Interview: John Radosevic (JR)
Interviewer: Sean Griffin (SG)
Date: May 2, 2019
Location: Burnaby, B.C.
Transcription: Jane Player

SG [00:00:05] Okay. We're here at the B.C. Labour Heritage Centre on May the 2nd, 2019 with John Radosevic. So John, can you just give me your birth place, date, details and your parents and siblings and so on? All the basic documentation?

JR [00:00:20] The basic documentation. So I was born in Yugoslavia, what is now Croatia. My dad was John Senior. My mum was Esther Ellen Caldwell. They were pretty old for being parents. I mean, he was 46 and she was 40, 42 at the time. I was born, and two years later my sister was born, and then we came to Canada shortly after my sister was born.

SG [00:01:22] What were the conditions that you were born in Yugoslavia? Because your father had been an immigrant to Canada already, had he not?

JR [00:01:29] Yes. Him and his brother came to Canada in the mid-twenties. They worked on the roads and in the forests. My uncle was part of the migration in the Dirty Thirties—actually had his leg lopped off in a train accident where he fell under the tracks. So he had one leg and limped around and for a while they lived with us. My dad worked in the resource industries. There was forestry and fishing and, you know, mining, I think. I think he worked at Britannia Mines, but, you know, mainly a fisherman after he came back from Yugoslavia. Between the time that he came to Canada and the time that he went back to Yugoslavia there was this thing called the Second World War that intervened. He joined the Canadian Army, and he went overseas, and then he came back to Vancouver. When he came back to Vancouver, he met my mum. He was part of this whole Croatian movement that took place in Vancouver in those days. When he came back, they decided they wanted to go back to to Croatia or Yugoslavia to help rebuild socialism. That country had been torn apart by the Second World War, and so they thought what they wanted to do was go back and help the rebuilding process. So they went back, my mum and dad and, as I say, that's where we were born.

SG [00:03:11] Where there were many hundreds of other Croatians?

JR [00:03:14] I think many hundreds. I think around 2,000 or 3,000 or something. You know, but they had a big community here. They had community centre, had a newspaper. They were all part of this left wing movement that was taking place around the union movement back in those days. And part of the organising drives. All of the things that you read about and know about with regards to labour history, they were part of that movement. When they dropped their life here and went back to Croatia, of course, they sold the hall and just moved back. I think the whole community, or a good part of the community, moved back. Many didn't go, actually. I mean, there were people that stayed on the boats and worked here while they were back in Yugoslavia, but many more, I think, went to Yugoslavia to be part of this project, before coming back to Canada.

SG [00:04:18] So I'm assuming they weren't happy with the direction—.

JR [00:04:21] No, you know, my dad was not a fan of Tito and I think that my mum wanted to move back to Canada where her family was all from. You know, the conditions there were not great for growing up. Schooling, health, all of those kinds of things and, just living conditions. She wanted to come back and my dad was not happy with Tito, so they came back.

SG [00:04:46] I see. I understand your mum comes from a long line of Canadians—

JR [00:04:49] Yeah, it's an interesting thing. I mean, you know how she ended, how her and my dad hooked up, but, you know, she comes from a really old line of Canadians. Actually part of the United Empire Loyalist Movement when the American Revolution took place. They came to Canada from the States and settled in Nova Scotia. In Nova Scotia, they got into the brewery business and so they owned brands like Schooner and Moosehead beers, which are quite famous Canadian beers, and they ended up owning the Bluenose Clipper, which is on the Canadian dime, that kind of thing. There were two brothers, my mum's uncles—was it their uncles—it was her mum's uncles. One brother became a machinery salesman because his wife was a temperance woman and didn't want him working in the brewery business. Then the other stayed in the brewery business and became, you know, wealthy and, and my mum's mum moved out to Alberta and was actually one of the first two teachers in Western Canada. They lived not too far away from Banff. I guess it's Waterton—Waterton National Park. She was born on a ranch called Birdseye Ranch. Her mum had met a Canadian, or an American rancher, who had some falling out with the Mormons and was running and so he came to Canada, met my grandmother and they owned the Birdseye Ranch. They they settled at the Birdseye Ranch. And the Birdseye Ranch is now part of Waterton National Park. My Uncle Doug built the big hotel there and was part of that whole thing. Yeah, it's really quite a Canadian story. But in my—

SG [00:07:00] Both your parents' history kind of got you involved.

JR [00:07:04] Well, yeah, because my mum was a teacher as well. She was a teacher in Alberta, but then she moved out and befriended Syd and Edna Sheard who were part of the left wing movement, so she became a left winger, and my dad always was. They met, no doubt (although I don't know the backstory on this) at some left wing shindig, some union shindig. And the rest, as they say, is history.

SG [00:07:33] So you actually started working on a ranch that you're family—

JR [00:07:37] Yeah, I worked on my uncle's ranch. It was like 17 square miles of prairie. Some of it was virgin prairie. All of it, you know, I think it was like 40 cows to an acre. It was all that the land—it was so dry—it was all that the land could support. It was like 17 square miles and so it was a big place. They had about, I don't know, a couple of thousand head of cows. I went back there starting when I was 12 and worked as a cowboy. So learned to ride a horse; actually rode a horse in competition, in one instance. Dawn to dusk, either chasing cows or moving them from one area to another area. It was a very interesting place. I mean, on the Buzzard Butte Ranch, is what it was called, and it was on a—there was a string of hills that were used by the natives. They had—you could still see the tepee circles when you rode up the hill. There was these boulders in a circle, which they used to hold down the edges of their tepees. You know, you found arrowheads and different little things because it was virgin prairie. It had never been ploughed. You know, buffalo skulls and—and yeah, it was a very interesting experience. I learned how to drive a

car when I was 12, or truck, when I was 12 and drove tractors and did all that kind of stuff until I was 16 when I went fishing.

SG [00:09:17] Well, here they used to talk about cowboy fishermen in the industry, but you were the real thing.

JR [00:09:21] I was a real cowboy fisherman. Yeah.

SG [00:09:25] How did you get involved in the fishing industry? Where is that?

JR [00:09:27] Well, my dad talked to a skipper that he knew. He was a fisherman. He was on the boats. I never fished with my dad but I went on a seine boat called the Jessie Island II. Skippered by a Mike Wyshynski, who was a Ukrainian fisherman, a good guy, also a left winger so that's how my dad was connected to him, no doubt. I just went fishing; became a tie-up man. Tie-up man was—

SG [00:09:58] Was this intended just as a summer job or?

JR [00:10:00] Oh, yeah, sure. Yeah. I was still going to school so, you know, the industry was a great place for students in those days because you could go fishing salmon in the summertime. You know, so you would make as much working on a salmon boat in the summertime as you could make— sometimes, depending on the boat that you were on and how much fish you caught—but you could make as much as anybody could in town in a whole year. You could do that in the summertime, so it was perfect for students that go to UBC, and it's perfect for students like me who are still not out of high school at the time.

SG [00:10:35] Oh, you're still in high school?

JR [00:10:36] Oh Yeah, I was 16. I went to—I went fishing from when I was 16 to when I was 21—when I was 20, I guess. Then I went travelling to Europe for a year, went back to Croatia. Saw some relatives. Was in various places in Europe and then I came back when the then-president Homer Stevens phoned me in Croatia, happened to be visiting there at the time, and said, 'Will you come to work for the union?' I came to work for the union and I started in—

SG [00:11:10] He actually tapped you in Croatia?

JR [00:11:12] Oh, yeah. He phoned me in Croatia. I got this message and it was sort of like, 'Homer wants to talk to you.' Homer was this guy that, you know, who's the president when I was fishing here. I was involved in committees and on the executive of the local and that kind of thing. I was never close to Homer, in the sense that I knew him well, but I knew him.

SG [00:11:36] Sort of larger than life?

JR [00:11:37] Yeah, he was a larger than life character obviously, he's, yeah—larger than life was a good way of describing him. I got this call from this Homer Stevens guy that I knew and he was the president of the union. He said, come and work for the union—so I did. That was, I think that was in February of 2002.

SG [00:12:02] 2002. No, that can't be right.

JR [00:12:03] 2001 maybe. Yes, I guess it was 2001. So February, 2001. Oh, sorry, 1971. Yes. 1971.

SG [00:12:15] Right.

JR [00:12:18] Yeah. You're on the ball here, Sean. I went to work for the union in February. It was the herring fishery. It was one of the early years; they just had started it up again. Before that it was a reduction fishery and they had this new fishery called the roe fishery. It was just starting. I think that was maybe the second year that it was happening. After about a, you know, quite a few years of layoff. They weren't doing anything. That's where I ended up, and I stayed there for 34 years, I think.

SG [00:12:58] But this was a time that a lot of younger (unclear) were coming in. The industry was really kind of growing.

JR [00:13:04] Yeah. It was a young person's—

SG [00:13:05] What was it like on a seine boat in those days?

JR [00:13:06] It was a young person's industry, right. As I say, because you could work on the boats in the summertime. With the herring fishery in addition to the salmon fishery, you're starting to make some real money. You could actually see it as a career, not just as a stop off between, you know, during the summer when you want to make a few bucks as a student. You could actually make some good money between the herring and the salmon. More on the herring than salmon, as it turned out for a good number of years. When I was just in the salmon part of it, there were so many young people—the sons of skippers, the sons of fishermen, the students. I think the average age must have been in their forties, early thirties, maybe the late thirties. I think probably today the average age is in the late sixties, because there's no money in it anymore. It's just a different industry altogether. Living on the boats, working on the boats, it was a lot of work. You were away from home. You worked long, long hours for that period of time. You got well paid for it if you were on a decent boat. You would sort of migrate; you would go where the fish were. This was like this moving city of—you know, the fleet went different sizes but I think when I was fishing there was like three to 400. It got up to over 600 later on, but three to 400. You'd have all these boats with these young people on it and they would go from here to Bella Bella, or they would go from here to to Prince Rupert, or from here to Port Hardy. Everywhere you went, you would have a ready made party, you know, there would just be these guys that would pull off the boats and occupy the pubs. It was just, you know, the size of some of the towns doubled when the fishing fleet was in the area. We would fish for three, four days a week and then you'd come back and work on your net and, you know, take some time off, go to the restaurants and, you know, maybe have a game of pool if you were in a town that had a pool hall.

SG [00:15:19] You were fishing a lot more steadily in those days, you weren't doing one day and four days off or whatever?

JR [00:15:24] No, you were fishing four days if the fish were running. More, sometimes, you know. You'd always have to go back and have, you know, fuel up and you'd have to grub up. You'd have to, you know, mend your net and do those kinds of things, but sometimes the turnaround would be a day or two. Usually, you'd think of three or four days of being a fishing week, but it wasn't a, you know, if you look at it, it wasn't an eight hour day. It was like you'd get up at four in the morning and you would be in bed by the time

you finished delivering by midnight. It was like 20 hour days, 18 hour days, that kind of thing for four days. You were ready to have a little snooze at the end of that and so you look forward to these days in town.

SG [00:16:16] This must have been with all of these younger people coming into the industry, this must have had an impact on the union's organising. They had to organise basically every season.

JR [00:16:26] Yeah. Well the union was pretty well established in those days too. There was a, you know, just a method. The older crews would bring the younger guys in. You would get signed up. We'd call it boat clearance. You'd clear your boat before you went fishing, which meant that you listed your crew, you signed your dues voucher because we didn't have check off. You'd sign a voucher for your dues every year. You would sign up every year. Doing that kind of thing. Then, you know, that was part of what I did as an organiser. I was in charge of the signing of crews and, you know, just making sure that all of the union regulations and rules were being followed.

SG [00:17:19] Was the beach line safety course running?

JR [00:17:22] No, it wasn't. That was a later development. It was good development, but it was a later development. When I first started as a beachman, there was no beach line courses. You got taught by somebody on the boat who knew what they were doing, hopefully.

SG [00:17:38] Yeah.

JR [00:17:38] And kept you safe. It was a very, very dangerous job, you know. Every year somebody, or more than one person, would be killed by a beach line. I mean, the tension on the lines was such that it would just rip the bark off of trees. When it let go you could see the smoke, you know, coming from the trees as the rope—I won't go into all the details, technical detail of what the job entailed, but it basically entailed anchoring the net, which was like a quarter mile long, to the shore with this beach line and the boat towing it in a circle, and the fish swimming into it, and then you would close the net and purse the bottom. That was called a purse seine. That was my job, and as I say, it was a very dangerous job. I think it was just—it was actually, you know, the industry was an incredible—you know, we had stats like—I think we lost, like 5 percent of our membership in the—I forget the year now, but in the tendermen section, that is the packing boats, in one herring season. A number of boats went down because it was just after the fishery got started and there were, you know, boats weren't—we were taking boats out of moth balls to go and fish in the winter fishery. So the weather was not good. It was a tremendously dangerous industry; so we paid a lot of attention to safety. We started the beach line safety course. We lobbied for changes to laws that govern, you know, activity on boats. There was a price to pay, but I think that the industry is in a safer situation, it is today. The boats are safer for one thing.

SG [00:19:32] Yeah, right. So I'm assuming that when you went to work for the union as an organiser, you'd already had a fair taste of what it was like to be in the industry.

JR [00:19:41] Yeah.

SG [00:19:42] What was it like when you first sort of stepped into that office as water (unclear)?

JR [00:19:47] Well, it was interesting. I was 20, 21. I was in charge of the seine fleet as the big boat organiser. We had a big boat organiser, a small boat organiser in charge of the gillnet fleet. We had a shoreworker organiser. We had, you know, a Northern organiser and a Vancouver Island organiser, that kind of thing, and I was the big boat organiser, the seine fleet. There I was, at 21, snot-nosed kid ordering about full-grown men. I was from the fleet and I knew lots and lots of people, and, you know, I had a lot of respect for the fishermen. They had some respect for me, I hope. You know, it was the authority of the union and I spoke with the authority of the union as a young organiser. You know, you basically organised that fleet, those people in that fleet, to be part of whatever the union was doing. There were political campaigns, there were things around price in negotiations, all of that. There were, you know, environmental campaigns. The job would be to, you know, during a certain part of the year, early part of the year, you'd get everybody signed up and, as I say, these boat clearances, you'd sign the dues up and do that kind of thing. Then you would follow the fleet on the union boat. You'd go out when they went out. So the boat was always out. There wasn't always the same crew on the boat. Sometimes it would be one of the other organisers or a couple of the other organisers. You'd go out and you would, you know, talk to people. You would be part of the social scene and, you know, you'd visit them.

SG [00:21:29] What was the union boat at that time?

JR [00:21:32] They had the Chiquita II and then we had a boat called the George Miller after that.

SG [00:21:39] These were boats dedicated to organising only?

JR [00:21:41] Oh, yeah. They were owned by the union and so, as I said, when the fleet went out we got on the union boat, we followed the fleet. We talked to them about the same things. We would talk to them on the boats about the campaigns that we had to do, things like stopping a dam on the Fraser, or we have to stop oil pipelines from going into Kitimat, or we had, you know, a labour code issue or—you know, there's always the ever-present fight to get better prices. There are many other things that the union did. After we'd done the organising and got everybody signed up, and once we had campaigned and got our our negotiations settled, and whether it caused a strike or not, we didn't know. I mean, you were into negotiations every year or two because that's how long the contracts lasted. You know, we had we had a number of strikes, but we settled many times without strikes, too. So—

SG [00:22:39] But there was the sense, I think a lot of that time, was it not, that because of the nature of markets and everything else, that it was an idea that you were going to have to go on strike to basically get a price agreement? That certainly was the view sort of outside the industry. What did the membership think of that?

JR [00:22:56] The membership didn't like strikes. I mean, you only have a certain number of weeks to really hit the fish. Nobody likes a strike, but nobody likes going fishing for and not getting paid either, so they understood and they had to fight for a price. You know, we didn't always go on strike. We got settled many times without a strike, but sometimes there were strikes and those were necessary in order to force the companies to pay attention to our demands. I think we got a better price for the people on the decks on those boats, and by extension, for the people that were owning the boats, as well, because the deckhands would take a certain percentage of the catch. They'd have to pay over and above that for

the people that own the boats, whether they were seine boat owners or gillnet owners, or whatever. We had a positive influence on the incomes of fishermen and people appreciated that.

SG [00:23:56] That was recognised by the fleet, eh?

JR [00:23:57] Oh, for sure, yeah. Otherwise they wouldn't have tied up.

SG [00:24:00] Right.

JR [00:24:01] You know, they tied up because they knew they had to, but we tried to settle without strikes. I mean, who wants to cost a boat a week's earnings when that week's earnings, if it was at the peak of the season, could be at 20-25 percent of your yearly income. You know, you fish for the summer, but you don't start fishing in the early part of the season and make as much money throughout the season. You have the peaks. The runs come in and they're heavy; then you're really fishing hard and then you're at the beginning or the tail end of the season, you're fishing often for not very much at all. Maybe not even paying for your expenses.

SG [00:24:44] Yeah, right. One of the things you mentioned is that this was also the beginning of the roe herring fishery, which was a fundamentally different fishery in a whole lot of ways, because was was there not also a change in licencing that had a profound impact?

JR [00:25:00] Oh, well, there was a change in licencing. You know, it started not in the herring fishery. It started with, I think, the abalone fishery, but we could see the effects on the abalone of the licencing of the, what they called area licencing. You know, basically it was the start of multiple licencing because the way the fishery could take place before was that you went where the fish was, and the fleet followed the fish.

SG [00:25:27] And it could be anywhere on the coast.

JR [00:25:28] It could be anywhere on the coast. When you had area licencing, you could only fish in a certain area. That could be, you know, a gulf fishery. There could be a, you know, central coast fishery or west coast fishery or northern fishery. I can't recall the number of areas there were, but there were multiple areas. If you wanted to fish those areas, you had to have multiple licences. So you started to get into boats that perhaps could make more money by renting their licence or, maybe the skipper didn't want to take his boat out and he'd rent his licence to somebody that wanted to fish two areas, or three areas. You got into this whole thing of renting multiple licences to be able to do what you used to do for no cost, or just with a nominal fee to the Department of Fisheries for a licence to fish the coast of B.C. As soon as it became a commodity, this rental commodity, it drove the prices up, you know, exponentially, to the point where you could pay 100 and plus thousand dollars for one season for one licence. The owners of those licences were making big bucks but they weren't producing anything anymore. The crews that were out there fishing that had to rent these licences had to pay a substantial part of their catch to get the right to fish to use these licences. What happened was, you know, the whole income level of people in the industry shifted, or, the division of wealth in the industry shifted from the working fisherman to the people who owned licences. You know, that was bad for the—that's the reason why the industry is now, you know, an older person's industry because nobody can go fishing anymore and make a living on that. You can't

marry somebody and have a family and, you know, get a mortgage and live on the amount of money that you're making on those boats anymore.

SG [00:27:37] And that was essentially where it started in the roe herring.

JR [00:27:39] No, it started in the abalone fishery. Yeah. I mean, you know, the herring roe fishery experienced it, but it was starting in the industry overall. It's in the salmon industry now. It's just grown, you know, because it was a way for people that wanted to rent licences. It was a commodity, and the people that owned the licences got them for free. When you're an old person, you're not going to go fishing. You know, you have these older characters in the industry that are no longer part of the industry, and, instead of retiring, they just continue to take money out of the industry, out of the pockets of those people that are fishing. So it was a real—and it happened big time in the herring fishery.

SG [00:28:23] Did you see it start having an impact at that time on bargaining and on union organisation?

JR [00:28:28] Yes, because there was, you know, as I say, there was less in it for people that worked on the boats. The whole relationship between bargaining for a price and getting a price and dividing it between the the crew and the boat changed.

SG [00:28:50] Mm hmm. Yeah. That would have had a profound impact.

JR [00:28:53] Yeah. The other thing that happened was, is that, before the area licensing, there was so much money in the herring fishery, just for a few years, people lost track of the fact that they actually needed a contract [laughter] to have a union. They were getting the boat owners, the people that, you know, not the crews, but the people that own the boats were getting so much over and above what they normally would get, it was just under the table payments, and so people kind of, couldn't afford not to go fishing, so they couldn't afford to go on strike. We had more difficulty getting the companies to pay enough money to keep the crews happy and so it affected everything. It affected the mentality of the fishermen, too.

SG [00:29:46] You went on from waterfront organiser to sort of move up into various other positions in the union (unclear). What were they?

JR [00:29:53] Yes. So I was an organiser for about seven years and then I became a business agent, which is basically a supervisor of the organisers, and had other responsibilities, one of the top three officer positions. Then I was the secretary-treasurer for seven years, and then I was the president for 12 years, I think. So about 34 years altogether. I didn't add that up. Does it come to 34?

SG [00:30:19] Or something like that.

JR [00:30:20] (laughter) Or something like that. Yeah, it was a long time.

SG [00:30:22] One of the things I wanted to ask you about, too, as I understand, you also got a call sort of out of nowhere from the Great Lakes fishermen.

JR [00:30:29] Well, yeah.

SG [00:30:30] To try and encourage you to come and organize them. Can you tell me about that?

JR [00:30:33] Yeah, that was an interesting story, actually. You know, we had some Portuguese fishermen that fished on this coast, so we knew them. They knew us. Just out of the blue, I think it was a Wednesday afternoon, I think, I got this call from a Portuguese fisherman that I knew and I couldn't quite place him but, you know, not to make fun of his accent, but I know how to do it well, you know, so it was 'John, John, you know. It is Domingos Malose.' (unclear) 'Oh, Domingos', and I finally placed him, and I said, 'Hey. How are you doing?' Then he said, 'Great, great. I got two hundred fishermen. They wanna join the union.' I said, 'Well, we're a B.C. union. We don't have the ability to service the Great Lakes fishery but, you know, I'm sorry we can't help you.' It was Thursday. I got another call in the afternoon and it was, 'John, John, we got 400 fishermen they wanna join the union.' I said, 'It was 200.' 'No, it was 400.' So I said, 'Well, it's the same thing, you know, Domingos. We don't have any structure for us to give you any service. We can help you find another union, but we can't help you from B.C. to do something in Ontario.' Okay, that's fine. Half an hour later, that phone was hung up and the next day, it's a Friday afternoon, by now. 'John, John, we have 800 fishermen. They want to join a union.' I went to Jack Nicol, who was the president at that time, and I was the business agent then and, I said, 'Well, you know, either we have 800 fishermen, which means that there might be the critical mass that you might need to hire somebody that would be able to go and service them and do something for them. Or, somebody there is telling 800 people that he can get them into the union, in which case that should be cut short. Either way. We should probably go.' I was on the plane that night to Windsor, Ontario. After flying all night, you know, it was a nice sunny morning and I saw everybody getting off the plane, out the window. I usually sit back and wait for everybody else to get off. There's no point in standing up and waiting. I'm looking at them and they're saying something to everybody that gets off the plane. Finally, it's my turn and I get off and what they were saying was, 'Are you the man from the West?' I said, 'Well, I'm from B.C. and they said, 'You're the man from the West. Come with us.' They separate me out from the other passengers, put me in a little room, and pretty soon there's this big RCMP woman who comes in and says, 'You know, you're okay and the Ontario Provincial Police will come here and talk to you in a few minutes.' You know, I waited there for another 15 and I looked out the window. There's all kinds of fishermen out there, some of whom I recognised, waiting for me to come out of the room, talking to the police. I went upstairs into this little Windsor airport, and the police were there and they sat me down and they said, 'What are you doing here?' I said, 'Well, I have a call. They want me to go and talk to them about organising a union.' 'Well, what's this all about' I said, 'because this was a lot of police presence for somebody just wants to go talk to a bunch of fishermen in Ontario.' They said, 'Well, we've had threats against your life.' I said, 'Oh, you know, that's interesting.' They said, and so I said 'Well, who's threatening my life?' 'Oh, it's the Mafia, sir.' As it turned out, that one of the places that we were organising was doing some things, whether it was money laundering or whatever, for the Detroit mob.

SG [00:34:30] Oh, really.

JR [00:34:30] Yeah. So, finally, I got out of this little room. All the fishermen were there. They took me for lunch. Then they took me to the motel where they were going to give me a few hours sleep. This was the morning, by the time I got there. I had flown all night, and so I wanted a few hours sleep. I looked out the window and they're doing patrol work, right? So the fishermen are driving around thinking this is security, right? As it turned out, those guys were all ex-Angolan soldiers and they were nobody to mess with. The

company sent, you know, the Hells Angels or a biker gang in to try and break up their organisation, and they just got run out of town on a rail. You know, they're just, these guys are tough, tough people and, you know, experienced fighters. They weren't just fishermen doing the patrol work.

SG [00:35:25] What year is this taking place? Approximately?

JR [00:35:26] I guess this was 19? Man, 1980, give or take. Yeah, something like that. When I was still a business agent. That night we went to the meeting and there were 800 people. They had signs up on the wall, all misspelt, 'Union Hurray!' People were, you know, there were men and women, and so, you know, I had about maybe 20 minutes of things to say. It took about 60 minutes to say it because, you know, there is the comment, and then there's the translation, and everybody cheers like hell, and then there would be another comment, and so on it went. It took a long time. People were jumping up and down so high that their chins were touching their knees when they were jumping. After the meeting, everybody, you know, they all crowded around and they wanted to give me money. Women wanted me to kiss their babies. It was, seriously, it was just fun. It was a lot of fun. It was funny, too. I said, 'No, we don't want any money. What we need to do is set up a structure here.' The next morning we were to meet, we went to Domingos Ballis's (unclear) wife's hair salon—this long kind of narrowish room with all of these beehive kind of dryers. There was about 15 chairs in it, and maybe, something like that—15, 20 chairs and the fishermen all sat in these chairs, with the beehive. (laugher). It was just the funniest looking—it was fun. We get it all settled. 'Here's where you put your money. Here's how you set it up. You've got a bank account. You got to have an executive. You've got to have a secretary-treasurer, and this and that.' So you help get them, set that up. By then, there was a crowd that was gathering outside on the street. I can hear it. There was a guy down there waving a Canadian flag and a Portuguese flag. Another guy, they had two big flags that were as big as this room, and they want me to speak. We go to the little park, but I'm getting late for the plane so, I'm just, I only got a few minutes to speak. You know, there's maybe four, 500 people out for that. I went—we went through the whole thing again and Domingos had his bullhorn and the police came. That was another funny thing. The police came to move us along because it was unauthorised gathering and Domingos was tapped on the shoulder to talk to the police. You know, he didn't stop talking. He just turned around full on to the policeman with the bullhorn and the guy's hair is blasting out behind him. (laughter). I spoke for a few minutes and we all jumped in the cars. Domingos was—I was in the backseat, but the car was, had a sunroof and Domingos Ballis (unclear) is going, you know, 10, 15 miles an hour down the street. Everybody's yelling and clapping, and Domingos is doing his Richard Nixon impression. I'm in the back seat. We just reached the outskirts of the little town, or where we had to go, and they just tromped the gas, and it was like, how many miles an hour! It wasn't the speed limit, and the flags were just (loud noise) behind. The car behind had a big pole sticking out one side and a big pole sticking out the other with the flag and off we went to the airport. At the airport they sang, you know that old, the old Vonceremos, Vonceremos (singing). Everybody in the airport's wondering who the hell I am I, and I'm thinking I don't know anymore.

SG [00:39:26] They still have this enthusiasm?

JR [00:39:30] Yes, they still have this enthusiasm. Anyway, I got on the plane. There are many stories around that. I mean, there was some others that were just as dramatic.

SG [00:39:39] But to make a long story short, they did eventually (unclear)?

JR [00:39:42] They did eventually succeed. They joined—they signed up, and they eventually joined the Canadian Auto Workers, as a local. They had some pretty tough battles to get those companies to sign up. I had to go back a few times and, you know, we got a member of the union who once, at one time was an organiser for the union to go back there and be their staff person. They got organised and they still are part of the Canadian Auto Workers, as far as I know—or the UNIFOR as it is now. Yeah.

SG [00:40:19] Well, that's good. Nothing like having enthusiastic workers who want to get organised.

JR [00:40:24] Oh well, if you had a video just on that, I could, I'd love to regale you with some other stories which are just as colourful. Yeah.

SG [00:40:36] That's interesting. So after the UFAWU got back into the CLC in '72, it also opened some doors for a lot of union members to become active in the labour, sort of central labour movement again. Did you yourself get involved as well?

JR [00:40:55] Yeah, we became—I didn't play a big role at the BC Fed other than to be a staff person that was looking after the business of the union, you know. Getting delegates looked after and that kind of thing. I was on, you know, I joined the Labour Council. I was one of the union reps at the Labour Council and, you know, was on the executive of the Labour Council, became third vice president, eventually second vice president, and then president of the Labour Council—up until about the time that we started having all of the fights around Mifflin. There was just no more time for Labour Council or anything else like that. I dropped the Labour Council business and I dropped the—I was head of the Action Caucus and I passed that off to Jim Sinclair. Let him do that and I got out of that and had to concentrate on the battle.

SG [00:41:56] What was the Action Caucus?

JR [00:41:58] Oh, it was the, you know, the left wing of the BC Federation of Labour. We introduced policy, spoke on resolutions, made sure candidates got, you know, we sponsored candidates.

SG [00:42:10] So you'd have a caucus of those unions, advocated for policy?

JR [00:42:13] Yeah, yeah. We called ourselves the Action Caucus. Yeah. You know, it had some success.

SG [00:42:21] Right.

JR [00:42:22] We had some good success. You know, we went through all of the—you know, it was it was the the leaders of the the Action Caucus were the people who really, they were a big part of it—you remember the old Vancouver peace parades? You know the—

SG [00:42:41] The peace walks?

JR [00:42:42] Yeah, the peace walks. Right. You know, the people from the Action Caucus, people like Frank Kennedy and Doug Shields and those kind of people, combined with Bruce Yorke and some others. You know, it wasn't 80,000 all at once. It grew. The

Action Caucus had some impact. The left wing of the labour movement had a lot of impact. The left wing of the labour movement was part of the Solidarity battles that took place back in whatever year, the hell that was.

SG [00:43:17] In 1983.

JR [00:43:17] 1983. You know, it started the thing. I was part of the committee that sent in the occupiers of the Premier's office. I don't know if you remember that, but that was kind of the start up of the Solidarity.

SG [00:43:35] I do. I remember there was a cartoon about pizzas.

JR [00:43:36] Oh yeah. I didn't go in. I was the outside guy and, you know, but George Hewison and Lorne Robson and Mike Darnell was one of the ones that were inside.

SG [00:43:46] George Hewison at that time was secretary-treasurer.

JR [00:43:48] He was the secretary-treasurer of the union, yeah. I was still an organiser, I think. No, I guess—was I the business agent by then?

SG [00:44:00] You would have been the business agent by then.

JR [00:44:00] Huh! My, how time flies! Anyway we said we were going to take this over, so we went in there and everybody crowded in and we screamed at the Premier's head civil servant, 'Get out, get out, get out.' Finally he left, and as soon as he left we barred the doors. We had these contraptions planned out and we just clapped the contraptions over the handles and we were locked in, and they were locked out, but they didn't have food. We had to get food into them, and there was a—we planned it. There was a couple of, you know, good looking young women wearing short skirts that drew away the guards. Soon as the guards walked away just a little ways away, they opened up the doors and threw the pizzas in there. I went, I got the pizzas. The cartoon you're talking about is me, with a stack of pizzas. The pizzas went in the door. Then, of course, they clapped. The guards came running back after they saw what was going on, but it was too late. They had food, and they could stay for another day. All of those things, though, those were all things that we were—it wasn't just me, it was other people involved, but it was the Action Caucus that, the characters around the Action Caucus, that made all of that happen.

SG [00:45:26] Oh, I see. And I mean it was an effective occupation, I presume. Got publicity and so on for Operation Solidarity.

JR [00:45:35] Oh yeah, but the whole idea wasn't for us to take the credit. The whole idea was for us to get the labour movement to do something, right? You know, we had this Bill 19 and 20, which was going to be so bad for the labour movement at the time. We had to do something and so we started it through these kinds of actions. What we really wanted to do was turn it over to Art Kube and the people at the BC Federation of Labour, and have them lead it because it's, you know, it's not going to go anywhere with a fraction of the labour movement, or a faction of the labour movement leading these things. It's got to be the main body of labour. They did, to their credit and, you know, it built up and it became one of the big movements of the day. You know, hundreds of thousands. No, yeah.

SG [00:46:26] It was hundreds of thousands of people.

JR [00:46:28] Hundreds of thousands of people. Yeah.

SG [00:46:32] Well, and even before that, labour support had been really critical for the union when you were under investigation by the Combines too. You were, presumably I would guess an organiser then or—

JR [00:46:46] Yeah, I would have been an organiser then. Well, it was interesting, I was at the office the day that the Combines people came in. They walked in and they had a warrant. They said, 'We're here to look at all the papers.' I was alone in the office, so I said, 'You're not coming in here.' I phoned Harry Rankin and I got a hold of Jack Nichol. When I talked to Harry, he said, 'Let 'em in.' I had to let 'em in. Meanwhile, some of the other people started to come back to the office to see what they—but they took boxes of material out and we got it all back but they did a thorough investigation. Simon Wapniarski was the lead investigator at the time and, so it was, you know, it was a life and death thing, you know, had the government been able. It was brought by a group of fishermen from a hostile organisation who were in collaboration with people from the government and the companies basically. I think, well, the government mainly.

SG [00:47:52] You were never named at any point though?

JR [00:47:53] Well, there were—and that's another interesting story at it because this all ended up in, in fact, in front of a Combines case in court. They wouldn't tell us, you know, for whatever reasons there are, and I'm sure there are some reasons. You can't—it's not like you meet your accuser. The accuser is silent so you never can really defend yourself properly, from charges under the Combines investigation. We couldn't find out who it was that charged this and a whole bunch of other information that we needed to defend ourselves properly. What happened was, that brought the whole thing to a close, was actually the judge called the lunch break. Everybody left the courtroom and Simon Wapniarski left his books and papers on his desk in front of the judge and we all left. They left the little window open in the door to the courtroom. There were a couple of people (I won't mention who) squeezed through that window, grabbed Simon Wapniarski papers and fled the scene. Yeah, and we knew who it was. Simon came back and he looked at his papers. What the hell? All his paper, all his case was gone. I'm sure he could have rebuilt it, but by then we knew where they were going. We knew who was accusing us and everything else so they dropped the case. We knew exactly who it was; it was the group, that group of people from the Co-op in Prince Rupert.

SG [00:49:47] Had they been involved in the earlier Combines investigation?

JR [00:49:50] No.

JR [00:49:51] This was a new one?

JR [00:49:51] Yeah.

SG [00:49:52] Essentially it was the same argument that fishermen were not legally employees, or workers, and therefore couldn't bargain collectively for prices or (unclear).

JR [00:50:01] And we couldn't do things like tie fishermen up.

SG [00:50:04] That was unlawful?

JR [00:50:05] That was unlawful.

SG [00:50:05] It eventually ended up going to an Appeal Court where that, the right of fishermen—

JR [00:50:11] Well, actually, I just went to a case, a case that Joy Thorkelson had brought. They're trying to now certify fishermen for the first time. The law was changed to say that fishermen were dependent contractors or something other than employees under the Act. Anyway, so that now they could. It was no longer illegal for them to be seen as a union or as employees. It's just now that we're starting to get union status for these seine boat guys, you know, they're now workers as opposed to being co-adventurers, is what they used to call them. We were always on a knife edge, you know, faced with legal threat because when we went on strike, what right did we have to go on strike? You know, none of the labour laws applied to us. The only thing that kind of prevented us, you know, prevented the companies using government or the law from breaking our strikes in the past was they knew it wouldn't have done a goddamn hoot of good for them because we wouldn't have done anything differently anyway. Also, the season would have been lost because, you know, the season, as they say, a week or two weeks at the head of the, you know, just at the top of the the peak of the season could mean your season's earnings. It could also mean the company season's earnings, so there was a lot at stake. We did what we did, but it was never under the umbrella of being a labour organisation, even though we were.

SG [00:52:00] Obviously it had pretty wide support in the membership as well.

JR [00:52:03] Oh yes. No, we couldn't have existed. We couldn't have done what we did without the—

SG [00:52:08] Even the little hand through the window would probably be involved (unclear) or something.

JR [00:52:14] It was funny. I found those those papers. I never knew where they went. There was one member of the union who kept on coming home and he would see, you know, at one point he came home and there was this big muddy footprint on his kitchen table. Somebody was coming into his apartment. His basement suite but nothing was ever stolen.

SG [00:52:37] Oh.

JR [00:52:38] As it turned out, it was Homer Stevens, who has now passed away so there's nothing that the law can do to him. He's a little beyond their reach. He was coming in to this guy's apartment to read those papers, but they'd put the papers in the guy's apartment without telling him because they wanted to give him plausible deniability. They didn't want him to know that the papers were in his apartment. It was Homer that was coming to read the documents when this guy was at work. Then he'd come home and the place had been broken into. Nothing's stolen. What the heck? That multiple times. Right? It was just, you know, and I finally found, I found a box when we were moving out and I was giving a tour to a bunch of fishermen after drinking a bunch of beer after a meeting one night. I was saying, 'Here's where that happened, here's where this happened.' We looked in the furnace room down in the bowels of the old Fisherman's Hall and there was this box. What the heck is this? We look in it, and it's the Combines investigations papers. And so, yeah.

SG [00:53:51] Oh, really? So where are they now?

JR [00:53:52] I have no idea and I don't want to know, because I don't know how, I don't know if there's a statute of limitations on this. Yeah. That's how that Combines Investigation was stopped.

SG [00:54:05] Right.

JR [00:54:06] Yeah. When we found out who it was.

SG [00:54:11] But so what? But there was in fact a court case—.

JR [00:54:14] Well, it was dropped.

SG [00:54:14] That was about the rights of workers and then it went to trial.

JR [00:54:15] Oh, that was during—yes, I'm sorry—that was when, that was a long time later. That was when Harcourt was Premier of the province and there was, we had a friendly government in Victoria. We got the Kelleher report and the report was acted on by the government and we got the right to be called workers, but that wasn't a court case as much as it was—

SG [00:54:45] Well, there was a federal court case then. It's what's known as the McKay Decision.

JR [00:54:50] Oh, right, you're right.

SG [00:54:51] And he was in—

JR [00:54:52] Yes, I'd forgotten that.

JR [00:54:53] Yes.

SG [00:54:54] And he said fishermen are, fishermen are, on my examination, the fishermen are indeed workers.

JR [00:54:57] Yes.

JR [00:54:58] That was subsequently upheld under appeal, and they wouldn't take it to (unclear)

JR [00:55:03] Yes. But I think that wasn't a court case.

SG [00:55:05] But it (unclear) by the provincial legislation that was—

JR [00:55:07] Yes. If I'm not wrong, and I could be on this one, I'm not 100 percent sure. The McKay thing was the less on our hook, then it was on the East Coast Fishermen's.

SG [00:55:17] No, because they already had the right, they had the legislation I think since the seventies. We don't need to dwell on that. The story about the people getting the papers is far more interesting than whatever happened in the court.

JR [00:55:31] Yeah, well, we did what we had to do.

SG [00:55:34] Yeah. You know, going back to some of the union's own activities and whatnot, with regard to fishermen, there were a lot of strikes in the union's history, like '75 and some of the herring strikes and whatnot that were really critical. The big one, the one that really was, I think, a lot of people think was the most critical, was probably the '89 strike because it came after the trade ruling had come down that said there could be no more exclusive Canadian processing for salmon and herring. The companies saw this as an opportunity to really go after bargaining.

JR [00:56:11] Yeah. Well, they did see it as an opportunity and they decided to take us on. We made a tactical error, in that, during that set of negotiations, that nearly cost us the union. What it is (and I won't go into how that came about) but it was an error. We went on strike to stop the companies from using the situation of the Free Trade Agreement, the changes. We went on strike, but we went on strike two weeks too early so I explained why it's important. You know, even though it hurts the fishermen the most to go on strike at the peak of the season.

SG [00:57:00] Right. When the run peaks.

JR [00:57:02] When the run peaks. It also hurts the companies the most. We've always, depending when you look at the fishing industry, you have thousands of, you have a couple of thousand gillnetters who are basically small businessmen. I mean, we said that's not true. We called them union members and workers, but they owned their own boats. They had their own licences. They fished independently for the companies. They moved around from company to company. You know, many of them could, I mean, if they didn't have—if they weren't tied to the company, they could move where they wanted to. In many respects they were independent operators who could go fishing any time. They could go fishing during a strike; they could do anything. What we had to do is, we had to put them in a position of being able to win a dispute in a short period of time, because if it dragged out, there were a couple of things that would happen. One, it would be unsustainable for them financially if they just lost the whole season, which we almost did in '89. The other thing was, is that if we went on strike when there wasn't a peak run, then some of the smaller non-union plants could actually handle the production. It was only when there was large volumes of fish that they couldn't process those fish without the major companies being involved. We went on strike two weeks before we should have been on strike and we had two weeks or two and a half weeks more even.

SG [00:58:43] Why? Why was that decision made to go early?

JR [00:58:46] Well, because there were some people that thought, 'Why go on strike when it's going to hurt us the most? Why not go on strike earlier when the peak of the run is not here, and we'll get this settled before the peak of the run.' There's no incentive on the company's part to settle it before the peak of the run. For decades, we just said, no, our policy is—but anyway, that decision was made because the majority rule and they wanted to do it that way this year. I think that, you know, it was also an interesting—that was an also an interesting exercise from a point of view that when we were on strike for those two weeks, we had all kinds of people that just went fishing. The more people that went fishing, the more people that said, 'I can't just stand here and watch everybody else fishing.' We just had defections from the union. It hurt us tremendously, actually. We got back some of those people, but many we didn't. Some just went fishing saying, you know, without even

thinking about it. It was just an emotional reaction to seeing other people out there fishing and them not. They weren't catching that much fish at the time. They were able to deliver it to the non-union places. There were places to get rid of the fish while the peak of the run was not there. By the time the peak of the run hit, we were on our last legs. We, you know, it was a tough fight! You know, I went to the BC Fed. I thought we were going to lose the union and whatever. I went to Jack and Bill, and I said, 'We've, you know, we've got to do something. We've got to defy the law and go in and stop some of these small companies from taking fish!' You know, legally, we couldn't do that, but let's somebody goes (unclear) so civil disobedience. You know, the jam and plug was my concept, right? I said 'Why don't we let everybody go fishing?' The peak of the run is here. We're now going to, you know, the whole fleet's out fishing, half the fleet is out fishing. Let the other guys go, and then we'll have the shoreworkers walk out or stay out. Then if the shoreworkers are out, they've got nowhere to deliver the fish. They have this massive amount of fish that would rot on the boats, which would be not sustainable from a public point of view. You know, fish rotting on the boats in, by the thousands of tonnes.

SG [01:01:34] Fish hadn't been delivered yet.

JR [01:01:35] It hadn't been delivered, so we said jam and plug. What we would do is we would let the boats go out fishing, catch all the fish they could, which was lots. Boatloads, we're talking about, you know, just massive amounts of fish. Then when they came to back to town with their fish, it would be plug. So, jam and plug. When that happened, even the Vancouver Sun ran a headline and it said, 'Oh, there are all kinds of people.' This, you know, this was just an anathema, that the shore workers would not be on strike at the same time. You know, but it worked. The boats came back. All of a sudden, you know, when we were trying to make this decision, the Vancouver Sun had a headline, advising our members to vote against the strategy of jam and plug. The companies were going nuts. They didn't know whether to shit or go blind, at the time. But we did it and they came back. The boats were loaded and the company had to buckle—and they did. They, you know, they were just refusing to meet. We had nothing to talk about. We were in a struggle for our lives. Then all of a sudden they were [nodding] 'Yes, sir. Yes, sir.' We certainly got the agreement that we needed. We saved the union and we went back fishing and we did what we could with the rest of the season. But it was a pretty tough struggle!

SG [01:03:01] Yeah. So what happened with the membership after that?

JR [01:03:06] Well, as I say, many members left to go fishing, especially in the small boat fleet and so we lost a lot of our strength as far as membership.

SG [01:03:15] (unclear) could get them back in those days?

JR [01:03:16] Well, in many cases not. You know. We didn't go on strike again after that, but I remember, I was the secretary-treasurer at the time, so I was the head negotiator for the salmon license. Before that I was—our officers divided it up. Jack was the head of the shoreworkers, Jack Nichol. He was the was the president and he headed up the shoreworkers negotiations. I was the secretary-treasurer and I headed up the fishermen's negotiations and then the business agent headed up the tendermen's negotiations.

SG [01:03:51] And it was Bill Procopation?

JR [01:03:53] No Bill was before me.

SG [01:03:56] Before you.

JR [01:03:57] This was a few years later; after the '89 strike Bill retired. That was when Jim Sinclair became the business agent. Jim was the business agent and I was the secretary-treasurer in charge of the fishermen's negotiations. We had a contract to negotiate and they wanted to do something like drop the price down to 25 cents and it was 35 cents. We had a telephone conference, coast- wide phone conference with the fleet.

SG [01:04:37] For pink salmon?

JR [01:04:37] For pink salmon. Yeah. And I just said to the fleet, 'Okay, fine, if you guys don't tie up, we're at where we're at, and I'm gonna sign this agreement for 25 cents or you guys tie up. They all came in—union, non-union, natives, everybody. Came in and tied up and we got an agreement. I think it was 32 cents, maybe, or 35 cents but there was a cut off. I mean, after about 20 cents you could go fishing. The longer you fished, the more money you'd lose because, at the price, you would barely be covering the cost of fuel and, you know, all of the other expenses that you have on the boat. They just came in and we went on strike. A little bit unorthodox. It's not like the normal situation that most unions would face.

SG [01:05:29] But it was often, over the union's history, when they had to take sort of unorthodox.

JR [01:05:33] It was always unorthodox. We're in an unorthodox membership. We weren't workers; we weren't covered by the Labour Code. We were unorthodox in the sense that we signed up every member, every year. We were unorthodox in the way that we battled, partly because we had no choice. It was either do or die. You know, things like the Combines investigation and—it was just an unorthodox kind of an organisation. You know, we had shoreworkers that made up about half the membership and the shoreworkers were the wage earners and they were workers. They did have the right to strike and the same with tendermen. They were workers as well, but the fishermen were not. It was a combination of these independent operators in what was it, what did they call us? I said it earlier. I can't remember now. Anyway—

SG [01:06:30] Co-adventurers.

JR [01:06:30] Co-adventurers. The shore workers and the co-adventurers and the—so it was all in one kind of ball of wax and that was unorthodox. So yeah, from stem to stern, it was, you know, speaking in the boat language, stem to stern. You'll note! (laughter) It was, it was unorthodox.

SG [01:06:51] For sure. I wonder if we could take a five minute break here just to get a drink of water and go on now into the CAW (Canadian Auto Workers) merger and that sort of thing and where you went with that.

JR [01:07:01] And let's talk a little bit more about what happened after the '92 strike and so on.

SG [01:07:09] Okay, so we'll go start with that.

JR [01:07:11] After that last go round with strikes, we had to concentrate more on what was going on with regards to licencing and the changes, because the federal government

saw an opportunity to really deal with us. They dealt with us partly through the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy. They used the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy to split the commercial industry from First Nations. Now when I say that, that's an interesting point because most of the First Nations groups up and down the coast, who relied on commercial fishing, were firmly against the Aboriginal Fishery Strategy.

SG [01:07:54] Maybe explain what the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy was here? I mean, basically it was a way of commercialising what had been food and ceremonial sales.

JR [01:08:05] That's right. I mean, especially in the river fisheries. You would have a lot of people who would go fishing in river, you know, ostensibly for food. You'd have people that would be fishing for food on the coast as well, of course. There was always this sort of like a under the table thing that would take place, where you would sell fish that were supposed to be for food and, and you would use it for for commercial purposes instead. I don't think anybody really cared that much about that. It started to grow; so people started to get dealt with. Then there was the Sparrow case where he just went out and fished. The courts came down on his side and it just broke open the whole way of doing things in the industry. People on the river started to really fish; it was just a commercial operation that they were doing, as much as for any other reason. You had the federal government stepping in with closing down fisheries to make sure that there was enough fish that was getting up into those areas and this and that. What they were doing is they were closing down the fisheries for who? Most of the commercial, or half the commercial, about half—that's not true—about 40 percent of the commercial fishery was First Nations, Indian boats. Alert Bay, Bella Coola, all of the places up and down the coast with native fishermen, or any town with on the coast had a contingent, had a fishery there, with native crews.

SG [01:09:53] Part of the regular commercial.

JR [01:09:54] Which was part of the regular commercial fishery. Prior to that, what we did is we said we had to put more of the fishery into the hands of natives. There was an agreement in the industry that we would do that by putting more boats in the hands of natives. Like there would be licences and boats and we would introduce more natives into the fishery, into the regular commercial fishery. That's the way it was done, but then what happened was that the government started to isolate fish. As a result, all of the native boats that relied on fish were suddenly being hurt by the Aboriginal Fishery Strategy, just as much as the non-native fishery. What that did, really, was split the Indian groups between native in-river and non-in-river. I remember going to a lobby to Ottawa with most of the major First Nations leaders. I was the head of that delegation and—but I was the only non-native. There was just one other guy that was with me. He was—I've forgotten his name now—he worked for the union for about a year back then. Oh man! John—anyway, it doesn't matter. Anyway, we were the only two non-natives, but it was to demonstrate that the native people on the coast didn't want the Aboriginal Fishery Strategy as envisioned by David Anderson. What happened was, is that that fishery really created schisms in the industry between natives and non-natives, but also between natives and natives. Suddenly we weren't able to unite coastal communities and we weren't able to unite natives and non-natives around programs like, you know, environmental programs that would help the industry. I'm getting lost a little bit in the weeds here; but it was an important point because, just at that point, also, David Anderson was trying to renegotiate the agreements that Canada had with the Americans. We had all of the fights to keep the industry united around some kind of a program that made sense to everybody, with the government playing this divisive role with the Aboriginal Fishery Strategy. Then, at the same time, we had the Americans taking our fish. We had plenty to do after we didn't have any more

strikes. We still had these major battles to try and make sure that we had an industry. Now, it was no longer a question of whether we have a union. It's a question of whether or not we have an industry. So we were able to—you say, what was life like after the '92? It was busy. We had the big tie up in Prince Rupert, where we surrounded the ferries. We had the governor of Alaska saying he's going to send in—

SG [01:13:02] (unclear)

JR [01:13:02] Okay. You know, it's fine but—so there was lots to do besides just fight for the price, which was almost impossible after that debacle of '89 and '92 and so on and so forth. The union lost a lot of its ability to actually unite the industry around the battle for a price.

SG [01:13:22] You know, the whole Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy was very divisive within the union itself, as well as being divisive in the industry.

JR [01:13:29] Yes, I mean, for an organisation which had fought for native rights for decades, it was part of our DNA, to suddenly say 'no', to a group of native people that were, who happened to be on the river, and were—you know, it was very difficult for some people just to stand out and say, 'No, we're not in favour of those native rights.' They were complex issues as well, so it was difficult to really boil it down to just black and white. You know, we had some problems with our own, with—in some sections of our own industry. When you consider that—especially within the shore section—when you consider that there was just a majority of people that were natives, in our industry, in our union. Really, I don't know what the percentage was to be precise, but it was a huge number of people that were from places like Prince Rupert. The workforce there was mainly native people. It was a really difficult thing for us to try and manage. But you know. Yeah.

SG [01:14:46] Well, and at one point the union joined the Fisheries Survival Coalition, which had waged a long, costly court battle against the AFS. Then later the union withdrew from that, so I'm presuming that there were various opinions on that over the years.

JR [01:15:07] Well, yeah, but I don't want to get into that.

SG [01:15:11] Right. Okay. Fair enough. Yeah, I mean, that's what happens with divisive issues here.

JR [01:15:16] Well, I mean, it's not so much I mind getting into it, but it's a subject all on its own, you know, and it's too complex to fit into the next 10 minutes of discussion. I don't want to go into that level of detail, and I don't want to be simplistic about it either. Once you get into that it's—

SG [01:15:36] It's at this point too that you join various other unions in negotiating a merger with CAW at this time too. What was the thinking that went into that from your own perspective?

JR [01:15:51] It was just the finding a home, some support. We were—given all of the things that we had gone through, there was a growing realisation that we (just to be on our own like that) was gonna—it was very difficult to do. We joined the CAW as a self defence mechanism as much as anything else. The CAW at the time was, you know, a very independent Canadian minded organisation. We had a lot of respect for Bob White and for Buzz Hargrove and some of the people that were leading the union at the time. We

thought it was a good home for us and it would offer us security. It was basically just for some security for the union, given the fact that we had lost membership; our fishery had gone down, so there was less days fished. It was becoming, you know, clear to us that we weren't going to have the vibrancy that had followed us for all the other decades previous. We needed to find a home.

SG [01:16:52] Right. Was the decision of the fishermen in Newfoundland to join CAW? Did they (unclear).

JR [01:16:59] That had nothing—no.

SG [01:17:00] It wasn't.

JR [01:17:01] But it made it a more attractive organisation. It already had a lot of fishermen in it. We knew all of those people, and they were people that that had worked with us on all kinds of fisheries matters previous.

SG [01:17:15] Richard Cashin.

JR [01:17:16] Richard Cashin and—

SG [01:17:18] And held a big rally at the union hall over Canadian fishing industry and whatnot.

JR [01:17:24] Yeah, we knew those people well. In fact, it was Homer Stevens, as much as anybody else, that organised the union on the East Coast and it was later, you know, it was later taken over by Richard Cashin and his crew. We knew them well.They were already, they had already joined the CAW and that made the CAW a, you know, an attractive place. It was a fishing organisation in a way.

SG [01:17:52] Right. It really was in a sense those two big issues, the Aboriginal Fishery Strategy, the division that brought, and then later the Mifflin Plan. Really, sort of dealt a, body blow to the union?

JR [01:18:04] Yes. Well, it dealt a body blow to the industry. This crippled the industry. The fact that with the union's not powerful anymore doesn't mean that the people that are on the boats aren't suffering as a result of the Mifflin Plan. As I said, there's a reason why the average age of the industry has gone up. It's because people that are raising families and having to buy houses and actually make a living, can't make a living anymore; so it really badly damaged the industry. Without an industry, you can't have a union. I don't know, there won't even be a fishery this year. I don't think. You know, if there is a fishery, it would be a day or two here or there. They closed the last Canadian fish cannery two years ago, I think it was.

SG [01:18:52] Yeah, 2016.

JR [01:18:52] That was the last and I think that's the last organised, the last unionised salmon cannery in the world. They closed that. Not that I think that the government of the day wouldn't have been happy that was the outcome. You know, in fact, I'm sure that that's part of what he was doing.

SG [01:19:10] Yeah. I don't think people realise the enormity of that; as you just say, that the last unionised cannery in the world.

JR [01:19:17] Yeah, the industry, you know, just basically what is happening is what we said would happen. You know, what we said would happen would be the demise of the fishing industry if we allowed certain things that Anderson and company wanted to do; if we allowed that to happen, we would lose the industry. And we did.

SG [01:19:37] At the same time, one of the things that I think is really striking about the, not to use a bad pun, but—

JR [01:19:46] When I say we lose the industry, I'm sorry, we've shrunk the industry down to a fraction of what it used to be.

SG [01:19:51] As the Mifflin Plan was probably one of the biggest campaigns ever in the industry's history to preserve something.

JR [01:19:59] Yeah, it was.

SG [01:20:00] How did you see it at the time?

JR [01:20:01] It was one of the biggest threats to the health and well-being of the industry that ever had been. And it was.

SG [01:20:11] You get news of this in the, you know, in various union circles and whatnot. What goes through your mind as you try to figure out how you're going to contend with this one—when the Mifflin Plan was announced?

JR [01:20:26] Well, we contended with it, contended with it the way that we had contended with every other thing, you know, with unorthodox alliances and actions. We did things like organised an alliance between us, the coastal communities, the First Nations up and down the coast, environmentalists. Because we had this division, this schism on this question of the AFS, it was more difficult to get First Nations broadly, fully behind what we were talking about. We had less ability and we ended up not being able to quite hold the same alliances that had stopped the dams on the Fraser River and stopped the oil pipes and so on and so forth. The government was determined to make sure that this happened, so, you know, we saw it as a threat and it was.

SG [01:21:23] At the same time we got things like, in Alert Bay where they had a whole day of mourning that involved the whole community, First Nations and non-native, eh?

JR [01:21:34] Yeah.

SG [01:21:36] As I recall you were one of the speakers on that.

JR [01:21:40] Yeah, yeah. Well, I mean, when you think about this. I forget what year it was, probably around 1985 or something like that. Give or take a year or two. I think that its telling that the two highest per capita earning towns in Canada were Sointula and Alert Bay. Sointula was an old Finnish community. Alert Bay, which was on the island just, not too far away from Sointula, on Cormorant Island, was primarily a native fishery, native people. After the Mifflin Plan, when you go to those places now, there isn't boats tied up there like they used to be. There's, you know, the towns are poor in comparison to what

they were. You can see the dramatic difference, the amount of change that took place as a result of Mifflin and Anderson and the things that they did around the fishery. You know, you ended up with with disaster economically for both First Nations and non-First Nations people.

SG [01:23:01] In a sense, that Mifflin Plan was, was something that was just too big despite the huge outcry and the huge effort.

JR [01:23:10] Yeah, it was. They were just going to do it.

SG [01:23:11] It was just too big.

JR [01:23:12] Yeah. They were going to do it. Yeah, yeah, they were going to do it.

SG [01:23:15] I think a lot of people left the industry at that time through the buyout I guess?

JR [01:23:19] Well, lots of people. Well, yeah, there was a big buyback. People could see the writing on the wall. They got rid of their boats, sold their licences, rented their licences. Sold their boats, kept their licence, rented their licences. Lots of licences don't have boats to go with them anymore, you know. There would be a guy sitting at home in his rocker with his old salmon licence in his pocket or his herring licence, or his black cod licence, or whatever. He's still renting it out, you know, not doing anything. He's not part of the industry. He's not, you know, and that's kind of probably where the most money is made, is by the rental of those licences.

SG [01:24:01] I guess as long as there's fish, those quotas will continue to exist.

JR [01:24:04] As long as there's fish, those guys will have those pieces of paper at home. You know, they'll age and instead of selling their boat and having a platform for people to go out and make a living, you have, you sell your your licence. I mean, it's interesting; I can't find a decent piece of black cod anymore in any of the stores. None of it—you know, they're all small fish. Apparently it's because there's just one black cod owner now, and he's got all the licences, and he sells all the best product to Japan and other places like that. You can't even get a decent piece of smoked black cod anymore. Now, having said that, what you can get is okay, it's just not the best.

SG [01:24:52] Right. Because it is going to Japan. Yeah. Like so many things.

JR [01:24:56] Yeah. It's it's really made a real mess of, I think, of the industry. You talk to anybody in it, they just shake their heads. You can have somebody maybe listening to this interview and saying, 'Oh, Radosevic is full of bullshit!' but go to anybody in the industry these days—anybody—and with very few exceptions, it is just not the industry that it once was.

SG [01:25:22] I no, I think many people think it's disappeared. They don't, they're not aware of it. It doesn't have the—

JR [01:25:28] Well, I was—in 1992, the year—I retired in '94, I think. A momentous day, so I should be able to remember the exact date and time and minute, but I can't. In '92, we went up to Adams River. Adams River, it takes about, optimally, somewhere between 15, 1.5 rather, and 2.5 million fish to spawn.

SG [01:25:59] Right.

JR [01:26:01] I think they had something like 24 million return that year. There were no fisheries because they didn't have the ability to manage a fishery. They'd gotten rid of all their science and management people. They didn't know what was going on because they had no trawlers fishing outside anymore to really assess how much fish was coming. They wouldn't let people fish in the Gulf because there was one small run, I think something like 60 fish in the Cultis Lake fishery that might have, we might have caught a fish or two if we'd had a fishery. They let all of that fish go up to the Adams River. We went up there, and I tell you, there was so many fish, that the fish didn't, they were right—we talked to a science guy that had gone down there diving and he said, 'There's fish right from the top, from the surface of the lake, right down to the bottom,' because we were asking, 'How come the fishes noses are up?' You could see them all poked out of the water. That's because they couldn't get in there; it was that solid in terms of fish. Fish were going into the spawning channels where they were digging up the eggs of the fish that had gone in before and had spawned. Ones were coming in later, doing the same thing. Then they were dying, of course, because salmon die after they spawn. They were rotting up the grounds and we had a collapse of the run. In fact, you know, it scientifically, I think it shows that the collapses of salmon happened more often following an over-spawn than when they have an under-spawn. It's counter, counterintuitive in many respects. So yeah. You had 24 million fish, just gone to waste. Well, how can you have an industry when you have that kind of thing.

SG [01:27:55] That kind of management.

JR [01:27:56] Yeah, you can't.

SG [01:27:57] Well, I think one of the the other issues, as you earlier mentioned, that appeared at this time was the renewed battle over the Pacific Salmon Treaty. The highlight of that, of course, was all of the stuff that happened up in Prince Rupert, which you were directly involved in were you not?

JR [01:28:11] Yeah.

SG [01:28:13] Run me through that? In particular, the ferry incident that caught everybody's attention in '97.

JR [01:28:22] Well, that was another interesting story. (laugher) Yeah, it's hard to boil these things down to just a short clip, but I'll try. We'd had the Americans fishing our fish as they came into the Skeena and into those northern spawning areas. We weren't fishing them because of environmental concerns, but the Americans were fishing them. David Anderson, who was the Minister of Fisheries, was kowtowing to the Americans. Wouldn't stop, wouldn't do anything to stop them fishing, while we were closed down. We didn't want to fish. We were saying, 'Close it down, that's fine, but let's not have the Americans catching our fish.' The treaty said that Canada—the whole idea of the treaty is that they would try to manage fisheries so Americans would catch fish that were heading to their areas of spawning and Canadians would catch fish that are herring. They were doing the same thing off of Point Roberts. They were also intercepting all kinds of salmon. We had some demonstrations down there, too. Basically, they were just allowing the Americans to run roughshod over Canada, to our detriment and to the environment's detriment. We weren't scrambling to go fishing on stocks that needed to be preserved but the Americans

were. Anyway, we said—well, one of our fishermen said, 'I'm not doing this.' He anchored his boat in front of the American—he took, the demonstration took the form of anchoring in front of the ferry or the cruise ship, rather, that goes from Prince Rupert to Anchorage. It stopped the boat from leaving; so there's 700 passengers on this boat. As soon as he did that, all the other fishermen started coming in and, and tying up in front of the boat. I got a call saying that this was going on so I went to Prince Rupert. It was the fishermen so it was my bailiwick in the union. Jim Sinclair happened to be up there. I said, 'Well, you head back and look after the shoreworker's stuff. I'll look after this problem, up here.' Yeah, so for four days we were in meetings with the police. The police couldn't do anything because they had one little patrol boat and they had hundreds of boats tied up around the around the ferry.

SG [01:31:01] They're they're pretty militant by this time.

JR [01:31:04] Oh yeah. You know, they were, just yeah, they weren't going anywhere. I think that, you know, we were finally able to say, 'Okay, we can't just stay. We can't keep this ferry.' We had the Governor of Alaska saying, 'We're going to send gunships down there.' Probably if it was post-9-11, he would have.

JR [01:31:26] He actually said gunships?

JR [01:31:28] Oh, yeah. He wanted to send in the navy to go and rescue this, or to break up this rabble that was surrounding the ferry and taking 700 Americans hostage. (laughter) It was something, but we knew we couldn't stay there. Finally, we said, look, you can't, you know, there was no out, right? The fishermen had done something that was tremendous in a way, but they had no strategy for getting out of it. You can't just stay there and hold them forever. We said we're not going to, you know—why don't we say, 'Look, we're demanding that David Anderson come to Prince Rupert and meet with the fishermen before we let that ferry go.' David Anderson said no but after about day three or four and there was pressure building up and we had North America looking at this thing. You'd go to a meeting and it would be like, literally, like 50 different cameras. You know, they'd be from everywhere across the country and in the U.S., you know, cameras from New York and Miami and Los Angeles. You know, for it was just like a—it's a real serious situation that was developing. Finally, David Anderson flew to Prince Rupert and had the meeting with the fishermen. We said, 'Okay, we will let the ferry go.' That was the kind of thing that we ended up having to do, or the industry ended up having to do. That wasn't just the union. In fact, Kim, who became the president of the union, owned the boat. He was the guy that originally tied up in front of the ferry and went to sleep.

SG [01:33:05] Oh, he was ground zero?

JR [01:33:06] He was ground zero; he was the first guy. There were a lot of non-union fishermen involved in that. Some of them didn't like the fact that I was there and making it look like a union event. It was partly a union event and so I was there. It was that kind of action that we tried, but it didn't work, at that stage. I mean, the government was just not willing to stand up to the Americans and we have a North American Free Trade Agreement that allows them to do whatever they want to do with Canadian fish. If there was any fisheries and there needed to be anything canned we'd just send it to the Alaskans to get that done now. Yeah, it was just—it was, in a way, it's a very sad story.

SG [01:34:00] So it galvanised a lot of attention, but didn't really change the (unclear) fishing industry.

JR [01:34:04] It didn't, no. We made them pay politically; we made them uncomfortable for doing what they were doing. There were many actions. Not all of them were quite as militant as that, but there were many actions up and down the coast at that time. The fishery is in the purview of the federal government and they're the ones that say what happens to the fishery. They had in mind that the commercial fishery was not the best use of water, that they downgraded the importance of, or the priority of fish from where it always had been, which is food for First Nations. No— environmental, food for First Nations, commercial, and then sports. Well, they put sports before commercial. Everything that takes place now, takes place on that priority ladder from the point of view of if there's going to be some fish, who gets first crack at it or who doesn't. You know, that was very intentional; they knew what they were doing and they did it.

SG [01:35:23] In 2004, you stepped down as president of the union?

JR [01:35:26] I did.

SG [01:35:28] You know, you were a relatively young guy at that time. What, 55?

JR [01:35:30] 54. Yeah.

SG [01:35:31] 54. Yeah. What went into that decision?

JR [01:35:36] What, 34 years is not enough?

SG [01:35:38] No, I know. (laughter) (unclear) Fisherman for life, president for life, you know. No, I'm just wondering what was your thinking at the time you decided? It was a long career.

JR [01:35:51] Well, my thinking was, yeah, it was a long career. Well, my thinking was, I had a young family, you know, and 34 years was enough. It was time; and so I did.

SG [01:36:06] At the same time, you had also begun a lot of work in this, what was then the Protein for People?

JR [01:36:12] Yeah. That's a very interesting little project.

SG [01:36:19] How did that come about? That emerged out of your connection with the industry, eh?

JR [01:36:22] Oh, absolutely. It actually came from a thought that occurred to me when I was driving home from sitting down with the companies in that, in what was it? What year was that? 19? Anyway, it was a set of negotiations and we were talking about the price of fish. The companies wanted to give us 15 cents a pound for fish and which, as I say, was below the cost of production, so there's no way that was going to happen. We were kind of stuck again. We didn't know what to do. I was driving home and I was pissed off at what was going on. I heard on the radio that the Vancouver Food Bank had something like 7,000 people a week going through their systems. I was thinking, what the hell is wrong with?—and the thing that they needed most was protein products, canned fish, those kind of shelf stable protein products. They can't deal with fresh product because they don't have the freezing and the capacity to handle that kind of thing. The canned, canned pinks, I'm thinking. What's wrong with this picture? We've got all of this fish going to waste and

we got all of these people that are hungry for it. You know, so I thought, well, let's do this Protein for People project. I got back to the office and we had some money left over from one of our previous projects. We donated a bunch of salmon to the food bank and got some PR for it, trying to explain to the people in the public about what it's, you know, what fishermen are getting paid for it again. It was an interesting project from the point of view that the food banks eventually, you know, they obviously wanted it. We started it and it was about two years, I guess, before I retired that this started. Once I was leaving, I knew that nobody else at the union wanted to deal with this, so I took the project with me and I talked to a few unions and I said, 'Here's the deal. Either, you know, it's got some good potential, and either we're going to carry on with it or I'll let it go.' They said, 'No no, let's get this this happening.' I think at the time we had about six unions that were interested in coming with me and doing this thing; it's now about 32 unions. Again, it's technical, so I don't want to get into technical explanations, but we ended up starting to subsidise product to food banks rather than just donating. The reason for that is that we could put more product out. We had a new partnership with the Overwaitea Food Group. That's the Save-On-Foods that would deliver it anywhere around the province. We had a way to get it to all of the food banks around the province. We started selling it for about 25 percent of the retail value, which is below normally what a food bank would have to pay in a place like like Prince George or whatever. We would get the product for a buck. We'd subsidise it down to 59 cents instead of the two dollars, and plus that they'd have to pay for it in the store. Well, the fact that we had the delivery process set up the way we did meant that a food bank could order something from Prince George and get it for the same price as a food bank in Vancouver could order it. It's grown now from about the retail value of about maybe at that time about $50,000 to a retail value of over a million now. Then we changed the name so it would be more clear that it was a union owned and operated project. It became the Union Protein Project as opposed to, you know, Protein for People, which was a little bit murky in terms of who owns it and operates it.

SG [01:40:35] (unclear) So this is a very much a union.

JR [01:40:37] Oh, I think, yeah. We do community events. It's a place for union activists to be involved with the community. They get to meet people from the food bank. We get calls from people at the food bank all the time saying, you know, thank you very much, or occasionally, you know, I'm working in this place. Which union should I talk to? There's lots of things that go into the project other than just, you know, getting salmon into the food banks. We've got our own label on all of the products for peanut butter, salmon and tuna now. The project is growing. We've moved into Alberta. We're about to go into Ontario. It was an interesting little project that's taken place over the last 12 years.

SG [01:41:29] One of the things that's always troubled a lot of trade unionists is donation to food banks because it was originally an emergency measure, in the eighties. Now it's become sort of institutionalized, but this one puts a much more effective union face on it than it possibly has in the past.

JR [01:41:46] Well, it's very effective, but I always find that a little bit phoney, to be honest with you. You know that, not to help people because they shouldn't have to be in that situation. You know, I think, we have to fight for—and our motto is, it's changed over the years as well, but our current motto is 'Food security through good jobs.' We have to fight for good jobs. What does that mean? Usually, it means union jobs but anyway, we have to do things to change the Labour Code and do all kinds of things that help people. In the meantime, we don't see them starve. In the meantime, we have to connect with those people and, you know. I think that—

SG [01:42:26] So, you've been doing that.

JR [01:42:27] We've been doing that. I think that people say, 'Oh, well, you know, they shouldn't be here,' because they should, we should be fighting for jobs. Well, just saying that doesn't connect you with the people that need to be involved in the fight for the jobs. You know, we need to be able to—so we're involved at the community level, people on food bank boards. You know, it's an opportunity for—you know, in next week, we're going to an event that we'll be recognised at, that over a thousand people from the Surrey area will come, supporting the food bank in Surrey. People will understand that the union movement is part of that community. Sure, we fight for unions. We try to get people signed up and go to vote for governments that will put in decent Labour Codes and, you know, housing issues and medical issues, all those kinds of things. We do that, but our chief calling card is our ability to put a million dollars worth of salmon into those food banks and advertise the fact, while we're doing it, advertise the fact that it's the trade union movement that's helping do that. We give credit to the Save-On people and the companies that we're involved in for being part of the project, but, you know, we have a mission.

SG [01:43:51] Yeah, that's good. Okay. Well, I think the only thing I want to ask you about is that more of an aside question, but there's this record here, which you apparently were the—it was your brief career as an executive producer? How did that come about? This particular record came out in 1982, of George Hewison, and it says that there were going to be more. I don't know, were there ever more records that came under that?

JR [01:44:25] Did you see that? Yeah, that's funny. Well, it was—George and I were pretty good friends. I always thought that he had a pretty good music sense. He knew what, how to perform. Bob Wishinski, same thing. I mean, a very talented piano player. I was friends with them both. You know, I'd done things. I was the the president of the Canadians for Democracy in Chile movement after the 1973 coup. Then also, I was the head of the Canadians Against Racism. For all of those kinds of things, we used to do things like have concerts at the Queen E Theatre and or some other consciousness raising events, or fundraising events. I had some background in putting those shows on and, you know, George and I thought, 'Well, let's do something here. Let's just have some fun and produce a record.' So we did. We travelled. As part of this, we rented a Winnebago and four of us were in the Winnebago. We went from here to Toronto and back, singing at various centres across the country, selling that record and having a good time while we were doing it.

SG [01:46:03] How did the record do?

JR [01:46:05] Well, we had to do a reprint.

SG [01:46:07] Oh, well, that's always a good start.

JR [01:46:09] Yeah, I think I got like 2,500 the first go round and then another 2,500, so 5,000.

SG [01:46:17] The reason I raise this is because often the musical side of what happens in the labour movement is kind of put aside as an afterthought. You know, in many cases it wasn't an afterthought. It was very much part of people's everyday thinking culture.

JR [01:46:30] As part of our events that we do now for the Union Protein Project, you know, our events are more like Labour Days, the way I describe them to people. They're like Labour days, but not for Labour people. They are Labour Days for people at the food fank. You know, you have—I don't know if you're aware of it or not, but most people that go to the food bank have an address. It's required to have an address. So they're workers, right?

JR [01:46:55] They're not, you know, they have to have a job, they probably two or three jobs trying to pay their rent and have it, you know, at minimum wage. We have these events and they're kind of like the Labour Day. What do I mean by that? It's free hotdogs or hamburgers or whatever the heck else. They're all, that's all done by people wearing union paraphernalia. There's a, you know, a connection with the union movement, with the kids and their parents that go for the free food. We have booths or tables that have things like housing or health or, you know, sometimes it'll be the get-out-the-vote people that will go to those things try and get—because that's the only place that you're going to, you know, you don't even see those people most of the time. I mean, those people don't get out to vote. They don't go to political rallies. Most—lots of them are English-as-a-second language. We have these events. I was just at one a week ago in Surrey, about 400, 500 people showed up. There was face painters and balloon clowns and labour music. You know, so we have music, and pretty good band, play labour music at the event. A three piece band. You know, we, we pay for it. We just—and you know, and as I say, balloon clowns, activities for kids, kids games, that kind of stuff with political action. We had the MP for the—no, the MLA for the area coming out and said a few words, patted some backs and shook some hands and kissed some kids and (laughter) that kind of stuff. It's a fun kind of non-political event that, you know, and we have to—we're a non-profit society so we can't be overtly political but it's political, right? It's a union event and it's, it's definitely got socially—

SG [01:48:56] Well, it puts the unions in front of a community that wouldn't traditionally see one.

SG [01:48:58] Yeah, exactly. It's the only place you're going to see those people. That's what I say to unions that say, well, you know, you don't want to be doing this stuff with the food banks. You know, where else are you going to talk to people that are working, the working poor?

SG [01:49:13] Good point.

JR [01:49:14] You know, as you sit in your high and mighty chair.