

SP FC 3803 U54 N_5-4-trk2 Harry Neelands Pt 1.mp3
Recorded 1964
Transcribed by Donna Sacuta, 2025

Interviewer [00:00:00] This is an interview with

Harry Neelands [00:00:06] R.H. Harry Neelands.

Interviewer [00:00:11] Mr. Neelands, could you give us your date of birth and where you were born and when you came to British Columbia?

Harry Neelands [00:00:23] I was born in Ontario July 8th, 1881 in the farming area where my dad was a mechanic in woodworking and blacksmith shop work and he was doing the woodwork, and the repair, and maintenance of farm implements and things of that nature. I attended school for about three or four years, when as a boy of 10 years of age, with the family, we left this country district to arrive in Vancouver in 1891.

Interviewer [00:01:37] How old were you then?

Harry Neelands [00:01:38] I was 10 years of age, 1891. My dad had preceded us, the rest of the family, to B.C. by a year or so. He was employed at Victoria. We landed off the train in Vancouver and by boat to Victoria, where I attended school and served my apprenticeship after leaving school at the printing trade.

Interviewer [00:02:31] The printing trade, I see. When did you start work?

Harry Neelands [00:02:32] I started work when I was quite young. Much younger than the average youth today.

Interviewer [00:02:40] Do you remember the date or how old you were?

Harry Neelands [00:02:42] I was 13 years of age and did miscellaneous jobs for a short period that a boy of that age could pick up. Gradually I drifted into a printing office, served my apprenticeship.

Interviewer [00:03:05] Which one was that?

Harry Neelands [00:03:08] It was a job office, known as the T.R. Cusack Company of Victoria.

Interviewer [00:03:17] That was in Victoria?

Harry Neelands [00:03:19] That was in Victoria.

Interviewer [00:03:20] In Victoria.

Harry Neelands [00:03:23] Then I served my apprenticeship with him. I worked for approximately 18 months, subbing, picking up whatever work I could at the printing trade for those 18 months. When I joined the union, the Typographical Union in 1904. Then in September 1905, I came to Vancouver. With the exception of a short residence at White Rock since my retirement, I have been resident of Vancouver.

Interviewer [00:04:11] So you got into the printing trade in Victoria?

Harry Neelands [00:04:14] Yes.

Interviewer [00:04:15] And you joined the Typographical Union there?

Harry Neelands [00:04:19] In Victoria.

Interviewer [00:04:20] And there was a local there? Were they affiliated with the International Typographical Union?

Harry Neelands [00:04:29] Oh yes, yes.

Interviewer [00:04:30] Do you remember the local number? The number of the local? Do you remember?

Harry Neelands [00:04:34] 201.

Interviewer [00:04:37] 201. I see.

Interviewer [00:04:40] And do you remember anybody from there who was in the local then?

Harry Neelands [00:04:45] No, I was just a youngster. I didn't take a very active part further than attending their meetings regularly in Victoria.

Interviewer [00:05:02] Were they a pretty well-established union? Did they have a lot—how many members did they have?

Harry Neelands [00:05:09] It was small generally speaking, of course much smaller than the present time.

Interviewer [00:05:15] How many members do you think they had?

Harry Neelands [00:05:17] I'd say must be in the neighborhood of 50.

Interviewer [00:05:23] Then you came to Vancouver in 1903? 1904?

Harry Neelands [00:05:32] 1904 and worked in various offices. Some small offices, job offices, and then finally landed in The Province where I worked from approximately latter part of 1905 until 1912.

Interviewer [00:06:08] Now, when you worked there at the time, how were conditions different from today?

Harry Neelands [00:06:19] Well, all the facilities are much different nowadays than what they were. In fact, I'd be quite at a loss in a print shop today.

Interviewer [00:06:39] For instance, your pay, your hours.

Harry Neelands [00:06:41] The hours at that time for the job offices were eight hours a day labour and the newspaper seven and a half.

Interviewer [00:06:56] That's good. That's pretty good for the time.

Harry Neelands [00:07:01] Yes, for the times. That was pretty good standard.

Interviewer [00:07:08] Did you have a weekly wage or an hourly wage?

Harry Neelands [00:07:15] Daily.

Interviewer [00:07:17] Daily wage?

Harry Neelands [00:07:17] A daily wage and paid it weekly, \$21 a week.

Interviewer [00:07:25] \$21 a week.

Harry Neelands [00:07:26] Now they're getting over \$100.

Interviewer [00:07:31] But compared with the time, that was probably a fair wage. Would you say that? At that time, compared with other trades?

Harry Neelands [00:07:43] Yeah. Well, comparatively speaking, I would say there is some advantage, but not a great deal. For this reason. You take housing as an example. It used to take about a week's pay, of about \$18 to \$20 a week to pay a month. A week of pay for a month's rent. The present day you will pay \$100 or maybe a little bit more for the same accommodation. So relatively speaking, there is not a great deal of improvement. Of course, we have greater privileges, automobile, the average tradesman, at any rate, has an automobile. [unclear]

Interviewer [00:08:51] And you have holidays and pension plan.

Harry Neelands [00:08:55] Oh yes, holidays and monetary benefits, out of work benefits, sick benefits. [unclear]

Interviewer [00:09:03] Workmen's Compensation.

Harry Neelands [00:09:05] Yeah.

Interviewer [00:09:06] You didn't have that then, did you?

Harry Neelands [00:09:09] They were absolutely unknown, yeah, in my earlier days.

Interviewer [00:09:19] When you joined in Victoria, the union, you just joined because you arrived at work and there was a closed shop or?

Harry Neelands [00:09:28] Oh yes, absolutely closed shop.

Interviewer [00:09:31] So you just joined.

Harry Neelands [00:09:32] Yeah.

Interviewer [00:09:32] The same in Vancouver?

Harry Neelands [00:09:35] I beg your pardon?

Interviewer [00:09:36] When you came to Vancouver, there was also a closed shop?

Harry Neelands [00:09:39] Oh yes, yes.

Harry Neelands [00:09:42] I took a traveling transfer card from Victoria and deposited it in Vancouver. Conditions were pretty much the same, you know. Of course, that's the practice of the Typographical Union and no doubt with other organizations the same thing applies. I had a transfer card from Victoria, deposited it with the local secretary and just took on—

Interviewer [00:10:13] That saved you the initiation dues. You didn't have to pay any initiation dues or anything like that?

Harry Neelands [00:10:22] No, just deposit the card was sufficient.

Interviewer [00:10:27] Was there a lot of contact between the Victoria and the Vancouver locals?

Harry Neelands [00:10:31] No, no that was internationally. For example I could have gone to New York.

Interviewer [00:10:35] And it would have been the same.

Harry Neelands [00:10:37] Or Ottawa in Canada and had the same reception.

Interviewer [00:10:46] Was there any difference between the Vancouver and the Victoria locals when you moved to Vancouver? Did you notice any difference, was the one bigger?

Harry Neelands [00:10:56] They could change any union.

Interviewer [00:10:57] No, but I mean, you quit the Victoria local and you joined the Vancouver local. That was, what was the number of the local?

Harry Neelands [00:11:10] Vancouver was 226.

Interviewer [00:11:12] 226, and were they in any way different from Victoria, were they bigger, for instance?

Harry Neelands [00:11:19] Oh, it was a larger union.

Interviewer [00:11:21] How many members did they have?

Harry Neelands [00:11:28] The membership of Vancouver at that time would be 100 to 125, I would guess.

Interviewer [00:11:39] Do you remember who were the outstanding members of the local at that time?

Harry Neelands [00:11:45] That time? Well, I could mention our friend Pettipiece. There's one.

Interviewer [00:11:55] He joined around then, didn't he?

Harry Neelands [00:11:56] And a fellow named Billie Pound. Stuart Campbell.

Interviewer [00:12:02] Well, they don't have in here who the new members were, so

Harry Neelands [00:12:06] No, not at that time they hadn't. It's [unclear] the list of members for that group.

Interviewer [00:12:16] Mr. Pettipiece, did he joined about the same time?

Harry Neelands [00:12:19] Oh no, he was already.

Interviewer [00:12:21] He was already a member when you joined.

Harry Neelands [00:12:23] I mention his name as one who was a member in the organization at that time.

Interviewer [00:12:34] He was about your age, wasn't he? No? Pettipiece, how old was he?

Harry Neelands [00:12:41] He was approximately my age. Within maybe a year or so older and I'm presently 82. In a few weeks I'll be 83.

Interviewer [00:12:51] This is 1964, right?

Harry Neelands [00:12:57] [laughs]

Interviewer [00:12:57] Now do you remember anything else that you think is important about that you'd like to mention about the first days of the union?

Harry Neelands [00:13:10] Well, would you be interested in the buildings that the Trades Council was interested in, from that time on?

Interviewer [00:13:23] What do you mean by that?

Harry Neelands [00:13:25] Like we had labour headquarters.

Interviewer [00:13:28] You mean the Vancouver labour Council?

Harry Neelands [00:13:33] Of course not the Labor Council itself, but the Labor Council as a big shareholder. They have to have a name for the business administration of the building. So it's known as Labor Headquarters.

Interviewer [00:13:51] I see.

Harry Neelands [00:13:53] A joint company comprises the company that is operating the building. Now of which individual members are shareholders and also the Trades and Labor Council a big shareholder.

Interviewer [00:14:10] I see. Well, I don't really think, I'll just tell you, we have pretty good records of the Vancouver Labor Council. They have all the minutes. What I'm concerned with now is your own local union, first of all.

Harry Neelands [00:14:30] Yes.

Interviewer [00:14:31] And other things that happened, you know what I mean? I don't know, other strikes maybe that you remember directly.

Harry Neelands [00:14:46] There's one thing that might be of interest, and that is the number of people, both men and women, in the labour movement of Vancouver. During that time, so many have taken an active interest political[ly], and municipally, civic elections, provincial and otherwise. Of course the outstanding one as everyone will admit, our good friend Angus MacInnis with whom I was quite personally acquainted and many others. Back to the 50 more years ago since I came here the Typographical Union has contributed members to the civic administrations of South Vancouver when it was a municipality. Point Grey when it was a municipality. Vancouver City, North Vancouver and Burnaby at different times and at the present time, some of them have labour representation.

Interviewer [00:16:12] Could you tell us who they were?

Harry Neelands [00:16:14] Yes. Go back to W.A. Pound, Stuart Campbell.

Interviewer [00:16:22] Where did Mr. Pound, what was he in, in the civic government?

Harry Neelands [00:16:28] He was reeve of South Vancouver. Stuart Campbell was a councilor.

Interviewer [00:16:37] In South Vancouver?

Harry Neelands [00:16:37] Yes, George Hardy who was a carpenter also was a councillor in South Vancouver.

Interviewer [00:16:49] When was this, about?

Harry Neelands [00:16:52] 1912. Around then, in that neighbourhood. A little later in Point Grey a fellow called Wilton, another printer, was on the school board several years.

Interviewer [00:17:10] Do you remember how many years?

Harry Neelands [00:17:12] No, I don't know exactly.

Interviewer [00:17:14] How do you spell that?

Harry Neelands [00:17:16] Around the twenties.

Interviewer [00:17:18] How do you spell his name?

Harry Neelands [00:17:21] Wilton. W-I-L-T-O-N. And Harry Corey, Councilor.

Interviewer [00:17:27] Is that C-O-R-E-Y?

Harry Neelands [00:17:30] C-O-R-E-Y. He was the councilor for Vancouver City. And Angus MacInnis, of course, was on the school board in the city a number of years. Around 1912, I'd say.

Interviewer [00:17:57] That's when he first, he must have been quite a young man.

Harry Neelands [00:18:00] Yes, around that period.

Interviewer [00:18:06] What union was he in again, Angus MacInnis? He was in what union?

Harry Neelands [00:18:15] Street Railwaymen, yes. Corey was a printer.

Interviewer [00:18:18] Did you know all these men?

Harry Neelands [00:18:20] Oh yes, knew them personally.

Interviewer [00:18:22] Where did you meet them?

Harry Neelands [00:18:24] Well, I guess my association, I would rather say.

Interviewer [00:18:30] Did you run as labour candidate?

Harry Neelands [00:18:38] Those first fellows I mentioned, Wilton, Stuart Campbell, Corey, Pettipiece, so on, I met them typographically. And being a delegate to the Trades and Labor Council I met others. Other trades, Jimmy Smith for an example, one of the members of the carpenters.

Interviewer [00:18:59] Was he elected anywhere too?

Harry Neelands [00:19:01] Him? Councilor of South Vancouver. George Hardy another councilor in the early period.

Interviewer [00:19:10] He was in what?

Harry Neelands [00:19:11] Helena Gutteridge, an alderman.

Interviewer [00:19:11] Oh yes. She was in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers.

Harry Neelands [00:19:18] That's right. Jim McVety, of course he wasn't active in the political field, but he had prominent positions similar to what Chris Pritchard had.

Interviewer [00:19:35] And you met most of these people in the Vancouver Labor Council?

Harry Neelands [00:19:38] Yes, that's right.

Interviewer [00:19:39] And did you run as labour candidates or as what, Socialist Party, or what was it? Or just as independents or Liberals?

Harry Neelands [00:19:49] In the early days, they ran as independents and were endorsed by the Labor Council as saw fit to endorse them. They were endorsed by the labour council.

Interviewer [00:20:04] That was most of the people you've mentioned then ran as independents?

Harry Neelands [00:20:07] Yeah and North Shore, for example, there's another printer member of provincial parliament. Mel Bryan.

Interviewer [00:20:16] Mel Bryan, I see. I've heard of him. He became a Liberal and then a Socred, and then a Liberal again and then they dropped him. You knew him when?

Harry Neelands [00:20:29] 1920 on.

Interviewer [00:20:34] He was first an independent? Was he an Independent Labor candidate?

[00:20:39] No, no, he was a straight Liberal. Sure. At the same time I was in the legislature.

Interviewer [00:20:47] Which?

Harry Neelands [00:20:49] Representing the Independent Labor Party (ILP) at that time.

Interviewer [00:20:54] The ILP?

Harry Neelands [00:20:55] Yeah, Sam Guthrie was there at the same time.

Interviewer [00:20:58] Now you were elected in 1920?

Harry Neelands [00:21:01] 1920 'til 1928.

Interviewer [00:21:04] Until 1928, and then you were defeated.

Harry Neelands [00:21:07] Defeated.

Interviewer [00:21:11] So, we'll get down to that later, but a lot of these people that got elected it was only one term very often. Like Miss Gutteridge, she was only in for one term. How do you explain that? I mean, how do you keep—

Harry Neelands [00:21:36] I don't know, I haven't any explanation, real explanation for that.

Interviewer [00:21:50] How do you explain that today, labour can't get people? At that time they did.

Harry Neelands [00:21:58] Labour doesn't seem to be taking—that is organized labour—doesn't seem to be taking interests politically as they did a few years ago.

Interviewer [00:22:08] Well, they did. I remember in 1958 before the recent legislation, they used to run candidates. Paddy Neale and so on, they didn't get elected, really. They

made a fairly good showing but they never got in. But you all succeeded in the 1912, 1920. You succeeded in getting elected. How do you, did you have a very active campaign? Was this it? Was the campaign better, or what? Was it easier to get in?

Harry Neelands [00:22:51] I'm sorry, I don't think I have any real explanation for that. I also often wondered whether there is the same interest taken by the working man as an individual now as there was then. Because they got so much, that some of them seem to be quite satisfied. Another thing is the big factor in the success of that time was the propaganda that was carried on constantly. Street corner meetings. They take the Independent Labor Party, which has now graduated in the street corner talks. Pettipiece, I've seen him on the soapbox corner of Hastings and—what is just the next street that joins in there? Well anyway, on the street corners amidst Vancouver soapboxing Saturday nights. The old Independent Labor Party weekly meetings would fill a theatre in the movie places for a Sunday night's meeting and good liberal collections to maintain the conduct of their affairs in the meantime. Whereas now, I doubt very much if that could be accomplished.

Interviewer [00:24:47] Your trade union. Did they help in this sort of thing?

Harry Neelands [00:24:52] Well, the trade union was possibly not as politically minded because it was composed, like it is at the present time, of maybe to a greater extent, of every party conceivable. Our good friend the late Parm Pettipiece many times say that, 'any organization in the labour movement could supply a political candidate for any political party that might be in existence.' So there wasn't the same unity in that respect as there is now.

Interviewer [00:25:39] But the members were more active is that it, themselves?

Harry Neelands [00:25:44] The individual members was more active and more concerned.

Interviewer [00:25:48] You talked about this on the job I suppose?

Harry Neelands [00:25:50] Yes.

Interviewer [00:25:51] And you spread the word around, that right?

Harry Neelands [00:25:54] Yeah. That's right.

Interviewer [00:25:57] Now, there were a lot of different parties, a lot of different sort of left-wing or working-class parties. Do you remember getting—how did you come in contact with all this? When you came to BC, for instance, you have no political leanings.

Harry Neelands [00:26:18] No. Well, my first venture, insofar as political action was concerned, was in South Vancouver and about the only explanation I could offer, I had no inclination personally, no thought of such a thing. But there happened to be this Mr. Pound that I mentioned, a member of the Typographical Union with whom I was working in The Province at the time was the Mayor, or at least Reeve, of the District of South Vancouver. I had a personal contact there. He was interested in municipal politics at that time and a vacancy on the school board, and he thought, well, maybe I'd make a candidate. I won there.

Interviewer [00:27:18] When was this?

Harry Neelands [00:27:19] 1912.

Interviewer [00:27:21] So you first got elected to the school board in 1912?

Harry Neelands [00:27:25] That's right.

Interviewer [00:27:26] And was this a byelection or general election?

Harry Neelands [00:27:28] No straight election.

Interviewer [00:27:31] And you ran as what?

Harry Neelands [00:27:36] Labour. Labour candidate, member of trades union.

Interviewer [00:27:42] Were you opposed?

Harry Neelands [00:27:44] Opposed? Oh yes. There were several candidates.

Interviewer [00:27:49] Like what? Were they different parties?

Harry Neelands [00:27:54] Yeah, well insofar as school boards are represented, there were other parties. There was a Conservative ran at the same time and another person who was a member who was a Liberal. I know that and I was on as Labor. I did fairly well politically that way as far as winning was concerned. Because from then on as a result, I can only attribute to applying my trades union principles to the conduct of affairs in school board operations. That was only explanation I could offer, and I consequently won every election that I stood for school board in South Vancouver until amalgamation. Then after amalgamation based on that reputation, I was nominated for the Vancouver City school board and I won there, I was a member there for some considerable time.

Interviewer [00:29:10] Until when? Do you remember when, until when?

Harry Neelands [00:29:16] When did I quit the school board?

Interviewer [00:29:18] Don't remember, eh?

Harry Neelands [00:29:19] [Laughs] I tell you, there's so many of these, I get the dates conflicted.

Interviewer [00:29:28] You said you ran in 1912, but you arrived in Victoria and then you came to Vancouver in 1904. Now, when you arrived, something between 1904 and 1912 must have, you know, got you politically interested. For instance, did you consider yourself, what were your political opinions in 1912? I mean, were you a socialist or what did you consider yourself?

Harry Neelands [00:30:04] Not affiliated. It was simply towards, might say, my main interest was to make some contribution to the welfare of the average individual by political action, it would assist. If there's a possibility that I could make a contribution in that regard, I would take advantage of the opportunity. I found that so in the school board because I pleaded the cause of the teachers and the employees of the school board mainly. South

Vancouver was fertile because that was populated by working people and consequently my ideas were acceptable.

Interviewer [00:31:01] Now what platform did you run on? Just a general sort of thing?

Harry Neelands [00:31:04] You know, just as it says.

Interviewer [00:31:07] So you did not run as a socialist?

Harry Neelands [00:31:09] No.

Interviewer [00:31:10] And were there other people running then that you knew that were?

Harry Neelands [00:31:14] No. No, I don't know.

Interviewer [00:31:17] Well, for instance, what about Angus MacInnis?

Harry Neelands [00:31:20] Yes Angus.

Interviewer [00:31:25] And what about Mr. Pound?

Harry Neelands [00:31:28] Pound? Conservative.

Interviewer [00:31:31] He was a Conservative?

Harry Neelands [00:31:32] He was Reeve of South Vancouver.

Interviewer [00:31:34] He was reeve but he was in the trade union.

Harry Neelands [00:31:36] He was a member of the trade union.

Interviewer [00:31:36] And did he run as a labour candidate?

Harry Neelands [00:31:45] No. Of course it didn't mean that the party politics didn't enter into municipal affairs. But in a way it was provincial or federal election I know that he would vote Conservative.

Interviewer [00:31:59] Were you a member of any party then?

Harry Neelands [00:32:02] No I wasn't. No. No.

Interviewer [00:32:04] Well, now hold on. The ILP, that was a party wasn't it? You were a member of that?

Harry Neelands [00:32:08] Well, I don't think I was even a member of the ILP at that time. No, I don't think so. But I very soon got interested in the ILP and was endorsed by them in all my elections.

Interviewer [00:32:34] Now you were just endorsed?

Harry Neelands [00:32:36] Yeah.

Interviewer [00:32:37] How did you go about getting endorsed?

Harry Neelands [00:32:40] Well, I was a member, an active member.

Interviewer [00:32:43] They had a meeting for selecting candidates?

Harry Neelands [00:32:46] For nominating their candidates, yeah.

Interviewer [00:32:49] What did you do, did you get up and speak?

Harry Neelands [00:32:51] Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer [00:32:52] And then they vote? You were endorsed?

Harry Neelands [00:32:56] Yeah.

Interviewer [00:32:58] Who else ran with you? Who were your running mates? Say, in 1912. Can't remember?

Harry Neelands [00:33:09] No, I couldn't remember. 1912 of course, the party politics wouldn't be a factor then. Not in my experience anyway.

Interviewer [00:33:29] Who put up your campaign? Did your local union help?

Harry Neelands [00:33:35] They would have. Yes. For my first election to the school board in South Vancouver I don't recollect any particular organization had my backing at all. I just went in as an individual and if I were to suspect any real factor in it would be my friendship with this fellow Pound and Stuart Campbell, who were members of the city council there and would be candidates at the same time for their respective offices.

Interviewer [00:34:31] Let's go back to the union for a moment. You became the secretary of the local, did you not? I have March 28, 1909. Is that right?

Harry Neelands [00:34:53] Yeah.

Interviewer [00:34:54] That's what the union history says. Do you remember anything about that? Do you remember anything about that? Well, becoming secretary?

Harry Neelands [00:35:06] I just remember that the secretary in office at that time came into business for himself, which disqualified him for the position. At a regular meeting, I was nominated to follow him and won.

Interviewer [00:35:27] What was his name? Do you know?

Harry Neelands [00:35:29] Harry Cowan.

Interviewer [00:35:31] Harry Cowan?

Harry Neelands [00:35:35] The firm is out of business now. Cowan is deceased of course. They had another partner, Brookhouse, also deceased.

Interviewer [00:35:50] How many members were there in the union?

Harry Neelands [00:35:53] 220 or so.

Interviewer [00:35:54] 220?

Harry Neelands [00:35:54] No. 120. Yeah. Approximately that.

Interviewer [00:36:03] I have in here that in 1911, you voted for a general strike, subject to endorsement by the ITU (International Typographical Union) executive? And you didn't get the endorsement?

Harry Neelands [00:36:16] No, no, no, no. I think that time it was, really the initial concern was the building trades. That's as I remember. Oh no, our international wouldn't stand for a general strike.

Interviewer [00:36:40] Why did you call, why did you vote for going on it? What was the issue for general strike? Why did you vote to go on general strike?

Harry Neelands [00:36:50] Why did?

Interviewer [00:36:51] Why did you decide to go on a general strike? Was there any one particular issue?

Harry Neelands [00:36:58] Our sympathies were with our friends which we were associating day by day. But a general strike was against the policy of the International Typographical Union and we would have to get their consent to participate. We didn't get their consent hence we couldn't take active participation in it.

Interviewer [00:37:25] But what I want, what I'd like to know is why did you think you'd like to go on a general strike? I mean, that is a pretty serious thing to do. You don't do that just for fun. Was it IWW [Industrial Workers of the World] influence or was it a particular labour issue that was important?

Harry Neelands [00:37:53] No, no, it was just that we're in sympathy with the people who were active in it and with whom we in daily contact. Naturally, our sympathies was towards them, but our rules and regulations wouldn't permit it.

Interviewer [00:38:22] But now, who were the people you say? You mean just all the trade unions? When you say, 'the people you were in contact with', you were sympathetic to? Do you mean other trade unionists?

Harry Neelands [00:38:37] Other trade unions who were involved.

Interviewer [00:38:53] I'll read out what it says. It says, "resolved that providing number 226 gets endorsement of ITU executive council, the local Typographical Union will join other unions in general strike on Monday, June 5, 1911. I was just wondering whether there was a big issue there. Was it overthrowing? What were you trying to accomplish with it?

Harry Neelands [00:39:22] Well, it's some protection.

Harry Neelands [00:39:24] Against what?

Harry Neelands [00:39:25] Our own international. If we had acted in face of the instructions from our headquarters, our charter could have been withdrawn. We would have been out of existence.

Interviewer [00:39:43] But when you passed the resolution, you decided you don't want to be on strike.

Harry Neelands [00:39:46] Well.

Interviewer [00:39:48] What were you trying to achieve with that.?

Harry Neelands [00:39:51] Maybe I voted against it. I don't know. (laughs)

Interviewer [00:39:54] But what if the membership had voted for it? Who proposed it?

Harry Neelands [00:40:00] I don't know. No, no.

Interviewer [00:40:02] And you don't remember what exactly they were after?

Harry Neelands [00:40:04] No. No, I couldn't recall the debate on it at all.

Interviewer [00:40:09] I'm just wondering, I guess. At that time, they also had a full-time secretary. You were the first, is that right?

Harry Neelands [00:40:26] Yes.

Interviewer [00:40:26] You became a paid secretary also in 1911. Up until then, you hadn't had them. Up to then your union hadn't had a paid secretary.

Harry Neelands [00:40:39] No. He was paid for a nominal amount you know. He did the clerical work in his spare time.

Interviewer [00:40:53] But not enough.

Harry Neelands [00:40:55] No, no. Just in a sense to compensate. It was a token.

Interviewer [00:41:07] This is a sign really that the union was getting stronger.

Harry Neelands [00:41:10] Yes. Yeah.

Interviewer [00:41:11] How many members that they have by then? Do you know?

Harry Neelands [00:41:14] I'd say it was in the neighbourhood of 200.

Interviewer [00:41:23] I see, 200 members, and they didn't have any problems really of losing certification or anything like that. So they felt fairly secure.

Harry Neelands [00:41:35] Yeah.

Interviewer [00:41:35] Would you say that?

Harry Neelands [00:41:38] Yes. Yes.

Interviewer [00:41:42] Now, you were also a delegate to the Allied Printing Trades Council, also in the same year? Was this the first time this was set up, this council?

Harry Neelands [00:42:05] Oh no, no. It had been in existence for years and years.

Interviewer [00:42:11] Before you came to town.

Harry Neelands [00:42:11] Before I

Interviewer [00:42:15] Is there anything noteworthy about the council that you'd like to say?

Harry Neelands [00:42:20] No, it was largely composed of the trades involved in the newspaper and job printing and it was merely to protect the interests of whatever joint way we could act of the people associated in the printing business.

Interviewer [00:42:54] How long did you stay on this council?

Harry Neelands [00:42:58] Just a few years.

Interviewer [00:42:59] Just a few years.

Harry Neelands [00:43:01] The delegates

Interviewer [00:43:03] rotated

Harry Neelands [00:43:06] rotated quite frequently.

Harry Neelands [00:43:09] And nothing particularly happened?

Harry Neelands [00:43:11] No, no, no, no.

Interviewer [00:43:14] At that time you were handing out union labels already?

Harry Neelands [00:43:17] That's right, yes. We were trying to organize a shop that might open up if necessary. What I mean by 'if necessary' it may be opened up by people who were not interested in the Typographical Union and the Allied Council would use its influence to square up a shop, make it a union one.

Interviewer [00:43:49] How did your organization drives go at that time? Did you pretty well have Vancouver organized?

Harry Neelands [00:43:56] Yes. Yes, pretty well organized.

Interviewer [00:44:00] Everything, except what? For instance, where were your biggest centres of members, which were the biggest shops you had organized?

Harry Neelands [00:44:19] [unclear] in Newton and at that time would be.

Interviewer [00:44:20] The World?

Harry Neelands [00:44:22] The World and The Province. Well The World and The Province would be pretty much on a par. Both were fairly substantial papers.

Interviewer [00:44:37] Did you have at that time any strikes? Did you lose any shops around then?

Harry Neelands [00:44:44] Wait, I'm sorry.

Interviewer [00:44:46] Did you lose any shops around then? Did your union and get decertified in any shops? Did you lose any strikes?

Harry Neelands [00:45:13] [unclear] Outside of one or two smaller shops that we would lose and we would lose them in this respect. They wouldn't agree to a scale that had recently been negotiated and consequently, unless they would accept that scale, we withdrew our members and some of them carried on as best they could under nonunion conditions. That applied in the job industry, not the newspapers.

Interviewer [00:45:53] They were all organized? You never had any problems?

Harry Neelands [00:45:56] Oh, no.

Interviewer [00:45:57] Is there anything else that you have to tell up to the First World War? Do you remember any of the other organizing campaigns or strikes, for instance, in the other unions?

Harry Neelands [00:46:19] No, I don't think at this moment.

Interviewer [00:46:20] For instance you were on the Vancouver Labor Council were you not?

Harry Neelands [00:46:25] I was president of the council for a spell. Oh yeah.

Interviewer [00:46:28] When did you become president?

Harry Neelands [00:46:32] That's just a matter of record. I was delegate for quite a number of years, but in the early 20s there was many—

Interviewer [00:46:44] After the war?

Harry Neelands [00:46:46] After the

Interviewer [00:46:47] First World War?

Harry Neelands [00:46:49] Well, I was a delegate to the council prior to the war.

Interviewer [00:46:55] But you were president after the war?

Harry Neelands [00:46:59] Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer [00:47:03] Now, Mr. Pettipiece, he was active in it too, wasn't he? In the Vancouver Labor Council?

Harry Neelands [00:47:09] Yes. Yes.

Interviewer [00:47:12] And he was what? He was secretary, was he?

Harry Neelands [00:47:18] Secretary of the council. Then McVety was president.

Interviewer [00:47:29] During the war did you go overseas at all? You stayed in Vancouver?

Harry Neelands [00:47:34] No, I didn't leave Vancouver.

Interviewer [00:47:37] You didn't leave Vancouver. Were you involved then in 1918? The Labor Council, the Labor Temple was stormed by—

Harry Neelands [00:47:49] Oh. I was there.

Interviewer [00:47:51] You were right there?

Harry Neelands [00:47:51] I was in the building.

Interviewer [00:47:52] You were in the building?

Harry Neelands [00:47:53] Yeah.

Interviewer [00:47:54] Were you on the executive?

Harry Neelands [00:47:57] I stayed in my office and wasn't bothered.

Interviewer [00:48:00] You stayed in your office, and you weren't bothered?

Harry Neelands [00:48:02] Yeah.

Interviewer [00:48:02] I see. Did you see any of it or you just heard?

Harry Neelands [00:48:07] No, I just sat in my office minded my own business.

Interviewer [00:48:15] And this was about, what were the issues? How did this all come about, do you know? How did people come to storm the Vancouver Labor Council?

Harry Neelands [00:48:31] Well, I don't know. It was anti war.

Interviewer [00:48:37] The Labor Council was anti war?

Harry Neelands [00:48:42] I would only surmise that was the main thing. I think that given the attack on the labour headquarters was originated by some of the business concerns. I think they were the force behind the scenes.

Interviewer [00:49:07] Is this just suspicion, or do you have any indication that this is the case? Do you have any kind of hint that this was the case or did you just suspect it?

Harry Neelands [00:49:20] Just suspected, yeah.

Interviewer [00:49:24] Just suspected but you don't know.

Harry Neelands [00:49:25] Oh, yes, sure. It's only an individual opinion that I have. I don't know.

Interviewer [00:49:31] But you don't really know?

Harry Neelands [00:49:32] No.

Interviewer [00:49:34] Now, there was a strike, wasn't that the case? It was after Ginger Goodwin's death, isn't that right? What about the OBU, One Big Union? Do you remember getting in contact with them?

Harry Neelands [00:49:49] No, not contact. I know that our organization was opposed to it.

Interviewer [00:49:58] And you were opposed to the general strike?

Harry Neelands [00:50:00] Yes. Yeah.

Interviewer [00:50:02] And why was this? Why? Do you remember why you were?

Harry Neelands [00:50:16] Well, the enormity of such an occurrence is the one thing that would be a deterrence as far as the typos were concerned and in addition to that, as I just mentioned before, the international wouldn't support it.

Interviewer [00:50:38] That's right, and that was sufficient reason for your local?

Harry Neelands [00:50:45] Oh yes.

Interviewer [00:50:46] They didn't want to lose their charter?

Harry Neelands [00:50:46] Oh no, couldn't afford to.

Interviewer [00:50:52] In 1920, you were elected an MLA for Vancouver South.

Harry Neelands [00:50:57] Yeah.

Interviewer [00:50:59] Was this the Independent Labor Party [ILP] delegate?

Harry Neelands [00:51:02] That's right.

Interviewer [00:51:02] How did you get to be elected delegate? How did you get to be nominated by the ILP?

Harry Neelands [00:51:07] By the party.

Interviewer [00:51:09] By the party? You were a member?

Harry Neelands [00:51:11] I was a member of the party yes. Yeah.

Interviewer [00:51:17] Who approached you? Do you remember?

Harry Neelands [00:51:22] No, it would be at one of their general meetings of the local branch of the ILP. Who did it, who did the approaching, I'm not, no knowledge.

Interviewer [00:51:41] Was this a Vancouver South branch or did you have?

Harry Neelands [00:51:45] South Van.

Interviewer [00:51:46] South Van branch?

Harry Neelands [00:51:48] Yes.

Interviewer [00:51:49] Did you have a local in the constituency?

Harry Neelands [00:51:51] Yes.

Interviewer [00:51:54] Who else was a member? Do you remember anybody else who was in that branch? Were you an executive officer?

Harry Neelands [00:52:02] Oh, Harry Cottrell, street railwayman. Jack Sidaway, another street railwayman.

Interviewer [00:52:10] How do you spell those names?

Harry Neelands [00:52:11] Sidaway. S-I-D-A-W-A-Y. Harry Cottrell. C-O-T-T-R-E-L-L.

Interviewer [00:52:24] Cottrell was in the street railwaymen? Was he a friend of Angus MacInnis?

Harry Neelands [00:52:28] Yes. Yes.

Interviewer [00:52:29] And the other fellow, who was in? [Sidaway] which union?

Harry Neelands [00:52:37] Midgely [Sidaway]

Interviewer [00:52:37] Midgely [Sidaway]. What union was he in?

Harry Neelands [00:52:41] He was in the street railwaymen also.

Interviewer [00:52:47] How big was the branch, in Vancouver South? South Vancouver?

Harry Neelands [00:52:53] I'd say about 50.

Interviewer [00:52:58] 50 members? Did you run against anybody for the nomination or was it by acclamation?

Harry Neelands [00:53:15] I think I got it acclamation, largely influenced from the fact that

Interviewer [00:53:22] You were on the school board?

Harry Neelands [00:53:23] My experience on the school board happened to create some confidence. That's the only explanation I could make.

Interviewer [00:53:35] You were a bit known in the area?

Harry Neelands [00:53:37] Well, to the school board attendees. Yeah.

Interviewer [00:53:45] Do you remember the campaign at all? What you campaigned on?

Harry Neelands [00:53:49] Well, the main factor of the campaign that I can say right away full knowledge, it cost us \$120 to elect me to Victoria. Volunteer labour in abundance. Oh, it was most gratifying, the support I got. Unexpected. Like a bolt from the blue. I was nominated to carry [unclear] as the vehicle to propagate things in the ILP. That's how I was elected.

Interviewer [00:54:45] Do you remember roughly what time of the year you were nominated?

Harry Neelands [00:54:50] In the fall.

Interviewer [00:54:51] In the fall, and when was the election, also in the fall?

Harry Neelands [00:54:54] Yes.

Interviewer [00:54:56] How much time did you have then?

Harry Neelands [00:54:58] A few weeks.

Interviewer [00:54:58] A few weeks to campaign and you won? That wasn't really much was it? Was it a snap election, or I mean, why did you wait until the last minute for running? That's just the way it was always done?

Harry Neelands [00:55:18] It was a general election.

Interviewer [00:55:20] What I mean is that sometimes people get nominated a year in advance.

Harry Neelands [00:55:24] No, no. It was just a few weeks ahead of the, but in the meantime, we'd been carrying on ILP community meetings, propaganda meetings, one or the other.

Interviewer [00:55:44] Which of the unions mostly supported your campaign?

Harry Neelands [00:55:49] The street railwaymen were strong supporters always. Carpenters to a large extent. My own union, I got personal support, and a result of what influence they could create for their brother.

Interviewer [00:56:13] Who was in it from the Carpenters?

Harry Neelands [00:56:18] I would just add Jimmy Smith, I mentioned. George Harley. That's two I know.

Interviewer [00:56:31] Were you on the executive of the local ILP there?

Harry Neelands [00:56:32] Oh, yes. Secretary for a period.

Interviewer [00:56:39] When did you get active? Yeah, you got active in 1912. What can you tell me about the ILP? When do you think it got started?

Harry Neelands [00:56:56] Well, it started by possibly the Socialist Party of Canada was a big factor in the formation of the ILP. In this respect. There was quite an element of the trade union movement that were fairly advanced in their thinking, not to a point where they were willing to accept the purely socialist. So therefore we formed what we called the Independent Labor Party with a measure of socialist ideas and with the object that we had in mind at that time of bringing in immediate effect, or as quickly as possible, some of the ideas that [unclear] and we thought would end up taking interest at the time more than a lifetime, which as far as politics were concerned, has developed, to my way of thinking any rate, along that line. Because the present NDP in its composition is a far cry from the Independent Labor Party. We didn't have professionals, university professors, and school principals, and top notch doctors in our ranks. It was the rank and file, pick and shovel, working man.

Interviewer [00:59:02] You were all working men?

Harry Neelands [00:59:03] All working men. Working for shorter hours if we could get them and when we could get them, better working conditions, sanitary improvements and things of that nature. We wanted it today, not some time in the unforeseen future. Now that's my impression of formation of the ILP. It had its graduation: it was ILP to start, Canadian Labor Party later on, CCF at a later period again. Now the NDP. What the future will be, goodness only knows.

Harry Neelands, c.1964, Part 2

Transcribed by Donna Sacuta

Interviewer [00:00:00] That's right. So what did you spent your \$120?

Harry Neelands [00:00:09] \$120. Literature and hiring halls.

Interviewer [00:00:13] Literature and hiring halls?

Harry Neelands [00:00:15] We took up collections at the meetings, the campaign meetings.

Interviewer [00:00:23] Where did you have your meetings?

Harry Neelands [00:00:29] School rooms and meeting halls scattered through the district.

Interviewer [00:00:34] And what kind of response did you get out?

Harry Neelands [00:00:38] Attendance? I'd say in the small population of the municipality of South Vancouver, nothing to get 250, 300 people out to a campaign meeting at that time.

Interviewer [00:01:00] Did you get any outside speakers in?

Harry Neelands [00:01:02] Oh yes. Tom Richardson, ex-member for the old country. J.S. Woodsworth another one. Ned Richard another one. I possibly shouldn't mention names because I forget more than I can remember. But at any rate.

Interviewer [00:01:24] Did J.S. Woodsworth help the campaign?

Harry Neelands [00:01:30] Yes, thank you and also to carry on propaganda meetings that we held Sunday nights right here at our theatres downtown.

Interviewer [00:01:42] Did he come every Sunday night?

Harry Neelands [00:01:45] Different. I would put up a different speaker every night if somebody was interested. If we get an outsider in, well we'd feature him. Otherwise
[unclear]

Interviewer [00:01:59] You had a meeting every Sunday night? An educational meeting?

Harry Neelands [00:02:01] An educational meeting, every Sunday night, and that seen us fill the Empress Theatre on Hastings Street.

Interviewer [00:02:06] An educational meeting?

Harry Neelands [00:02:06] Yeah. And another up in Mount Pleasant, on theatre I forget the name of it now, on the corner of Main Street and, the top of the hill.

Interviewer [00:02:21] Broadway?

Harry Neelands [00:02:23] Broadway yeah. Broadway and Main.

Interviewer [00:02:26] And how many people would that be?

Harry Neelands [00:02:28] Oh, there'd maybe be 100, 150.

Interviewer [00:02:31] And what kind of—how did you get in— was JS Woodworth in the Independent Labor Party? Was he in the Independent Labor Party? Woodsworth?

Harry Neelands [00:02:46] The Independent Labor Party was the responsible agent for these meetings.

Interviewer [00:02:53] What about Woodsworth, was he a member of the party?

Harry Neelands [00:02:58] Pritchard?

Interviewer [00:02:58] No, Woodsworth.

Harry Neelands [00:02:58] Woodsworth? Yes, he was a member of the party.

Interviewer [00:03:05] Were there some people who were in your party and also in the Socialist Party?

Harry Neelands [00:03:08] I don't know.

Interviewer [00:03:09] You don't know?

Harry Neelands [00:03:10] No, I don't know. I couldn't say. We had support I believe from some of those people.

Interviewer [00:03:22] So they didn't run a candidate?

Harry Neelands [00:03:24] Pritchard, I think, was a Socialist Party candidate.

Interviewer [00:03:29] Chris Pritchard?

Harry Neelands [00:03:29] Not Chris, on no, another fellow. Bill Pritchard.

Interviewer [00:03:29] Bill Pritchard.

Harry Neelands [00:03:33] I think he was a carpenter.

Interviewer [00:03:38] He was from Winnipeg, or he was in the general strike there. You carried on a weekly educational meeting all the time? And these too were all working-class?

Harry Neelands [00:03:55] Working-class speakers and attenders.

Interviewer [00:04:01] How did you go about getting, did you work through the trade union? I mean, unofficially, did you corner guys at the Labor Council, for instance, and get them to bring out people from their union? How did you go about recruiting people?

Harry Neelands [00:04:19] For membership?

Interviewer [00:04:20] Yeah.

Harry Neelands [00:04:23] Well, individuals would try and persuade their friends and there was an invitation at our regular meetings for anyone interested to come along. That was about the only way.

Interviewer [00:04:56] You were a constituency organization. Was there an organization in every constituency in Vancouver?

Harry Neelands [00:05:05] A local group.

Interviewer [00:05:09] And were there strong is yours?

Harry Neelands [00:05:15] Oh, we had 150 or so that I mentioned that attended our meetings were not members or not. Every spadework was carried on by a mere handful of people.

Interviewer [00:05:28] Yeah, but still, for instance, what about were other constituencies, which other ones had a strong organization?

Harry Neelands [00:05:36] Burnaby is a good illustration. Burnaby was always first-class.

Interviewer [00:05:49] Now when you were elected in 1920. What? What happened? You went to Victoria. How did you find that? What was your reaction?

Harry Neelands [00:06:07] Lost. (laughs) Poor guy in the wilderness. Although I had a good stand-by. Sam Guthrie was elected at the same time.

Interviewer [00:06:21] From which constituency?

Harry Neelands [00:06:26] From the Island.

Interviewer [00:06:27] Nanaimo?

Harry Neelands [00:06:27] No, Comox.

Interviewer [00:06:31] Who else was in your group?

Harry Neelands [00:06:34] There's just the two, supported by Tom Uphill, Fernie.

Interviewer [00:06:41] Tom Uphill.

Harry Neelands [00:06:48] Tom outlived us all.

Interviewer [00:06:52] Well, he certainly. So there were three of you were in a group. Was Uphill in the group too?

Harry Neelands [00:06:55] Yes, he was supporting it.

Interviewer [00:07:01] Did you have a caucus? And you met together?

Harry Neelands [00:07:04] Not a regular one, if we had like discussing something, some measure before the house, all get together.

Interviewer [00:07:13] Did you do this regularly? Did you do that regularly?

Harry Neelands [00:07:17] No, no.

Interviewer [00:07:20] You didn't have a leader?

Harry Neelands [00:07:21] No, no, no.

Interviewer [00:07:27] Well, but you must have, I mean, for instance, if you wanted to propose legislation, you'd have to line up.

Harry Neelands [00:07:34] Oh yes.

Interviewer [00:07:35] Line up a speaker and nominator and seconder?

Harry Neelands [00:07:38] Get together, you know, the three of us.

Interviewer [00:07:42] How regularly? Was it once a week or,

Harry Neelands [00:07:46] No regular time, as occasion demanded.

Interviewer [00:07:49] How often would you say?

Harry Neelands [00:07:56] I'll make a guess and say three times a week average.

Interviewer [00:08:00] That's right. Now, did you co-operate with any of the other groups in the House?

Harry Neelands [00:08:12] The other parties? We supported either one on any subject based on its merits from our point of view. The nearest approach to our thinking in exercising our vote. No option, no particular choice.

Interviewer [00:08:40] What did you accomplish?

Harry Neelands [00:08:50] I'm sorry, I don't know of anything really outstanding. We advocated eight-hour days and old age pensions, social improvements, one kind and another in a general way, but it was an uphill fight. If in our conversations and in our talks before the legislature we could influence parties to pick up some point and adopted was about all we could point to as our accomplishment at that time. Of course, that's what, 30 or 40 years ago.

Interviewer [00:09:46] 24. No, 44 years. Who was the Premier then, do you know, do you remember?

Harry Neelands [00:09:53] Premier John Oliver.

Interviewer [00:09:58] Oliver. How did you get along with him?

Harry Neelands [00:10:00] John Oliver and I are friends. I talked to him man-to-man anytime. Always welcomed in our offices to discuss any problem and same with practically all the members. We'd fight like that on the floor, you know.

Interviewer [00:10:24] What was their attitude towards you?

Harry Neelands [00:10:30] In some respects, let's take Alec Manson, for example. He was a Liberal in the Cabinet. Another one that I can see, another cabinet minister, always the door is always open to us but we differed on the floor and on our votes. So that was the general circumstances at that time.

Interviewer [00:11:09] What about Uphill or Guthrie? Were they new also at the time? Were they new elected too?

Harry Neelands [00:11:24] Yes, there were three elected at the same time.

Interviewer [00:11:28] You were all new?

Harry Neelands [00:11:30] All new.

Interviewer [00:11:30] How you go about learning the ropes? Just trial and error, or what? How did you go about learning the ropes?

Harry Neelands [00:11:43] Oh just trial and error. Filed a lot of motions that were out of order.

Interviewer [00:11:54] Do you remember Hawthornthwaite?

Harry Neelands [00:11:58] He was prior. I remember I met him. He was in the legislature along with Parker Williams, just preceding Guthrie and I. Parker Williams of course, got into the Compensation Board and was disqualified of course. He sat as a socialist member. Sam Guthrie practically took the place of Parker Williams. Hawthornthwaite, I think was a member from Nanaimo, if I remember right. I don't know, he would be defeated while I was there. A fellow name of Sloan, was a Liberal, was in the House.

Interviewer [00:12:55] Now, what do you remember of, can you give us any, what was your impression of Guthrie?

Harry Neelands [00:13:07] Oh splendid. Really top, a real man Sam was.

Interviewer [00:13:15] Can you tell me a bit more about him?

Harry Neelands [00:13:16] A splendid character, he was a socialist admittedly to start with, and sympathies with the working man to the fullest. He was persecuted on behalf of labour, in that he went to jail for his ideas. You'll have heard of this before, so that's all I need say on that. But at any rate a real man.

Interviewer [00:13:55] He was. What about the others? What about Tom Uphill?

Harry Neelands [00:14:00] Well, I wouldn't go that far. Tom did a lot of good work helping people here, but a different type of individual all together.

Interviewer [00:14:14] In what way?

Harry Neelands [00:14:19] More serious and however, I won't say. I feel that our contribution at that time towards the welfare of the working people was the access that we had to the heads of the various governmental departments, namely Department of Labor, Department of Education, Department of Housing and such like. We always had access to those ministers to discuss with them our points of view on any legislation that was before the House with a view to influencing them, to give some support to the matter under discussion. Otherwise, we could introduce certain measures that by way of suggesting improvements to Department of Mines, Fishing and municipal bodies. For example the firemen were all for legislating, seeking provincial legislation. Well, we could help them out. Not only by expressing their points of view on the floor of the legislature but also having access to these ministers having charge of the Bill. Whereas at the present time, there's quite a number of members of the party at present representing labour in the house who, by strength of numbers, have a greater influence on the affairs provincially to a far greater extent, and prevailed at the time I mentioned.

Interviewer [00:16:57] In other words, you worked behind the scenes.

Harry Neelands [00:16:58] Yes.

Interviewer [00:17:00] All three of you?

Harry Neelands [00:17:02] All three of us, yeah. Guthrie used to glean ideas for his mines, being a miner himself, he was familiar. I can't recall individuals at the time. Mothers' pensions, another thing under discussion at that time. We'd go to the Minister of Health on those propositions and try and enlist his sympathies towards bettering them.

Interviewer [00:17:42] How successful were you?

Harry Neelands [00:17:45] Well, in some respects I think we were a factor all right, in some instances, but I don't know what.

Interviewer [00:17:56] You have know? You don't really remember that they made any changes to these?

Harry Neelands [00:18:04] Workmen's Compensation Act, has to be some changes to that. The Minister of Labour.

Interviewer [00:18:12] Do you remember what they were?

Harry Neelands [00:18:14] No.

Interviewer [00:18:15] But you remember the Commission?

Harry Neelands [00:18:16] Yes, there would be some improvements. Uphill would always get some support for mining ideas to improve conditions in mines.

Interviewer [00:18:35] What about you yourself, you were in the mines?

Harry Neelands [00:18:37] Solicitor General.

Interviewer [00:18:40] You were in Education?

Harry Neelands [00:18:41] Yeah, Education, yes. I had frequent interviews with the Minister of Education.

Interviewer [00:19:00] Did you remember any sort of changes you got the Minister of Education to make?

Harry Neelands [00:19:07] What they were, now, I don't know, but as an incident without detail with schoolteachers at one time were seeking legislation for their protection and I had frequent consultations with the then Minister of Education. I accompanied Mr. Charlesworth, who was the provincial representative of the teachers.

Interviewer [00:19:52] How do you spell that name?

Harry Neelands [00:19:52] C-H-A-R-L-S-W-O-R-T-H. Dr. MacLean was Minister of Education. Mr. Charlesworth was lobbying on behalf of the teachers. I had access to the Minister of Education if he needed it. I could introduce him to the Minister. I could open the door to him. Although I think in his own right Mr. Charlesworth had access to the same privileges.

Interviewer [00:20:36] Did he come to you first?

Harry Neelands [00:20:39] He came to meet to discuss their problem.

Interviewer [00:20:46] They were worried about what exactly? What was the issue?

Harry Neelands [00:20:51] I forget the issue.

Interviewer [00:20:53] Independence, was it?

Harry Neelands [00:21:01] No, it was more rights to organize or something of that nature.

Interviewer [00:21:09] Well, they must have had some kind of organization. Well, this is one case. So, did you have a pretty good relationship with the, a pretty good understanding with the Minister of Education? You were on pretty good terms with him?

Harry Neelands [00:21:32] Oh, yes.

Interviewer [00:21:34] And what about?

Harry Neelands [00:21:37] Oh, and another event that might be mentioned was the raid on the parliament buildings at the time of the unemployed, the pretty hungry twenties. I was in the House that time when they raided the corridors of the legislature. At any rate we could only take, and I don't know of anything particular that we did. We took advantage of the demonstration as an evidence of a lot of the things, the distress that was involved. Actual facts should be given some consideration by the government by way of remedy. That was quite the event that day. I can picture that starting at the front steps of the legislature.

Interviewer [00:22:46] Would you like to tell us a bit about it?

Harry Neelands [00:22:47] That's all except that it was a huge demonstration and raided right into the buildings.

Interviewer [00:22:58] How many people were in it?

Harry Neelands [00:23:02] There must have been thousands. Make it conservative and say 600.

Interviewer [00:23:12] They just what? Who was the leader of the group? You don't know.

Harry Neelands [00:23:16] They come up. I think it was organized in Vancouver.

Interviewer [00:23:26] And they came up to the legislature?

Harry Neelands [00:23:31] They came before them, you know, to emphasize the condition of people, some people, at that particular time. Now, of course, you might say, and I would say that maybe in the long run that has had an influence in unemployment insurance and welfare stuff that is handed out, mothers' pensions and children's welfare and all of that. While we didn't accomplish them, we were pleading the same things like those crying in the wilderness. That's what stays in the hope that some good would be accomplished sometime.

Interviewer [00:24:25] Were you in session at the time?

Harry Neelands [00:24:28] No, no, the House wasn't in session. Oh no.

Interviewer [00:24:32] Did they look you up in your office? Did they look you up at your office?

Harry Neelands [00:24:38] They could, but they didn't.

Interviewer [00:24:40] What did they do?

Harry Neelands [00:24:41] They just muddled around in the crowd until finally they dispersed. I think John Oliver, Premier, came out and addressed them.

Interviewer [00:25:06] Did you go out there? Did you and Guthrie go out there? Did you go off and talk to the men?

Harry Neelands [00:25:07] Oh yeah, yes, we did. The angle we took there, that we were impressed by their organization. I think we swung them around to this point of view. That it was a demonstration of the need of electing people who had thoughts of the things that you were at present bringing to the attention of government rather than people who were coming, who are being sent from your own constituencies to administer welfare to people provincially.

Interviewer [00:26:08] How come they didn't look you up? How come they didn't come to you?

Harry Neelands [00:26:14] As a group? Well, I don't suppose we were together at the time.

Interviewer [00:26:21] You didn't get told about it?

Harry Neelands [00:26:21] No, no. There was no warning about it. We may have been in some part of the building, but in no concentrated group at the time.

Interviewer [00:26:42] What other ministers? You say the Minister of Education was the one you knew closest?

Harry Neelands [00:26:50] And Labour. Alec Manson. I knew him personally. We got to know all of them reasonably personally. Those that I mention are the ones whose departments we were interested in possibly more than the others. For example, Sam Guthrie was a miner. He was interested in William Sloan, that time Minister of Mines. So anything the miners' interest would fall on Sam's shoulders and Sloan's door was open to him for a discussion at any time.

Interviewer [00:27:51] Manson, you were on good terms with Alec Manson? You were you were on good terms personally?

Harry Neelands [00:28:03] Oh yes.

Interviewer [00:28:05] You dropped by his office anytime.

Harry Neelands [00:28:09] We could get into his office and talk man-to-man. Swear a little.

Interviewer [00:28:19] What were you trying to push him into doing? What did you go in and ask for most?

Harry Neelands [00:28:24] Eight-hour day.

Interviewer [00:28:27] Eight-hour day?

Harry Neelands [00:28:27] For one thing. And minimum wage.

Interviewer [00:28:31] Minimum wage? And did you get it?

Harry Neelands [00:28:33] Well they got it eventually. I don't think we got it during our term, but it was being propagated at that time, by us.

Interviewer [00:28:48] What was his reaction to it? What was Manson's reaction to it?

Harry Neelands [00:28:53] Well, just telling the times, too early.

Interviewer [00:29:01] Too early. Were you ever approached? Was your group, or members of your group ever approached by the Liberals say, or the Conservatives to, you know, to join in with them to become part of their group?

Harry Neelands [00:29:15] Well, as far as I am personally concerned, I think I cast one Liberal vote, the first one I cast.

Interviewer [00:29:33] No. What I meant was in the legislature when you were elected, did the Liberals or the Conservatives approach your group to try to convert you? Bring you in?

Harry Neelands [00:29:52] Oh no. To avoid candidature?

Interviewer [00:29:53] No, to sign you up, to bring you in. Like remember Mackenzie-King he got the Progressives and he got them all into the Liberal Party.

Harry Neelands [00:30:02] No, there was never any

Interviewer [00:30:03] No attempt?

Harry Neelands [00:30:04] No attempt, no co-operation in any respect.

Interviewer [00:30:10] And they never tried to swallow you up?

Harry Neelands [00:30:14] No as far as I am personally concerned and I think for the others as well, I know personally nobody approached me in any respect in that regard.

Interviewer [00:30:29] Which of the two parties would you say was the most favorable towards you?

Harry Neelands [00:30:35] The parties?

Interviewer [00:30:36] Yeah.

Harry Neelands [00:30:38] Well, my term was under Liberals.

Interviewer [00:30:43] Yeah, but which one was the most co-operative with you? Friendly? Was it the Conservatives or the Liberals?

Harry Neelands [00:30:52] I would say given them benefit I think the Liberals.

Interviewer [00:30:57] The Liberals.

Harry Neelands [00:30:58] That's merely because I have more personal knowledge of the tradition.

Interviewer [00:31:09] Did you co-operate much with the Conservatives?

Harry Neelands [00:31:12] No.

Interviewer [00:31:13] You were both in the opposition but you didn't really co-operate?

Harry Neelands [00:31:18] No, no. Well, it wasn't really necessary because, or at least it wouldn't have been politically any particular advantage because labour three members should line up with the Conservatives at that time, maybe six or seven. There's no point in the Conservatives trying to —

Interviewer [00:31:49] Did you at that time, I mean you got three elected in 1920. Now what about 1925? How many were elected there? Still three?

Harry Neelands [00:31:59] Still three.

Interviewer [00:31:59] No more?

Harry Neelands [00:31:59] No, no. Personally I've never been interfered with.

Interviewer [00:32:09] No, I'm on a different topic now. In 1925 there are still only three elected? Do you remember? Any more labour people elected?

Harry Neelands [00:32:39] Let's see. In 1925 there were three elected. Guthrie lost.

Interviewer [00:32:44] Guthrie lost. Did somebody new come in?

Harry Neelands [00:32:44] I think Guthrie lost to a Liberal. Uphill was re-elected and I was re-elected. Frank Browne was elected from Burnaby.

Interviewer [00:33:00] I see. How do you spell his name?

Harry Neelands [00:33:03] B-R-O-W-N-E, and he just passed the term ending 1928, I think. Incidentally sacrificed himself personally. At the time of his first election, he was at the time of his election, he only got elected once. He was in the credit department of municipality of Burnaby. As a consequence of his political attitude, he lost his position.

Interviewer [00:33:52] So when he was defeated, he couldn't go back?

Harry Neelands [00:33:57] I wasn't at all sure, but when he was defeated shortly after his defeat, he went up to the Okanagan country. I don't know what happened to him. Whether he survived yet or not. That's what happened to him.

Interviewer [00:34:18] Now I know that something interesting. The Canadian Labor Party advocated the Oriental franchise, didn't they, around 1928 in the election? They advocated votes for the Japanese and Chinese Canadians. I noticed that your union opposed that. Did you get into any hot water?

Harry Neelands [00:34:46] Well, the secretary was in hot water.

Interviewer [00:34:50] You were the secretary?

Harry Neelands [00:34:51] I was the secretary. However, it's a very democratic organization and as long as he behaved himself typographically, his politics or his religion were no concern to us.

Interviewer [00:35:06] But you advocated the Oriental franchise?

Harry Neelands [00:35:12] Oh yes.

Interviewer [00:35:12] When did you first, had you always advocated this? When did you first start? When did this first become an issue that you advocated?

Harry Neelands [00:35:26] The only time it came before the Typo Union was that any definite action was taken on the thing was the time I just mentioned. Prior to that opinion, the Typographical Union had the opinion that any citizen was irrespective of race, politics or religion.

Interviewer [00:35:58] Well, there has been a long history in B.C. of all trade unions they were—

Harry Neelands [00:36:03] Yes there has been, there was very strong, in fact, miners were I think [unclear] and the railroad workers.

Interviewer [00:36:25] What I'm getting is that in 1928 here is the Labor Party advocating the vote.

Harry Neelands [00:36:30] Yeah.

Interviewer [00:36:33] When did they start doing this?

Harry Neelands [00:36:35] When did they start? I think it was

Interviewer [00:36:38] Right from the start?

Harry Neelands [00:36:39] Right from the start. It had been in the minds of the majority at any rate, of the people constituting the Party at that time.

Interviewer [00:36:51] Was this a big factor In the election of 1928?

Harry Neelands [00:36:54] No. No.

Interviewer [00:36:59] I noticed that you still got a \$50 donation from the ILP to your campaign. So they didn't—

Harry Neelands [00:37:08] At that particular meeting that point of view happened to predominate.

Interviewer [00:37:16] Can you tell us anything more about the debate?

Harry Neelands [00:37:18] No. In fact, I'd forgotten all about it. Well, until just since you phoned, I looked that up and I saw it in there myself. If somebody had mentioned it to me, I couldn't of —

Interviewer [00:37:41] Do you remember getting any money from other unions? Like you got \$50 from your own. Did you get any money from any other unions? Which ones?

Harry Neelands [00:37:51] Well the Carpenters supported, Plumbers supported, Street Railwaymen supported, Electrical Workers would support us.

Interviewer [00:38:00] Yeah, but anything financially?

Harry Neelands [00:38:00] Financially, but as an organization, vote [unclear]. Each one according to his own convictions.

Interviewer [00:38:17] How did they do it? Go around with the hat, or did they pass a motion and give you so much.

Harry Neelands [00:38:25] Passed a motion and the majority of the members would be in favor and make the contribution. That is the majority of the members in attendance at the meeting. If that explains anything.

Interviewer [00:38:46] The other unions would do it the same way?

Harry Neelands [00:38:48] They do it the same way.

Interviewer [00:38:49] It was not a matter of passing the hat, but it was a matter of a motion?

Harry Neelands [00:38:53] Yes. A union might pass a motion to pass the hat.

Interviewer [00:38:59] Today that would be illegal.

Harry Neelands [00:39:04] Oh no, I would go to the president of the subscribing union, that would be the individual's responsibility.

Interviewer [00:39:15] Today, Bill 42 prevents a union from doing that. They can go around with the hat now, but they can't move motions out of the general treasury.

Harry Neelands [00:39:35] In the days that I speak of, they could do either.

Interviewer [00:39:38] And that's what they did?

Harry Neelands [00:39:38] Yes.

Interviewer [00:39:38] Did you go and address union meetings during your campaign? During the campaign? Would you go to the union meetings?

Harry Neelands [00:39:57] Oh yes. We could go to the Street Railwaymen. We could go to the Typos, I'll say that. I can't speak for all organizations, but there were some organizations who helped.

Interviewer [00:40:11] Which ones?

Harry Neelands [00:40:14] Well, Street Railwaymen. Carpenters. That's about all I could think of.

Interviewer [00:40:28] A lot of unions got broken about 1919 after the war. They were broken up. Do you remember anything?

Harry Neelands [00:40:45] Oh yes. Hod Carriers, pretty active in the original Trades and Labor Council.

Interviewer [00:40:52] When did they lose? When did they lose?

Harry Neelands [00:40:58] I don't know the date but the new methods eliminated.

Interviewer [00:41:16] This donating money. Back to that for a moment. Did they just give it to you or did all the ILP candidates get money?

Harry Neelands [00:41:29] The same procedure would, now, let's see. Losing a lot of space.

Interviewer [00:41:49] That's alright.

Harry Neelands [00:41:50] We had a central group that would handle those financial affairs for South Vancouver, Burnaby, North Vancouver and the City of Vancouver. That would be the general fund and the branch expenditures would come out of that. I think that's pretty much the procedure, although I'm sorry I said that because I'm not exactly sure. Otherwise, how can I definitely say that my first campaign cost \$120 when I have no idea what was spent on candidates in the City of Vancouver who were running at the same time. So there must have been considerable local autonomy in that respect. Including our own efforts, by taking collections at the meetings and subscriptions that might be made. But by the same token, I would say that any subscriptions from an organization, any union organization would go into the central pot. These other incidentals would come from the district local. South Vancouver, as I say, met all its expenses. If there was any surplus beyond that \$120 collected it would go to the central fund to buck up somebody who lost out.

Interviewer [00:43:53] This district campaign thing, were you on the central authority, the central committee, the city committee, do you remember being on it?

Harry Neelands [00:44:04] I doubt if I would be. I'd be a member of the South Vancouver group who would have a delegate to the city branch, but I wasn't a delegate.

Interviewer [00:44:24] We could finish by in 1928, you got defeated, right? Now, why do you think you were defeated?

Harry Neelands [00:44:34] The fortunes of war. When I was defeated by Jack Cornett who was reeve of the municipality at that time and a very active Conservative.

Interviewer [00:44:51] He was a Conservative, and did he beat you by much?

Harry Neelands [00:45:00] No, 400 votes.

Interviewer [00:45:01] You don't remember what were important issues?

Harry Neelands [00:45:03] No.

Interviewer [00:45:08] And did you ever run again?

[00:45:10] No.

Interviewer [00:45:10] You never did. Did you go back into union?

Harry Neelands [00:45:17] I went into other work. After amalgamation with the city I went onto Vancouver School Board. I was there for how many?

Interviewer [00:45:28] Twelve years.

Harry Neelands [00:45:28] Do you remember a fellow Bingham, Chief of Police?

Interviewer [00:45:40] No.

Harry Neelands [00:45:42] Well, I was on the local board I know, for 10 or 12 years, I think, continuously.

Interviewer [00:45:53] What about Bingham?

Harry Neelands [00:45:54] Bingham was Chief of Police. I was trying to connect the dates.

Interviewer [00:45:57] I see. Were you friendly with him, or not friendly with him? Did you run almost immediately after you lost?

Harry Neelands [00:46:18] Yes. I got into the school board work on the city. We moved from South Vancouver, or at least South Vancouver amalgamated with the city, which made me elevate up, which disposed of the South Vancouver school board. Made me eligible for election for the city board. I don't know.

Interviewer [00:46:51] Did you run as a labour candidate, or independent?

Harry Neelands [00:46:59] Labor. Independent Labor.

[00:47:01] By the time, your last years in the legislature, did you think of yourself as a socialist then, or still more labour than socialist, or what?

Harry Neelands [00:47:13] Well, I think at the end of my experience, I would say that I'm somewhat more socialist inclined than I was before. Of course, when I was first elected, the Socialist Party ignored or could see no possibility legislatively. That's my conception, at any rate, but felt that only through their own economic strength they could attain their ends. No chance politically, but I didn't altogether subscribe fully to that point of view. I thought that as a means to an end political action has its points, and on that basis, I saw whatever contribution I might be able to make.

Interviewer [00:48:27] When you ran, was the idea to form the government or was it just to get?

Harry Neelands [00:48:32] Well, no, no, no, no. Just that was too fantastic to think about at that particular time. But I hope at least, what contributions were made at that particular time has been at least a small spike in the advancement up to the stage that has been reached at the present time.

Interviewer [00:49:05] You didn't really consider it as a party out to win the government?

Harry Neelands [00:49:09] No. It was more educational.

Interviewer [00:49:13] And also to get some people in, right? You did plan on winning when you ran?

Harry Neelands [00:49:22] No, in fact it was biggest surprise of my life, the greatest surprise imaginable. I just couldn't credit it, the first election.

Interviewer [00:49:35] What about the others? Were they surprised?

Harry Neelands [00:49:37] Well, some of them, well there were candidates in the city and the only one surviving in this particular neighborhood was Sam Guthrie. Well, Sam was on the Island. I guess I was the only one, possibly I was the only one. There was three members in the House, including myself. There was Guthrie from the Island, Uphill from Fernie and myself. That's right. I was the only one, whereas there were candidates running in the city, all defeated. Candidates running in Burnaby, defeated.

Interviewer [00:50:23] What about in 1928? You got defeated? Did anybody else get elected, or did you all get defeated?

Harry Neelands [00:50:33] No, Uphill survived.

Interviewer [00:50:35] Uphill, but that was the only one?

Harry Neelands [00:50:36] He's the only one. Yeah.

Interviewer [00:50:41] Did you get more active again in your union after you get defeated?

Harry Neelands [00:50:47] More active?

Interviewer [00:50:47] Yeah.

Harry Neelands [00:50:48] Oh no, I was equally active. I was at the legislature and took my office, attended our monthly meetings. I had a member of the union taking my place. I was given leave of absence by the union, whoever took place. I came home to attend the meetings.

Interviewer [00:51:12] And what?

Harry Neelands [00:51:13] Picked up my job after dissolution.

Interviewer [00:51:18] What about your employers? They were co-operative?

Harry Neelands [00:51:21] My employers were the union.

Interviewer [00:51:24] I see, they hired you.

Harry Neelands [00:51:25] The individuals.

Interviewer [00:51:27] You were secretary?

Harry Neelands [00:51:29] Yes, see as far as the union was concerned I had continuous membership from 1909 to 19—, 5 or 6 years ago.

Interviewer [00:51:43] So how long did the session last?

Harry Neelands [00:51:50] About six weeks, approximately six weeks.

Interviewer [00:51:52] And then you were back in your job?

Harry Neelands [00:51:54] Back in the job.

[00:51:54] Right. So that when you got defeated, you just went right on with the job.

Harry Neelands [00:51:58] Yeah.

Interviewer [00:51:58] And I don't suppose you took your family with you to Victoria?

Harry Neelands [00:52:05] Oh no. I came home weekends.

Interviewer [00:52:11] You came home every weekend?

Harry Neelands [00:52:13] Yes. Yeah.

Interviewer [00:52:16] Were you on any committees in the legislature? And any of the other people?

Harry Neelands [00:52:24] Oh yes, I was on the committee all right. Municipal Affairs, I think. Yeah, I think Municipal Affairs was the committee I was on.

Interviewer [00:52:39] What about Guthrie? What about Sam Guthrie?

Harry Neelands [00:52:46] Guthrie. Mines.

Interviewer [00:52:48] Mines. And nothing else?

Harry Neelands [00:52:51] Uphill I couldn't say.

Interviewer [00:52:57] You met as a group and decided which committees you would join? Or did the government?

Harry Neelands [00:53:06] The government appointed us.

Interviewer [00:53:06] You didn't suggest it, which ones you wanted in on?

Harry Neelands [00:53:06] No, oh no. As far as I'm personally concerned, I would say that my experience on school board would lean towards Municipal Committee and hence my appointment without consultation.

Interviewer [00:53:24] Without consultation?

Harry Neelands [00:53:27] Guthrie being a miner, to Mines likewise.

Interviewer [00:53:37] Now, I have notes here that your union arranged for the support of the unemployed members during the Depression. When the Depression started, you made provisions for your unemployed members?

Harry Neelands [00:54:00] Oh yes, yes.

Interviewer [00:54:03] Could you tell us something about that?

Harry Neelands [00:54:06] The Vancouver Typographical Union had the largest list of unemployment in its history and as prospects of improvement in trade conditions were

problematical, local union continued to make arrangements to take care of its unemployed members. The holiday trade did not come up to expectations. That means the Christmas yearly end [unclear] up business in the trade, did not come up to expectations so far as extra employment was concerned. On several occasions during 1931, the question of assisting unemployed members was debated and action taken, about half the members being idle. On January 25, a resolution was carried in effect. That's the resolution of the local union in meeting.

Interviewer [00:55:15] Would you like me to read it?

Harry Neelands [00:55:20] That [Local] Number 226 petition the ITU, that's our International Typographical Union, to submit referendum for an assessment of two percent on total earnings of the membership. Funds thus raised to be distributed in subs, that means substitute workers, by joint action of local unions, and ITU on a pro rata basis of unemployed in the affected areas. Several typographical unions supported this proposition. Then on January 1928, as the resolution was carried by referendum that all regulars lay off one day every alternate week for three months. That an assessment of four percent of gross earnings be levied on all members holding executive positions or preferring to work in lieu of laying off, proceeds of same to be used in relieving members who cannot be employed in any other manner. On March 29, another resolution along the same line. Until August 31 all regulars, meaning people working full-time, shall lay off one day every other week or pay an assessment of eight percent on their earnings. Substitutes shall pay two percent on their monthly earnings when exceeding \$150, \$115 at each regular. And later on it was further resolved that each regular lay off one day alternate week or be assessed equivalent for relief fund. That subs earning \$105 or \$104 in four weeks' period pay one percent and over \$105, two percent on their earnings. December 23, 1931 by referendum vote of the local unions, that is, of 162 votes to 63 as follows. That during December, an assessment of three percent shall be levied on earnings of members. That subs earning less than \$115 during the month shall be refunded their assessment. Now that is the practical means adopted by the union to take care of their members during the period of the Depressions of 1930.

Interviewer [00:59:06] And you succeeded in that pretty well? Did this work? It kept your unemployed members going?

Harry Neelands [00:59:14] It benefited the unemployed members to that [unclear].

Interviewer [00:59:18] And it kept them going?

Harry Neelands [00:59:21] It was pretty substantially. When you take, we could pay \$8 a week to the members who weren't employed at the scale prevailing at that time. Realize that this was a very substantial contribution towards the welfare of the people who otherwise would have been suffering considerably.

Interviewer [00:59:51] Did other unions do that in the city?

Harry Neelands [00:59:53] Not to my knowledge. Other unions assisted, but none to my knowledge, to the same extent.

Interviewer [01:00:01] Was there any, was there much, I know there was some opposition in the union, thinking about 60 or 70 percent full.

Harry Neelands [01:00:10] Yeah.

Interviewer [01:00:11] But was the opposition pretty vocal to it? To doing this plan?

Harry Neelands [01:00:18] Well, the opposition was relatively small, about one to three.

Interviewer [01:00:24] Yeah, maybe, but were they loud about it? Did they feel very?

Harry Neelands [01:00:28] They took their medicine along with the rest. The majority prevailed. That's our policy. Amongst ourselves we fight over points, but when the decision is reached, we're unanimously behind the—

Interviewer [01:00:42] They work.

Harry Neelands [01:00:44] They work.

Interviewer [01:00:47] When did you retire from the secretary position?

Harry Neelands [01:01:00] 1954.

Interviewer [01:01:05] What about, were there any major points in the history of your union between the Depression in 1954? What would you say were major events?

Harry Neelands [01:01:17] I would say the prevailing wage speaks for itself. The prevailing wage in 1920, well take the period that I came first came to Vancouver, 1905. The scale was \$21 for an eight-hour week. When I left the trade in 1953 the scale was about \$99 a week for night work I think it was, and day work about maybe \$10 a week less. I just forget. At any rate, that's the condition as far as wages were concerned, they were advanced about five percent per week over the period of 50 years or so.

Interviewer [01:02:34] What about your relations with the international union office? How were they?

Harry Neelands [01:02:42] Always good.

Interviewer [01:02:42] Always good?

Harry Neelands [01:02:42] Yeah.

Interviewer [01:02:43] You never had any problems with the international?

Harry Neelands [01:02:46] No, no. The international affairs are operated on a very democratic way in such extent that any material change must be submitted to an individual referendum of individual members of individual unions. For example, the local officers, which we describe as the executive council consisting of five persons, cannot sit down in their own committee room, raise their pay one penny. Any increase to any one of those offices would apply equally to each one, would have to be submitted first to an individual unions and each individual member of each individual union would have a vote on whether that increase should prevail or otherwise.

Interviewer [01:04:15] What about, was the policy, the ideas of your union local, were they ever at variance with the international?

Harry Neelands [01:04:23] Well, I would say yes. Possibly this condition is peculiar to the Typographical Union in that they have what they call one party and another party. They have differences of opinion and they fight like tigers as individuals for the different ideas amongst themselves. When a result is arrived at, if necessary, is submitted to the individual unions in the manner which I have just described.

Interviewer [01:05:12] Which party did you belong to?

Harry Neelands [01:05:14] I don't belong to either of them. At least as I vote at the present time, I support the ones that are in office at the present time.

Interviewer [01:05:27] Did you always do that?

Harry Neelands [01:05:30] No, I've changed my opinions on matters that I didn't agree with. I've changed my opinion on it, supported it accordingly. That's what I mean by the democratic process.

Interviewer [01:05:47] What about, but I mean, for instance, did your local mostly take one side in this two-party system?

Harry Neelands [01:05:55] On occasion one, and on another occasion another. At the present time, I can say that it's a different party in office internationally at the present time than the one in office when I joined. They've alternated.

Interviewer [01:06:20] Is alternation fairly frequent? Change over quite often?

Harry Neelands [01:06:24] No, no, no, no. There's only about twice in my experience, 60 years.

Interviewer [01:06:31] I see. When were the dates?

Harry Neelands [01:06:35] The first one was, oh. The first one was in office when I joined the union and the present ones were defeated around about 1930, I would guess. The present ones have been in office about ten years.

Interviewer [01:07:22] So since 1954, you retired, roughly?

Harry Neelands [01:07:28] Well, no, it was before that. A couple of years.

Interviewer [01:07:31] A couple of years before? Does the two-party system worked inside your local too?

Harry Neelands [01:07:41] Not to any great extent. It's of recent origin insofar as the local union is concerned. The local union for quite a long while resented the idea of the division. Resented it and voted against it, but their opinion didn't prevail.

Interviewer [01:08:09] So in that sense, your opinions were different from the majority of the union?

Harry Neelands [01:08:17] Majority of the membership varied and they got into office on their areas.

Interviewer [01:08:28] Were mostly, you had to make a choice. I mean you had to vote. Were you mostly on which side? With one group or you just switched back and forth depending on the issue?

Harry Neelands [01:08:43] Not particularly the issue, but the election of officers would take place based on these conflicts of idea and certain people would run along one idea. The opposition to that would run candidates and the ones elected would go to the headquarters to carry out the mandate.

Interviewer [01:09:13] Inside your union you have a discussion of the issues and your slate of candidates would be elected on the issue?

Harry Neelands [01:09:19] That's right.

Interviewer [01:09:21] And that issue was the same issue all through the union?

Harry Neelands [01:09:24] The union international.

Interviewer [01:09:26] Does this is to get promoted through the union paper? Is this how you found out about it? How did you find out what the issue was?

Harry Neelands [01:09:33] We had a monthly journal issued by head office, it goes to each individual member. Well, what I have in mind in conclusion is that, and possibly I should have made it a point to have mentioned it earlier in this interview, is the splendid support that I received from the women members of the party during the period of my experience over the years, just covered in this interview. I hesitate to mention names, but it might not be out of place to possibly mention one or two of them. First, I would say that Mrs. MacInnis has helped at times. Helena Gutteridge, a one time delegate from the Garment Workers Union to the Trades and Labor Council also helped. I'm sorry to say that in the numbers that have assisted me on the platform in the conduct of campaigns and such like work is beyond my memory. I regret that very much but want to extend my sincere appreciation of the efforts on the part of those people, some who have gone before, some others presently with us unknown to me.

Interviewer [01:11:42] Do you have anything to say about Helena Gutteridge? Do you remember her well?

Harry Neelands [01:11:46] Yes, she was on the executive council of the Trades and Labor Council. I don't know whether she's alive yet or not.

Interviewer [01:12:02] Where was she from?

Harry Neelands [01:12:02] The Garment Workers.

Interviewer [01:12:02] She was from Britain, didn't she?

Harry Neelands [01:12:08] Yes. An old-country girl.

Interviewer [01:12:11] And she was in the suffragettes, wasn't she?

Harry Neelands [01:12:15] Yes.

Interviewer [01:12:17] Was she pretty strong on women's rights?

Harry Neelands [01:12:21] Yes.

Interviewer [01:12:21] Was this an issue at all at the time?

Harry Neelands [01:12:24] I can't say.

Interviewer [01:12:28] For the labour movement? Equal pay? Did you have equal pay in your union for women? Was there equal pay for women in your union?

Harry Neelands [01:12:36] Oh yes.

Interviewer [01:12:38] This was never in doubt?

Harry Neelands [01:12:42] No.

Interviewer [01:12:45] What about in the Labor Party? Was that much of an issue in the Labor Party?

Harry Neelands [01:12:59] No. I've run out of energy.