**SP FC 3803 U54 N_5-4-trk1b Horace Mackey Part 1.mp3**

**Horace Mackey**

**Interviewed by Bill Piket**

**Date: 196?**

**Transcribed by Donna Sacuta**

**Bill Piket** [00:00:00] This is an interview with Mr. Mackey  M-A-C-K-E-Y.

**Bill Piket** [00:00:09] Horace Mackey of the Locomotive Engineers. Mr. Mackey, could you go over what you remember of the introduction of legislation on the Workmen's Compensation Act in the province?

**Horace Mackey** [00:00:28] Yes, Mr. Piket. In the early days there was no Compensation Act, but in the year about 1900-1901, the railway groups were about the only ones that were well organized in the province of British Columbia. Mr. Matt Crawford at that time, being the Chairman of that board, applied at that time, Premier Sir Richard McBride, in regard to Workmen's Compensation. In the year 1902, the following Act was passed. [Reading] "The Act is called the Workmen's Compensation Act 1902, and it was passed on the 21st of June 1902, and became effective on the 1st of May 1903. It was stated as a statute of the British Columbia 1902, Chapter 74. The coverage was limited, that it covered employment in or about a railway, factory, mine, quarry or engineering work and to the employment by the undertakers as in hereafter defined or in about any building which exceeds 40-feet in height and is being constructed or repaired by means of scaffolding or being demolished, or on which machinery driven by steam, water or other such mechanical power is being used for the purpose of the construction, repair, demolition thereof. The definition of a factory is fairly wide, engineering work somewhat limited, and railway and mines are pretty well covered as expected." You understand that this was really the inception of a railway group at that time. Other groups were not well organized, therefore was no representation from them.

**Bill Piket** [00:02:31] None from the miners' union?

**Horace Mackey** [00:02:32] No, the mines were not well-organized at that time either. Miners, better not put this on, miners at that time were looked upon as Wobblies.

**Bill Piket** [00:02:48] I see.

**Horace Mackey** [00:02:50] [continues reading] "With respect to the benefits, there was a two-weeks' qualification period. The workman received 50 percent of his earnings up to a maximum of $1,500. The dependents of a workman who was killed, received a sum equal to his earnings during the three years preceding his injury, but not exceeding $1,500." Well, that was the limit that a widow could receive from the death of a man under this Act. "A workman had the right to elect to either claim compensation or take proceedings against his employer, but the employer could only be liable apart from Workmen's Compensation, if the accident arose through his personal negligence or willful act. There was provision to contract out of the Act if there was another scheme set up with approval of the employer and the workmen and also approved by the Attorney General. In case of disputes, they could be settled by arbitration, and if not, then a single arbitrator agreed by the party or appointed by a Supreme Court judge and his say was final. Later on it was found, when organization became more spread over British Columbia that there should be something done in regard to a Workmen's Compensation Act for all workers. So the government was approached and they agreed to a committee being set up. Brother T.J. Coughlin of the Trainmen's organization was appointed to represent the railway groups. J.H. McVety of the international organizations, was appointed to assist, representing the Trades and Labor Council, which was at that time purely international groups."

**Bill Piket** [00:05:01] Could you spell the names out?

**Horace Mackey** [00:05:02] I beg your pardon?

**Bill Piket** [00:05:03] Could you spell out the names?

**Bill Piket** [00:05:09] They're on there I think. Just spell them. Coughlin is what? C-O-

**Horace Mackey** [00:05:15] C-O-U-G-H-L-I-N. Thomas Coughlin.

**Bill Piket** [00:05:19] What about McVety? How do you spell

**Horace Mackey** [00:05:20] J.H. McVety? His name was James Hackett McVety.

**Bill Piket** [00:05:26] How do you spell McVety?

**Horace Mackey** [00:05:26] James Hackett McVety. M-C-V-E-T-Y. [sirens in background] In fact, I went to school with him and we sat in the same, there used to be two of us together sit in the seat. He and I sat together on it.

**Bill Piket** [00:05:38] You did. So you knew him?

**Horace Mackey** [00:05:38] Oh, I know him well. He was a machinist with the Canadian Pacific Railway, and later I think he became President or Secretary of the Trades and Labor Council during the strike of 19[19]. Anyway, he lost his position with the CPR and went strictly into the labor movement. Now, I might read you, as I have right here, the report that Brother Coughlin made at that time. [loud clock chimes] It says, [reading] "I have the honour to report as follows. The draft bill that was introduced at the session of 1914 was made as a basis for an Act that was to have its final adoption at the session just past. In order to have a fair and equitable Act, the government appointed a Commission in the fall of 1914 to hold sittings at different times in the province, also to travel and secure firsthand evidence in the various states of the United States, the Provinces of the Dominion, and most of the representatives of employers and employees in the numerous places visited, as well as to meet the representatives of the employers and employees in this province. It is only fair to say that this Commission did their duty efficiently and satisfactory to all concerned. The report shows, from the report of the Commission a review draft bill was submitted to Parliament." Well, it should be to the Legislative Assembly.

**Horace Mackey** [00:07:30] "It was while this draft bill was under consideration, that the joint committee composed of all the classes of labor in the province, did their most efficient work as we had to combat united efforts of the employing interests, as well as the casualty insurance companies who wanted to write this business. When you consider that we had to meet the objection of several associations of employers who averaged two deputations a week interviewing the government, it is easy to see what we had to contend with.".

**Horace Mackey** [00:08:06] "I might say that I draw your attention to the fact that in the United States most states are covered by casualty insurance companies, whereas in British Columbia these people were enabled to get a proper Act, which was administered by Workmen's Compensation Commission. That our representatives have not been in vain, the Act has passed on May the 23rd, 1916 as testified. Without going into detail of the work of our joint committee, I cannot in passing refrain from commenting on the very good feeling that prevailed between the members of the government, cabinet officers and ourselves, and also the sincere wish of the Premier Honorable W.J. Bowser to secure of the best Workmen's Compensation Act anywhere in the world."

**Horace Mackey** [00:09:04] "Now, as to the Act itself, I wish to state its operation and the rights of the workers under its terms. First, an accident had to happen to a workman or working woman, as the case may be, who comes under the scope of the Act. A person is entitled to medical aid as provided in Section 21, except those persons who come under the subsection of Section 4 of 21. This is my opinion, is not equal in any Act in the world. True, the workmen contribute one cent a day towards the maintenance of this expense, but any additional expense must be borne by the employers, as it is taken from the accident fund. If the accident has disabled the person for three working days or less, no compensation other than medical aid will be paid. If it disables a person for more than three days, then all time will be paid, less three working days. The accidents are classified as temporary total disability, permanent total disability, permanent partial disability and death. Also in the same connection, many industrial diseases be classified, but we trainmen are not classified as belonging to an occupation from which of necessity an industrial disease arises. I wish now to state here briefly the terms of the Act in reference to our particular occupations. Suppose one of our brakemen meets with an accident which lays him up for more than three days. Suppose he is earning, say $20 per week, and is off 10 days. With this injury, he would in the case, be entitled to $11 compensation. That is 55 percent of his wages. Where he met with an accident where he lost a limb and could not follow his occupation of brakeman, his injury is classed as partial permanent disability."

**Horace Mackey** [00:11:09] "Let us suppose his average earnings are at $100 per month and when he first injured, it is for the time total disability as he would not be able to work for some time at any kind of job and he was entitled to $55 per month. If he was paying $0.01 per day for the medical aid, would be entitled to come under the conditions of Section 21. If he was not contributing $0.01 a day, he would be under some medical

association or system acceptable to the board. So that the medical aid end would be taken care of in any event, and he would continue to receive his $55 per month and medical aid until the time, as he was able to do something for himself. Let us suppose that whether he was fitted with an artificial member, he could only secure a job that brought him only $50 a month or $600 per year, then the board would pay him for life $27.50 or $330 per year to make up the balance of what is 55 percent of his wage would give him and what he was capable of earning."

**Horace Mackey** [00:12:23] "Another fact must not be lost sight of, and that is that the brakeman would say in one year be a permanent conductor, and his probable earnings would be greatly enhanced. Then this fact would be taken into account by the board in arriving at his probable earnings. A case cited above cover temporary total disability and total partial disability. But in the event of injury being such that he was permanently totally disabled, he would receive 55 percent of his average earnings for life. In the case of death, the compensation as provided for in Section 50 applies. In the event of marriage, the widow, Section 16 applies. In section 18, a provision is made that is in no other Act that I know of. That is compensation for same patient disfigurement. So also is a new departure in Subsection 4 of Section 15, where payment is continued in the case of an invalid child until the child ceases to be an invalid, or dies, or all dependents are included in the Act, even though they are aliens and may never reside in the province. To us railroad men, the best condition in the Act is the elimination of individual liability of each railway to the men for accidents, as the railways have to pay their share into the accident fund of the board. The board pays the injured person direct so that there is no inducement for a railroad to have their men waive their compensation under pressure of their claims department. Under the Act it is unlawful to do this. Neither can it be assigned or taken away from the injured person for any cause or by process of law. No compensation for a lump sum can be made without the consent of the injured person when the impairment of the earning capacity exceeds 10 percent of his earnings capacity at that time of the accident. The notice of the accident required by the injured person or in the event of death, by his dependents is set forth in Section 42."

**Horace Mackey** [00:14:43] "So no extended comment is necessary as this Section speaks for itself. In conclusion, let me say I repeat that we have on the whole the best Workmen's Compensation Act in the world as most of the other Acts have a time or money limit beyond which they do not go. But ours is for life and our waiting period is only three days,

while most of the others have two weeks' waiting period. It has taken us a long time to get this Act, but when you look at its terms and conditions, I believe you will agree, that was time and money well spent. When we look back over our efforts in the past with such Acts, and also our experiences of common law when its surrounding causes for non-suit and when damages were awarded, the major portion was absorbed by lawyers. I feel I am on a safe ground to say in advance that the Act will be a great boon to the injured person as he will get all that is guaranteed under the Act without litigation of any kind. What is so essential to an injured man is proper first aid. Also all subsequent medical aid. The common justice, I must give the government all due credit for the passage of this Act that is so essential to the well-being of our workmen and women."

**Bill Piket** [00:16:20] Signed?

**Horace Mackey** [00:16:20] "I must thank my associate officers of sister organizations who worked so consistently unceasingly for the passage of this Act. I cannot close without mentioning, in particular, the intelligent, loyal and efficient work of Brother J.H. McVety, Machinists Union, who above all others, we can thank for the good legislation it is my pleasure to report to you. I must also testify to the intelligent and fair-minded manner in which Mr. A.B. Pineo, Chairman of the Commission conducted the sittings." He paid a great tribute to Jim McVety, the representative of the Trade and Labor Congress which as part of that Committee. Now where do we go?

**Bill Piket** [00:17:15] This is Mr. McLaughlin, right?

**Horace Mackey** [00:17:17] Coughlin. T.J. Coughlin.

**Bill Piket** [00:17:20] And this is a report to them.

**Horace Mackey** [00:17:21] That is his report to the railway groups. He was chairman of, at that time, we had a group you see, as I tell you, of five or six organizations which are organized on the railways.

**Bill Piket** [00:17:37] Could you mention them again, the ones that were represented?

**Horace Mackey** [00:17:40] Yes. The group he represented was the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, Order of Railway Conductors, the Brotherhood of Maintenance of the Way, Order of Railway Telegraphers. That was the group that Mr. Coughlin represented on this commission that was set up at that time.

**Bill Piket** [00:18:23] You got any comments on that?

**Horace Mackey** [00:18:26] I beg your pardon?

**Bill Piket** [00:18:26] Were you in on this too?

**Horace Mackey** [00:18:28] Well, I was only a member of this committee, of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers committee at that time. I was not chairman. Mr. Matt Crawford was chairman at that time. We have a group which meets, the engineers meet themselves and they appoint a chairman. We have a representative in each division in British Columbia. Our group consists of, we have 13 members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. We meet triennially and appoint a chairman. The chairman is the man then that works with the central group, which other groups also appoint a chairman. At that time I was not chairman, but from 1930 I was chairman of the Locomotive Engineers in British Columbia.

**Bill Piket** [00:19:37] So you weren't in on the actual presentation.

**Horace Mackey** [00:19:39] I wasn't in on this commission. I wasn't part of the commission, and neither was Mr. Matt Crawford. We only didn't have a chance to over-weight the commission, you understand. There was only, I think there was only five members on that commission, if I remember, that really traveled over all of the United States and Canada. It was a lot of money that was expended by British Columbia at that time. Mr. Bowser, he became well acquainted with the labor movement because in the early days in 1901, he was a lawyer that came out here from New Brunswick, and he started in business here and the first [bells chiming] young lawyer here in British Columbia.

**Horace Mackey** [00:20:39] The first income tax was placed on in 1901. The railway men on account of work, not working like other people where they only worked, in those days, a

regular day. Of course, a regular day in those days was 12 hours, but our men worked from 12 to 24 hours at a stretch, and we figured that if the railway group figured that they should not have to pay income tax on excessive hours or overtime, which would be overtime. So they engaged Mr. Bowser at that time for their cause, and he appeared before the Privy Council in England. That is how he became well known to the labor group. After he became, when it was approached, his government, he was quite reconciled to the fact that something he became well known to the local labor group and he felt that something should be done for organized labor. That is how he became ready to put this Act into effect. I might say that Mr. Bowser's government went out after this government was in effect and Mr. John Oliver had the right to appoint the commission. At that time, Mr. Wynn, a lawyer that had been a lawyer for the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Rossland was appointed as the chairman of the board. Mr. Parker Williams, who was a member of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, was appointed as the labor representative on the board, and Mr. Hugh Gilmore, who was the representative of the Waterous Engine Company was appointed as the employer member of the Workmen's Compensation Board.  That was the first makeup of the work to apply this Act. Mr. Wynn carried on through the years until such time as he was superannuated, and I think in all times he was very, very fair and he did not carry— his idea was the human side of Workmen's Compensation, not the legal side. While he was a legal administrator, he always was willing to look at it from a humane point and I think through all his term of office and also his successor, Adam Bell, we had wonderful cooperation from those gentlemen as representatives of labor. That, as far as we, now what do you want to know further?

**Bill Piket** [00:24:03] Well, what other legislative briefs? What were some of the most important ones that you present?

**Horace Mackey** [00:24:15] The most important reason that I see was social welfare for women. In the early days, it was impossible to get any assistance for women. I might cite that in the early days, if a woman was left widowed and she had a son, he was forced to keep her, and that caused a lot of dissension. After it was taken up at the social, now at the present time, women can get social assistance irrespective of their children, they're not loaded onto their children. Next thing is deserted—

**Bill Piket** [00:25:21] When did that come up?

**Horace Mackey** [00:25:23] That came up in about 1944, I guess, somewhere about like that. That is that we did not have to, that it wasn't compulsory for the son to maintain the widow, that is his widowed mother.

**Bill Piket** [00:25:50] Were you in on that?

**Horace Mackey** [00:25:52] Yes.

**Bill Piket** [00:25:52] Can you tell us anything about?

**Horace Mackey** [00:25:55] That was in one of our briefs at that time and we got the government to agree to that. Previous to that, I might say that we had a case that I exemplified was a young man that had just been promoted to a locomotive engineer on the E & N [Esquimalt to Nanaimo Railway] and his salary was only $2,400 a year. His mother happened to become widowed, and she applied for some kind of assistance. There was no assistance, but they would not grant her, they compelled this young man to keep his mother, and he had already become a young married man, caused a lot of dissension in his family and everything like that. Another case where one of our, I might say it was one of the executives of one of our big companies, and his mother and father became dependent. They were old people, and he was saddled with their keep. It caused a lot of dissension, and these cases were brought to our mind and, of course we presented it in our briefs that we were able to get the government then to relieve those people of that.

**Bill Piket** [00:27:25] That was the Coalition government.

**Horace Mackey** [00:27:29] Yes.

**Bill Piket** [00:27:34] How did you go about this? Do you remember anything?

**Horace Mackey** [00:27:37] I beg your pardon.

**Bill Piket** [00:27:39] Is there anything worth mentioning about how you went about this?

**Horace Mackey** [00:27:43] Well, we only went about it in presenting our brief and then showing those people how unfair it was. We had the most wonderful cooperation, as far as

I am concerned, from all governments. I have dealt with them all, with Mr. Tolmie, Mr. Oliver, Mr. George Hart, Byron Johnson. They all were at all times were ready to listen to us. I must pay a great tribute to Mr. George Pearson, which I think was one of the greatest men with regard to labor in British Columbia. He was always ready to listen to us and try to do something for the working man. A wonderful credit to this country.

**Bill Piket** [00:28:47] Did you have any dealings with the Socred government at all?

**Horace Mackey** [00:28:51] I beg your pardon.

**Bill Piket** [00:28:52] Did you have any dealings with the present government?

**Horace Mackey** [00:28:53] No, I have not. I relinquished this job in 1948. I haven't been active as a legislative chairman since 1948. I was retired, you see, in 1945, and then in 1941 I was appointed on the Regional War Labor Board for British Columbia. I sat all through the war as one of the representatives on the Regional War Labor Board. Of course I was retired from active service on the railway at the age of 65 in 1945. So not a young man, you know.

**Bill Piket** [00:29:39] That means you were born 1880.

**Horace Mackey** [00:29:42] I was born in 1880. That's when I was born. February 25, 1880. So I'm not a young boy by any means [laughs].

**Bill Piket** [00:29:51] You were born in Vancouver?

**Horace Mackey** [00:29:53] No, sir. I was born in London, England.

**Bill Piket** [00:29:55] London, England?

**Horace Mackey** [00:29:56] Yes.

**Bill Piket** [00:29:56] When did you come here?

**Horace Mackey** [00:29:58] When did I come to Vancouver? In 1889. I went to school here, and that's where I got my education here in Vancouver.

**Bill Piket** [00:30:09] What about, do you remember anything about trade unions then?

**Horace Mackey** [00:30:12] Trade unions? There was no such thing as trade unions in those days. I can tell you about the first inception of the trade unions. Maybe that shouldn't go on record.

**Bill Piket** [00:30:23] That would be interesting.

**Horace Mackey** [00:30:26] Well, I'll tell you. My father was in business here in Vancouver as a contractor under the firm name of Mackey and Brennan. They had contracts for several buildings in Vancouver. One of them was the People's Theater that was being built on Pender Street, and several other big buildings. At that time, the carpenters were getting a wonderful sum of $0.25 an hour, working ten hours a day. All these contracts that these gentlemen had taken were based on rates at that time. All of a sudden they brang on the contractors that they were organized from now on and their rate would be $0.50 an hour.

**Bill Piket** [00:31:45] When was that? Do you remember?

**Horace Mackey** [00:31:46] Well, I think this was in 1898, either 1897 or 1898.

**Bill Piket** [00:32:01] We can check back. We can probably find the date.

**Horace Mackey** [00:32:03] I beg your pardon?

**Bill Piket** [00:32:04] We can probably check back and find the date.

**Horace Mackey** [00:32:05] Yes. They sprung this on the contractors. Well, of course, these major contractors also had contracts with plumbers, bricklayers, everybody at that time, everybody organized. Eventually, practically every one of these gentlemen had to go bankrupt, which they did. So that was my first inception into the labor movement. It didn't go very strong. My father then returned to England and went back to, he was an engineer in the London County Council. Went back there, resumed his position in the old country.

So that was the end of that. Of course when I went into the railway business, I realized that we had to have organization, which we had.

**Bill Piket** [00:33:09] When did you get into?

**Horace Mackey** [00:33:15] The railway? In 1899.

**Bill Piket** [00:33:18] Which railway?

**Horace Mackey** [00:33:19] Canadian Pacific Railway. I worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway for 47 years.

**Bill Piket** [00:33:28] And which union did you join?

**Horace Mackey** [00:33:30] I beg your pardon?

**Bill Piket** [00:33:30] Which union?

**Horace Mackey** [00:33:32] Joined the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen first. [clock chimes] Then afterwards the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. I ceased with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. I was representative of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers from 1909 until 1948.

**Bill Piket** [00:34:06] What do you remember of the highlights? The history of the union?

**Horace Mackey** [00:34:14] The highlights?

**Bill Piket** [00:34:15] For instance when you joined. What was it like?

**Horace Mackey** [00:34:20] Well, of course, conditions in all were very, very crude. Employers were not always ready to meet us. Very hard to get a meeting with them. But as time went on, as far as the railway groups were concerned, I think the railways realized that they couldn't get along unless the groups were organized. They could then go and talk to the representative. The representative carried it to his men, and he practically, if he went along with it, the men went along with it. That's the way it was in the early days. You

might as well say that the representative, the labor representative of that time, they could just as necessary for the employer to have command as it was for the groups to be organized.

**Bill Piket** [00:35:41] Did you ever go on strike?

**Horace Mackey** [00:35:43] Never.

**Bill Piket** [00:35:44] Never?

**Horace Mackey** [00:35:44] Never.

**Bill Piket** [00:35:47] How was this? Why?

**Horace Mackey** [00:35:48] Because we in the early days, we negotiated. We never took a strike vote before we went to ask for negotiation. Far as negotiation is concerned, I've often been in Winnipeg or Montreal for three to six months negotiating. Eventually, we never, we didn't always get that which we asked for but we always made a settlement that was satisfactory to our men. Now, of course, in this day and age, it's altogether different. As I notice in the trades labor movement today they take their strike vote or feeling in regard to a strike before ever they start to negotiate. In the olden days, we didn't do it that way, the last resort was always a strike. We have taken strike votes, you understand, but we never had to use them. It was only just a test, I think, by the railway to find out whether our men were behind us. When they found out that our men were behind us then we didn't require to go on strike. I have never been on strike in my life.

**Bill Piket** [00:37:21] You started off working long hours, 12 hours, 24 hours a day?

**Horace Mackey** [00:37:29] Well, when I first started here, the day was a 12-hour day on the railway. Everything was regulated to a 12-hour day. When I first started firing, I fired a switch engine here in Vancouver Yard and I worked 12 hours every day. We used to change shifts and on Sundays, we worked, every second Sunday we worked 24 hours, the changeover from the night shift to the day shift. On railways, there's no such thing, in the early days, there was no such thing as tying up on the road. Later we got legislation in our contract, that we could tie up after 15 hours, being 15 hours on the road. We could ask for

rest on the road. [loud vehicle noise] It's since that's been reduced to 12 hours. Our men really have to work 12 hours today on the railway before they can tie up for rest. So while you might say we have an eight-hour day, it's based on an eight-hour day. Yes, we are required to work 12 hours before we can obtain rest.

**Bill Piket** [00:38:57] You still don't really work eight hours.

**Horace Mackey** [00:38:59] We do not work eight hours. That is we have an eight-hour day. We're paid on the basis of an eight-hour day, eight hours for 100 miles, or 100 miles paid the equivalent of eight hours' pay. If we make 100 miles in two hours, we still get the same pay as we would for working for the eight hours.

**Bill Piket** [00:39:30] You didn't have anything like pensions or so on?

**Horace Mackey** [00:39:33] We had no pensions in the early days. Later years it was a pension, the Canadian Pacific Railway in the year 1903, I think it was, had a gratuitous pension. That is to say that they agreed to pension their employees off at a certain time. We paid nothing for it.

**Bill Piket** [00:40:01] Was this in your contract?

**Horace Mackey** [00:40:02] No, it was never in our contract. We had no contract, in none of our contracts is there any mention of pensions. Our pension is separate. That is on the railways.

**Bill Piket** [00:40:18] What are some of the big issues you bargained on?

**Horace Mackey** [00:40:26] Bargained on? Well, in the early days, our men had to have perfect eyesight, 20/20, and perfect hearing. In the year 1909, the company brought, 1908, the company brought out a rule that men would have to, that could not come up to standard would be dismissed. So in 1909, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers that were very badly hurt by that on the system, they asked their international organization to grant them a certain grant here to put through a visual and acuity test. Mr. Cobb, the general chairman at that time, with the Canadian Pacific Railway, Mr. Stone allocated $10,000 to him to put this through. By his efforts all men that were taken out of service on

the railways were put back to work being allowed to wear glasses. Anybody whose eyesight could be brought up to the normal by wearing glasses was allowed to work. That was the first time that glasses were allowed to be worked, people were allowed to use glasses to bring their eyes up to standard.

**Bill Piket** [00:42:15] What year was this?

**Horace Mackey** [00:42:16] 1909.

**Bill Piket** [00:42:18] Did you have to bargain for this with the company?

**Horace Mackey** [00:42:21] We had to bargain with the company. Then we had to bargain and get a law passed by our legislative group to allow us to work, to use glasses. Now, nobody was allowed, even soldiers weren't allowed to wear glasses in those days. Everybody if they had a standard vision of less than 20/20, you were just out on certain jobs.

**Bill Piket** [00:42:49] Your legislative group got the law passed?

**Horace Mackey** [00:42:52] I beg your pardon?

**Bill Piket** [00:42:53] Your legislative group.

**Horace Mackey** [00:42:54] Our legislative group, the railway groups, got legislation passed to allow for a visual acuity test. That is to say, and that is law today. You can get a copy of that from the Dominion government. Now, that is to say that the acuity [car engine sounds] for us [unclear] would all come under, anybody that is run under the railway commission have to come up under the visual acuity test. Afterwards, of course, it had become a well-known fact that glasses can bring anybody up to standard. Our motor vehicle people agree to the visual test as outlined for railway men.

**Bill Piket** [00:43:53] In other words, what this law meant, is that if you could see with glasses you were just as good as without glasses.

**Horace Mackey** [00:44:00] Just as good. That is to say, a railway man, the law went to say that you had to carry two pair of glasses so that if one broke, you would have another pair to put on. Now all railway men have to carry two pair of glasses if their eyes do not come up to 20/20.

**Bill Piket** [00:44:18] Did you have trouble with the companies on this?

**Horace Mackey** [00:44:18] I beg your pardon?

**Bill Piket** [00:44:23] Did you have any trouble with the companies on this?

**Horace Mackey** [00:44:25] Well, the companies took our men out of service because they couldn't come up to the standard. We had 70 men out of service between Montreal and Vancouver. We had one man in Vancouver here, and he was used to show how a man's eyes could be brought up to standard. We had that man fitted with glasses and we got him a job on the fire department here. His name was Howard Ferguson. It was exemplified that if he could drive a fire truck here in the City of Vancouver, which was shown by pictures to the government at that time, it must be all right for him to run any kind of vehicles or even a locomotive, which they went along with. I was just trying to think of a senator, or he became a senator afterwards, I think it was Crerar, but I won't be sure. He took a very active part with us and a Dr. Gee from Winnipeg was one of the doctors that was hired by our group, was mainly instrumental in getting the railway men to be allowed to use glasses.

**Bill Piket** [00:45:56] Did you have any, were there any other big issues that came up?

**Horace Mackey** [00:46:03] Any of which?

**Bill Piket** [00:46:04] Any other big issues that came up in bargaining?

**Horace Mackey** [00:46:08] Well, of course, all issues were large with bargaining when you come to figure on bargaining. Every issue was a large issue. When you go to bargain, every issue is a large issue. Of course there was lots of things that they call conditions. Conditions were very poor in early days. Conditions have been wonderfully improved in all classes of labor. They were issues that were hard at times to bargain for. Meals away from

home, sleeping accommodations. All those things were hard to bargain for. In the early days, when a man went out to a job he carried his blankets on his back and he slept on a bunch of straw or something like that. I'm talking about all labor. Not only railway, but other. All those things have been improved by bargaining. When I go back to the woodworkers in the early days, their conditions were something fierce in these camps. They have made wonderful strides. Now, instead of being in the olden days, people used to have to go to work and carry their blankets on their back. Today, why you don't. You go out and live under proper conditions. Those are things that over the years have been hard to negotiate.

**Bill Piket** [00:48:09] Were you in the negotiation on these things?

**Horace Mackey** [00:48:15] The negotiation on these things? Oh, most decidedly.

**Bill Piket** [00:48:20] Do you remember any? Is there anything you remember about?

**Horace Mackey** [00:48:22] Well, I remember

**Bill Piket** [00:48:23] That you think is important.

**Horace Mackey** [00:48:25] I remember in our early days that we as railroad men, we were very dirty, you understand? We had coal-burning engines and conditions [clock chimes] weren't good. When we were going to a town even the hotel didn't want you because you weren't clean. There was no place to wash up or anything like that. We went to a hotel, they didn't want you. I guess where men was going into Kamloops and had to sleep on the banks of the river because the hotels didn't want you. That's the way conditions were until such time as things were bettered.

**Bill Piket** [00:49:07] Well.

**Horace Mackey** [00:49:09] It was exactly. I'm not only talking of railroad business, but I'm talking generally. If a man went out to a camp, they didn't think anything of him, you know. A man that was a sailor went on a ship. Look at the conditions there were in those days. Organized labor is the only thing that has bettered all these conditions. If you look at what men were on ships and the conditions that they had, even on our coastal ships here in

early days, why people today can't realize. We talk about—I shouldn't say that thing or [Hal] Banks that he done the most wonderful things, but irrespective of how he did it, he's done the most wonderful things for men on ships. We find that all the way through the piece.

**Bill Piket** [00:50:08] This is just a gradual battle, chipping at it?

**Horace Mackey** [00:50:11] I beg your pardon?

**Bill Piket** [00:50:12] This is just a gradual progress.

**Horace Mackey** [00:50:15] Yes.

**Bill Piket** [00:50:16] Bit by bit.

**Horace Mackey** [00:50:17] Bit by bit. We didn't get it all at once, you know. It's been a fight all the way up to get this. The employer didn't realize that we would have these things. No employer that I ever knew of volunteered any of this.

**Bill Piket** [00:50:33] Never did.

**Horace Mackey** [00:50:34] Never did. In the war when they wished labor and labor was hard to get, then they did offer conditions to try and hire employees from other employers that had them. That's why the Regional War Labor Boards were set up. It wasn't so much the workers, it was to keep the employers from stealing the employee from the other man.

**Bill Piket** [00:51:12] Or bettering conditions.

**Horace Mackey** [00:51:14] It didn't better conditions.

**Bill Piket** [00:51:16] No, but it was set up to prevent employers from stealing other people by bettering conditions?

**Horace Mackey** [00:51:23] By increasing wages.

**Bill Piket** [00:51:25] That's right, so would you say that the effect of those boards and or the purpose of them is to keep wages where they were more or less?

**Horace Mackey** [00:51:35] It was to keep prices and wages in line. I have quite a lot of stuff I feel, a little bit of that on that. The Regional War Labor Board did keep prices in line and helped out the depressed conditions of certain people that could not have obtained anything any other way than by the Regional War Labor Boards. I think we made more advances in labor under the War Labor Boards than we did at any other time.

**Bill Piket** [00:52:16] Well, how about telling us about your, how about telling us about your service on this board? You were on it.

**Horace Mackey** [00:52:25] I was on it from its inception until, I am very sorry that I destroyed all those too because there's so much on that, but I have a few little clippings here. Then I was later on the Reconstruction Council which —

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**Transcribed by Donna Sacuta**
**Recorded 196?**

**Horace Mackey** [00:00:00] I think, I'm not quite sure, but I think our group did make application to the Congress, but on account of representing two different classes of labor, it wasn't allowed to be recognized as eligible to join the Congress. That's what I understand.

**Interviewer** [00:00:27] When was this?

**Horace Mackey** [00:00:29] That it was about five years ago. Five or six years ago.

**Interviewer** [00:00:30] Five or six years? Before that, there were no attempts?

**Horace Mackey** [00:00:37] No. Before this Congress, the two joined, there was no attempt at any time to affiliate, and we are not affiliated either in the United States or Canada.

**Interviewer** [00:00:52] And the question never came up.

**Horace Mackey** [00:00:55] The question has never come up because we have been an independent group, that is the railway group.

**Interviewer** [00:01:03] Were you ever invited to join?

**Horace Mackey** [00:01:05] No, I don't think so. Not that I know of, I'm not aware of that anyway.

**Interviewer** [00:01:11] That you ever get into, were there ever any attempt by other unions to organize? The OBU [One Big Union], did they ever try to take over in your field?

**Horace Mackey** [00:01:27] The OBU did endeavor to raid the railway organization in 1919 in Winnipeg, and to a certain extent they did. A great number of men that belonged to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen did join with them. There was considerable trouble and some of them were dismissed from service and then had to make application to the Firemen to ask for their reinstatement on the railway. I think practically all of them were brought back into service.

**Interviewer** [00:02:08] So they didn't really come out?

**Horace Mackey** [00:02:12] No, no, it faded out. Of course, there was a lot of trouble in 1919 around Winnipeg subsequent to the First Great War.

**Interviewer** [00:02:26] Well, I mean, what about in B.C., were they?

**Horace Mackey** [00:02:33] No, we have never had any raiding in B.C. to my knowledge.

**Interviewer** [00:02:38] You never had trouble with the OBU in B.C. either.

**Horace Mackey** [00:02:39] No, none whatever.

**Interviewer** [00:02:43] You had railway locals in Vancouver?

**Horace Mackey** [00:02:45] Railway locals?

**Interviewer** [00:02:48] Yes. For instance, I know CBRT [Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers] doesn't have a railway local in Vancouver.

**Horace Mackey** [00:02:54] Well, they have never raided the international organization. To my knowledge, they have never attempted to do it in British Columbia.

**Interviewer** [00:03:21] For a while the railway unions were really the big or one of the biggest groups of organized labor. Isn't that right?

**Horace Mackey** [00:03:31] That's right.

**Interviewer** [00:03:32] But they aren't really that anymore. There are other large unions now, larger ones.

**Horace Mackey** [00:03:37] Oh yes, the railway groups were the earliest organized groups in America outside of the Typographical Union. The Typographical Union, I think, were about the same as ours. Our organization, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, [train whistle] is over 100 years old.

**Interviewer** [00:04:00] In Vancouver?

**Horace Mackey** [00:04:01] No. In Vancouver, ours started in 1886.

**Interviewer** [00:04:05] 1886.

**Horace Mackey** [00:04:09] That's the charter that was given to us was in 1886.
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**Interviewer** [00:04:14] And you still hold the same charter?

**Horace Mackey** [00:04:16] We still hold the same charter.

**Unidentified** [00:04:20] Which makes you one of the oldest unions in the province. [train whistle]

[00:04:23] Well, that is correct.

**Interviewer** [00:04:27] What is the local number?

**Horace Mackey** [00:04:30] 320. Division 320 of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers.

**Interviewer** [00:04:34] You tried to organize other railways, for instance, on the Island?

**Horace Mackey** [00:04:40] On the island? Yes. In the early days, I was chairman of the railway on the E & N [Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway]. We gave the E & N a charter, they have a charter, the number 510, or 501.

**Interviewer** [00:04:59] What about Dunsmuir for instance?

**Horace Mackey** [00:05:03] I beg your pardon?

**Interviewer** [00:05:03] Dunsmuir. James Dunsmuir.

**Horace Mackey** [00:05:06] In the early days, James Dunsmuir didn't agree with us and we could never make a contract with him, but his engineers did come to our Division and were initiated in that. When the railway was taken over by the CPR, that would be in 1910 that the E & N was absorbed. We absorbed them right into the British Columbia district. Then the CPR found out they were up against troubles in regards to the Songhee[s] Indian Reserve over there. So Mr. Marpole came to me and asked me to again separate our schedules and seniority list from the E & N. When they got that settled, he would again amalgamate the schedules. Later in about 1913, Mr. Marpole came to me and was willing to do it. At that time, the men on the Island had already got their schedule and they didn't see fit to again become part of the British Columbia district. Since that have been the E & N Railway subject to themselves and at that time their own local.

**Interviewer** [00:06:37] But you never organized Dunsmuir?

**Horace Mackey** [00:06:40] We could not organize under Dunsmuir.

**Interviewer** [00:06:42] Do you remember anything about that?

**Horace Mackey** [00:06:43] We could never do anything with Mr. Dunsmuir. You must remember, that's when Mr. Hawthornthwaite and Parker Williams, Parker Williams went to jail, you know, over that. That was the miners' strike. That was in nineteen hundred and—.

**Interviewer** [00:07:07] 12? 14?

**Horace Mackey** [00:07:07] Oh no, no, previous to that.

**Interviewer** [00:07:11] Previous to that.

**Horace Mackey** [00:07:15] Miners' strike must have been between 1903, 1904, 1905, something like that.

**Interviewer** [00:07:26] The big strike then?

**Horace Mackey** [00:07:27] There was a big strike then.

**Interviewer** [00:07:28] You refused to cross the lines?

**Horace Mackey** [00:07:31] There was no such thing as picket lines in those days, brother. That's something later. In my early days, as far as the railways were concerned, they didn't realize anything about picket lines. You must remember the first person that brought picket lines and the one person in this world that made it was Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. She refused to go across a picket line that they were picketing some hotel and she refused to go into the hotel. Now, that's the first time that I realized that picket lines were observed. Previous to that, picket lines were not observed, and she was one of the great women of the world that did that. In our early days, we had a contract. As far as we were concerned, railway men it didn't matter what it was, our contract with our contract and we carried that out. Since that, of course, we like to say to other people, "we don't cross picket lines", but you must remember the picket line business has only come into effect just as I tell you.

**Interviewer** [00:08:45] Eleanor Roosevelt.

**Horace Mackey** [00:08:46] I think you're the same as I say, that Mrs. Roosevelt we've got to thank her. She was the lady, that first refused to go across a picket line.

**Interviewer** [00:08:55] When was this? Do you remember the date? What the strike was?

**Horace Mackey** [00:09:00] It was during Mr. Roosevelt's time. We've got to go back. That would be, I can't remember the date, [clock chimes] but you can look that up. You'll have to make a little research on these things, you know, because what I am giving you, I'm only giving you from memory. You can find out when Mrs. Roosevelt, that'll be down here in the library, you'll be able to find that out, when she refused and she did make an issue of it.

**Interviewer** [00:09:36] Do you remember what strike it was?

**Horace Mackey** [00:09:40] It was hotel people evidently. I think so, anyway. Whatever it was, she refused to go across the picket line, and then organized labor took that up. They refused to go over other people's picket lines. She really is the woman that established it as far as I can remember. I do take my hat off to her for that.

**Interviewer** [00:10:09] Do you remember anything about trying, there must have been attempts to organize on the Island under Dunsmuir.

**Horace Mackey** [00:10:16] There was never any attempt to organize. There was nobody to organize. The crews there was so fearful of losing their jobs that they couldn't get to organize them. You must remember in the early days it wasn't like it is today, you know, to go out and organize people. People had to get that thought themselves that they wanted to

join an organization. When I joined an organization, just if you read there what I give you, men came and asked to join the Firemen's organization and were willing to pay $2.00 application and $10.00 initiation fee. By gosh that was a lot of money in those days, boy, because I'm going to tell you, those fellows were only earning $1.50 and $1.68 a day. Who would right now be willing to go to work and sacrifice ten days' pay to join an organization? Not very many. That would mean if a carpenter was joining today, you'd have to pay about $300. There is the documentary stuff in that little book there where these boys, and they came along and wanted to join. They were never asked. There was no organizer.

**Interviewer** [00:11:47] They didn't have to, they just wanted to.

**Horace Mackey** [00:11:49] They just wanted. They just knew that that was it. We had men, the first railway that was organized, that is the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers was organized on the Intercolonial Railway. They notified these men that when they organized they gave them 30 days or 20 days to quit the organization or leave the railway. A great number of the men did leave the railway. Mr. Creelman, Mr. McCarragher and Ed Austin and several other men.

**Horace Mackey** [00:12:34] They came out here on windjammers around the Horn, came out here because this railway was under construction. Mr. [Andrew] Onderdonk, he was a Jew, but he said, "I'll take you all," and he says, "You can organize out here if you wish to." He said, "I want engineers." They all went to work on this construction right out of Yale. That was in the early days of the construction of Canadian Pacific Railway. Those men gave up their job rather than quit their organization. I'm going back now to about 1880, 1881. Those were the men, Charlie Brown, another one, they were the men that made up or built up this labor group in British Columbia. They were the fellows that came here, were willing to give up rather than have the railway tell them that they had to quit.

**Interviewer** [00:13:44] They were Americans were they?

**Horace Mackey** [00:13:46] No, they were Canadians down on the Intercolonial Railway.

**Interviewer** [00:13:49] I mean, they came from the States?

**Horace Mackey** [00:13:51] No, no, they were they came up. In those days to get to British Columbia, you had to come around the Cape Horn. They were making steel for steel rails down there in Cape Breton. Those ships, those fellows came out here as sailors, out here to get a job on this construction out here on this end. Of course, we had many men, Ashe Kennedy and those people, they came up to Winnipeg and those were the men, the nucleus of the men that brought organization into this country.

**Interviewer** [00:14:32] They actually started organizing the railways around 1880?

**Horace Mackey** [00:14:38] 1886 was the first charter, that's our charter that was given in British Columbia for labor organization.

**Interviewer** [00:15:00] When did you join the union again? When was it?

**Horace Mackey** [00:15:03] I joined the Firemen in the year 1900. Then I stayed with the Firemen. I was promoted to be an engineer in 1903. Under the laws of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers in those days, a man had to serve one year as an engineer before he could apply to belong to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. You had to still belong to the Firemen until you could join the Engineers, so I made application to join the Engineers in 1904, and I joined the Engineers in January 1905.

**Interviewer** [00:15:54] You met some of the fellows that got the union started here?

**Horace Mackey** [00:15:58] I worked with them.

**Interviewer** [00:16:01] What do you remember of them?

**Horace Mackey** [00:16:02] Of course, when I started, the railway was only 15 years old.

**Interviewer** [00:16:09] Where were you working?

**Horace Mackey** [00:16:11] Out of here in Vancouver.

**Interviewer** [00:16:14] What do you remember of these pioneers, more or less, of the union?

**Horace Mackey** [00:16:20] I can only say that they were the strongest organized men that I've ever run up against. It was all Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, or Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, or Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, Order of Railway Conductors. They were all true to their organization. Whenever there was a meeting and they were in the city, they were at the meeting and they were voicing their opinion and they told their chairman what they wanted. Now, today, I find in all labor organizations, the membership do not attend. That's their trouble today. We don't get the men out to meetings that we should have. You can only get, the chairman is only one man. He can only think one way, but if you have 100 men and you have 100 different ideas, you can consolidate them and then maybe work something out. That's our trouble today. Men are just due payers as a rule. They're not members of organizations, they haven't got the organization at their heart.

**Interviewer** [00:17:31] It was a much livelier, more dedicated group?

**Horace Mackey** [00:17:36] They were dedicated to it. That is why our labor group has got to where it is. I can go back to your membership, the men that were dedicated. Percy Bengough, Chris Pritchard, Jamieson, you know, the Musicians' man. Those men are all dedicated men. Those fellows were dedicated to it. That's why we've come up. Phil Page, some of those fellows they were dedicated to what they were doing. But today, no, nobody cares. 'Let the executive do it.' Then they complain about what the executive does. They

don't attend the meetings. They have a voice the same as anybody else if they'd only exert it.

**Interviewer** [00:18:34] Who were the leaders of the first local?

**Horace Mackey** [00:18:41] Here in British Columbia? The first leader,that was Robert Mee. Bob Mee.

**Interviewer** [00:18:53] How do you spell his name? M-E?

**Horace Mackey** [00:18:54] M-E-E.

**Interviewer** [00:18:54] M-E-E.

**Horace Mackey** [00:18:56] Yes, and then I followed him.

**Interviewer** [00:19:02] I see. What do you remember of this fellow? What was he like?

**Horace Mackey** [00:19:10] He was a very fine gentleman. In those days, he was I guess he was one of the highest thought-of men in British Columbia as far as that's concerned. I'm talking when British Columbia was small, you know, and he had a lot of property here in Vancouver. He was quite a wealthy man. That is as it went in those days, you understand, of course nothing to what it would be today. I'm talking of pioneer days and Mr. Mee was very well thought of. Another gentleman that stood for a while was Mr. E.J. Hosker. Teddy Hosker.

**Interviewer** [00:19:56] How do you spell that?

**Horace Mackey** [00:19:57] H-O-S-K-E-R. Mr. Mee and then Mr. Mee dropped out for a while.

**Interviewer** [00:20:07] Was he president of the union?

**Horace Mackey** [00:20:09] I beg your pardon?

**Interviewer** [00:20:09] Was it the president?

**Horace Mackey** [00:20:11] Well, the president isn't the highest officer, the president of the organization. The chairman is the man that is really the

**Interviewer** [00:20:23] The big leader.

**Horace Mackey** [00:20:27] Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:20:27] He was the chairman?

**Horace Mackey** [00:20:28] He was the chairman.

**Interviewer** [00:20:29] The first chairman.

**Horace Mackey** [00:20:30] Of course, you have in presiding at the meeting, we call him the chief engineer. He  is the head of the organization, but the other officers, such as the legislative representative and the local chairman, what we call local chairman, that is your man that negotiates your contracts and that, they are the head of the organization really. The organization wouldn't exist without them.

**Interviewer** [00:21:08] Was he Canadian born man, Mee?

**Horace Mackey** [00:21:11] Yes, Robert Mee was. I think he was Irish.

**Interviewer** [00:21:13] Irish?

**Horace Mackey** [00:21:14] Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:21:15] How old was he?

**Horace Mackey** [00:21:16] I beg your pardon?

**Interviewer** [00:21:17] How old was he?

**Horace Mackey** [00:21:19] Well, he died when he was 57.

**Interviewer** [00:21:22] He was older than you. How many years older?

**Horace Mackey** [00:21:25] Gosh, I don't know. I was a boy of 19 when he was 55. All those men were older than me because I started on the railroad when I was 18.

**Interviewer** [00:21:38] This way.

**Horace Mackey** [00:21:38] I beg your pardon?

**Interviewer** [00:21:40] This way, if you compare it to you, we can figure out pretty well when he was born.

**Horace Mackey** [00:21:43] In those days, I used to think he was an old man, because all of those fellows used to have long whiskers in those days.

**Interviewer** [00:21:51] He was the fellow that organized it?

**Horace Mackey** [00:21:55] He was a very strong organizer. You might as well say he was a dictator because what words he said was law.

**Interviewer** [00:22:10] I see. What about the international. Did they send anybody up?

**Horace Mackey** [00:22:16] We never had any dealings much with the international. As far as our Brotherhood is concerned, there's none of our money goes out of Canada. I might tell you that. All our money, we don't pay any dues. We pay dues, but it's banked in Canada. I might tell you too, when times were hard in the United States, our organization was glad to have the money. We carry over $1 million in the Canadian Bank of Commerce in Toronto at all times. In addition to that we have bonds in all provinces. We have money invested in every province in Canada. So as far as our organization, and it's a very wealthy organization, our organization. We have two immense buildings in Cleveland, a bank building and [siren sounds] legal, so there's an organization that doesn't take one cent out of Canada. In fact, as I've told you before, they were glad to have their money because when the banks tied up in the United States we still had our money in Canada to operate, that they could draw on from and pay back when it's necessary. Of course we do support, [clock chiming] we have to pay our dues just to the grand office, the same as anybody else, but it's all done through our bank in Canada. At all times any officer that is paid by the grand office is paid in Canadian funds, not in American funds, because it's all drawn from our source in Canada, you understand.

**Interviewer** [00:24:14] Did the other railway unions organize at the same time as you did?

**Horace Mackey** [00:24:21] No, the engineers were the first and then the conductors followed, I think in about one year afterwards, I think.

**Interviewer** [00:24:33] When was the engineers?

**Horace Mackey** [00:24:37] Our organization organized?

**Interviewer** [00:24:40] Yes.

**Horace Mackey** [00:24:40] Our organization was the first organization as far as that's concerned, in the United States. When it was organized, it was organized in Detroit.

**Interviewer** [00:24:51] No, what I mean is in B,C.

**Horace Mackey** [00:24:52] In B.C., yes.

**Interviewer** [00:24:55] Was it all set up at once or how?

**Horace Mackey** [00:24:57] Our organization was the first one that organized and then the conductors started in 1887. I think that the trainmen and firemen followed as soon afterwards as possible. As I tell you, our men came out from the east that had left the Intercolonial, and they were the men that started this organization here. They did not have that same nucleus of men to draw from, to start conductors, trainmen and others. They had to get in line and follow what the engineers had first done.

**Interviewer** [00:25:45] Do you remember anything about them getting organized, or do you know anything about that?

**Horace Mackey** [00:25:50] That was before my time. That was in 1886.

**Interviewer** [00:25:53] Do you remember or do you know, whether they had much opposition from the CPR?

**Horace Mackey** [00:26:01] No.

**Interviewer** [00:26:02] Let's get back to the carpenters now.

**Horace Mackey** [00:26:06] Well I am talking about all trades that organized about this date. I do not think—

**Interviewer** [00:26:16] The 1890s, early 1890s.

**Horace Mackey** [00:26:18] 1898. I don't think that the attitude was fair and I don't think it's fair at this time either. If contractors have a certain amount of work and they have contracted on that basis, then of course in the early days there was no escalator clause to say if raise his wage then we'd have to have an increase in the price. The contract was set for that price and in that way the contractor was up against it and really forced him out of business altogether. I don't think was fair. If the if the contractor had been advised that when all such work that he had fully completed, then the increase would be such and such. I think they would have been more amicably settled at that time. It did work to the sort of great number of people. I must say there was a lumber firm at that time and they were only in a small way starting in business. That was Robertson Hackett, and they became quite financially embarrassed. While the banks did carry them on, these other contractors had to go out of business.

**Interviewer** [00:27:42] So they went out of business and you said that new people came in?

**Horace Mackey** [00:27:46] New people came in because there was a new era of other contractors because these people had gone out of business, they couldn't do anything else.

**Interviewer** [00:27:58] The new people were Americans mostly?

**Horace Mackey** [00:28:01] Well, there were mostly Americans that came up from the other side at that time and started in business here. You must remember we were just starting in an expansion then. It was quite a little boom going on in regard to expansion in this city. The city at that time only had a population I would say, of about maybe 40,000 or 50,000 people. That would be the outside. We did start to expand, because all that property in the West End was being opened up to settlement at that time, there was a lot of business that went on. So I think that—

**Interviewer** [00:28:54] Your father was an employer?

**Horace Mackey** [00:28:56] I beg your pardon?

**Interviewer** [00:28:56] Your father was an employer?

**Horace Mackey** [00:28:58] My father was a contractor and an employer.

**Interviewer** [00:29:00] And he went out of business.

**Horace Mackey** [00:29:02] He went out of business and returned to England.

**Interviewer** [00:29:08] Did he not try to do anything about it? Did they have a strike?

**Horace Mackey** [00:29:12] The Englishmen in those days, if he went bankrupt, it was supposed to hurt his character. [clock chimes] That's right. His character couldn't stand that. There was no there was no endeavor because what could you do? You just had to fold up.

**Interviewer** [00:29:32] What I mean was there, was no negotiation between the carpenters and the employers?

**Horace Mackey** [00:29:38] Well, the carpenters organized, and then they set a rate. It would have been a strike. That's all there was to it. They refused to work. When they joined, they joined an organization. There was no organization previous to this.

**Interviewer** [00:29:59] The employers had to give in?

**Horace Mackey** [00:30:00] The employers, there was nothing else for them to do. If you couldn't get men, what could you do?

**Interviewer** [00:30:06] They were pretty well organized then?

**Horace Mackey** [00:30:08] Well, they did. They organized very, very well. They did. They did a wonderful job of it because they jumped from $0.25 to $0.50 an hour.

**Interviewer** [00:30:18] Just like that.

**Horace Mackey** [00:30:20] For many years after that, they didn't make any more advances.

**Interviewer** [00:30:25] Do you remember how it happened? I mean, did they just meet?

**Horace Mackey** [00:30:29] I was young at that time. You must remember I was only a young fellow and didn't realize what really took place. I'm only saying that they did. My

father was in a very nice way here, and he just felt that he couldn't just take it and he just left the country. That's all there was to it.

**Interviewer** [00:30:53] So there was really no negotiation going?

**Horace Mackey** [00:30:57] I beg your pardon?

**Interviewer** [00:30:58] Was there any negotiation?

**Horace Mackey** [00:30:59] There was no negotiation.

**Interviewer** [00:31:00] It's just the carpenters decided?

**Horace Mackey** [00:31:03] It just came as a flash to the contractors at that time.

**Interviewer** [00:31:07] Well, what happened to them when the new contract was [unclear]?

**Horace Mackey** [00:31:10] Well, the new contractors worked, they knew that they had to pay that rate and that's all there was to it. A lot of these buildings had to be finished by other people because those people could not carry on. It was really a poorly handled thing at that time, I think. Being young, I can't remember all the incidents of it. I don't know, there may have been negotiations. I couldn't tell you because I wasn't part of my father's business by any means in those days.

**Interviewer** [00:31:48] Well, do you remember any other, this was in 1896 wasn't it?

**Horace Mackey** [00:31:56] It was between 1896 and 1898.

**Interviewer** [00:32:02] Do you remember anything else going on at that time?

**Horace Mackey** [00:32:08] That's the first that I remember of any organization. I know that in later years when I became organized to the railwaymen, saw what organization did, I know that I wanted to get unionized suits and I couldn't get a union suit in the city of Vancouver. I went after the Trades and Labor Council. The only people I could get with a union label in was the Tip Top Tailors. I might say that I have dealt with them ever since and every one of my suits you can see a label for the Tip Top Tailors.

**Interviewer** [00:33:01] I've got a union label here too.

**Horace Mackey** [00:33:06] What's yours?

**Interviewer** [00:33:07] It's Hudson's Bay, but it's a union suit.

**Horace Mackey** [00:33:12] I must say that one time I spoke to one of your gentlemen. I happened to be working with him on a board, and I asked him if he had any union labels

and he didn't have a union label on anything he had. My shoes were union label and my hat was union label. (laughs) That's what I say. We have that now, but I did in 1919, I went after, of course I was chairman then, I did go after the Trades and Labor Council, but they didn't have a union tailor. Mr. Cleland was the gentleman that I dealt with, and they didn't have anybody that they could recommend a union tailor.

**Interviewer** [00:34:05] That's funny because I was reading through the Labor Council minutes and this is 1902. They had a rule then at the Trades and Labor Council that every three months all the delegates were inspected and they had to have at least one union label. If they didn't have it the union was asked to withdraw the delegate.

**Horace Mackey** [00:34:36] In here?

**Interviewer** [00:34:37] In Vancouver.

**Horace Mackey** [00:34:37] In 1902?

**Interviewer** [00:34:39] That's right.

**Horace Mackey** [00:34:39] They had what?

**Interviewer** [00:34:40] They had a Union Label Committee and the committee would every three months inspect all the delegates to the Trades and Labor Council and check whether they had a union label on their clothes. If they didn't have it, the union would get warned. The second time, if they didn't have it for the second time, then the union would be asked to send a new delegate.

**Horace Mackey** [00:35:12] I think that's baloney.

**Interviewer** [00:35:14] You think so?

**Horace Mackey** [00:35:14] Yes sir, that's baloney, because I'm going to tell you in 1944, I was sitting on a board with the President of the Trades and Labor Council, and that's what I said to him. He didn't have a union label on anything. That's right. Now, I think what they've been telling you is baloney, because I'm telling you that between 1914 and 1919, I know it was between the First World War, and I can tell you, the two Claridge boys, you know them, one of his boys plays in the Lions. Well, Frank Claridge, he came to me and he was a wiper, but times were hard and he had to go to another job and he was selling suits. So I said, "All right, Frank, I'll buy a suit from you. You have union label?" So the outfit he was working for were up in that Rogers building. So they said, "Oh yes, we put the union label on." That is to sell me the suit. I bought the suit, I paid for the suit. No union label. So I went after this outfit. They gave me the runaround on it. So then I went after the Trades and Labor Council and they did not have a place in this city with the union label at that time on clothing. Frank Claridge can back me up in that because he's the boy that sold me the suit. It wasn't his fault because he went out and sold suits to all the railwaymen and they did not have it. I went after, I know that the gentleman I got a hold of

was a name, Mr. Cleland. If you look back in your records, I can't remember whether he was the president at that time or not, but he told me, "No, that they didn't have it." I had already bought from, had been dealing with the Tip Top and I deal with the Tip Top. The last suit I got was just last year. I've still been dealing with them because they've always given me the satisfaction. Nevertheless, that suit is made in Toronto. I'd sooner have it made in Vancouver, if I could.