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**Company Affiliations:** Canadian Wheat Board (CWB), Grain Transportation Agency (GTA), University of Saskatchewan, Western Grain Marketing Panel

**Interview Date:** 13 May 2011

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**Summary:** In his follow-up interview, Canadian Wheat Board Commissioner and economist James Leibfried discusses the various professional roles he held after his time with the Wheat Board, including conducting rail line abandonment studies for the Grain Transportation Agency, teaching at the University of Saskatchewan, advising on government committees regard US-Canada free trade agreements, and sitting on the Western Grain Marketing Panel. He also tells the stories of his overseas travels with the World Bank to Argentina and Russia, offering recommendations on how to improve the efficiencies of their grain systems. Other topics discussed include the worldwide reputation of the Canadian Wheat Board and Canadian Grain Commission, how the Wheat Board's structure has changed, voluntary grain pooling and open marketing, predictions for the future of the industry, and his assistance in designing the CWB logo.

**Keywords:** Canadian Wheat Board; Grain Transportation Agency; Rail line abandonment; Railway consolidation; Grain laws and legislation; University of Saskatchewan; Government policy; Grain pooling; Open markets; Grain marketing; Canadian Grain Commission; World Bank; Canadian International Grains Institute; Economics; US-Canada Free Trade Agreement; North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA); General Agreement on Tariffs and Taxes (GATT); Policy negotiations; Western Canada; Argentina; Russia

Time, Speaker, Narrative
NP: We are sitting in not-sunny Manitoba this time, unlike our last interview with Dr. Leibfried, and this is the second go-round. We're conducting it on May 13 in the afternoon of 2011. And I will just start by asking you to introduce yourself and give your date of birth for our records please.
JL: I'm Jim Leibfried, and I was born March 16, 1931.

NP Great. And to follow up on the first interview—we ended it quite abruptly, in listening to it, because there were a couple of things that you mentioned that you had gone onto after your career at the Canadian Wheat Board [CWB], and that was your involvement with the Grain Transportation Agency [GTA] and a study on rail line abandonment, two very important parts of the history of the grain trade. Could you refresh my memory on when you left? What years were you at the Wheat Board?

JL: From October 1964 until the end of December 1985.

NP: Ok.

JL: So 21 years.

NP: 21 years.

JL: Three months. Yes.

NP: And how did you come to get involved with the Grain Transportation Agency?

JL: I'd been very much involved with grain transportation part of the time when I was at the Wheat Board, and the revamping of the delivery quota system, and of the resetting up of what we called the block-shipping system, which involved the companies and the railways and the terminals and all that, trying to improve the efficiency and the throughput of the system. So I had a lot of experience with them, and I knew very well the people that were with the new Grain Transportation Agency—Peter Thomson and his people.

NP: What was the history of the Grain Transportation Agency? How and why did it come about?

JL: The agency?

NP: Mhmm.

JL: Oh. There might be others who could tell you more about the politics behind it. I think there was some feeling in there that the Wheat Board was doing too much of the rail transportation in particular, that maybe there should be an independent body who was in there and allocating the overall car supply and the overall management of it. I think that's probably why it was established, and I

think after a few years, they found out it wasn't operating much differently. And I think much of that went back--. Well, it ended, and then it went back I think to the Wheat Board. Much the same coordinating functions.

NP: And when you--.

JL: But they also had certain special projects they worked on as well as the day-to-day or week-to-week coordination.

NP: And was it one of these special projects that you were involved in?

JL: yeah, a couple of them.

NP: Ok. So--.

JL: One was the rail line abandonment. We had six branch lines in western Canada that we used as sort of guinea pigs, I guess—two in Alberta, two in Saskatchewan, two in Manitoba. Three involved the CPR [Canadian Pacific Railway] and three involved the CNR [Canadian National Railway]. What it was was we went in there, and I was the chairman of the committee, and I had specialists from each of the railways on it and a certain of the rail company people. And we would go in and we'd set up a local committee then of mainly farmers in the area. We could go through what are the alternatives to the system as it existed, whether you abandoned the line or could you maybe truck it to, or could you load cars directly, and things like this. What was the best way to go about this and what was the cost associated? What were the extra trucking costs, highway problems? We covered the whole gamut of things.

So we would meet with this committee, and they would give us their questions and the things they were concerned about and what options they wanted to look at. And then we would come back and our committee for the working group put all the numbers together, then come back, have another meeting with them, and explain how this here shifting out. And after we had several meetings like that, then we had public meetings in which we explored these possibilities before the group and just said, "This is it. We're not giving you the answers. This is about the numbers we got, and this is the best we've got."

**[0:05:04]**

NP: Can you recall some of the names of the people from the railways who were involved in that group? The reason I ask is that if we take a look at the expertise areas of the various people that we've interviewed, we're a little shy on the railway side. So we need to make some contacts. And also, I guess, just to--.

JL: Oh. A couple of the main fellows I used to work with are dead. [Laughs]

NP: Mmhhh. Unfortunately, that's what we discovered.

JL Yeah. Jim Harris and Bob Ship. Bob Ship was CPR and Jim Harris was the CNR. There was some younger fellows. There was Bob Martinelli on the CPR side. Paul Earl, he worked sometimes for the CPR, sometimes for the UGG [United Grain Growers], and sometimes for the GTA. Then he's made, or I think he's teaching and doing some research since then. He was involved in some of those. Tommy Chassises, he was with the Cargill. He was on some of those committees. Mike Chomsky, who's with the government, federal government, on transportation. I'm not sure just which department he's in now. He did a lot of the work in putting the numbers together on all of these alternatives. I'd say Mike, I think, he's probably still with Agriculture Canada or maybe Transport Canada. I'm not sure.

NP: What was the impetus for even considering the branch line decommissioning?

JL: Well, it was trying to improve the efficiency of the system, I guess. We'd gone into getting a hopper car fleet built up, and you wanted to turn those as fast as possible rather than taking them down a branch line and leaving them to sit there a week and pick them up again. Also, some of the old tracks were taking a lot of work to keep them up. They couldn't handle these kinds of tonages and things like this. So. And the companies were also consolidating at trading off points and here and there and trying to build up bigger loading units. So all of these things were going on at the same time, and they wanted some direction as to what lines were going to stay and which ones weren't going to stay. And the federal government also wanted to know where the money should be going or not. So these were, I'd say, six sort of trial areas that we needed to work with. Some of them got--. There were different solutions that came up. But it's the government had to decide later. We didn't make any decisions, our committee. We just set out the facts and what the opinions were and wrote reports.

NP: A couple of things rising from your comments where it seemed like a very difficult thing to deal with because you would think that, particularly with the producers, the farmers, that there was no solution other than status quo. Is that true?

JL: Oh, it would start out that way, I'm sure, in each of these cases. Each one wanted to keep their own elevators and their own branch line. Yeah, they were very strong on that most places, but they also knew things were going to change, so they were very interested to know what were the other possibilities—and if the elevator was gone and if they would get paid for trucking to another place. Oh, I'd say there was a very informative sort of thing. The meetings, yes, when we had the public meetings then some of

them would get a little hot and discussions would go, but you'd explain to them, "We're just here laying this out. We want to hear your comments. We're not the decision makers on this. It's going to be up to the government."

NP: So what were some of the alternate solutions for various places? Not necessarily matching them to the places, but--.

JL: Well, some branch lines were just taken up completely. Others, just part of the line was taken up. Some of them the middle of the line was taken up, and they sort of used branch stub-ends either way. Oh, there were--. And each one was quite interesting because they had been set up as grain-dependent lines, which meant they got money from the federal government to keep these lines open. But a couple of them were not mainly used for grain. The railways were running other traffic over them, but that didn't count. So they would get a subsidy and the fees for keeping that track going there. I'd say we ran into two of those cases out of those six. Or one. Both of them were used mainly for other things rather than grain, even though they were getting subsidies for hauling grain and the branches were kept open for hauling grain.

**[0:10:19]**

NP: But they weren't necessary for that.

JL: Yeah.

NP: Hm!

JL: I think we had the line between Dauphin and Swan River, and in the middle there it's mostly forested area, some ranching and livestock in there—very little grain. There was pretty good grain on both ends—next to Dauphin and then from Minitonas in Swan River—but in between there was a large stretch of track and there was very little grain delivered in that area. And yet, it was being kept up as a grain line. But mainly it was the CNR was running pulp and stuff across that line as a short-cut going east.

NP: It wasn't all to the advantage of the railways then? As the--.

JL: No. They were different things. I know we had a farmer, right after we wrote a report on that branch line, he was in the paper giving—the day after the report came out—saying this was just a snow job or cover job for the railways. Really. Then about a week or two later, I saw him at a farm meeting, and he come running up to me, and he said, "I'm sorry." He said, "I didn't even have a chance to read the report before the reporters were after me, so I said the usual line, 'The railways have got somebody out there

speaking for them or covering for them.”” And he said, “I read it, and you’ve laid it all out. It’s all there, the whole story.” He was quite happy with the report. [Laughs]

NP: How long did that project last between starting it up and sending the report in?

JL: It was at least six months, and it might have been nine or ten. I think it was all done within the one year at least anyway.

NP: And that report would be on record somewhere?

JL: Oh, yes. I’m sure.

NP: Anything else strike you as memorable about that particular project?

JL: Well, I remember one farmer got very angry at a meeting. But early in the meeting he was giving the railways all sorts of gears for not giving good service, and at the end he was making a fiery speech about how they couldn’t survive without the railroads, and we shouldn’t take it out. [Laughs] And I sort of pointed out to him which was his--. And he just stood up and walked out of the meeting. [Laughs]

NP: Well, when you’re faced with facts, right, sometimes you realize that--.

JL: But in general, it went quite well. I think I was brought in to head this committee because the Wheat Board, I think, generally has a pretty good reputation among the farmers as being on their side of things in looking at things. So I’d say I think for political reasons they probably figured an ex-Wheat Board guy was a good one to send out there.

NP: [Laughs] Send out to the firing line! Yeah. So did you follow what came of the report? Whether it was implemented pretty closely or ignored completely? Somewhere in between?

JL: Well, we didn’t make a firm--.

NP: Right.

JL: Recommendation on any one of those particular--. We had about five alternates, I think, on each of those branches sort of. I know, like, the one that ran from Winnipeg to Riverton, they cut off the end of it from Gimli north. Tha part has been abandoned,

and they've started to haul the grain in Arborg. Now, the line kept going because there was some big distillers at Gimli that's bringing in US corn. That's a big part of their whiskey operation there. So that line, this end of the line is still existing. Uh, I'm not sure about the one on Swan River. I think it's still running. The strange thing about that one was you had this federal government subsidizing this rail line between Dauphin and Swan River, and right beside it, you had this Manitoba with the Number One Highway. A very good road. Two transportation systems where you probably only needed one, and everybody around there would have said they wanted the highway not the railroad if you told them to make a choice. That was kind of an interesting one to look at.

But there are other lines I know that have been completely abandoned. A couple of them--. Well, one in Saskatchewan was completely abandoned, and the other one, I think, they abandoned one end of the line and then they built bit of a new line going west a few miles to hook onto the CPR. A CN link was connected to a CPR line. So, there were different combinations that were possible, and they didn't move on. I think all of them have had some things done to them on those six lines, yeah. And there's many other lines involved since then.

**[0:15:21]**

NP: Right. And the whole consolidation of the industry resulting in closing down of elevators serviced by--.

JL: Oh, yes. Many.

NP: So quite a major change.

JL: Yes. When I first came to the Wheat Board, I was just amazed how many. I don't remember the exact numbers, but I don't know how many thousand grain elevators there were in western Canada. I'm sure there are under 1,000 today.

NP: Yes, for sure.

JL: It might even be 600 or something. I'm not sure.

NP: Yeah. And all of those attach to a line, so.

JL: Yeah.

NP: It might have been some major changes even beyond that.

JL: Probably if you asked me to make a recommendation, I would have recommended that some of those branches be kept open and not the elevators, and you just use them as direct producer loading spots where producers can make themselves, save themselves a lot of money if they load their own cars. Some like to do it, some don't.

NP: And sort of my limited experience or talking to people, there seems to be a upsurge in the producer cars for just the reason you mentioned.

JL: Well, I always thought it would come faster than it has. Yes. [Laughs] Because most of the farmers had pretty good trucks and augers, but weather of course is something you have to battle with.

NP: Was there ever any discussion at the time of talk about railway subsidization, which is pretty apparent, as opposed to road subsidization? And as you get increased use of the roads for trucking grain to other locations, was that ever part of the equation?

JL: Oh, sure. We had meetings with the provincial people and what was going to happen to their roads. Oh, yes. They would make estimates of what it was going to cost them, so that this was part of the numbers that were put into the thing, you know?

NP: Sounds like this study was very well designed.

JL: Yeah, I think it was designed about as well as you could do it at that time. I'd say Mike Chomsky was very good at putting all this together. The railway people providing their numbers, and we're getting numbers from the provincial people, the elevator people. So, yeah. I was fairly pleased with how well it did work out. I knew it wasn't going to be a popular thing then. [Laughing] Anyways.

NP: Mmhmm.

JL: It was something that was going to have to be done.

NP: So you were working as a private consultant at that time?

JL: Yes. So I had a contract with the government for that project, with GTA, yeah.

NP: Yeah. And from there?

JL: I also did another one for the GTA on looking at direct shipments to the US gulf first. I was trying to line up a trial run of a unit train of grain for the Wheat Board to put down there and have a customer at the US gulf ports pick up, just to see what all would be involved. We had concerns about, you know, when you don't have the Grain Commission inspectors at the terminals and all. There are many, many questions about what could go wrong or could happen. Had it all pretty well set up, then the buyer on the other end backed out of the thing, and we never did it. Never got it done. But anyway, I looked at that one.

NP: Seemed wise to do like a dry--. Well, not even a dry run, an actual run.

JL: Yeah. That was going to be an actual run, that one. We got pretty close, but.

NP: And you had said something about that in the previous interview because we were talking about the long-term prospects for the port of Thunder Bay.

JL: For Thunder Bay.

NP: And versus Duluth and through down to Louisiana. So given recent changes in the politics of the nation, I think we might be having a lot more of these test runs.

JL: I don't know. It depends, because the Board is changed now. You've got the farmers supposedly in control of the Board. They've got the majority of the members. Yeah, it'll be some interesting times now with the government seeming to have one view of things and the elected farmers another idea.

**[0:20:03]**

NP: We wait.

JL: In general, that's been quite a shift in the industry over the years. First we went to an elected advisory committee, and then we got the--. Before, they had been appointed by the government as well as the commissioners, so that was a big step forward to have each region having their own elected member. We had 11 or 12 of them. And then we used to move out and have meetings in their particular districts--all day meetings, answering questions, which they chaired with the fellow chair. So they started putting out a lot more information and meeting face to face with a lot more farmers after that. But then it's gone. And since then that, at that time of

course, now you have the elected board of--. But you have 15 members and five are appointed by the government and ten are elected. That's a little different. That's where you get clashes, I guess, now.

NP: Well, and all of that is under the federal government legislation. So you change the legislation, and you can pretty much--.

JL: Oh, they can do whatever when they change legislation. They found they couldn't do it just by--. I mean, if you change the Act, you can change a lot. You can't change everything by regulation very much. But yeah.

NP: So between the work with the GTA and the grain marketing—Western Grain Marketing Panel, was that--?

JL: Mmhmm.

NP: I think that was the title of it.

JL: I guess it was called that.

NP: How did you become involved in that one and what do you recall about it?

JL: Well, I spent—in between there—I spent two years in Saskatoon at the University of Saskatchewan as a visiting prof.

NP: Ah!

JL: So, I was there for a couple years, and then I came back. And--.

NP: Well, let's--. Before you go on then to the Grain Marketing Panel, what did you teach at the University of Saskatchewan?

JL: Grain marketing. [Laughing] Well, I used to sit in on other classes, both with the Voc Ag [vocational agriculture] classes in the wintertime and, oh, with different people. Anybody could invite me into their class, or I'd give lectures when somebody was gone or--.

NP: So this was in the Faculty of Agriculture, I would assume?

JL: Yeah. Economics.

NP: And so, talk about a career starting in one area and almost ending in another area. Did you notice any difference between the students in your first stint as a professor and the time in Saskatchewan?

JL: Great deal of difference. Great deal of difference.

NP: Say more about that.

JL: Maybe I was more different than they were. I'm not sure.

NP: Oh, probably both.

JL: Yes, it probably was a bit of both.

NP: But yeah, say more about what you noticed about the difference in--. It would have been different country to begin with.

JL: I guess as a young professor I knew a lot of things. As an older one, I wasn't so sure of myself, what I was going to be professing. So I wasn't probably quite as--. Made things quite as interesting or exciting as I might have in the older, earlier days. But also, I had students at 8:00 in the morning for an hour and a half, and half of them were asleep, I think. So I just didn't have the best pick of the times and that. But then you'd have, you know, 40, 50 students. I forget what it was in a particular class. But there were several of them I got to know quite well and who would come around and talk to me outside of class. That was always really good. They would write papers. They had the terms papers and things you had them write. One of them ended up in the grain trade in rather substantial jobs, both with Archer Daniels Midland [ADM] in the US and then later he was at the Wheat Board for a while and also with Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. So that was one of the good parts.

Also when I was there, my next door office partner was Ward Weisensel, who is now the chief operating officer of the Wheat Board. So! [Laughs] He is a very good fellow, and I would say I'm quite pleased with the way he's worked out at the Wheat Board.

NP: Could you tell with--. Sometimes it's difficult to have interaction with the students, except for those that will interact with you outside of the classroom. Could you tell anything about their philosophy of grain marketing? How they felt about the way things are or should be?

**[0:25:07]**

JL: They were pretty well-mixed, I would say. I suppose in there and teaching grain marketing, I taught open marketing as well as Wheat Board. That was all part of it. Having been from the US, I'd tell them, "Everybody gets used to their own poison, but there's good parts and others that aren't." Anyway. So I don't know. No, there were none of them that I remember ever that strongly wanted to get up and debate one side or the other. They were a little too sleepy or something in the morning. [NP laughs] I don't know.

NP: They hadn't been in the real world yet!

JL: It was better when I went to the Voc Ag boys who were there in the wintertime, and they were regular farmers. Oh, yeah. There I got more reaction than I did out of the degree people. Yes. Because the degree people, some of them were more interested in livestock, and grain marketing was maybe one of their electives. I don't know. So I didn't get as much--. But no, the Voc Ag fellows who were in there for three, four months in the wintertime, they were much more interested, and they wanted to know about trail line abandonment and quotas and all the operation, day-to-day operation things.

NP: It had a real impact on them.

JL: Those were pretty good. Yes. I also tried to get out to little marketing clubs and also to very district Pool meetings and things like this. And some of these were very open-market oriented clubs, and then there were some of the other. The Wheat Pool was not particularly happy to have me there, I think. I didn't get invited to too many of theirs.

NP: Why would you say that was?

JL: Well.

NP: Speculating.

JL: It's hard for me to say. I think when I was at the Wheat Board, I wasn't considered political in any way—left, right, or anything—so nobody really--. I hoped I was looked at as just a professional marketing guy, and this is the way we get things done. But I don't think any of them really--. Some of them thought I was a little too pushy, that the Wheat Board was trying to take over and do too many things. And I thought they were rather dragging their feet and pretty slow on a lot of things. It was only when they were in big trouble, we could get some action. [Laughs] So I had different reactions from them.

NP: Were they in a time of expansion then? Or were they--?

JL: They hadn't really made up their minds yet at that time. They were still--. I remember when the Cargill people came in. They were very, oh, very worried about this. I said, "You just take care of your business and don't worry about them. They're just ordinary people like the rest of us. They're in Canada and they've got to abide by the Canadian rules and system. They will." Well, some of them didn't like that, I guess, that sort of idea. Also, I had pushed for the expansion of the terminals at Vancouver, and they thought I was pushing a little too hard. One of them gave me a little lecture one day that Sask Pool was the big dog in the grain trade, not the Wheat Board. We were the hard men. But anyway. [Laughs] It was kind of interesting.

NP: Mmhmm.

JL: I just didn't think they had a big enough, broadened view, a forward-looking view on their--. They needed to be shook up a little bit.

NP: Well, things did get shook up, as you said.

JL: yeah, and I was--. You have the people who say, "If something's not broke, don't fix it." I was always, "Change is good for the-. Change to keep things moving and stay on the offence. Keep things moving." That wasn't too popular with some of them.

NP: Well, they were a large organization.

JL: Oh, yes. Very large.

NP: Yeah. So even within their own troops or--.

JL: And they had their own farm directors and that they had to try and bring along. So they had a--. I had one of them one day say how fortunate I was at the Wheat Board. I didn't have a board of directors I had to answer to. And I said, "Well, I've got four other commissioners who have access to all the same people and all the information I have, and they know exactly what questions to ask," and all this and that. I said, "You bring in your farm directors once a month and you tell them this is this, and what are they going to say?" Anyway. [Laughing]

**[0:30:03]**

NP: Well, I have found that in my experience anyway, that until you actually have worked on the other side, you don't really have a good sense of what people are up against. And every body's up against their own challenges, they're just different challenges.

JL: Yeah.

NP: So when you came back then to Manitoba, was it to work on the Grain Marketing Panel?

JL: No, no. I just came back. I was more or less, by that time, thinking that I was getting close to retirement. If some possibilities picked up, I could work on them. Well, while I was at the university—well, before I went to the university and while I was there—I was also on the advisory committee to Ottawa on, first, the US-Canadian free-trade agreement, and then on the Uruguay round of the GATT [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade]. So I was on a technical committee for what they called a industry technical committee for agriculture and the US-Canadian free-trade negotiations. And then on the next one I was on the upper policy level advisory group to John Crosby who was minister at that time of trade.

NP: Now, you were involved in the grain trade agreements prior to this as well in the early--.

JL: Earlier years, yes.

NP: Earlier years, as I recall, from our conversations.

JL: Yes.

NP: So this was at the time of NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement]? Or NAFTA was just getting its feet wet? Or this was part of the whole NAFTA--?

JL: Oh, north--. This was at the start of the North American Free Trade Agreement, or the US-Canadian part of it anyway. Then later they added Mexico and called it North American Free Trade, yeah, NAFTA.

NP: So let's talk about the first piece then before you went into the sort of upper policy one. So what can you tell me about those negotiations? The cut and thrust of international cooperation or--.

JL: Well, I wasn't on the actual negotiating team. We were just advisors in Ottawa, and they had their own negotiating teams. I knew the people in agriculture, of course. I thought the interesting part, when I first went in there, is I was just appointed as an individual. I wasn't representing the Wheat Board or any particular organization.

NP: This would have been what year? Just for trying to track down some background information. Approximately.

JL: Oh, it must have been about '88 when I started on that and '92 when I was through with those two groups.

NP: Ok.

JL: I think I was on there about four or five years. This was a non-paying--. They paid my expenses, that was it. As I say, I wasn't on--. I didn't get any big fee or anything for doing that. So like I say, when I first went with this agriculture first technical meeting, many of them thought because I was shown as an ex-commissioner of the Wheat Board that I would be protecting the Wheat Board, I guess. And many of them on the supply management side of things, they were quite concerned what was going to happen to them if this US border would open up. And they thought, well, the Wheat Board would certainly be the one who would be the first one to take the lead and say, "You can't do this and this and this." And I didn't take that approach. My approach was all, "Here's one of the wealthiest, biggest markets in the world, and up to this point we've been so limited in grain we can hardly get anything across that border." There were some good possibilities because I knew we had the quality of grain and standards that they didn't have in the US that millers would like. That was a big--.

And so, I just thought, "Well, see where we can go with this thing." And this sort of upset, I think, some of the people in some of these other agriculture industries. Oh, well. Particularly one I remember are the grape and the wine people, because they just thought they were going to be ruined if this border opened up. Now you go back and look at that, and it really woke those guys up and they got on top of their game. And nowadays, they're very proud of the wines they're producing, and their markets are developing. So. [Laughs]

NP: And some eastern marketing boards too, I think, were--.

**[0:35:03]**

JL: Oh, yeah. They were concerned for sure.

NP: Really.

JL: But they, I don't know. The dairy and the--.

NP: Poultry.

JL: Poultry people everything, they stayed protected. So they haven't changed in that one very much. But it did open up substantial marketing of grain for the Wheat Board and the rest of the Canadian western industry.

NP: Now, if I recall correctly, when we were talking about your early involvement in the grain talks, was it the Kennedy round?

JL: Yeah.

NP: The round that went nowhere.

JL: On grain.

NP: [Laughing] On grain! And I think I'm not sure about the others, but so in your mind, this particular round later in your career was a much more successful round?

JL: Well, this bilateral one with the US.

NP: Yes.

JL Yeah.

NP: Because as I recall, it was the US that fell down on their part of the bargain in the earlier one.

JL: Uh, yes. [Laughs] They got sort of locked into a position, let's say, for political reasons.

NP: Would you say that from your position as an advisor to the Canadian group, the US is—how was [Pierre] Trudeau put it?—the mouse and the elephant? Because they are such a major player and such a major trading partner for Canada, how can they negotiate equally in such unequal positions?

JL: [Laughs]

NP: Like what's in it for the States, I guess, in these situations? I can see what's in it for Canada, but what's in it for the States?

JL: Well, they preached free trade for the world, then when they'd get into things, they'd start to see some of their own programs being put under the pressure and their local groups getting upset. Then they would have to shift ground. It was a very, yeah, very difficult position for them, but they are big. And I used to tell our guys, "It's like you go to a dance. These guys have hired the band, and whatever music they play, you've got to out-dance them if you want the girls." [Laughs] You know? And they're going to change the music on you whenever they feel like it too. Because if they negotiate something and then they feel like they don't want it. *Cht!* It's what De Gaulle talked about, "Treaties are like a rose. They last while they last." [Laughs]

NP: Ah. Interesting, interesting comment.

JL: Yes.

NP: Very astute, I'd say.

JL: Yes. If you're the big dog, anyway, that's the way it can be.

NP: Yeah. So what would they get out of the free trade agreement related to the grain market?

JL: They get very little, I would say, because during the bilateral US-Canadian agreement, they didn't pay much attention to the grain on the US side really because they had this Uruguay round coming up and they assumed the grain was going to be dealt with there. They didn't think they were going to let it go very far there. But as the US-Canadian agreement came around, they had to submit it to the GATT in order for them to approve it as a bilateral arrangement because GATT's supposed to be multilateral for everybody, and if you have two parties involved here there's certain conditions that should be met. And one of them was that it should be very comprehensive. So when it came down to the end of it, they had to have something in there for grain, which they didn't really want. But it got thrown in, and I'd say I think Canada got a break on that one. [Laughs]

NP: So what eventually did Canada get out of that then?

JL: Well, got access to the US market. Got away from having a quota about less than a million bushels a year to, well, 50-100 million bushels or something.

NP: And has that continued as far as you know, the freedom there?

JL Yeah, we still have regular trades there. I couldn't tell you the exact numbers right now. I haven't followed them, but no, they've been selling on a regular basis to a lot of the large mills down there.

NP: So this one stuck?

**[0:40:04]**

JL: Yeah, yeah. That one did.

NP: This round of negotiations stuck?

JL: Yeah. That part of it anyway. They still haven't multilaterally through the GATT gone as far as they could, but. No, the US gained mostly on the industrial and that side of things in the Kennedy round. That was the big thing they were after in that one, and to open up Europe and some European markets and Japan. That was where the big things were for them. They made progress on that.

NP: And in this round they made progress on just the whole--?

JL: Well, they're on another round by now, third one. What are they calling this one? I forget. I don't know. It's going very far. You don't hear much about it.

NP: So the--.

JL: Because the US was getting more concerned about their own jobs and sort of isolationist tendencies creeping in down there, and they're beginning to question, I think, some of their own free trade--. Now you don't hear them say "free trade." They say they want fairer trade. Which means they want to keep their markets.

NP: And certainly, they have bigger concerns than Canada.

JL: Oh, yes. For sure.

NP: In that regard.

JL: Yes.

NP: So the higher level group then, was that the group that then dealt with the grain issue?

JL: It was everything, yeah.

NP: And so what were they trying to accomplish?

JL: Well, this was on the Uruguay round, and this was supposed to be an international. I guess they were trying to revive the--. There wasn't much done in grain actually. I would say there wasn't a heck of a lot accomplished on grain under that round at all. So I can't point out any great development I can remember coming out of that one as far as grain is concerned.

NP: Yeah. In the intervening years of your first trade talks, and I recall at that point there was the European Union, I think, in those early years was really subsidizing.

JL: Yes. Oh, yes.

NP: But things had changed there, too.

JL: Some anyway. I don't know. I don't know their position right now that well.

NP: I guess what made me say that--.

JL: They've had higher grain prices in general in recent years and things. But--.

NP: And their subsidies just kicked in when--.

JL: Well, if you have low world prices, that's when they would kick in, but the biggest or where they're at right now, I couldn't tell you.

NP: Then onto--. Before we move from that though, in both of those cases—in the Canada-US free trade and the Uruguay round—things like the Wheat Board and the Canadian Grain Commission [CGC] as potential subsidies and so on, they were left alone?

JL: Yeah. The US side were trying to push to get rid of Boards, like the Australian and the Canadian Board. The Australian Board is pretty well changed, but whenever the US would challenge—they had a number of challenges after that bilateral agreement when the Canadian grain started moving—they had six, seven or more challenges in there trying to say that Canada, the Wheat Board, was undercutting the market or something. The panels had looked at that and backed Canada on every one of them.

NP: Probably only outnumbered by the lumber. [Laughs]

JL: Yeah, that may be. But the big thing I think with the US was that the people importing it were some of the biggest grain outfits in the world. Let's say, Archer Daniels and Cargill and Continental. And they have a lobbyist and they wanted it to keep coming. [Laughing]

NP: Good! allies in good places.

JL: Yeah, yeah.

NP: So then was your next stint then with the Grain Marketing Panel?

JL: Yes. Mmhmm. Well, Ralph Goodale was the minister at that time. He was the one that called me up and asked me.

**[0:45:02]**

NP: Was that the Liberal--?

JL: Yes.

NP: Ok.

JL They were Liberals, yeah.

NP: And how had you met him previously?

JL: Well, he had been in parliament as a young fellow and as an assistant to Otto Lang, actually.

NP: Oh, okay.

JL: Yes. So that's when I first met him. Then he lost his seat in Saskatchewan, and then he went, and he worked for Hazen Argue, when Senator Argue was made the minister responsible for the Wheat Board. They didn't have any elected members in western Canada, so they took Argue, Senator Argue, out of the Senate and made him a minister. Then Goodale worked for him as did the fellow who used to work for me at the Wheat Board. He went to work for Hazen Argue, Terry Martin. So I got to know him on a more personal basis than when he was working with Terry, because I knew Terry very well. He and I had worked close together for many years.

And anyway, I'm trying to remember the circumstances of how that panel came about. You're asking--. There were pressures from the Western Wheat Growers, of course, wanting to look at things differently and see what could be done. So I guess they were probably pushing for a panel to look at this again. I don't know, we've had how many along the years? I think there were, it must have been 10 or 12 of us on that committee. Murray [Cormack] would have told you more about that than I did.

NP: Yes.

JL: But I think we hired him as the executive director or something, so he sort of brought in and managed the show. Well, we had the chairman from Saskatchewan, a lawyer, who took a very legalistic approach to our committee, which was quite foreign to me.

NP: How would you describe a legalistic approach?

JL: Well, when we had meetings, we were not supposed to express our own opinions. We were just supposed to listen and ask questions. We weren't supposed to put forth any ideas or engage really.

NP: So you had the public meetings?

JL: Oh, yeah, we had public meetings.

NP: So it was at those meetings, not just your sort of private panel meetings.

JL: Oh, no, no. Yeah, we were there mainly for public meetings.

NP: And to answer questions because otherwise why be there?

JL: We weren't supposed to express our opinions very much.

NP: Oh, ok.

JL: I was hoping when we started that just by having our group together that we would interact and come up with--. There are some pretty good people on that panel, but the chairman, he didn't want us out floating ideas or suggesting this as something that should be looked at or tried.

NP: So quite a different approach than the rail line abandonment one?

JL: Oh, much. Much. So I was very disappointed in that committee, except I kind of knew at the beginning we were put there to buy time for the government, to give them time to try and think through what line they wanted to take on it. I'd say mainly we were going out there saying, "They've got people looking at it." [Laughs] But I don't know that anything seriously got taken from the report that was written.

NP: There were some recommendations related to the constitution of the Canadian Wheat Board?

JL: Oh, yeah. I guess we did make some. Yeah, that may have been--.

NP: More farmer representation.

JL: Yeah, that and an elected board of directors and that, which I always thought was fine. I'd say the more democratic you made it, the better. That was one thing that always bothered me. I didn't want to be appointed a commissioner. I didn't like the idea of appointments like that, but I was sort of pressured into it. [Laughs] So I always liked the idea when they got first the elected advisory committee and then the other kept progressing, which I thought was good. As long as we had our own professional staff and kept them out of the politics side, then these board of directors could take care of the politics, [Laughs] deal with the government mainly on that.

**[0:50:15]**

NP: So mainly a stop gap measure?

JL: Yeah. I think it just bought them time while they were trying to think through the position they wanted to take on things.

NP: Anything particular as you sat through the delegation presentations, anything that sticks in your mind about the various groups and their presentations? Any surprises? Pretty much predictable? What would you say?

JL: No, it was all quite predictable, I think. I can only remember one or two incidents that were interesting, but.

NP: Can you share those, the interesting incidents?

JL: One was with Paul Earl. [Laughs]

NP: Ok.

JL: He was there, I think, working with United Grain Growers at that time.

NP: Oh, okay.

JL: Then he made some kind of a little speech about something. He's a very serious-minded fellow, as you should know. You've worked with him? You've had your--.

NP: No, I have not met him. We haven't interviewed him yet. He's on our list.

JL: Oh, oh. He's a very bright guy. He's got his views pretty fixed on a lot of things. He made something, and I sort of responded to something or asked him some questions about it, and he started getting red in the face and he was getting--. And I said, "Paul, you don't need to debate that. I agree with you!" And he, once somebody from the Wheat Board agreed with him--. And he still thought of me as Wheat Board, I suppose. I wasn't on the Board then. I kind of rattled him a little bit I remember. [Laughs]

NP: The make-up of the panel was—Mr. Cormack was outlining for me at the interview we had with him—appeared to try to strike a balance of interests.

JL: Oh, yes. Everybody was--. Yeah. No, no, that's true.

NP: The eventual coming together of the report, given, say, the predictability of the delegations, presentations, and the differences in viewpoints of the people on the panel, how easy was it to put the report together?

JL: It wasn't a very meaningful report, in my opinion. It was pretty loosely hung together in order to get an agreement. Even that wasn't--. Almost to the last day, I threatened to write an independent report and file it because after we'd agreed this was finally the wording we were going to use, one of them at the last moment would want to change some things. And I just said, "I'm not signing it if we change one word. This was finished yesterday and that's that. If the rest of you want to go along with junky changes, I'll write my own report."

NP: So what would you have--?

JL: But they did sign it.

NP: Yeah. What would you have liked to have seen come out of that?

JL: Oh. I would like to have seen them come out with something trying voluntary pooling and opening up for the Wheat Board to take on canola under a voluntary pooling as well. I always thought we could make voluntary pooling work, and there were very few people in the industry who ever thought that. And I still think like that. And I've sent papers into the last couple boards on it, but suggesting the outline for what I thought would be a real test for a few years. But--.

NP: So how could that work?

JL: Well, what I was suggesting is they take barley and canola and open up the barley up on the Wheat Board side to voluntary pooling, and at the same time bring in the canola.

NP: Interesting.

JL: Yeah. Neither side would like it completely. [Laughs] But they'd both learn a lot from it. But things have changed now, and with fewer farmers and bigger farmers—all this and that—you can organize these things and you can give them more choices with the computers about when and where they want to deliver. And if they make an agreement that they'll deliver a portion of their crop or something, then the Wheat Board can make long-term sales commitments on those bases. The Wheat Board is well enough

established in both the world and western Canada to do that nowadays. In the earlier years, no. But now, it's quite different, I think, and I think you could have more teeth in the agreements between the farmers and the Board so that they would live up to their contracts or their general agreements.

**[0:55:42]**

I think a large part of the farmers, even in canola, would favour pooling on a voluntary basis. To me, it's like mutual accounts or mutual funds. Now, I don't know if you have mutual funds or not, but I don't like to particularly follow particular companies in the markets day-to-day and minute-by-minute, so I use mutual funds. It's just pooling. Because I--. And out there the farmers, I don't think there's more than 10, 15 percent of them who really would want to stick watching the markets every day-to-day. And even if they did, they don't have enough inside information. They're always going to be late onto the game. So I think most of them are more interested in straight farming or mechanics and welding—many, many interests—curling, whatever, than they are in trying to sit and watch the computer everyday. Well, there are some of them that are interested in it and some of them might do all right, but not very many. So I think there would be--. And a lot of them, I think, would like to pool canola.

And the Wheat Board, given a big supply of canola, could make bigger contracts than any of the individual companies nowadays can, which would be of interest. I think I mentioned that to you last time when the Frito-Lay people in the United States—the chip people—biggest users of cooking oil in the United States. They're part of the Pepsi people, which is--. Oh, what do you call it? They've got the big pizza places--. It's this PepsiCo. It's a whole empire. Anyway, they were serious about looking into canola, and they couldn't find enough suppliers to make it worth their while to go out and really push and publicize that they had this better oil they were using. They say they had a guy--.

NP: Lost opportunity.

JL: I say, they ran a guy on it a couple years, and he looked at contracting acreage and the different places in the States, acreages here, and talked to different companies. He couldn't come up with a big enough supply. That's a number of years back. Oh, I was also on a canola marketing committee too once.

NP: Oh, okay.

JL: Oh. [Laughs] And I wrote this up in a report, and it got stuck in the appendix because nobody else would agree with me on it. A couple of them kind of agreed with me, but they said, "Look, this is such a popular thing. Everybody knows canola is a big success. They're going to laugh if we come out with this that the Wheat Board could do this and this with it." Anyway. [Laughs]

NP: So that was through the Canola Association that the--?

JL: Oh, this was another government--.

NP: Oh, another government--.

JL: Government committee.

NP: So where would all these nuggets be filed? Department of Agriculture, Department of Trade? Do you have them in your file?

JL: Oh, yeah. I've got them all.

NP: Oh, good. So you'll make sure that we get a copy of them at some point?

JL: Oh, I don't have extra copies I don't think.

NP: No, but when the time--. Or the other thing is, we can actually scan them and return them to you.

JL: If you're going to set up a little library, I might give them to you someday. The whole works. I don't know.

NP: Good. We are hoping to. We are hoping to.

JL: I always thought of burning them. [Laughs]

NP: No, no! Please do not do that! Unfortunately, I'm afraid of all the stuff that gets tossed never to be found again. You know files get too full. "Who was this guy anyway?" And they just toss it out. Anyway. We are--.

JL: I could tell you. When I wasn't too long at the Wheat Board, I had a long evening discussion with a fellow I really respected a lot, and I still do. And I was trying to get him to come to the Wheat Board, and he said, "No." He said, "I started out as a poor farm boy, and I'm going to make some money and make a little reputation." [Laughs] He said, "You're just going to end up at the Wheat Board as a faceless wonder who never made any money." [Laughing]

NP: So did this person make his fame and fortune?

JL: Yeah.

NP: Oh, did he? Ah. His name will not be mentioned on tape?

JL: No, no.

NP: [Laughs] Well, unless there are any other little nuggets that you'd like to add to our history, I'd like to go on to ask just a few general questions. We have slightly under half an hour left.

**[1:00:16]**

JL: Well, I had one other assignment that I--.

NP: Ok.

JL: World Bank.

NP: Oh! Let me just move this a little closer. So tell me how you got involved with the World Bank and what you did there. When was this, the World Bank?

JL: Well, the first time was shortly after I left the Wheat Board. Charlie Mayer was the minister, and he had been invited to a World Bank thing in Argentina, and he couldn't make it. A symposium of some sort. He asked me if I would go. So I did. It's a great country Argentina. You look at it and it's a beautiful farm country. I'd been there before. I had business and meetings with the Argentina Wheat Boards and Board of Trade and all those people. Anyway, they were having this conference, or I don't know. How to make their grain handling and things more efficient and all this, so this is why Mr. Mayer asked me to take it over for him. I went and had these meetings. And the Argentinians wanted to have a separate meeting one morning with their efficiency committee or something. And so I said, "Well, I've got something coming up at noon and the afternoons are full." "Okay, we'll meet about 8:00 tomorrow morning." Well, nobody meets at 8:00 in the morning. [Laughing] Finally, I offered them 10:30 or 11:00, I forget. And at that time, I think two were there out of about eight. And just about the time I was ready to leave, the rest of them showed up. I think that's the way to live, that mañana style of life. But you can't--. It's a tough way to run a railroad, but anyway. That was just a very brief--. That was the exposure to some of the World Bank people, I guess. Then later--.

NP: What is their impact on the grain industry?

JL: Oh, well grain is a very minor thing in their thing, but they get involved in all of these economies, trying to help them develop and make changes or they won't lend them money. Oh, yeah.

NP: Ah. Such as this Argentinian efficiency stint.

JL: Yeah. There was supposed to be some--. They had made some application, I guess, to the World Bank for some kind of developmental fund for grain transportation. So I don't know. Anyway, then later after this other committee of Murray's, then I got approached by them to go to Russia. This was when Gorbachev was--. Was Gorbachev out already at that time? They'd been in this big transition, and they were trying to move to an open market. The World Bank was in there, and they had big questions about all the wastage there was in the system, and there was some big problems and all this. So, yeah. I was there for about two months, I guess, travelling in the country and meeting with different groups. They have a tremendous rail line. They have tremendous terminals, and they have very good hopper cars. And I couldn't understand this big wastage factor they always had over there. They said they produced these big crops, but then--. It was quite an experience.

I think they were over-built, but they didn't trust farm storage, and so they thought they had to grab everything at harvest time, put the army in there and everybody else. People shouldn't have been trying to handle grain or anything, but they tried to rush it in and get it into the terminals by the cities as fast as they could, so they knew they had it sewed up. And then if they couldn't get enough, then they would import. To me--.

NP: When you say they didn't trust storage, they felt it would shrink?

JL: On the farm. They didn't trust it on the farm.

NP: Or just the quality of the storage or where it might end up if it didn't get out?

JL: They just didn't think they would ever see it, I guess.

NP: Ah, okay.

JL: They weren't--. Once they got it into their terminals and that, they handled it pretty well, and the storage standards were pretty good on the grain. They copied the Grain Commission's mainly. Yeah, I think to a large extent the Grain Commission has a tremendous reputation around the world—its quality standards and such, and a very important part of this whole Canadian wheat marketing structure. I'd say it's at least as important as the Wheat Board has ever been in that. Oh, no. They were--.

**[1:05:19]**

NP: Were the terminals similar to ours? They looked like ours?

JL: Oh, yeah. Yes. Yeah, big cement silos and things like this. I'd say they tried to have them close to the cities and get as much food as they could. I was trying to make a point with them that they need farm storage and maybe pay them something and have them deliver as you need it during the year rather than trying to rush it all in in a couple of months. And then with these army trucks, you're going to get wastage and you're going to get all this and that. I met the top group. They were a very good bunch of people, and they were the ones who actually the buying export club, their orders when they could buy or when they could sell grain. They were the overalls responsible for this grain supply in all of Russia. There were about eight or ten guys, and it reminded me of some of the early guys I used to know on the Wheat Board when I first met them. Very responsible, very serious fellows about their job. And I had a really good afternoon with them. And the one World Bank guy was sitting in with me—he was from India—and he said, "I never heard them talk so openly before." He said. I don't know. Well, they, through the export club, they had a certain amount of respect for the Wheat Board, and I think I was talking a language they understood.

But I was trying to tell them if they could just bring it in from the farms when they needed it rather than having all this extra--. They couldn't understand a quota. To them, a quota was an order. You bring in the grain. And to have a quota that you open and then the farmers bring it in, how can you rely on that, you know? We've got to be responsible for having this food, you know?

NP: Well and making it worth the farmers while to hold it too, so I mean the whole system, yeah.

JL: Yes.

NP: Well, and when you consider the length of time it took the Wheat Board to develop its system, which was running quite smoothly, but that was between the period of '45 and, what, '85? '95 before it really--.

JL: Yeah, 30 or--.

NP: Before it was running and worked the kinks out of it. Hm.

JL: But anyway, they were--.

NP: So did they make changes? Did you follow up on--?

JL: Well, they didn't follow the line that I recommended, but they made changes all right. I'd be interested to come back now and see where they are. They've done some things that have changed because they've started exporting even some, in particular the Ukraine.

NP: So you wrote a report for the World Bank then for that?

JL: Mmhmm. Mmhmm.

NP: So that also is in your collection?

JL: That never was a public paper though.

NP: Yeah.

JL: That was never a public one. I had suggested they come in and get somebody like the Wheat Pool or some of the other big international houses to come in there. Well, they could invite them into their country on some sort of a long-term agreement and gradually show them how to run a system, but they never quite bought into that.

NP: No.

JL: Because I think they had ideas about how they could chop up the system for their own advantage a certain some of them.  
[Laughs]

NP: Yes.

JL: And they were being taught they were supposed to be capitalists, so.

NP: That was their definition of it.

JL: I know one day a couple of them asked if I would go to lunch with them, and they said World Bank people wanted to do a big survey. They turned the position of stocks and movements and all this and that. And the guy said, “Under our old system, we’ve got all these numbers on our computers now. We don’t have to make surveys. We’ve got all the actual numbers. Well, what should we do with it, you know? Should we tell these guys that, or is there a way we can sell this to them?” [Laughing]

NP: Yeah.

JL: A good question.

NP: A good question.

JL: Yeah. We’re supposed to be capitalists now!

NP: Yeah. And that was a lot of resources putting together that information.

JL: Why go through all this business and then try to do it with just huge surveys, which we wouldn’t have much confidence in anyways.

NP: Yeah. [Laughing] I think this is fitting to move onto some general questions because as I recall, when you first started out and you were doing that summer project at USDA [United States Department of Agriculture] you were suspicious a little bit about some of the statistics that were-- . [Laughing]

**[1:10:17]**

JL: Oh, the numbers. Well, yeah. Yeah, well, you know, you always have to be a little suspicious of statistics, but you also have to know a lot of them so you can have things in proportion and see the context.

NP: I’m going to ask you a couple of wrapup questions, and one is, as you think back on all of the stuff that you have done over your career—which is quite amazing—could you pick one that you were most proud of? It could be the smallest thing, or it could be sort of an amalgamation of all the things. I don’t know.

JL: The smallest thing?

NP: Well, no.

JL: Well, a thing that's very small gives me great pleasure when I see these logos on these grain cars. My friend and I designed that. Yeah. I wrote a little report on that one. I like to say we did it over a cup of coffee. No, we'd hired Dave Suderman to come in and be our first PR or information officer. We never had one before, and we wanted to put out a newsletter on a regular basis and all this. And one of the first things he said was we needed to have a logo or a brand, you know, that people would recognize. He made this pitch to me. I was the executive assistant to the board at that time. He made this pitch to me, and I said, "Well, Dave, I know that the CN has recently paid guys \$50,000 to design that wiggly worm." That's what we used to jokingly call it. "50,000 bucks," I said. "I can't go to the board and ask them for \$50,000 of farmers' money to design a logo." He said to me, "Logos aren't worth that much."

Well, he still thought we needed a logo, so he started diddling with it himself. And anyway, one day he asked me to go to coffee with him and then got out a serviette, and he sketched out his idea, which was sort of like that. And I said, "Hang on, that's some possibilities, but I know the Australians have recently adopted a new one and it's very similar to that." I said, "I don't think that will do." I said, "On the front of our building on the cornerstone, we have a head of wheat sort of like this one here." And he said, "Oh, that's too much. That's too complicated. That's too busy. How about if we just add a couple more blooms up here? Look similar now?" "Ok, yes." And then I said, "Why don't we put the two lines in the middle for the beard." And that basically was it. He took it to an artist friend of his and he designed it. And then it got used on the Board's letterheads and on our *Grain Matters*, the publication we put out. Then Otto Lang grabbed onto it and put it on his stationary as minister responsible for the Wheat Board. Then when they started buying hopper cars, they threw it on there, which we were glad to see.

NP: So you could have made your fortune as a graphic artist!

JL: My--. No. This is more Dave's than mine. Dave was the biggest part of this. But my grandkids say, "There's grandpa's cars," when they see those. [Laughs] It's something that gives me a kick that. Few years later one time when I asked the existing board—I was on the board at that time then—if they went and gave us a letter formally recognizing our role in creating this, and they got a little concerned. And I think they thought we were trying to get some money out of them [Laughing] So they gave it to our legal people, Henry Monk and his assistant, and they came back with a paper which they wanted us to sign, which we did. It just said--. Well, it recognized us as the designers, but that this had been done as part of our duties and there was no financial thing expected or such and such. But we were entitled to be the honorary holders of the copyright. And we copyrighted it, and they recognized us as the honorary copyright.

NP: For the historical, yeah.

JL: Yeah. So we each got a letter about that.

NP: Great.

**[1:15:01]**

JL: So that was that. Then in the '90s after I was gone from there, they added the CWB at the bottom of it. So this is now what's used, but that was kind of a fun thing.

NP: We are hoping to get a centre established in Thunder Bay under the Parks Canada banner to recognize the importance of the development of the export grain trade in Canada's development. And the focus would be the history part of it, but also the intriguing science of the grain industry as well. If we were successful in accomplishing this—which is questionable, but—what pieces from your experience with the grain trade do you think really should be front and centre recognized in a centre such as that?

JL: Hm.

NP: We're hoping as well to attach it to a terminal elevator to preserve one of those as well as an iconic symbol.

JL: Well, one of the big things to me is this quality control in Canada. That means you're marketing a product, not a commodity. Then with the Wheat Board having the monopoly supply of it in large quantities, and you could sell in bulk by shiploads and all this of consistent quality stuff. This was the big thing for Canada. I'd say the Grain Commission and the plant breeders, all of them as equal to Marquis as designation or standard they set for new varieties, controlling it, starting from there. And they kept out the--. Oh, back in the '50s and '60s there were all these, what do you call, short dwarf varieties came out and were supposed to be higher yielding. And the US jumped into those, and that sort of jumbled up all their quality, and they lost their consistency. So you had to look at it carload—or not even carload—but almost truckload by truckload and test it, then know how it performed and millers and bakers knew how to use it. But that was really the backbone of that export system, I think, and then the reliability over the years of both the Wheat Board and Grain Commission in standing behind and dealing with customers as they had problems, telling them in advance what new things were coming with each crop. You might have to vary--. You had meetings with, well, big millers and bakers in Japan and Europe, telling them what certain variations might be coming with the new crop and all this. But that would be very slight and that would be adjusted. Oh, there was great, I think, service.

Well, the other one I'm very pleased with is the CIGI [Canadian International Grains Institute]. That has also proven to be a great thing, better than I had imagined when we started. That was really very good. And as people from around the world could come there and we'd have people in lecturing, not only on the Wheat Board and Canadian ways, but on the open market side of things. And the private grain companies here in Winnipeg sent their guys to give talks, and the railways. Everything was concentrated here in Winnipeg. We could draw people in very quickly. So that quickly caught on around the world, and all the young executives wanted to get in on this course. [Laughs] I'd say it really--. And once you get to know people personally, and they understand the Canadian system better, it was just a great educational thing as well as a very big PR kind of a thing too as far as that thing goes. Yeah.

NP: This may be rather a negative way to—well, it depends on your answer, I guess—a negative way to end the interview, but those things that you mentioned certainly have come forward in a majority of the interviews that we've conducted with the Winnipeg people. I think the people working in the trade, let's say, at Thunder Bay where we've also done a fair number of interviews, I don't think they realized how important what they were doing was to the success. But these also strike me as being the elements that are most likely to disappear in the next ten years, and if so, what's the future of the grain trade?

**[1:20:15]**

JL: Well, it's not nearly as important to the overall Canadian economy as it used to be. See, in the olden days, it was such an important segment of it that nobody wanted to mess it up too badly or do things. But I would hope everybody realizes this quality control thing is important and they continue with that. There's talks about loosening it up, this and that, and reducing the amount of inspections here and there, but I think that would be a very backwards step. But of course, now with the bigger acreages in canola and also with the feed grain exports we've had, there isn't the dependence on just wheat as it was. It may be with computers and that now we can connect individual farmers almost with overseas buyers almost, and maybe they can get their assurances of quality that way. There could be lots of changes coming. But it's still a very good system, and I don't see it disappearing too quickly.

NP: Well, it will be interesting to watch, won't it?

JL: Yes, it will be. It's just the grain business. It's not religion. It can change. [Laughing] Some people out here take it as religion, you know? And they don't want to discuss facts, eh? [Laughing] They've got their mind made up one way or another and that's that.

NP: Yes, which has its long-term disadvantages for any organization. So have you had a chance to say what you'd like to say? Have I asked the questions that allowed you to say what you wanted to say or is there—in the couple minutes remaining—is there anything you'd like to add?

JL: Oh. [Laughs] [**Papers shuffling**]

NP: Oh, my goodness! Okay. Well, I--.

JL: I suggested to the Wheat Board, they should let some of us go back into their files and correspondence and get dates and write up reports on a lot of these things that we were involved in in some detail. But I never had a positive response on that yet.

NP: Let me just officially close off the interview here by thanking you so much for the time that you've spent. I really appreciate it, and you've shown me quite a far different perspective than a lot of our other interviewees—narrators as we've officially called them—and I particularly appreciated your dual experience with the Canadian system and American and broad worldview. So thank you very much.

JL: Well, I guess I take sort of a macro view of everything rather than the micro. That's why at the Board I was involved in all aspects. In some ways I was a troubleshooter. If there was a problem in this area or that, I'd be shunted over there for a while, and I liked that. It was never a dull moment. There were lots of little adrenaline rushes every day.

NP: Great. Thanks again.

JL: Yes. You're welcome.

**End of interview.**