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Making money the day it closed

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Q: How did you end up working at Celanese?

LH: Actually I was working at another place, and my sister's boyfriend at the time had just started at Celanese. He said why not go out there. It was \$3 an hour more to go out there, so I threw out an application. The next week they interviewed me and I was hired the week after. That was in September of '81.

Q: So you worked there 26 years?

LH: Almost – 25 ½ years.

Q: Where did you start in the plant?

LH: I started in CA, cellulose acetate, and AR is one unit. They're 2 separate units but they're considered one whole entity. That's basically where I ended up staying the whole time, in the one unit.

Q: What sort of job did you do there?

LH: You started at the bottom there. One area was called preparation, where you made all the chemical batches to the specs that we needed. Cellulose acetate is made from wood pulp, so you had to shred big rolls of pulp - that was part of your job. Then also you worked up in the control room and slowly progressed up the ranks from trainee to second operator to first operator to finally senior operator.

Q: So you were a senior operator at the end?

LH: Yes and supervised in the end for 4 years.

Q: Was it a good place to work?

LH: Yes, it was shift work, some people don't like it. I enjoyed it when I was young, it was really nice. Working conditions were a little dirty, but on the whole most of the time operating is sitting and waiting for something bad to happen. It's pretty good work, not too hard. You have your good days and bad days. The people I worked with were really good. When I first started there, there were 12 guys per shift. In the end we were down to 9 guys per shift. With automation, jobs were taken away slowly. Operators.

Q: You mentioned conditions were dirty – did that change over the time you were there?

LH: A little bit, but our process was a batch process, and it was with wood pulp so there was lots of machinery and dust. It wasn't terrible or anything, but compared to some of the other units that were strictly liquid chemicals, they were a lot cleaner. If you went into the VA unit, it was a much cleaner unit, because it was all liquid. We had dust - that was our problem. Our final product started as a solid and ended as a solid, so there was always dust involved.

Q: When you started in '81, were a lot of products being produced?

LH: In the '70s they cut back a lot, before my time. But I know, talking to the other operators, that in the '70s there was a downturn. They closed a lot of plants. But there was still 6 plants per unit making different chemicals at that time. Basically it stayed that way until basically 6 years ago, so in about 2000 is when we started closing things. The Alberta government helped build those plants, because they gave them tax free exemption. They didn't start paying taxes until the '90s, provincial tax. Because we had all this natural gas in this province, so that's why all these plants were built: Dow, Sherritt, Celanese.

Q: So the export of natural gas has had an effect on the viability of plants like that?

LH: Oh yes the Alliance Pipeline finished those plants. Basically building it and piping all our raw natural gas to Chicago meant the end of the plants.

Q: And that was part of the NAFTA agreement?

LH: Yes, that's another big thing; NAFTA really hurt us in my opinion. I remember once a compressor station blew up, and we actually had to slow down rates in our plant because they couldn't supply enough natural gas to the States. So they got the natural gas first, we had to slow down here because of it.

Q: Were there layoffs?

LH: No, there were no layoffs. Celanese was really good. When I started in the '80s we were on block shutdowns. I was there only maybe 2 months, and then we'd run for 3 months and shut down for 2 months. They actually kept me on, which was surprising, since I didn't know anything, I would've thought they would've laid me off. We did that for about 8 months, we had 2 big block shutdowns. After that we never slowed down. The only time we ever slowed down was usually before contract time. They always did it, every 3 years that we signed the contract, we'd always slow down and they'd say we're having hard times. As soon as we signed that contract we'd go back up to maximum rates. They always thought that we wouldn't realize this. We always did a booming business out at Celanese.

Q: Did you become active in the union?

LF: Not really, no.

Q: But you were aware of it?

LF: Oh yes, I supported the union, they did good for us. They did a lot of good for the community.

Q: Did you see people with union training bringing that training into the community?

LF: I'm sure there must've been, because there'd be community leaguers. Usually if you're active, you learn your skills to take to other things.

. . . Even our United Way campaign, I can't remember how much money we always brought in. But they said, when we lost Celanese that was a huge amount of money to United Way. You had people there making good wages, and people with good wages spend money, they're not just living. They buy the houses, the cars, everything that supports a community. To lose a plant like that is very foolish. I think the government made a mistake not trying to help Celanese and other plants like that. Now they're talking about helping build upgraders. In a sense Celanese was an upgrader. It took natural gas, which was basically the feedstock for most of our chemicals there, and upgraded it. So instead now we're selling natural gas raw to the States, where they're upgrading it. I remember once the Americans could buy ethylene cheaper than we could up here. Ethylene is a byproduct of natural gas. Well what was with that? That was all part of that free trade NAFTA where we were not getting the products cheaper.

. . . I think that's foolish. Selling our oil now is getting all upgraded in the States. Raw bitumen, that's a big mistake. You think of all the jobs. Not the construction jobs, that's a huge amount, but it's the people afterwards. Celanese had roughly 800 people working for it, and they all had good paying jobs, good community, lots of benefits. When we had shutdowns, \$50 or \$60 million went out into the community for parts and other trades we brought in. We'd have to swell our ranks when we had a shutdown of any unit, because we only had so many maintenance guys. They couldn't handle a shutdown, so you'd always bring in more tradesmen. So all the spin-off business is huge.

. . . I never had a recession in the '80s, because Celanese ran good through the whole '80s, so the recession was nonexistent to most Celanese workers. But they had the spin-off business that helped people. Now that's gone. Like I said, that plant was making money the day it closed.

. . . That plant, with the land they owned, there was set for big expansion. A lot of our problems I blame on our one plant manager Ian Brownley. He never built any new plants, he fought everything. The last plant that was built in '81 was the methanol plant, and nothing else was built since. They could've built an acid plant. What's funny about that is even in the '90s they were talking about building it; even in 2000 they were talking about it before we closed. The LPO was built in the '50s so it was pretty ancient technology. But it was \$80 million to build, and had payback in 2 years. So that's \$40 million profit a year, but that in turn, the acid that we used in my plant would've made our product cheaper. So there'd be more profit throughout the plant, because every unit usually supplied another unit, it was all interchanged. Plus even in 2000, that's when you really knew the writing was on the wall, is someone wanted to come and build a co-generation plant, selling electricity. All they wanted from Celanese was a 20 year commitment to use steam. They were going to build everything and we were going to run it and they were going to put the money in to maintain it. Celanese said no.

Q: How would they have used that steam?

LH: Co-generation, they produce steam. They would use steam to run the turbines to make electricity to sell into the grid, because it was all privatized.

Q: Why would the government just throw money away?

LH: I don't think the government has any long vision. I think they're in power for now, everyone's happy, everyone keeps talking about the Alberta advantage. Right now house prices have doubled, most things have gone up, gas, everything costs more to live in this province, yet most wages have gone up 4%. Unless you're a politician who gives yourself a 50% raise, you're not getting ahead in this province.

Q: Why aren't they motivated differently to look after the people that live here?

LH: I don't know. It shocks me the way they squander money and have all these resources coming in, yet they seem to not have any vision of saying, look, we have to take advantage of the oil and gas we have here. You can look at even our heritage trust fund, it's been sitting at \$12 billion since the day it was invented. It's never grown, it's never done anything. Why is it not like the American one in Alaska, I think it's sitting at \$80 or \$100 billion. Started at the same time, but that one's run by investors. I don't know if these businessmen, once they get into politics, just lose their heads or just do what it takes to get elected again. Because I don't think they have a vision. Now we're building all these pipelines, but that's to ship raw stuff away. That's not making jobs here.

Q: Canada is one of the few countries in the world without a national energy plan. Does that surprise you?

LH: It shocked me, actually. I remember the outcry when they started it at Petro Canada and we were going to be self sufficient with oil and everything. Then that all just fell to the wayside and now we're dependent on, well most of the investment in a lot of our oil sands is foreign. What happens when they want to start sending all their oil and stuff there and start starving our province, which could happen. I don't think the government is looking at that big picture.

Q: What does that say for the security of our energy in this country?

LH: It's very sad. I know the Americans won't allow foreign ownership of their oil companies. They only allow a certain percentage, but they have to own a major controlling share. Here we let it open to everybody. Energy is what you need; energy and water, those are 2 basic things that we should really be worried about.

Q: What about water?

LH: We seem to be wasting it constantly. You read about how much water goes down into the oil sands product, and it's waste water afterwards. Without water you can't live.

Q: Do you see water becoming an export?

LH: I can see water very easily becoming the next export. The Americans are getting very dry; they want our water. I remember reading an article when back in the '60s they came up with a plan to divert water to the States. They kyboshed it because they said, no we won't do that. But every major dam in Alberta that's been built was one that was on this proposal to actually send water to the States.

Q: Do you know who did that survey?

LH: I don't know. The article I read years ago; I was very surprised by it.

Q: Would you be surprised if I told you it was the US army corps engineers?

LH: That doesn't surprise me at all. I remember there was just an article in the Journal about a pipeline going through Jasper to the coast, and that was done with the US army corps of engineers. That's when they were allotted steel that was ? , because they wanted oil to go to the coast for the Americans. The one that just went through Jasper right now, they're expanding it. They had a one time shot to double the capacity.

. . . It's quite shocking to find out this stuff. Most people don't realize it. Everyone looks at Alberta and everyone's making a good wage, taxes are reasonable, roads are good, hospitals are good. People complain, but they're still better. But I don't think they look at the big picture until it affects you. My plant closing for the only reason that they can make more money offshore at the Mexico plant; the plants in Canada are closing, the plants in the States are closing, why is that? That to me is foolish. Very shortsighted of the government, especially now when they're talking about giving benefits to build upgraders here, when in a sense you've had upgraders already. I wouldn't let any national resource leave this country. I don't care if it's Alberta, I'd say Canada, as long as it's upgraded somewhere in Canada before it goes to the States or Europe or wherever. It should be upgraded at least once from a raw state. A finished product would be the ultimate best. I don't know why we don't use our clout, because I know Canada has every natural resource needed other than 2 minerals in the world. We have a highly educated workforce. We should be a paradise among countries, and yet we seem to lag behind because we just export. We're basically almost going to become a banana republic. In time the natural resources will run out.

. . . A lot of jobs I remember, they made a lot of jobs that are part time jobs. Now a lot of service industry jobs. Well people making minimum wage or a bit better do not drive an economy. It's people who work in plant sites or a structured industry that are making very good wages. They have the income to buy the extra things, to support charities, drive an economy, to invest. People on minimum wage don't invest, they survive and that's all.

Q: What is your age?

LH: I'm 45.

Q: Are you working now?

LH: No, I'm not, I'm taking a year off.

Q: What do you see happening with your work life?

LH: Odds are I'll probably end up doing something in construction, or hopefully getting back into a plant again. But my age is against me. I've talked to some guys, some guys have found jobs. Right now we're in a super boom, but it's still hard, because age is against you at 45.

Q: People who worked in the plant, unless they get jobs in the construction industry, where are they going to go to make decent money?

LH: A lot of them went up to Ft. McMurray to try to get on at plants there. Some are flying, and life suffers from that, because 2 weeks away from home is not something I want to do. Celanese was here in the city, I was home every night. I could go to soccer games, I could do things in the community. That's very important, as far as I'm concerned. I know a lot of people don't like plants. There were complaints from the community about the plant and the noise it made, but I don't think people realized how

much money it brought in. Those people working there spent the money in Edmonton. It's very sad when a plant like that closes.

Q: Do you think it'll affect property values in that area?

LH: I think it would have if we wouldn't have been having this construction boom where there are so many more jobs here, and that's driving the property values up. But in some of the small towns in the States that closed, Celanese was the only plant in some of those towns. When they closed, it crushed those towns. There's probably nothing left there anymore.

Q: We've had GWG, Gainers, Celanese, a number of places close where generations of families have worked. What does that say for the future for young people?

LH: I think it's becoming harder for them to find good jobs. Celanese, the nice thing about that was, kids going to university got to go work a summer there. Well in that summer they would make more money than a lot of their friends working jobs, so they could spend more time studying. They didn't have to work through university, because they could make the money just working at Celanese. That was a big boost to them for their careers and their schooling. I was the oddball out of Celanese, I had no family there. I was the only one. But most of them, someone was related to someone, because it was family oriented.

Q: There has to be the availability of stable working-class jobs.

LH: I agree totally. That's what seems to be lacking now. It gets less and less. I think it's a lot of corporate greed now, too. These companies keep buying up everything, and cutting the workforce, cutting the workforce, and then they go into recession because by cutting the workforce, those are the people who buy their products. So these companies are very shortsighted because if you don't have someone buying your product, 5 years down the road you're going to be downsizing again. That's seems to be what they all are doing now.

Q: Did you see changes in ownership leading to this?

LH: Yes. We were bought 3 or 4 times over the years. We changed names and everything, but everything was fine. Nothing really changed. But this last time we were bought out by this company called Blackstone, and they were a holding company. They basically bought us to dissect us. Once they bought us, the writing was on the wall that they were going to close everything. They didn't care about the people. They always told you all the years, we were the best commodity Celanese ever had. Well they slashed people out of the door without a blink of the eye.

Q: Foreign ownership of vital parts of the economy seems to be a dangerous practice.

LH: I think so. I understand it's supposed to be free trade and capitalism, but every time you turn around the Americans are blocking our lumber exports, because they say we're subsidized. They want things on their terms, and we seem to always bow down to them. With ownership, it's the same thing. All these foreign countries are buying up our stuff. Right now things are good, but who's to say when there's a big energy crunch, our energy doesn't go to, like China. They're going to be very hungry for energy the way their economy is growing.

Q: That economy isn't necessarily that stable either.

LH: No, their economy is it supplies us for the products. Their people don't consume right now, because they don't make the wages to consume. Until they build a middle class in China, they're always going to be hinging on North America and Europe for buying their commodities. You can make it cheap, but if no one is buying it, you're stopped.

Q: But if production and jobs cease in Canada, then it no longer is a consumer of products from China.

LH: No, because everyone will have lower paying jobs, and you don't consume on low wage jobs. That's just a fact of life.

Q: It seems ironic.

LH: It seems very ironic. I don't understand the thinking of our governments that supposedly pay all these professionals to give them reports, and then they disregard what they tell them to do anyway. The royalty review here, they got these people who were supposedly in the know to say we need to get this much royalties. Then the government says, we can't do that because the oil companies say they'll leave. Where are they going to go to?

Q: What does that say about the system?

LH: I think it has a big flaw. I think the governments are too shortsighted; they're only thinking of staying in power to get to the next election, and that's when they bring out the goodies to hopefully make the people put them back into power again. I really don't see their vision of making Canada great.

Q: Are the huge monopolies controlling the government, rather than the other way around?

LH: Actually now that you say that, that's probably a good point. The companies are getting bigger and bigger, and they wield so much clout that they could actually intimidate the governments to do whatever.

Q: A lot of oil money goes into political parties.

LH: That's right. You don't bite the hand that feeds you, right? And they're looking at their hand, not looking at the greater good. Some people go into politics thinking they're going to change things, but once they get there they get corrupted too. That's just the way it goes; I don't know what it is.

Q: It makes it hard to decide where to cast your vote.

LH: It makes it very hard. I was always a Conservative, but I'm getting a little fed up with them right now. Kind of hard to say if I want to keep voting for a government that seems to have shortsightedness. They say, oh we never saw this big boom coming, and now our infrastructure can't keep up with it. Well you've paid people, they probably told you this was coming. You can't say you're going to put how many plants up in Ft. McMurray and not realize the roads can't handle it, the houses can't handle it. Why are you doing that?

Q: What is your perspective on being a Conservative? Is that what these guys are?

LH: No, they're not really Conservatives.

Q: Have they let you down?

LH: I think they have in some ways. I think really they give away too much stuff to things that don't matter to me. A Conservative means you give people the basics and the freedom to do what is necessary to have a good life, whereas they are just doing too many wishy-washy things, as far as I'm concerned. They give money to things that I think are foolish, and I think if you're Conservative, no one should be penalized in this country, but why do we have to supply... well here's a thing I've always worried about, is multiculturalism. Why do you give these multicultural things money to stay not Canadian. I have no problem with you practicing your different religions or whatever; you come to this country for freedom. But when you start saying, I'm distinct, and we have to conform to their ways, that's a little bizarre. Why do our tax dollars pay for that?

Q: Were there a lot of immigrants working at Celanese?

LH: Yes, a lot of immigrants. We had people who could barely speak English. We had the whole broad spectrum of everyone.

Q: People of colour?

LH: Oh yes.

Q: Were there ever any problems with that?

LH: No.

Q: So people worked together?

LH: I think people always can work together. I find it very hard when people can't work together. You have different personalities, there's certain people that do clash. On the whole, you just want to go to work, make your money, and go home for your family and enjoy. You don't go to work for your life, you go to work for what you can do after work, at least that's how I always lived my philosophy. Work wasn't my life, it was...

Q: Community?

LH: Community, and doing the things I wanted to do on my free time. That's why I worked at Celanese. It paid good. The people I worked with were good, they were a good bunch of people. We had a good social club, there was lots of activities. The children had picnics, Christmas parties, they had it pretty good. My son is upset Celanese is closed; he took it harder than me.

Q: How old is your son?

LH: He's only 8.

Q: The union played a big role in how the plant operated. Tell me about the safety conditions..

LH: Celanese was very good with safety. It was a very good place to work there. Whenever anything happened it was always looked into, and things were always trying to be improved. If we thought something was unsafe, we'd never have to do it. There was no job, if I said no I'm not doing that job, your manager might come to you, but if you just say no, talk to the union, the union would come in and look at it. Safety came, and if they said no, it was not done. When you were young I did things there that I probably

shouldn't have over the years. When you're young you don't realize. But even with all the training I've had, even things now I do at home I look at differently and say, oh you shouldn't do that, that's just foolish. But some people don't have that drilled into you. We had monthly safety meetings, different programs, and that all opens your eyes to the what-if scenarios.

Q: Having a union makes a difference.

LH: It makes a huge difference. You can stand up for your rights. If you're just by yourself, and let's say a manager hates you for some reason, it happens, without the union they can make your life a living hell at work. With the union though, you've got the clout of the whole plant site there, so people have to be controlled and that manager can be brought up. I agree with you, I think they should be there. Also most people said our wages in Canada are dropping, but also trade union people in trade unions is dropping at the same thing. So that's an interesting correlation. See I'm one of the few in my family, well my wife's family are all anti-union. But I always make the point, where do you think you get your 5 weeks vacation from? Oh because I'm a good worker and that's a standard. Well that's a standard because unions fought for it. And why do you have a 40 hour work week and then you get overtime? Because unions got you that. Companies don't give you nothing because of the goodness of their hearts; they're there to make money. If it wasn't for unions bringing up our standard of living, we wouldn't have what we have in this country.

Q: What kind of wages do you think a person doing the job you did would be making now in China?

LH: I know one guy went over to China; I think he told me they were making \$1 a day to do what I was doing. I was making \$35 an hour, and they were doing it for a dollar, with no safety conditions.

Q: And they were making a profit here?

LH: Yes, a huge profit. With good safety conditions. It's just they didn't want to reinvest in here. We could've made lots of money. Even a lot of the units we closed, they lost business because of it. The one plant in Bishop couldn't make the same product as us. They always said how good we were at this plant. We had a major power outage once, the city knocked down our whole power. The whole plant went down, but within 2 days every unit was running and making product again. That happened in the States, and their workforce was a week and a half later and still not running properly. So we had the people here who knew how to get things done. We always jumped through whatever hoops they wanted. Even in this downturn they started saying, oh if you cut costs we'll keep you open. Well they kept making these targets ridiculously lower, and kept making it, we kept making the product. They would tell us no one liked our product. Well when fibers was closing, the Chinese and Indonesia bought every scrap we had, because they wanted our product. We made one of the best products there was in the whole corporation.

Q: So these plants in the States were less productive?

LH: They had a different system down there; their standards weren't the same as what Canada's standards were. With us too, a lot of the plants in the States, when you had a job, you were the board man. That was your one job, that's all you knew, you knew this

part of the puzzle. In my unit we went through every job. If there was a problem anywhere in my unit, we could go help. So we all helped each other. Let's say the problem is up on the 4th floor or whatever, well the guy downstairs has nothing to do because his job is impacted by that one, so he could come up and help because he knew what to do. Where in the States I heard that if you were down on the ground floor there, that was your job, that's what you did all your life. You never changed. So they didn't know, so I think that hurt them.

Q: Were those plants unionized?

LH: I don't know. I thought they were unionized. Texas and North Carolina. I don't know for sure. I'm assuming they were union, but they might not have been, I never thought about it. The union gives you the clout to also say no. That's one of the biggest things, you don't fear repercussions of your job by saying no to something you don't think is right. A lot of times you read these safety files on what happened in a plant. I remember one plant, a plastic plant, I think they killed a bunch of people. It was basically because they were pushing to get it going, and they bypassed a lot of safety systems. It was because the managers were pushing and the guys, it was a non union plant, they didn't say no, and then the plant blew up and 12 people died. To me, having the union... I remember once I walked out. We were starting up and they wanted to bypass safety protocols. I looked at the boss and said, I'm leaving now. We were starting up the unit; we were behind the gun because we'd had a few bad starts, leaks and everything. Then all of a sudden we were under the gun to get going. So they wanted, instead of purging the still, like the book said for 8 hours, they wanted to purge it for 2 hours. I said, well the book says 8 hours. Oh no, no, we're only going to do two, because we're in a hurry, we have to get started. I said, it's going to blow up then, or it could blow up. They said, no it won't Larry, just do it. I said, no, I'm leaving. They said, well you can't. I said, I'm not going to be here starting a time bomb, that's the end of that. And these other guys will all come with me and that's the end of this. So the manager had to back down because, one, he knew he was wrong. Two, I also asked him to put it in writing. Once you ask someone to put it in writing, it's amazing how many bosses will stop dead in their tracks. If they know it's wrong, and they tell you verbally, then they can deny it later. But if it's in writing, they know. So as is we purged the still for 8 hours, we got going fine. Everything was fine, no repercussions, nothing at all.

Q: There have been a lot of people killed because they didn't know they could walk out.

LH: That's right, and they don't know they can. They're scared to keep their job, so they do something they know isn't right. That's something, and the training. Even now, talking to Celanese workers who have gone to other places, they can't believe what some of these companies are doing. I thought there was laws against some of this stuff, and these companies are doing things that I find totally shocking. But I was trained, we always had lots of training. That's one good thing about Celanese, they didn't skimp on training. We had our own fire department. It was quite a joke when I first started, but at the end it was a very good thing. They went to Vermillion for training; they had the same training as the Edmonton department here. It was very good. I was out there for the first 3 years I started, but as you went up...when I first started there you were always on fire crew. You started on the first crew, but as soon as you got any knowledge and moved up in job status, you got bunted off the fire crew. Then the new guy came in. Then finally the fire crew started saying, look, we have nothing but greenhorns on this fire crew, we're all

going to die fighting fire. So then they started saying, yes that's foolish. Then they started keeping anyone who wanted to be on the fire crew stayed on it, no matter what their position was.

Q: Is that unique in plants, to have their own fire crew?

LH: I know all the plants with refineries have their own fire crew. How they're manned or whatever, I'm not sure. I was told PetroCanada, everyone on the plant site is trained in firefighting. It doesn't matter if you're on the fire crew or not, you all do a little bit. But I'm not sure about that, because it's just from hearsay talking to guys who are now at PetroCanada. I know 5 guys who went from Celanese to PetroCanada.

Q: Is globalization effecting standards we have today with the exporting of jobs and everything?

LH: I think there's plants in Canada that will keep that standard. Oh sure, they don't really care. I remember once in a Mexico plant they boiled 2 guys. They were cleaning a vessel and a hot water barrel dropped on them. They went to the front gate and were able to get 2 more people to come in. You just shake your head, how can that be? But people in Mexico are waiting in front of that gate to come in the plant site. What kind of job security do they have there when they know you could be fired, and they could go out and get a replacement worker like that for you?

Q: Do you remember when that was?

LH: No, I can't remember – I'd say the late '80s. I remember it was at one of our safety meetings they were telling us. It was the same plant as us, so they had the same system and they boiled vessels just like we do for cleaning. We go in them, but when we went in them we had to blind them. But that's from years ago, because over the years Celanese has killed people. My unit I was in at the end there, they used a paper blind to separate the process from the thing. Of course that was in the '50s when things were a lot different. The changes I saw from '80 to 2000 were huge, what we could and couldn't do, safety systems that were in place at Celanese. Then I'm quite surprised when you go to different plants. I know people who went to AT Plastics. They don't have the same safety. They're starting to implement stuff that we had done in the '90s, they're just implementing those safety standards now.

Q: AT Plastics that used to be CIL?

LH: I can't remember. They were on Base Line. They're AT Plastics now.

Q: Celanese was a leading plant.

LH: Now that I hear about what people are going to now. I assumed that was a standard in the world, or in Canada at least. But even talking to some of the tradesmen that we brought in for shutdowns, they'd say, oh no I work in these plants where we never signed. It's like you had lock and tied schedule where you'd have to sign in if you were doing a job. We couldn't do anything with that equipment until everyone signed off. They said at a lot of these other plants, oh no we don't sign nothing, you guys just tell us it's safe. Well that's what we used to do. But at other plants people got hurt, and we started realizing we have to make sure people are all done with the equipment before we do anything with it. Always in a shutdown, the shutdown is when the plant makes no money. So they want to be running as fast as possible. So it's the push, push, push.

Q: I'm surprised there isn't such a standard.

LH: There isn't. I thought it was a standard, because of Celanese. But some plants are going there, but they all have different versions of what we did. We had a very good system, I thought.

Q: All the more reason losing Celanese was not a good thing.

LH: No, I think it was a very sad thing, actually.

[END]