

SD: giving me your name and when you were born and where.

MM: Well my name is Mona Morgan now. And I was born in Winyard, Saskatchewan in 1913.

SD: OK. And could you tell me a bit about your growing up years, what your family did and?

MM: Well, I was the eldest of seven. And in the course of growing up, my mother and father adopted three, so we had a very large family. My father became a Socialist. And so I grew up with Socialist ideas right from the time ^{when} I was quite young. As a matter of fact I can remember ~~being~~ a school inspector who came around, and, calling me a little Red. Things like that, although that didn't perturb me at all, I think I thought it was kinda funny. But those are some of the things, ^{and} because my father was a Socialist and a businessman, and he was sort of considered to be, well in those days a little bit 'off'. But we, actually we didn't suffer from that, we just, I think we found it interesting because we, our house was always full of very, very interesting people. My father was also a poet, who later published four books. And so, they were very, very interesting discussions always in our house, and lots of polemics. And because we were Icelandic, of Icelandic origin, then the Icelandic papers used to come to our house, you know, my father would subscribe, and then, after he read them, then my mother [coughs] Excuse me, ^T Then my father used to write articles in the paper, and then of course there'd be big (Sighs) paper, The discussions about it. [^] And then he edited the Winyard Advance, () when my uncle was overseas, he was the one who owned and operated the paper, and then dad edited, well, he was, 'cause

MM: (Cont) dad was a sort of a scholar. And so, as I say, we always grew up and ~~in~~ spite of the fact that we, in the latter years, didn't have much money 'cause the depression came along and was, you know, kinda tough, my dad's business went belly-up, as they say. And so then we had to resort to changing our large house and family ~~in-~~ to, almost a boarding house. So we had teachers and some of the bank boys stayed at our house, and...So that's the sort of thing that happened in the depression, and I can remember the terrible dust storms, you know, we'd clean the house and then the dust storms would come along and you'd have to do it all over again the next day and that sort of thing, and then the terrible ^{worry} about people having no money, there ~~were~~ no jobs. And for us growing up, I ~~had~~ just always assumed that I would go on to university and, of course when I finished school that went right out the window. So, in 1933, we packed up, ~~we~~ couldn't sell the house, no way! So we sold our furniture and bought a car, seven passenger Studebaker, and came out to the coast. And that way, my brothers at least were able to get to university when they finished school, although really by their own efforts in a way because one of my brothers, I don't know if you've heard of him or not, Emil D. ^{Bjarnson} ? of the Trade Union Research Bureau, well he won a Governor-General's Scho, Medal, Scholarship. And my second brother, he, he also became an assistant to Dr. Dalman at the university in bacteriology. And that's how he got his university education and stuff . And my oldest brother, who remained behind because he did have a job in a pharmacy, he stayed there until 1936, I think it was, that he came out here, and then he finished his pharmacy course, he finished it, he took a pharmacy

MM: (cont) course quite quickly, and then of course he got work immediately he came here, with Cunningham Drugs, and he rose right to the top of that outfit, completely to the top. So anyway all my brothers had, some education you know, good education. I have a brother in Seattle who teaches music and French and Science and so on. And my sister and I, well she was a dress designer, she died in 1950, the youngest of them all, in '76 when she, at the age of 50. But when I came to Vancouver, I went to, the only thing I could do, I went to, I got a job at housework, cooking and looking after three children, for a couple who both worked. And then I became a cook in one of the large households, in Vancouver, in Shaughnessy, but in the course of those three years I learned to type and shorthand. And then through some influence I was able to get a job in B.C. Plywood's office, and I was there for three years and then I got my walking papers real fast, they gave me ten minutes to leave.

SD: How did that happen?

MM: I think, they didn't say it of course, after asking me which position in the office I would really like to have, six months later they said you can leave in 10 minutes, the Inter-urban leaves in 10 minutes, here's your cheque and your holiday pay, and I said, "And why, Mr. Robinson?" And he said, "We're making the staff more flexible." However I know that they also knew because they had their Labor spies, that I was engaged to Nigel Morgan, who at that time was a woodw^{ork}, an organizer for the International Woodworker's of America (laughs), organizing their plant. So it was just too much of a coincidence. So anyway then, by this time Harold ^{Fritchett}, as a matter of fact, it was only a month later I think that Harold

MM: (cont) Pritchett was deported from the United States, having been the first President of the International Woodworkers. And he went to work in the office, of the newly-organized office of the CIO, and asked me if I would come and work for him. And so I did that. And in those days of course, the unions were just barely becoming organized, and the pay was very small, and of course there were long hours but that didn't really matter because it was rewarding work. And although I had had very little experience in the, well no experience in the labor movement as such, I had joined YCL, the Young Communist League in '37. And I had done some things with them, but in the actual trade union movement I didn't know anything about it. But I certainly learned very quickly. And then, when we were married (laughs), just a little over a year later, I was fired from there, discharged, shall we say, because the majority of the officers didn't believe in married women working. Of course they weren't Communists, they (laughing), a couple of them were Liberals I think. So anyway I just, I worked in my husband's office, volunteer work for a few months, and then one of the girls in one of the other IWA Local offices had to leave, and so the Secretary asked me if I would come to work there. Course even in those days, you see that was, what '41 '42, there weren't that many I think that were really wanting to work in offices where there was long hours and poor pay, (laughs), sometimes there was no pay, if there was no money, because they, the unions were just barely becoming organized you know and they had very few members, and of course my husband was working very hard, because being the Secretary-Treasurer of the District Council, he was also the editor of the paper, he put the paper ^{together} all the time, so you can imagine what kind

MM: (cont) of hours that would be, so we all worked long hours, but that, we didn't mind that because something was developing and growing you know, it was the beginning of things. So I found that very rewarding and interesting and helpful.

SD: OK, I wanted to take things back just a little bit and ask you a few questions, a bit of the earlier stuff. Do you feel that your cultural background helped to bring you to ^a Socialist perspective?

MM: Oh yes.

SD: Could you talk about that a little bit?

MM: Well yes because you see my father being such a, an avid reader and writer, there were many days when, at the noon hour, we'd probably just be finishing our lunch, in those days it was a dinner because things were different then on the prairie, you had your dinner in the middle of the day, and dad would read ^{(to) us} from some of the books or papers that he was getting. And I can remember that somebody smuggled in a copy of the book on ^{Sacco; Venzetti} ~~City~~.

SD: Oh yeah.

MM: And this was of course banned, it was not supposed to be in Canada, so of course this was great! You know, we just loved that, that was a little bit of intrigue you know, so...And then dad used to get Labor papers, and he would read us stories from them. Then the miners struggle at Estevan, when Annie Bul ^{ler} was imprisoned and there were three miners killed. And Estevan isn't that far from my home town. And so you know we heard about that struggle. And then Communists and Socialists and leaders used to come through and where did they come to, if there was a meeting,

MM: (cont) if they couldn't have a meeting in the hall or something, our living room would be the place where, I can remember some teachers and other people who were interested in Socialism, who would come and they'd have meetings, or discussions that went on till maybe three in the morning. And my father was an atheist. But I can remember three ministers of three denominations in our living room at the same time, discussing with my father; and he played bridge with them too. So, and then the same thing with cultural events, you see when you belong to a so-called minority, then Icelandic artists and performers of one kind or another, or people who had been to Iceland and they showed their slides, Many of them were entertained in our house. I remember my mother used to play the piano for a little quartet that they had, you know and...There were things like that that colored our whole development, ^{you know} that is ~~the~~ earlier ones of us who were still there. Those who came here, it was a little different of course, the struggle was more intense when ^{we} got here. But those were the kind of things that certainly shaped our lives and our ideas and changed things...I can remember that I used to try and have little discussions with some of the girls that I went through high school with. And their responses were quite different because they didn't have the same background I did, and I couldn't quite understand why they couldn't understand about what this Depression was doing to people, you know. But they didn't and partly because their fathers were in different, although, mine, their fathers were in different positions for awhile, although that didn't last very long, because one of them, whose father was a lawyer was disbarred, ^{because (you know)} he got, it was a terrible misfortune

MM: (cont) really because they were very fine people, but he had used trust funds which he assumed he could just replace and then when everything fell apart, couldn't do it. And these were some of the things that happened, you know, made it very difficult. But we remained, we, we maintained our friendships though; and two weeks ago, a few of us got together when one of the girls came from Saskatoon. And we had a very nice evening, those that are grown up together, and you know, and gone through high school and so on. So, ^{of} course when you graduate you go your different ways, people move and leave and that sort of thing. But anyway those are the sort of things that shaped our thinking, back in those days.

SD: Okay, I was going to ask you then about when you began to work...

MM: Mnmhn.

SD: ... in the Forest ^{industry} industry.

MM: Mnmhn.

SD: What was it like working in an office in those days? Do you remember what the conditions were like? Can you describe them?

MM: Yes, I remember quite well, because we had, we worked from nine until five. And I, I just can't remember exactly whether we had a full hour for lunch. I think we probably did, because you see we had a very nice, it was out, it was down on Marine Drive, off Marine Drive, so we had to go by inter-urban or car, and I did both. And, we had a very nice lunch room, and we used to have our lunch there, and then we'd, I remember we'd always used to go for a little walk on nice days, up the railroad track and things like that. Um, I, I, the conditions, they expected ^{us} to do a good job. I had a little experience myself, after I had been there for about a year, I suddenly got sciatica, and I was off for two

MM: (cont) weeks. The office manager was very nice person, and he said, "You can collect Compensation for that." And he saw to it that I got Compensation. He was fired by the way, at least he, well they didn't say that, but he was replaced by a man who had been I forget what in a bank, and so then immediately things began to change, and then they used to look over their shoulder, they'd stand behind the door, see if Margaret and I, Margaret and I shared a little office together. I was on the switchboard, I did the cheques, we had, I had 29 locals on that switchboard. That became quite tiring. And I had to do all the mail, and I did the cheques. And every once in awhile, you know you'd look around and here was Mr. Robinson, just behind the door to see whether we were talking or if we were doing our work, you know. So, but other than that, and they expected that, I remember that the reports that had to go to H.R. MacMillan, 'cause this was a MacMillan you know, subsidiary, and the reports had to be perfect. So when we were typing those reports, then we had to make sure that there were no mistakes on them you know, had to be done in a bit of a hurry. But, and of course we, on there was no union in those days. And I remember, we made a few little remarks about the fact that the girls in the office, and it seems to me there were 11 of us. We were the ones that had to make the tea and the coffee, we had tea every afternoon, and we had to make the tea and the coffee, and that sort of stuff you know. (clears throat)

SD: Right.

MM: Yeah, there was one or two of the fellas that would go and put the kettle on and that sort of things, but generally speaking you know, it was the traditional women's role, (laughs) you know that

MM: (cont) we had to maintain; of course it was interesting, but you know the reason they gave me 10 minutes to leave, they didn't want me to talk to the other girls...

SD: Yeah.

MM: ...in the office.

SD: Did, was office work considered sort of more privileged or better quality work for women in those days?

MM: I suppose, yes, it was, because you see, I guess I was earning about double, at least, you know I can't remember whether it was, I think we got our cheques every two weeks. So I would be earning about double in that job that I was earning as a cook. I got 25 dollars a month, as a cook in a large house in Shaughnessy Heights, with three children and a couple and a nursemaid; and I wasn't just expected to do the cooking, I had to do the cooking, I had to do the dusting downstairs and the vacuuming, and I was expected to press his clothes and polish his shoes which he left out. I didn't do it, and finally the lady of the house did the pressing of his suits herself. So they could have easily sent them out you know. They were quite wealthy. And he was a bit of, the funny part of it is, kind of a coincidence, is that he was a corporation lawyer for MacMillan Bloedel (laughs), it was kind of funny, you know, that I should have got that job, you know. But and they were, when I applied for that, I did it because I wanted to upgrade myself, and that's why I left the other place, and when I applied there were dozens and dozens of people who applied for that job, and I think it was only because I had my senior matriculation, you know, a little better education, I probably talked my way into it, probably some of the others were much better cooks.

SD: So there was real competition for those kinds of jobs.

MM: Oh yes oh yes yes indeed. And that was, let's see that would be 1936.

SD: ?

MM: Oh yes yes, there was, yeh.

SD: When you, as a young woman, ^{when} you were thinking about where you could work during the Depression, what kinds of possibilities were there?

MM: Not many at all, and in a small town there were hardly any. The only thing that I got in the town, you know, I helped at home all the time of course. We had the boarding, we were running a boarding house then, I, I did, I worked at home. But in the summer time, I did work in the, when the, a friend of my, (sighs) a father of one of my friends, they went on holidays and they had a store, a clothing store, and so I worked in that store, for maybe three weeks or something like that, and then I worked in, a, oh a little, I guess it was a confectionary store, you know things like that, those were about the only thing, and that was just you know short time. Now if I hadn't had to work at home because that was quite as you can imagine, having to cook and clean for, having a big family and then that on top you know it was a wonder my mother survived. My dad, mind you, was excellent because he understood "the woman question", and he did his share. Oh yes, yes he really did, he was very good about things like that. So that's the way it was.

SD: Was it, what was the emotional feeling amongst young people in the 30's?

MM: Terrible! Frustration, frustration because it's like it is today. Where were you going to go, what were you going to do. There were

MM: (cont) teachers with M.A.'s washing dishes. There were people with all sorts of education who found it impossible to get work~~any~~ where. And there was no sense of, unless you were lucky and knew the right people, and even then, the right people couldn't always get you a job you know 'cause there weren't that many, there was so few. And it was a very frustrating time for most people, or a large number of people anyway. I mean in our town was a railroad town and the people, the engineers and the, probably the Section people, and firemen and that sort of thing, their jobs were reasonably secure. But for the others, even the storekeepers-- I know one of the reasons my father's business~~went~~ was because he couldn't collect what was owed to him; if he had got what was owed to him, he could have survived. But the people who, you know, it's a vicious circle and it's the same way today, same way.

SD: So, OK, so when you came to Vancouver you were working as a domestic, and then you mentioned that you joined the YCL in 1937...

MM: Mnmhn.

SD: ...Can you tell me a bit about what prompted you to finally become a member of the organization?

MM: Well mainly because, until I had the time in the ^{en} evenings, you see, one of the things when you're working in a house, in those days, you were tied to that place. You had, in the first place I had Saturday afternoon and Sunday off, but the second one, the one in Shaughnessy I had Thursday afternoon and every second Sunday afternoon~~off~~. And I had to have the meal prepared before I left, so that they could serve a cold meal on Sunday evening. And and you couldn't go out at night, without permission, oh yeah, mnmn.

SD: So it didn't give you much flexibility.

MM: Didn't give you any flexibility, so at that time there was you know I had no chance for doing anything but, after I went to work in the office and I had my evenings free, and so then, there were things going on, see the YCL they had a social program too. And for those who were able to carry on some sort of activities during the day, you know they would be more active in organized activities you know amongst other young people. But, in the evenings, there would be social activities, and then there were things like, I was able to help with some typing, you know on a Saturday afternoon, I could maybe help them do a little typing and, or something like that was required you know. And then at the same time, though, was the Youth Congress Movement. You know about that don't you?

SD: Umm, tell me about it?

MM: Well that was a very broad influential movement of young people. And two of my brothers were involved, one of them from the Canadian Students Union at UBC. As a matter of fact he was a delegate to the National Convention of the Youth Congress. And there were delegates from almost every organization you want to name, all churches, there were East Indian people, we had a, I remember Jerry Hundel was one of the guys, he was quite influential in the, and he was a University person. And other ethnic groups, Japanese, young Japanese, I can't-I think there must have been some Chi, yes there were Chinese too and others, there were a whole number, and. And the ^{rec?} pro ~~wreck~~, I can remember we had ^{and} ~~and~~, one of the people ^{Prowreck} who was the leader of that organization was the late Erick ^{rec} Martin, you know the former Minister of Health in the SOCREG government. Oh and there were many many others. One of the Owens, Walter Owen's brother I think it was, you know former Governor General, there was, it was a very very broad movement, the YCL was affiliated.

MM: (cont) ^{Maurice?} ~~Maurice~~ Morris Rush was one of delegates, now the leader of the party here was one of the delegates there. And so, and I was a delegate at one stage from the Icelandic club, what did we call it ^{The Omalan} ~~The Omalan~~, which was an Icelandic young women's club. sp.

SD: And can you tell me a bit of what the youth congresses did, what their goals were, and how they were ^{organized} ~~organized~~.

MM: Well their goals were to try to influence the unemployment, you know to change that around, and to, they dealt with questions like the rights, trade union right, ³ trade unions were affiliated too. I was trying to think who they were, so long since ^{-we-} I thought about it you know. My oldest brother after he came here, he became the provincial president of the Youth Congress and then of course when the war broke out, shortly after that of course it faded away because they all went to war, alot of them did. Two of my brothers were, one was a tank commander and another one was ² a flying officer, he was a navigator. And you know that's what ^{happened} ~~happened~~. But their goals were, well for example, I can remember very very heated debates over the question of India, and the role of British imperialism in India, that was you know how India was seeking her independence, working towards her independence, and the East Indian delegates, I can remember, you know, same thing in Japan as the, at that time facsism was in Japan, eh?

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SD: Yes, did you say facsism was in Japan?

MM: In Japan as I recall, I can remember a very strong debate on sorts of those questions because those were questions related to peace, anti-war struggles they were very great, I can remember, oh dear, there was a woman now, I've forgotten her name, so long since I've thought about her, but I think she, seems to me was either from the International League for Peace and Freedom or, but I shouldn't say ^{that} because I can't remember exactly, I'd have to think back on that, I'll ask Earling about it because they remember so well, because no matter who comes to Vancouver who was ever in the Youth Congress, they always get to my brother's, from all over the place, from England. Last summer there were people from Edmonton, from England, from France, all over the place, so they maintain a very you know, and they, my pursuits have been quite a lot different you know over the years, so I don't remember so well about that. But I know we did discuss those questions of peace, and at that time, you see, there was still alot of unemployment.

SD: Right, yeah.

MM: That didn't change until really the war broke out, there was a slight beginning, and then of course ^{there was} the Spanish War, that was also a very big, on the agenda, and I can remember meetings you know where Dr. Bethume came for example, and I can remember him speaking in the theatre or something you know and we went to that. And I know Nigel was in Victoria at the time and I can remember writing him about that meeting, things like that. Then of course there was the whole question of scholarships for students so that they could have some education. And there was also, there ^{were} also

MM: (cont.) questions related to domestics. Did you by any chance talk to Mildred Liverse ^{dge}?

SD: I have her name, I think she's on the ~~list~~?

MM: Yes, and she's a very sick woman. Her husband was the ~~one~~ who wrote Onto Ottawa Trek.

SD: Uh-huh.

MM: And she did some work in relation to organizing domestics, who was a very staunch person.

SD: ~~I'll have to~~ see if she would be willing to see me, that would be great.

MM: Yeah.

SD: Yeah. OK, did you ever get involved with any of the domestic organizations?

MM: No.

SD: No?

MM: No, no, no. No, at that time I wasn't in touch with anybody you know, and my nose was to the grindstone. I used to just get, go home, you know, and our home was always such an interesting place anyway, that, in my off time I went home and enjoyed that. And so whatever cultural activities there were in the Iceland community, you know, we were involved in that, so what little time I had, we did that.

SD: The Youth Congress Movement, would they organize demonstrations ^r around these issues? Would they hold public meetings? What kind of activities did they...?

MM: They used to have, I don't remember how often the meetings were, whether they were once a month, I really don't remember, I can check it. I think rather than give you a whole lot of stuff that

MM: (Cont.) on that that mightn't be too accurate, it would be much better if I had a talk with my brother and my sister-in-law as a matter of fact because she was involved ^{with} you see all these things were sort of intertwined, she was involved with the, they called it International House at UBC. And, as a matter of fact, they were at a wedding Saturday night ⁱⁿ which a Japanese woman from there, who had married one of the fellows that we knew in the Youth Congress I think, and they got married and their daughter was being married. (Laughs) Well those are the kind of things that happened you know. But there were all sorts of relationships, and...

SD: OK, so we'll leave that.

MM: Yuh, and I'll try and I'll make a note about that, because I think we should know more about that anyway. That is a chapter, because it was national. And it was very influential actually. So I should really get a lot more about that. See I, in those days, I was very very retiring, and, I didn't do anything like get up in a meeting and speak, I mean, ^{-I'd have been} (awed) [^] caught dead first. And I, I was just sort, I was just very much of a back-ground person where I would typing or where I would do things like that but I, you know, but I was very much in the back-ground. So anyway I'll get that info.

SD: Was there any discussions of organization when you worked at, uh, in your office job? Because they were organizing ⁱⁿ the plants.

MM: I know and there was a very little bit of discussion about it. Uh, just trying to think...I'm sure I opened my mouth much too

MM: (Cont.) much when I was there, without realizing it. You know, I'm sure that a lot of them, thought that I had really had some really funny ideas, or probably even had come to the conclusion that I was a bit of a Red, because I might have thought I was being very diplomatic or something like that but, looking back on it now, I'm not sure I was (laughs). I think I probably opened my mouth much too wide sometimes, you know. (laughs) So, no there was very little talk of organization because you see in those days, don't forget unionism was taboo then...

SD: Uh-huh.

MM: As the Communist Party is today. I can even remember discussing with one of the girls as we were walking at lunch-time about the horrors I felt about the Spanish War. And she had no difficulty in being able to rationalize that. But then, but then you see the CCF didn't play a very good role either in that you know.

SD: Could you elaborate that?

MM: They took a position of neutrality.

SD: In the war in Spain.

MM: Yeah, and Finland too. Now I had a real battle and that was a very difficult thing for me in our Icelandic Women's Group, on the question of Finland. Because the girl who was President, she was a real liberal, and she brought a resolution one time into the meeting, without discussing it with the Executive, she just brought it in, in relation to—I think it was aid to Finland, or something like that. And you know, you'd have to know the history of that, that point, to know that that was a, you know I didn't know what to do, it was just, you know, ^{I thought, oh} how awful!

MM: (Cont.) What a position to be in, you know. And anyway, I managed to get it put for, until the next meeting, and then we we had about, I was able to muster about six or seven or something, or eight I don't remember, it was quite a little group that voted against it, but she won because they were real, they were real red-necks, so anyway those are some of things that, that happened.

SD: OK, that takes us then up to, those are my questions up to around 1941, oh we mentioned working in the CIO ^{office}....

MM: Yes.

SD: That was what it was called, the CIO ^{office}?

MM: Yes it was the CIO Industrial Union Council.

SD: Mnmhm. What did they say to you when they fired ^{you} for being married when they discharged you, do you remember?

MM: Um, well they just said that there were so many people who were not married who should have jobs, and married women shouldn't be working and taking jobs.

SD: And that was it?

MM: Yeah, that was it.

SD: OK, so...

MM: Mind you that was only half of that story too.

SD: OK, what's the other half? (laughs)

MM: The other half: if I hadn't been married to Nigel Morgan they probably wouldn't have fired me so easily.

SD: So they were afraid of...

MM: You know radical politics.

SD: You mentioned before that you were, you ^{were,} had been ^{sort of} shy and retiring, when did that start to change, and what was that process?

MM: I think, mind you, not that I ever liked it, but I think that when I had to take positions in the Auxiliary movement--I joined the Auxiliary you know fairly quickly after we were married. And before long, we had a, I can't remember what year the District Council was organized, it might have even been organized when I joined. But anyway before very long I became one of the officers of the District ^uCouncil. And then I had to be in a position where you spoke on questions. And then the worst of it was that, (laughs) I went a couple of times with Nigel to the Island, and they're, "o-oh, they'd like me to speak too!" Oh gosh! That was devastating. Anyway, I guess that happens^s to a lot of people, when you're suddenly have to, you're put in a position where you have to make statements and...

SD: You had no choice.

MM: You had no choice, you had to do something. So, I guess it was at that time that I came out of myself more.

SD: Alright. So, you worked in the IWA office and you were also a member of the Auxiliary.

MM: Oh yes, that was just as the wife of a woodworker. You know a union member.

SD: OK, I think what I'll do is I'll ask you some questions about working for the IWA and then I'll ask you and then I'll ask you about the Auxiliaries.

MM: Mnhmn, mnhmn.

SD: When you worked for the IWA, that was during the War, right? wasn't it?

MM: Yes.

SD: Yeah, OK, can you run over about what you recall about the history of the union in that period of time ?

MM: Yeah. It was just beginning to be organized. You see, the IWA was formed in 1937 in Portland. Harold ^{Pritchett} from B.C. became its first President. And the BC District Union Council was chartered, and it was the first union chartered under the CIO in B.C. And, see before that, they'd had the Lumber Sawmill Workers and so on, and the CIO was the beginning of organizing industrial unions, where they were trying to get one union in one industry, and have the strength of the whole woodworking industry, as opposed to the division of the craft unions. And so it was the struggle to organize the CIO was extremely difficult as well, because again, it was all, the Red Bogey was always used, to try to change that. Now there are some very interesting quotes, and I have them here somewhere, where Phillip, well before Phillip Murray, it was the John L. Lewis, John L. Lewis, who swept aside that. And he said, that you're never going to organize anything if you're going to allow those kind of divisions. And although he was a mine owner himself. But he became a very influential as you know, a person. And here the struggle it was reflected. And I can remember discussions even amongst some of the people that I had grown up with, some of the guys who, we got together socially, and they were saying, "Oh the CIO, that's just a bunch of Reds!" And this sort of stuff. So it was a really big struggle to organize the CIO, and I know when Nigel came into the District Council, he was in Victoria, and when he made, he was made Secretary-Treasurer, they had under 300 members. So you can imagine what kind of a job it was, to maintain an office, keep the Lumber Worker going, keep the ² ~~Lower Wain~~, which was called *Laur Wayne*, ?

MM: (Cont.) the Loggers' Navy, keep it going. And so most of the people who worked there, worked for very little, and sometimes there wasn't enough to pay. And, but they were all so dedicated people that they worked to build the union and maintain it. I can remember one of the things that I had to do when I ^{went} work to for Local 71 because everybody would be out in the field, often at nine o'clock at night I would rush to the Union steamships with the mail, that had to go out for the camps. And I never resented that, I never thought anything about it, except it was part of the job you did.

SD: So you felt like you were part of the organizing process?

MM: Well that's right, because you you became, everybody in the, in those early days that worked in the union, that's the way you felt, because the unions were being organized, and they weren't looked as a big outfit that could maintain itself at that point. And the organizing was done, I can remember, even before Harold came up, no it was after, of course, because he wasn't here at that time, I wasn't in the office at that time--no they would go out and meet groups of people just in their houses to try to get them to come into the union. It was a, you know a one-on-one sort of a deal often, and when they went out to the camps, they would have to go in the dead of night sometimes, and get into the bunkhouse when the guys were sleeping, and wake up somebody that they knew in there, try to find out where they were, cause if the boss knew they were in camp, it was out.

SD: Yeah.

MM: And they used all sorts of, in order to get guys' names even in

MM: (Cont.) the ^{camps} [], they would run raffles, they'd raffle a bottle of whiskey or something like that, to find out who was working there, what was the names of the guys, so they could go and see them at their homes. Now this, people don't realize today what building the industrial unions was.

SD: It was illegal wasn't it to organize, like there was no legal status for unions, was there?

MM: No, I can't remember when that came in...

SD: '43 I think.

MM: Was it '43 that they actually got that bill?

SD: Yeah.

MM: Bill 39 I can remember was one of the things we worked very hard for, yeah, it was a, it was a really tough struggle. But you know you looked on it as something that was happening. And of course, you always had those who in their own way tried to break everything, I can remember when they, and I would take the Minutes you see at District Council Meetings, sometimes, not always, because one of the other girls in one of the ~~the~~ other Locals would do it, but it was, you know because Nigel would be going, it was just as good for me to go, as to stay home. So quite often I would do that. So then you watched these what would they used to call them the White Block; and some of those guys, the shenigans ^{on} that they went through, in order to try to avoid all the good things that the others were doing you know. It was a real, real struggle.

SD: What about women in the IWA in those days; were there women working in the industry?

MM: Yeah, but not many.

SD: And when did they come in, and in what conditions?

MM: Well, I guess during the War, of course like everywhere else. There was even the odd woman-faller, but very few. I only actually knew one.

SD: Oh yeah, could you tell me a bit about her circumstances, I never knew that there were women-fallers.

MM: Yes, well but she was the type of woman who, well, I don't think she did it so much for the fact that the wages were so good, as that she just enjoyed the fact of registering her independence, and wanting to do something that was really different. I can't say that I knew her terribly well, but I can remember coming into the Union office. But in the mills, ^{of} course like in B.C. Plywood, we had a woman organizer.

SD: Oh yeah.

MM: Gladys, uh...

SD: Hilland.

MM: ^{Shunaman} Shunaman, Hilland^a yes, Gladys Hilland, and that was in Local 217, in the Sawmill Local in Vancouver. And of course Alice Person has worked in the mills for how many years, years and years and years. You met her, haven't you met her, ^{yes}, for years and years she was there.

SD: Did the women come into the Union office with any kinds of specific problems or issues that they...?

MM: I would say not anymore, not as nearly as much as the men, mind you I was in the Loggers Local, I worked in the Loggers Local, and then later, in the District. I don't think I worked in the District while Nigel was there, I think I worked there, after he left. I was there you see, for three years, after he was gone.

SD: So you wouldn't come into contact that much with ^{the} rank-and-file ?

MM: No, no not of the women because their, no the loggers were, it was the loggers Local that I worked in ^{the} longest.

SD: What about equal pay for equal work, was that an issue there that was current during the war?

MM: Yes, there was a certain amount of that, but mind you, I didn't come across it that much because I wasn't in that area, ^{we} heard about it, but I must say that I didn't, Alice would know much more about that. She would be able to give you that ^{story}, or Gladys.

SD: OK, what about, I guess it's an analogy in some ways, with the equal pay issue for women and men, but was there, weren't there issues between workers of different races in the industry?

MM: Oh yes!

SD: Yeah?

MM: Oh yes, yes. You see in the early days, I can remember particularly on the Island hearing Nigel talk about how they used to make the Chinese workers, and I suppose it applied to East Indians workers as well, pay them, for giving them a job. And they collected every month. And that was one of the things that the IWA addressed, and won. They took some ^{people} to court I think over that it seems to me, but they won it anyway I know, yes, it was quite bad. And, you know, there was that same ^{division} that you find amongst workers, even today, where they think, oh well some of these immigrants, they come here, and there aren't enough jobs for everybody and so they shouldn't have them, you know. It was that, there was a certain amount of that. I don't

MM: (Cont.) know what percentage of others worked. See in the Loggers Local, I can't remember coming across that so much because a large number of them were Swedish and Norwegian; they were craftsmen when they already came, a lot of them. And there were a lot of Ukrainians, in the woods, and some Germans.

SD: Right, so this was [a] mill problem to some extent.

MM: I think it was more of a mill problem.

SD: Do you remember--this is a difficult question, [] --do you remember in which policies that, I guess it would have been the Labor Progressive Party, at that time had, how they would be argued inside the Union, and how it would affect the direction of the Union, because that, a lot of the leadership people were...

MM: Mnmhn.

SD: ...Party members.

MM: Yes, quite a few of them were, not all of them though, well it's like everything else, if proposals are put forward and you always have somebody who doesn't accept them; and certainly there was complete democracy there because, like the (laughs), I must tell you about John McCush, I'm sure other people have mentioned him to you. He was one of the, he was the President and one of the organizers of the Local, the Loggers' Local, Local 171, and he was a rough-hewn prince of a person. He had been everywhere, he was born in Nova Scotia, he'd been in various parts of ^{the} United States, Hawaii, everywhere he went he was for the working man. And one of the first jobs I had when I went to work for (laughs), for the union, was to phone a list of people he gave me, "Now you

MM: (Cont.) try and get those characters out of bed to come to the Union meeting." He said, "We want everybody we can get to come to the Union meeting, you know." And naturally what happens, I don't know if you've ever worked with loggers or know anything about, when they come to town, after they've been out in the woods for a period, they cause, they're bushed.

SD: Uh-huh.

MM: So, sometimes the first thing that happens is that they deposit all their stuff someplace, they used to bring alot of their stuff to the IWA, the Union office, they'd bring their money in there, and we'd have to keep in the, we had a great big wall safe. And wall safe; it was a whole room practically. But anyway, and then they would go on a toot, or they'd go to the b-, they'd go into the beer parlor and so on, and not all of them, because some of them were married people. But the single ones, they'd get themselves a hotel room and they would have fun then, often they got rolled if they didn't get to the Union office first. And so, anyway McCush ? , he spoke like this you know, "lower than a snake's belly, that guy," (laughs), those are the kind of things he would say. But completely principled person. But they did, they tried very, very hard to get guys out to Union meetings, because, how do you organize if you don't get people out; and it was the same thing in the, Local 217, when they had a meetings, they would get as many as they could possibly muster. Today you can't get people to Union meetings unless there's some hot issue. But in those days, one of the reasons that some of them didn't want to come out to a meeting was they'd be identified as being Union members. And they didn't always want everybody

MM: (Cont.) to know who they, that they were Union members.

SD: It was like a volunteer sign-up.

MM: Yes, sure, oh yes, for a long time, I forget what, I don't even remember when they got the check-off, it was a long time after. ^{They were always} collecting dues, it was a really a tough job to keep the whole thing going, so that if any policies that were projected, were projected in the Union meeting, first of all it would be done in the Executive, and then the Executive would take it to the Union meeting, and it would be discussed. And I can remember lots of real hot discussions; and of course after Harold ^{Pritchett} left, there was a change in the leadership of the International Union. And some of the officers were something, as a matter of fact I came across a bit in one of the Lumber Workers, that I, I don't know what made me keep these things, but I did, and I didn't realize I had them. But one of them is where Mr. Fadly who was quite a bit later, but he went to the Province, and put an ad in the Province newspaper which had been on strike. I can't remember where that is now, but anyway the International officers at one point, they were very, very, well it really led to the break-up, when the Union dis-affiliated; it was just the pressure, of that endless fight, that finally led to it .

SD: So the union, the International Union was hostile to District One.

MM: Oh yes, yes, and came out publicly against them, I had forgotten some of those things ^{too} but I came across it right in there.

SD: ?

MM: Yes they actually came out publicly and that was in '48.

SD: Around what issues did the hostility come out, was it ever around Contract issues...

MM: Everything.

SD: ... or policy?

MM: Everything. Because you see, even the whole question of District-wide negotiations is a progressive policy. And if people are not in, interest^{ed} in organizing a union for the benefit of everybody they just have their own little empire to, service, then they're not necessarily gonna be that interested, in industry-wide negotiations; they're rather gonna think a little bit more, how much can I get out of this and mine. For example, it took a long time for the shingle-weavers, and Harold was a shingle-weaver. But there were, there was another group, that was much longer, I forget who it was, that took such a long time before they even, got them in because they, they had that old craft mentality actually. And so this, "in unity there is strength" is a progressive slogan. And if a boss can get a union organizer to fight against that, he's gonna win something, eh? And you know the union movement has been riddled with bosses agents since the day when, I'll show you some afterwards, about some very interesting things that, and I can remember taking the minutes of that meeting. Where a guy, they actually found what had happened, it's all there, I'll show you. So, it wasn't just the question of Labor Progressive policies, but, the whole, the whole question of developing strong unions, like it is today. Right now, the Bennett is very busy trying to organize ways of breaking up the existing unions,

END OF SIDE II
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SD: They harrassed, was this the government or was this ^{employers}?

MM: No, well no it was the logging, the other logging operators, because he had broken, he had broken the fraternity, eh?

SD: Yeah.

MM: You know, that's what happened. And he was a very interesting person, as a matter of fact. And he had a weak spot, and it was for children. And, that's how Nigel finally got to him.

(Laughs)

SD: In what way?

MM: Well, I don't exactly remember you know, but I remember Nigel saying, he said, "You know, I got around him that way." And then he was able to sort of, get around the fact. Because first of all you have to break down people's prejudice, and of course there was very wide-spread prejudice. And the organizers had been all blasted as Reds anyway and so on, and lies, like the Province printed a story about us, just shortly after we were married; and said, oh we lived in Shaughnessey Heights in a great big house that was I forget how many thousands in those days, seems to me there was ^{something like} nine thousand which now is nothing, but it was just ridiculous. But those are the kind of things that they did. And the same thing as they do now about the Soviet Union out of ^{whole cloth}, or about, like I heard something last night that was just ridiculous, but that's the type of thing. And if they can make that stick as a Red issue, then they're home-free. So of course they did that. Now that doesn't mean to say that that the people who were members of the Labor Progressive Party, mind you that wasn't important until 1930, 43.

MM: (Cont.) But they were members of the Communist Party before.

And that doesn't mean to say that they didn't make some mistakes in, it's much easier if you're a member of an organization where you have like-minded people, to bring in proposals, or policies that you believe in, and if there isn't that much opposition, you know there not be that, as much debate, as if, as if you weren't that many. So it is possible that, maybe it was too fast, they may have been taken for granted that because you recognize that all these things are for the good of the people, that everybody will see it your way. And that isn't always the case; you have to, in united front work it's, ^{it's a very} skillful operation, because it's very easy to, because you think one way to think that it's so logical to think that everybody will understand it and they don't.

SD: Were people open about being members of the Labor Progressive Party? Or there more of a separation between individuals' politics and their actual union work in organizing?

MM: Oh yes, they weren't, they weren't organizing as members of the Labor Progressive Party, that wasn't the case, and I think everybody knew, you see the Labor Progressive Party was formed at a great big meeting in the Georgia Hotel or the Vancouver Hotel, one or the other, I don't remember which, it was a, you know an open sort of a deal. So those people who were there, were known, now they weren't all there, by any means. But they weren't organizers because they were members of the Labor Progressive Party. They were, they became members of the Labor Progressive Party, in probably, many of them, as a result of their experience in helping to organize. I mean that was true of a whole number

MM: (Cont) of people that I know...

SD: Yeah.

MM: ... who hadn't been particularly political, but who when they joined the union, and they gradually began to understand what the working class is up against, they, began to learn more and more about politics, and did join. There were many, many people like that, so some of them are around, some of them aren't around. But you see, during the War, there was a completely different atmosphere, because we were working in a period of the National Front...

SD:

MM: Am I too far away?

SD: No, I would actually like you to be able to be comfortable, so don't I just...

MM: Oh that's it.

SD: ...sit the mike here, OK?

MM: Ok, you know ^{where, where} [redacted], almost everybody was fighting for the War effort, and amongst other things, the union officers were active in organizing Victory Bonds, all sorts of things like that. I can remember meetings in our house where one of the leaders of the, not the leaders, they're not leaders, a person who is in the B.C. Electric, he's dead now, he died from cancer, but he was a top officer, from the B.C. Electric. And he was involved in ^{the} Victory Bond, you know, I can remember him having a meeting in our living room. We lived in the West End then. Where we were organizing Victory Bond campaigns and the union officers would go out, and speak about it, because it was an understanding; you're fighting facsism, if you don't win...

SD: Mnmhnm.

MM: And that, you know, what's gonna happen. And one of the problems was in bringing home to people the fact that it was possible, that the war in Europe could extend, if Hitler was successful there, and don't forget that he was going like dominoes, knocking down the different countries in Europe, when we were being, when we were, even when I was at B.C. Plywoods, and I can remember how we were discussing what was happening in the ^{Magnit} Line, and that sort of thing, and then afterwards when they went into Poland, and they went into Czechoslovakia, and France and all this you know, it was a very emotional time for everybody. And yet there were people who were, well, the armies were over there, we're gonna beat them, no, don't worry about it. There were people like that, but I think a great deal of the thinking people were, were very concerned and were part of the National Front that developed at that time. We were members, I was the (laughs slightly) chairperson, chairman of the Air Raid Precautions in the West End. And Nigel was on the men's division, and we used to have meetings regularly on those questions. And the unions became very involved in that. That may have made it just a little bit easier in some respects, as far as organizing was concerned, although one of the difficult times was when there was a no-strike pledge. But that had to be broken in the Queen Charlotte's, and there was a strike. And it was won. But it was one of those contradictory times where, what's the, I'm trying to think, the rule is made to be broken sort of deal; it was one of those times it was more important. But that was the only strike at that, in that particular period, and it was won. But it was very solid, I can remember that strike, very

MM: (Cont.) sol-, very short. But...

SD: Did the ^{rank-and-file} ~~rank-and-file~~ back that strike?

MM: Oh yes, yes it would never have happened otherwise, yes, yes it was very solid, yeah.

SD: And what, why did that strike take place, was it to...

MM: I can't remember, at this point I just can't remember exactly what it was about, we had so many of them that I just can't...

SD: And the IWA supported the no-strike pledge.

MM: Mnhmn, mnhmn.

SD: What was, how did people talk about that, or rationalize that political position?

MM: In order to put everything possible into the War effort, so that you didn't stop production, because they felt that it was very necessary to keep production rolling so that the requirements of the, of the war effort would be met. ^{I know} ~~rank-and-file~~ one thing that I did that was, I found very difficult to do one time was, speak at a little meet, no it wasn't such a , it was a big meeting, in I think it was the Royal Theatre or, no I don't remember the name of the theatre, ~~it~~ was on Hastings Street anyway, for the opening of the Second Front. That was, that was one of slogans during the war. My brother was in the opening of the Second Front, both of my brothers that were in the war. Remember that day very well.

SD: Was there any division within the union around the policies around the war? Did most rank-and-file workers say, well, we have to put everything behind the war effort?

MM: Most of them did, but not all, like in everything, you always have some people who either think that you're, you're, you're

MM: (Cont.) doing something for some particular reason or that, that they don't understand you know, I think that the basic feeling was that, that we lacked faith, that the armies could overcome Hitler, um, then of course there were some others that felt, "well the Russians are so powerful," you know, I mean they were in all the battles that were being waged and do you know it's too bad that we don't have the papers, they're on file, but the Sun and the Province used to carry tremendous headlines about the victorious Russians or you know the brave Russians and all this, you wouldn't have (laughs) to read the papers today you know, I was watching TV the other night you wouldn't believe it the way they're distorting history, it's scandalous, just scandalous. They're trying to reverse everything, you know? It's the Americans that won the war. But I think there were different things that went into people's thinking about it, but I think the majority of people felt that we had to support the war effort.

SD: Ya, OK, there's two criticisms of some of those policies that have come out in the course of some of my interviews can I say them and you can tell me what think of them? One has been that there was some inconsistencies in some of the positions that the LPP took or the Communist Party took, OK, around its relationship to the war effort could you maybe respond to that?

MM: Well, as I recall, what we called the phoney war, when the, allies refused to join in a united front with the Soviet Union against Hitler, and the facists it was more than Hitler, I mean it was

MM: (Cont'd) Hitler, ^{and} Mussolini and it became the Axis with Japan and uh, they refused to do that, and it, so they really allowed Hitler free reign, not only that, but they admitted that they were, I mean Britain for example, admitted that they were helping to uh, what was the word I used? to back up, they were giving military aid to Germany,

SD: Excuse me, was this *Spain*, or?

MM: No, no, this was uh, I'll have to dig that out, but uh, I what was the name of, Lord somebody or an other who said, "We are lending Germany so many millions, in those days, millions of dollars in military aid, we don't ever expect to get it back but, at least it will help to keep back the Russians." It's a bald statement, it was in *Nigel's*, I found it in his wallet, and I think it's still there (laughs) um, and it was that kind of a situation, while at the same time they were blaming the Soviet Union for everything, including the, the, non-aggressive pact that the Soviet Union made with Hitler in order to be able to stave off what they knew was going to come ultimately and so you know, this was part of the scene at that time, and also they knew that the marginal line was a fake it wasn't going to do anything we knew that, and, then of course when they invaded on June 21st, 1941, then Churchill came out with his famous statement, and they finally realized what was happening, but, Churchill, Churchill never gave up the anti-Soviet fight, and he's the one who instigated the cold war, he triggered it by his speech at Missouri, but,

SD: Was it in 1941 that people really swung behind the war effort?

MM: Oh yes, yes very sharply yes, Ya because they recognized what was happening, because if they figured, well if they can, because they went in so quickly and they broke that pact, you know the non-aggression pact, they went in and they, they, I don't know exactly, I really can't tell you because I haven't studied it that well, they claim that the Russians weren't that well prepared, that they felt that they, that by this non-aggression pact that they had staved it off a little longer, and there's no doubt about it that their ~~re~~ ^{Banner} divisions came in far into territory, but I don't think that, they ~~do~~ 't ever say and they didn't on, the other night that there was never any bombing of Moscow. I mean the air defence was uh, so that right from the beginning, that was in place, but, no, I remember, there were difficulties because I can remember one of our professional people, he lived just a block from us and, we used to have dinner together and things every once and a while, he was a member of the party, and, I can't remember exactly what it was, but it was something prior, to that, to Hitler going into Germany, that he said, "I haven't got the guts," he said, "I just haven't got the guts to stay," he said, "things are too difficult," and I can't remember, he said, "oh, ^{what.} put the, the issue was because I forgot about it for a long, long time and it was, there were many times that were difficult. It was real tough.

SD: OK, that helps. The other thing that I ^{ive} ~~heard~~ ^{said} was that it was hard to fight for conditions, like to improve conditions in the situation where there was a no-strike pledge and also where a

SD: (Cont'd) lot of effort was going into the war effort, is that true?

MM: I think that it's true. Well, it's fairly reasonable, because you see, if your strike weapon is your ultimate, then you in order to be able to get your demands, you have to be able to use other ways, you know, without using that ultimate weapon. Therefore, it, it, it makes it more difficult to put the pressure on the boss, for example because he knows that unless there's something really, really tough, as there was in that one instance, that you're not going to strike, so that's I think that's the main reason.

SD: Right, so did that mean in a way people saw having to make it through the war first and then really get a decent contract, or how did people in the leadership of the union maintain a sort of balance between fighting for improving conditions and wages...

MM: Well, strangely enough, they were able to get a ^{whole lot} of things done. They did because the war didn't end until 1945, the union grew from about 300, less than 300 to what, 47,000. When Nigel left I think it was about 37,000, and that was by, and that was the war, because he became leader of the Labour Progressive Party in '45. David was six months old.

SD: Is that your son?

MM: Yes. And let me tell you, that was, I think the hardest thing I did. In some ways - was during the 1946 strike, Nigel was away, David was, a year old, and a half, no, just over a year old, and I had a broadcast every day for five minutes, Five Minutes with

MM: (Cont'd) Mona. That was tough, I did that for six weeks.

SD: What was your broadcast?

MM: It was replying to the employers' broadcast, they had one that was five minutes every day, and, my job was to help show that it was not the wages of the workers that were increasing prices, and that the union demands were legitimate, and you know, all sorts of things like that, so you had to have a different angle every day. Oh, it was hard. And in those days, I was on CJOR, and I had to have it down there by I think it was nine o'clock every morning because the lawyer had to go over it to make sure that there wasn't anything (laughs) anything libelous or whatever, so that was later, that was in '46, but that was THE big strike, there's the picture of the auxiliary.

SD: OK, lets get into the auxiliaries.

BREAK

I was going to ask you about the IWA Women's Auxiliary, and can you tell me a bit of, why was an Auxiliary organized?

MM: Well, it grew out of a struggle for the Woodworkers for decent wages and better conditions and in order to be successful, they needed the help of the womenfolk, and I think most struggles, strike struggles require that, and in Fraser Mills, the Fraser Mills strike in 1934, led to the formation of the IWA in 1937, and the women were very active in that strike.

SD: Can you tell me the history of that activity, do you know of it?

MM: No, I don't know too much about it, except that they were active in helping the strikers in those days one problem, you see there was no strike pay, in those days, and so in that struggle, the same as in most struggles, there was Blubber Bay in '38, for

MM: (Cont'd) example which was a historic one, ^{the} Lake Cowichan, '31 maybe, no it was Fraser Mills in '31 I may have my dates mixed, but in any case, all those struggles, one of the things that had to be done was to organize enough food, which meant going to farmers, or grocers, or wherever they could gather things, and then to get a crew together to help either make sandwiches or do some cooking or whatever, because there was nothing to keep the families going. You know those struggles were not like they are today, or like in Poland where they're paid to go on strike. Didn't know that? Ya, easy for them to go on strike in Poland they get full pay. But in any way, that isn't the way it was and so, even at the time that our auxiliaries were, particularly in their beginning, it was a question of helping to, give coffee to the pickets, on the picket line, and to help in other ways to organize events so that you raised money, you'd have dances, or you'd have socials, or something to draw in other people, and work in every way you possibly could, like they did in Sudbury, even in the last one, where although they had a certain amount of strike pay, they weren't going to have it forever and they had to get the solidarity of other unions and in those days there weren't that many unions, you know it was they had to depend on the people around, and that's where the womenfolk and, and I know one of the women who joined our auxliliary in 1946, she said, you know before this strike I was anti-union, and she learned through the efforts of that strike, what the union meant. And that's what happened, so anyway, the women pitched in and they did all this kind of work, and in the course of doing so they also learned

MM: (Cont'd) about the issues they were fighting for and why they had to maintain the union. It's a little bit like that Mine Mill, movie, what's the name of it, remember? I've forgotten, but in any case, it, I think that movie shows quite clearly what the families of the strikers went through. So, anyway, mind you, in the course of it, the employers did everything they could to try to divide the families, and to win women away from the struggles and they do it today.

SD: OK, could you elaborate on that a little bit?

MM: Well sometimes they even send letters, to the women of the family saying, don't you realize that if your husband is going to be on strike ^{there's} not going to any pay, he's never going to recoup whatever he loses in the period he's away on strike, and uh, in the long run this is only going to be hard on the family and you know, we want you to realize that. It's not that long ago that they, that I remember them doing that very concretely.

SD: Were you thinking of Harlan County, was that the movie you were thinking of?

MM: No, I'm thinking of right here in B.C.

SD: Ya, I meant the movie.

MM: Oh, no, no, no, I'll think of it, it's one that was made, in Mexico.

SD: Salt of the Earth!

MM: Salt of the Earth, that's right.

SD: OK, so they recently, they've done that eh? sending letters like that?

MM: Ya.

SD: And, when you say the women learned of the issues in the strikes or

SD: (Cont'd) the unions, how would that process happen?

MM: Well, it would happen in many ways. See, one of the things would be that, when you're fighting for ^{say} one of the slogans was, was "Advance Our Pay A Buck A Day", so they would find out that if they were successful, in winning, a dollar a day at that time, that that would increase their standard of living and that they would be able to do things that they couldn't do before. And, then if they were fighting for safety on the job, again, you know that one out of every three woodworkers ^{in B.C.} in 1947 was either killed or maimed, that's right, that's just scandalous, so, and the auxiliary in Lake Cowichan for example came in to being around the question of safety. The men had been struggling to have the roads improved from the logging camps to the hospital, the nearest hospital, I think it was in Duncan, they were trying to get those roads improved and they had not been successful. So the women decided they're going to have a go at it. So, they did. And they organized, and they fought so hard, that they finally got those roads improved because you see lots of times the men were so badly injured when they got them to the hospital, that they were, you know, coming over those roads, what do they call those roads that are (laughs) ...

SD: Corderoy roads?

MM: Corderoy roads, yes, you know that they would be just shaken to pieces, lots of times it would be too much, they would be dead by the time they got to hospital. Either that or broken bones they couldn't set them, they were, you know, it was awful, so when you have a situation like that, you know you can understand how the women would become very, very concerned and would fight

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MM: (Cont'd) tenaciously in order to get things changed, and they did, and out of it, they decided that if they could do that, they could do a whole lot of other things, so I mean in those days there were no ambulances there was no rescue planes, there was just a straight case of getting guys out of the woods. So, anyway, what else, on that question, I don't know if there is anything else I could say about how they learned, you know,

SD: Was there actual educational within ...

MM: Oh, once we got the auxiliaries organized, sure, but if we want to talk about all the different things, that we did, the high accident rate in the woods and mills meant that there were always lots of guys in hospitals, so, the women, we formed hospital visiting committees and so we would go up to the hospitals, we'd take copies of Lumberworkers, some cigarettes, some sweets, maybe, and that was, we tried to do that just regularly. The union members did that too, but, you know there weren't that union members that were able to, of the organizers or anything, and, they would try to get other people to do it. But anyway, that was one of the things, the other thing, of course, was a concern for children. And, one of the big things they did was to organize the, the Children's Jubilee summer camp. And do you know that this is the first year that that camp will not be opened since the thirties. And, I think that the statistic is still the same today. Another thing we did was had representation on the Foster Day Care Association,

END OF SIDE 1

TAPE 2

MM: (Cont'd) and I don't know that the statistic has changed very much, it may be even worse today that , one child in ten , was in a foster home, in a home other than its natural home. And so we used to have representatives on that association to help do what we could to keep that organization alive. And, as the union grew, then, more auxiliaries, were organized because the women took part in the development of the organization, of the union, and so by 1946, at the time of the big IWA strike, which was a historical one as you know, the B.C. District Council of the IWA Federated Auxiliaries (laughs) that's the official title, had 16 locals with over 300 members. And during the 1946 strike I showed you that picture, all the auxiliaries participated. And we went by chartered boat from the mainland to Victoria, and we were housed in the army barracks in Victoria, and nobody showed undue concern for the less than comfortable accommodation, but when all the contingents had arrived from the woodworkers' areas in the province, the men and women together marched in a great circle around the parliament buildings and sang "Hold the Fort" , "Solidarity Forever" and "The Union Maid." Those songs echoed in the corridors of the Legislature as the union spokesmen were meeting with the government. (laughs) and the poor people of Victoria, they thought the revolution had arrived. It was really funny, you know? But the feeling of solidarity for the cause of the woodworkers and their families, was, it permeated the entire movement. And there were thousands of people there.

SD: Were there women workers there too from the mill?

MM: Yes, oh yes.

SD: Did they march with you, or did they march with their locals?

MM: They, I think they marched with their locals, ya. ya, not that we cared very much, you know, but..And then as I told you, one of the contributions there was the broadcast, which presented the issues around which we were fighting, from the women's viewpoint. The auxiliary largely financed those broadcasts. We developed quite an audience, a listening audience, we had one woman who wrote in a (laughs) card, opposing everything, everyday. (laughs) Somebody from Victoria. Should have kept them. Well, as a matter of fact, I would have, but somebody threw them all out. And then we edited a page in the Lumberworker. And we finally produced a bit of an exchange of views between the auxiliaries, members, in the columns there. Another interesting event was a holiday camp for auxiliary members. Twenty women, including most of the executive of the District Council, plus, a delegate from most of the, not all they couldn't all make it, of the locals, spent a week in the Gulf Islands, combining leisure activities with lectures on trade unionism, women's place in society, and current topics, and had a meeting of the District Council, in the course of it. I've got the minutes too. I wasn't there. I was back east at the time. Anyway, and the Auxiliary District Quarterly meetings and conventions were always interesting. They were, we used to hold them in the Malispina Hotel in Nanaimo. And the press always came, because they said that they knew that there was always going to be something interesting happening. And, in addition to the issues of particular current concern to woodworking families, we also had fraternal delegations from other auxiliaries, like there was the Mine Mill, Marine Workers, who else did we have? Longshore, and then there were visitors from other women's groups too, and

MM: (Cont'd) they didn't, we didn't confine our activities to strictly woodworking problems, we realized that the question of prices, housing, health care were related to our own immediate concerns so whenever the District Council met, we would take up these questions. And of course, just like now, the working people are blamed for the price increases, and they really zoomed after the war. One of our experiences, or, out of our experiences, we, joined with others fighting against high prices, and the Housewives and Consumers Associations was formed.

SD: When was that?

MM: 1947. As a matter of fact, Marge Croy (sp?) who is now Marge **DALSKOG** and I were chosen as delegates to Ottawa by a large meeting representing many women's groups that was held in the Hastings Auditorium on International Women's Day. And, that was a meeting of delegates from the four western provinces and it was lead by, or chaired by Margret Chun of Winnipeg, who became a trustee that year, school trustee, she now lives in Vancouver. And we had, well I've got a picture of it which I'll show you, and our brief, we have, I have a copy of the brief here, somewhere that we presented to Abbot, and then, that delegation, let's see, what did I say about that? received nation wide publicity and it also lead to the formation of a National Housewives and Consumers Association the following year. And it was the "Buy No Beef", and "Buy No Pork" campaigns that actually did bring down the price of bacon, I've got the clipping to prove it. For a short time of course.

SD: Can you tell me a bit more about those campaigns?

MM: The women across the country, assisted by some trade unions, collected a million signatures to roll back food prices, and the delegation of 500, that presented that petition in Ottawa, was rebuffed at the doors of Parliament. Those are three of our Auxiliary members who went. No, Doris Hartely is not a member, she was in the Housewives. But I've got lots of stuff. Here's a picture of the delegation, the first one. But I'll show it to you afterwards. That's where we met Abbot. So, anyway, that carried on, we worked very hard on questions of prices and related issues. As a matter of fact, here's a leaflet. sp.

SD: "Buyer's Strike Action Against Higher Prices." Mona Morgan, Marge Croy, so you, you were on that delegation?

MM: Yes, that was the first one.

SD: Old Age Pensioners Society, (Dorothy) Shepard CCF, Bruce Nickelborough, LPP, Bill White, Vancouver Labour Party. sp.

MM: That's a little picture, another one of it, you see. Here's a picture of one of our District Council meetings. No, that's a convention, actually, in Nanaimo. That was taken just outside the Malispino Hotel. Oh yes, those were things we did, and here's there we are, Buyers' Strike.

SD: "Toot Your Horn On Prices, Stop, Look, Protest", "Buyers' Strike, Don't Buy Clothing May 26 to June 10th, Bring Prices Down." So what would you do? Would you move from sort of from product to product? Like..

MM: Sometimes we did. Yes, yes, we did all sorts of things like that.

MM: (Cont'd) Is the clothing one there? Yes, there's one on clothing, ya, These are some of the things that we used doing things, I was just going to look up something here that I thought would, I, we presented briefs, here's one I did on the Milk Board, to the Milk Board, at the Public Inquiry of the British Columbia Milk Board, on behalf of the Auxiliaries. I think maybe if I just use, these minutes it'll tell you more of some of the things that we did. Because I was struck by it myself with what all the, minutes (laughs) minutes of our Quarterly Meetings. Had to have your delegate's credentials too. Ya, here we are. "(^{Price}) Campaigns have been the main political action work of the auxiliaries, other good examples throughout the District should receive mention. The sisters at Lake Cowichan did a big job in helping to elect our District president, Edna Brown to the School Board, In Campbell River, Sister Helen White was a candidate for Commissioner, and got a very good vote, the number of Auxiliary members who took part in the Labour Lobby, was encouraging, and the Alexandra, "oh," and the excellent hospital work in most of our communities, including the Alexandra Solarium, adoption of a little French child, shows that our Auxiliaries do fine political action work in addition to the District Projects.

SD: What year was that?

MM: (leafs through minutes (?)) 1948. January 24th, and 25th. Education, "Previous recommendation for education was that advantage should be taken of the IWA Educational Department for joint union and Auxiliary classes. Where this is possible, it

MM: (Cont'd) should be done, but experience shows that women find it hard to attend the same classes, because of family ties and in addition, many of the subjects dealt with do not come within the scope of Auxiliary activity. In the main, education for Auxiliary members needs to be different. One suggestion is we undertake a study of the role of women in the history of British Columbia." We were just starting on that you know, when the thing had to fold, isn't that too bad. OK, Now this is where we made the recommendation, the summer camp, "The Trade Union Research Bureau, and the CIO Research and Education Department have material that can be used to good advantage ." and they did that, we had, I think it was Bert Mar^euse, he was the Director at one stage of the Trade Union Research Bureau and he gave lectures, we quite often had lectures, like that in connection with our meetings, And then on the question of peace, oh gosh, we did a pile of activity on that. We had some, just a minute now, I think the resolutions will tell you probably enough. "On the Civic Franchise." OK, "Resolved at this sixth annual convention,"etc. etc."urges the government to amend the Municipalities Act to make the qualifications for voters similar to those in provincial and federal elections, except for money by-laws." And then we had one on price controls, naturally, and on political action, "Safety First," we had a big resolution on that, unemployment insurance, that we "urge the government to amend Unemployment Insurance Act to include in its provisions benefits to those unemployed

MM: (Cont'd) through sickness, " oh but that was the further resolve, the first resolve was that "demanding that during periods of forced unemployment, the Unemployment Insurance Commission pay \$35 a week, for married people, and twenty five dollars a week to single persons thereby insuring that the unemployed worker and his family will be looked after. And then we had..

SD: A minimum

MM: Yes, of course, yes, and then a one on compensation. To give full pay to those injured in industrial accidents. And then there was one on pensions, "goes on record demanding of our governments, provincial and federal, that immediate consideration be given to all citizens receiving pensions and allowances an increase be granted in line with high living costs." And then here's one on the school tax, and on foreign policy, "goes on record favouring a Canadian foreign policy whose main purpose is the preservation of peace and the maintenance ^{of} friendship and respect of all people be it further resolved that we urge our government to resume trade relations with all democratic and friendly countries to maintain Canadian industry and agriculture at a high level of production and help provide employment for our people." Then we had one of arms to China. "goes on record vigorously opposing further shipment of arms to China for any other country trying to establish," what was that? "opposing further shipment of arms to China" this is under the dictatorship of ^{Chiang Kai} ^{shek} (sp?)

MM: (Cont'd) OK, "Medical supplies to China," that's something we used to do.

SD: What, you...

MM: Actually make bandages and stuff,

SD: And send them to...

MM: There was a China Aid Committee in Victoria. Mrs. Bladen, Mrs. Pease, Margret Clay, who was one of, I think she was Assistant Provincial Librarian, or something... but they had a big committee, a big peace committee in Victoria. A China Aid Committee. And we, here we decided to raise a hundred dollars for medical equipment for China.

SD: That's quite a bit of money in those days.

MM: That's right. "Increase Family Allowances!"

SD: Right, that's still relevant, eh? What was the composition of your Auxiliary movement in those days, what kind of women got involved in it, and were they politically involved as well, or was it...

MM: Well, just a few, there was, no, the bulk of them were not. The bulk of them were wives of the woodworkers who had been in, a number of them had been involved in the building of the union, or they were in strike struggles, or, something.

SD: And, this is, I'm going start going back asking you more details about some of what you've said. You mentioned that there were there was at one point, sixteen locals, 300 members, how were those locals organized, how ^{would} people go about setting up an Auxiliary in their town?

MM: Oh, well, what you would do, would be to get in touch with the

MM: (Cont'd) union members, like, see 107 was the one in Vancouver, so, first of all, it would comprise the wives, or sisters, or mothers of the union officers, if you know, they were the most natural, or the shop stewards, and then anybody who, who could get involved. Who were the mothers, and then what we did, we put out a little leaflet, that's one, there was also a blue one, I maybe have it here somewhere, but you see, we were affiliated with the International Auxiliaries. International Headquarters, Seattle, Washington, and we used to send delegates to the International Auxiliary convention. Which would be held in Portland or Bellingham, or wherever they decided to hold it. The last one that a bunch of us went to, twenty I think, was in Portland, and, no, I'm wrong, it's '47. Here we are, that's the International Convention, and here it shows the different ones of us who were on different committees, like the Resolutions Committee, "one of the hardest working committees to the Federated Auxiliaries Convention. was the Resolutions Committee." There's me, and then we divided up to different ones, you see I think I was the only one from B.C. on that one, and then over here, there's Edna, the president, she was from Lake Cowichan, she was one of the originals, and she was on the Credentials, and somebody else on something else, here the oh, and a whole bunch of them here, all the different committees and stuff. That was quite a convention, we got into a real big fight in that one.

SD: About what?

MM: That had to do with, what the heck was that now, I think it

MM: (Cont'd) had to do with foreign policy, I'll have to think about it.

SD: So, going back to the organizing process, so, it was mostly women who were wives of woodworkers, or related-in often leadership, related to leadership people, and then it would tend to expand....and , what about during the war,

MM: Excuse me, there's one other thing, we used to go and speak to union meetings.

SD: OK, on what kind of issues?

MM: Well, the importance of involving their womenfolk, to give strength to the things that they were doing. Lots of times of course because of the women didn't understand the problems of the union, and, they would be very resentful that their husbands would be out at union meetings, or sub-local meetings, or everything that's connected to a union, and so it was very important that you get the family involved.

SD: Was there a shift in attitude amongst women and to women being involved with union support during the war and after the war?

MM: I don't recall that there was that much, no, I don't, I can't put my finger on anything that indicated that. I don't know, I don't see it.

SD: And, was , the was keeping the family together a major goal of the auxiliaries, or concern ?

MM: Oh yes, sure sure, ya, working for the good of the family, and and society as a whole, you know. The community. And nearly all of our auxiliary women were involved in a whole number of things. They were involved in the , what did they

MM: (Cont'd) call those lodges that they all belonged to?

SD: Rebecca?

MM: No, Purple, purple something? It was a sort of a fraternal lodge in some of the small places, you know, and they were on hospital boards, and community organizations of PTA's, I was a member of the PTA over here in Lord Selkirk when David was in school and most of them were members in the PTA and officers in the PTA, I was ^(wasn't?) on the executive of the PTA over here, and so were most of our members were... and also, on daycare, or child care, like we had Gordon House in the West End, Nigel was on the board of that for quite a long time, and , we were involved in almost everything that had to do with the community. And of course the more you got organized, the more, and the more acceptable unions came, the more other organizations came to look for support among trade unions as well as other places. So you know, when they mentioned the Alexander Solarium, those women in Duncan, and Cowichan and Ladysmith, they donated, they must have donated hundreds of dollars, they outfitted hospital rooms, I can remember, I think it was Ladysmith, they outfitted a whole hospital room. Because it wasn't just the ordinary, this grew out of the whole feeling of the safety conditions and everything else that went with it, you know. So, here are the list of donations, just imagine this now, for one, donations to the CWA Delegates' Fund, that means the International Board Fund, IWA Federated Auxiliaries Fund, Delegates to Ottawa. Protesting High Prices, Glace Bay Mine Strike, Spanish

- MM: (Cont'd) War Veteran, Conquer Cancer Campaign, IODE Cancer Stamps (laughs), you asked if we ^{had} people ^{of} political stripes(?) we had everything. I remember, a couple of, two or three of the IODE women as a matter of fact, ya, you see, Imperial Laundry Workers' strike at Nanaimo, the Polio Fund, "a needy sister and an IWA brother", the Victoria Boys Band (laughs) The Duncan Dominion Day and Local Labour Day Sports, "adopted a child in the Solarium", the Unity Hall "now a reality and headquarters of local 30, Besides investing \$400 in the hall, we have bought forty chairs, paid \$30 as our share of the insurance and \$160 for wiring the hall." So you can see why Phillip Murray, who was the president of the CIO later, asked for, asked all the local unions to organize auxiliaries.
- SD: Because they were so central to ^{creating} a community.
- MM: That's right, all sorts of activity, and they said that in, that in the days following, the real big push of the development of the CIO in the States, they became very active in political action, and they found that the women were amongst the best organizers, of the distribution of the leaflets and the, the campaign activities that were needed, partly because a lot of them were at home. You don't have that situation today as much, although with women being laid off, you will. ??
- SD: OK, to what extent did the Auxiliary ~~actually~~ get involved in formulating demands *inside the* union contract, or campaigning around a specific demand in the union contract, was there a sort of a division between what the auxiliary did and the union would do?

MM: (Cont'd) No, no, no, see we were not what you'd call a, a fully independent body, we were a local, an auxiliary of the union local. Therefore, our dominant policies had to dovetail with whatever the union was doing. In other words, if we would be out of line if we worked on questions, like we always discussed, we didn't go into detail with them, but we said when we were having a Quarterly Meeting, maybe the executive and we couldn't get together usually until we got to Nanaimo, because some of the executive were there, but ^{if} two or three of us in Vancouver, we would meet with the union and say now, we're going to have a district council meeting, our proposals are so and so, and so and so, what do you propose or, should we do something different, or what have you got coming up that you want us to take up? And that's what we would do.

SD: Right, was there ever conflicts between what the women in the community thought was really important and what guys in the local might think?

MM: I don't recall too many, I think we might have had the odd time where, where maybe we got carried away with something in a meeting, but, it would never, it was never of any, consequence, that it created a problem,

SD: Were there men who are IWA members who were ever threatened by their wives getting active in the Auxiliary? Did that ever happen?

MM: Ah, there might have been, but if that happened, we would only get the story in a discussion in the coffee klatch or something,

MM: (Cont'd) I don't think it ever became an issue as such that I ever recall. I know there would be lots of instances where yes, as a matter of fact, there was. One of our executive members, that's right, he finally beat her, but she left him. But she stayed for him to beat her, because that was the only way in those days that you could get out, and keep your kids. She was advised by the lawyer to do that. And he did, he beat her. He was not a good union man, he resented everything she did, in relation to the Auxiliary, and, now that's one specific case I remember, there may have been a few others, but, I don't remember them.

END OF SIDE TWO

END OF TAPE TWO

Tape 3
Side 1

MM: We had a big , I know, we had a big fight with our International Board, not of our Auxiliaries, but of the union, because we found it very difficult to organize all our auxiliaries as one unit to a union , and it was in one specific area where we wanted to have sort of sub-locals, because the distances were too great for the women to come together to one Auxiliary meeting, so we wanted to set up sub-Auxiliaries. So what did the Federated Auxiliary, what did the IWA International officers do? Lifted the charter. So we had a big fight about that.

SD: Were they afraid of the power of the Auxiliaries?

MM: Oh yes, oh yes, you bet they were. Yep.

SD: How did that come out? They lifted your charter...

MM: That's right, for that particular local, and then there was a fight about it and I think we finally won, but we had to compromise, somehow or another, because, I don't remember what we did, about it, but we found a way of having those women meet, I guess they got together just less often or something and...

SD: Because it would seem to me that if women were at home-based and community-based that if you had only a more centralized local structure that it would basically destroy...

MM : Well sure.

SD: A system that was based on local organization.

MM: That's right, but that's what they wanted. They didn't want it because they didn't like our district anyway. They didn't like our district anyway, because we were making the biggest strides, you know the District No. 1 made big strides in contract negotiations and winning demands for woodworkers. And so our Auxiliaries did the same thing. You know we were a strong Auxiliary group. I think we were the strongest as far as numbers and actual locals were concerned. But there were some terrible things that happened, in the States, like Laurel Law was murdered, and her baby threatened.

SD: Can you tell that story?

MM: Well, what was his first name? He's dead now, he was an officer of the IWA in , oh dear, what was the name of that place? It was in Washington, D.C., it was Washington anyway, I'll think

MM: (cont'd) of it later, what the name of the town was. And he came home from a union meeting one night and found her lying on the chesterfield, she had been stabbed with an ice-pick thirteen times in her breasts (voice has fallen to a whisper) And he went upstairs where the baby was sleeping in the crib and in her blood was written, we'll come back for him if you don't leave town. So, that was just a terrible shock for everybody, he was, they were very, very, they were wonderful people, both of them.

SD: Who did that?

MM: The goons!

SD: Employer goons.

MM: Sure, you know, the tactics that they used, will astound you. I can remember a meeting of the International that was held here in Vancouver, now I don't remember what year that was, I think it was in the Vancouver Hotel, and when some of the delegates from south of the border got up to speak, if they were a ^{stipe} stripe that the guys didn't like, they would just come and sit them down. And, one of the International presidents, I've forgotten which one it was, Lowery, I think it was, Bert Lowery, he admitted that he had a gun in his desk. The organizing of the union, industrial unions I tell you was really something. It was, well you know the story, you've read Mother Bloor's book, you know what happened in steel, and the others, so it was the same, not as harsh, or as much.

SD: But in this instance, you're talking about there being a lack

SD: (cont'd) of democracy inside the union structure.

MM: Sure, in the, with the IWA officers who succeeded Harold, and some of the others; they were like goons, I remember one instance when Nigel was at a convention or a board meeting or something, down south and they kicked one of the guys downstairs, long flight of stairs, you just had to watch yourself. So it was . . .

SD: What about the women from the Auxiliaries in the States, what were they like?

MM: Great, they were great. We had a few that were just the same as we had a few here, we had a few who were wives of what some called the "White Block" who would be quite vociferous, but we never had that same, struggle, I guess because they probably realized, either they realized what was going on, and they didn't want to become involved, or their husbands kept them out of the auxiliary, and they didn't, they just didn't want to be stronger or something, I don't know, I don't know why, but we didn't have that many who fought us on issues, hard, we'd have, often we'd have people who disagreed with different aspects, and we'd talk it out and so on, but at all our conventions we'd have a District Officer, who would speak to us and make some proposals or, would just pat us on the back, or whatever, but we always had, and we always, said, ^{that} men were always welcome, at all our meetings, and we were also invited to attend all their union meetings with voice. Now in the Mine Mill Auxiliaries, they had voice and vote, but I didn't agree with that. I never did agree

MM: (cont'd) with that.

SD: Why is that?

MM: Because, people outside , direct membership in an organization, particularly a union organization, which is after all an organization where you are bound by vote on questions of contract negotiations and so on, you are dealing with questions that are , they affect the family, but they're not the same concern of the woman who isn't working on the job, *as they are of* the man who is involved. I don't see how you can expect someone who doesn't work on the job to have the precise same feeling about conditions on a job as you do , if women work in industry they soon find out a whole lot of things ^{that} they didn't know, when they were just at home. So it seemed to me that if you have auxiliary members who were going to, you could pad a convention, you could pad a meeting, with people who didn't fully understand what it was that their husbands or brothers were negotiating about and if they had the vote, they could out-vote something. I don't think that's a democratic procedure, do you?

SD: It's, it's an interesting debate. I didn't know that about Mine Mill,

MM: But its the only Auxiliary that I ever heard of that had that. I remember telling Harvey Murphy, "I didn't agree with that, Harvey,"

SD: See, I can see the logic for that position too though, interms of the way that it affects women.

MM: It does affect them alright, but it sure could be used. Because

MM: (cont'd) in a union meeting, just an ordinary union meeting, you don't have , well, you have the warden at the door and so on, but if you're going to have the women, how are you going to know particularly, if you include the sweethearts, which some of them did. I think that could be a very dangerous procedure. I don't know if it ever turned out to be, probably didn't,

SD: What about women's issues, in terms of the Auxiliaries, you've talked about struggles around rising prices, what about what are now considered to be feminist issues?

MM: Well, the very first speech I ever made, at a District Council, I remember how nervous I was, I was asked to speak on the position of women in society, I don't know why, anyway, I had, I dug out a whole pile of stuff, I had read a certain amount about it, but, anyway, and that's what I talked on, and then I had, I did it at ~~Yowden~~ Auxiliary, and then the Mine-Mill asked me to come up to Britannia Beach, and help them organize an auxiliary up there, and so we had discussions on the whole question of the position of women in society and why they're held back, and so on, and then we got some books, I had (laughs) I had a book called Why Women Cry, or Wenches with Wrenches, ever hear of that? Oh, I'd give my eye teeth to get it back. But I sent it around the Auxiliaries, and I lost it finally, and that was written by a woman organizer of the , what was it Steel, or Auto, one of the big unions in the States, she wrote this book , and in a very popularized style, she wrote that so it very, very easy writing, you see,

MM: (cont'd) and so, so, we did that, we got other books too, I've forgotten what they were now, but we used to do that, and we recommended reading, and on our Auxiliary Page we did that some times. We wrote little columns on women, like ^{Sojourner Truth} Sojourner Truth, do you remember her? about her? So I got very facinated when I read her story and so I wrote a little column on that, and in the paper, and, then we had one column that said, what was that, something about something about the kitchen, and get out of it. anyway, that was also geared to the position of women and how they're held back and the constraints of the kitchen and home, the four walls, and how important it was for women to, and usually some aspect of that would be touched on in our either or council meetings, or, or even our Auxiliaries, because you see, we were dealing all the time with questions that related to the home and the child, children and, and high prices and, and the reason for these things would keep coming up and the fight for the vote, I was on a committee to extend the franchise, and the women got the vote in 1951. Civic vote. So and you know one of the women who was on that committee? Judge Helen Gregory McGill. She was in her eighties, at that point. And that's another book that we used was, but that was after, see, My Mother The Judge-I thought I leant it Catherin(?), I wrote that down, but she says she hasn't got it. Oh, don't tell me I've lost that one again, that'll be the third time, I was trying to think how else that came up, that particular question, but it came up quite often, in

MM: (cont'd) different ways.

SD: The general rights of women?

MM: Yes.

SD: How about, did ever come up in terms of women in the auxiliaries wanting jobs? Wanting to be employed, was that an issue?

MM: Not as much. It wasn't until, I don't remember exactly when it was that so many women, you know of course, after the Second World War it was very obvious that women were in the work force to stay. And, many of the auxiliary women who had done some work, had worked in industry, or an office or something during the war, they kept on. So, we always had a combination of women who worked, and women who didn't work. So, and of course at that time, even in the IWA, well, in all the union offices, there was the struggle going on for the union, the Office and Technical Workers Union, and we were members of that, those of us who worked in the IWA,

SD: How did you feel about that? I mean you came out of history where you'd been involved in working for the union in a sense, like total dedication, how did you feel when you began to actually organize as workers for the union, was that a conflict?

MM: I felt then, the same way as I feel now, and that is that I think that the Office and Technical Workers Union, spent far too much time, working on getting very nice contracts for the women in trade union offices, than they should have in organizing ^{the} women outside, in other offices, and banks and so on. I don't think there's any reason, why those of us who worked in union offices couldn't have worked for a little bit

MM: (cont'd) less , rather than fight for the absolute maximum, and get into a situation like we did in 1976, which I think was as far as I'm concerned, a blot on the Office and Technical Workers Union.

SD: What happened then?

MM: They tried to put us on strike. In the Marine Workers, in a whole number of other offices, to get, we were getting really good pay, and there's nothing wrong with that, we were getting good pay, and we had good conditions and good hours, you know? and it was over the issue of, I think it was, was it the six hour day or something? Or the seven hour day, I don't remember now, but, which particular, I think that was the main issue, but, actually that was done in order to embarrass the union leaders. Do you know (opal
I think that was a , see that was the time of October 14th, eh? A time when we should have had the most solidarity that could have been organized, everywhere, and yet that thing was set to go I think it was the day before, something like that, I forget, I've forgotten all the ins and outs of that struggle. I remember going , we had a meeting at eight o'clock in the morning, and leaving on the plane about ten. We were, I felt really bad about that. And that doesn't mean to say that you don't always fight to upgrade your position. But it has to be in relation to something else. I mean, and that, you don't go for the policy that says that people who are earning high wages don't necessarily strike for more because the guys at the bottom aren't getting anything, it's not that

MM: (cont'd) contradiction, but I think that that union developed a-quite a big membership and big contracts because they were in that position where they could put the hammer on the union leadership. And that isn't where you should put it; the banks, insurance companies, you know, any, hundreds of other offices where women are not getting anywhere near the same pay. It's like organizing the unorganized women. And that is a big job, eh? And it's the unorganized women who are at the bottom of the ladder. And some how or another, there has to be a vehicle, a means of organizing those who are, just have no advantages, and today when it requires, two incomes, to maintain any kind of a home . . .

SD: Was that something that the Auxiliary was concerned with?

MM: Yes.

SD: What way did you talk about it?

MM: You mean about requiring that much?

SD: Organizing unorganized women.

MM: Well, we didn't, no, I must say we didn't specifically go into that, but what we did do, is in addition to joining the, our members joining, the Housewives and Consumers Association, which is different from the old Housewives League, we also participated in the activities of the Congress of Canadian Women, as individuals, I think. See, there were, International Women's Day meetings, I can remember speaking in Nanaimo, and in Lake Cowichan on International Women's Day, I can remember speaking in Lake Cowichan on May Day, Effie Jones and I, I forget what year.

SD: What kind of things would you speak on there, do you remember?

MM: Well, I think we would speak on the question of high prices, no doubt, and, if I could remember the year, it would be on what issues were to the fore at that particular moment.

SD: So, contract negotiations...

MM: There might have been, or, well, basically, no, we would have, unless they were in a particular kind of ^a struggle, it would have been, May Day, we would have been talking about how the working people, what kind of issues they should be struggling for, or what they were struggling for, and, the question of prices, the question of peace, because ever since the Second World War the question of peace has been, a, very high on the agenda of most working people. Or democratic people, whatever you want to call them, because, you know, it was 1950 after all was the war in Korea.

SD: It's been pretty constant hasn't it?

MM: I spoke at a picnic of the Scandanavian Central Committee, in 1950, and came home to hear that the war in Korea had been declared, it wasn't declared, it was started. That was 1950.

SD: So, we've sort of covered this thing around women's issues, what about, was there any discussion ever of women's status within the family? Like did that come up in the meetings? and did that come up in terms of child care?

MM: Oh yes, sure, sure Well, because quite often if we had an auxiliary meeting at night, eh? Well then either the

- MM: (con'td) husband had to stay home if there wasn't a granny, or something else, and if , a union member , said, well you know, I've got other things to do, or something like that, well, a lot of stuff we did in a jocular way, but it had it's kernal of truth never the less. And there were lots of discussions in relation to that. Of what women could do, or what they couldn't do, because you're not going to be a slave to your house, and if you want to do Auxiliary Work , then you have, if your husband is agreeing to you being in the auxiliary, then , then he's going to have to help. And the same way, if your husband's going out to a union meeting, then you'll have to co-operate.
- SD: So, did that ever, result in any confrontations with guys, or..
- MM: There might have been a little bit, but there wasn't that much that it created , a, except for that one time I'm telling you about, and I think there were one or two others but, I don't remember the specifics because they weren't that, that, great.
- SD: What happened when the union basically divided, if there was, what happened to the women ^{with} in that process?
- MM: Well, I'll show you what happened. There it is,
- SD: "We stand with our menfolk, the facts in the case of the Woodworkers of B.C." I'll have to read that. So basically the auxiliaries voted, what happened?
- MM: Well, we were at the, present at the meeting, but we voted separately, We had a meeting, and I have no doubt, although it wasn't voiced, that there might have been some questioning,

MM: (cont'd) there was questioning in the back of my mind. Never expressed though. I mean, not publicly (laughs). But you see, there was so many things we didn't know, too. When I think of Carly Larson, and, I think back to things that he was talking to me about,

SD: OK, can you tell me, because you told me this off tape, what's the story with Carly Larson?

NNL Oh well, he was International President, I don't remember what year that was, I guess it would be '47, '46, '47, and then when the Unamerican Activities Committee was holding its meetings, what would it be, about '50? he, was there.

SD: Did he testify?

MM: Ya, he testified (speaking v. quietly) And, you know, his house had been burned down. At one stage. But he testified on the Un-American Activities Committee.

SD: So, can you sort of go through, chronologically, the events that lead up to the split, and the kind of discussions that lead up to the split, and the kind of discussions in the Auxiliary and what happened immediately after?

MM: Because I wasn't here, I was away that summer, and I arrived home the day before, so I can't tell you, exactly whether, and, maybe I heard about some discussions afterwards, but I just don't remember them. I just don't remember. But we kept on, our activities, we had, we had a, convention in January, we raffled a cedar chest which had been donated by, a member in North Vancouver who made it, and all the Auxiliaries donated, articles of sewing and all sorts of nice things, and equipment, there were cups and saucers and goodness knows

MM: (cont'd) what. Anyway, it was a very nice thing, we raised money through raffling that cedar chest, and, we carried on some activities, I don't have the minutes of the WIUC meetings, I don't know ~~whow~~^{how} come I've got these, but I have anyway.

SD: So, you created a new auxiliary with the WIUC, is that what happened?

MM: No, we just changed over, from the IWA to the WIUC, that's all. But, it couldn't last, it was a very ~~ad~~ difficult time, very difficult time. I worked in the office, of local 71 until, I think it was 1949, and I used all my Unemployment Insurance money, and so had other people, I mean, I'm not begrudging^g it at all, but it, I think it was '49, and then it just simply wasn't possible anymore to , to do it. And ~~by~~ this time, I think that they had agreed that it was, you know, not going to be able to carry on, the strike fund was returned, there were lies written about some of that stuff. That strike ~~fund~~ was never used. Never. It was returned intact. And all ~~sorts~~ of other things, you know, but some people who wanted to make it much blacker than it was. You know, I mean, an honest mistake is an honest mistake. And that's what it was, and partly based on incorrect information.

END OF SIDE 1
TAPE 3

Tape 3
Side 2

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MM: (cont'd) that there, there have never been IWA Auxiliaries since then ^{that} you ever heard of .

MM: (cont'd) I think they have had some. But I don't know what they ever did. Maybe they've done some internal things in the union. But, I've never heard.

SD: That was pretty much the end then?

MM: I think so, I've never heard of anything else being done.

SD: What was the, Labour Progressive Party's stance, well, the first the Communist Party, and then the Labour Progressive Party's stance on women during the war?

MM: Oh, the party always took a very firm stand on the position of women. Always.

SD: Can you describe ...

MM: Well, I can tell you that at the very first meeting when the Communist Party of Canada was formed, Florence ^{Custance} was the only woman, and she even at that time, pointed out, that the employers, that capitalism used women as a cheap source of labour. And that women had to fight for their position, for equality, with men. That's always been the position. And, of course we always used Women in Socialism by ^{by} Bebel, Lenin on The Woman Question, and The Emancipation of Women, and then, Engels, ^{The} Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, those are always, books that were recommended reading, and lots of classes held on them, on those questions. Right ^{back} as far as I can remember that, the position was always quite clear, how it was carried out wasn't always quite so clear. But, but, not, not, I don't think there were too many mistakes made in that way that I know of. Except, you know, there's no way that everybody, including

MM: (cont'd) communist men and women are going to be a hundred percent clear on all theory, and certainly when you're in a capitalist society where male chauvinism, is it, then its not always that easy to get rid of ^{the} underlying (Laughs) basics. But its always been, that's always been the position.

SD: Do you remember, the program in, the concrete program in the '30's and then during the war and afterwards for women? Do you remember shifts in immediate demands that were being made, like in the '30's was there maybe a focus on relief, or birth control, or on something like that ...

MM: They always had a position on it but it was not, but I don't remember it being so , spoken of so much, always the question of child care, was always ^a point, it was ^{always} just that women should struggle for their, position ~~in~~ society, which we recognized can never become, a, really fully rounded out until there's socialism. Because of the economic reason that there isn't the material base. That's why no other society can do it.

SD: What happened at the end of the war when women were facing being basically upushed out of industrial jobs, what kind of position did the party take and did it try and fight?

MM: Oh yes, yes.

SD: Can you describe that a bit?

MM: Well, I can remember that in, well I have to think of what year this was, I should find that paper, Becky Bewie , did a treatise on women in society, in which she pointed out how

MM: (cont'd) the position of women had changed , following, World, during and following World War II, and how, much larger numbers of women had come into the work force , and how that they would have to fight^{for,} to maintain their position as workers if they wanted to, and to, to get the conditions for the home, so that they would be able to work ⁱⁿ industry, and that , so they should fight for the same kind of wages , for equal pay, and all the benefits for maternity leave, those questions were raised and that would be, oh golly, what year would that be? in the '40's. And that was simply an extention of what had been it was just bringing it up to date, following World War II. I think that might have been about, '48, lets see where was I in '48, '49 maybe? It might have been about '49. But, I have it, so I can look up the date. But, there has never been any question about what the official position was. Right from the very beginning's of the party, since it started in 1922.

SD: Were there, do you remember the debates, or discussions around 1944, 45 where people were trying to figure out how to deal with women getting laid off from industrial jobs, and whether, how to deal with layoffs in general as part of that women's...

MM: I can remember some of them taking positions, but, oh dear, what was the name of that gal, she had been a, she had been a, writer, on one of the, papers in Saskatchewan, and during the war she worked at, I think Boeing's, and she was furious about being laid off , but I think it would have

MM: (cont'd) very difficult I just sort of thinking~~back~~ now, I think it would have been very difficult for those women, to have fought for their jobs, no matter how much~~they~~ felt that they, that it was their right to have them, when , the veterans were returning from the war. ah, so it became a kind of a social question, eh? Even if they knew that they should have been able to have their jobs, when these men, who had sacrificed their lives, in fighting against facism, But, I do remember definately, that, them fighting against that *situation- those* saying that women have to go back to the home, and, and that they should give up their jobs, the position they took was that there should be enough jobs for everybody who wanted one. Men, or women. I remember that very well.

SD: Do you remember any more details of that? Like were

MM: No, I can't remember, I just don't remember, Laverne, Laverne, her name was, but I can't remember, and she's not here~~any~~ more, she's in the States. Uh, sitdowns too you know, in the Post Office.

SD: Women played a part in the sitdowns in the '30's...

MM: Ya, oh did nobody tell you about that?

SD: Not in detail, not about that, nope.

MM: Well, when they sat down in the Post Office, the Housewives League, and the Women's Labour League, ^{the} women who were left of them, and, and, other women, I think the women in the , in the ethnic groups, like the, Association of Ukrainians and so on, they, very, they got very busy, they made , sandwiches, they set up a kitchen, in the Ukrainian Hall, and they had a

MM: (cont'd) kitchen somewhere else, now, I can't tell you where that was, it was upstairs, and I can't remember what, what the name of the building, the building isn't there any more, but anyway, and they got, sort of got in touch with all sorts of people to come down and make sandwiches, and to prepare other kinds of food that you could take in their, you know it had to be , pretty well finger food of some kind. That you took into them, that was done. And then on Bloody Sunday , they actually almost set up , well you call a first aid station, I suppose at the Ukrainian Hall. And men and women pitched in like anything.

SD: So they would be taking care of people who were injured?

MM: Oh, yes, yes.

SD: Did women play any role in the Defence Campaign after people were arrested?

MM: Oh, I think so, they were part of it , yes. In almost all of those kinds of struggles you'll find that the women are very, very much there. See, the On To Ottawa Trek for example, women played a leading role in that. They, some of them went along and they did the cooking and, helped organize meals along the way and things like that. It was, you know, these things are actually there, some of those things are out in the On To Ottawa Trek, I think, as I recall. I had something here where I wrote down what I was going to look up for you so I should find it so I add something else, what did I do with it?

SD: Something on the Youth Congress.

MM: On the Youth Congress, that was one of them, there it is

SD: Sorry, I didn't get that right, could you just repeat the sentence?

MM: What?

SD: You were working...

MM: Oh, I was working in the office, at the time of the sitdowns, and, people called us, to come and help on Sunday, of course, we were able to make sandwiches and things. Any YCL'ers, or anybody like that, we were, we were called.

SD: In the post-war period what kind of impact did, I guess, the shifts, government shifts, towards the more right-wing position and discrimination against leftists have on your activities?

MM: Well, actually, it wasn't so much a shift in the government, federal government, you mean?

SD: Ya,

MM: As it was a shift in the policies that were, they carried on, you see, it was still the King government, eh? When did the King government go out now? or was it Laurier? Anyway, whichever one, it was the same outfit, and, they used, the so-called "spy trials" which was a sweet, cooked-up dream, to, which was their way of joining with Winston Churchill's call from Missouri, to attack the left. And the cold war just gradually developed from then on. And of course, it scared a whole lot of people, and so our ranks diminished, quite a lot, as a matter of fact a lot, because they used some really, you know the tactics they used, were, they didn't have an Un-American Activities Committee, but they did it in more subtle ways in Canada. Our place, that window was shot out twice, and, they

MM: (cont'd) did everything that, sugar in the gas tank, and all sorts of threats, everywhere Nigel went, the RCMP followed, and, that sort of stuff, but you see, that wasn't as difficult for us, as it was for some other people.

SD: Why is that?

MM: Because for those people who, what'll I say, who weren't actually known Communists, no, they could be members, but they hadn't been, in public activity. For them it was much harder because, they, to , carry on a sort of a policy or maintain their principles, it was easier for me. I had no problem being on the executive of the PTA. But I can remember a woman saying to me, "but (whispers) how can you be on the PTA? " Because I guess, they , they felt that the atmosphere was so cold, and so stifling, that it was hard for them to react.

SD: What about employment, did it effect...?

MM: Not as far as I'm concerned.

SD: So, it didn't mean that people lost jobs?

MM: Oh, yes, lots of people, sure, lots of people lost jobs, but, I don't remember, I can't give you details of it now, and of course they couldn't use the fact, they always had to use some phoney reason, why people lost jobs, because there is that , we still have some legislation that is supposed to protect you against discrimination, and if a boss, which happened periodically, was stupid enough to say, why they were being laid off, then they could be challenged. And ⁱⁿ a few cases they were.

SD: So, Nigel was working for the Party in that whole period?

MM: Oh, yes, he went to work for the Party in August of 1945.

SD: I had another question, You had children during the period of time when you were active, did that affect your ability to be as active as you...

MM: Oh, sure, sure of course.

SD: So was that an issue that up with women a lot?

MM: Oh, yes, oh yes, sure. Now, the reason that I could go on working, I took six months off when David was born, and, when Ernie ^k (Dalslog) came and asked me if I would come and work in the District office, somebody had to leave or something, and he asked me if I would come and work in the District Union office, I said, well, "I don't know if I can do that, I won't do it unless I can make the very best arrangements to have the baby looked after," so we checked around, and we were very fortunate in finding a woman who had not had children of her own, she was married to a man who had ^{had} grown up children, didn't want any more, and, but she loved children and felt frustrated by the fact that she wouldn't have any of her own; so it didn't take very long, I think about two hours for us to recognize that unless we very badly mistaken, she would be an ideal person, and she was; she looked after him during the day, and when he became two and a half, we enrolled him in Gordon House ^{and}, she would take him there, no we took him there in the morning on the way to work, He would be fed and have a nap in the

MM: (cont'd) afternoon and that , and she'd pick him up at three o'clock. She'd come home and then she'd make supper, and then she would leave as soon as we got home. So that was fine. And then there was another woman who, we, she was in the same apartment house as we were, We weren't supposed to have any children in that apartment house, but the doctor's wife had a little boy, so that cleared the way for us. So both Iris and I had children, and so we used to also take turns in watching each other's children. And, my mother on occasion, looked after him too, but I didn't like to do that too often, but, she did when it was necessary. Now, it cost money! I basically worked, I don't think I had very much ^{left} over by the time I paid Freda, When we had a District Council meeting, that meant going to Nanaimo on a Friday night and coming home Sunday night, and that meant she would stay there and look after him for Friday night, Saturday and Sunday, and which meant that I would provide , the food and so on for her there, and pay her, extra, for those days. So, it cost a lot of money. But as far as I was concerned, that was, important. Simply had to be done. And of course we didn't have District Council, well, once every four months, or every three months, whatever it was, so, it wasn't as if I took every weekend off away from the child, And I tried to have not too many evening meetings. So that when I would get home from work, at five- thirty say, I could at least be with him until seven or whatever time he went to bed. And the both of us, whenever we could. But, that presents a problem. There's just no question. And, if you have to do it, you have to do it. So, I used to bring a lot of

MM: (cont'd) work home with me. Auxiliary work and stuff. And, I would do it. We always had a typewriter at home. We always had a desk, and so, we both did a lot of work at home in the evenings, when there weren't meetings.

SD: Did you share a lot of the work around the house?

MM: Oh yes, whatever we could. Ya, mind you I, I never took the position that my job, important as I felt it was, was not as important as Nigel's was. His was much more difficult too. And required much more time than mine did. Now which doesn't take away from the fact that , that, you have to share responsibility. But there's no such thing as equality, period. It's equality of opportunity, and that means that you have to take into consideration what everybody's doing. Nigel was very good about most things like that, where he could be, and he, his time wasn't that great, but he would like to do it if he had the time. So that was always, if I couldn't for some reason^{or other} do dishes, or something like that, well, that was no problem for him, and he liked to cook, he had been , a camper, when he was young, and he just loved to do anything like that. Fisherman, he'd cook 'em as well as catch 'em. (laughs) Oh ya, yep, so those were the things.

SD: You mentioned earlier, that there had been, there is quite a history of International Women's Day in Canada. Can you just run over that, some of the celebrations.

MM: Well, as I was say I don't remember the first, the year, that it was, but it was some time, I think it must have been the late thirties, that I attended. They had them before because

MM: (cont'd) I can remember Effie Jones once saying, " Hoooooh, International Women's Day," she said, "is always , it's always such an organizing thing, you know, it has to be organized." And, and every International Women's Day that I attended, had that international flavour, and very often they had women in costume of their ethinc origin, and , when I had anything to do with them, I don't remember which year, I think that it was, that'd be about '49 I think, would be the first time I had anything to do with it. And I was asked to sit on an International Women's Day committee, from the Auxiliary. What they did was they invited all the different women's organizations and, we had, some of them that we had, we had many forms, as a matter of fact it was '49 I was asked to speak, (whispers) I nearly died. That's right, and we had it in the Pender Auditorium. And I can remember that, Susie Brown, who was a terrific cook and all that sort of thing, she organized a tremendous tea, and we had women from different organizations, and there was and a group of women and I don't know what group it was , no women and men, and my sister-in-law was one of the people , and they put on a skit. It was very funny, and it had to do with the position of women in society, but I really can't remember what the name of it, they had been in the West End Community Centre, and they were in the Writers' Group, Dorothy ^{we} Li sey was one of the people in that group, and, Emma and Gladys were amongst the people that formed that group years and years before, and anyway, they had the skit, and we had music and all that sort of stuff, and, a number of

MM: (cont'd) them we had in the Swedish Hall, where we had women in costume, we had, we always had speakers, cultural activity, and, a very nice tea, usually a bake sale, and those sort of things were to raise money for some particular cause. It wasn't to have a bake sale so you could have a nice feed. It was always to raise money so that there, whatever happened to be on the, well you can see what we did with the money, well the same thing was true of the International Women's Day. Oh, I know, in 1951, at the International Women's Day, I've got a picture, right here, I'll show you after, we had, we had somebody, couple of our young women, were artists, and they made sketches, great big huge sketches of the early strikes that women had been involved in; 1823 was the first strike in Canada that women were involved in, and we had, they made pictures of that, we had, some pictures of children, see, what did I say that was, '51, in Korea. Anyway, all around the room we had those sort of pictures, and, I've forgotten I've forgotten now who the speakers were, but out of it, we agreed that a delegation, would, go, it was the Congress of Canadian Women that put that on, that women would go to the legislature, to lobby, I think that was on prices, as I recall, I have the clipping there, though, I'll tell you. And, do you know who had his picture taken with that group? W.A.C. Bennett, and two or three days later, he crossed the floor. So that one, so I remember very well. And, succeeding ones where we had oh, people from across the country, I remember one time we had Mary Cardash, come and speak, she was a

MM: (cont'd) Winnipeg school trustee for many years, and she came and spoke on the question of education, and the position, of women and how important it was for women to upgrade their education, and, the whole position. Another one we had, what was her name, a French Canadian, because we felt that we should have some solidarity with our sisters in French Canada, as well as around, the rest of around the world, so we had, ~~Janette~~ ^eJanette Walsh, came and spoke, and, at onetime we had a film,

END OF SIDE 2
END OF TAPE 3

TAPE 4
SIDE 1

MM: (cont'd) and at one time we had a film, on the position of women, and I've forgotten the name ^{of the film} now, but it's, it was a poor film, but we got it from I think was the Film Board, usually their pictures aren't that bad, but anyway, it, it was good from the viewpoint, of, the position it took in relation to women, so we showed that, and then we had some cultural activity, and, we had a bunch of kids dancing, and we had Highland dancers, I remember, and there were times when we had women from almost every ethnic group that you can mention, Scottish, and Irish and Welsh, ^I remember sometime we had a woman in a big Welsh hat, and, Japanese, you name it, we tried to always make it as wide as possible, and on the fiftieth anniversary, we did a, now what would you call it? it wasn't a pantomime, it was, we did a paper on the background

MM: (cont'd) of women in British Columbia, and somebody read it , and at a point in that reading, we had somebody come out and do , somekind of a symbolic deal in relation to that, which was, would highlight some particular activity, I'll dig that paper out for you, I made a note here because it was quite a good thing, and one of our women had written a poem which was read, and we always had music. Another time, we had it in the Met, what do they call that theatre out on Marine Drive? Metropol? And there we had an India- a woman, a native woman, who spoke about the problems of the native women, and we had an East Indian woman, and I don't remember what else, but we had several categories of women , women, maybe in the work force, I think, as well as a musical program, and, again the International Bake Sale. See the reason we had International Bake Sale was because you every different kind, like I made a , or had my mother make, or somebody, always made ()tortes which is an Icelandic five-layer cake, and, you know, we would sell those for, oh well, well, the last one we had, we sold them for about two-fifty for a quarter of a cake, I think, or something, and we made over two hundred dollars at our last bake sale, and they didn't have it this year you see. ^{But,} because you had things that you don't get anywhere else, the Ukrainian women would make (), and they'd go just fffttt, and East Indian women would make, I forget what they call it, and that would go, and it, but completely different, and it was the only time you saw it! You'd raise a fantastic amount of money for a cause. So, we

MM: (cont'd) always did that. And another time we had a, different kind of a film we had a film on athe, CUPE, have you ever seen that film? OK, one time we had that film, and then we had a speaker, and, other things. Another time we had Elspeth Gardner speak on the question of Women in the Law, and associated things, and then at that one, we had a, we drew up a little letter which we had, gave, and had every woman send a letter to Trudeau on some peace issue, um, we had at least two over here in the Trout Lake Centre, which was in Grandview, it was too small, they were just all over the corridors, and the last one that was there, I wasn't there, because it was when Nigel was in hospital, BC. Fed,

SD: Astrid Davidson

MM: Astrid Davidson, spoke and, I think () maybe, from the South Africans, and somebody else, but there was always that attempt to ^{try to} bring in the different segments of the problems that women have, and try to tie them together, with whatever campaign was at the moment. And the one we had about three years ago, we had Lorette Sloan from Quebec, I think she's Quebec City or Montreal, I don't know, either one, but she is the president of the League de Femmes in Quebec, and they do tremendous work, oh boy, they had fifteen thousand women about two years ago, and so she came and spoke, and striker from Sudbury, and I think Hanna spoke that time on child care, you know, those are some of the ones that I can think of just off the top of my head, but every year, there

MM: (cont'd) was , something, oh, we had the Grace Hartman one year, in the Playhouse. So.

SD: I want this article here it said, it mentions that you gave a report, this is in 1946 at the Women's Auxiliary, and that you said that "while the Auxiliaries have accomplished a tremendous amount during the past few months, there has been a tendency to be quote, busy with business, unquote, our problems are many and difficult and to solve them it is necessary to have more than meetings." And you go on to talk about the need to build community activities, and a spirit of co-operation and political education, what was going on that you felt...

MM: Did I say that?

SD: Yes, you did.

MM: Oh well, '46? The strike! The strike, it was probably the after- what's date of that?

SD: November 4th, 1946.

MM: Ya, you see, that's the aftermath of the strike, I think everyone was exhausted (laughs).

SD: So you were basically spurring people on to keep going?

MM: Oh yes, sure, sure, sure, oh yes, Look here, this is what I was going to show you. Oh no, it's not this one, oh, it's another one, no, that's just one I wrote on price controls. No, that's that's not the one, but there's that picture, but that's in the brief, did I give you the brief?

SD: No

MM: On the Housewives? Oh dear..

SD: OK

MM: "In 1946 the union locals voted one cent per capita to help organize the Auxiliaries and maintain the office."

SD: So there was the recognition,

MM: Yes, as a matter of fact, where, here it is. "Sister Marie Godfrey, reporting as a delegate to Vancouver Foster Day Care Association said there were seventy-one new children to mothers who have to work, being looked after, and the average number is three hundred a month. There was some discussion on the Strathcona Day Nursery and Sister Godfrey was authorized to investigate this for recommendation at the next meeting...Godfrey, Marge Croy and Mona Morgan reported on the Federated Convention and arising from the discussion it was decided to ask the Trade Union Research Bureau to help in drawing up outlines for study groups in the Auxiliaries on important union and labour questions facing us." (laughs) tell ya,

SD: "Leave politics to (mend?) itself," oh, whose...

MM: Corinne Fisher, she was the president of the IWA, Auxiliaries. "The President's National Emergency Famine Committee, the National Commission on Children's Advisory Committee, of the Womens Bureau, National Consumers' Advisory Committee of OPA and others, members on the legislative front have helped by testifying before House and Senate Committee on such subjects as school lunches, childcare centres, emergency maternal and infant care, and in the organization front, by collecting food supplies and running soup kitchens during strikes. Through their community contacts, they have sought

MM: (cont'd) assistance and support for CIO policies from a wide variety of organizations, our union should encourage the building of auxiliaries as part of our public relations work, states the report, for they can be made a great force in the union's machinery for political action.

SD: And who's that by?

MM: The President of the CIO.

SD: Phillip Murray.

MM: Phillip Murray. "...a buck a day " That was one of the slogans of the union, but you know, when you're organizing women, or anybody else for that matter, you have to organize them where they're at, not necessarily where you're at. And you know, making bread for most of those women, was a daily routine,

SD: So what you tried to do was use that to say that people couldn't afford to buy bread.

MM: That's right, and as a matter of fact, there was a resolution in here, I saw, to the government on the question of the increase in the price of flour. Not just bread, but flour. "Through action, taken by Nanaimo IWA Auxiliary, an employee of Spencer's Ltd. was re-instated in her job, after an absence enforced by illness. When the woman became ill, Spencers promised that her job would be open upon her return, however, when she went back to work, she was informed there was no place for her. After the IWA Auxiliary took up the case the woman was reinstated in her former job."

SD: What year was that?

MM: 1948, February. () yep, whole paragraph, Oh here's the March of a Million (), () here's some recipes

SD: So that the Women's page would combine political education and...

MM: and everything. "Aid ^{for} China;" "New Members;" "Housewives Call Convention", "New Officers,"...

SD: Was it geared towards union men as well as women, who would you be speaking to on that page, would it be for the women who would read the Lumberworker, or would it be the women's voice to the men as well?

MM: Everything, ya, ya, sure, sure. Yep. Here we are protesting milk prices, ... Oh, OK, "During the strike, most of the Auxiliaries carried on extensive activity helping in the strikers' kitchens, raising money by special functions, speaking at meetings, etc. In order to be able to submit a full report to our union, we would appreciate a full outline on your strike activities within the next week, not later than Thursday, July the 4th, Thanking you for your co-operation in this rush report"

SD: Is this 1946?

MM: Yes, June 25th, 1946.

END OF TAPE 4