

Shane Dawson

Location: Brooks, Alberta

Year: 2010

SD: My name is Shane Dawson and my title today is Special Assistant to the President of UFCW Local 401, Douglas O'Halloran. That's what I do today.

Q: What's your background?

SD: I started out in the union business around 1976. I went to work at National Sea Products. I worked there until I started working for the union. I came to work for the union at a very unique time. It was a time when CAW was raiding UFCW. During the course of that people were asked to come onside, and I came onside with UFCW in 1987. That's my first introduction to the labour movement. I stayed. I went to work for UFCW in 1987 and in 1989 I became an international rep in the province of New Brunswick. In 1991 I became an international rep in the province of Alberta. Mainly organizing is what I was doing. I stayed at that for around--in the year 2000 I became assistant to the Canadian director in Western Canada. I stayed at that until about 2005. I moved to Toronto and I was director of organizing for UFCW Canada. I stayed at that until around 2009 and came back to Alberta and became an executive assistant to Douglas O'Halloran, president of Local 401.

Q: Who led the raid for CAW?

SD: Bob Lloyd. He was president of CAW at the time. He, and Richard Cashin was the president of UFCW Local 1252. There's a long history there. You'd really want to have a lot more time. It wasn't called UFCW then. It was UFCW Local 1252 but he called it Fisherman's Union Local 1252. Nobody in Newfoundland knew that they were a member

of UFCW. We were all just led to believe that he was the start and end of the union in Newfoundland, and that's what we were led to believe.

Q: When you became the director of organization, who was the president of UFCW?

SD: When I became the director of UFCW Canada, Michael Fraser. He's now retired. He retired about three years ago. I'm one of the few people left that actually worked for every director, and Doug O'Halloran has too. We've worked for every director that UFCW has had since UFCW began. UFCW came together when they all joined unions, and Cliff Evans was the director. When Cliff Evans stepped down, it was Tom Kukovika. When Tom stepped down it was Mike Fraser, and now it's Mike Hanley.

Q: Tell us about some of the early experiences in Brooks.

SD: As an international union, having the largest plant in Alberta, non-union was really a problem. It was dictating the wages for the rest of the packinghouses in Canada. We also, down the road in High River, we unionized High River Cargill in 1991. I worked on that not nearly as much as I worked on this one. In 1997 the national office along with President O'Halloran decided we gotta come back here and stay at it. I came down in '97 and checked into the Heritage Hotel. I checked in for a week. My second night there they came up, knocked on my door, and asked me to leave. They said, we were told that you work for the union; Lakeside Packers have told us that if you don't get out of the hotel they will not give us any more business. They were giving the Heritage Inn a lot of business at the time. They were pretty much the only hotel in town that gave a really good service. So I moved out of the hotel and Local 401 bought a house. I was heading up the organizing campaign. So we came down here. I looked at a few houses, and we bought a house. The real estate agent told me the name of a lawyer: I don't want to say his name now. I went over; we bought the house; I gave him the papers. I said, I need you to register this house. It was on a Thursday, I gave him the papers. I'm leaving to go back to

Calgary. This was when cell phones first came out. I was nowhere and the phone rang, Shane you've gotta come back to Brooks to the lawyer's office. I come back to the lawyer's office and he says to me, I can't put the house in your name. I says, why can't you put the house in my name? He said, I'm the lawyer for Lakeside and they told me. They were a big player in town. He said, we can't do it. I said, I'll go across the street to another lawyer. He said, nobody in town will touch your house. And believe it or not I had to bring the papers to Calgary to get the house put in my name. It was a really tough struggle in '97, '98, '99, 2000, 2001. These were all major struggles down here just to get anything done. I move into the house and I want to open up an office. What I'm going to do here, I'm going to service that plant just like it's unionized. If you get hurt, you come to the house and I will represent you. So I open up an office. The first day I opened the office, they show up; the city does, and closes me. Day one.

Q: On what grounds?

SD: On what grounds? I don't have a small business permit; on the grounds they won't give me one. I've applied for a small business permit; they won't give me one. The lady on one side of me runs a salon out of her house; the lady on the other side of me runs a daycare. But they won't let me open up. So I get a fine, and I gotta appear over at City Hall. So I go over to City Hall, me and Archie Duckworth. Archie's a really good politician; I'm not. I'm not a good politician. So I go over there and they pretty much tell me that they're not going to give me a license. They're not going to give me a license at no time. During the course of this I meet with the mayor and all the councilors during this meeting, and I give them the song and dance that if we had a union here the 200 people a month that are leaving may stay. If we got a union and got the workforce stabilized, we may be able to sell some houses, they may buy some cars, they may do a lot of things for the community. The moral of the story is that plant is here to stay. So we might as well unionize it and try to stabilize it and get some good people there. So, at the end of the thing, they said to me, you're still not getting the license. I don't know if I can say on

camera what I said that day; it was not very nice. I just stood up in the meeting and said, quite honestly, I couldn't give a fuck what you do. I'm not fuckin' leaving and you can send me a fuckin' ticket every fucking day till fuckin' eternity fuckin' freezes over. I ain't fuckin' leaving. I'm here. I got the backing of the UFCW national union. Fuck off. And I left. I wasn't out of there 20 seconds, cuz I went there with papers from my lawyer. My lawyer phones me and says, whatever chance we had of getting a license you ain't getting it. I said, the fuckers weren't giving us a license anyway; fuck 'em. I said \$250 a day is the price of doing business. It's the price of doing business. Believe it or not, at the end of the week I got a license. They brought me over a license at the end of the week, with a lot of restrictions. A lot of restrictions, but the fact is I got the license. I couldn't believe it. This wasn't a 24 hour thing. This was over like, it all seems like yesterday, but when we were going through it, it seemed like forever just to get to this point, just to get the license to open an office. It was unbelievable. So we had that going for quite a while. We had that many people coming to the house that worked there and were injured and all of that stuff. We opened an office. Not this office here. This is my third office in this town. I had an office over on 2nd Avenue, then moved over here on 9th Street, and now this is where we came after. It took a long time. Our first goal of getting the union there, the years are all mixed up now, let's say it was around 2000 or '99, I brought in a group of people from Toronto. At one time I had 38 organizers here, 38 organizers. People would say, you're only doing this for the money. We will never get back the money out of this plant that was spent to unionize it – millions. We had to stay at it because it's the number one plant. So the first time around I got about 600 cards. I needed to get around 1,200. I'd get up to 600 cards and that's as far as I could get because I couldn't find out who they were. People are turning all the time and a lot of these cards--I would've had an organizing drive in June and July and would find a lot of the people in the parks, transients. They were coming here and that's where I would sign a lot of them. But I would get up to 600 and that happened to me three years in a row, I'd get up to 600, and then it would die. During the course of this I would come here and have meetings with different groups. I'd done everything in the world to get names. I even had a store up here, a Newfie store that

sold fish and chips. When you go in and buy fish and chips, if you worked at Lakeside, you put your name, address, and phone number on a card and put it in a box, and we used to draw for a golf bag. That's only one trick. There's so many things we did here to get names, and could never get enough names. I'm in the house in Brooks, just had another unsuccessful attempt at getting the names, and it didn't work. My buddy Archie now has moved into the house with me. We're living there and we're going to every function that they have in Brooks – Sudanese weddings, everything that they're having, we're attending. Whatever was on the go, Xmas parties for everybody, you name it, UFCW were involved. Whatever's on the go, us guys would go out and get involved in them. So I'm sitting in the house and the door knocks and it's a guy from NDP party. He's campaigning, he knows I'm with the union. I said, how many doors are you knocking on here in Brooks? He said, I'm knocking on every door in Brooks. I said, really? He said, yeah, I knock on every door in Brooks and find out how many people live there. I said, how long does it take you? He said, it takes me about three weeks, me and two more guys, and we have an accurate account of how many people are in Brooks. So I go to bed that night. The next morning I get up and go to Toronto and meet with some people. I meet with President Douglas O'Halloran and brought in a group. I went to the NDP party and broke it down in the polls exactly the way they did it on a map. Everybody who come to work, I brought in 34 organizers and I gave you a poll, you a poll, you a poll, you a poll. We kept track of every poll on the computer. So you would go out tonight and knock on 55 Greenbrook and say, hello, my name's Larry, I'm with United Food and Commercial Workers Union; anybody here work at Lakeside? If no one there worked, they would know next door or next door or next door or next door. That turned out to be, in a small town like Brooks, I can do that; 80% of the people that live in Brooks work at that. Then I had to go out and do Rosemary, Tilly, Bassano, and all those places. But I could bring a group into Bassano and knock on every door in four hours, knock on every door and find it all out. That turned out to be the number one key to getting the names. It wasn't 100 per cent accurate but it was a hell of a lot better than what I was doing before. We finally got up the numbers to go have a vote.

Q: What year?

SD: I don't know off the top of my head, but I'm going to guess and say we had vote, I can't believe it's 2011 just around the corner. We had a vote say in something like 2002 or 2003 and just barely made the 40%, just barely made the 40%. But we went out and we had to vote – all these numbers used to be fresh in my head, they're not there now – and we lost. We lost it by 63%. Two years later we round it up again and do the exact same again. We have a vote. We go into it this time with a little better than 40% signed, and during the course of that we have a vote and we lose this time by 2% more than we lost the last time. Heartbreaking, heartbreaking, heartbreaking, heartbreaking. But it was showing everybody else that we want to stay at it; we're going to stay at it. By this time, after opening up an office, we're here to stay. At the plant they had an anti-union group of people. The day of the vote I had 18 organizers here in town and the vote was being counted at 3 o'clock. So 20 after 3, when the vote was over and we lost, I said to everybody who's here working, it happened on a Wednesday, I said, if you want to take the rest of the week off and do nothing, the 18 of you can just hang around Brooks, do nothing, go home Friday and have the weekend off, and you can, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday here just taking it easy. The point I'm trying to make is when they got the results of the vote and we lost, everybody left town. The only two people who stayed here was me and Archie. The group were not interested in two days in Brooks doing nothing. It was very unfriendly here.

Q: What was the attitude in the community?

SD: Most of the residents in Brooks, Alberta, do not like the fact that that plant is out there. They do not like the fact the plant is out there. Brooks, Alberta is about as redneck as you're gonna find anywhere, especially in Canada. If the Ku Klux Klan are anywhere in Canada, they're in Brooks, Alberta. These people are not well received here in Brooks.

These new immigrants that come into town, they do not have open arms for these people here. They never did. It's a little better today, but it's a long ways to go, a long ways to go. My organizers took a lot of heat knocking at the door, a lot of heat. If I had to leave this town the first time I was threatened, I would've been gone a long time ago. The phone calls that used to come to that house were crazy.

Q: Like what?

SD: They'd say, Newfie, we don't want your union; get the fuck outa town. Newfie, we're coming down tonight, three of us. The second vote I had, when all of those people left town, me and Archie were left here by ourselves. We were committed to this; this was our job. Win, lose, or draw, we were staying here to keep the office open. They had an anti-union rally. At the end of the vote they won, they came down and circled our house. It wasn't all that sweet; it wasn't very sweet. These were mostly white Albertans that did not want that union to go in there; they didn't. They fought hard against it. They gave us a good run for our money. If it wasn't for the immigrants, there wouldn't be a union. Let's be clear on that, very crystal clear. If it was up to the white Albertan, there would not be no union. That's clear.

Q: So you lost that second vote.

SD: Lost the second vote. So then we turn up the heat. We turn up the heat and we start doing more. So Christmas came. In this office here we gave out Christmas hampers to everybody who worked at Lakeside. If you worked at Lakeside, you were entitled to a hamper. You would come down here and you got a \$75 hamper on December 15th – it was a turkey, it was a bag of flour, a beautiful hamper. Dougie don't do nothing small. You came in, you gave me your name, your address, and your phone number. We were lined up here literally from 9 in the morning until probably 9 o'clock that night. We gave out around 1,400 hampers.

Q: Mainly to the immigrants?

SD: Whoever came. If you worked at Lakeside, come in. We didn't discriminate, even the office staff. If you worked at Lakeside, you were entitled. We did a lot of things like that. We had UFCW socks. I went out to the front gate and every car that came out we gave them a bundle of socks with UFCW on them – they got six pairs of socks. Let me tell you it was the biggest hit that you could imagine, the socks. They were big hits. We had people coming here for years after looking for socks. Seriously. It was that big of a hit we just bought a whole load of socks for our members; we just bought a whole load of socks for our members. A lot of these people get here and when they get here they don't have much; they don't have much. There's no doubt since this plant came to town there's definitely some bad effects that came with it. One of the worst effects that came, back in '87 all the way through 2003 and 2004, they had a place out there where you could live, called the Echo Trailers. You would come out here and they would go to a place like Marystown in St. John's, Newfoundland, and have a video. So I'm back in Newfoundland and I'm in the process of organizing this; I wanted to go to one of their recruiting seminars. So I put on my coveralls and put on my fish plant boots and I go to this. They show you this glorious place you're going to come to work. Everybody's smiling in the plant, and it's just a wonderful place to work. They called it the oasis of Alberta. On Saturdays, when you don't have anything to do and you make all this money, you can travel to Brooks; excuse me, you can travel to Banff and go skiing. You can travel to Banff and go skiing and then on the following weekend you can go to West Edmonton Mall. They didn't tell you it was six hours drive; they left out that little dictation. They show you all these people catching these Greyhound buses, and everybody is so happy. It was an amazing thing to look at. But they didn't show you the trailers. So you would show up here on January 1; you'd show up here and they'd give you a trailer; they'd give you a room in that trailer. The room was big enough for a bunk. That was it, big enough for a bunk. Now when you're in that trailer you're not allowed to cook in there. The only

thing they had in there to cook on, up over the dryer was a microwave: one microwave for 300 people. That was the extent of the cooking things. When you go out there in the nighttime, every trailer had a Safeway bag hanging out the back. That was your fridge. That was it. The living conditions were unbelievable, and they charged you \$5 a day when they first started. Then it went up to \$10. Now you only had 30 days, and day one you're out of that trailer. But what they did, when you come out here, they charged you \$5 a day and \$7 a meal. They had you, cuz when you got paid that's the first thing come off your cheque. When you got paid, they got you. While you're out there, Friday, you come off work. There's no work on Saturday; there's no work on Sunday. You got no money. You just got here. Cafeteria is not open. So what do you eat from Friday to Monday morning? Your food tickets are no good because they're only good in the cafeteria. What the average guy don't realize, it's 10 kilometres from where the plant is to come into town. That's not next door. That's a long time to go without something to eat. But then what would happen, every second Friday, you would get paid. You got 300 men that have been out there for 14 days that have not--not allowed to drink out there, not allowed to smoke out there. If your father comes to visit you, he's not allowed in. In order to get in there was a door right here; you park your car; you had to go in through a security shack to get in. There was a barbed wire fence going all the way around it. So, every second Friday they would let 300 men come into the town of Brooks with a paycheque. Let me tell you, it was worth going over. There used to be a bar up here called Izzie's. We'd go over there Friday nights at 2:30 in the morning. All the cops would be there. It made W5 twice. It was a very serious thing that was going on. It was crazy; it was crazy. At this time it was Lakeside Packers and IBP bought it and then Tysons bought it and now it's XL Beef that owns it. But back when IBP owned it they didn't care about how brutal the living conditions were. The living conditions, make no mistake, were brutal. When you're in that room you had no privacy. The security guard was entitled to go in there any time he wanted to, any time. That was probably the number one worst violation for human beings to be out there living in there, especially when you couldn't eat. Friday afternoon when they closed that plant, you couldn't eat until the cafeteria opened. You got these

tickets they gave you when you went there. These were people that were leaving Newfoundland, leaving Thunder Bay, leaving Sault Ste Marie, leaving all these remote places with nothing, with the promise of coming to the happy land. You get here, and every Sunday for 18 months I had chicken and chips. Not me, UFCW. We had chicken and chips, Kentucky Fried Chicken for the people in the trailers every Sunday for 18 months. I told them I would stay at it until conditions improved. The trailers are gone today. They're gone today, but it was unbelievable. One of the few places--I've been organizing since 1987--and one of the few places that I went to work that I tried to organize, back up the road there's a prison called Drumheller. When you're leaving Drumheller, they give you an application for the packinghouse. One of the few places that I know that would hire at the time, they certainly weren't prejudiced, they would hire...

Q: This was before the Sudanese?

SD: This was during the Sudanese. They'd hire anybody. You gotta realize there was times we had up to 25 different languages in that plant. In '97 probably there was more Koreans than there was Filipinos; and then in '98 there'd be more Filipinos. It seems to go up and down. Sudanese is probably the number one today. But it wasn't always number one. The Filipinos were number one for a long time. The only reason why that is, every white guy in Brooks, Alberta, that wanted to work there has worked there, and they're not going back. They're going back. Even to this day a lot of the kids in this town are not going to go to work out there. It's a very brutal place to work. It's a hard job.

Q: What makes it so brutal and hard?

SD: Here's one of the problems. I worked 14 years in the fishing industry in the hole of a dragger. This is a different story. There's a quarter of beef hanging and you gotta make your cut. When you make your cut, the next man can make his cut; the next person can

make their cut. But if you don't make your cut, I can't make my cut. I can't leave the line. I want to use the washroom. You're not allowed to just leave and go to the washroom. That is a very sad day in Canadian workforce when you can't go to the washroom. It's a very sad day. If you stop, the people behind you stop. We've had numerous people that have urinated in their pants because they're afraid. You'll always hear about the one person that stood up, made noise about it. There's a whole lot of people that don't stand up. A lot of these people are just glad to have a job--they're just glad to have a job. I like to think that the working conditions today are much better than what they were in 1997. As a matter of fact, I know they're much better. Those trailers are gone. It took a lot of campaigning to get those out. People should not have been allowed to live in those trailers. A camera: nobody can get inside of that plant. I understand that's the way it is. Coming from Newfoundland, the seal hunt, I understand why they don't like cameras.

Q: You mean you can't give me a tour of that plant?

SD: No. I got trouble getting into that plant right where they're killing animals. I got trouble getting in there, let alone trying to get you in there with a camera.

Q: So you lost the second vote, and now you're here to stay.

SD: Okay, so then we had an upset around our last vote. We had 80 people get fired in one day; 80 people got fired in one day. They phoned my office and said, okay, we're going to unionize now. Out of those 80 people we probably had 15 people that were angry, and they got involved. I had a lot of ammunition, I had a lot of names and addresses, a lot of phone numbers, plus I had the experience of going through it a few times. So, in a matter of four or five weeks, we had the cards, we made the application, and we won.

Q: What year?

SD: I don't know off the top of my head. I want to say 2004, but I don't want to say because I don't know the exact date. But I can get you all those dates. We won at 51%. As a matter of fact it's in the washroom. The plaque is--of Don Crystal and the boys. We won that vote, and then we went into negotiations. Going into negotiations it was going to be a brutal fight, a brutal fight. At the end of negotiations we had a strike, brutal strike, not friendly. We lost two members. Two members died in a head-on car collision, one guy going to the picket line and one guy coming home. Those are things that can't be-- nothing can bring back those people, nothing. At the end of the day we finally had an offer. We had a vote at the Heritage Hotel right where it started many, many years ago. We had a vote at the Heritage Hotel. I can tell you from a personal perspective, being a little boy in Newfoundland, when we counted that vote and we finally had a contract, it was my Stanley Cup. It was the happiest day in the 20 year career of doing this. Me and Archie Duckworth were there, and I'm not a man that gets sentimental or anything; but I hugged Archie. It was a great day. It was a great day in the history of Brooks. I believe to this day it's the number one best thing that ever happened to the town of Brooks, unionizing that plant.

Q: What have you been able to do for the workers in that plant since then?

SD: The biggest thing that we've been able to do for the workers in that plant, right now it's to me, we gave them a voice. We gave them a voice. Today, when you get hurt, we make sure you get your sick benefit. We make sure if you're entitled to long-term disability, you'll get it. Short-term disability, you get it. You can't believe how many people out there got wronged on their cheque and wouldn't bring it forward. They just wouldn't bring it forward, afraid of getting sent back to where they came from. They used that stick out there. Even to this day, it's unionized; they use that stick. If you don't, you'll get sent back.

Q: Now there are more TFWs, who have even fewer rights.

SD: That's another case that would be another four day operation.

Q: What do you think about that?

SD: Here's the biggest problem that I've got with this today with the foreign workers. The biggest problem I've got with the foreign workers: if we bring them over here, we should take care of them. We should not bring them over here and let them work for 18 months and send them back where they came from. That's what we should not do as human beings. When you take a man out of a desperate situation and put him into an okay situation, you should not be allowed to send him back in a desperate situation. That's how I feel about it personally. We should not be allowed to do that. That's the threat they're doing today, and in some places they're doing this.

Q: And it's a threat to the union.

SD: We're in a bit of a legal battle now where we believe if you do not renew his work visa, you're firing him. But they're saying they're not firing him. We're saying you are firing him, cuz he no longer can work here without the visa. So it's in the lawyer's hands, a sticky situation. But I think anybody who knows anything about it is of the same opinion. If we're going to bring them here, treat them right and let them stay, or don't bring them.

Q: But what about the threat to the union?

SD: As a union what scares us, you got 400 foreign workers the company are dictating to what to do. We're not going to talk about it a lot, but that's a major concern for us. What we've done in this set of negotiations, Bill, one of our staff, Bill has got the job of

bringing five of these people in here. Those five people are going to contact the leaders of the community; are going to contact all these people and tell them their rights. It's hard for me to sit down and explain to them their rights. I only get to see them once. The company got them for nine hours a day. You got the supervisor saying, hey get at that. If you don't, you're going back to where you came from. When it comes time to vote for this contract, we tell you what to do.

Q: What percentage of the workers are TFWs?

SD: It varies. It's in the hundreds. Some days it's five; some days it's... it varies all the time. It varies the level of foreign workers that are allowed to stay versus the ones that are not. I'm not really sure what fits the criteria, and I work for the union. I'm not really sure. It changes. An example is I had a man come in here a month ago. He applied to leave where he was to come here to go to work in Canada. On his application he wrote down he had two children. He's been here for a year. During the course of this year they put you underneath a microscope and they check out your history--well as best they do, the government here. They find out not that he had two kids, he had three. The third kid was handicapped and the third kid was very sick. As a result, the third kid has passed away since then. But when they found out that he had the third kid, they denied his application to stay. So he come in to me and he's in bad shape; he's gotta go back. He comes in to me and I said, why did you do this? He said, I knew my third kid was going to pass away, and I knew if I put that down I wouldn't qualify. When I met with the government people – a lie is a lie is a lie. All I want to say today: he's not coming back. But it wasn't a phone call. It's quite a bit of fooling around, and also the company played ball. He was a good worker. But these people, what we gotta remember here in Canada, these people are desperate. Desperate people do desperate things. He put down he only had two children for a good reason, for a good reason. That's the thing about the foreign worker issue that bothers me the most. We bring them over here, we give them so much of a chance in life, and just when they're getting used to it, we decide to take it away. That's cruel; it's cruel. I

really believe immigration and all this stuff is way out of my ball park, but if we got them here we should take... You gotta remember we go over there or Lakeside goes over there looking for these people. They send over recruiters looking for these people. If we bring them back, I think as Canadians and as the company, we should look after them.

Q: Where are they recruiting them?

SD: They go anywhere. I think they've backed off on a few countries. I don't want to name the countries. They've backed off on a few countries. For whatever reason they've backed off on a few countries. But it's a pretty sad thing. That's my problem with the foreign workers.

Q: You were saying that long ago this plant was unionized – what happened to the union?

SD: We had a union there many years ago. Again, I think it was 1984. In 1984 we had a strike, and the second day into the strike the union chairperson crossed the line. When he crossed the line, he brought back about 40% of the workforce with him. That 40% was enough to up and run it. There was probably only 300 people in the plant at that time, much smaller. As a result, when we came back over '97 and '99, they said, oh the union will just come here and take your money and leave again. We had a hard, hard time getting over that. We paid strike pay right up to till the last guy left. There's only so much you can do. It was a strike we lost; it was a strike we lost. Then it turned out to be the number one plant in Canada, and we had to come back. We had to come back, and we did. It's been a long successful haul. When this was all over, myself, Mr. Duckworth, and Mr. O'Halloran – Dougie O'Halloran will tell you it was his number one proudest moment the day we got a contract in that plant. I can remember. I travel with Dougie a lot and we talked about it the other night. You can't just explain to someone. It's like a family thing.

You get into it and you stay at it and you stay at it. You've really gotta believe in it to do it. Again, without foreign workers and different groups, we never would've done it.

Q: Does the union have good support in the plant these days?

SD: Oh I think we're higher today than we ever were, no doubt in my mind. You gotta remember, the same way you get a union in you can get it out. If they could get me out, they'd have me out. Let's be clear. This is redneck Alberta; this is redneck Alberta. This place here is as busy as any doctor's office. Let me tell you, we've got offices all over Alberta. We get more people in this office than we do in all the rest of them combined. I got a sign-in sheet out there – we do 200 a week that come into this office. The young lady that you met coming in the front door, her biggest asset is she speaks five languages. When she got here, God love her, she couldn't type very well. But let me tell you, she knew everybody coming in through the door.

Q: Where did she come from?

SD: ...Africa. That's her number one asset. You wouldn't believe. You're out to that plant and you get fired. The supervisor will say, it's the union's fault. They will come in here going, and God love her, she knows the languages and calms them down. Things have moved ahead here. We were in the Stone Ages when we started the union business out there. Trying to explain to some of these people their rights, I'm talking about trying to explain to the company what rights some of these people got. If you're hurt, you're entitled to see your own doctor. This is Canada; you have not got to go to their doctor. But some of the supervisors believed that they had a right to tell you. They really believed it. It was crazy.

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