

Felix de los Santos

Interviewer Don Bouzek

FS: I'm treasurer of CUPE Local 474.

Q: In what part of the Philippines were you born?

FS: The southern part of the Philippines, which is Marinduque. I was born in Santa Cruz, southern part of the Philippines.

Q: A lot of people don't know how many islands there are in the Philippines.

FS: The Philippines is composed of 7,000 islands.

Q: Did you grow up in a town, or in a more rural area?

FS It's one of the small towns in Marinduque. Marinduque is composed of six towns. Santa Cruz, where I was born, is the biggest town of Marinduque.

Q: What's the population?

FS: That's a good question. I'm not sure. It's probably the size of Edmonton population, although Santa Cruz Marinduque is a small town. But there's dense population. It's like a city area.

Q: Is it agricultural around it?

FS: It's agricultural and fishing industry. My parents, he's a farmer. We have a coconut plantation, a rice plantation, and a bakaw – banana, pineapple. And we have livestock, that's the main resources of income that my parents have. We have water buffalo, horses, and horses is the one that's useful for our daily living because they're used for traveling and stuff. And

coconuts, coconut is the main product. I still remember when I'm young we harvest about 50,000 pieces of coconut. That 50,000 of coconut is good enough to support nine kids of my parents to go to school and daily expenses. But so far we're not buying anything as far as basic food is concerned – rice, meat. The only thing we buy is the beef, but mostly we didn't buy any food because it's very abundant on our farm. We call it barrio. It's good, we're doing okay. But when nine kids are going to school at the same time it's very hard for the parents to accommodate, so maybe two will stop and the other two will go and proceed to elementary up to university.

Q: So you went to school within your own community?

FS: Yes.

Q: Then where did you go to university?

FS: I finished my high school from elementary to Santa Cruz Institute, which is a small community elementary. Then I go from high school, they call it Malindig Institute. We have high school only from first year up to fourth year, then you go to university. Then I go to, it's not university, it's a college. I went to college after I finished my high school. I take accounting, and fortunately I got my major in accounting in the Philippines.

Q: Was this during the Marcos era?

FS: When I graduated, ya. I still remember the time, 1968. That's the start of the tension started by the students of the Philippines. What happened is that mostly students are aware of the situation of the country – the suffering of poor people and what's the abuse of the government in a third world country, which is a reality up to now. There's lots of corruption, grabbing lands which did not belong to them. They take opportunity with people who cannot fight because they cannot hire lawyers, so there's people that have money and can get it. Not all of them, but the politician, some of them take opportunity while they are in the position. I don't know

whether to say corruption, but many of them might do that. But usually they are in ? the government, but economic time didn't have much income.

Q: What role does the U.S. have?

FS: We're under the United States. First of all we are under the Chinese and then the Japanese, and then the American. The American get an influence to us because during the Japanese war the Philippine government has been helped by the American. The American people educate us with a very high standard of living for those people that maybe they are the son of the rich people. They poor people want to be up to date with the styles and stuff, but it's hard to do that. What happens is that if you are poor you'll be poorer, and if you're rich you'll be richer. I go back to the knowledge about the student. The student realized that there is no opportunity. If you don't have a big family or a well known family or the biggest income family, you cannot go to university. If you go to university if you are average family, you have to sell your livestock, you have to sell your property in order to go to university. The reason why they do with university, that's the only inheritance that the parents can give to their son and daughter so that they can participate to work in the global economy. But mainly the education is that it comes from the people's pocket. It's not like the government in Canada that they have support and you can borrow money to the government or can be funded by the government from elementary to grade 12, which is good. In our country, no. If you don't have money, you will be stuck and you will not learn.

Q: What changes were the students asking for?

FS: The way the system works. The point is there's no equality and justice for workers as well as the new graduates. Mostly the graduate student, some of them because they have money, they don't have knowledge; it's just because of the diploma mills. What's happening is that if you have money you have diploma, but nothing here. What's happening is that you pay for diploma, you don't learn for diploma. So mostly like that, that's what happening. The poor people don't have any opportunity to go to university. The highest they can get is up to grade 6, so that's it. They might work, but they might work maybe in land construction or railroad or something like

that. But other than that, there's no other income coming. You cannot find a job. It's more factory they have, but before you get that you must get influence with the politician. In order to get a better job, you must have a connection, influence.

Q: Were there specific changes the students were demanding?

FS: During the Marcos regime, if you commit a crime and you are son of one of the government officials, you can get away with it, because you have money. Then with regards to education, there is no funding for education. Like I say, there are two categories of education. University of the Philippines, even you have a brain and don't have money, even if you don't have any connection, you can get it. Sometimes when you are so bright you go with that. But mostly it's being manipulated by the politician to go there, so they have opportunity to go to university. Some other stuff is there is no grant money in order to stimulate the kids to go to university. They can't borrow money so they can go to university. There's no such kind of chances that they will give you an opportunity to better yourself to go for education.

Q: Were there alliances being formed at that time between the students and some of the unions?

FS: Yes, at the time I was there they had Kabataang Makabayan. Kabataang Makabayan are composed of university students. The reason why they organized that one is the government has not responded, there's no response for their common demands. Farmers don't have any opportunity to work on the land because mostly there are owners and workers at the same time, and they paid only about one third of the income they made on the land. So it's not enough for the family to support it. I think that's the main demand that they're asking, that there's an equal distribution of land. Like I say, at the time, if you are one of the family that you want to go to university, from a lower class family, you have to sell your livestock. That's the thing that you can do so you can go for education. Then one more problem is the medical is demand. Most people are working while they're strong, but once they got sick, let's say you saved about a million dollars, that one will be spent in not even a month when you get sick, and all the money will be spent. That's a cause of suffering. Most people cannot go for doctor fee or

hospital fee because of that. So what happened as a result is there's people that are waiting for a free consultation with the government. They are getting a lineup. Let's say General Hospital – General Hospital even in acute or emergency, the lineup is maybe about two or three blocks. Some people that's in emergency, before they reach the counter they die first. So that's the most difficult one that most student are demanding about the healthcare system. Education, healthcare and the farming.

Q: Where were you during all of this?

FS: I was in college taking my accounting. When I was in second year, there's lots of interruption. Kabataang Makabayan is starting to organize. They say, okay, in order to ask our demand, let's say we want to increase the minimum wage. So what happened is that the Kabataang Makabayan will lead that one, because they know what is the present issue. Then the post office will go. If they have like that, they interrupt the entire city. What happened is all the universities closed, so all the student participate. But that participation that they have is just for the common cause, it's not for themselves – ya, I'm a member of CUPE Local 474 that I go there and have \$200 a week. No, it's just because you are there, you know what is the reality going on in the country, what's going on with the poor people, and what the government can do. So it's a difficult time. There's no opportunity.

Q: What was the government's response?

FS: Before it goes to martial law there's lots of battles with the student too. The first time they have Battle of Mendiola. The Battle of Mendiola is the same demand – corruption will be stopped, student grants, healthcare, wages, and opportunity for the poor people. What happened is that during the Marcos regime they had a rally – farmers all across the country – they have a rally. It was interrupted. Most people in a third world country are not like we here – oh no, we don't have to do this. But because of the feeling that they have in true suffering and starvation, they go. Just like I'm saying, if you have a knife, no matter is how is the knife, he will hold it and grab it to you. That's the feeling of the people there fighting for their rights to do that. Even a sharp knife, they will hold and cut your finger, they'll do it. So that's what

happened. So what happened is people are getting violent. They want to go inside the Malacañang Palace with this – the White House. They want to attack probably. So what happened, of course it was defended by the Philippine government. So I think lots of people died at the time, mostly students. That's the start of getting worse and worse every time they have rally. I think second to that is that when they had that one, all university student go there on that rally. It's just like war. I could see what was going on. There's a government car, they turn upside down and put fire on it. Then all the guards coming from the Malacañang fire live bullets at these people. I forgot the number of people who died at that time. I still remember the Battle of Avenida, 45 people died. The same thing, the demand is just improvements for the livelihoods of Philippine people.

Q: In addition to these battles, there was a continual picking off of the leadership.

FS: I believe Marcos, because at the time he controlled everybody. But now when you go to ?, if you are a son of the official you can carry guns. But during the time of Marcos, only the military can do it. So you're safe at the time, you can go, because the military is the one who handle it. But this time you don't know. When I come back in 1999 the one with uniforms is not the real policemen or real military, it's the New People's Army. They start with Bagong Hukbong Bayan, with that New People's Army. The New People's Army now, they got 600,000 members; that's what I heard. I'm not sure about this, but they start only with 15,000 and now they got 600,000. They're all against the government, 600,000. As a matter of fact, I hope they spread over the entire Philippines. I think in parts of Marinduque they're almost completely New People's Army. It's difficult.

Q: Did you lead in any events of this period?

FS: I cannot say I'm a leader, but I'm a follower. The point is that when you're a student, just like here, you know the present issue. If they participate for the common cause, I'll do that. That's the way I believe, and I'm active about that. The reason why I'm so concerned about it is that the young generation of today, there's no future for them. If you belong to a rich family, that's the only chance for you. But in order that the government have a high standard of living or

everybody have an opportunity to live an equality of life that will be presentable to everybody around the world, is that everybody have equal justice as far as your rights and being good citizens. But what happened is that there is no opportunity. The young generation don't have any opportunity that everybody are equally educated. So that's the most difficult part. That's what my concern is. Like I say, even you graduate in university or colleges, they got lots of people. When I leave, it's about 65 million people, now I think it's 120. There's people that have been graduated, some of them they finish lawyer, all degree. But there's no job available, there's no guarantee that you can find a job. The only thing that you can find a job, maybe have your business. But it's enough to survive, to live by yourself. The only thing that you can live is because of the piece of land that you inherit from your parents. But as far as the income, unless you work for the government, but still if you a teacher or policeman, they cannot survive on the salary that they have, just for the expenses.

Q: You left in '73?

FS: Yes, '73. When martial law was declared, I leave October.

Q: That was the last straw.

FS: That's the last straw, ya. That's so difficult when you leave your country. But if it's for a better opportunity, not only for myself but for the family, I think you have to do it. It's not because I don't like my country. I'll die for it if necessary, but the point is that we want change. We want a peaceful life. When you go out in the middle of the night, do you think I can come back tonight if I go out? Here we are free. It's a gift that we come to this rich country, and we have to promote that and preserve that rights that we have. It's freedom, you don't have to worry anything.

Q: Why Canada?

FS: Well my sister is here. She's been a nurse in Canada. She knows that there there's no opportunity that I can support my own life to buy a house or buy your own car. The average

family that you have there, even you have a degree and a job, you can't even buy a car. You're lucky if you have bicycle to buy it, which is very unfortunate. But that's the reality. If you have two or three kids, you cannot afford, just to support your kids.

Q: Some people think people come here just because they want to leave their own country.

FS: I love my country. I born there, I am a Filipino. But the point is that when I come here it's the opportunity that it's the richest country. When you come to a country like this, there is great opportunity for you. As long as you work hard, you can get it.

Q: There's also a myth that people coming here get great jobs.

FS: When I got my degree, probably when I stay in the Philippines I might be in the armed forces. But the point is that the armed forces, I don't believe that if I'm an authority and I say I will arrest you and then somebody comes to me and say, I know these people – I can't do that. That's why I don't want to be there. As a matter of fact, my business was to be a detective there, but the point is when the Marcos regime is doing like this, if you belong to Marcos you'll be great. I'm a guy I think about livelihood of people, that they have an opportunity for them like anybody else, simple as that. So if I'm a justice man and they come to me and beg to me, if you're wrong your wrong. That's the way I am. When you are there already and people comes to you crying and begging, bringing the family, it touch your heart and then you want to exercise your power as an authority to arrest or to give justice or to give punishment. I don't like that. If you're wrong, you're wrong – simple as that. That's the policy. Canada is like that. There's no excuse. If you done a mistake, you have to pay for it.

Q: When you first came here, what jobs were you able to get?

FS: Oh, that's good. When I graduate in the Philippines, well that's the difficulties that we had for all people in a third world country. There are too much expectation that because they finish their degree in the Philippines or other parts of the world, when they go abroad they think it's glory: oh ya, I'll be an accountant or I'll be a doctor. But that's a dream. But when you get here

and see the wealth of the country, the freedom, the wisdom and the opportunity is there. I got too much disappointment, of course I got too much disappointment. But the point is that I'm a guy that never gives up. I always fight. Even as a student, I always lead and say, okay we gonna go and attend that rally, because this is important for us. I always speak out with the issue. I don't know why, I always speaking for the poor. I am not envy or get jealous of the people that's rich. I always think when I was in the Philippines, someday I'll be there. I always think about it. If you are poor, you will be treated as poor. I always look for poor people that's been abused and taking opportunity for these people. That's who I am. But anyway, when I come here my dream is to work in a bank. I went for many banks, I apply like this like that. Always they say, oh ya, you got interview, when you come home what did you finish? All these questions at the end is always do you have Canadian experience. Oh well you don't have Canadian experience, but we'll just let you know if we gonna hire because we're not sure yet. So you keep waiting and waiting. Okay fine, that's no problem. So I keep going and going, and finally I cannot find. So what I do, I started in lumberyard because I cannot find a job. I was out of town in High Prairie, all institution, shopping mall, I apply, but nothing. I work in a lumberyard. The reason for that is that I think I have only \$5 in my pocket. My sister gave me a plane ticket, and my sister is single at the time. When you are sister, you send money the Philippines to help your brother. We are many in the family, so we send some money over there to this family we have in the Philippines. When I come here I said, well my sister helped me already to come down here, I don't want to ask anything more. So I said, okay I work in a lumberyard for six months. I start in October and the temperature at that time is 40 below. I don't know if they discriminate us, but the point is they are all Indian reserve. We worked from 6 o'clock to 8 o'clock in the morning. During our break time we don't have any shed like this. There is a big barn and it's hot, so you go like this on your break time. My shoes is very thick and snow up to here, we pile lumberyard. The reason for that, I want to earn money so that I go to the city and take that opportunity to work in my profession. So when I come down here after that six months, I met a Filipino guy from St. Albert from Philippines. He say, oh ya I will help you to look for a job. He helped me, but in my profession he cannot find. So he bring me to ? Industry. In the Philippines, because my parents is average family, I never know how to hold hammer. The only thing I do is have a good time, go to school, and eat. I don't know how to cook, because we have maid and everything; that's the life that they have. But that's not the life that I'm waiting, because it's just ordinary there. I

come down here, I don't know how to hold the tape measure and everything. So the guy said, well this is the only opportunity for you to get that job as roofer in ? Industry. I worked there for three years. Seven guys are working in that field on the roof. They put furnace, they put flooring, they put electrical wiring on that stuff, and then the roof and the ?. When they train me, only one guy, and the production before is four; I make seven. I was young and very strong. Then after three years I demanded that I will go downstairs, because I work on the roof all the time. You know what he said to me? If you don't want to work upstairs, you get out. So I said, okay. I didn't say okay, I said fine. But I had savings already, I'd been three years. I had my car. I said, hey I can go find another job. So I went up there and when I went up there I talked to the boss. I said, I'm leaving now, I'm not coming back. He said, why? I said, well I asked him to me down, he didn't give me opportunity. After a week he phoned me and said, if you want a raise I'll give you a raise. I said, fuck you. Sorry for my word, but that's it. I said, okay fine, I will find a job. You know Eddy Eison was working at the school board at the time. I asked Eddy and said, Eddy, I need your help. He go like this. One day I apply ait warehouse and he said to me, tomorrow you start to work. Now I'm still working, and I don't have any absent for 27 years. Now with Eddy and Doug, they know that I have background in accounting. They always encourage me to attend the meeting. He knows that I'm interested about, not politics, but the common cause for most working people. I keep attending, but I cannot do because I have a kid. When my kids are at the age of 10, that's the time for me to be an activist. I still come every meeting and attend. That's the time that I said, ya, that is my ?. Now I'm lucky, I have been treasurer here for almost 12 years now. We did job that we have done as CUPE, we are one of the strongest CUPE, and then I was be nominated to the National Rainbow Committee for five years to represent Canadian Union of Public Employees in Alberta to Ottawa. I've been ? work over there. Then school board, I was on the PR campaign. The first time that the school board are not interested about harassment, because that's their policy. But our local put that one for a ? in a letter of understanding that there's representation about harassment and discrimination. The harassment and discrimination was successful in the school board because they realized when we had committee representation – we had a lawyer, we had the research and everything -- that it works. Now school board are so successful that they participate. They are so active this time, Edmonton teachers and principals represent the harassment and discrimination. Now they

have a committee of 18 people from teachers, administration and custodial. I'm the only one custodian. I'm the only one custodian representing harassment and discrimination contacts.

Q: Discrimination can be harder to fight here, because it's not as overt.

FS: That's right, but I never give up. I always fight for it. In Canada, if you are so interested in the thing that you have to do, you will get it. You meet people, they will teach you. They're honest. They're, oh no it's easy, I can help you. This is good for you, this is what you have to do. By talking to people, you learn more and get more stronger for your belief in what you are fighting for.

Q: What specific things are you working on around anti-discrimination?

FS: I'm the district contact of the entire 7,000 members. We have unionized members of CUPE, 28,000 at that time, 28,000 CUPE members across the province. I was the first Filipino guy in workers of colours that represented the national. We had a meeting every five months for five years. We monitor across the province with regards to fighting for equality and justice for all workers, especially the gay and lesbian people with workers of colours and with handicaps. That's the one that we're fighting for. I think I make a resolution at the convention with regards to harassment and discrimination. This one here, the first time we have in the collective agreement that we have here, I convinced by myself and the rest of the group but mostly the effect that I learned from CUPE, I used that one to the administration that this is good. Because they don't believe in harassment and discrimination, because that's a policy. But now when I make that collective agreements that we have, they don't approve the harassment and discrimination, but they put a letter of understanding. It's just like in order to educate the entire seven districts what's regards with harassment and discrimination. Now you see last September everybody, lawyers from the school board and everything, they participate in that. That's a big accomplishment that we done with this local. Very strong, and people are scared to get a bad comment. There's lots of charges they can do with harassment. Realize that by saying I don't like your religion, they have damages of I think \$45,000 to go to human rights, which is in the training that we have. It's stated there. That's why people are scared now. We started that one

as a local and now the school board are getting more promotion, and look at what we are now. If you see all the materials that we have. They sent out of 7,000 district workers first 21 that's been accepted with qualification and everything. They were the first one to get that training, and I was one. I'm so proud about it. This is the great job that we have done as a local. On top of that, Doug, when we accomplished these ones, because Doug is strong, I'm strong, the rest of the group are strong, we ? the privatization. That's a big success. What success we have for privatization is the same as harassment and discrimination.

Q: What kind of specifics have you been able to achieve on privatization?

FS: The point is that they bring across the country and across the district that we proved to our employer in the materials being used to research from the professor from the university that's been hired is very successful. All the materials, all the knowledge that's been applied after the PR campaign, the 17 months campaign that we made, all the research that they have done from universities and different parts of the province, they have that recognition after we have the final submission about the privatization that it won't work in this country. That's why I get more stronger, every time I get more stronger. I think I feel like when I'm young in the Philippines, whatever happens I'll be there. With the activities we have done for membership, not only for the membership of Local 474 but across the province and across the country, with educational sector workers, a tremendous impact that they utilize even abroad. The president, because of that submission, in appreciation that in this province is the first province that they don't agree about privatization and it won't work. Ontario is the second one, but where did they get the materials? They got from us, they buy from us. Even British Columbia, even Newfoundland. The thing we have to be proud about is that the president of our local, because of the hard work, he's the leader so he will be the one to go, he got an invitation to United Nations in Washington that he went there and tell about what's happening in private sectors, that privatization won't work. Our unionized worker is the most effective way to the school board with regard to the words that we are implying to them. We are so successful about it, the materials we have, even in England, even in Australia, they order that one. By ordering that one, we are not the only local earning that one. The school board is earning at the same time, because they are the co-

owners. Up to now, there's lots of unionized workers around the world that are ordering the materials that we have.

Q: Is your memory of education and healthcare in the Philippines what makes it so important to you here?

FS: The reason why it's so important is that because I come from a poor country, I come from a poor family. My parents, when they start to build our family, they can eat with just salt and rice. It means that there's no meat, there's no anything. But they don't give up. No matter how hard is life, they always work and work. We are nine in the family. We have doctor in the family, we have accountant in the family, we have a ? in the family, we have a nurse in the family. When we are there we are successful. Imagine that just only farmers, own a piece of land just to send their education. I still remember they don't hire any workers. All the nine family would work together. I see the difficulties of my parents. In order to make extra money, they cook ?, just to buy it and sell for the kids to have pocket money or 5 cents. Five cents is about one cent that you have here. I see my mom, she work hard everything. But you know what, the good at the end is that we are so successful and everybody is educated because of those difficulties. But you know I always see how hard they are encounter when they are doing that one. In the Philippines you don't live because you are rich here, you live in the exclusive area which is for the rich. I see people in our neighbourhood, people around us, that maybe you can see that they are not eating. That's the one that goes to your heart and you feel that. I was so fortunate that even though my parents is poor, they still continue to survive and struggle in order to get out from poverty. I really admire that. Like I say, you see people who are starving, who are not eating, they are beg. For ourselves I say, how lucky we are in Canada, we don't see that kind of people, and they have opportunity. Everybody have equal education. Last week I speak out about the funding of education. I'm very strong. They don't know me in my school. But when the people are speaking about, ya we need funding because of this, we buy books, computer, and there's almost 50 demands that they have already. They cut already and said, no more speaker. So I come and say like that. I told them one thing. I said, is it long or short? Because we don't have any time. The global commentator say, no you're close already. I said, you know what, I love this country. This is the benefits that we have in this country. If we don't get to

exercise the benefits that we have in this country, the two system of education will exist – one for the rich and one for the poor. I said, I come from a poor country. But you don't realize those people that come from the poor country. We are lucky here. The government get a funding. Those people there in third world country, there is no funding. So when I see the difference between the third world country and this one here, well this is the benefits that we have. We treasure this one, it's like diamond that we have to keep it, and we have to be proud about it. If we don't do this one, there is from the year 2002 to 2003 the anticipated deficit is \$13.5 million. In order to balance the budget for 2003 to 2004, they have to cut workers. We are affected in that. We as workers are affected, teachers and staff. But the point here is that workers are affected but the most that's been suffering is the young generation of today. Let's say the population we have for the students is 82,000 students, but because of the suffering for five years, let's say from 2004 to 2008 we have cut and don't give any funding. But you don't know the result of that. The people that's been victim of that five years suffering of funding will suffer at the end. When they graduate, you know what, they don't have opportunity for them and it will end in unemployment. It's the same problem that the government will encounter at the beginning and at the end. After the end of their life they'll say, oh why should I'm going to work? When I'm studying I don't have any enthusiasm to get more knowledge so that when I get more knowledge I can participate in a global economy that I can bring more money to the country and can get more income tax. But because I was the victim of underfunding, of course most people don't have any enthusiasm to be ahead. Now where did they go? Unemployment. Who will be the one to suffer? Taxpayer. That's my concern when I said we have been campaigning for the past five years already and there is no action. As a politician, it's not because you belong to Conservative or Liberal, let's work together across the country that we have to make more funding for the young generation for their future. If we don't do that, what will happen? I still remember in this country it's the only thing that the funding will raise is to increase taxes. We don't have any knowledge let's say that we have to concentrate on industry, like making cars. We promote the cars, we don't go to some other part of the world. That's a big contribution to the economy. The only contribution that they make for the funding is to increase taxes. It won't progress that way. We have to stimulate the economy by the young generation to learn more in industry. Computer, we don't have to buy computer some other part. If we are progressive that way, because of the funding that you give sufficient for learning, the kids will be

educated properly and they might decide to go to trades. Trades have been suffering in this country. I went to Alberta Congress Board, 450,000 independent workers are lacking of trades, they cannot find the trades. The private corporation or the private industries are shortage of workers. What is the recommendation of the Alberta Congress Board? The recommendation of Alberta Congress Board is to educate the aboriginal workers, the workers of colour, and the people with disability so that we can fill up the gap of 400,000 deficit of workers across the province only, across the province only. Imagine that. I said, look at the benefits that if we as workers work together and get that idea. That Congress Board have a combination of doctors, lawyers, policemen, RCMP, mayors, everything. But you know what, there is a shortage. Now in the school board they have to cut 350 teachers. Look at what will be the effect of that. Last year the school board is asking those who've been retired to come back to work for teaching, because there is no workers. Now they cut again 350 workers. What will happen? There's no progress with this. I hope the politician will not tell me like this. I said, the politician have a tremendous work that they have to do. But the point is, who will do that? You guys have been elected to do the job. But the point is one more thing that they won't do. Are we going to wait for the election to release the money? That's what's happening. The money is being released only when there's an election. The commissioner election must be established to do that. It's just like a scapegoat that they say, ya you examine that there will be a deficit, and then examine the board funding, the financial statement of the school board, and say there will be a deficit this year or there may be something wrong about the other. It's just only a delay tactic that they cannot give, okay this is the money that we'll do. Why is it was have to victimize the young generation to have underfunding? We are not at war. The only thing that we have to suffer in education is that if we are at war. Well Canada is a progressive country. If we say that we have a deficit because of education, let's do it. You know why? We are implanting in the brain of the young generation that they will be the successor of the future. If they don't do that, what will happen to us? We'll go back to like a third world country. That's why I come in this country, the benefits that we have. Benefits of education, that's my main goal. When I have my kids, I want them to have better education than anybody. Inequality, it is not because I'm rich, you have an education. Healthcare is the same thing. My brother passed away with cancer. He had a million dollars that he saved, and he spent that one in one month. Do you want to happen that to anybody? How about those people that are unemployed, the people that's been welfare? Do

you think they can pay that one? If they are sick, it's nice that we have the same system of healthcare that we have and the same education that we have, because there will be equality of the poor people, the unemployed people. All the people have an opportunity to learn. That's the goal that I want when I come to this country because, oh ya this is paradise, this is the things that I have an I'm happy about it. I'm so proud about it, if they go to war I'd fight for Canada. That's all, thank you.

Q: What society do you want in the future for your kids?

FS: When I come in 1970, that's the society that I want. In a society like we have in Canada you have a job, you buy whatever you want, you go for a holiday, you got the house. Why is it you're going to commit crime? Tell it. Take people that's been in the third world country and bring it here and say, I give you a job. You can buy whatever you want, you can have your family, you got your own house. You sitting in your house with a nice TV, you've got your nice car, nice food, you can get the food easy. What more do you need? You've got a happy life. I think people who stay with that kind of life have no other intention of making crimes, because everything is there. When I speak in the Philippines when I come back one time I said, is this like a country of Canada that, okay I bring you here. All your food is there, all your job is there, all your medical is there. Do you think you will make a crime? I bet you won't make any crime, comparing here. That's the good opportunity that I'm always telling to these teachers, principal, student, because I work in the school board, this is the way we want for this country. If we lost these benefits – the education and the healthcare system – we'll go back to the third world country. That's the thing. The country will stay and remain progressive by the people that they care. We as the people that come as immigrant here, we are so loyal about it. We always so dedicated about it that we don't have ???. Example that I give you now, if I don't have any dedication or education. I've been 27 years, you know, I never get absent. I have to pay something to Canada that this is the only thing that I can pay to them for what they have done to me to stay in a better life. It's the only compensation that I will not abuse that opportunity. I can go absent. I've got days off. What for? I'm happy, I'm working. I've got the job. Why is it I'm going to take advantage? So that's why it's my example that everybody will do the same, especially the workers in our local. They're all dedicated people. They all think about the future, they always

think the future, because they come from the third world country. They are different ethnic backgrounds that they don't have that kind of life, they don't have that kind of freedom. They don't have this kind of wealth that they have here. We have to preserve that so that your son, your great grandson, that's their future. We preserve it and this will remain as a great country – peaceful and a better place to work. People work together. That's all I can say. . . . The reason why it give me a life that I have, because I see. When I was studying and still young, I see people begging. They're starving, I see people that are starving already. I want to help, but what can I help? You would be so depressed about it. When I see like that, it's like I don't want to enjoy. I said, how about if I'm the one like that, if I'm the victim of suffering because the government are not caring for the people who are poor. If they die for starvation, they die for starvation. People that commit trouble, you want them to give justice, you cannot give justice because, oh ya, I'm the son of the mayor, I'm the son of the chief of police. You cannot do it. It's wrong. You are not curing the attitude of the individual who do that. In Canada if you make a mistake, sorry, you're done. That's good, it's fair. But like I say, put you in a country that's rich, they got foods, they got healthcare, they got education. You can by what you want, you got a good family that in the future they got a good education. What more do you need? You will not make crime. That's the good example. There's people that come there and say, oh ya, those people that don't care is the one who born here, because they don't come to the poor country. That's their attitude. But we have to educate these people. It's just like harassment. People say, oh ya I don't like you, you're from Philippines. But you have to educate them. That's the way we are successful as a country – we learn by educating each other. What more can I say? It's good.

[END]