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Company Affiliations: Canadian Wheat Board (CWB), Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR)

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Interviewer: Mary Mitchell (MM)

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Summary: In this two-part interview, former director of information and grain marketer for the Canadian Wheat Board David Suderman discusses his career in the Canadian grain industry and representing the trade around the world. In part one, Suderman recounts his early journalism career and brief year in the CPR's public relations department before becoming the CWB's first director of information in charge of disseminating Wheat Board news and policy to farmers. He describes setting up farmer meetings and advisory committee meetings as a major role. Suderman then moved into the market development division, and he explains his responsibility of working with the Canadian Grain Commission, Grain Research Lab, Canadian International Grains Institute, and plant breeders to develop grain varieties for end-use customers' needs. Throughout the interview, he tells stories of visiting potential customers overseas, including to Korea, North Africa, Japan, Thailand, and Egypt. He explains Canada's reputation for quality and the use of Canadian high-quality wheat for blends in international milling, and he praises Canada's quality- and varietal-control systems for grain. Other topics discussed include working under various Chief Commissioners, predictions about the future of grain marketing without the CWB, the CWB's historical control of all grain transportation, the introduction of block shipping and hopper cars to improve rail movements, and a brief history of the CWB's work during and after WWII. In part two, Suderman adds stories of overseas marketing travels to Iraq and China.

Keywords: Canadian Wheat Board (CWB); Grain marketing; International trade; Grain export destinations; Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR); Block shipping; Journalism; Grain transportation—rail; Farmer meetings; CWB advisory committee; Canadian Grain Commission (CGC); CGC Grain Research Lab; Canadian International Grains Institute (CIGI); Grain varieties; Grain research; Plant breeding; Grain variety registration; Grain transportation—ships; Bill McNamara; C. D. Howe; World War II; Wartime industry; Hopper cars; South Korea; Morocco; Algeria; Japan; Thailand; Egypt; China; Iraq

Audio Part One

Time, Speaker, Narrative

MM: It's November 26, 2011, and we are here in Carman, Manitoba, with David Suderman. I am Mary Mitchell and Nancy Perozzo is accompanying. David, why don't we start by giving us your full name and describe how your career began.

DS: David Suderman, originally born and raised in Winkler, Manitoba, on a dairy farm. I always wanted to be a journalist as far back as I can remember. After high school, I got a job with the *Manitoba Free Press* as a copyboy which was a fancy name for a simple messenger boy and that's how it started. I worked there for three years and found that the *Free Press* was one of the cheapest organizations going and that I would never make a reasonable income if I stayed there, so I decided I had better go back to university.

After university, I got a job as editor of my hometown newspaper. I was young, full of myself, and I decided what a small-town newspaper needed was a good reporter, so I would report things that most people would rather report that I didn't report. [Laughs] So I lasted there a year. I realized that there were a couple of big advertisers who were not in favour of me continuing there, so I wrote and got a job with the *Family Herald* in Montreal. This is a national farm magazine. It is probably beyond you.

MM: I remember it as a child.

DS: Yes. I worked there for just over 10 years when the owners there decided that they would terminate the publication of the magazine. We were not privy to their account number, but they always told us that they didn't make enough money, which is probably true. Anyway, at that point, we had a circulation of 460,000. Probably the largest magazine in the country. I thought we were doing very well. I got to work one morning, and at 9:30 I didn't have a job.

So, I worked for a short time then at CPR at their head office in their public relations department. But as part of that job, I became a member of the committee that was involved in establishing the block shipping system with the Canadian Wheat Board. The whole grain industry got together. It was in that sense that I became associated with people from the Wheat Board.

MM: What year would that be?

DS: That would be in late 1968 or early 1969. As a result of that association, I was asked by a representative of the Wheat Board to draw up a proposal or a plan for an information department for the Canadian Wheat Board. They had not such a thing here before, and they thought they needed it. I had first experience knowing that they desperately needed it, because I was a journalist, and part of my beat was to cover the Wheat Board and western Canada because we were published nationally, so nationally that is what we did.

Anyway, I will never forget one experience, and the Wheat Board was going to die anyways. I'm not going to bother covering it up. I had made appointments at the Wheat Board to talk to quite a few people, and when I got there, I was suddenly restricted to one. He was a nice guy, but he was embarrassed, and I went in after, and I was pretty angry. They had an indoor garage on the main floor, so I went and paced off how many cars there were. I counted how many cars there were and checked out what the leasing rates were in that area. And I figured it out how much it cost farmers to park a car there. [Laughs] This is the story I heard. I don't know if it is true or not. It is a nice story. Anyway, Chief McNamara, who I really respect, was the Chief Commissioner. I don't know what kind of language he used, but I think I probably would have heard him say, "If he is going to write that kind of stuff, we had better hire him and get him out of the way."

MM: So you published an article about the cost of what it cost the farmers to park their cars and the staff cars?

DS: Yes, and their fancy offices and that kind of stuff.

MM: So that is how you came to be hired by the Wheat Board?

DS: That's right. For most of the years that I worked at the Wheat Board, if they offered me a parking spot, I always refused it. [Laughs] Ah, fun and games. Anyways that is how I started with the Wheat Board.

MM: Okay.

DS: I still remember the first day I was there. I was given an office on the eighth floor in the back of the building. It was a very nice office, sitting there on my first day. Now what the heck do I do now? But it evolved slowly and eventually it became a very important part of the Board.

MM: So your first job was Director of Information?

DS: Director of Information. Yes, we got a small staff. We started things like a newsletter for farmers. We started our district meetings, where we had an advisory committee at the time, and there were 11 districts across western Canada. So we would have at least 11 meetings and one at each advisory committee. The advisory committee member would be chair, and he would select the location, pick the hall, and this kind of thing.

The first series of meetings were in 1976. It was a very tough year. Those were very tough years in the grain business. The international trade was restricted. Prices were controlled internationally as part of the International Wheat Agreement and also agreements between Canada and United States. Prices then, and we may have heard this from other people who were directly involved, virtually were set every day after the discussion of the officials in Washington because they would set their export subsidy every day. And the actual subsidy determined the international price. So if the Wheat Board wanted to market anything, they had to compete with that. So that is how prices were established at that time. Very rigid system.

MM: So the district meetings were an opportunity to talk with farmers?

DS: Talk to farmers is what it was all about. Because it was difficult years, there were a lot of angry farmers out there at that time. Delivery quotas were very low. So, they were unhappy, which was not surprising at all. The attendance was just enormous, far more than anybody expected. The smallest meeting I think we had 500. We had about 1,500 to 1,700 in Lethbridge. The halls were never big enough, so they were jammed and the sound systems, which were locally owned, were never adequate. So at some places, the fuses would just blow. So I would be running around putting in new fuses in. But it worked. I think it eased and it was also the time when I think it was the year when the advisory committee members were first elected.

MM: Who were the advisory committee members?

DS: They were farmers from the areas that would be elected by western Canada, divided into 11 districts and each district would have an advisory committee member who was elected by permit holders in those districts.

MM: So they were farmer based?

DS: Yeah, oh yeah, entirely.

MM: So, who else would have attended these district meetings with you?

DS: Oh, the Wheat Board officials. I was the organizer there. I was not the speaker. We would always have a commissioner, a member of the Board. That first year we had two members of the Board that were present and senior staff, and the Director of Transportation, marketing guys and people like that would always be there, making presentations.

MM: Who were some of the other people on staff at that time?

DS: Well, the board at that time was Bill McNamara. No pardon me, Bill McNamara was no longer there. He retired, or he was appointed to the Senate two years after I started at the Board in 1970. And at that time, Gerry Vogel was then the Chief Commissioner. Assistant Chief Commissioner was Larry Kristjanson and Jim Leibfried, Bob Esdale and [inaudible]. Those were the five. Where am I?

MM: Well, you are good. Let's go back a little bit to that Mr. McNamara. Can you tell us a little bit more about him?

DS: He was a tough guy and he always said he ran a one-man show. He had tremendous knowledge and a tremendous memory. He could remember details that always surprised me. But he had quite a remarkable history. He had joined the Board. I can't remember. I have his biography. I wrote it, so I should know. He was with the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and then was appointed to the Board in the late '30s, I think. I am not sure.

During the war, the food supplies had to be controlled and managed. All food supplies. So, wheat grain was a very important international commodity. So, he was basically sent to Washington to head up a commission, which would control grain supplies to the Allied countries. And they would allocate grain supplies. This was particularly important after the war. There was tremendous shortages and tremendous starvation in Europe. And they would allocate the feed grains to particular countries.

He got to be known as "Bill Mac". That is where his nickname started was Bill Mac. That is where the chief of the grain business in the world at that time. I guess he gained a lot of respect because of his managerial abilities and his fairness. He didn't play any favourites or anything like that, although Britain always got their better share or fair share. And he was with the Wheat Board for, I think, 18 years and as chief. I am not sure how long—15 years, I am guessing.

MM: Would that have been surprising in that era?

DS: Board members were appointed by the government, by Cabinet.

MM: Yes.

DS: And they were there on the basis of good behaviour. There were two appointments—you were probably not aware of—two kinds of appointments: good behaviour and at pleasure, at pleasure of the Grain Commissioner. They are political appointments, and when governments would change, they would change. If they were mismanaged, Cabinet has to approve that and have evidence of it and they have to have an Order in the Council indicating that.

I don't know if you were around when the Andrew Coyne Affair, Andrew Coyne [sic] was then Governor of the Bank of Canada and John Diefenbaker—what was his finance minister?—they didn't approve of him, and they wanted him moved. There was a heck of a row when he tried to get legislation through to fire him. This wasn't easy to do, which is one of the problems here now because when they amended the Wheat Board Act recently, they changed it from good-behaviour appointments to at-pleasure appointments. That makes a huge difference in the way an organization is run.

MM: When did that happen?

DS: The last piece of legislation that was changed by Ralph Goodale when he was minister. So that would have been in probably in the early--. [...*audio skips*] I argued against it at the time, but those people didn't understand what the difference meant. It was a huge difference. The minister suddenly has power that he didn't otherwise have. So that is why the Grain Commission is virtually decimated now. It doesn't have the authority and the power it used to have. I think it is a terrible shame. It is undermining our whole quality control system, and that is the basis on which Canada competed in the world. It's like if Toyota and Honda said, "Stop making good cars!"

It's the same damn procedure and process, and it angers me like heck that this government does not understand such simple things as quality control. It's only if there is a complaint. Well maybe when vessels are loaded there is still loading in terms of segregating and knowing what is in the terminal. The company determines that. And it used to be that the Wheat Board knew exactly how many tonnes, what grade of wheat there were and what protein levels there were in particular terminals. And it was able to manage loading and controlling much better that way. But of course, the companies don't have much power that way, so they want the other thing. They have been lobbying for, even in my day when I was involved, they lobbied governments strenuously to have off-loading, in-loading, or grading at the terminal. When cars are unloaded, they are graded and binned accordingly. So that has been changed and that and has removed a very important control in the whole quality control system.

MM: Back on your career path, and you started with--?

DS: I got diverted there, didn't I?

MM: That's good that you got diverted. That was great!

DS: Did I sign that release form yet? No. [Laughs]

MM: As the Director of Information?

DS: Yes.

MM: Then where did you go from there?

DS: I was asked to head up the Marketing Development Department. That was in 1982.

MM: So you worked in the Information Section for 12 years?

DS: That's right. And I started there. I had had some contact, understanding of what the functions of that department were. The job for the most part, well, part of it was customer relations. The job for the most part would be to seek out or expand markets in countries that were not usual buyers. Part of the job task would be to understand country requirements, what their needs were and for that you needed to know the end products they had.

MM: So can you give us some examples of that?

DS: Oh, French breads in Latin America, [inaudible] flat breads in the Middle East, and pan breads in Asia and noodles. Noodles are huge in Asia—far more important than pan breads. So each country has breads that largely developed on the basis of the kinds of grains they grew themselves. I think that is a given, except in Asia where the pan breads, white pan breads were really introduced and adopted to North Americans standards for pan breads, except that they always wanted their breads whiter than anything we have here. Oh yeah, the Japanese pan breads, the quality of them are considerably superior to the pan breads we have in Canada because they took care. Even in Korea, we would take them to bakers here sometimes and show them how the Canadian bakery worked, and it would be embarrassing to see the kind of quality that was being produced here. And they would notice. They were very quality conscious.

And to do that we needed a lot of technical analysis of their quality requirements. You don't do that simply by duplicating baking their bread here. You have to send people over into their countries to work in their labs and in their bakeries and their mills. We used Canadian Grain Commission, mainly grain research people for that, to carry out that function. We would work as teams, part of teams. And the Canadian International Institute would also be involved. They would come in at a more commercial, when we at more commercial operation. But initially and originally, we would have GRL [Grain Research Laboratory] people to do the work.

They would bring samples back and then do tests in their own labs to analyze the kind of--. Especially the blending. I mean in those countries, they all blended, with the possible exception of the Japanese. I am not that familiar with Japanese because they are an

existing market. They were an existing market done by negotiations. Therefore, our market development people would be wasting their time there. We are not going to develop any markets there because the market was basically shared between Canada, United States, and Australia. So, there was not much point there, and literally a centrally controlled country because there the government decided how much they were going to import and how that grain was going to be allocated among their mills. They didn't want any outside agency to influence that. And they certainly did not want us to go and talk to their millers or end users because these guys might get some idea as to how they would like to improve their quality and then complain to the government that they were not getting the right stuff.

The government didn't appreciate those kinds of interferences. So, we never went to those countries, except to maybe carry on a program through the Institute and invite them over and gladhand them and show them how the Canadian system worked. That is about as far as we would go in terms of market development. That is more customer relations than anything. It would keep the central agencies happy because they could draft members to come to Canada or some of their millers to come to Canada. It is nice to give gifts to people because there was no cost to them. All costs were paid for by the Institute. So, there were no costs to them—just a jolly old trip.

MM: Okay, so the institute being the Canadian International Grains Institute?

DS: Canadian International Grains Institute, managed jointly by the Wheat Board and the Canadian Grain Commission. There was also a guy from the Grains Group there in Ottawa there. Towards the end, I think the Wheat Board paid for all Institute costs as part of our marketing development costs.

MM: So what countries did you do most of your market development work?

DS: We did a lot in Korea, South Korea, Malaysian countries, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines. In South America would be Brazil and Chile. The Arab Gulf countries including Egypt and Kuwait, Oman. Well, we did some in Saudi Arabia, but never seriously, particularly when we introduced this new variety each with a 20 high-yielding, semi-dwarf wheat which had been developed. I can't remember which research station, probably Swift Current. I am not sure. Anyway, it was basically two tasks. To find out how suitable this wheat was for end uses in certain countries, mainly French breads and flat breads. It was a strong gluten, so it wouldn't have worked very well for noodles, although some Southeast Asian countries imported it and used it 100 percent for noodles. [Laughs]

And I don't know if that was a case of bad management. They didn't buy the right stuff at the right time. Anyway, those were the kinds of things we did. One of the things I found were very important in this work probably better in South Korea than anything.

We were competing very strongly against the Americans. There was a lot of American loyalty in South Korea because of the Korea War. Canada, they always recognized what a contribution Canada made, but most of the muscle came from United States and most of the money came from the United States. Koreans are not dumb. They are not going to offend that kind of an ally. So it took a lot of hard work to break into their wheat business. They had about 11 mills across the country, and they made high quality pan bread, and they had a lot of small bakers, but most of the baking was done by large bakeries.

So, we worked again with Ken Preston, who was the head of the baking lab in GRL, and I had Paul Chen with me who was then the noodle man in the Institute. Very knowledgeable and had a very good reputation in most Asian countries. Henry Fast was there, too. He was the chief of the Inspection Division. We always worked closely with the Inspection Division, and I got to know Henry very well.

MM: You worked closed with the Inspection Division, so you could guarantee quality?

DS: Yeah. Also, so that they can understand the kind of quality that was required because they had a quality analysis too on a visual basis. Anyway, we worked much closely with several of the mills there. We sent container shipments of sample wheats, different kinds of wheat, to different mills. We would get them to use it and show and use it in different blends that they had. Then also follow it to the end users, the bakeries, and occasionally to the noodle makers.

We had a significant meeting with Samlip, which was their biggest bakery. And they were using mostly American dark northern springs and western hard winter wheats. They were using the U.S. sponge and dough system, which is a fairly slow baking process. It takes about seven hours to produce a loaf. Because Canadian wheat is not as nearly as strong—the Red Spring wheat, gluten strength is quite a bit less—you can do it faster. The Canadian fast, Canadian system or something. There is a name for it, anyway. It has Canadian in it. Canadian baking method. The head of their lab said at one point at our meeting said, "I wish somebody would show us how to shorten our baking process."

MM: And this was in South Korea?

DS: This was in Seoul, yes.

MM: Yes.

DS: And nobody else had heard that. So when we came back to our hotel, "Did you guys hear what he said?" He said, "Well I wish somebody would show us how to shorten our baking process." "We could do that, couldn't we?" So we went back and made a

proposal that they come over and send their whole team over and work with the Grain Commission and Institute. I think they were here for six weeks. They went back. We sent a team back then because they had to make some adjustments in their plant. I can't remember what they all were, but there was a bit of an investment. But eventually they were persuaded to change their plant over to the Canadian Short Baking System, which meant that they now had to buy Canadian wheat, which meant that the mills that serviced them had to buy Canadian wheat and use flour made from Canadian wheat. It worked quite well until we ran short of high protein wheat. [Laughing] What a heck of a thing to happen. Here we are we had spent maybe eight years in trying to develop that country, and then the year that we finally make a breakthrough, we have a shortage of high protein wheat.

MM: And why?

DS: We can't supply their full wheat requirements.

MM: Why and what was the cause of the shortage?

DS: The weather conditions?

MM: Yes.

DS: Yes, the weather conditions.

MM: Do you remember what year that was?

DS: No, I don't. It would have been--.

MM: The mid, late '80s?

DS: The late '80s.

MM: The late '80s?

DS: Yeah, Definitely the late '80s. Maybe even the early '90s. I am not sure, yeah.

MM: So that was some of the path you took to doing the marketing through creating a market by the research?

DS: We always came with the idea that there are probably two reasons why mills buy Canadian wheat. Some of those mills buy Canadian wheat because they want to buy the best. Most of those mills are individually owned, and their owners have huge egos. They will go over to Switzerland and buy the best milling equipment in the world, have it installed, and then they can then invite their competitors and friends in to tour their mills. They can show off their expensive equipment. For that kind of equipment, they seem to think they need the best wheat in the world, too.

MM: And you could provide it?

DS: We could provide it. And that was one reason. And the other reason is that if you knew how to do it, you could show them how to increase their profits or improve their quality of their products buying Canadian wheat. Now you are talking now about mills that never use 100 percent of one kind of wheat. They always blend. Presumably that is to try and reduce their gristing costs. I know a couple of millers in Malaysia who once told me that they buy Canadian wheat first. They will book it, and they will have it delivery guaranteed. Now they know what kind of wheat they are going to get because with Canadian wheat they always know what kind of wheat they get, and then they will shop around for other cheaper wheats to use for blending purposes. Their laboratory people, most of them are very knowledgeable. They probably have more knowledge about the quality of different wheats from around the world than most Canadian labs do because Canadian labs only use Canadian wheat. They don't use different kinds of wheat.

MM: Going back, you had established the market in Korea and then you had a shortage. How did you resolve that issue?

DS: Well, we had to short supply them.

MM: Yes.

DS: So our whole market development effort had to be delayed.

MM: Did that have a long-term impact?

DS: Well, you know I haven't followed it, but I am sure it did. I am sure it did.

MM: Okay.

DS: Because they had invested quite a bit of money. Over \$100,000 to make the transition.

MM: That is a lot of money.

DS: Oh, a lot of money.

MM: In that period. Okay.

DS: But--. I am trying to decide if I should say this. [Laughs] There are amusing sidelights to a lot of things that happened. Anyways, I got to working with this guy who was the head of their lab, and as a result of all of this activity, he got promoted. He got promoted over to the director level, which was a huge leap. What it meant was that he now suddenly had a company car and a chauffeur. Can you imagine what that means to the status of a man, in his own society? It is enormous! We don't even know. We have no understanding of that. Also, he now could afford a mistress. [Laughs] Yeah, that was funny. He quite openly told me about it. He was so proud of it. I got a big kick out of it.

MM: So, you came to know many of the people on a personal level?

DS: Oh yeah.

MM: Yes. Now you also talked about the Middle East. The Arab Gulf countries. What about work there?

DS: We were trying to introduce HY320 into that market.

MM: What is that?

DS: That is the semi-dwarf.

MM: That is the semi-dwarf?

DS: The semi-dwarf. It has very strong gluten, but it does not have very high protein content, partly because of a high yielding and the way it was developed. It was the first high yielding wheat that had been developed in Canada. Up until that point the varieties of so-called semi-dwarfs had all being smuggled in from the US. [Laughs]

MM: Smuggled in?

DS: The seed was smuggled in, of course.

MM: Oh, okay.

DS: Oh yeah, because it was not registered here, and therefore you couldn't officially sell, market, seed for those varieties in Canada. That is part of the quality control system. You start right with the kind of seed you plant. So a long time ago, long before I was around, they had developed this whole quality control system in which varieties had to meet certain specifications, especially red spring wheat. If it didn't equal in quality Marquis wheat, it would not, and could not, be registered. And that became the standard. I think right now there is a new standard. I can't remember what it is. It could be Manitou. It could be-- Not Manitou. What was the other big variety in my day? Anyway, it had to be equal to that in all respects including protein, milling quality, milling yield, flour yield, all that kind of stuff. It had to be equal to the successor to Marquis. I can't remember the name of it. It doesn't matter.

MM: But then there were some varieties--?

DS: There were some varieties that did not fall into-- Well, they introduced new classifications. Utility wheat was introduced by the Canadian Grain Commission, equal to red spring wheat. There was a winter wheat class, a soft wheat class, durum, of course. There are six different classes that were established then. The main ones had standards. In durum, it was Hercules and in red spring wheat it was the successor to Marquis, whatever that was. Anyways, isn't it funny how these names escape me? Manitou was--

MM: Was Red Fife earlier?

DS: That was the original.

MM: That was the original?

DS? That was the original, and Marquis was developed out of that. They were all developed at the Dominion Research Station in Winnipeg.

MM: Yes.

DS: Anyway, we were in the Middle East, and we were there to basically trying to develop a market for HY320 or wheats of that kind.

MM: Okay.

DS: Into countries like Morocco and the big one. Northern African country? Come on you guys, you should know this.

NP: Algeria?

DS: Algeria, yeah right. It had gone back to the early '70s when they started marketing durum wheat. They used it for the kind of end product they had there. They did not use it for pasta or anything like that. And then of course, the other parts of the Middle East, there were mainly flat breads. Well, you didn't need a hard red spring high or durum for that. An HY320 would serve perfectly for that, except that they had automated baking systems, and it did not work that well in automated bakery systems. A small bakery worked fine, but automated bakery systems were, I don' know, they make the adjustments in the mill to accommodate different qualities of wheat. The quality of bread made out of HY320 was inferior from, not as good as, the breads made from US winter wheats. So that was a bit of a problem.

MM: How did you work with the grain companies? Were you involved with interaction with the grain companies?

DS: No, not really no. I was with the end users and that was about it, understanding their needs.

MM: Okay.

DS: Understanding their needs were also important. Our job was to find out what the customer wanted and transmit these requirements to plant breeders, so that they could incorporate those qualities characteristics in their breeding program. And a lot of the white wheats that have come in since then, are a directly a result of that. Because of cutbacks, we should have check-off for wheat and barley through the Wheat Board. I worked with plant breeders and the Grain Commission to develop the terms for that and how it would work and then it was turned over to the Western Grain Research Foundation to manage it, operate it.

MM: So the check-off being that producers would help to pay?

DS: Would help the research for the development of its own varieties, and it was restricted to wheat and barley.

MM: Was that popular with the producers?

DS: No, no. Some of them did. It was a voluntary check-off, and the farmers had to write in to declare that they wanted their money back. It was mostly the larger farmers that wanted their money back.

MM: Oh, that is interesting.

DS: It was the large farmers that asked for their money back.

MM: Now were those some of the issues you were dealing with in some of these district meetings?

DS: Some of them, yeah, yeah. A company-developed variety like Roundup-Ready Canola, they would pay a lot of extra money, and they paid for research there. And the larger farmers are doing it, but they won't pay for varieties that are developed in Canada for their own use. And one of things that I find sad about it is that these companies develop these varieties for their own purposes. Monsanto does not develop Roundup Ready to be nice to farmers. Oh no, they want to sell the product, and they also want to sell Roundup.

MM: Yes.

DS: That is the main purpose. But you know you can build in disease resistance into a lot of these varieties like red spring wheat. It is 100 years of breeding in it, and it has a lot of disease resistance to avoid the use of chemicals. Farmers don't want to pay for that. Maybe we all do. Maybe you should delete that. [Laughs] It doesn't matter.

MM: Now, so did you retire from the marketing development role?

DS: Yes, I did, in 1995.

MM: What would you like people to know most about the work you did?

DS: I don't know. I thought we did an enormous amount of good work. And with the current debate that is going on, you know you almost have a feeling that people are saying all the work I did had no value, which is entirely wrong. Things are going to change very drastically. It may not be evident immediately, but it will be evident if you watch. So, I don't know. I can see us working, how

our competition work with--. How we competed with the Americans, especially the Americans. We could run circles around them. They had a US Wheat Association, which was their independent organization that did market development work.

One of the huge differences between them and us is that we could go, and we could develop a market, and we could make a commitment in terms of our supply. They could never do that. Their biggest problem was to try and curry favour among customers. What they would do, especially in a market like Korea, they would follow us around. Somebody would tell them that we were in town, and they would be in the lobby in our hotel when we left in the morning, and they would be there at night. And they would try and take us out for drinks in the bars. And we were told by one company at least, later, that they came back--. This particular company, the Wheat Association, just paid for several of their senior milling people to go to the United States for a course in Kansas City. And he says, "That is the last time we are ever going to pay for one of your people to go to Kansas City." And that is because they had decided to buy some of our wheat. But that is one form of competition, I guess. [Laughs]

MM: Yes.

DS: So we would see how we could work around them so easily. I mean there were other companies that were only interested in making the shipments, getting their profits on the shipments, and be done with it. They will not do market development work because they can't afford to. If one company does market development work, another company comes in, offers the wheat at 25 percent. Consumers, they are very money conscious. They want to save money. They will switch. It is as easy as that. And the same thing is going to happen here. Canadian companies are not going to do market development work.

MM: Will the competition from the American system be stronger?

DS: Oh, probably, but one of the things that you have to ask yourself is what is the point of the Institute now? Who is going to pay for it? The Wheat Board is not there. Who is going to pay for it? The companies? Not likely.

MM: You don't think so?

DS: If I were them, I wouldn't. Never. So those are the kinds of things that nobody thought about. Well, I am sure the people at Institute are well aware of it.

MM: Yes.

DS: But the person in Ottawa, Minister Ritz, probably doesn't even know for sure what the Institute is.

MM: So then you are proud of the work you did on behalf of Canada and Canadian farmers?

DS: I am very proud of the work we did. Yes.

MM: Surprise Nancy and me. [Laughs]

DS: Well, my job was--. I mean in some sense it was much broader. I did a lot of troubleshooting. I wrote a lot of speeches for board members. For a period there, I wrote most of them.

MM: That was during the time of the 12 years when you were in--?

DS: Oh no, after.

MM: Okay. Were there particular issues that you needed to address?

DS: A lot of them had to do with our quality-control system, varietal-control system. I probably had a better understanding how those systems worked than anyone else in the Wheat Board. I understood it a lot better than somebody at the Commission [inaudible]. Who some of them were, that wasn't all that significant. [Laughs] Anyway, I am retired. They can't do a damn thing to me. [Laughs]

That probably put me in touch with many different parts. It put me in touch with the farmers, too, because you had to understand what farmers were interested in to write the right speech. And you had to decide what had to be in the speech and that kind of stuff. So I can remember writing a speech about a variety of red spring wheat, hard northern red spring wheat in the United States. I can't remember the name either. But it was very good quality wheat. But it was different than our dark series, much stronger than ours--.

[Audio pauses]

MM: We have paused and are restarting.

DS: But it is indistinguishable from our wheat. So, it would have been graded as a Canada Western Red Spring wheat. Qualities grown had been significant. And we had estimates that there was enough seed that had been smuggled in to produce a million acres,

a million and a half acres. And Manitoba shipments would have changed the quality of the wheat coming out of Manitoba. So it was important that it not be registered.

And so, I drafted a speech for the Chief Commissioner to give to Manitoba and explained to them how our system works and used the Japanese car manufacture's concept of quality as a basis for it, and how it would change the nature of Canadian wheat. I gave them an example like in Britain they had by that time switched to this very fast-baking system and there was also a name for it. It was based on the use of Canadian wheat, the red spring wheat. You are changing Canadian red spring wheat, and all of their bakeries would be totally out of sync with the quality nature of the wheat. I mean it takes a lot longer to develop the dough, that kind of stuff. I don't think the bakeries would have tried to change. They would have just switched wheat imports.

MM: So did the seed growers listen?

DS: Yes, very carefully actually, and they passed a resolution if I remember correctly that this particular variety should not be registered.

MM: Yes.

DS: And consequently, it wasn't. That was kind of a negative victory, wasn't it? Yeah. Saying no to something. [Laughs]

MM: Yes. So were there any other parts of the work you did that might surprise us?

DS: Oh, I don't know. Yeah. One of the things that I thought was very important was that we have good wheat for Asian noodles. Australians were beating us on the Asian noodles because of their white wheats. There are other quality characteristics, but they were not as significant. But white wheat was. I mean, all Australian wheat is white. I thought it was important. And 40 percent of the wheat they use in the Asian countries is used for noodles. So I mean, they will use Canadian wheat for it only as a blend, not as principal carrying wheat. We encouraged plant breeders then to start prioritizing development of high-yielding white wheat. The Swift Current Research Station took that on very seriously, and they really devoted a lot of resources to development of that wheat. And several varieties have been registered since I retired, coming out of that program. So that was useful.

The other part that I thought was amusing, became amusing was Australia ran short of, had a poor crop. Japan basically had divided its barley imports between Canada and the United States, and Canadian barley was mainly used in the northern part of the country and Australian was used in the south. When the Australians ran short, they had to start moving, importing more Canadian barley and moving it into the southern feed mills and feed lots. Nutritionally, our barley was just as good, if not superior to, Australian

barley because it was higher protein. But in appearance it wasn't anywhere close because of the harvesting and growing conditions in Australia. Their barley was two-row, which means that it has nice plump kernels and even-quality kernels, and it is white or much whiter. Well, these cattle owners, beef owners—and it is high priced beef, you have no idea—they had these feedlots, and it's like race-horse owners in Canada. Oh yeah, they wanted to have special oats. Re-cleaned oats is what they call it. That is for the race-horse market. Humans decide what the animal eats, and of course, humans apply their own visual ideas of quality. So we got into a lot of trouble in Japan as a result. Our barley didn't look good.

So we sent a special mission. Henry Fast and I were on it and a couple of other feedlot people, some feed people. I made the mistake of trying to make light of it and I said, "Well, I hear cattle are colour blind". Oh, that comment was not appreciated. [Laughs] The funny thing about it was if you go to the feedlots, and you are looking at an animal and that animal is worth \$64,000 on the hoof-- I mean Japanese beef business is very different than ours. There you will pay \$75 to \$80 /kilogram for steak. [Laughs] That is the kind of quality they want. So you can understand why the owners, which are probably individuals who have contracted out the feeding of the animal to a feedlot—they do some of that here too—they want the best for their animals. There is nothing you can do about it. Our harvesting conditions, the weather is the weather. You can't do anything about it. So therefore, that is one thing we had to learn to live with.

Oh, we did encourage the development and the use of two-row barleys—which gives you the plump barleys, plumper kernels—a lot more partly because of US malting companies started to buy two-row malting barleys as well. There was a good reason to try and move two-rows a greater use of two-rows. Part of the problem with two-rows initially was that they didn't have the disease resistance of a six-row, therefore you really couldn't grow them in Manitoba. So the result of that was very little malting barley is grown here.

MM: You talked about the seed growers. Now what about the producers, did they respond to your needs as quickly as you felt they should?

DS: Oh yes. New varieties were adopted very, very quickly by the western Canadian farmers.

MM: Yes.

DS: They just want to try them out. And we never had any trouble. We used to start off-- To introduce varieties and we would have contract programs with producers. And these contracts would guarantee them deliveries, which at a time of low quotas, was very important—a big incentive—and it worked very well. Now the whole contract system that is out there now, is based on the one that we developed in the market development department.

[Audio pauses]

MM: I was going to ask you, you had mentioned about the research station at Swift Current and its role. What do you see as the future of the research stations?

DS: Well, they can't survive unless federal funding is stabilized or unless private companies start contributing funds. I don't see that happening. I think most companies would prefer to start their own research station. Like United Grain Growers, they started their own. Sask Pool had their own. United Grain Growers, which is now operated by Viterra, is just about 20 miles south of here, and they did their own varietal development. But most of it will then, varietal development, will be to Pioneer and places like that. I don't know how they can survive without federal funding, and I am sure that is being cut back.

MM: Now what about your marketing department's interactions with the carriers, both rail and water? Did you have much connection with them?

DS: I understood what they were doing and how it was being done. The interconnection was being done through the transportation department, which was part of the marketing division. I mean the Wheat Board, which a lot of people didn't understand, was really the coordinator of grain movement in western Canada. For a long time, it was all grain including canola and non-Board grains. I am not sure to what extent it is now. No, it changed quite a bit after a while, and they set-up another transportation authority for non-Board grains. The two organizations were very closely together.

The Wheat Board was the one that had made the main export commitments. They knew when the ships were going to come in, in what quantity and for what kind of wheat. So it was the only organization really that had the information needed to determine what kinds of grains should be moved forward. Unless you had that kind of information, companies and railways would move the grain that they would like to move forward. And often it wasn't the right grain. So you ended up with terminals full of grain that hadn't been sold.

So the rule came in with the block-shipping system when I came in 1970 was that you don't move stuff to the West Coast—especially to the West Coast—unless a sale has been made. And that applied to a degree also to canola. But I don't know the exact details on that. How that was exactly done, but that was the principle. Because in 1968, this is two years before I joined the Board, there was a very high moisture year—a wet year and harvesting year in western Canada. And there weren't very many dryers located in western Canada, certainly not on farms so all of the grain to get dried had to ship to a terminal where the dryers were. So they shipped carload after carload of high-moisture grain into the terminals, plugged the terminals, and we couldn't get the grain

that had been sold through. So the demurrage bill was enormous. [inaudible] ships waiting for grain we couldn't deliver. Well, that, you can't do that. So the whole industry got together to develop a new system. How it was done and it was called block-shipping system and essentially it was run by the Wheat Board because it had the information that was needed.

There were still some problems at some time. I can remember in the early years after the Board we had a tremendous number of snowstorms, blizzards in the mountains. The railways would be plugged. They couldn't get through. There was one occasion in Vancouver, and we couldn't get through for seven weeks. That was enormous. And it also meant ships were waiting and demurrage bills were running up to \$60 million dollars in a season. That was a big cost to farmers. So, that is why it was done to coordinate the movement. And even deliveries by farmers starting right from the farms, deliveries to elevators, and forward shipment to terminals was all coordinated in response to the sales program.

MM: Thus the term "block" that it was a system.

DS: Yes, a system. And I think western Canada was divided into, I can't remember how many blocks. It was sort of railway sections would become a block. Each block would have a coordinator and that is how it was structured.

MM: So was computerization an important part of that?

DS: It became an essential. Oh yeah. Eventually it came to the point where every delivery made by a farmer would be transmitted to the Wheat Board, and we would know exactly what grain had been delivered by farmers. That became part of your inventory management. It is as simple as that.

MM: Did that make your work easier?

DS: Wheat Board's work, for sure.

MM: And what about your work?

DS: The Sales Department would have been. They were involved in day-to-day sales and dealing with customers and their problems.

MM: Okay.

DS: Our job in market development was not to work with customers when there were any problems or anything like that. That was the sales department. If it was a quality issue, then the Grain Commission Inspection Division would be involved in dealing with customer complaints.

MM: Now would you like to just summarize what your sense of the role you and the Canadian Wheat Board played in Canada's success as an international grain trader?

DS: Oh. That is a big question! I was just a little part of it. The Wheat Board as a whole was--. I think the central marketing was responsible for the success of Canadian wheat business around the world. I am sure of it, from what I saw and my firsthand experience. There is no question in my mind. Whether it will be done as well now, I don't know. Nobody has told me what kind of a system is going to be there when the Wheat Board is gone.

The Wheat Board won't survive, even though Ottawa officially says they will be still being there. That can't happen. The Wheat Board doesn't have any elevator facilities. It has to use existing elevators to do it. And can you imagine private elevator companies telling you, "Oh yeah, you can use part of our system, sure". They might, maybe if you tell them, if they pass the right legislation and force them to, it might work to a degree. You can buy other long distance service fair comparison I have no idea. I have no idea.

MM: It is an interesting one though.

DS: Yeah. But I can't imagine it. Not at all.

MM: You talked a little bit about some of the changes you saw in the industry. But what were the major changes you saw in the industry and your workplace over your career?

DS: The major changes? Well one thing was the introduction of the block-shipping system. That was a huge change. The switch to hopper cars was a huge change—made their transportation system a lot more efficient.

MM: And the Wheat Board purchased hopper cars?

DS: Yeah, the Wheat Board purchased 2,000 cars, but that was partly to force the industry into recognizing there was a car shortage that was causing a problem. Mainly at the initiative at the Canadian Wheat Board they initially persuaded the government to buy hopper cars because the railways themselves were not going to buy any railway cars at all. And it had to be done by an outside

agency and the Canadian government bought--. I don't know how many in total they bought, 10,000, 12,000 something like that. The Wheat Board bought 2,000. I am not sure how many hopper cars. Now the railways are now putting in their own cars.

The Crow Rate change, that was the other part of it. You have to recognize that the railways claimed, and I agree with them, that they lost money moving grain. I worked for CPR for a short while, and the common saying there, or one saying there was that, "We lose money on every bushel we ship, but we will make it up on volume." I have never been able to make up—put my brain around that one. How that one worked. [Laughs] Build railway cars. Not at the Crow Rate. So the purchase of hopper cars was basically a government decision to compensate the railways to maintain their Crow Rate and compensate the railways by buying the equipment. Because the railways could use them at no cost. All they had to do is pay for maintenance. It was not a bad deal. I don't know. I thought it was a pretty good deal at the time. That is how it started.

The other thing that would surprise you is that I was the one who principally designed the logos and the design of the railway cars—what they looked like and the colours.

MM: Oh, hey.

DS: Except for the Government of Canada now. They are Liberal red.

MM: But the Wheat Board logo?

DS: The Wheat Board that was ours. And originally all the government cars were painted like that, had our Wheat Board logo. And even the government car, the Wheat Board logo is on there. That is our logo.

MM: Do that?

DS: Well, I wasn't asked. I did it.

MM: Oh, okay. [Laughs]

DS: Oh no, wait a minute. I was appointed as head of a committee by the minister. Oh, who was responsible for--? Otto Lang. That is how it happened. But that was a one-man job. One-man person who did it. I worked with the CPR guys, the ones that I got to know when I was at CPR. I told them what the design should be and what colours they should be. They knew the size of the cars so they could figure out what size the logo should be and all that kind of stuff. So that is one of the surprises.

MM: Yes. And that makes you proud to still see the logos?

DS: Oh, still makes me proud. I wish they would repaint some of the old ones, but they don't. [Laughs]

MM: Get the graffiti artists to do it.

DS: When you're Information Department the way I was, you are into all kinds of stuff. First of all, you have to understand the operations of the Board and actually do the job. You become a generalist, and you see the connections from one part to another part, too, which when you are working in one particular job, you don't see. It always surprised me working even with [inaudible] people, they wouldn't see the connections between a quality requirement and what was happening here. I don't know. One person once told me that I was a horizontal thinker not a vertical thinker. [Laughing]

MM: So we talked about some of these changes, were there particular impacts on you in your work of these changes that you have talked about? Were there other changes that you want to talk about?

DS: I don't know. The biggest change I had was to switch from information to market development. That was a huge change. The executive director of marketing asked me if I wanted the job. It was as simple as that.

MM: Did you hesitate?

DS: No, I said I would be interested. We were going up the elevator. So I said, "Sure I would be interested. But I want to see the details." And then he asked me well he says, "You write up the details what you think the marketer development should do." And that is what I did. A one pager.

MM: Who was this?

DS: Gordon Machej. Have you talked to him? Oh, you should talk to him.

MM: Okay. I will take note of that.

DS: He is now president of the Co-op Gas bars in Winnipeg.

MM: Oh, ok good.

DS: He shouldn't be hard to find.

MM: What about challenges? We have talked about some of those as you spoken. But you know other than dealing with change of some of the issues around quality control, what were some other challenges?

DS: In market development?

MM: Yes. Well or in the Information Services position as well.

DS: The biggest challenge is the Wheat Board his always faced from day one is that it is a monopoly and therefore imposes demands and restrictions on farmers. Most farmers, being independent minded, don't like that. And I understand that. I don't like to be at the tail end of that either. It is a lot less now than it used to be. When I joined the Board the first year, delivery quotas were four bushels an acre. Now it probably meant that you could deliver—the way that the calculations worked—eight bushels an acre and you are producing 30. What are you going to do with the rest of it? But it is the international marketing situation that existed at the time. And it remained that way until 1972 when the Russians---. Well it started to change when China started buying large quantities. That was before my time, and I wasn't involved. We should have asked Larry Kristjanson about the China deals. Did you talk to him about that?

MM: We did talk to him about that.

DS: Was he open, frank?

MM: Yes, pretty frank.

DS: Yeah.

MM: And he talked about the opportunity in China and Russia because the Americans wouldn't go there because of the Communist regimes. So Canada took advantage of those.

DS: Yeah, sure. That started to change things. But the 1972 big Russian deals are the ones.

MM: Yes, we talked about that one.

DS: Yeah. The one that really changed the situation in Canada. I don't think it has ever been the same. And of course, in those days, 85 percent of [inaudible], and the role of the Wheat Board was much more important then than it was now because these agencies preferred to deal with one single selling agency. It made their life a lot simpler. It came down to, the Wheat Board had an excellent reputation in terms of trust.

The American system was different. In terms of their grading system, they developed a system whereby if we don't meet grade, we will start discounting, but we will still sell you No. 1 Northern, but then we will start compensating you if it doesn't quite meet the protein level that you want or the quality. They started compensating. So in terms of the end user, like one guy says, "We get a lot of dirt." To them, it is as simple as that. "My cleaning capacity is geared for certain kinds of things in my mill, and when they said you a lot of dirty wheat, I have got a problem." So that is the kind of complaints you would hear about. They wouldn't say very much to us.

MM: Who would they complain to?

DS: They would probably to complain to the US shippers.

MM: Okay.

DS: Yeah, that is where they would ship to. Yeah.

MM: Okay.

DS: You have to understand, when you are talking to a buyer, everything is negotiation. If they say something that gives, and we start thinking we have an advantage over the Americans, we are going to start pricing higher. So he is not going to tell us very much. They are all independent operators or most of them are. I found that mills where the independent operators because there the owner would make all the decisions. Many of them were not very good at delegating. They made all the decisions.

I can remember once we wanted to visit a particular mill, and this is how competitive they are. You go into a mill, and you are not allowed to bring your camera. No way. You might take pictures and show our competition what kind of milling operation. Their warehouse doors are closed because they don't want the competition to drive by and see how busy their warehouse is. It comes down to things like that. And you've to be very careful. You never say anything about another company to anyone else.

MM: Is this among all of the countries you dealt with?

DS: Oh, especially in Korea and Asia. Even there you had to be careful.

MM: Okay.

DS: Certain countries.

MM: Now were there things about the culture in Asia and the Middle East that you learned?

DS: Oh, they are mostly Chinese owned.

MM: Oh, okay.

DS: That is the one thing. Chinese are the businesspeople in those countries.

MM: Oh.

DS: And when you drive through Malaysia, you drive Thailand, a lot of the business signs are in Chinese. So they are the ones even though they are not given full citizenship, especially in Malaysia, they don't have full citizenship. They have 40 percent of the population but not full citizenship. There is a two-tier level there. If you're Malay and Muslim, you are a full citizen. They don't practise multiculturalism there.

MM: So, one of the questions I had earlier which I didn't ask because you have been talking and--.

DS: You didn't have the courage or what? [Laughs]

MM: No, you have been talking in such broad terms.

DS: Yes.

MM: Maybe I might ask what would a typical day be like in a foreign country?

DS: In a foreign country?

MM: Yes, in a foreign country when you were working, say, in South Korea?

DS: Okay. You would get up early. You would leave the hotel at 8:00 in the morning and go to a mill or bakery, depending on where it is. You couldn't have too many appointments at different locations in a day because of the traffic. You didn't want to spend all your time in traffic, especially in Thailand. It was just awful. You could probably afford to have two appointments a day. That is the amount of time it took. So you would try to spend as long as you could at a particular bakery. If we were doing tests, and we were running demonstrations or tests—well we call them milling tests—the mill would be operating doing it all day. We would provide them with 100 tonnes, which is probably their daily capacity. So they would be milling our wheat all day. We would be there all day then. And we would often be invited out to dinner or be required to take them out for dinner. We would rarely get back to our hotel before 10:00. So those are long, long days.

One time I think we had shipped over a full cargo of wheat, but it was layered with eight different types of wheat. Three mills were involved in that one. One was in Pocheon and the other one was in Mokpo, which was in southwest part of Korea and the other one-- No, there were four, the other two were in Seoul. So we were there for 31 days. I found it incredibly exhausting!

MM: Oh, I guess.

DS: One of the things that always happened to me when I came back from a trip, on my way home I would always come down with the flu, every damn time. I would be sick when I would land in Winnipeg. Our last trip was over 30 days and that was too long.

MM: And how many of these would you do in a year?

DS: Oh, at some point, three or four. Towards the end, I had acquired good staff, and I sent the staff. I only made one trip in my last year.

MM: How many staff did you have?

DS: I had two good development assistants, and I had about four clerical, and one guy who worked entirely with contract programs with farmers. How many have I--? And one sort of a quality-knowledgeable guy. He could understand quality better than I could. So we are talking about five, seven, it doesn't matter.

MM: Uh-huh.

DS: It wasn't very big staff.

MM: But people who you could rely on and trust?

DS: Yes.

MM: You had spoken earlier in the interview about the contract system that started is still operating. Do you want to comment on that anymore?

DS: No, not really, no.

MM: No, okay.

DS: No, that is up to somebody else.

MM: Okay. What are the most vivid memories of your work life? The traffic in Thailand? [Laughs]

DS: Well, there are many of those kinds of things that happened. You interact. Oh, I will never forget this one. [Laughs] We were going into Egypt, and we were working with a couple of mills there. And we were demonstrating the use of HY320 and our big project there was in Alexandria. So, we flew into Cairo, and our host was supposed to provide us with internal transportation. So there we are early in the morning, I can't remember what time it was. It was early and I was standing in front of the hotel waiting for transportation. And this shitty little taxi shows up. [Laughs]

We were three guys, all our bags, and we had the driver and our host who was also acting as interpreters, and this little car. We have to drive to Alexandria which is about 150 miles. [Laughs] Anyway we all climb in with our baggage on our laps and that kind of stuff. We were carrying on, and Phil Williams was with us. He was at GRL. Have you heard of him? No, he was a classic man. I enjoyed him. Anyway, he was also difficult, but he had eaten some black beans for breakfast at the hotel. [Laughs]

And this little car. We were driving along and suddenly *bump, bump, bump*. We had a flat. [Laughs] And so we all get out with our baggage, and we have to take everything out, and he changes the tire, and we get going. And the new tire, the replacement spare

tire, goes *thump, thump, and thump*. And I say, "Look guys, I think in 15 minutes we are going to have another flat." And sure enough, we did. Well, now of course, we had no more spare. So we get out, and we hitchhiked to Alexandria the rest of the way, which was about 35 miles. The three of us.

MM: Who picked you up?

DS: It's amazing what happened! A guy in a station wagon stopped. He spoke fluent English, and he had been one of the carry-overs from the British occupation. That is how he had come to Egypt, or his parents had. He had a strong British accent. [Laughs] He took us to Alexandria and just dropped us on the street, and we took a taxi to our hotel. And the guy that was driving us found us at the hotel. As a matter of fact, we were walking down the street, and there he is waving at us. He had got his tire fixed up. But I thought to myself, "Holy, that is quite an introduction to a country."

MM: Yes.

DS: I don't know. It was so funny. But maybe leave it off. Turn it off.

MM: So, should we leave it at that?

NP: Okay. So I am going back on now

MM: Are there any other questions that you think we should have asked or of things you would like to share that you think might be significant to capture?

DS: How much of the history of the Board have you been able to capture here in your interviews? Anybody?

MM: Nancy, you probably like to speak to that.

NP: Well, I think probably where I learned most about the history, and where we probably discussed the history was with Frank Rowan.

DS: All right.

NP: But I don't think that we have actually--.

DS: His would be straight and narrow. He would probably talk a lot about the Russian experiences, eh?

NP: Yes. Well, we spent a lot of time talking to him. So it was over quite a broad--.

DS: Okay.

NP: But I really appreciate what you have to say about that because we are not heavily loaded with it.

DS: I don't know if I want to get into it. I thought you guys were talking about this would be for the purpose of setting up a museum at some point?

NP: Yes. This particular Voices project--.

DS: My problem with that is that should be Winnipeg centred.

NP: Fair enough. [Laughs]

DS: Because that is where the history is.

NP: Well, and what the umbrella group for the Voices of the Grain Trade project is a group called Friends of Grain Elevators.

DS: Okay.

NP: And we came into being to salvage and recognize one of the terminal elevators.

DS: In Thunder Bay?

NP: In Thunder Bay

DS: Good.

NP: As a national historic site.

DS: Oh, okay.

NP: So our focus has really been in these conversations about the export grain trade, the handling, the transportation, and obviously the sales that made those possible. So I lived in Winnipeg for 30 years.

DS: You weren't in the grain business?

NP: No, no. My loyalties are divided.

DS: Okay.

NP: But Thunder Bay certainly needs the centre more than Winnipeg does. So I can push for that.

DS: Okay. There is another group that is after my retirement. The idea was to set up a grain museum in Winnipeg.

NP: The Renaissance on the Red.

DS: Was that what it is?

NP: With Bob Roehle, who was involved in that.

DS: Yes, Bob Roehle was involved in that. But it never got off the ground. I think because we had the wrong kind of people in the committee.

NP: What would have been the right kind of people? If you excuse me for butting in here, Mary.

MM: No, please do.

DS: Some people that, I don't know, were more action orientated. They wanted to do things the right way. I felt that and then ask everybody else, "How would he have set up a grain museum?" But to mean it means that you develop a concept and then you show it to people, and you try to get them to buy into. Either that or start amending concept to get more support and maybe improve it. Those kinds of things. But you don't want to start by asking Richardson, "Well, what do you think about participating in a grain

museum?" And they're the ones who are supposed to provide money. Well, they are not going to buy a pig in a poke, and that is how it started. It just fell apart. Right there. I had developed a whole concept for the grain museum.

NP: Do you still have that?

DS: I still have it yeah.

NP: Is that something you are willing to share?

DS: I don't know.

NP: Okay, well you think about it. That is a straight-forward answer.

DS: Yeah. I don't know.

NP: I would like to have a bit of discussion about this, but off tape if you don't mind. So that Mary can finish off.

DS: Yeah.

MM: Yeah.

DS: I don't know if there is anything more that I can really add for the tape.

MM: Right. And maybe we can talk about different memorabilia or that kind of thing.

DS: Yeah.

MM: Because I know you did some tapes with the chief commissioners.

DS: Yeah. Only one. The first one.

MM: All right.

DS: Did you check with the library in the Wheat Board?

MM: No, we have not. No. You mentioned you thought that was stored there.

DS: Yes, there are.

MM: Okay.

DS: They should be in the archives somewhere.

MM: All right.

DS: Also the book. Do you have John Morris, Bill Morris's book?

MM: I don't have it, but Nancy you do.

DS: Those tapes were used as for part of that. Especially the first volume. Oops.

[Audio pauses]

MM: Ready to go?

DS: Okay.

MM: Just one another question then about the CWB's history. What parts of that history do you think are the most important to preserve?

DS: I think, I don't know, if one can say that, but the Wheat Board history was sort of divided into parts. One was when up until the mid '70s when central purchasing agencies were critical in international trade. The other part of it is probably—and it is a fascinating part of the history—during the war years.

MM: Can you expand on that?

DS: Well, the Wheat Board then became an agency of government. It was the supplier of the Allies, especially of British, a lot. You know I don't even know how many--. I never did find out how many ships carrying Canadian grain, and how were they replaced. And also during the war, of course, the tremendous amount of temporary storage was built in western Canada to accommodate the crops that were grown here. First, because they couldn't get enough of the stuff out. Europe was closed as a market because of the war. That had been a very important market before the war. So that was all closed. And Britain was really the only offshore market they had at that time. I am more talking about the stuff I've read. It is not personal memory.

I think that part should be looked at, not just from a dry--. But so much of those times were a very human story. I read once C.D. Howe—they use to call him the Minister of Everything, and he was a very extremely capable individual—but I read a story about him, and he was the Minister Responsible for the Wheat Board. So he had been in England, and in those days you went by ship. On his way back, his ship was torpedoed. And then sunk. There he is out in the lifeboat, and he can see this convoy of ships going by. And everybody in a lifeboat thinks, "Oh, we are going to be rescued." He was probably the only one that knew the captains of those ships were under strict orders never to stop, except for one Norwegian captain. He says, "The heck with this." And he turned away from the convoy otherwise C.D. Howe would have been toast. I don't know how much that would have changed it.

But you know just as an insight into the man. When I was working at the Montreal at the *Family Herald*—this is a magazine I was working for at the time—I decided I would go and interview C.D. Howe after he retired. And he had an office on Sherbrook Street. I walked to the address that he had given me. I had talked to him on the phone, and he had given me the address, and I walked in, and I walked straight into his office. And I thought to myself, "Now here is a man who probably had about four or five outer offices when he was a minister, and you would never get close to him, unless you went through all of the offices." The man had such a small ego. He was totally self-assured, and he was one of the easiest interviews I've ever had, mainly about the Russian purchases and this kind of stuff. But he was the one that didn't really do the Russian purchases. His successor Mitchell Sharp did them.

I was in Ottawa at the time at the Press Gallery. He was an easy man to talk to. So I mean, I can still remember him when he was in Morris during an election campaign and farmers were mad at the government. This was in 1957, and there he is talking to this farmer. This farmer is giving him heck, and he [inaudible] shown a picture of sticking his finger into this farmer's stomach, and he said, "My, you don't look too badly off to me." Well, he is [inaudible] certainly in western Canada. And when John Diefenbaker came in, it changed the politics of western Canada from then to now. It has never changed back, and it has been Conservative ever since. And I am sure that picture and that quote had a lot to do with it.

MM: He would have been a contemporary of McNamara then?

DS: Yes, he was.

MM: Do you know of anything about their association?

DS: Well, they were good friends. That is all I know. There were a few key people that were in Ottawa at the time, that were kind of key. They worked sort of as independent sort of senior civil service committee. But there were four or five of them that I have read about, and Bill Mac was one of them.

MM: Do you know any of the others?

DS: I am trying to remember who the deputy minister was for Trade and Commerce at the time, would be there. I knew the other guy too. He was--. I can't. His name has slipped me.

MM: We can pick that up.

DS: Yeah.

MM: That will be in the records.

DS: Yeah. So that was interesting part of history. The other part of history that also [inaudible] Bill Mac. After the war, because there was such a tremendous shortage of food in Europe, and the grain supplies of course suddenly disappeared in Europe, you had to feed Europe.

MM: Yes.

DS: So they ran out of wheat. So they started allocating barley for bread making. Yes.

MM: Was that successful?

DS: It had to be. It was the only food there was. So that was interesting, and Bill Mac would have been involved in that. He did. He told me about it actually. There were few individuals that I knew in my life and made quite a difference. Yeah. Bill Mac was one of them. Yeah.

MM: What other chief commissioners did you work under then?

DS: Oh, Gerry Vogel. I worked under everybody since Bill Mac. Bill Mac, Gerry Vogel, Lorne Hehn, Esmond Jarvis, four of them.

MM: Did they have different styles?

DS: Totally. Oh yeah. Bill Mac and Gerry Vogel were the two most knowledgeable. Gerry Vogel, oddly enough—and this is the thing that really surprised me and sometimes people do surprise you—is that he was there when we had the first district meetings. And you know one of the things in the question-and-answer sessions, he had fun. And you know he had decided at that time that he was going to retire. He had been offered the posting as the General Director of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. No. Yes, it was. It was, and by that time, so he knew he was retiring, and he almost had regrets about that.

I can remember one time at Portage questions and answers, and one of the other commissioners was there. And he and Gerry Vogel were the two commissioners. They were sitting at front, and the other commissioner—and I won't name names—answered a question, and he always had this problem with having long, convoluted answers. When he finished the question, "Let me know if you didn't understand my answer". [Laughs] The crowd just howled because no one could understand the other commissioner's answer at all.

MM: Now you have mentioned a few other folks to whom we should speak. Do you have any other names you would like to add to that?

DS: You should talk to Bill Spafford, for sure.

NP: Do you have a contact for him because I have had his name, and someone says you can probably contact him at Lake of the Woods or at Falcon Lake in the summer?

DS: He is only on wireless phones.

NP: Oh okay.

DS: I have a cell email address for him.

NP: Oh, okay, that would be perfect because we have been trying to get a hold of him.

DS: Yeah. I had, but I don't know how good it is. Do I have your email address?

NP: Yes.

DS: Okay. I will send it to you.

NP: Okay. I will give it to you again.

MM: And we will get that connection going.

DS: Bill Spafford should be one.

NP: And you mentioned Henry Fast, who you will give the name for us.

DS: He is Grain Commission. And Brian Oleson.

NP: We have him on our list. And we have Ken Preston on our list, but where is he, do you know?

DS: Oh, he is in Mexico in the winter and Lake of the Woods in the summer.

NP: Okay. Do you have a contact for him?

DS: I have an email address.

NP: Okay. And you mentioned a Mr. Chen when you were talking about Ken Preston.

DS: Paul Chen.

NP: Chen?

DS: Yes. Chen. No.

NP: Kennedy?

DS: No, Stevens.

NP: Yes, we have him.

NP: And he has been done, okay.

DS: He is the only one at the Institute that I would bother.

NP: You mentioned the Dominion Research Station.

DS: Yes.

NP: Now who are they?

DS: That is the federal government research branch. They used to be called the Dominion Research Station. It is the federal research branch, station. The research station in Winnipeg. University of Manitoba.

NP: Oh, who was there? Like we had interviewed Mr. Bushuk or Dr. Bushuk.

DS: Yes, it was the University of Manitoba.

NP: Okay.

DS: He would have been a good one. Some of the plant breeders would have been useful. I can't remember their names now.

NP: Well, if they come to you, just add them to the list because we are a little shy on that side.

DS: Are you?

MM: Mmhmm, yeah.

DS: Oh, you should interview the guy that used to be at Swift Current because I think 80 percent of the wheat acreage was seeded to his varieties.

NP: Is that Depauw?

DS: Yeah, Ron Depauw.

NP: I don't know how to contact him, but he is on my list. I have got this article from *Equinox* that was about him, and I thought, "Wow, what a career."

DS: Yeah.

NP: So if you again have--.

DS: I don't have his email address. And that is the only one of the plant breeders, the original one, and I can't remember. He worked out of--. [...*audio skips*] Standards of quality.

NP: Great.

DS: And Manitou and varieties like that. Those are all his varieties. Campbell does that?

NP: Yes. And I think he felt that.

DS: Doug Campbell?

NP: I think it was Doug Campbell. Was he about the same age as Dr. Bushuk?

DS: Oh, maybe a bit older.

NP: Yeah, because he was saying his memory was not good.

DS: Oh yeah ok. Yeah. He must be in his nineties by now.

NP: Yeah, because VP Campbell or something. Brian, yeah.

DS: Did you interview Jim Leibfried?

NP: Yes, I have.

DS: And how did your interview with Larry go? Larry Kristjanson one.

NP: Unfortunately, I was not in on the Larry Kristjanson one.

MM: I was.

NP: Anyways, shall we--.

MM: Thank you for this interview. It has been most enjoyable and informative, and we just appreciate your time. Thank you.

DS: Okay. Thank you.

End of part one.

Audio Part Two

Time, Speaker, Narrative

DS: That was before the first Iraq War. We were in there trying to open markets [inaudible]. Mill was importing Australian, and of course, we were trying to cut in on that part of the business. So, we had a meeting with the general manager and walked into his office. I knew that we were going to have a problem as soon as we walked in because his desk was on the stage. [Laughs] We looked at each other and sat in this chair and looked up at him like this. The first half hour was devoted to his commentary on the superiority of Islam over Christianity. Of course, we were pretty quiet about that. One of his arguments was that the Muslims had always regarded Jesus Christ as a prophet, which is true, and therefore would have never crucified him, impossible—couldn't have crucified him. I made a comment that, "If that is true, it kind of changes the history of Christianity, doesn't it?" He looked at me, and he just ignored my remark completely and just carried on.

We eventually got down to talking about what their mill's requirements were and that kind of thing. He wasn't particularly knowledgeable. I mean, he wasn't there because he was knowledgeable. He was there because he had, I presumed, family connections. You had to live with that and go along with that. And eventually, we got to talking with his head of his research lab, which was much more useful, and he had much better idea of the kind of flours they were producing. That short half hour, an hour, part of the things that as a marketer you just have to learn to live with. I don't know. Did Larry Kristjanson talk to you about some of their experiences in China?

MM: He talked more about his experiences in Russia.

DS: Oh, okay, did he? He was also in China.

MM: But he didn't--. Particularly, he talked when he was in Russia about the fact that it would take a week to negotiate a deal no matter what because they had a textbook process, and so they learned to live with that. Was that similar in China?

DS: And Larry has told me this was that, during the cultural revolution, that he and Gerry Vogel were there, and they had to carry around with them little red books and Mao's sayings, and that was essential that they had them ready in case some of these Red Guards stopped them on the street. They were foreigners, so they had to be very careful. But he also--. I have read quite a few minutes of their negotiations and some of the starting of their negotiations were pretty damn rough. They had to put up with a lot of personal abuse, and I listen to it. I do not know if I could have done it.

MM: That was not part of your experience?

DS: No, that was not part of my experience. I was in China once as part of an Institute program and that is it, in 1972. That was just after the Gang of Four had been displaced and people in China, where all the men were still all wearing Mao suits and these little cloth slippers.

NP: You mentioned the minutes of the negotiations. Were those public?

DS: No.

NP: What will happen to them?

DS: I presume, I have no idea to tell you the truth, they might go into the archives, and they were pretty sensitive.

NP: And if they were to go into the archives, would they be public?

DS: Not likely. I mean it would still be Chinese government people might still find them quite sensitive.

NP: Do you think that they would be destroyed?

DS: You are asking the wrong guy. I have no idea. No, no idea.

MM: Thank you.

DS: It could be a tremendously valuable if someone really wanted to write the definitive history of the Canadian Wheat Board. The one that Bill Morriss wrote was really just a surface history, never really got behind the doors. To get the real story of the Wheat Board, you would have to get behind the doors and some of the people are no longer around. That is unfortunate. I interviewed the one chief commissioner. What was his name, the second one? Do you have his name? No, you don't. For nine hours. I wanted to interview Bill McNamara, too. He at first refused, then when I asked again, his memory was gone so much that it was pointless. I always thought it was such a sad thing because that is the only real history there was. The two of them covered about around 40 years of Wheat Board operations, so that was a long time.

End of interview.