

SP FC 3803 U54 N_5-10-trk1_Bob Skinner.mp3

Recorded c. 1964

Transcribed by Donna Sacuta, 2025.

Interviewer [00:00:00] This is an interview with Bob Skinner, right? Where you were going to come back from the war.

Bob Skinner [00:00:08] Well, which was the first boat I could get back from the old country in 1919. The OBU (One Big Union) was going good, organizing right across the country. Hired police, the Winnipeg strike was on, Bill Pritchard was put in jail, J.S. Woodsworth was also put in jail, A.A. Heaps. I didn't know those people then, you see? When I got here, that was the situation. Things were still tough. So, I got a job in a retail store. That's the result, I got that clock there. So we started to organize the white collar for retail.

Interviewer [00:01:14] Which store was that by the way?

Bob Skinner [00:01:17] Woodward's.

Interviewer [00:01:24] Woodward's.

Bob Skinner [00:01:24] In those days, "Oh no, you couldn't organize the white collars." Our dues, maybe you'll laugh at this, were \$1.00 a year.

Interviewer [00:01:40] You're kidding.

Bob Skinner [00:01:40] Not a month.

Interviewer [00:01:42] \$1.00 a year.

Bob Skinner [00:01:42] Yes, we had a committee organized to try and get the Wednesday half-holiday and Boxing Day.

Interviewer [00:02:00] Boxing Day.

Bob Skinner [00:02:01] Yes, we didn't have Boxing Day. We didn't have Wednesday half-holiday.

Interviewer [00:02:05] Who was on the committee? Do you remember?

Bob Skinner [00:02:08] Yes, I remember some of them. Syd Blight and Ernie Wray. That was two of them. The rest, oh, I would say there were eight or nine of us on this committee. A dollar-a-year, and they wanted to know where all the money was going, because we held a meeting every month to see how things were going. It was a dinner meeting, which we paid out of this \$1.00 a year business. They wanted to know what we did with all the money. That's funny, you know. However, we organized them all right. Now, then Bill Pritchard comes back here and he's lionized. I suppose you know Bill Pritchard.

Interviewer [00:03:12] I'm seeing him in about a week from now.

Bob Skinner [00:03:20] I'll be seeing him too because he comes here.

Interviewer [00:03:21] He's coming August 7.

Bob Skinner [00:03:21] August 7. He comes here all the time. He comes up from Los Angeles. Bill and I were very good friends. So Bill came out of jail. Now the city hall employees proceed to organize. The difficulty was that the then Council and Mayor, and Council were very much opposed to any organization. The problem was to get somebody to do the job and this I will hand it to Walter Scribbins who probably you've heard something about. Walter stuck his neck out to be the secretary for the organization with the result is and I'm talking from memory now that he had to leave the city service. I still have the original franchise. However, there was fire, police, outside staff, and inside staff. Now, this is not the pretty picture, but this is the true picture. Each organization paid \$50 a year to the Civic Federation.

Interviewer [00:04:53] Now you're reading from the original constitution.

Bob Skinner [00:04:55] I'm reading from the original.

Interviewer [00:04:57] Agreement?

Bob Skinner [00:05:00] I'm reading from the original franchise of the Civic Federation of Vancouver which embraced the firemen, the policemen, the outside and the inside staffs. The officers were Charles Watson, Hector Alexander Urquhart, who was then in the Licence Department, George Harrison, who was a municipal employee, and Kennedy Brown, who was a Board of Works employee, and John Anderson, a fireman. All of the City of Vancouver in the Province of British Columbia. Now that constituted the Civic Federation and the date was prior to amalgamation. That's prior to 1928 when amalgamation took place between Point Grey, that's here, Hastings East, South Vancouver and the City of Vancouver. Amalgamated in what is now the City of Vancouver.

Bob Skinner [00:06:17] Now we have organized the Civic Federation and that is the officers of the Civic Federation. The chairman, who is Watson, fireman, Walter Scribbins — you cut it out if you like — but he was pretty foxy. He was quite a politician. So he arranged that Watson would be the chairman, and the chairman would have a voice and vote only in case of a tie. Now, he had under his control the inside staff and the outside staff. Besides that, there was the firemen and policemen, and each had equal voting rights. Now, note this. That the firemen were one delegate short because he was chairman. Walter Scribbins had the votes of the inside staff and the outside staff. The only other people were the firefighters. Now, it didn't matter which was done, Walter had the balance of power because he arranged prior to any meeting that his delegates vote for this or that or whatever was wanted.

Bob Skinner [00:08:13] Now, they also had a book called the Vancouver Yearbook and that was bringing in somewhere around \$2,000 a year. And I understand you have a cut, [unclear] show you a cut of myself. All the aldermen, they had their photographs in it for a certain amount of money. And Walter took all that in. See, he controlled that. Now the difficulty was, "How are we going to get rid of Walter Scribbins," because a lot of people were not happy about the situation. Now, this is how it was done. We arranged, and I say 'we.' Some of the firemen came to me, including Sly, who is assistant fire chief now, and several others, and said, "We've got to stop this because things are not very good." A new political party was established here, known as the Provincial Party and Walter Scribbins

and Bert Showler were part and parcel of that party, which I as a socialist didn't like, and some others didn't like it either. "Now how are we going to upset this?"

Bob Skinner [00:09:48] So this is what we did. They came to me and asked me, "Would I take over as secretary of the Civic Federation?" Oh, well. I'm in 1929 now, you see, amalgamation. Well, I said — and I'm working for the City. I said, "Okay, but you can't do it." Well, Walter, or the Bowser fellow, "Oh well, we'll fix that." So this is what they did. Four of them in the outside staff agreed not to attend a meeting where the officers were going to be elected. The firemen had the chairman, and he couldn't vote, or in case of a tie. All right. So when Walter saw and he was quite keen on this stuff, he moved that we postpone this meeting until another month because obviously some of the mail had gone astray or for some reason or other some of the delegates were not present. But the motion was put that we continue, which we did, and poor old Walter Scribbins, he didn't know what was done. But I was now the secretary of the Civic Federation. Well, immediately after that, somebody broke into the Civic Federation offices in the City and destroyed all the books or took the books away. I don't think you're interested in this though.

Interviewer [00:12:06] No. Well, I don't know. It's up to you to say. To think whether it's important or not, you know.

Bob Skinner [00:12:14] Well, this was important, insofar as—

Interviewer [00:12:17] I think what you've said so far is important, all right.

Bob Skinner [00:12:22] Another fellow and I went to the bank and we found that the only person that had the right to sign cheques was Walter Scribbins. Nobody else. No other signature necessary. So we asked for the, just to show the account, which I had a right to do as secretary, and we found that \$4,000 had been extracted from this account. So from then on, Walter Scribbins and I were daggers drawn.

Bob Skinner [00:13:11] Now, the Civic Federation is now in operation. And we come to the main fight. We had very little to fight for except wages and trying to get a five-day week, which we didn't have then. We had to work on Saturday, Saturday morning from 9:00 to 12:00 and did nothing during those four hours. And it was a hard fight to get that. Eventually we got it for the summer, and eventually we got it for the whole year.

Bob Skinner [00:13:48] Now, there was a municipal superannuation act that was organized by the firemen and policemen prior to the time I'm talking about. This municipal superannuation act was fraudulent from the start, insofar as the City of Vancouver put in no money. Nobody put in any money. In fact, the Fire Chief retired, and Mr. Tolmie retired, and Mr. — his name was Sidney Black — retired, and these people drew pensions up to \$300 a month out of his fund, which there was no assets to. It wasn't drawn up by an actuary. Now, to give you one instance that I am familiar with, Mr. Carlisle, who was the fire chief, paid in for about, I would say, not more than six months, paid into the fund four percent of his salary, and he drew out \$36,000 out of that fund, and that couldn't go on.

Bob Skinner [00:15:29] Now here was our position. At that time the Old Age Pension had just come into being and it was a means test. You couldn't draw more than \$120 a year, that's \$10 a month. Now, we were forced to pay into this pension fund and we got nothing out of it, because it was more than \$10 a month. So I started off on that track. Now, that was a big fight. Here is from 1940, which is a long time ago, and the only one available to

show you some of the pensions that they were getting after paying all those years. \$4.50, \$8.84. As a pension!

Interviewer [00:16:34] Per week, per month?

Bob Skinner [00:16:36] Yes.

Interviewer [00:16:36] Per month?

Bob Skinner [00:16:37] Per month. And here is —

Interviewer [00:16:42] In 1940?

Bob Skinner [00:16:45] In 1940. But we couldn't do any about it. We had to pay into it or we couldn't hold our jobs.

Interviewer [00:16:49] And who controlled that? The provincial government?

Bob Skinner [00:16:53] Provincial government through the Lieutenant Governor. Here's all the pensions. This is the only one that I know of. Here's one, a nice one here, for your information. Is that 50 cents?

Interviewer [00:17:17] 50 cents, that's right.

Bob Skinner [00:17:18] A month!

Interviewer [00:17:18] A month.

Bob Skinner [00:17:25] For pension. Now, do you think you're going to stand for that? No, sir. So we're going to fight this thing. Now Walter Scribbins went over to Victoria, came back and moved a resolution that when I went over there at the convention that I was not to raise the question of superannuation. Now, he got nothing out of superannuation, I'll be quite candid about that. But, why did he do that? Because Mr. Baker, who was then the Superannuation Commissioner turned all the assets of the fund, some were five and six percent bonds into two-and-a-half percent government bonds as a patriotic gesture. All the funds of the Superannuation Act were turned over to the government.

Interviewer [00:18:40] That was a good help to the government, all that.

Bob Skinner [00:18:49] Yes. That was our fight from here on in. We want rid of this thing, and we're determined to get it. Together with a five-day week and increases in salary and the right to belong to the union of our choice. Incidentally, this is going to be printed, is it?

Interviewer [00:19:13] Well, it'll be typed out and then—

Bob Skinner [00:19:16] It will be printed at a union shop, that's what I want to know.

Interviewer [00:19:18] Oh yes, it will be the BC Federation of Labour will be appointing people to go through it and so on and print it.

Bob Skinner [00:19:28] That's okay. Paddy Neale, eh?

Interviewer [00:19:32] Paddy Neale, yes.

Bob Skinner [00:19:36] I know Paddy Neale. In the meantime, I started writing a column for the Labour Statesmen, which I did for five years every week, gratis. Under a nom de plume of Spud Tamson, who is a barber. And every week I put certain entities and non-entities, would-be politicians in the barber's chair, including Charlie Woodward, and to give you an example, Charlie was very hot about this. He went over to the legislature and he said that every married man should have \$100 a month. He was surprised at the meagre wages that was paid. You put that off. So the next week I put Charlie in here, give him a haircut. "You know Charlie, I was really—Mr. Woodward, I was really very pleased that you were raising that issue that every married man should have \$100 a month salary. But, I had a man in here yesterday who was one of your janitors, and he tells me that he's getting \$18 a week. Now, \$18 dollars a week is not \$100 a month. If you believe that, why don't you pay him \$100 a month?" And you know, he went over to Percy Bengough, to find out who this Spud Tamson was, but Percy didn't tell him. Bill Watts was managing editor of the Labour Statesman at that time. Now, now in 1927, Mr. Woodsworth, Angus MacInnes, and Jack Sidaway, who was a BC Electric man too, and I think he's still alive, over in Victoria somewhere, Jack Price and myself.

Interviewer [00:21:47] Who was Jack Price?

Bob Skinner [00:21:49] He was a BC Electric man too, and he became an Alderman here. We were not satisfied with the way things were going in Canada, because there was socialist parties in Winnipeg, offshoot of the OBU, One Big Union. There was labour parties in Hamilton, Ontario and labour party in the Maritimes and a socialist party here of which I was a member and Ernie Winch. [unclear] was too young at that time. Now, we met here with the intention.

Interviewer [00:22:48] Right here at this place?

Bob Skinner [00:22:49] Right in this room and on that couch. And I said to Woodsworth, "Now, the farmer-labour group, including yourself, Mr. Woodsworth, Speakman, Miss—" oh sorry.

Interviewer [00:23:24] I know who you mean.

Bob Skinner [00:23:27] McPhail.

Interviewer [00:23:27] Agnes McPhail.

Bob Skinner [00:23:28] Agnes McPhail. Now, I said, "You are all members of the farmer-labour party. It's a farmer group, interested only in farmers. Now, what we want is a socialist party, or some kind of a labour party, patterned on the old-country Labour Party, in Canada to consolidate this movement." So Woodsworth gave me 22 contacts that he had right across Canada from Victoria to Newfoundland to the Maritimes and I wrote 22 letters.

Interviewer [00:24:17] Do you remember who they were, those people?

Bob Skinner [00:24:20] Well, I remember from Wetaskiwin, Bill Irvine, he was one of them, and of course, whatever names he gave me, MacDonald I think it was in the

Maritimes, a miner, and Michael Spencer in Victoria, and oh, I forget, you know, it's a long time ago, since 1927. So I used to have a very attentive memory. It's going fast.

Interviewer [00:25:02] What did you write?

Bob Skinner [00:25:04] What?

Interviewer [00:25:04] What did you write them? "I wrote them a letter," what did you write them?

Bob Skinner [00:25:08] I wrote them with the idea of formulating a Canadian-wide labour party, as I said before, patterned on the Labour Party in Great Britain, of which I had some experience during the war, because I was a member of the Glasgow Trades Council at that time. Now, there was several very influential socialists in this province. In fact, I think the most and best informed, and I'm taking in a lot of territory, in the world. That's a lot of territory. And I can mention, Georgie Morgan was one, who became the UBC (University of British Columbia), UBC—?

Interviewer [00:25:56] The bookstore there.

Bob Skinner [00:25:57] Yes, George Morgan, who was one of the smartest economists anywhere that I know. And Currie, Dr. Currie, and O'Brien and Lester. Oh several—oh, Bill Pritchard.

Interviewer [00:26:23] LeFeaux?

Bob Skinner [00:26:25] Wally LeFeaux, run in Kamloops in 1908. Wally was up here to see me, just a little while ago, you know? He's still the old socialist. Of course we got a very poor response. So the only thing that we could do was to send people to the first meeting of the farmer party held, I think, in Calgary at which this idea was rooted.

Interviewer [00:27:12] Which Calgary conference was that? There were a number of them, weren't there?

Bob Skinner [00:27:15] Yes, but this is the first one.

Interviewer [00:27:17] Which one was that, 1927?

Bob Skinner [00:27:19] No, it would be 1928.

Interviewer [00:27:22] Did you send a delegate?

Bob Skinner [00:27:24] We sent delegates, yeah.

Interviewer [00:27:25] Who would you know.

Bob Skinner [00:27:31] Because we had no money as a socialist party. Socialist parties never have any money, you know? We sent Tom— we sent Angus MacInnis because he was an alderman by this time and we sent Tom—another fellow that worked for the CPR, I forget his name anyway. [unclear] and a fellow called Bill Hope, who worked for the CPR, he had a pass, CPR pass, so they went down there for free, but they went down instructed to not agree to anything outside a socialist party, to be called the Socialist Party of

Canada. That was very definite. I don't think there was any way to see it went down, all they could pay their own fare, or there was a pass or something. That's the only way we could get it. So, Woodsworth was at that meeting naturally, because it was a farmer meeting. So they set it back a year to consider the matter. In the meantime, and this is worth noting, that Woodsworth holding the balance of power for a farmer group, and don't let anybody kid you that this isn't true, that Woodsworth went to Mackenzie King and said, "Look, you either put through an old age pension plan or we're going to put you out." Have you got that already?

Interviewer [00:29:31] There's a copy of the letter that Mackenzie King wrote that's right on the — hanging in the office of the party, New Democratic Party. Or the original letter, they got it right hanging up there in the front. Right in writing he had it.

Interviewer [00:29:49] Yeah, well, Woodsworth was the one that brought in old age pensions. However, I'm giving you enough garbage here. Anyhow, now, where were we? The origin of the CCF. So they came back and said it was under consideration for a year. So we sent them back the following year after due consideration. Same gang, because we couldn't afford it anymore. Couldn't afford the money. And they still hedged.

Interviewer [00:30:28] Who was hedging? Do you know?

Bob Skinner [00:30:31] The farmers. Farmers didn't know any of our socialism, they were farmers. But the people we sent down did know socialism. Have you got access to the, to UBC —

Interviewer [00:30:54] Library?

Bob Skinner [00:30:58] A whole bunch of my stuff is there.

Interviewer [00:31:00] It's down there, right?

Bob Skinner [00:31:01] Mrs. Steeves took it up.

Interviewer [00:31:02] Good, good.

Bob Skinner [00:31:03] So you'll see it in the Skinner collection. Yes, I specialize in money. I wanted to know what this money is all about. It's money, but it's another story. However, now then, they came back, "The situation was hopeless," so far as the Socialist Party of Canada was concerned, because they wouldn't go for it. They would go for CCF, Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. All right, they came back with that. Ernie Winch was hostile as hostile could be. He wanted no part of it at all. And he tried to stop the organization of the then Mrs. Steeves' party, which was the League for Social Reconstruction. Maybe you've got some notes on that. Well, Mrs. Steeves was so far to the right that she, at that convention we held in Westminster, she said, "Mr. Chairman, I object to being called comrade."

Interviewer [00:32:21] Did she really say that?

Bob Skinner [00:32:22] Yes, I told her, she was in here to see me.

Interviewer [00:32:25] Does she remember it?

Bob Skinner [00:32:27] Yes.

Interviewer [00:32:30] How about that? She's changed.

Bob Skinner [00:32:33] She's changed all right, changed for the— And she was a very determined lady, believe me, at that time. And she didn't like me and I didn't like her at that time because we were hewing to the line. And Ernie Winch gave out pamphlets to try and stop Arthur Turner, who's still an MLA, and myself, from agreeing to permit the League for Social Reconstruction to get into this because they were organizing a CCF group of their own which they had no right to do because we held the franchise. We paid \$25 and we held a franchise for the CCF here. What were we going to do? These people were going ahead and they were getting more conversant. We were because they had something people could swallow as the League for Social Reconstruction and they were giving a lot of screwballs in there, like Trotter and — I don't know if I'm mentioning names. They didn't know what it was all about. What were we going to do with them? So Arthur Turner and I, in Wally LeFeaux's office, we said, "Well, we've got to do something with those people because we are now the CCF. We've got the franchise. What are we going to do with them? We can't stop them, so if you can't fight him, then join them. Okay, we'll do that." Now this is where Jack Price comes in again. I was the president of the Socialist Party then. Jack Price was the secretary. And we met them all in LeFeaux's office. And Mrs. Steeves, and that fella who was MP for Nanaimo.

Interviewer [00:34:41] Cameron?

Bob Skinner [00:34:42] Hmm?

Interviewer [00:34:42] Cameron?

Bob Skinner [00:34:43] No, no, that's [unclear]. We said, "Well, here's what we'll do." They were waiting outside to see what we were going to do. So he says, "All right, we'll give them equal status in the CCF. But the president and the secretary shall have a vote on the executive. Outside of that, you will be given equal status with the Socialist Party in the CCF." Oh well, we were tickled to death, tickled to death. And Mrs Steeves wasn't smart. Jack Price and I was president and secretary and we had votes, two votes. Wally LeFeaux and the others had equal votes with the League for Social Reconstruction. So all that we had to do was to select two or three League for Social Reconstruction nominees and vote for them only to go to convention. We voted for our own Socialist Party members, and only two or three of them. I mean, this is politics for you. We were given authority once that amalgamation took place, and I still have the photograph of the convention of the League for Social Reconstruction held at Stanley Park where that amalgamation was consummated. "Okay, we're given authority now to call a convention for the party. Ernie Winch wanted it to be called either here in Vancouver or in Kamloops, where the radical Socialist Party, so-called, predominated. Mrs. Steeves wanted someplace else, I forget where.

Interviewer [00:37:26] Victoria?

Bob Skinner [00:37:27] No, eventually it got to Victoria. I'll tell you why. She wanted here, as far as I remember, or Westminster, where they were, had been organizing. So I got together with Jack Price and we phoned over to the secretary of the Victoria Trades Council and said, "Now, can we say something to you in confidence? Can you get the hall, Trades and Labor Council Hall in Victoria for a meeting that we will arrange and give you

the date of, without divulging to anyone?" "Yes," she agreed. All right, so we go back to the next meeting of the combined League for Social Reconstruction members who had equal voting power with the Socialist Party, and Price and myself there. And the matter was left in the hands of the secretary and the president to make arrangements for the convention. I came back, "It's going to be on Victoria." "Oh, no, no, no. Oh, no! Who gave you authority to hold it in Victoria?" "Well, read the minutes, 'the matter left in the hands of the president and secretary'." Okay, so we held it in Victoria.

Interviewer [00:39:10] Why did you hold it in Victoria?

Bob Skinner [00:39:12] Because Ernie Winch was not strong in Victoria and Mrs. Steeves was not so strong in Victoria. That's why we held it in Victoria. You following that reasoning?

Interviewer [00:39:25] Yeah, I can follow that reasoning.

Bob Skinner [00:39:28] So we held it in Victoria. And that was the first meeting.

Interviewer [00:39:31] And the Victoria Socialist Party was for the CCF, was that the idea?

Bob Skinner [00:39:36] That's right.

Interviewer [00:39:36] Whereas the Vancouver Socialists were against the CCF.

Bob Skinner [00:39:38] That's right. But Victoria wasn't really a socialist party at the time. Now, Vic Midgley, who probably you've got in your tapes, eh?

Interviewer [00:39:52] He's dead now.

Bob Skinner [00:39:54] Yes, I know, he died in New Zealand. All the good socialists thought Vic was a pretty swarmy guy, too. He was. Now then, when we put that over, and the CCF became an entity, Ernie Winch wanted to be leader of the operation and he thought he was entitled to it. So he lined up his forces, and I lined up mine. And so far as we were concerned, we had Ernie beat by one vote. And he moves, and this is where he ruined himself. He moves that, "Whoever would be the leader of the opposition give the extra indemnity to the party." In the meantime, the leader of the operation was Connell, Reverend Connell, because he appointed him in Victoria. Following the pattern? Now Winch was very rhetoric, very antagonistic and very unfair to Connell, who was a minister, because the propaganda then, we were an atheistic party, we didn't want the church and all the rest of it taken tie on that kind of thing. So, Ernie said, and I repeat, that the leader of the opposition give his extra indemnity, which he would get for a secretary of [unclear], would be paid into the party. Well, it's illegal for anyone to give any part of their indemnity to any political party. Did you know that?

Interviewer [00:42:20] No. Is that so? I didn't know that.

Bob Skinner [00:42:24] You can't pledge any part of your indemnity —

Interviewer [00:42:29] To a party.

Bob Skinner [00:42:30] To a party.

Interviewer [00:42:36] I see.

Bob Skinner [00:42:36] Anyhow, when the votes were counted, Ernie was out by one.

Interviewer [00:42:40] Was this at a convention, or —

Bob Skinner [00:42:41] No, no, this was

Interviewer [00:42:42] Executive meeting?

Bob Skinner [00:42:42] The executive. To elect the head of the opposition.

Interviewer [00:42:53] So Ernie lost by one vote eh?

Bob Skinner [00:42:59] Now, Ernie going down to BC Electric, walked down with Jack Price, and he says, "Well, I'm glad that Wally LeFeaux voted for me anyway." And Price says, "Well, he couldn't have, or somebody couldn't have, because I voted for you." Now, Jack double-crossed me there, you see. I didn't know that till afterwards, till he came up. He said, "I don't believe it." "Well," he said, "You check with Wally LeFeaux, because I had agreed with Wally LeFeaux to Connell." Wally LeFeaux knew Connell. See so that you can check those facts. Now, Ernie was mad, really mad, and he still didn't like the CCF and he didn't like Arthur Turner because Arthur, he was beating Connell. Alright, now we call, there's another convention called at Winnipeg and now we're in better shape and actually [unclear] of us go down there, and this I never will forget. We go down there and we have the Agnes McPhails, and the Speakmans and the Bill Irvines and those other members of the farmer group were all there. And there was members of the Communist Party from I think Toronto and we very soon got fairly close together with our ideas of the arrival of Communists and watering down the line all the time. But anyway, we were determined that they wouldn't get [unclear], what they wanted to put over. This I never will forget. When Agnes McPhail, when Miss McPhail got up to speak, the stuff that she put over made us so mad that we went out into the rotunda of convention hall and I started, at least we started, singing "The Red Flag" and Gracie—

Interviewer [00:45:35] Grace Woodsworth?

Bob Skinner [00:45:35] Yes, you know, "sh-sh-sh, he press are here. "We don't give a damn for the press. We are stating what we believe, and we are stating what we think is the right thing. And if we want to sing that, who are you to tell us to stop?" Grace never forgot that either. But of course, most of us being irreverant, the convention didn't like it, but we sang it anyway. And that's the old "Red Flag" in Moscow's halls. Anyway, that was that. We come back here, more or less divided, anti-Woodsworth, no, anti-Connell and pro-Winch. The fight is on, and it was a bitter fight too, eventually we made it. The only part in the Regina Manifesto, which is the next convention. The only part that interested us was the one that says, "We are interested in a system in which there shall be production for use and not for profit." That's the only part, the only safe part. What's happening now? Here comes the NDP. They want to obliterate that. They don't want that. They don't want production for use and not for profit. They're back to the old farmer psychology, "This is my land. You can't go on here. This is mine. You go peddle your papers." Now I became business agent for West Vancouver, North Vancouver and North Vancouver School Board, Greater Vancouver Water Board, and all my activities were taken up in that order. I also sat on Conciliation Boards, with Taggart and MacTaggart, which is two of them. For sure, I can't remember them all.

Interviewer [00:48:41] What about, were you delegate to Trades and Labor Council?

Bob Skinner [00:48:43] No, never.

[00:48:44] BC Federation of Labour?

Bob Skinner [00:48:48] No. Because, you see the inside staff were not affiliated, so I couldn't be.

Interviewer [00:48:58] Okay. Were you unemployed at all, during any periods? You always worked, even during the, say, the 30s?

Bob Skinner [00:49:15] Mister, I was never out of a job. I never had to go. I went out to the logging camps. Went up at Stave Falls in charge of the store and the post office. Went over Campbell River, in charge of stores over there. Storekeeper.

Interviewer [00:49:44] I just wanted to know whether you were unemployed at all.

Bob Skinner [00:49:47] No.

Interviewer [00:49:48] And what parties were you associated with? A member of, well you were in the Socialist Party of Canada, right, Labour Party first, British Labour Party.

Bob Skinner [00:50:01] Oh yeah, that was in the old country.

Interviewer [00:50:02] Then the Socialist Party of Canada.

Bob Skinner [00:50:04] Yes.

Interviewer [00:50:05] Then the CCM, right?

Bob Skinner [00:50:07] Yes and now the NDP.

Interviewer [00:50:08] NDP, yeah. Okay, that's pretty straightforward. Were are you in the OBU (One Big Union)?

Bob Skinner [00:50:19] Yes, in Princeton.

Interviewer [00:50:21] In Princeton. Can you tell us about that?

Bob Skinner [00:50:23] Well, see, that was in the 1919s. Well, all that we knew was One Big Union, that's all.

Interviewer [00:50:35] What were you doing? What work did you have?

Bob Skinner [00:50:39] Just a member was all.

Interviewer [00:50:40] Yeah, but I mean, where were you working then?

Bob Skinner [00:50:42] Working in a store in Princeton.

Interviewer [00:50:44] in Princeton, I see. And you were in the OBU. Were you an officer, at all?

Bob Skinner [00:50:53] No.

Interviewer [00:50:53] How long did that, did you move out? When did you move out of Princeton? When you moved away from Princeton?

Bob Skinner [00:51:03] I moved from there to go up the Cariboo.

Interviewer [00:51:08] When? Do you remember?

Bob Skinner [00:51:11] 1920.

Interviewer [00:51:11] 1920. Now did the OBU continue to exist til you —

Bob Skinner [00:51:19] Yes. It was quite strong, a fellow there called Horricks, I think was secretary.

Interviewer [00:51:24] How do you spell that name?

Bob Skinner [00:51:26] H-O-R-R I-C-K-S. I think that was how you spelled it. He was secretary of the OBU.

Interviewer [00:51:32] And he was the man, the leader there.

Bob Skinner [00:51:36] More or less. See, they were all farmers, and the Copper Mountain was going. They were miners and ranchers up there.

Interviewer [00:51:56] Well, what did you think of the OBU? Were you all for it?

Bob Skinner [00:52:06] I thought it was impossible. Because you're talking of revolution, the One Big Union. At one time in the Socialist Party we used to think, "What's the use of us trying to elect people to Parliament? We can't run capitalism better than the capitalist class can. They know more about it than we do. So we just do it for propaganda purposes." And you can check that with Wally LeFeaux, which is true. We didn't care about electing people. Now there was another group. Not the OBU, what do you call it.

Interviewer [00:53:04] Workers' Unity League or the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World)?

Bob Skinner [00:53:07] IWW. Now, you don't like what my personal history going up the Cariboo in 1920, right up the old Cariboo trail, before the road was put in, by wagon team. That's an experience I'll never get again. And I got a cable at Quesnel that my father was very sick with cancer, which he had, and I was instructed to come home. I had my partner there, a team of horses, wagon, and what was I going to do? What would you do? I said to [unclear] who's mentioned in "Grass Beyond the Mountains". Have you ever read that book? [unclear] was my partner. So I said, "Fred, I have to leave you." He says, "You can't do that." I said, "I have to, I have to go over to the old country." I said, "I'll leave you 100 bucks, that's all the ready money I've got here now to tide you to the bank." So I went back to the old country. And then from there, I was right round the world. To Bournemouth in England, Straits of Gibraltar, through the Suez Canal, Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai,

Yokohama. Right to Vancouver. [unclear] Canada. So, I've been around. So anymore questions?

Interviewer [00:55:26] Yeah. What about the Independent Labor Party and the Canadian Labor Party? What was the union attitude to them?

Bob Skinner [00:55:36] The Independent Labor Party was more or less dominated by the printers' union. Harry Neelands and what was his name?

Interviewer [00:55:58] Turn it up a bit. Harry Neelands and—

Bob Skinner [00:56:01] What was his name?

Interviewer [00:56:05] Bartley?

Bob Skinner [00:56:08] The fella's name that went down was Bill Bartlett, the fellow that rings a bell, went down to Calgary, because he had a pass, you see. You remember that, Bill Bartlett. Now, at that time believe it or not, there was a very anti-Asiatic propaganda here.

Interviewer [00:56:42] I know about that.

Bob Skinner [00:56:44] And Wally LeFeaux as a member of the central branch of the Socialist Party brought in a resolution to the Labor Party that we enfranchise the Oriental. And Harry Neelands, and others, said, "The minute you do that we're out. We'll bust it up rather than do that." The Commies had the same idea, they'll bust up the Labor Party, which they did. So it didn't last very long. Now you got that data too.

Interviewer [00:57:33] Did the motion pass?

Bob Skinner [00:57:38] No.

Interviewer [00:57:39] It didn't. What did they say exactly? Did they say, 'If you pass that, the thing will break up?' Or did they say —

Bob Skinner [00:57:45] No, they said that the printers would leave.

Interviewer [00:57:49] I see, if they passed it.

Bob Skinner [00:57:54] Yes.

Interviewer [00:57:54] Well, what about the Canadian Labor Party?

Bob Skinner [00:58:01] What Labor Party are you talking about?

Interviewer [00:58:02] Well, the Independent Labor Party, which started in 1926. Now, the Canadian Labor Party started in 1921. Is it the same thing, or—

Bob Skinner [00:58:20] You see, it's very difficult to get your mind, but one of them had 'farmer-labor-socialist' in their headings.

Interviewer [00:58:39] That was ILP, I think, later on.

Bob Skinner [00:58:42] Independent Labor Party.

Interviewer [00:58:43] Yeah, they put that on later.

Bob Skinner [00:58:45] Because Ernie Winch insisted that they go on. So, so where's it?

Interviewer [00:58:54] What about your union, your own union, the Civic Employees, did they take any part in this at all?

Bob Skinner [00:59:02] In what?

Interviewer [00:59:02] In the Labor Party?

Bob Skinner [00:59:05] No.

Interviewer [00:59:09] They didn't 'eh? Why?

Bob Skinner [00:59:10] Because they were municipal employees, they were white collar and didn't see the need for it. Just the same as they will not and do not pay unemployment insurance. Because they don't see the need for it until they get fired or quit their job, then they're seeing it.

Interviewer [00:59:33] Well, what about, now let's go on, what about the Workers' Unity League, do you remember that?

Bob Skinner [00:59:39] The Workers' Unity League. I remember the name —

Bob Skinner [00:59:41] 1922 to 1924. [clock chimes] It was a communist —

Bob Skinner [00:59:47] Probably, but I wouldn't know much about that see, because I was more or less anti.

Interviewer [01:00:00] You don't remember what your union felt about it? Do you think it was important at all?

Bob Skinner [01:00:00] No.

Interviewer [01:00:00] Didn't think it was much of a threat, did you?

Bob Skinner [01:00:03] I know this, that we placarded Hastings East in one of the poor run per council, he got 80 votes. I know that. 80 votes, in the whole of Hastings East was all we got and we spent night after night plastering billboards and those were tough days.

Interviewer [01:00:38] When was that?

Bob Skinner [01:00:40] I couldn't tell you. Wally would tell you.

Interviewer [01:00:45] What about the All-Canadian Congress of Labor?

Bob Skinner [01:00:49] Well, the All-Canadian Congress of Labor, of course, I didn't have much to do with because I wasn't a member.

Interviewer [01:00:56] No. But you were in the Civic Employees, right?

Bob Skinner [01:01:00] That's right.

Interviewer [01:01:01] And your union stayed out of it?

Bob Skinner [01:01:03] That's correct.

Interviewer [01:01:04] What was their attitude to it?

Bob Skinner [01:01:11] Well, I don't know that they had any attitude to it, because they were not—

Interviewer [01:01:18] Well, what kind of a threat was that All-Canadian Congress of Labor to unions like your own?

Bob Skinner [01:01:27] Well, you see, you haven't commented on Bill Black's episode yet.

Interviewer [01:01:33] No.

Bob Skinner [01:01:34] I guess you, got him anyway.

Interviewer [01:01:34] Go ahead. No I haven't got anything on him, so puy it on.

Bob Skinner [01:01:40] I don't think I dare. Getting a five-day week in the summertime, increases in wages, pension plan, and so on. Now we get people asking, "Well, what is your form of organization?" And we had Eddie O'Connor, who I presume you know, and his brother and Miss [unclear] came down to see Bill and I. And we said, "Well, we can't handle you people at all, because we are the City of Vancouver Civic Federation. We are bound within the city, the greater City of Vancouver. We can't do anything for you at all." So he thought this matter over, and he says, "Well, how about organizing a Canadian-wide public employees' organization.".

Interviewer [01:02:58] This is O'Connor that said that?

Bob Skinner [01:03:00] No, we said that. O'Connor was on the outside, wanting to get in somewhere. So, we organized a Canadian-wide organization embracing postmen, all the federal staffs, all the municipal staffs and all the provincial staffs and called it the National Union of Public Employees. Have you got that?

Interviewer [01:03:50] Well, this is the first person who's talked about it to me, so I haven't got anything on that.

Bob Skinner [01:03:57] So you can see the amount of work that was put in. Now then, at that time, the provincial government employees was very much underpaid and they employed most of them on a temporary basis, including the Liquor Board staff. Some of them were there 10, 12 years. No holiday time, no pension, nothing, because they were temporary employees. They came to me. So Eddie O'Connor had to do something because they were going to go in with us in this joint council of public employees. Now, we had the postmen. You don't know anything about them, do you? And we had — oh, I can't remember them all. Anyway, we were from coast to coast anyway, but we went to a

national organization of public employees. And we've got [unclear] put over, too. Only there was three or four different types of postmen, accountants, inside staffs, sorters, postmen on the beat and so on, and they could never get together, they had two separate organizations. Well, that fell through. But Eddie O'Connor stayed with us until such times as he got the government employees organized and he thought he was strong enough, which he eventually got to be, to be without us. They got a hall on Main Street and Eddie O'Connor was elected to business agent and the first thing he did was to separate himself and his organization from this organization I've just been talking about. And that was the start of the —

Interviewer [01:06:28] Provincial government.

Bob Skinner [01:06:28] Provincial government employees. Now Eddie's smart, no question about that. So, you see, there's been so much work, then it's hard to go away. Now, any questions there?

Interviewer [01:06:44] Well, I really wanted to come back to this All-Canadian Congress, but that didn't affect you much, did it?

Bob Skinner [01:06:51] Didn't affect me at all.

Interviewer [01:06:51] So, it wasn't any big threat to you. They didn't sign up. What about —during the thirties, you continued to work. Did you? Did your income drop? Did your wages go down during the thirties?

Bob Skinner [01:07:19] Did it? Well now, as I say I worked for Woodward's. City staff so far as the health department was in a state of chaos. The health inspectors wouldn't speak to the [unclear] inspectors and so on and so on. And they had tried three chief inspectors, none of them any good. One was a veterinarian, Dr. Strong. And finally the medical health officer was given notice to either put these departments in apple-pie order or resign. Now that's [unclear], so he went to Mr. Vance, who was then a city analyst, \$3,600 a year, and asked him if he would take it, to get an order [unclear]. Now, I'm still working at Woodward's, assistant manager in the [unclear] department. I knew something about the cooking of meats, so he came to me and asked me would I take the job in the City office. And I said, "Well, what's in it?" He said, "125, 75, and 45 a month." He says, "You've got a car? I'll pay you \$25 a month for your car." Which I refused. That's how I went to work for the City of Vancouver.

Interviewer [01:09:26] When was that?

Bob Skinner [01:09:27] Just immediately after amalgamation.

Interviewer [01:09:30] After what?

Bob Skinner [01:09:31] After amalgamation.

Interviewer [01:09:33] Well, that's after 1928. But during the Depression, now, say 1932, 1933, did your salary go down? Did you, yourself? Just trying to figure out how it affected people.

Interviewer [01:09:49] A hundred, and twenty-five, seventy-five and forty-five. An extra twenty- five. They cut us five percent, and then another five percent, and they put us on

three-quarters time. Gerry McGeer became mayor. Gerry was going to fire Arnold Webster and said so, and I got up on a platform at Kerrisdale School and said, "Look, Mr. McGeer is not Arnold Webster's boss, and he can't fire Arnold Webster. That's a matter for the school board, but he can fire me, and I dare him to do it." [unclear] I don't want to toot my horn.

Interviewer [01:10:47] Yeah, that's great.

Bob Skinner [01:10:52] Alright. Gerry and I became very good friends after that. And I'll tell you, also I lost my home.

Interviewer [01:11:02] When?

Bob Skinner [01:11:02] On 22nd East. And I sold that to buy this, because I thought I was getting \$145 and \$25, and I could handle it. But I couldn't handle it! Because I was reduced to \$90 a month. I had bought a car, which I had to pay for, \$45 a month, [unclear] I had to cash in all my assets. All my assets including my life insurance.

Interviewer [01:11:42] Did you sell your house?

Bob Skinner [01:11:44] I lost it!

Interviewer [01:11:45] You lost it? When was that?

Bob Skinner [01:11:48] It was sold for \$600. House, lot and everything. It's still standing there.

Interviewer [01:11:55] What year was that?

Bob Skinner [01:12:00] [unclear] I bought this in 1927, this house. So it was between that and immediately the Depression hit in 1928 or 1930. 1928 was when the thing happened, wasn't it?

Interviewer [01:12:18] No, 1932 or so.

Bob Skinner [01:12:21] No, yeah, we—

Interviewer [01:12:26] Well, anyway.

Bob Skinner [01:12:27] When they were jumping out of the windows?

Interviewer [01:12:30] Well, 1932 was about, I think, when the Depression hit.

Bob Skinner [01:12:33] That was when the Depression hit everybody, but that's not when the stock exchange went down.

Interviewer [01:12:48] No, I know.

Bob Skinner [01:12:48] So I'm down now to \$90 a month paying for a car and paying for this house.

Interviewer [01:12:53] And you lost your—

Bob Skinner [01:12:58] I lost that house.

Interviewer [01:12:58] So you didn't have a very good time with it during the Depression?

Bob Skinner [01:13:03] I had to cash in everything. So now I'll tell you something else about Gerry McGeer. I went up to his house, at his invitation, and he wanted to know all about the civic employees and we got quite a discussion, and he was talking about a free country. I said, "Look, Gerry. This is not a free country. What's free about it, you tell me." I said, "The boys wanted to go down to Ottawa. They got to the Alberta border. They hopped off the train to walk across the border so they could go on the ferry and still ride the rods, and what happened? The RCMP stopped and says, "Where are you going?" "Ottawa." "Like hell you are. Back to that way. That's the way you go. Back to British Columbia." Did you know that?

Interviewer [01:14:05] No, it's the first time somebody mentioned it.

Bob Skinner [01:14:10] Well, that actually happened. Now—

Interviewer [01:14:12] Were you involved in that?

Bob Skinner [01:14:13] No, but I'm just talking to Gerry McGeer now, and evolved out of that came the —

Interviewer [01:14:23] Regina business?

Bob Skinner [01:14:28] Post Office business. "Now," I said, "You tell me, Gerry, what freedom we got." "Well," he says, "If you don't like the government, you can vote it out." I said, "Who told you that?" He says, "I'm telling you that." "Well," I said, "All right, you tell me what constitutes this freedom." "Well, if you're a British subject, you're not in the penitentiary, you're not insane, then you have the right to vote." I said, "Who in the hell told you that?" I said, "I know Hindus here who were born in India and Chinamen who were born in Hong Kong, which is a British colony and they don't have votes, no right to vote."

Interviewer [01:15:37] Mm-hmm.

Bob Skinner [01:15:38] "There's a bunch of them left out there in the inlet weren't allowed to land here. Okay. Don't talk to me about freedom. I'll tell you how much freedom we have. We've got freedom to die. That's it. We've got privileges, but we have no freedom. We have no rights. We have privileges, but no rights!" Look, I own this house. Do I? Did you ever read the deed? Well you'd better.

Interviewer [01:16:18] Well never mind now, we're getting off the topic here. What about the Regina Riots? Were you in that at all, involved in it? You know, the Regina Riot.

Bob Skinner [01:16:37] I was here.

Interviewer [01:16:39] You were here. Were any of your members or was your union at all active in starting this? It wasn't eh? Was this a part of the labour movement, the trade union movement, or was it just something that was on the fringes of it?

Bob Skinner [01:16:57] What the—

Interviewer [01:16:59] The demonstration there in Regina. I think it was in 1930.

Bob Skinner [01:17:07] In 1930. The Bennett Buggy days. Well, Bill Pritchard and I went down to Winnipeg to a convention down there, I think it was Winnipeg. We drove down with Ernie Winch, and we were, don't know why, we contacted him. He lived in White Rock. And we spoke all the way from Winnipeg west here. And this is funny and it's still a complex. He used to introduce us at various meetings, and Bill made a point of this, as 'Mr. Skinner and Bill Pritchard'." [speaks in high voice] "Why should there be a difference between us? Why call him Mr. Skinner and me Bill Pritchard?" So, we get to Kelowna which was very English, and in my speech I said, "Something struck me, going through the prairies, that there's a big pile of stones at the corner of each farm," and I wanted to know why. "Oh well, that's the stones we took off the farm." Now I said, "I come to British Columbia here and to Kelowna and Vernon, and I still see the same pile of stones." I asked some of those fruit farmers where the stones came from. "Oh," they said, "That's where we took the farm off, took the farm off the stones." So after the meeting, what was his name, he became Mayor. He came to me, he says, "You know, Mr. Skinner, you made a terrible mistake." I says, "What was that?" He said, "You addressed those people as fruit farmers." "Yes, what's wrong with that?" "Now," he said, "They're not fruit farmers, they are orchardists." I say, "Oh, is that so? Well if calling you orchardists will help to sell the peaches they are throwing in Okanagan Lake, and the strawberries they can't sell, and the onions that they don't know what to do with, if calling them orchardists will help, I'll be very, very glad to call them orchardists." Now that's their psychology, and it's still their psychology. They still want to be called something else. This is an age of specialists. Doctors used to be —

Interviewer [01:20:23] We're getting off of this. It's interesting. I wanted just to find out a bit about the organizations of the unemployed during the thirties. I think there was the Relief Camp Workers?

Bob Skinner [01:20:41] Yes.

Interviewer [01:20:42] And was there a BC Federation of Unemployed? Or was it just the Relief Camp Workers?

Bob Skinner [01:20:51] They were likely dominated by the Communist Party.

Interviewer [01:20:54] The Relief Camp Workers?

Bob Skinner [01:20:55] Yes. I'm there. I'm trying to think of his name. He's up at Gibson's Landing. You'll come across his name, he was business agent, he went to work for the outside staff. Mussman. Now, he went up there to one of the camps and the communists really took us to the cleaners. Oust him from the camp. It doesn't matter. You see that's, I'm not ready for years. However they were largely Communist-organized. Now, we'll come to something that's of real importance to you. How did the civic outside workers become dominated by the Communist Party? Would that be of interest?

Interviewer [01:22:18] Yes, that would be.

Bob Skinner [01:22:18] We had on our committee dealing with the Council a fella called Billy [mutters] and he was quite a booze artist too, at pretending he was under the influence when he talked to Council. Now, the outside staff got fed up with him and Phillips

worked for the City and the other one, what do you call him? What's the name of the chairman of the outside staff?

Interviewer [01:23:17] Brodie? No, Chairman of what?

Bob Skinner [01:23:22] Outside staff.

Interviewer [01:23:23] I don't know.

Bob Skinner [01:23:25] They control the outside staff now. Guise. Don Guise. Don't you know him?

Interviewer [01:23:33] No.

Bob Skinner [01:23:34] You don't know any about him?

Interviewer [01:23:35] No.

Bob Skinner [01:23:38] I say the outside staff was fed up with this of this Billy and something had to be done with him. So, when the meeting was called, there was so much hostility to Billy, that Guise and Phillips step into the breach, and they've been there ever since, because they've done a job. They've given the boys leadership. And there's no question about that. Mind you, I don't like the Communist Party tactics because they'll use you as long as they can. And they almost emptied that bookcase of some books that you can't replace. I gave it to them because I thought it might [unclear]. Communists are advantage. Advantage. Excuse me, my speech is affected.

Interviewer [01:24:46] That's alright.

Bob Skinner [01:24:46] They've only got one viewpoint. Communism. Everything else, if it isn't in that line, eh?

Interviewer [01:24:55] Yeah, I think you're right.

Bob Skinner [01:24:57] Well, I don't blame them. That's the way we're going to go and that's it. All Karl Marx stuff. Do you know what that is? All those books there?

Interviewer [01:25:15] That's what you mean?

Bob Skinner [01:25:18] Yes. That's [unclear] by Barry Mather. There's all kinds of stuff in there.

Interviewer [01:25:27] You're getting off the topic again.

Bob Skinner [01:25:29] No.

Interviewer [01:25:30] Now let's get back to the Camp Relief Workers, the Camp Relief—

Bob Skinner [01:25:35] Well, we at City Hall, City Hall had very little to do with that because we were not unemployed, you see. That was the reason.

Interviewer [01:25:45] So you didn't really get, you didn't support this really.

Bob Skinner [01:25:50] Well, we didn't have any contact with them.

Interviewer [01:25:53] You didn't, no contact?

Bob Skinner [01:25:56] No contact.

Interviewer [01:25:56] Was there any contact between this thing and the union movement?

Bob Skinner [01:26:02] Oh yes, the general union movement that was, because they were getting a dollar a day, something like that, in the camps.

Interviewer [01:26:12] Yeah, but that still doesn't tie them into the, say, the Vancouver Labor Council.

Bob Skinner [01:26:17] No, they weren't members of the Labor Council.

Interviewer [01:26:20] Were they tied up with it in any way?

Bob Skinner [01:26:23] Not as far as I know.

Interviewer [01:26:25] Not as far as you know, eh?

Bob Skinner [01:26:27] No. Of course they tried to use it, there's no question about that.

Interviewer [01:26:33] How?

Bob Skinner [01:26:33] By moving resolutions.

Interviewer [01:26:35] They had a delegate there?

Bob Skinner [01:26:38] There always is delegates from the Communist—

Interviewer [01:26:41] I'm not talking about the Communists now, I'm talking about—

Bob Skinner [01:26:42] Oh but that's the people that move motions.

Interviewer [01:26:46] They were really just the Communists.

Bob Skinner [01:26:48] Well, there's several do-gooders that thought they should do something about it. But what could you do about it? You're in a Depression, there's no work, you can't buy a job. If you have a job, you're lucky. Now out of that, we took as I said before, a five, a five percent cut, and three-quarters time. I would like this to go on record. Gerry McGeer built that city hall in spite of hell and high water. Everybody was opposed to it, thought it should be downtown. Gerry built it there. Carter-Halls-Aldinger were the contractors. It cost a million dollars to build that hall, and Gerry didn't have any money. So he issued baby bonds. Baby bonds. You know about that?

Interviewer [01:28:02] No. But it's not — is it associated with the union movement at all?

Bob Skinner [01:28:06] Yes, it's associated with the union movement, because we, the inside staff and the outside staff of the City of Vancouver, paid for that city hall because we got the first cuts and we were the last to get them back. That's interesting, isn't it? We were, our salaries were cut first in Canada, and we were the last in Canada to get our salaries back. So, we not only paid for the city hall, but we paid for all the grafts that went on, including the Reverend Mr. [unclear], and the relief here, when you had to go down with a gunny sack to get your can of tomatoes and your onions and pack at home yourself. Those were tough days. But what could the trade union movement do about it?

Interviewer [01:29:11] Nothing much really. What about this sit-down demonstration? The post office.

Bob Skinner [01:29:20] Well Harold Winch could tell you more about that.

Interviewer [01:29:20] Yeah, but was that connected with the trade union movement in any way?

Bob Skinner [01:29:27] I couldn't tell you because, as I say, I never sat in the trades council, and couldn't tell you about what went on. So my activities were in the—you think you've had it eh?

Interviewer [01:29:47] All my questions. Now you better think about, do you have any more things to put on there? I'll tell you, I was a bit unclear about the Woodward's organizing. Now, you're talking about Woodward's, you talk about the Woodward's stores, or are you talking about the city hall? You're talking about Woodward's stores. Now you organized this in what, 1920, 1919?

Bob Skinner [01:30:12] No, no. 1927.

Interviewer [01:30:17] 1927

Bob Skinner [01:30:19] Well, look at that clock.

00Interviewer [01:30:23] Yeah. It's on there, is it? It says 1929.

Bob Skinner [01:30:29] That's when they donated it to me.

Interviewer [01:30:32] Yeah, and that's the year you organized them?

Bob Skinner [01:30:34] Right after that.

Interviewer [01:30:34] You organized them before that.

Bob Skinner [01:30:34] That one dollar a year business I was telling you about.