

Interview: Bill Routley (BR)
Interviewer: Phil Legg (PL)
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Transcription: Jane Player

PL [00:00:05] Bill Routley, thank you so much for agreeing to be part of this project. Today, we've been talking to a bunch of woodworker folks from up and down the island, and we'd love to hear more from you. Why don't we start with the early years of Bill Routley.

BR [00:00:24] Well. Okay. Bill Routley was born in 1948, so I'm just recently turned 75. Anyway, I was born in Chatham, Ontario, came to Duncan, grew up with a couple of ministers as mum and dad. I had kinda the concept of social programs—doing things to help people. Our family spent their whole lives helping people. We were poor and didn't know it because, you know, we used to get groceries brought to the house and all that kind of stuff. Those were fond years that I have of growing up and going with my dad house to house and, for Dad, it was, say a few prayers, you know, and thank them for having us there. I got to know, what it was like to be in people's houses from—and people from all over the world—but, you know, Cowichan Reserves. We were in their, you know, people's homes as well as, the Chinese community in Duncan, which was small at the time, but we had a lot of different folks that, were on the list. I did have, well-rounded background as far as dealing with people. That was really good for me in the early days.

BR [00:01:51] As far as transitioning into the union, it's actually pretty simple. The best way to wanna be a union guy is to have a really bad employer—I had a really bad employer. I had one in the shoe repair business. I thought I would transition, because I was getting married, from front end manager of the Gorge Road car wash in Victoria to—I was going to be, repairs. I thought a great career for my future would be being a shoe repair man. In 1969, I went to Stevenson's shoe repair [Stevenson's Shoe Clinic] because they promised me I'd go from a \$1.00, \$1.10 an hour that I was making to \$1.50, over the course of a year. I was going to go up to \$1.50, and I thought I could have a wife on that and get married, you know, because I'd have a real career. Anyway, I soon realized after a year at the shoe repair, that this guy was a really rotten boss. He used to pick on, Rita, who was—we had about five or six employees. We were right there on Fort Street and used to—she—Rita, used to color the purses and shoes and stuff for the ladies, but he would yell and swear at her, and she would be in tears. I remember saying in the lunchroom to her one day, 'Well, why are you putting up with that? Like if he did that to me, I just turn around and leave.' She said, 'Bill, I can't. I've got two young boys at home, and this is my income. This is what pays the rent is working here and I can't leave.' I saw that side, you know, and then I saw one of the East Indian fellows that, the Stevenson shoe repair actually brought the guy over from India, but, while his wife was a nice lady, they used to hand his cash. Every two weeks, they'd give us our pay in cash in an envelope. After his wife left, he would go rip the envelope, open up this East Indian fellow, take 20 bucks out, which is a lot when you're making like, you know, a dollar, dollar 25 an hour, take 20 bucks out and take his friend and go down to the Cherry Bank to have a drink. So, I saw this kind of terrible behavior—and he abused the other staff too. He used to open the curtain and throw shoes at me. I was doing—I was soles and heels (laughter) doing the soles and heels on shoes.

BR [00:04:30] Anyway, I'd about had enough, and I was on a ferry going to my cousin's wedding, and who do I run into but my best friend from childhood, Dave Basler, who said, 'You know, they're hiring up at the Youbou mill, and why don't you come up there?' He says, 'If you just go into the personnel office for a couple of weeks straight, just go there every day whether they need you or not, and they'll hire you.' Sure enough, that worked. So, I was getting married (laughter), when, if you can imagine this picture, here it is, 1969, and this is September, that I went up there and rented the place at the beginning of the month for the whole month and 40 bucks a month rent for a cabin on the beach in Youbou. Anyway, I paid the rent, and I went to the office every day—to the personnel office—and, sure enough, after a couple of weeks, they got tired of seeing me, and they said, 'You really want to work here, don't you?' A guy named Myron Barge, a personnel manager—they hired me and put me to work in the chip plant. Well, it turns out this squashed hand started a whole career. (laughter) Okay. How does a terrible incident like a squashed hand start a whole career? Well, I was—first of all, I worked in the chip plant for a couple of weeks, and, of course, I heard from the guys that I was working with, 'Well, you got to get 30 days within 90, and you're going to be in the union.' I thought, 'Oh, this'll be cool. I really got to work on gettin' in the union', because then, you know, my life—'this is going to be a lifelong career working in the mill. I'll be able to do this forever. I'll be making so much money, I won't know what to do with all of the [gap unclear] that I'm making.' Because, by the way, the entry level job, I went from \$1.50 an hour—\$1.35 actually—\$1.35 an hour to \$3.28 an hour at the mill. So, I thought I died and, you know—

PL [00:06:36] Gone to heaven.

BR [00:06:37] Yeah. Anyway, I worked a couple of weeks in the chip plant, fortunately for me, because I got sent over to the planer, and I got a guy that didn't feel like training me. A foreman. A young foreman takes me out, shows me. He says, 'Have you ever seen a tally load?' I said, 'No, I've been down in Victoria. I don't know anything about tally loads or anything.' So, he's saying, 'Well, you're going to pull six foot of this and ten foot of this and eight foot of that and 24 foot of something else. Mark, you know, N mark and five. Anyway, he tells me that just like a shot gun, all this information, and then he walks away. So, I'm trying to remember, and I'm looking at the piles around me, and I grabbed the board. The one thing that they could have told me was, 'Young man, don't ever put your hand over the end of a board when you're in a mill where there's an overhead crane with posts every 20 ft and maybe 16 ft. Anyway, there was a post right behind me, and I got a board behind. I swung it out and hit the post, and this this finger burst. Well, I want this job so bad, like I didn't even wanna—I kept working, and blood was dripping down my arm. Right. I'm still trying to pull lumber and figure out what I'm doing. Finally, the guy next to me saw so much blood dripping down, he came over and said, 'What the heck is going on? You've got to go to the first aid.' I went to the first aid. They sent me down to Lake Cowichan, and they sewed me up. I came right back with this finger (laughter) all bandaged up in the air. Right. I go into the personnel office said, 'Look, I really want a job here, so is there anything else I can do other than pull lumber?' They said, 'Sure, we'll send you down so they—I go to the planer and again, no training.

BR [00:08:36] They take you down and said, 'Well, you're going to pile strips that are coming from the dry kiln.' Every layer of imagine two by six, every layer's got at least three strips, if not four or five, and they were falling from heaven. Like, as they, as they move, they were falling. I was supposed to grab these things and put them in bundles on the side and with my finger. So I'm, I'm trying to do this under my arm and they're falling and all the—you know what? There was, kind of a cleanup guy, an older guy, and he saw me struggling. He came over and showed me how to do this, and I thought, 'Wow, wow. This

is great.' That's all I needed was somebody to show me how to do this, grab the pile and scoop them all up and get them under your arm. It worked good. Anyway, I kept doing—they had me down in the basement. I think they kind of just forgot about me but one day I got called to the foreman's office. Name was Fred Daley, and he said, 'Here's your pink slip. We're going to have to let you go.' He said—I said, 'Well, look, I really—I'm getting married in like two weeks.' Don't forget, I'd started in September. I was getting married in November, and so this is the end of October, and he's saying to me, he's going to have to let me go. I said, 'You know, I just celebrated getting in the union a week or two ago. I got my 30 days within 90. So, I'm going to have to go see. I heard of this plant chairman, Bob McPhee. I'll have to go see Bob about this because I really need this job.' He says, 'Well, hold on, hold on.' So, I knew the power of the union right away because here's this foreman saying, and I said, 'Well, why were you going to let me go?' I said, 'I really want to work here, and I'm working hard.' He said, 'Well, yeah, we can see that, but you're an accident waiting to happen.' I was so mad that I didn't get proper training, and they would say—dare say to me, an accident waiting to happen. Anyway, he looked it up and sure enough, I was right I worked the two weeks over in the chip plant. Now I've got six weeks straight that, you know, makes up 30 days within 90. He comes back and he says, 'Well, I'm going to send you over to Ray Bennett in the sawmill, and they're going to be keeping an eye on you, and you better just, you know, do your job or else.' Anyway, I found out I was in the union, and that meant a lot to me to realize that just mentioning the plant chairman's name and telling them about, I knew 30 days within 90, you know, and I thought, 'Wow, there's this is real power in this stuff.' But I didn't know anything about unions before all this happened.

BR [00:11:29] All these events and particularly squashing my hand was well—and so guess who put his hand up when they had the first safety meeting and there's 5 or 600 guys in the mill. We had an A mill, a B mill, and a veneer plant, and who puts up his hand and says he'd like to be on the safety committee. You know, I got my hand up, and they elected seven guys out of the mill with 600 guys working there, and I got elected the very first time around. I had people saying to me, 'Oh, that's great.' Yeah, we want to—and I was in the chip plant.

BR [00:12:03] By the way, by this time, because I did my stint on the green chain, they found out I was a wonderful green chain puller. In fact, there was three Bills on the green chain. There was Buffalo Bill. He had a big beard, and it looked like a buffalo, almost. Then there was Lightning Bill, and he pulled lumber so slow it looked like he were in slow motion. (laughter) I was Wild Bill, and that was because I was pulling my lumber and everybody else's and just going wild. I actually lost like 30 or 40 pounds pulling lumber because I wanted to do such a good job that they would never even ever think about wanting to get rid of this guy. I wanted to be the best that there could be at everything from that point forward. Anyway, so that really motivated me to get involved in safety and, and lo and behold, a minister's son has a lot to say about stuff, about safety. I went down to the local union office and the safety director, Ross Davies, he was telling me, you know, what you should get is one of these three, these three layer things that's got yellow paint when white on the top, you write on it. So, if you find a safety violation write it down and give one to the foreman. Keep one for the local union, and one goes to the head office of the company. I started (laughter) doing this and the mill—yeah—they were—I told the rest of the committee, we're going to just paper this place with all of these violations. The next thing you know, the WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] is coming in to have a walk through, and they asked for me and we—anyway, the company was not happy at all about all these safety violations.

PL [00:13:55] Your finger crushed. I mean, the first order of business is file a claim. No? Nobody files a claim?

BR [00:14:03] Oh no, of course, I went right back to work. I only missed a couple hours of work. [PL voice in the background] And I was—oh, yeah, I was encouraged to go back to work. Nobody told me about any claims or anything. No. Then nothing about WCB.

PL [00:14:17] Yeah, right.

BR [00:14:18] Yeah, well, and I found out that scam, all right, that there was a real problem with the company telling people to—'oh, we'll send you over to the bench, and you can count nuts and bolts or put screws in the right bins' and 'don't do a claim', whatever you do. Yeah. No. That was outrageous, that kind of stuff. Anyway, the next thing you know, I find myself as the—I went from safety chairman to—in 1970s the— (laughter) I was taking my water out of Lake Cowichan. Okay. Because I bought a little place in Marble Bay for 11—about a hectare of land for \$11,300, which was almost as much as I made in a whole year. Imagine spend—like I thought—and my interest on my loan was 20 percent back then. Anyway, I was—and people thought I was crazy. Other guys in the mill said, 'What are you doing buying this land?' It turned out to be a very good decision, which we won't go into. Anyway, at the end of the day with the safety chairman, the company was dumping pentachlorophenol. Our crane way had these great big steel bins, and they would take a whole load of lumber and drop it in the steel bin, and it would coat the lumber with the chemical, and then they'd pull it out and drip all the way down the crane way, and all the stuff would leach into the lake. But the worst part was when it all got sticks and cut pieces of stuff in the bin. They would hire a new guy off the street, give him a pair of gumboots, tell him to climb in there and take the end of the fire hose, the pump, and put it in the gunk, and we're now going to pump it into the lake. Right. I saw them doing this, and I actually sent away to the Agriculture Canada. I asked the WCB. They had nothing, by the way. No information. (laughter) Then I asked Agriculture Canada, and they told me this stuff, you can't use it for chicken bedding and said we've had experience with deformed cattle if it's on any kind of bedding for cows. And anyway, then the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] in the States—I wrote them too just because I was a safety chairman, and I wanted to see what I could get. I got this document like this thick, and it says it's carcinogenic and all this other—and there's toxins in it. I went to management and said, 'Look, you've got to clean up your act. You got to put in a proper recycling system.' They said, 'Ah,' you know, like this is —manager said, 'It's a tempest in a teapot, and you guys are just making a lot of noise over nothing.'

BR [00:17:23] Anyway, I called the local fisheries guy. Here I was safety chairman from Youbou taking positive action for the union. I phoned the Fisheries [Fisheries and Oceans Canada, DFO] guy and he says, 'I'll come up and do some testing.' So, I had my man from the safety committee, Dennis Martel, wonderful guy—he was on the safety committee for years. Anyway, Dennis was standing by to watch this pumping going on into the lake, while I'm arriving with the Fisheries. (laughter) Anyway, the Fisheries—of course, down comes Rick Waller, the maintenance superintendent, and he says, 'Oh, you can't come in here until you've, you know, you've got to sign all the safety stuff. You're going to need a hard hat. We'll have to fit you for a vest.' You know, all this stuff, (laughter) and meanwhile, he runs upstairs, and we piece this together later because Dennis is down there, and he watches the mill—Otenoh—who's one of the foreman from the mill. He comes running downstairs. He unplugs the fire pump. Pull, whines the hose all up. Puts a canvas cover over it, and for good measure, he takes a handful of dust from the conveyor and throws it over the cover and runs back upstairs to report mission accomplished. Well, unbeknownst

to him, my man Dennis uncovered the thing, put the hoses all back in, and the Fisheries and I come around the corner just in time to see them in full fledged pumping. (laughter) Well, Rick Waller looks at me and he says, 'There's been some shenanigans going on here.' And I said, 'There certainly has.'

PL [00:19:03] Yeah.

BR [00:19:04] What's he (laughter) what's he going to do? Anyway, that took over a year to get through the system, and BCFP [British Columbia Forest Products Limited] at the time brought three lawyers over, and there was me and Ross Davies, I think, and the Fisheries guy. The Fisheries guy comes out with the little bag of dead fish. He collected three dead fish from the shore. BCFP lawyers made a good point that they hadn't seen a lot of fishing going on in the mill pond, (laughter) and that this was not a regular fishery area. The fish don't apparently hang out anywhere near mills anyway. Anyway, and the company said you have taken samples with a plastic container, and you have to use glass. So anyway, make long and the short of it, they tossed out some of the evidence about the testing because it was done improperly, but they did slap him because of the dead fish. They did buy that there was something went on, and the judge gave him a \$300 fine. So BCFP—it cost more than that to fly the lawyers up there. Anyway, they got a \$300 fine, and of course, it's reported in the newspaper that Bill Routley is a disgruntled employee. (laughter) Because I'm—I was telling the media, look at all this chemical and this is our water system, and we swim in here. People fish and ski and do all these things. Here are the air pump and dioxins and pentachlorophenol. They tried their best to cover that up, but again, that was the trajectory. Then I had of course, a whole bunch of the crew came to me and said, 'Bill, you now have a target on your back. They really want to get rid of you. If you make one little mistake, you're going to be targeted. So, you need to get on the plant committee.' So, I ran for plant committee. Then of course, Bob MacPhee, who I worship like above, he was, Scotchman and he was a militant electrician from (laughter) and a Scotchman. Anyway, I love him. He was a great plant chairman but Bob decided, he was going to retire. He said to me, he said, 'You know, you should be the next plant chairman.' But he says, 'I'm not sure you have the balls.' I thought, 'You bugger. Like, you know, I'm going to run just because you said that.' So, sure enough I ran, and I went to my best friend on the plant committee. Les Cluehart was a great big, strapping guy that I was going to support him for chairman. I said, 'Les, if you want to run for chairman, I'll support you.' He said, 'No, Bill, you're a little more diplomatic than me. (laughter) He liked to crush them, not to talk to them. Yeah. Anyway, so then I, then I ended. Up becoming plant chairman for, I think it was eight years.

BR [00:22:12] Oh, in this same time, imagine in 1980, here I am working on booming grounds in the veneer plant at the time, and I went to a labor council meeting, and I heard them say, 'You know, we need to get more young unionists involved in community politics.' I thought, 'Well, what could I do? Like, I don't have any particular skills.' Then suddenly it dawned on me. Here, I've got a son and daughter. We're taking them to school and soccer and all that stuff to do at school. I said, 'Well, school trustee is coming up. Maybe I'll run for that.' Then I thought to myself, 'Well, if I'm running for school trustee and I've only got a grade nine education, maybe I should take night school classes.' So, I signed up for my GED [General Educational Development tests] to get my grade 12 equivalency. I was taking this at night and going through the course, and I did by the way, get my GED, which turned out valuable when I became a politician. Suddenly, I could say truthfully, I got my grade 12 certificate from the GED program.

BR [00:23:29] Anyway, and no, of course, when I ran for school trustee, nobody asked. Nobody cared about my education. They cared about the fact that my kids were in school, and they liked my campaign, which was—see, my grandmother was a teacher in Coalhurst, Alberta. When my granny just the year or so before she died, we brought her out west to live with us in Victoria. I remember her telling me about these terrible trustees who think that they know best. You know, some guy running a shop in town thinks that he knows how the education system should run, and they're telling us how to do our jobs. I said, 'No, tell me it isn't true.' (laughter) I decided what my great campaign would be to say, 'I'm there to support teachers and the people that make a difference in education program and that we depend on our teachers to make the system work. Why would we want to fight with the people who make a difference, who actually influence our children's lives? They care about our children, and we got to be supporting them. Giving them the right tools to do the job.' The teachers loved me, (laughter) so I had a few extra campaigners there.

BR [00:24:46] I even went to the Sikh temple in Lake Cowichan, and they gave me time to speak. I told them about how we could be helping their children, and we can't have any of this bullying and stuff going on, and we gotta fix this up. Boy, did I ever get support from the East Indian community. I beat out, if you look back in history, I beat out the [unclear]—he ran the arena. Buck Hollingdrake was his name, and he managed the arena up the road here, which was, you know, that's a big job. Everybody respected Buck, including myself. I beat him by 34 votes and became a school trustee.

BR [00:25:32] Yeah. By the way, at this—just a funny story. I don't know if you got time for a funny story, but—

PL [00:25:37] Absolutely.

BR [00:25:39] My friend Bob MacPhee, he ran at the same time, back in '80. He got elected too. (laughter) Here's the two of us from the union. We had all our union buddies supporting us, right, to vote for a school trustee. I remember the first thing Bob did was say, 'Well, I need a briefcase. You're sending me all this paper; I need a briefcase.' They said, 'Well, we don't supply briefcases. If you want a briefcase, go get one yourself.' So, then he was a wonderful street man. He could have been a comedian because what is Bob show up with? But a Lucky Lager beer case, (laughter) and he puts it on his desk, and he's thumbing through the paper. Really. Seriously. Like thumbing through, and what was that? Section nine. Then putting it back in his beer case. Well, of course, and we were in, you know, in and out of camera so people could actually see. Here's this—so next meeting we all had brand new briefcases. (laughter) Suddenly there was money in the budget for brand new—but anyway, that was just a funny thing that—Bob was an influencer one way or the other. Yeah, those are those were great days and good experiences.

PL [00:27:03] Plant chair—where does that take you in terms of local union, 1-80?

BR [00:27:10] Well, at the time I got involved and—actually, Bob, there was a bit of a fight with—(laughter) we decided while I was on the plant committee, and Bob was still there. Bob was an electrician, and he came to us and said, 'You know what? We're not going to put up with these working foremen. Furthermore, we're not going to be letting the millwright's job be done by the guys in the chip plant anymore. So, we announced these two things to management, and management didn't take kindly to it and said, 'No, you don't direct the workforce, we direct the workforce, and you're not telling us who's gonna change the anvils on the chipper.' So, the first time we shut down and we had an anvil

change, of course we phoned the millwrights. The millwrights came over and the company, and then they said, 'You're suspended,' to me and some of the three guys that were involved in this resistance effort [background noise by interviewer] —they're trying to correct the record. Yeah. Tryin' to get management to do—and to do away with working foremen. We wanted to do way with working foremen at the same time. Anyway, make a long story short, we had a meeting over in Vancouver and the local had us over there. Fernie Viala was the president, and he said, 'Just let me handle this.' Keith Bennett, young Keith Bennett was chewing us out and saying, you know, 'You guys think you're running things. Well, we'll tell you right now, you're not running things. And we've got files on each and every one of you.' Well, Fernie stands up and says, 'This is B.S. We're not putting up with this. You don't talk to my people that way. If you got something to say, you say it to me as local union president.' I'm thinking, 'Wow, this guy is great. He's really doing the job for us.' So, anyway, we settled on a compromise, and, and it was, a bit painful because we had to go back to work and agree that the, I mean, the lawyers for Jack Munro, even Jack Munro said to us, 'Who the hell do you guys think [laughter]? You can't tell them how to run their mill. Like, that's just not going to fly.' Anyway. Their lawyer backed and said, 'You're out to lunch.'

BR [00:29:32] Well, of course, when we got back to the mill, Bob—I followed Bob into the lunchroom, and he stands up and announces, 'The local sold us down the river, fellas.' I stood up, and I said, 'You know, that's bullshit, Bob. I call bullshit on there. I was there, and he defended us really strongly. I take issue.' Bob and I suddenly had a real issue over this and—but the word got back to the local union, and suddenly I get a call and they say, 'Well, we'd like you to come down and, we need a, recording secretary for the local union. Elections are coming up. We think you'd be a good choice.' So, next thing you know, I've got an in with the local union, and we're quite palsy-walsy and they're not talking to Bob, but they're talking to me. I thought, 'Well, this is okay because we need an in with the local, with the big mill.' Those were good years, and I had a good rapport with the local.

BR [00:30:37] Then in 19—see, I was a school trustee, from 1980 to '85. Eighty-five was a pivotal moment for me because in October I went to a course called The Pursuit of Excellence. I don't know if you've heard of it, but it's one of these health self-awareness programs where you go down to the university, and they tell you, ask you about your mother and your father, and they ask you whether you're being, you know, holding yourself as a victim or, you know, all this stuff. They tricked us by getting this—well, it wasn't a trick. They said on the very first opening statement, 'Take a blank piece of paper and write down right at the top, what does Bill say he's going to do to create, pursue excellence in his life? What does pursuing excellence in your life look like?' Number one was quit smoking. Number two was go talk to the local union president and see if they need anybody. You know, you want to be more involved. Go do this. I had a list of other things that we won't go into. So, I quit smoking October 1985. That's still my quit date. I phoned Roger Stanyer because I had an in with the local. I phoned Roger and I said, 'I'd like to buy you lunch at the Logger Hut here in Lake Cowichan.' There used to be a restaurant in town called that, and so he met me there for lunch one day. I was on afternoon shift. At noon, we met in in the Logger Hut. He said, 'What's up?' He thought it was something to do with the mill, I guess. I said to him, 'Just so you know, I wanted you to know that I've gone to this course and been a school trustee. Had some really good training there, and I think I'm ready to take any kind of role that the local might need. If you need somebody for anything, I'm interested. I just want you to know I'm really interested.' Roger said, 'Oh, thank you. That just doesn't happen very often.' This was in October, the end of October, after I'd finished my course. About a week or two later I was moving forward with my plan.

BR [00:32:49] Anyway, February comes, and Roger says, 'We want to bring you in for two weeks—err two months, two to three months,' he said. 'I want you to try your hand at union organizing'. Of course, some people would say, 'Well, if you don't know anything about union organizing, how can you just say, yeah?' I jumped at the chance. I said, 'Right on, yeah, I can do this.' I looked up the rules of the labor code, got a copy of the labor code, studied it, had highlighted it with yellow and pink and green, and I had it pretty well memorized by the time Monday came, and I was starting at the local. I started my phone tree connecting with people at the Labour Board, you know, talked to organizers within the union and guys like Larry— that was something—Larry Rewakowski—he used to organize for the IWA. Anyway, next thing you know, I'm out following guys around, from Attwood, which we tried to organize, and that was unsuccessful, but we organized Plenks Wood Centre. That was later, it was owned by Claudia and Walter Plenk, and then, Weyerhaeuser ended up buying it up there. Anyway, it was a value added plant. I got a crew from Island Mack Trucking. They had five service men. They had I think 14 mechanics. They had a lot of mechanics. This was up in Nanaimo, and they came to me and wanted to join the union. That's a whole other story. I was looking pretty successful. All of a sudden we're getting new members, and then the first vice-president, Jack Riser, had a problem with his back, and he was taking some strong medicine for that, and he needed to go off on long term disability. They came to me and said, 'Well, we've talked about it. The executive have, and we think that you'd be good material to run for first vice-president. I said, 'You're kidding? First vice—really, first vice-president?' I asked of the second vice-president, 'Are you sure you're okay with me moving in?' 'Oh, yeah'. This was Ross Davies, of course. Ross said, 'Yeah. You're a wonderful choice, Bill. I support you all the way.' And I talked to the third vice-prez about all the guys, and they're saying, 'Yeah, right on. We think this is great. Yeah. Good for you.' So, here I am; I become elected in October 1986, and of course, we weren't getting paid because the street strike is on. My first four months basically, I was working not just eight hours a day, I was working like 24. I was standing on picket lines in the back of pickup trucks, talking to the media and doing all this stuff, trying to, you know, beat back the the efforts of the industry to try to break our strike. Anyway, after the four- and-a-half months' strike was resolved, and we got our snapshot and, you know, all that kind of history, we were definitely happy. Everybody was happy to get back to work. I was delighted to be a new, first-vice president when I started getting paid and everything. They gave me a car—I couldn't believe all that. Of course, I just loved working with Roger Stanyer and all the other staff there. I never even thought about the day might come that I'd have to be the, or might be, the president. Like I never had any inkling—like I had—I already thought I'd risen above my wildest benchmark. Right. Like, now I'm making some real coin. I can even buy a house with this job.

BR [00:36:41] Anyway, (laughter) so, and then when Roger Stanyer got anointed fourth vice-president or whatever, over at the National Union, and he announces to me he's leaving in 1990. So, there's Roger leaving, and I'm now going to—and I even had Dan Clements who said, 'Well, maybe I'll run too. Give the members a choice.' I said, 'Well, maybe I shouldn't run.' Of course, Roger, he actually had a big meeting, and we met with Earl Foxcroft in a restaurant, and they were, you know, 'here have some more whiskey'. They were telling me, 'No, Bill, you're the right guy for this job.' They convinced me that, yeah, you should run.

PL [00:37:30] The time has come.

BR [00:37:31] Yeah. The time came and I guess Dan decided not to run. I became the heir apparent and got—then nominated to be president of the local union. Again, I thought, 'Wow, you've risen to the highest level of your potential incompetence.' (laughter) There's a

clear path. The door is open. Everybody wants you.' Anyway, I did find out real quickly, even as first vice- president, that I did have the skills to work with people and that—I think the one of the most valuable things I was told as a brand new business agent and working in the union, I was told the rule of thirds. The rule of thirds is there's a third of the people who dislike you. They don't even know who you are. They don't care. They don't like the union. They don't like you. You're not their cup of tea. There's a third of the members who are just glad that somebody like you is stepping up, and it's the other third you're working on. I thought, 'Wow, that's a good way to look at it because if you—I mean, you have to have broad shoulders if you're going to take on a union job.

BR [00:38:49] I remember going into lunchrooms. I remember the time I went in and, we had to vote twice. I don't know if you remember that year on the same contract, basically. (laughter) The millwrights were all yelling at me and saying, 'You guys sold us out once again.' All this stuff. I took my keys out of my pocket and held them up and said, 'Well, you're man enough for the job. Come and take them.' Of course, nobody did. There's a little bit of a quiet time then, but (laughter)—and I also—you know, the other rule is when you go in the lunchroom to talk and there's 30 minutes for lunch, you talk for 25 minutes and then give the boys a free gratis to speak for the other five. There's always the mouthy guys that stand up and yell at you. I remember the Duke Point mill where it was particularly raunchy group and I said, 'Look, fellows, it's not the deal that you're entitled. It's the deal that's there. We did our best for you, I'm telling you, and I hope you'll support it.' To my to my surprise 84 percent of the crew agreed with me and voted in favour. I found out that people do listen to common sense, and the members are smart, and you have to trust the members that they will listen. It didn't matter what crisis we came across. I found out as long as—like, I had a mill chairman that was putting me down in his mill, and the word got back to me. I went right up to that mill and right into his lunchroom and confronted him and told the crew what I was hearing, and if that's true, it's totally false. Put it—squashed it before it grew any wings whatsoever.

PL [00:40:37] Don't run away from conflict.

BR [00:40:41] Don't run away from conflict. Always face up to it and go straight into it is my advice. I loved working for the members. I consider it a real honor and a privilege to have had the opportunity to represent workers, you know, most of my life. I saw it as—I thought, 'Well, if I do nothing else, I've helped a lot of people along the way. Dealt with their problems, whatever grievances.' I had some amazing stories, you know. The guy that got fired eventually, even though I stood up from. I remember him knocking on the door and saying, 'Bill, can I talk to you for a few minutes?' Said, 'Do you remember me from the Duke Point mill? I said, 'I sure do.' He said, 'Well, you tried your best for me, and I appreciate that.' He says, 'I want you to know that the best thing that ever happened to me was getting fired at Duke Point as millwright because,' he said, 'I went down to the States, got hired working for a shipwright, and we were fixing up old ships and doing carpentry work. I got hired as a carpenter for a major contractor.' He says, 'Now I'm a multi-millionaire because I ended up buying real estate and doing my own developments all over the United States. He says, 'As a result of getting fired, I'm a rich man.' (laughter) I thought, 'Wow, that's a wonderful story that I'll remember.' Not often does that that kind of thing—so yeah. Anyway, there's people that I know that quit alcohol and drugs, that were a success story. I saw the ones that it didn't work too, but we started the South Island Family Assistance program. I was proud of what happened there. Yeah. Amazing stuff that we had happen in our industry.

PL [00:42:45] Charlie Fit. Does that name ring a bell? Charlie Fit ran a sort of employee assistance program kind of thing over in [unclear].

BR [00:42:57] Oh, yeah, no. Yeah, I heard I heard the name. Yeah, we had we had our own guy.

PL [00:43:06] They're completely—they're a unique type of human being.

BR [00:43:12] They are. Yeah.

PL [00:43:15] Right.

BR [00:43:15] They did great work to help workers union families, and they kept it out instead of—instead of either the company or us wasting money on frivolous legal arguments when the real problem is drugs, alcohol, or even family related problems at home then. A lot of times we were able to solve those—and actually, I remember companies working with me and saying, 'Look, we fired the edger operator, and she's got a real drug problem and crashed on drugs. We don't want to keep her fired. If you can get her into treatment, then we'll take her back. There were things like that that went on that, that worked well.

PL [00:44:01] Let's switch gears a bit and talk about Bill Routley deciding that he wants to get into the legislature.

BR [00:44:10] That's kind of a funny story because I had decided to — I'd actually told my wife, 'Well, I'm going to retire in 2008.' The Steelworkers had come in and taken over the IWA in 2004. I thought, 'Well, you know what?' Our guys were wanting to merge, so I had guys like Brian Butler, who is now the president saying, 'I think it would be a good idea if we joined with local 2171 and 363 and all this stuff.' I said, 'Really?' He said, 'Yeah, that's what I think the way we should go.' He says, 'There's strength in getting bigger and stronger.' I said, 'You know what? I'll, move out of the way, and whatever you guys want to do, that's fine with me because my time is up.' I had said I wanted to retire at 60 and I was going to be 60, and so I even bought an RV thinking I was going across Canada and retiring from the union. Well, lo and behold, this guy Richard Hughes, that was running for the NDP, and he was kind of nominated already by the local executive of the NDP to be the Cowichan Valley representative. All of a sudden, I'm hearing—I had people whispering in my in my ear to start with. It was just whispers saying, you know, you should run for MLA. Then I had Doug Routley wanted to have lunch and said, 'Well, you know, I'm moving north. They've created a whole new electoral district, and it's going to be Cowichan Valley, and you know everybody. I'm going up to Nanaimo.' He was honest enough to say, 'Look, there's 9 percent more NDP folks north. Then there's about 5 percent extra NDP members to Liberals in the Cowichan Valley, if you play your cards right. He said, 'You should run.' .

BR [00:46:10] I hadn't even thought about running because I had been mad at the NDP over—you might remember Clause 7—and the NDP got in trouble with me because they—we had Clause 7 written in 1991 by then-Minister of Forests, Dan Miller. He actually did us the favor of writing in—and Clause 7 connected Youbou mill to the tree farm license and connected the trees. We really liked that. We loved that clause, and we applauded it, and we were able to use it with Fletcher Challenge. We said, 'No, you're not laying us off because that says without the minister's approval, you've got to go to him.' They didn't like it at all that the minister was phoning him up and saying, 'You know what, Routley is right.

You can't just shut down and have no reason why you've got these logs. You've got an obligation to run the mill.' Even that it was on a limited basis, it was better than nothing at all. Anyway, the NDP in my—I found out since that they got snookered by Timber West sadly. Timber West. Dan, what was his name? Dan or Don? Anyway, he was chief forester for Timber West. He actually drafted the new clause to replace Clause 7, and he convinced the NDP that this clause would be better. Now, but. I didn't—

PL [00:47:47] They said the replacement was better.

BR [00:47:48] I didn't find this until after—like, we had protested in the legislature, and we even had the sad spectacle of the then-minister of forests standing out in the legislature saying that it was missing, the clause was missing, and nobody knew how it went missing.

PL [00:48:11] Was this, was this—

BR [00:48:13] This—

PL [00:48:13] Bill, whatever his name was, was a deputy. Was he the—

BR [00:48:16] Yeah, I think so. Anyway, to make a long story short, lawyers brought me 21 boxes of stuff, mostly redacted. I actually went through night after night and spent several hours going through redacted material. I finally found a document that said, 'We're going to implement this clause and it will supersede Clause 7, or whatever. This is going to take over this Clause 28 or whatever the number was. I think it was Clause 28. It was supposed to make it better because it was going to include the pulp mill and Duncan Bay, which turned out to be—that's Duncan Bay is up there in Campbell River. What that allowed the company to do is to shut down Youbou legally, and then announce that the wood flow is now going to go to those other places. They just put our mill out of work. Inadvertently and in a very sneaky way, the company was able—

BR [00:49:23] And part of what was also going on at the same time is the company was cooperating with the NDP in creating this river park. Along the Cowichan River, they were make—Stoltz Pool was becoming a park. There were these go to park lands or whatever. Anyway, I thought it was very, you know, somehow too convenient by half the fact that all this went on. I don't blame the NDP. I really do think that the staff in the background were cooperating with the company, and they just slid a document under the Minister of Forests' nose and said, 'Sign here.' That's basically what the minister admitted to me. He said, 'Look, I signed a lot of documents that came through. They said, 'This is good. All approved.' I had sent a letter to the minister saying, 'Whatever you do, don't forget Clause 7. In any discussions, don't forget Clause 7. That didn't get to Dave Zirnhelt. I showed him the letter. He said, 'I never saw it. Never, ever saw that letter.' So, you know, somebody within the—but, I mean, what are you going to do? The horses are already out of the barn, and they had already closed the Youbou mill, and it was it was painful.

BR [00:50:52] Sorry I went down that rabbit trail—but back to—so, I've got all these people, and Doug Routley says to me, 'Why don't you run?' Then I had a couple of union guys, one from Victoria, who came to me and said, 'Well, I helped, the'—he's currently an MLA, from Victoria, Rob Fleming. He said, 'I helped Rob Fleming,' and he says, 'I believe that you're the right guy for Cowichan Valley. I said, 'Well, I'm not even an NDP member. (laughter) I ripped up my card years ago.' He said, 'Well, the good news is you've got to get it signed within 60 days prior to the nomination meeting, and you have time. So, sign here.' I signed up and sent my dollar a month or whatever, you know, \$10 to join the NDP.

I signed up to the NDP and I still thought this is a long shot, you know, like, what are my chances?

BR [00:51:55] When we had our nomination meetings, I admit I was terrible. My friend Doug Morgan came with me, and he said, 'Oh, those were the worst speeches. Like you just did terrible on the road going to all these communities because you got into all this well, we're going to do this and we're going to do that. You were following the NDP playbook'—you know, because I had studied it all, and I'm following their lead. He said, 'That's not you. Like you need to tell them who you are.' When it came to the meeting where people are going to decide, there was something like 300, 350 NDP members all signed up with the Cowichan Valley, and some of them were Steelworkers, for sure, but no—the Richard Hughes team had these orange scarves, and it seemed like everybody in the crowd had an orange scarf on. I'm thinking, 'Well, I'm done,' right? I still remember Doug Morgan coming up to me and say, 'Just throw that damn speech away,' because I read the speech the night before to him. He said, 'Don't do that. Just speak from your heart.' I wrote three points on a napkin. (laughter) I had my three points on my napkin, and I looked at the three points, and I went up there, and I did what Bill does and just went at it and said, 'You know this Liberal governments are destroying the province. We need to stand up to them. We need to fix health care. Look what's happening in our hospitals. We've got seniors sitting in lines waiting to get attended to, and it's totally unacceptable.' Yeah, I got wound up and did my ten minutes, and I had people like—I surprised myself because I won on the first ballot. Right. There was five candidates. I won on the first ballot. I grabbed Richard's hand and held it up in the air. He thanked me for doing that later, but he was mad nonetheless that—

PL [00:54:04] Richard Hughes was from where?

BR [00:54:06] Well, he was from the Cowichan Valley. Richard was—and he was being anointed by even, well, guys like Leonard Krog liked him, and so did John Horgan. At first, John Horgan didn't like me because I kicked, Richard Hughes out. Once he got to know me—in fact, I still remember (laughter) a couple of MLAs that will remain unnamed. I'm going to dinner with them, and one of them turned to his friend, and then he looked at me and he said, 'You know, it's nice. It's a nice surprise that Routley isn't the knuckle-dragging Neanderthal we thought he was. (laughter) I thought, 'Well, that's a pretty good compliment. I'm not that knuckle-dragging Neanderthal.' Yeah. I guess they think, 'Oh, gosh, this guy from the union it's going to be dark days for sure for the NDP. When I became an MLA, I was kind of shocked because suddenly I'm an MLA. Like I got—but as far as the NDP—and then everybody kept telling me, 'Well, if you get elected by the nomination meeting, well, the next part is going to be easy because that's the election. Most people are ready for the NDP in the Cowichan Valley. It doesn't matter whether you're the dog Spot was running they're going to win. You're going to have your name attached to the NDP flag.' That's partly true actually. I mean, obviously the candidate can destroy the viability of having that candidate elected, but I know a lot of it is there's strong support from within the community, long time NDP members. It was a bit of a uphill climb to let them because they're saying, 'Well, where did you come from?' I said, 'Well, that's easy. I was in the paper just about every day fighting for the members and families here in the Cowichan Valley. That's what I've been doing for my whole career is fighting one way or the other. Now, instead of fighting with the employers on the workers behalf, I'm going to be fighting in government.' I said, 'I've just been in protests in Victoria about log exports. Now I get to go inside and actually say something about that which I did, by the way, many times.

PL [00:56:41] You're in the legislature. What's it like when you're on the opposite side, trying to crank things up on the Liberals, I mean.

BR [00:56:50] Well, one of the things that was amazing to me is, you know, I thought, well, now that I'm MLA, there's going to be a playbook. They give me this MLA manual. Well, I read it. I highlighted the parts that were important to me. Okay. I read the part that said that you could go ahead, and it says you can get \$1,000 a month in housing, or you can get, I think it was up to 17,000 or something, for if you rent a place that's furnished, you can get more, right? I went and I thought, 'Well, all the Liberals are going to be in skyscrapers so I'm going to go—I rented a room at the Regency that was up to the maximum limit. Of course, when the calendar comes around, and they find out that the MLA that's closest to the legislature, just over the hill an hour's drive is staying in a \$17,000 apartment, it's front page news. I said, 'Well, look, I just read the manual on this. These are the rules.' I didn't know that most people took the \$1,000. I promptly signed up for the thousand dollars, by the way.

BR [00:58:14] Then I had to take my foot out of my mouth, but I thought I did a good drum, and it was absolutely 100 percent true. I said, 'Look, I needed to be near the legislature. I don't know anything about setting up bills, about defending legislation. My job is suddenly going to be, I have to speak for half an hour about things I know nothing about.' I've got to study—suddenly the HST, I did nine half-hour speeches on the HST, which I knew nothing about just weeks earlier, but I studied it. Thank goodness there's online. Yes, the NDP caucus sends you some material. I did the job. I did the homework I spent hours. For every five minutes of speech that I gave in the legislature, I can honestly say there was at least—minimum—one hour for every five minutes of that half-hour speech. I spent hours—you know, it's more like two or three hours for every five minutes. I wrote 63 pages for my first speech because I had no idea how many pages I would use. I learned—imagine, here you're a brand new MLA. I went to the staff, and I said, 'Well, how do I make the font bigger so that I can read this?' The secretary took it, and of course she showed me on the computer how you move the font around, and I think I've gone to heaven and suddenly I can blow up the font. I'm cutting and pasting and moving stuff around, and I'm thinking, man, I'm really moving ahead here. I've got all these pages to speak. Well, I had 63 pages and I got to speak six pages. (laughter) Guess what? Part of the reason there was only six pages is because I did what I'm doing right now, and that's wander off on rabbit trails. I want to say this about that. I always had a story. Yeah. Well, the other guy that was good at that was John Horgan. I so respected John because I remember the day that he spoke for two hours on a bill that was just miscellaneous stuff. I thought, 'What is he going to say for two hours about this?' Well, he was talking about his cardigan sweater and all this other stuff, and Grade 9 he did this. I'm going, 'What on earth is this all about?' Of course, the speaker every now and then would say, 'You know, get back in line.'

BR [01:00:55] By the way, that was the other best mistake I could have made in my life. Here I am, a guy that's been called Brother Bill since I was a young man. In the mill. In logging camps. In the sawmill. We always hear, 'It's Brother Bill.' I'm introducing my cousins that have come over from the mainland, and I said, 'Brother Speaker.' Well, the house broke up in such laughter that the Hansard that's recording things said they'd never seen the needle go right off the scale before. (laughter) People were laughing so hard, including everybody on my side. They thought this was hilarious. Then I said, 'Well, we look like brothers and sisters, and we fight like brothers and sisters, too.' Everybody clapped and we moved on. Then John Horgan, by the way, got up and spoke right after me and he said, 'Brother Speaker.' Of course, the place broke up again. The speaker said, 'There'll be no more. That's it, no more.' Anyway, I'd walk down the hall after that—and this

was my early days in the legislature. After that, I walked down the hall and here comes an opposition MLA, 'Brother Bill. How are you doing?' The speaker, 'Brother Bill, come on into my office. I'd like to show you this,' or whatever. That turned out to be the best mistake I could have made was calling everybody brother. Yeah, they kind of—it became a term of endearment my whole time there.

BR [01:02:39] The other thing that I became known for—I realized all this industrial language that I'm used to oh I can't say this. I can't say any of it anymore. What am I going to replace it with? Well, I thought, and I thought, and I thought. My mother had this wonderful word. Every time the circus would come to town and I'd say, 'Well, I want to go down to the circus. She said, 'Well, be careful of the midway. There's all kinds of jiggery pokery goes on down there'. I introduced—well, it wasn't a common word, but you may or may not know, every speech from, you know, beginning of time, I would fit in jiggery pokery. The very first time I did it, the clerk was asked by the speaker, 'What does this mean?' They were quickly looking it up and finding out it has several meanings (laughter) and the possible deniability for me that was really true was that while it could mean you're a lying, cheating, no-good son of a gun, it could also mean that you're up to slippery, you know, jiggery pokery trying to slip one by and make money and dubious means by saying or doing things that are not true. There was enough in there, and it's the Queen's English. I got known for my jiggery pokery speeches. They said I was near 500 at the end, like 500 jiggery pokery speeches. (laughter) So instead of going 'you rotten', you know, like that, I'd be saying 'There's jiggery pokery here.'

PL [01:04:21] So language in the legislature is—

BR [01:04:24] The Queen's English. Yes. It's very tightly policed. Yes. You're not—of course I did that too—they said you're not allowed to name people. I stand up and say, 'Gordon Campbell over there.' They'd say, 'Stop, take your seat. You're not allowed to say names in here.' I'd have to get up and apologize. I had to apologize quite a bit in there. [unclear interviewer's voice in the background] In there too. The time that I most remember that this is worth having on record is if you look up Hansard, you'll see that Bill Routley accused the then minister that was involved with the WCB, from Northern British Columbia, who has a name that sounds like Shirley Bond. (laughter) I said, 'You've got blood on your hands.' See, you're supposed to use parliamentary language, and you're not supposed to point at people and say, you know, egregious things. So, I was called into the speaker's office and told I was going to have to apologize. I apologized, and I made it clear that I was apologizing for upsetting the minister.

PL [01:05:38] For accusing her of [unclear].

BR [01:05:39] Yeah, I did not apologize for the words because I would have got thrown out rather than deny that she does have blood on her because those mills that blew up that was what that was all about. Do you know that one of the mills in Lakeland Mill had a 50 foot fireball. Then two weeks later that mill burnt down in, the First Nations, area there, and we had eight people killed. If the industry had been taken to task about that fireball in Lakeland and done what they used to do. Back when I was in safety, if there was an accident, a near death, thing, it would be broadcast to the entire industry. The industry would take action, and they would have started cleaning up the dust and doing the proper job. That would have saved the lives of those people at that mill that, Burns Lake. Burns Lake has a real place in my heart because those guys that died didn't have to die. That came out in the coroner's report. One of the guys from the WCB actually admitted that he

had been told when he said we should do something about this. He was told by his upper level management that, 'Oh, we can't do that. Management wouldn't like that.'

PL [01:07:10] You know, that the WCB, the CEO for the WCB, had recommended charges against Lakeland, against the owners and management of Lakeland. For that, he was—and that was prior to the May 2013 provincial election, and when the NDP lost and Shirley Bond became the Minister of Labour, that was turned on its head and became a reason for firing—well not firing—they forced him into retirement, forcing Dave Anderson to retire—

BR [01:07:55] Wow.

PL [01:07:56] And bringing in—I wish I could remember the guy's name—special investigator to look into the mistakes that Dave Anderson made in advancing that to Crown counsel for charges.

BR [01:08:13] Wow. Outrageous. Absolutely outrageous.

PL [01:08:17] And the Stewart family, which owns and is, you know, hand-in-glove with her, would have been on the phone days after the election saying, 'Okay, this has got to stop. Turn that thing around. I don't care what you—how you do it but do it.'

BR [01:08:37] Kevin Falcon bragged about his doing away with 'unnecessary red tape' he called it. I said, 'You ripped up thousands of pages written in blood. People literally died for those regulations, and you just threw them out because management wanted them to.' Yeah, I was told by former folks that worked within the WCB that they just hated my speeches because, the folks at WorkSafe, and I made the point. I said, 'Get it that they even had the audacity to take the good name, Worker's Compensation, and change it to a management directive. Work safe young man. Work safe. Yeah, right. That's basically pointing the finger right back at the worker. How dare they? You know, it just makes my blood boil. Just thinking about how arrogant that is to take worker's compensation and turn it into a directive against workers. Work safe.'

PL [01:09:46] Yeah.

BR [01:09:47] They used to brag that, 'Well, we have worker's compensation,' and "This is not a—we don't point fingers. This is not a thing where we blame game. No, there's no blame game here.' Yeah. Right. Every single time when I was safety chairman, without question, they tried to blame the worker. Always.

PL [01:10:09] Macatee, was his name.

BR [01:10:14] That's right.

PL [01:10:15] And he was brought in—

BR [01:10:16] Yeah, I remember that.

PL [01:10:17] He came with recommendations, and his draft recommendations included the, bringing—ticketing workers for workplace violations.

BR [01:10:30] Wow.

PL [01:10:31] I know. It never made it past—

BR [01:10:32] Scandalous.

PL [01:10:35] The argument that was made to him was, management has the right to manage. In doing so, they take responsibility for making sure that it's done safely. Ticketing something, you know, bring—having WCB come in and essentially telling people this is the safe way to do it, and if you don't do it that way, then we're going to ticket you. You, as managers, are trying to download your responsibility onto an agency. That right is—yeah, I mean it's just craziness in the extreme.

BR [01:11:09] Craziness.

PL [01:11:12] Yeah, unreal. You know what?

BR [01:11:13] I guess we're at the end.

PL [01:11:14] We burnt through an awful lot.

BR [01:11:15] We did.

PL [01:11:16] This has been tremendous. I loved every minute of it.

BR [01:11:19] Oh, I'm glad you did. Yeah. I enjoyed thinking back on all of those special moments because it was quite a ride. I'm very proud to have been given the honour of representing forest workers and their families and to do the school trustee thing. And, of course, the ultimate cherry on top for me was getting to be an MLA because there was some very good things that we got to do there, too, that, yeah, that could be a whole other chapter. Just all the good things that happened, yeah.

PL [01:11:52] But it kind of speaks, in my humble opinion, it speaks to this idea that, unions, especially at a community level, are so highly regarded that the advocacy you do doesn't just stop at the plant gate, it filters out.

BR [01:12:09] Yeah.

PL [01:12:10] Bill can be trusted.

BR [01:12:11] They knew. I even had, and to my surprise, I had industrial relations guy from the Crofton pulp mill who I ran into, and he says, 'Good on you running.' He says, 'I'll tell you right now, I'll be voting for you.' I went, 'Really? Like, 'Really?' I was shocked, you know, but yeah. I had a number of former management people that frankly hated my guts that said the same thing. They said they were proud of me for running for MLA and supported the notion. So, yeah, the fact that we need—it shows that working class people can make a difference in the community. In closing, I would definitely say we need more working people. Please get involved, get active. It's very rewarding. You'll look back like I do on my life and say, 'Thank God for the union. Thank God for the membership.' The union truly is made up of people, and when I used to organize, do union organizing, I'd say, 'The union isn't the guys down at the union office. It's you.'

PL [01:13:22] Yeah.

BR [01:13:23] You're the union, and, you know, you can make a difference. I'm proud of the difference that unions have made in Canada. How we've helped people with benefits that they wouldn't have otherwise got. Pensions. I've had seniors come up to me and say, 'Thank you. I had no idea how important this pension would be (laughter) when I got here.'

PL [01:13:45] I can eat.

BR [01:13:47] Yeah. Exactly. Yeah.

PL [01:13:51] Good stuff.

BR [01:13:52] Okay. Thank you.