

- The management practices certainly changed
- Work injury - That company tried to fire me. They made no bones about it. The union definitely saved my job
- ultimately became the chief steward
- taking profit out of there and not sinking any money into it at all

Rod Wood

RW: My name is Rod Wood. I started at Celanese as a summer student in 1984. I worked 3 years while I was going to university, then after completion of university I hired full time in October and was there till 2004.

Q: The interviewer is Alvin Finkle, September 25th, 2007.

Q: Rod, tell us how you first came to be employed in the plant.

RW: Originally Celanese had a policy where children of people who worked at the plant site were hired as summer students. I was going to university then, and my mom worked at Celanese, so I applied to Celanese and worked there for the summers. In the maintenance to start, and then later on I worked in one of the production units. Then after that, at the completion of university, I applied and was hired full time. So I worked there in the cig tow unit from October of '88 to January 2004.

Q: Tell me about the jobs you did.

RW: As a summer student it was basically doing, they called it grounds and roads. You were looking after the plant site, tidying up, any very general laborer type work. In my final years as a summer student, I was working in one of the production units. I worked in the preparation area of the cig tow unit, which basically you were scraping these filtration presses and changing filter dressings out of them, and recycling some of their waste products. When I was hired full time I worked in the cig tow unit again, primarily in the bale press area, which was baling cigarette tow which they used to make cigarette filters. Then through progression of seniority, I then progressed up to the toller area, and then had a little sniff at the actual operations of the area. Then my final 4-1/2 to 5 years at Celanese I was elected into the full time chief steward position, and that's what I did for the last years at Celanese that I was there. Then one more further connection would be that in my current position, I was actually the servicing rep for CEP for the plant site.

Q: Were you active in the union all the time you were at the plant?

RW: Not all the time. Initially my main focus was, unfortunately, - I was trying to get a commercial pilot's license, so I wasn't really very active. What kind of got me active was I had a workplace injury and was off work for 15-18 months, during which time my only real connection with the plant site was the union. I was going to every union meeting, and the contact I was having was with the Don McNeils, the Bob Adseds, and people on the executive. Upon getting back to the plant site, when I finally did, I thought these people had done quite nice things for me and it was time for a payback for them. So I became a steward, became an area steward, and the ultimately became the chief steward.

Q: What were you able to achieve through your union involvement?

RW: I think we held back a very difficult employer through some very trying times. I would like to say that my time as a union activist at that site, rightly or wrongly we always did the best we could. I don't know if I can point to specific gains.

Q: Even holding back specific...

RW: Holding back specific, ya that I will take a lot of pride in, yes.

Q: The last employer took over the plant in what year?

RW: That would be Blackstone you mean?

Q: Was that in the late '90s?

RW: I think it was later than that. ... I think Blackstone bought it after I was, I might've been gone when Blackstone actually bought it.

Q: Who was the owner at the time you were there?

RW: It started out as Celanese, United States was the owner. But then Hoechst bought them, which was the German drug company, which then was the major shareholder of Celanese United States, which was the major shareholder of Celanese Canada. That kind of weirdness, shell game.

Q: I gather they weren't very willing to do maintenance and plant upgrading.

RW: Ya, certainly later on in years, it was run almost like a slum tenement. They were taking profit out of there and not sinking any money into it at all.

Q: How did the union try to respond to that?

RW: In a lot of ways, I guess. We pointed out that it's not a sign, I can think back to the early '90s when people were saying, it's not an activity that a company that aspires to longevity, does. They are just trying to get as much blood out of the stone as they could, or profit I guess, without putting anything back. We would see things like, in the area I worked in, there was definite modifications that were being done at other sites that we just weren't getting considered for. It was just like that wasn't good.

Q: Can you give some examples?

RW: Well they would have - down in the United States they have these tow cans, the tow layer cans that they have were actually mechanically moved. There was a computerized system that, when this one was ready to be pressed up, a computer would actually signal a carrier to go get it, pick it up and bring it to a press. Then it would empty and then return it. Whereas here in Edmonton, that was done by hand, by people. We pushed it, pulled it, grabbed it, everything. A very archaic way of doing it, and very labor intensive, but they wouldn't spend a dime on that. Any money they spent was grudgingly because they had to.

Q: Did you feel that they were trying to just grab what they could and let this plant fall apart?

RW: That certainly was my impression at the time, and I think the proof is in the pudding. That's the Hoechst company, but once Blackstone was involved, I think it wrapped up even more.

Q: When you started, that was before Hoechst had taken over?

RW: Yes, Celanese United States was the owner then.

Q: What was the regime like then?

RW: I guess early on, because I wasn't totally involved with the union at the time, it was more getting it 2nd or 3rd hand. The management practices certainly changed. When I started out in my little area of the plant, it was a very fun place to work. It still was work, but I enjoyed going to work, and I enjoyed the work. Later on certainly a lot less I enjoyed work; but even further on, after I was chief steward and everything, that area of work was no longer fun to work in. There was definitely a change in management there.

Q: Can you describe the change?

RW: From what I saw, it seemed that prior to, I don't know when the exact date was, but they would tend to promote managers from within. A unit manager had sort of worked his way all the way up and gone through each individual step and had a pretty good working knowledge of just about every area, and at least would have some sort of idea of what was going on there. Afterwards it seemed the managers were becoming engineers or being hired from not necessarily off the Celanese area, but certainly parachuted in. It really reflected, caused quite a change. There certainly was, especially from the area I came from, a lot of pushback with these people.

Q: So the new managers were trying to work people harder.

RW: Ya, they would come in and want to have the area show what was done prior wasn't necessarily good and them coming in would solve all our problems in a week and change everything. This is how it's going to be done from this point forward, because I said so. There was numerous errors that were made by very bad management decisions, based on nothing more than arrogance.

Q: With what impact on the union?

RW: I guess the impact on the union was we were continually trying to say, hey look, you can't. In a very good market you can make bad management decisions and survive. If it's a seller's market where all your product is gone, which at the time it was with cig tow; they were making mistakes all over the place, but the tow would still sell. In a more competitive market or a leaner meaner market, your bad management decisions come back to bite you. I don't think that led to the closure of the plant, but it certainly pointed us in that direction. It affected our profitability, ya.

Q: Had people felt earlier that it was a more participatory kind of company?

RW: Oh sure. They seemed to want to get more work per hour out of everybody in a location that already was pretty top as far as what was being done. There was a definite pushback, definite pushback from members, both through the union and through various other activities.

Q: You mentioned that you were injured on the job. What happened with that?

RW: I acquired a repetitive strain injury but also sort of a repetitive trauma injury. Because of the physical nature of the job I was doing, with the various wrist movements and the impacts into your hands, I got in both wrists, I can't remember the technical term, but it was a triangular fibro cartilage tear, which is basically like a knee injury in both my wrists. That then prevented me from doing the job, I wasn't able to do it. Well I could do it, but it hurt like hell. Typical company, they'll then pull you off. I was on light duties and writing manuals for various jobs. Every week I'd get the same question, is it getting better, is it getting better? Or try this or try that. I was quite blunt with them, that if I tried anything and it hurt, I wasn't going to do it. So ultimately it ended up that they just ran out of things that I could do, because everything was hurting. So then they put me into the hooks of WCB and there I sat. I had 2 operations of a degree of success. They were never totally fixed, but they got better. The funny thing was I was never actually cleared to return to work, medically cleared. WCB phoned me one day and said, we're not longer paying you. The union had warned me about, try not to fall between the cracks where WCB clears you to return to work, and then the company doctor says you're unfit to do the job that we have for you. So I actually never went to the company doctor, I just showed up at work one day. The unit superintendent saw me sitting there in the supervisor's office. He walked in and said, "You're not going to sit there all day are you? Why don't you get back to fuckin' work?" Never welcomed me back, never asked how I was doing. That actually really pissed me off. Just told me to get back to work. But also I had a chuckle on that one, because he'd now just given me my clearance to go to work. I just followed his orders, went out and started work.

Q: Were you okay to work at that point?

RW: It wasn't perfect, but I'd also acquired the seniority so that the actual job that injured me was no longer going to be my job. I had 7 days to put a bid in and then was on a job that no longer was so hard on my hands. I was able to do it. But the funny thing is they'd said to me, you'll never work bale press again. I was like, ya okay I'm okay with that. I was always quite adamant that I wasn't going to use the injury to go around seniority. If it had a negative effect on someone I wasn't okay with that. But they had said that, never work on bale press again. It was a year or so later, just by scheduling, etc., they had this schedules and I looked, where's my name, bale press. So I go, hey I thought I was never going to work bale press again. I laughed but they didn't care. I just went down, I was happy to go down there. And that's sort of what happened.

Q: What kinds of problems were there generally for people in the plant?

RW: As a chemical plant and as a 50 year old chemical plant, you're certainly going to have the whole gamut. Asbestos exposure, various chemicals that were at one time viewed as safe but now, through more evidence, people find out there's nasty stuff there. Benzene exposure, there's benzene on that plant. I don't know a lot about chemistry, but there's certainly a lot of hexanes. I've got articles even of filament exposure, which is the stuff that breaks off the cigarette tow. So there's tons of stuff. How did the union deal with it? Well later on we had a full time safety officer, Bill Climie. We had him doing lots of stuff. I'm not sure of the specifics. We had other locals within CEP, like out of Sarnia, who had done all kinds of stuff about tracing asbestos and chemical exposure at their site, and how they dealt with all their WCB claims. We sort of hooked up with them to find out how they were going to do it, and were sort of in the process of setting stuff up

to do that here. Unfortunately, then the closure started to occur. It's a ball that I don't know if it was actually dropped or just kind of pushed aside for priority sake.

Q: If there hadn't have been a union there, your injury would've put you out of a job.

RW: Without a doubt. That company tried to fire me. They made no bones about it. The union definitely saved my job, there's no question. Three people in particular I can point to, like Don McNeil, Bob Adsed and Lloyd Harder. If it wasn't for those people, I wouldn't have been employed at Celanese.

Q: Did you approach the union at that point, or did it come to you?

RW: I worked with Bob Adsed and worked with Lloyd Harder as well. They were both from the executive. There's a lot of people from the unit I came from that were on the executive. I wasn't the only one who was suffering from wrist problems in that work area. There was probably about 4 of us at the time, 4 people who had been on the bale press, the senior people in the area, were certainly coming down with the same affliction. So it was certainly discussed at the executive level even prior to me going off.

Q: Did they ever introduce a kind of job rotation that would reduce the chances of people getting that kind of repetitive strain injury?

RW: The company entered into all kinds of studies. Out of the studies they put bars on cans, which basically was the cheapest. I read some of the studies. The studies were talking about the mechanized can movements that I was talking about earlier as a way of saving injuries of this sort. More breaks. That's something a company doesn't want to hear about, more breaks. More actual time away from the job, or an actual rotation where you get away from it. But unfortunately they weren't open to that, because that implied cost. So no, the only thing they really did is they, at one time we used to have to pull these levers out. They then had a mechanical system to do it, that they did. These metal bars on the can so instead of pushing a can with that motion, which they tell you is a bad thing for your wrist, you now held them like this. They did that, those two things, from a list of 20 things that they could've done, 'cause they were the cheapest.

Q: Did the people of different nationalities get along, or was there some ethnic tension?

RW: Ethnic tension, I don't know of any, no. But in a plant of that size, anywhere from of unionized members, 450 or 500, obviously there's going to be some tensions. But ethnic, no. The unit that I primarily worked in when I was on the shop floor had a lot of women working in it. No issues there.

Q: What jobs did the women do versus what the men were doing?

RW: Same. There was a period where there was, like if you go back through the collective agreements back from the '50s, there's actually positions designated as women's positions. But by the time I was there, there was women doing everything. There was women operators, there was women in bale press, everything.

Q: How many people were working on the bale press?

RW: It started out as 16 and went to 20.

Q: Were you much involved in the local community?

RW: No.

Q: Would people in the plant generally be?

RW: Yes. Once again, you take a slice out of any population, if you have a number of say 500 or whatever, you're gonna have those that are very active and trickle all over the place. Celanese would definitely have that.

Q: Was the company supportive of the things people were doing in the community?

RW: At the start, yes. Both financially and supportively, with giving things like donations, etc, badges, posters, stickers, T-Shirts. Later on, I don't know if I could blame the management or just more of whatever is driving the cost constraints that they were facing. There was a time when they would match donations dollar for dollar. Later on they put a ceiling on that, and then stopped the practice all together. That's a sign of the times.

Q: At what point did you feel they were maybe thinking of closing the plant?

RW: To be honest with you, up to the day the announcement was made, I truly thought that plant would stay open. I naively thought that as long as the plant's making good money, why close it. I truly was shocked the day they announced it. The cig tow unit and the methanol unit were moneymakers. It floored me.

Q: So you thought they might close parts of the plant?

RW: By that time they had, they had closed parts. Some of the parts they closed, the market wasn't so great on that, the price of natural gas was really high. Okay I can buy that one. But the cig tow one and the methanol one truly floored me.

Q: As part of a larger international development where companies don't have much loyalty to any particular place, what about the policies that the provincial government, in terms of natural resources versus manufacturing, do think that is attributable to this?

RW: I assume it contributed to it. When the actual announcement of the closure was made, I was the servicing rep for the union then. I went with the chief steward and the president, and we met with a couple of provincial ministers. It was just post election or pre election, I don't remember. I think it was pre election. The guy made an off the cuff remark to his aide buddy. That was the one thing from that meeting that I remember he said. He sort of looked to the side and said, you know, isn't it funny how much money we spend on attracting business to here, and yet we spend no money to retain business here. He wasn't running again, he was about to go lecture in Washington or something. But I was just like, wow, that's an important aside comment. But the problem is these large multinational companies don't have any loyalty. As long as you're giving them what they want, and every year they want a little more. While they're asking you for stuff they're asking others for more, and the minute they can get more somewhere else, they're gone.

Q: So you were servicing that unit. What was that like after the company had announced it was closing?

RW: I can't say nothing but good things about how the workers took it. It had been such a long drawn out thing. The original partial closure is happening a few years earlier, everyone hopeful that it's going to stay open but everyone's now at least got the answer, it's closing and there's nothing we can do about it. The workers were great. For me personally it was quite difficult. These were my friends and coworkers. I'd kind of moved

on and sort of, they were about to lose their jobs and I had the front row seat for it. That I didn't like. That was very uncomfortable. But the workers themselves were great.

Q: Did most of the find new jobs?

RW: Some, ya. Once again, you take that slice of the population, some will and some won't. Some have fared very, very well. One guy I talked to said it's the best thing that ever happened to him. He's now a fireman with the City of Edmonton, something he always wanted to do. He took his severance, went and did the fireman training, so it's perfect for him.

Q: But for the older workers, the ones in their 50s...

RW: And there were lots of them. Once again, with this long drawn out closure, they certainly weren't attracting young workers to it, because the writing was on the wall. The people that were still there at the point of closure were long seniority members, for the most part. The guy I referred to, the fireman, he was the first wave.

Q: So some who had been there longer would have more difficulty finding equivalent work and pay.

RW: Equivalent kind of pay would be difficult to get, because Celanese paid very well. We had 50 years of negotiations there, and obviously some very successful ones that put their wage quite nice in the hierarchy of wages. ... That's one of the things, when I was chief steward, in the dealings with the company. Whether it was true or not, we could make the claim that job action or any action had 100% support of the members, and the company took it seriously. Once again, I'll point to the maintenance area for sure and a certain couple areas on the plant site, they knew that that group would, at the drop of a hat, take action.

Q: Did Celanese seem like a fairly cohesive community? Were the workers active in social activities organized at the plant.

RW: Yes. Even from the union's perspective, there's not much that was going on on the labor front in Alberta that wouldn't have had someone from the Celanese bargaining unit at it. The whole gamut of community stuff, volunteering soccer teams, football teams, hockey teams, coaches, all of that, huge United Way contributors, all kinds of stuff.

Q: So the simple fact of it being a fairly stable employer over a fairly long period until the last when it changed, it did sort of give people a kind of freedom to be involved in other kinds of things, because they had some stability in their lives. Even though some of these people now go off and do other kinds of things, there isn't going to be a new generation who have that experience, not only at that plant but any similar kind of plant.

RW: Absolutely. It's not just a negative effect on the shareholders of the Celanese plant of the actual workers at the Celanese plant. The number of people that have worked there through the years is astounding. I don't know the number, but you just keep bumping into people. As soon as they find out you're from Celanese they're like, oh ya I worked there in the '50s or the '60s, and where they've gone. It's massive, so that's gone. The end of the pyramid has occurred.

Q: Tell me about your period as the full-time shop steward.

RW: It was a very tumultuous period, because that was when the first closure occurred. To set the groundwork of how crazy it was, there was 4 or 5 plant managers during that time – 3 heads of HR and 2 human resource directors – 4-1/2 to 5 years. Plus you had 4 union presidents during that period. It was a pretty crazy time. What kind of issues did we deal with? It went right from disputing what the actual severance would be, based on the language in the collective agreement, to a libel charge against the head of HR and the plant manager. Libel and slander.

Q: Libel charges by whom?

RW: Us. The entire executive.

Q: You felt that the head of HR had libeled the union?

RW: Under our lawyer's advice, clearly she did. Libel in print. She said we were acting in our own self-interest. What happened is, they had offered an enhanced severance initially. They said, we want to make this smooth as possible, the usual company stuff, and we'll offer you, if you accept the package as a whole, we'll offer you an enhanced severance. We'll pay what's in the collective agreement plus an amount. But you have to accept it as we propose it. So part of the proposal was to get this severance, no recognition of seniority, no right to grieve, and they will do it as they deem fit. The amount they offered each individual member above the severance was a substantial amount, it was \$20,000. So we were stuck with the dilemma of would the members accept this or would they not. We had a fight back and forth going on it. We took a vote and rejected it by 90, high 90s. Took it back to the company and told them we would accept their offer of an enhanced severance, but not with the conditions that they put on it. The company then said, we'll do it your way as per the collective agreement, but as we interpret the collective agreement. She said, we will do it exactly as the collective agreement is written, were her exact words. We went back and read the collective agreement. One of the stuff that was ambiguous was the severance language. So we told them to go ahead and do it exactly as they want, but we put out a letter saying that the company is going forward with a layoff. It is the company that's laying people off, the union will do everything it can to protect the rights of the workers both going and remaining. The last thing we put on there was our interpretation of the severance language is that it was 4 weeks per year of service. She got a hold of that, well we put it out everywhere. They put out a letter right after it say the company had been so nice, they offered this enhanced severance, made no mention of the conditions, and the executive is acting in their own best interests based on their interpretation of the severance language, or something like that. So we then said, we're going to take you on. We didn't agree on how the language would work, there was no agreements. It was just a schmozzle, that initial layoff. It was bad, and it was fighting like cats and dogs. It was labor relations through lawyers is what it was. ... We didn't agree about anything, we couldn't talk about anything. It would end in screaming and shouting, and then off to the lawyers we'd go, off to the lawyers they'd go.

Q: How did it work out in the end for most of those workers?

RW: The unfortunate part is they didn't get their enhanced severance. The fortunate part is we retained our right to grieve, and it was done by seniority. I still get people talking at me that we hosed the members out of \$20,000; they always forget about that part. The union retained the right to grieve, and to me that was the massive one.

Q: If you can't grieve and you can't maintain seniority, you're basically not a union at that point.

RW: That's right, and the company wasn't exactly... All the people they laid off weren't exactly, like if they had a bad apple somewhere that they'd been trying to get rid of, they were targeted. If we had signed onto that line, there would've been people that weren't even in the area that they'd have laid off.

Q: Actually, those people would've had a pretty good case to sue the union.

RW: Totally, because we negotiated away their right to grieve. So that was one of the issues at the time. There was of course all the bumping rights and where people were going to go; even that was disputed. The company didn't want to have anyone bump anywhere because it would disrupt the people that were there, or whatever. So we fought about... The language we had at the time, I don't know when it had exactly been negotiated, but unfortunately it had never been used in a layoff. When you read it really specifically and closely and followed everything, it actually didn't work. So we had to renegotiate or at least do letters of understanding during a layoff, layoff language, because the layoff language in the book didn't work. So that even had issues. If you were negotiating some way that you thought would work but that opened up areas that under the current actual language wouldn't be exposed to bumping, these people were angry. Wait a minute, I was protected under this language, how come you're redoing it? It's like, it doesn't work. That was a pretty heady time I guess. We'd outreached to other plant sites because it was affecting the Edmonton guys. We hooked up with a Celanese plant in Blacksburg, Virginia. We were hoping to get a hold of the Mexicans but we never did actually get that linked together. But we had talked about doing it.

Q: Did you have a sense of how the Celanese plant was being operated versus other Celanese plants, in The States, for example?

RW: The Blacksburg, Virginia site was similar age to ours. We went down there and they had new everything. It was an impressive location.

Q: So the foreign ownership did have a negative impact.

RW: Oh totally. And Mexico was brand new, and they'd also built the Chinese sites. That was going to be trouble for us.

Q: Do you think the free trade agreement had an impact as well?

RW: I know it did. I don't know what his name was, he was one of the head honchos of Hoechst. He came up and said that the branch plants of Celanese were built to get around tariffs. The minute the tariff disappeared, don't need the branch plants anymore. And he made no bones about it.

Q: The plant did export.

RW: The cig tow market probably 80 plus percent of its market was to the Far East. I think they exported methanol. Any of the petro-chem products were definitely exported.

Q: So even though they were a foreign owned firm, once you got them here, they came here just to get around the tariff but then they found other reasons.

RW: Without a doubt. Ya.

Q: When they first started in Alberta in 1950, one of the attractions for them was natural gas, which was their feedstock, was close to zero in price, and Alberta wasn't piping that stuff away. Did the changes in government policy affect the way they saw this?

RW: Sure. I don't know a lot about it, but the stripping of liquids or whatever off natural gas, and also that you had to buy on the world market or the Chicago price, so it was almost cheaper in Chicago. Natural gas would go to Chicago and be shipped back or whatever. The price was actually higher here than they could get in Chicago. So of course, their price of natural gas went way up. Celanese, I don't know if they're the 3rd biggest user in the province or the 2nd biggest user; they're behind 2 cities as far as natural gas usage, or they were. It was pretty spectacular. But another part of that was in the corporation as well they weren't allowed to buy on the spot market or futures. You couldn't buy for a certain while and get it, so they had to actually buy in the last 8 years nothing but the market price right at the time. There was a time where, because the plant was 2 types of the Celanese corporation – there was the chemical side and the fiber side – there was a divider that one side was viewed as fibers and the other was as chemical. The chemical side was allowed to buy, no I'm getting this backwards. The fiber side was allowed to buy on the spot market because of different management, but the other side wasn't. So they were paying way more on our side than the other. But then all of a sudden they just sort of, once that contracted ended up, they stopped doing it. They were paying way too high.

Q: They dumped the fiber side fairly early on, didn't they?

RW: It was early on in the 2nd wave of layoffs.

Q: Describe a bit of the chaos in the first wave of layoffs? Was it easier by the 2nd wave?

RW: I wasn't there for the 2nd wave. But it certainly didn't have all the fighting. But they also didn't offer the enhanced severance with the conditions. The company just said, we're going to do it by the book. We all know, except for Rod, what the language means.

Q: So they gave up the fight to try and control who was going to be gotten rid of, and accepted that they had to go with the union's seniority list?

RW: Ya, and I think the company just said, let's make it as easy as possible. With the change of management too, I alluded to earlier the manager who was brought in to sort of bring the union in line. That didn't work, and it actually caused more problems. The new guy that was brought in definitely had been witness to all the problems that had occurred. He didn't want those problems; he even said that. Look, I just want this to go smoothly, it's inevitable, let's just do it.

Q: Blackstone came in after you'd left. Blackstone represented an even greater degeneration of what management was looking for, didn't he? This Hoechst seemed to be interested in running a plant, even if they wanted to run this extremely tight ship and act like the union wasn't there. How do you see this Blackstone period?

RW: My impression of Blackstone is that all they wanted to do was go in there, cleave off assets of value, get as much money out of it as they possibly could; close some things to create commodity shortage, which then would put the price up of the commodity, which would then ultimately make the stock look healthier. Then ultimately I think they will sell Celanese.

Q: They had that intention from the time they took it over?

RW: They had that intention before they took it over. They knew exactly what they were doing. That's my impression.

Q: At the time you first started at the plant, it was a different work in terms of that stuff. It was a multinational company that was running things, but multinational companies were big but they seemed to compete with one another. They were in a certain field other than stripping assets and selling them here and there. There was kind of a change.

RW: Celanese was a Canadian company owned by Americans. It had its head office in Montreal and it had been there for a long time. There was no reason to think they were going anywhere when I started there. Not that I anticipated to retire there, but I certainly thought people I worked with would.

Q: Many people you worked with must have thought that they were going to retire in this firm.

RW: Totally, yes.

Q: So for many people it must have been a shock at the end.

RW: Yes. I have nothing but respect for those people and how they took it. Right to the bitter end, they were not downtrodden or beaten down. They kept their heads held high in very trying times.

Q: What do you think the contribution of the Celanese workers was to CEP as a union?

RW: There was nothing in this province that went on without something from CEP Celanese. Right from the camera you're filming with to any picket lines that were involved, chances are someone from Celanese was going to be there, either in body or financially. The legacy of Celanese through CEP, as you can see, Don McNeil, ex Celanese, he's now the vice president of the western region. Myself, I wouldn't be where I was if it wasn't for the members of Celanese and the training I got from them. Dave Molka, very active in the province of Alberta, and numerous others, if we were running steward schools or whatever, that would go through there. I think the impact of Celanese as a unit on the labor movement in this province is huge. Just on the fact that there's 50 years of labor history there plus a very active core group of activists coming out of there: the Carol Stewarts, the Louis Yakimishyns, and all of them.

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