

V = transcribe please

Muriel Overgaard: Editing suggestions 1.

Tape 3619-1 Side One

We came to Victoria because of family reasons. And because of that I found that I was locked into Victoria for family reasons.....

STORY OF BAY and LEARNING CONTOMETER OPERATION

end afterstory...

"The wages of women were far below those they were offering the men."

It was just after the war so I'm certain that there were a lot of single parents who had to support their children after the war. My husband was not in the service so there was no pension.

I had a happy time in the Bay. The hours were long and we worked hard.....EATON'S STORY....(til ...I left because I remarried and I decided that I wanted to have some time at home with my son.."

"What was it that you missed about working when you weren't working?

I think it was my own money"...to I'm not that kind of person..."

I had in the meantime joined Toastmistress and they encourage you to use your training. One thing led to the other. Toastmistress is an international club that teaches women to speak and teaches them parliamentary procedure....There's no way that I could handle the conventions and meetings that I do today without that background...

Definitely ~~is~~ prepares you for a leadership role. It not only learns you to control yourself but it ~~learns you~~ teaches you to listen, to listen to what other people are saying and to evaluate what they are saying. That's a great learning process. It's quite difficult to do.

2.

OVERGAARD

You learn how to take evaluation. Some of the people who I've come up against in the different areas of elections and debates. I think that's the part that throws them, that I am able to take evaluation and stand it, because I have been trained in being able to take evaluation and learn from evaluation.

My girlfriend and I just one night decided that we would go. We read about it in the paper, and thought we'd like to go and see what it was about...just curious. ..There are a lot of people who have been involved.

It gave you a feeling of wanting to do more than you were doing.

And the job that I went into was not really that inspiring a job or that great a challenge as I would have liked. But the prime importance to me was that I did something that I thought I would enjoy and yet had time to be with my children. My family have always come first. I'm very fond of my family. And so the school board offered those hours for me. And that's how I became involved with the school board. And I started in the libraries and I looked after all the high school libraries. I looked after the cataloguing and receiving of all books. I helped with the ordering of all books in all the libraries and schools in Victoria.

It was nine to four and then they extended on, As jobs progress you always seem to get longer hours. And so finally it got up to nine to three and I was almost working six hours a day. When it came to that point when I had to have someone come in and be here at three o'clock I didn't like that that well and I found that I was missing out on the excitement of the children coming home because that's when they are really bubbly. So then I went back and reverted back to a

Post war

3. OVERGAARD

four hour day, which was with the dental department, with the school board. That was another area that I enjoyed very much. I was working with the young people.

It's an educational programme . They have it still in Victoria, with the Regional District. At that time it was with the school district. It was an educational programme. We went and showed films and talked. gave demonstrations to the children in the classrooms and examined their teeth and did ~~the~~ *profalaxis*. I was in the dental corps during the ~~the~~ army days, during the war. so it was my field as well.

I was with the CWAC in the dental corps. I was a dental assistance on the chair, which was assisting the dentist with the work. And we handled the army and the navy and the air force. The dental corps looked after all the forces regardless as to what they were. But as soon as the commanding officer found out that I could type, he pulled me off the chair and put me back in the little office to do his letters . That lasted just so long because he was a fuddy duddy He'd be giving you dictation and all of a sudden he'd go off and think about something and ~~all of a sudden you were doing~~ dictation that wasn't relevant to what you were doing. So I finally put a complaint in and got transferred back on the chair. And there I stayed once the commander was changed and one of the men went and did the typing.

4. OVERGAARD

WWII
The dental corps was very difficult to get into in the first place. I was really the first woman to be in the dental corps/in Regina. The commanding officer just was not for women being in the dental corps. That changed after a couple of years. Most of our work was done in the Regina area. I didn't go out of Saskatchewan. I stayed in Saskatchewan and I met my husband there, ~~and~~ and I didn't make any pushes to get overseas....

I was born in a little town called Elbow, Saskatchewan and there were seven children in the family. And dad worked for the ~~Western~~ Western Grain Elevator company. He had a habit of coming home every Friday night and putting us all back in order. I always maintained that ~~and~~ dad brought us up like a crew of elevator men. He was a dear soul..and worked very hard himself. Mom never went to work, but with seven children she really had her hands full ~~and~~ at home.

Dad travelled in most of Saskatchewan and we moved then, quite often. We moved to a lot of different points and Dad would then take the area in which we moved. The last point that I was at home was in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. It was there that I signed up and joined the army. Mom and Dad eventually moved into Winnipeg, my dad into head office.

Post war
My father was a very tough man because he had worked with men all of his life and he had his own ideas about what should be and shouldn't be

5. OVERGAARD

My being part of the union structure really upset my father. He couldn't understand how I could be so involved. We had a lot of arguments about it and finally I refused to argue any more.

My mother was a sweet thing. She was a Rebecca all of her life and loved her lodge very dearly, when she got older I joined that lodge so that I could help with her being there and going back. It ended up that I eventually became the ???? of that lodge, so it took another six years of business. The people in that Rebecca Lodge and in the oddfellows made a great contribution to my life.

We became a union at the school board in 1965 or 66. It wasn't a very well organized area at the time. It depended on how fast you could talk as to what your wage was. I know that I made more than the person that I was working next me. That really wasn't fair. We really didn't have any benefits whatsoever. ~~and that was~~ We had the holidays that were stipulated by the government labour laws and that was all. We had a lot of men on staff at that time and they certainly were making more money than the women. And one of the men got to be president of this new local. I went one night just to hear what it was all about and I was astounded at how the meeting was run and what was being done. So a few of us got together and we decided that we should maybe run. And we organized this union of ours. This was something new to us. I had never belonged to a union nor had I been very interested in unions. I just never thought very much about it and neither had the others that I was working with. SO we ~~talked~~ got one of the girls by the name of Kay Fraser

Post war
to run as president and the rest of us went on the executive. And it wasn't long before we had negotiations going our way. But the opposition on the ~~xxx~~ employers' side was very chauvinistic. And we had to take a lot of ridicule, which I don't think I'll ever forgive some of those people for--not for myself particularly but for all of the people that we ~~xxx~~ were working with. We had a different way of negotiating ~~has~~ now. You don't negotiate with people like that anymore.

Post war
There'd been nothing before. The people who worked in the outside, the janitors, custodians and the people who worked in the ~~xxxxxx~~, gardens, they were organized before we were. They were a local before we became a local. But there was a drive by CUPE, to bring as many people within the unit together. And we agreed. We decided that perhaps that's what we wanted as well, so we became organized.

Post war
I was president of that local for eight years and while I was president I became president of the Island, which is the Vancouver District Island council and I became Treasurer of the Division, which is all of B.C., the B.C. Divisions of Cupe. I was the treasurer for almost three years and then I transferred into Vice Presidency and I have been now the President for four years of the B.C. Division.

Post war
A lot of time and a lot of slugging that the average membership has no idea that they're asking them to do for them. You have to do a lot of research in order to meet the employer on their behalf and it takes a

Post war
~~let-eg-yime~~-lot of time and effort, The treasurer of the division was one of the toughest I held. Many, many nights I sat up doing books until two o'clock in the morning. Because you had your fulltime job to do as well. ^{and} I had the other areas of responsibility. ANDwhile I was treasurer, the big lock outs began. SO we had the lockout in the ~~XXXX~~ Vancouver area, we had the lock out in Kamloops and we had the big lockout here, which meant a lot of strike pay having to be paid. It was maybe '73-;74.

Post war
 It was mostly money and job security, That's one of the problems that we're still facing: job security. The percentages have really not been very high for the public service. In those days they were very minimal, 4% was a good salary increase or 3%. We had to fight very hard to get 3 and 4 %, which is nothing of nothing. We've come a long way since those days. It just took one local to go on strike and then the rest were locked out. They've always tried to hold down the public sector, hoping that they would not gain a higher wage base than the independent employers because once the wages go up in the public sector, then the independent employer is also forced to pay a higher wage and so whether the person wants it or not they don't want to pay it.

Post war
 The Vicepresidency was to assist the president with the B.C. Division There's a lot of having to go and come and there's also put me in the position of running as the regional vice-president on the national executive board and I am there still.

7. OVERGAARD

Post war
We have ~~conventions~~, we have an annual convention every year and the annual ~~conventions~~ set out policy. We go from the annual ~~convention~~ resolutions and make that our year's work. But in the meantime many issues come up that we have to handle in between. But the main policy setting is ~~down~~ in convention by the delegations, by the resolutions they submit where they're asking us to do certain things for them until the next convention.

I sit in only many negotiations, not so much negotiations by the discussions that come out of negotiations. We always have reports on negotiations ~~on~~ at all of our divisional board ~~meetings~~ meetings. We know exactly what is going on in each bargaining area.

Post war
One of my main interests was when the status of women started, which was back in 1970, 'I thought that we should really have something going in British Columbia because I ~~would~~ could see the need. The first convention that I went to there were only three women at the convention, myself, the person from my local area that came with me and one other person. Well that was really disappointing to me and really a surprise. So I felt that women MUST get more involved and when I talked to people in my own local area and other areas, they'd say, "I don't have the nerve to stand up and talk. I don't know what they're talking about. I don't want to be part of the discussions. When people make motions I don't know what to do about it." Or, "I don't know how to make a motion." So at the convention, it was in '72, I put forth the motion that the B.C. Division formalize a women's committee and we were the first

women's committee in British Columbia. The federation came in after we started. We started ~~as~~ the first organization for working women in the province. I heard that. We've made it a standing committee within the B.C. Division Executive and here's money funded to ~~xxx~~ it and we have at least two working seminars per year we are by women come and participate. Educational training and it's proven to be tremendous. You'll notice that within the CUPE organization if you meet them, we have so many trade union women really active and we have over half of the ~~we~~ presidents in B.C. that ~~are~~ not women and certainly on the negotiating teams. On ~~our~~ our own executive level, our full time officer on the Division is a woman. And I have two other women on the executive.

Post war

The largest amount (is ^{women} ~~of~~) particularly in B.C. we have a large women percentage. There are actually across the whole organization. We have the municipal workers and the school board workers and the hospital workers, particularly in the private hospitals. We have the university staffs, a lot of them and the colleges. We have police on the ~~western~~ east coast and the CBC and the MSA. Anyone who really works for the public, except for the government is in our jurisdiction.

Post war

OVERGAARD Tape One Side two

Best way

This is where the women's committee have come in strong because they have forced consideration of legislation changes. And this is you don't think of it being done by women's committees, but alot of the changes have been done by pressure from women's groups. Even the pension plans and other areas have been changed by women's committees pushing for changes, The materinity leabes are in every conctrct, now, where they eertainly weren't along time ago. And conrtract labgiage, a lot of that language has been chaged to make it people and everyone equal. Atone time we had group life insiracexxx so mych for thw women and so much for them, that's long gone, now its for the worker. Even in your ~~am~~ superannuation, of the spouse was not entitled toyour superannuation if you were a woman. That's been changed. We've been very busy. I think we've accomplished a great dea.

Best way

The male employees were very hesitath anout accepting the women's committee for some time and then finally we invited them to come and we called it a people's conference instead of a women's conference. The men who came wre really excited and thtilled and realized that were re not doing anything to jeapordize them men. All we were doing was giving the women an oportinuty to learn more aboyt the r union structures adn how to accomplish what THEY wasnt to accomplish from ab organization.

~~xxxxxx~~

Post war

We, within our organization, now have a terrific evaluation system. We've brought it into two or three locals and were by they have evaluated them. They do it on a point system. Regardless to what job you're doing, your job value is evaluated on its value and you're paid on that. But it's very difficult to get the employers to go along with that because they know it means an upgrading of some positions. Ordinarily they leave the anomalies to negotiations and then they sit and argue back and forth about jobs that they ~~waxxx~~ really don't know what it's about either. A lot of employers don't know what they're asking their employees to do. And jobs grow and finally they grow. In my own area, as a school administrative secretary there are times when you're carrying more responsibility than certainly you were hired to do. You're not just sitting there typing and taking shorthand. And most jobs do grow as you get into them. To get the employer to give you the opportunity to evaluate the value of those positions, that's really where we have to go and it's difficult. We now have six evaluators who ~~xxxxl~~ ~~xxxxx~~ throughout the country that travel and assist the employees and the employer to evaluate their workstaff.

The evaluation processes have to be part of the negotiations, so the point where they agree that there will be an evaluation system.

W~~l~~-ever-worked-very-hard at-

(verna King should be mentioned...)

That really startles a lot of people ~~because they~~ when they think that you're in this business and you're not getting paid for it. Because people say, "Oh the union leaders, they get such a lot of money that they really couldn't care. That's not true in CUPE."

"I feel that the trade union movement to me has been a terrific vehicle by which changes can be made for the working people of this country. Not only to gain a little bit economically but in social stature as well. I do think that they have contributed a great deal--the workers of this ~~country~~ country--in doing just that--to change a lot of our social ills, but there's a long way to go."

As an aside, my ^{husband} ~~business~~ has been in business for many years. He has had a painting business for many years and he for years, for 18, 20 years, we had a steady twenty man staff here. And they were all unionized. And we got along fine. And I think he was a better employer because of my affiliation with the ~~about~~ movement. But I really didn't connect the ~~about~~ movement as to its value, because all I thought of it was just getting a little bit more money or getting an extra week's holiday, until I really did get involved and saw on a broader base how many problems there were for people who were working and I mean sincere problems. The daycare problem for ~~one~~ one was very sad, we did a lot of work to get day care centres. My value of trade union movement has been a growing thing. And I know that I've lost some friends over ~~it~~ it, people who could not support my stand.