can remember when I started out to work, in Winnipeg, that I had more than one boss that pinched me and tried to date me, and you didn't dare, this was the Depression years, and you didn't dare open your mouth. Harrassment was common, very common in restaurants, not only by the owners but clientele, and nothing was, you

EN: (cont) didn't dare open your mouth. You were there to serve. You could be abused by a customer; you could be abused by a boss. No, so it came from that. But there was a general air, at that period I'm talking about, during the war years, where there was a lot of other people. There was union people who would come into a restaurant and say, "Is this a union restaurant? Where's your union card that's up and over the bar?" So we'd had support from the trade union, from a lot of the various unions. Oh no it, yeah, I think there was a lot of them too that knew a brother or father or someone in their family. No the general atmosphere was pro-union, not anti-union, not at that time.

SD: What was, the work itself, was it done by men and women, or was there a clear sub-division between ^{the} kinds of jobs that men had and women had?

EN: Well, yeah it's changed it quite a bit now, but I think generally speaking, the front staff, the waitresses were women, and the back were men, and the cooks were men. That was generally the division. But there was some of that, there was a few places then that had waiters, like the big hotels in their top rooms, dining rooms, they were waiters. But generally speaking, yes, women did, women worked helping the cooks.

SD: Yeah.

EN: But the dishwashers were men. But then there was all places that had nothing but men. I remember the Oyster Bar, as I recall had nothing but men waiters and men in the back, and ^{it was} just kind of mixed.

SD: Did you find an equal kind of interest and involvement from the men and women in the process of organizing?

EN: Well, to be quite honest, I think there was more enthusiasm by the women; I think the best union members were the women. I don't know, the cook always felt he was just a little bit, you know he had a prestigious position, in comparison to waitresses. It wasn't so easy to change a cook, as it was to throw a waitress out of a job and get another one. No, the women were, I once made ^a statement, "Give me a picket line of good dedicated women and they will outpicket any man." And I really believe that.

SD:

END OF SIDE II

EN: ^{Women were} ...loyal and dedicated,

SD: Women.

EN: Women, yes they were. That was my experience; I'm not saying it was so in every other union. But there was a larger percentage of women in our union. I would think that the percentage would be at least two-thirds women to one-third men. So, they were not shy at all about raising questions and being asked to be participating. I think the executive board as I recall, reflected that too, I think it was pretty much about two-thirds women and ^{about} one-third men. We tried to get people on the executive board who held various positions - cooks - somebody would be able to talk for chambermaids, somebody would be able to talk for waitresses, somebody would be able to talk for desk clerk, and somebody for cooks; your executive board would kind of representative of the people that were in the union. So, no I look back of those days with a great deal of nostalgia, many laughs, a few heartbreaks. (laughs)

SD: What occasions, do you remember you said that thing about wanting women on the picketline? The context?

EN: I think it had to really, I think where I really felt that was when we were organizing the hotels. I found the women were much more ingenious at getting in and organizing and could talk their way out of tight situations.

SD: Do you remember any examples of that? Would they be harrassing people who were joining the unions?

EN: No, once the B.C. Hotelmen's Association saw that we were going to organize and that we were going to continue, really,

EN: (cont) they sort of, they never helped us or anything, but I think they kindof decided it would be better to work with us. (laughs). It just came to my mind, I don't think I ever thought of this since: But you know during the war years, you couldn't get chocolates, and you couldn't get, they were rationed, and there was partly none, they were lousy anyway. And silk hose, nylons were just unheard of, if you had one pair you washed them and you were very, very careful. I can remember us being bribed, or trying to be bribed with chocolates and this, they were always difficult things to get, soap was hard to get, nylon hose and oh yes, there was all kinds of tricks, even liquor, liquor was rationed. Oh yes, they tried, in their own kind of way figuring that maybe they could soften us up. I think they found us, we weren't easy.

SD: It didn't work then?

EN: No it didn't work.

SD: In a union with that many women in it, were there specific issues that came up that were women's issues? You mentioned this thing about women getting off shifts?

EN: Mnmhm. Dressing rooms. Oh god! You can't believe some of the holes that they were asked to change their clothes in; some of them had, ooh, vermin, never clean, stinking, broken toilets, oh, you have no idea! That was also a very, very touchy thing. And we did alot. That was one of the big issues in, oh practically every restaurant, was proper dressing rooms, and facilities for them to put their clothes in lockers, and protection of their valuables. Tried to encourage

EN: (cont) an employer to put lockers in, where the girls, where the people would have keys to it. Then there was some of them, it meant you had to have two dressing rooms, if you have a men's dressing room and women's. They would say, "Well, why can't they use the same ones and they all change at one time and then another?" And nobody but nobody ever was assigned to duty of keeping these places clean, so that the result was that, they just got to be, and they were basements, and they were dank and moldy and oh, terrible! terrible!

SD: So that was an issue?

EN: Yeah.

SD: And uniforms, I guess were an issue as well?

EN: Yeah, hours of work went, you know--and no protection, the dignity of the employee, that the employer, he himself to respect that employee and insist that customers respect his employees. That was also a very important issue.

SD: I guess that sexual harrassment would be an issue.

EN: Yeah, sure. I think it was more common, it probably is today I don't know but it's still fairly common. I think women are just beginning now to raise a ruckus; I know in Toronto there's office workers, secretaries, so, sure, it's gone on for years, and that was something we worked at. There was lot of issues.

SD: During the war period, when the no-strike pledge was in effect, did people, despite the no-strike pledge, ever take in anything that would resemble a strike activity or action in order to...

EN: No, no we never, we never. We threatened, when we, during

EN: (cont) negotiations: one time, we'd had a closed shop for years in the restaurants in our contract; so one year they hired somebody, a public relations guy, and he thought he was gonna come in so we, at our first meeting, he's telling us all the clauses he's taking out. (laughs) Anyway we mobilized our employees, our union members, and got them to come up and sit in, and they, and the negotiations took place in the union hall. They had always taken place there. And much to their surprise when they landed for the second session, there was about 25, no I think there was more than that, we asked union members. And we said, "You'll just come in and you will sit quiet and you won't say one word." But we wanted them to sit there to show strength behind us as negotiating. So that really shook them all up. They wanted those people out of that, they asked us, "Could we move them?" We said, "It's their hall! They're paying the rent here, not you guys, unless you want to negotiate somewhere else." But it was sufficient. Oh yes, they got the message quick.

SD: Yeah, that kind of thing.

EN: Mnmhm. Broken shifts were another thing that was, you know there was alot, there was shifts where you work two hours and off two hours and you came over breakfast and ^{came} back for lunch, or you worked an evening shift, you know, ^{there was} terrible broken hours so that you're, we finally got it down that the shift had to be done within 12, with only one break. That was the maximum, had to be done within a 12 hour period,

EN: (cont) with only one break. But, oh shiftwork also was, you know if it was a poor lunch period, he'd send them home a hour earlier, but he'd say come back at four instead of five, or come back at five instead of going home at eight, you'll stay 'till nine. They just were able to make shifts up every day, depending on how the business went. So you never knew from day to day.

SD: That would have a tremendous effect on women with children?

EN: Oh sure it did.

SD: Did many of the women who worked in the industry have kids? Were they mostly single women, or?

EN: Well, sure there was women with children, but I think maybe 50:50 married I would think, if I recall, about 50% would be single, with no attachments that would impede them, but sure there was married women, and there was older women too that had been waitresses for many, many years whose children were grown up.

SD: Was child care an issue that came up at all at that time?

EN: No. We hadn't gone and advanced that far. (laughs) That's come later dear, thank goodness, but no, no, child care, boy you...

SD: What about the ?

EN: You couldn't do anything about it, you couldn't do anything about it. They had people come in and look after them, and grandmothers and that. Incidentally, I have never forgotten, and I really would love to meet this gal if I could ever find her again. She was 36 years old and she was a grand-

EN: (cont) mother, on our executive board. She was only 36. And she was, when I, when she first came on the executive board, and I was aware of it, she was a grandmother to two. God, she was a good looking gal; she didn't even look 36. Always remember her saying, "Well, I'm a grandmother."
(laughs) Well, I worked with some really fine, fine women. Good people.

SD: Yeah. What kind of consciousness did those women have of themselves; ^{well as workers?} did they see themselves as women as well as workers? Were they critical of the stuff going on in the world at that time ?

EN: Think they were a mixture. There was some women who were very conscious, very intelligent, who followed what was happening in our society. I think we had a good group that was politicized, who was very well aware of the political power, but we also had people who weren't, who weren't really interested. They were interested only in their job, and in the union for what could improve their conditions. But they were a cross-section, a cross-section I think really.

SD: You acted as an organizer; and then did you ever become a business agent, or?

EN: No, no, I never was the business agent, but I was the president for, oh about five years I guess. And was paid not, the president's position was not paid, the organizer's, it was an organizer that was, that was what was paid. So I worked practically in a dual role. I was president of the union, but I was very active in the organizing and in the planning of the organizational drives, and the carrying through

EN: (cont) of them, and negotiating. I sat in on every negotiations.

Matter of fact, Daisy was telling me, I had a letter from her, and she was telling me she was just recently went through the old, old files, and she said, "There I found old contracts with your name on them." (laughs)

SD: Great. So when you say you sat in on the negotiations, would you actually negotiate?

EN: Oh yes, oh yes! You came in with your demands and they came in with what they were prepared to do, and it wasn't unusual to have--~~I~~ don't know, when the hotel agreement was signed, I think we probably met before that agreement was finally ironed out, I think we must of met about a dozen times, I'm sure it took a couple of months. We met quite regularly though. And ^{the same} with some of these restaurant contracts, we would meet until we would finally got what we wanted, or what we could agree upon. So we would have sessions. We usually had, tried to have about two a week, because we tried to keep, they wanted to stretch it out, but we were always pushing to have the contract signed.

SD: Yeah.

EN: And always threatening that we won't work without a contract; and we would have 60 days to negotiate and we ran over it a few times, and continued; we'd be close. But, no I don't recall ever going longer than about three months, negotiating.

SD: Was there strike action when you were...?

Mhmm.

EN: No. We never pulled a strike but we threatened, a number of times, but we never really had to pull anybody right out. I

EN: (cont) think the big strike that took place in this town was before my time, was the time that the Vancouver Hotel, that was in the 19, late '20's or early '30's when Bill Stewart was a young man. I heard about him dying, died not long ago, Bill Stewart. But he was a, I remember meetin' Bill Stewart when he was about 20 years of age, and I prom, I'm sure, I was a bit younger than him, I wouldn't be any more than about 17 or 18, but I came out on a visit to Vancouver, and met him and talked to him. We talked about unions. There was the youth movement in, going on, in Canada at the time; and we talked about that. It was around that time. That was quite a strike apparently, that Vancouver Hotel strike. And then the Railways Unions took over; they did the organizing of the catering people, and the dining room people and that. So we, that was part of the Railway chain.

SD: When you talk about sort of there being a youth movement back, I guess reinforces the whole experience of being brought up within a trade union movement framework?

EN: Yeah, mnmhn, yeah.

SD: Been raised in it. Were people, you were from the prairies...

EN: Mnmhn.

SD: So was the CCF a strong force then? Was your family at all?

EN: Yes, as a matter of fact I must tell you that the first vote and of course then you had to be 21. We lived in Winnipeg north enter, and the first vote I ever cast, and I was very, very interested in politics, because I was casting my first vote. And I voted for J.S. Woodsworth, he was the candi-

EN: (cont) date, in North Center. And, yeah, I came from a family who was politically conscious, trade union conscious. It was not unusual for Woodsworth to be in our house; Nellie McClung was in our house; my mother was very active in women's groups, and during the Depression she was very active in ^{the} unemployed movement, although my father had a job during the whole Depression. But a great empathy; my mother came as an immigrant to this country as a young child, and I think there was a great deal of empathy, particularly with my mother, although my father too. But, for people, ordinary people trying to raise families and to better themselves. So I was surrounded with this; we were encouraged to read books, encouraged to expand our minds; we were not, gossip was discouraged in our family. Small talk was discouraged. And at the table, we were a large family, and at the table we were not allowed to quarrel or argue. My mother would divert it, or my father; and say, "Well let's talk about what you did at school, or let's talk about what book you read lately." And so, you know, the discussions were kind of, I realize now they were very cleverly steered away from small stuff and quibbling and talking about neighbors and that sort of thing. So I think I was very lucky.

SD: Is that the kind of training that taught you the kinds of skills necessary to be an organizer, do you think?

Those experiences in your family?

EN: Probably, probably. We were encouraged to take an interest in joining groups, and take an interest in the world around.

EN: (cont) My mother always said that, no matter who that person is or what their lifestyle or their kind of work they did, oh even if they scrub floors or swept floors, that they were a human being and they were worthy of dignity, and if that we wanted to be respected back, that we should realize that they had feelings like everybody else. We were encouraged to show dignity to everyone, irrespective of the color of their skin, or their religion; racism was a real taboo in our family. Yes. We were not allowed to indulge in that.

SD: You said earlier that your dad had been a trade unionist?

EN: Mnmhn, yes. He organized a, I don't know what you, there was always the caretakers and the engineers in the schools in Winnipeg. He was one of the first organizers. And I had a brother who worked for the school board and he was very, very active. After my father retired, he was working. He was in the union at the time with my father. But my father retired and, yes. Of the six children, we had, Tom, didn't we have five? Presidents in our family.

T: At one time, yeah.

EN: Yeah, out of six children, we had fi--oh, just very briefly, there was a very brief period at which one was, you know...

T: Yeah.

EN: That we so, I think it gives an indication of the thinking of the family.

SD: (laughs) Let's see, what kind of skills were necessary to be an organizer?

EN: I think you have to put your shoes in, put your feet in the

EN: (cont) other guy's shoes. I think the best organizers are the people who have worked in the trade. I really think that there is no substitute to know what what it's like to be on the other end, you know. I think only then can you really have empathy and understanding of the problems of a worker, is if you've really done that job.

SD: Yeah.

EN: And it's true that that was a period when there wasn't, when organizers were not really educated to the extent that they are today, and need to be today. I am not putting that down. But I remember the first time that we had to bring professional help in to help^{us} with a brief; and we just felt that the employers were hiring lawyers and people, and it was certainly dumb on our part not to get the best legal advice, ~~the~~ best assistance we could in presenting our case. And at that time, you presented it, but you got research work done. But that was just beginning of realizing that it took more, if you really wanted a good contract, that was just the beginning of where we realized that you had to be educated or have people do research for you, which will make you on an equal footing with the employer.

SD: Right.

EN: Mnmhn.

SD: Which was the big change I guess, from the past. You said that the union itself didn't go out on strike, but were there any strikes or struggles that you were involved personally?

EN: There was no-strike period. ^H Was the war years.

EN: (cont) It was a no-strike period, and we never, we weren't involved in any strikes.

SD: What about...?

EN: There was no, I can't, I'm trying to think, I don't recall during that period a strike in any trade.

SD:

EN: It was certainly considered very disloyal.

SD: To do that?

EN: Oh yes. Very.

SD: People feel a very strong ^{of} patriotic sentiment?

EN: Yes, you had the odd maverick, you know, you had them all the time, we had the odd mavericks, the trade union movement has its percentage, who would urge, but generally speaking, the majority of the members of the union, and the leadership of the trade union movement, there was, really it would be not in our interest to provoke, because we had the most favourable conditions there had ever been, as far as I know, the most favourable conditions that ^{have} ever existed to organize. So we were rushing to take advantage of it. (laughs)

SD: What kind of reaction did your family have towards your involvement in the union?

EN: Oh, they were very favourable. No problems, no. No. We used to have sessions; my brothers would sit, and ^{when} we'd go up together at family gatherings, we would talk about the kind of problems we ran into in our organizing, and in ^(unclear) with trade un, and we'd exchange stories about different incidents. Yes, we always had this subject that we could talk about, we had in common. And my mother and father

- EN: (cont) would participate when they were alive. We tried explain what we were doing. But no, we really, in this we had no problem in our family.
- SD: What happened within the union? What kind of shake-up took place?
- EN: Well, as you know, wasn't it 19, was it '46? that Churchill made that speech in the United States, what was it called? ^{Folks? Fulton} The Full Speech or something, and the Cold War set in. And of course the whole climate changed, where we had worked with, we did, I did, anybody that was prepared to organize workers and work within the trade union movement, and did not interject their personal politics into the union, I worked with. So we had Communists in the union; they were in all the unions, weren't just in ours. But we went through a very, very radical change, took place in our society. We entered the Cold War. And of course, the Red Baiting started, and the Red Scare. And let's face it, the AF of L was not noted to be (laughs) the most liberal outfit. ^{The} Top leadership of the AF of L's was pretty conservative. So they went on Red Baiting campaigns and they were determined to throw everybody out of the unions that they even suspected. And I think what was really sad about it was that anybody who continued to even talk to these people, or work with these people, or treat them like--you know you were supposed to just treat them like they had typhoid or something, and if you refused to, if you ever had established a personal relationship and a social relationship, well you were supposed to cut

EN: (cont) that and if you didn't, you were just lumped with them. Anyway there was a whole upheaval in our International Union. It was a struggle took place: I went to the Convention in Cincinnati; I was the delegate from Vancouver; and there was, the president had died; and there was a struggle between left-wing elements, not just in Canada. A matter of fact, less in Canada than in the United States, and was progressive Locals on the west coast, down in San Francisco and on the west coast and in New York City. And so we each put up a candidate. It was just horrible. It was shocking! For me as a Canadian to go down, where they cut off microphones; they beat up delegates. Oh it was terrible. And the more liberal, progressive and those people that rallied, including the Communists ^{on} the Left were defeated. And once they were defeated, once their ~~slate~~ was defeated, they just went through the whole International Union, and cleaned out everybody. Oh yes, the Cold War was at its worst in the trade union movement. And I think they really ostracized and threw out a lot of very fine people, people who had spent years building a union. You know you didn't even have to be one of them; everybody was painted with the same brush (laughs), you were either for me or against me, was the thing. So they put in, they came up, they had a the International vice-president for Canada died ^{a guy} by the name of Archie Johnston from Toronto ^{came in}, and he wanted to throw out of the union about, a number of people on the executive board. He wanted the Local cleansed of Communists, and so you had to define who was a Communist, who

EN: (cont) was a Red, and everybody's interpretation can be different. What was the criterion? So anyway there was a clear division. And I must honestly say that I, and I have no regret, that I felt that it was wrong and I sided with those elements in the Local that opposed trusteeship. Well, they, at that point, they just said you're going to do it, and when we said we're not going to do it, they just said we'll put in a trusteeship.

SD: Cause you refused to?

EN: Mnmhn. I still have the headline. I have one paper with headlines of the front page, still have it at home, of us, them -- they took over the office, and they took possession. And incidentally your friend that you say you interviewed *recently* was one of them. And they took over the office. I can't remember now, they must have gone in the morn, no, they came in the day and we were out and they just took possession of the office, so we went, when we came back after being out on, in restaurants, doing our bit during the day, when we walked in the door was barred to us. And they'd changed the locks. And then (laughs), gee, anyway, we decided, we met, oh, they put an injunction on us, that was right, they put an injunction, that we weren't to speak on behalf of the union; we were not to hold a meeting and speak to the union members. I had two injunctions on me at one time. We were not to mail; we were not to talk on behalf of the union; we were not to use the mailing address, or hold meetings. Anyway we ignored the first injunction, and went ahead with the meetings, as

EN: (cont) I recall, and then they slapped another injunction on the officers, I was one of the officers. And I was told if I went ahead, we had to get legal advice, with that meeting that night, that we would be put in jail over the weekend. Anyway we decided not to push our luck. But what we did is, during the night, we broke in (laughs) to the union office; we turned the tables on them; and we had a locksmith who came in during the night and took all their locks out, put all ours in. But in the meantime, the injunction was working, you see, they had gone to court. The injunction was before a judge, and it hadn't, the hearing hadn't been held, but. So when they came to the office, we said that, "It's our office, it's our union . . . You're on the outside now." But of course the injunction I think was held, the hearing was held for the injunction that afternoon they won an injunction, so we legally had to abandon the office. So they took it over, and everybody was, the union I think was under trusteeship for about six months.

SD: How did the membership react?

EN: Well, they were able, they took over all the books, they were granted in the injunction all the books, and all the addresses. *Of course* it was complete turmoil, complete turmoil. We had a number of members of the union support—the union was divided—there was a few who ^{were} confused and there was those that were prepared to support us, and there was those that were prepared to support International Head Office, but they had the power, they had the legal power.

SD: They could do it.

EN: Yes, they were able to do it.

SD: (Sighs)

EN: So I was suspended as I recall, I've forgotten exactly what happened but that was, yes, the whole top leadership of the union was cut off. And then I went back, I, by this time I was married, and went back and did some waitress work. My husband was in a sanitorium and we needed the money. He had broken down with T.B. He had been working steady, and it was necessary for me to go out to work. And I'll tell you it wasn't easy for me, I was known, to get a job, as a waitress, but I did. And I worked for a period of time, and then he came out of the San. I worked for Woodward's, in their coffee shop, which wasn't organized. I couldn't get a job in a union shop, nobody would hire me.

SD: Why, because they'd...?

EN: Mhmhn. I was black-listed.

SD: By the union?

EN: Yes, of course, by the union, sure.

SD: Same thing happened in the wood industry. I just
wanted to go over quickly^{just} a few things...

EN: But I was just going to say: I'm not really bitter, I have no bitterness about that period.

END OF SIDE I

EN: (cont) I think it was a very educational period. I am not the personality, that I understand the times that we were in; I also understand people who were not, who thought they were doing the right thing. I still retain relationships with a number of people in the union, who really weren't supporters of me, at that period. But no, I have no bitterness, I think it was a great education, and I think that anybody that lives through the, that McCarthy period can, has understandings of what happened. A lot of people were hoodwinked, a lot of people were scared out their wits, into doing a lot of things they wouldn't do. And then there was a lot of people forced to break friendships which they preferred not to break friendships, and I think the question of loyalty was, which I consider a very important attribute, loyalty. I think that, I can understand them forsaking loyalties, yes, understandable.

SD: Were there like policy differences between the International leadership and the leadership you were employed in?

EN: Well the International was very, very conservative. It had an elite at the top. I think if you know the old AF of L, Meany was the president, I think he's just resigned, I don't know how that guy ever lasted so long, but, ^{our} International Union which was the fifth largest of the AF of L, oh yes they had a very large membership. It was very conservative. Listen the unions are not exempt from people opportunists; unions are not exempt from the spectrum of society. They have their people who are self-perpetuating, and it's understandable.

SD: What about the conflicts between the Bartender's Union, they sort of had been organized for a long time, and Local 28 which must have been more in the process of organizing, what kind of conflicts were there—you talked about that a little before—

was that a big problem in the process of organization?

EN: Yes, at the beginning it was. I don't know, you see they had been organized for a long time and I suppose you would say, I shouldn't generalize, but there are people who are bartenders, that kind of trade I think attracts people who are not intellectual giants. Mind you there are intellectual giants in the, I don't want to really generalize. But we were also in a period, this was long before women's, really, it was only during the war that women started to crawl out of the kitchen. So they were quite opposed, they just didn't want, they felt and especially young women, "The place of women, nyah, women!" They really didn't see women as we can look at them today. And they were afraid that they'd get involved and it would upset their quiet little set-up. And they had a very good quiet set-up, where they negotiated their contracts, and there really wasn't many, they didn't really have any, many problems, and they were better paid. Why should they go stick their neck out! I had that said to me many a time: "Why should I stick my neck for that chambermaid or for that waitress, or that bus-boy. Who are they to me?" "I'm okay, Jack." They really weren't enthusiastic. Except that we had to try and work with them and encourage them. But once we really went in and they saw that we were sincere, that these people really wanted to be organized,

EN: (cont) we won them over. But at the beginning, oh yes, very much opposed.

SD: Was your Local in the B.C. Fed. , or in the Labor Council?

EN: Was there what?

SD: Was your Local a member of the B.C. Federation of Labour, or?

EN: Oh we went to the Trades and Labour Council meetings, yes, yes, surely, I was the delegate to the Trades and Labour Council. Bert Showler was the president at the time, Teamsters Union, eh Tom? Remember old Bert, wasn't that his name, old Bert Showler?

T: Yeah.

EN: Yeah, he was the president.

T: -

EN: I got along very well really with most of them. Yeah, he was the president at the time.

T: -

EN: I'm trying to remember, there was a guy by the name of, later became an alderman, something to do with the B.C. Electric Jervais, Gervais.

T: Oh yeah, Gervais-

EN: Wait a sec, Gervid, Gervin. Yes, he was the secretary during a period that I was the delegate to the trade, Bert Showler nominated me, which was a very flattering thing, he nominated, they were looking for women delegates to the World Labour Council, or I know International Labour Movement, eh? or International Labour, ILO, that's right.

EN: (cont) And they were looking for delegates and they were asking top people in the trade union movement to submit names, and Bert Showler submitted my name. I didn't get going, but I worked with all these people and worked quite well with them. I avoided, I tried to stick strictly to trade union work, and I avoided those kind of controversies which divided people. I didn't get into the politics of it, and the game playing because there was game playing, of course there was, there's always been and there always will be a certain amount of game playing, but I didn't involve myself in that. I worked with Woodworkers, where a lot of people framed, we had the two labor groups here in B.C. and, but I worked with people, if they, their workers were close to our workers. You know you just went and if you had a problem you would ask, "Can you help ^{us} with ~~this~~?" I really must say I never ran into that, I think I ran into one male chauvinism (laughs) more than, at that time, you know. I think that was more the problem, than working with--I think it was new to have women organizers; there wasn't many women organizers; I was one of the first of any prominent sphere, you know. So it was a whole new ball game, and I think they quite didn't see us as being serious and being conscientious. We were playing at it I guess they thought. Thought we were being frivolous. I think that had to do with their attitude towards all women, not just trade union women. But it changed.

SD: How did that come out, that kind of chauvinism? What would they do?

EN: I think the bartenders' attitude was a typical case of it, and

EN: (Cont) and a kind of a superior attitude, you know. *That* weren't important; we weren't even important in the trade union movement.

SD: How is that rationalized that you weren't

EN: Well you know, *oh* waitresses. *oh*, chambermaids, *oh*, hotel workers, "Who are they? We're tradesmen!" This was a new ball-game, organizing service workers. They never considered service workers as being terribly important. I, you know.

SD: Did they recognize these people as workers though; did they see them as workers *or women?*

EN: I just don't think they saw them as people. (laughs) Particularly women.

SD: Uh, huh. Right.

EN: I just don't think that they saw them as people. It was still a big hang-over from the crafts unions. Mentality of the cr-- CIO was just very, very young in the United States where we have industrial organization, it was the beginning of it. And the war speeded it. This is where it got *people*; our society was changing; people were not working in crafts the same way. And I think that was the beginning of realizing that you organize a whole industry. How do you organize it? Are you going to organize into crafts or what? And of course there's always been chauvinism in the trade union movement, because it's a part of our society. "My craft is better than your craft; I'm more equal than you're equal." Sure we had that in the trade union movement.

SD: So industrial organizing would be pretty important for the hotels? Cause you had different trades?

EN: Yes. Yes, we didn't want the Building Service Employees really because we thought it complicated. What if we had problems, negotiating with them? But we didn't. They were darn good at helping to organize; they participated in the organization; they were darn good at negotiating table. But what if it meant another union? It meant two unions in the same building. Bad enough to have Locals, different Locals, but to have two unions, sure we would have preferred to have taken all of the--but they were prepared to help us; they were working hard at organizing; and we worked with them.

SD: Just a few things on women before the end. Did you find that the kinds of responsibilities that women had outside of their work really affected their ability to be active in the unions?

EN: Oh yes, sure. How much time have you got: if you ^{we} got to go home, and you got children, you have a home to clean. Of course; it pertains to today. Pertains the same. Only if you can, we can find some way of freeing women, and of course we got all kinds of modern appliances and modern things to do. I think that the attitude of men are changing: I think it's no longer considered a no-no for a man to cook a dinner, or to put the kids to bed. I think society is changing, thank goodness, because ^{really} women ¹ worked you know, went out to work, and had another job at home.

SD: Did you in your union mostly appeal to women as women or as workers?

EN: Workers. I did. Workers. But I think women can have special problems that are peculiar to women. And so these problems

EN: (cont) cannot be ignored; I think they'll always have problems that are peculiar to women. And so I think, for that reason you have to broaden ~~the~~ scope a bit.

SD: And did women in the union play a central role on both leadership bodies and making policy?

EN: Oh yes, they were in every, they were on the executive board, they were on the negotiating committee, they participated in every phase of the union. I really felt the women in the union were more active, and more interested, more conscientious, than ^{the} men.

SD: What would the unions...?

EN: Maybe I'm prejudiced. (Laughs)

SD: (laughs)

EN: I happen to have a great respect for my own sex. I think they've gone, they've had alot of years where they haven't been really, well not by everybody, but, I think they've had a bit of rough load to hoe.

SD: When the union was put under trusteeship, and the leadership was thrown out, and the new leadership put in, was that a male or female leadership that was brought in?

EN: Male, what do you think! (Laughs) ~~Which I think~~ helps to prove my point. Male, sure.

SD: And did that...?

EN: And the executive board of our International Union, as I recall was 24 on that executive board, of which only one was a woman. And yet, our trade, when you think about the field that we cover, women are at least two-thirds to three-quarters of memb-

EN: (cont) ership are women! And ^{yet} here was an executive board, we were talking about chauvinism, believe me it can happen in trade union movement and it did! We had one woman, I remember Gertrude Sweet from Seattle, no from Spokane, was the only woman on that executive, ~~that~~ International executive board; she was vice-president I think for the 6th District or something. So that tells you!

END OF SIDE II