

**Stanley Grizzle:** Yes. Um, well, you mentioned earlier about improvement in working conditions after the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters arrived on the property of the CPR. One specifically was the sign- assigning of a bed to the porters in which he could take his-his rest periods in between the sheets. Uh, are-are there any other conditions, uh, improvements that you can recall, which took place after the union arrived?

**Melvin Crump:** Oh yes. There-there were um, there were numerous-numerous changes um, and there were changes uh, for the betterment of both the um, company's benefit um, and also for the benefit of the- we, the porters and the employees. Um, now I do know that it was uh, one of those things where uh, a meal time, as an example, we-we-we had a-a specific time that we could come in for meals without-without having to-to, uh, straggle in, at-at their- at their time that they wanted us to come in. We had times that we could come in uh, at- on a specific time. And it was no such thing then as uh, "Well, uh, everybody else has been fed, now go call the porters." That was the policy in the past. But when the union came in, we-- it was established that we had a specific time that we were to go in, come in. And once that-that was uh, established, then we automatically would go in for dinner, or we would go in for breakfast, because that was the uh-- we were assigned for such. It wouldn't- - We wouldn't come in like a bunch of puppets-- Uh, well now we-we call the porters, and uh, we can give them their-their-their meal now. It wasn't like that anymore after the union came into existence. Now, that was a very, very important uh, that was a very important uh, thing that happened to the porters, all porters uh, after the union came in. And then, um—

Oh, I could- I could name so many, um-- The inspectors, now we-we, in the past, if-if an inspector was abusive, or in-in-in any way tried to uh-uh, abuse uh, some of its employees because of a personal feeling, uh, he could no longer, uh, take that uh, take the spite out on- on us when he aborted the train. He had to approach us as a man, and not as-as someone he wanted to abuse, because if he gave us any bad time, then we could report him. And that inspector was then called upon the office and to prove his- to prove his-his uh, compla- complaint against us, instead of uh, just saying what, "We did this, and we did that and we're due- and we're due punishment," et. cetera. So then the-the inspectors all started to re-re reconsider their approach towards the-the porters when they-when the- after- just after the union came into existence. And this also pertains to the sleeping car conductors, and not only to the sleeping car conductors, this also pertained to the-the sign-out platform inspectors. Uh, all-all-all personnel- senior personnel then started to give recognition to the- to the porters after the union came into existence because the unions had somewhat of a protection.

**Stanley:** Right. Alright. We'll, uh- We'll get back to the um, persons who did uh, much to organize the porters' union outside of Calgary. And other than the ones you've already mentioned, can you recall who were some strong or-organizers in Montreal for instance, or Toronto or-

**Melvin:** Uh.

**Stanley:** -Vancouver?

**Melvin:** Well, you see, living in the- living in the west, that is to say in Calgary, um, persons beyond Winnipeg, um, I didn't have a chance to get personally-personally acquainted with

those boys. I knew them by-by face, but to say get personally acquainted with them, I didn't have that opportunity. Uh, but I do know that uh, Blanchette um, played uh, the biggest role in Winnipeg, in the organizing of we, the porters, at that time. Uh, Blanchette in uh-- And let's see now-- and also in Winnipeg. What was his name? Um, there was another-another fellow down there in Winnipeg that, uh—He's passed on now, um, along with a number of the other senior-senior employees. Uh, offhand, I can't recall the-the gentleman's name, but however, he's a Winnipeg man. Yeah. His name, uh-- I-I recall now, his name was Bob Jameson. Bob Jamerson played a very, very important part, right along with Blanchette and uh- and uh, Simmons, yes, I recall a Simmons. There was, uh-- He played a very important, uh-uh, role in the, uh-uh, putting together of the union, and encouraging the men to join the union. Uh, he did.

Now-Now in Vancouver, I must return to the Collins boys. They did a wonderful- a wonderful job in organizing, uh, the union, uh, the Collins boys. And then there was, uh-uh-- besides the Collins boys, there was this, um, Jimmy-Jimmy, uh- Jimmy, um-um, what was his last name, Jimmy? Well, anyhow, it was Jimmy somebody, uh, he's passed on too. Now in Calgary at the time, Teddy King. Teddy King played a good uh, a-a very important role here in Calgary, encouraging the boys to join up. Odell Holmes in Calgary at the time, he-he did, uh- he did a good job, and I dare say that I-I encouraged a lot of the uh, men in Calgary to join the union. And that was our- that was gonna be our only salvation was to, uh- was to join the union, and uh-- Question?

**Stanley:** Yeah. Um, I thought that you were through.

**Melvin:** Mm-mm.

**Stanley:** What about the Ladies' Auxiliary? Each division had a Ladies' Auxiliary. Calgary had a Ladies' Auxiliary, and you-- was your-- you-you were married then or--

**Melvin:** [crosstalk] In the Ladies' Auxiliary? Uh, I-I believe, huh. I believe I-I was married at the time that the Ladies' Auxiliary came into existence. Um--

**Stanley:** Was your wife involved?

**Melvin:** Uh, my wife? Um, let's see now. I don't think my wife was involved in the Ladies' Auxiliary, but I can say that my wife was 100% behind uh, both the Ladies' Auxiliary's movement and also the, uh-the, uh-the-the importance of having a union for the porters. I will say- I will say this. And um, my wife at-at no time did she knock the ideas of us having a union, nor did she knock any of the ideas of having the, uh- the Ladies' Auxiliary.

Yes, but see, she was, uh- she had the kids at the time, and she-she was the type of woman that didn't wanna leave the kids with some other responsible persons, and to attend the-the meetings. And so this would be- this would be one reason why she didn't participate.

**Stanley:** Are you familiar with what activities the uh, Auxiliary promoted when they were holding?

**Melvin:** Well, the Ladies' Auxiliary was, uh, somewhat attached to the, uh- the union itself, and the union was for the purpose of, uh- for the purpose of better-bettering the conditions

of uh, we, the employees. And I uh, was very strongly-strongly, uh-uh, for that, uh- for that particular per-uh-purpose. And the Ladies' Auxiliary were-- they-they were something like Easter-Eastern Star, ladies of Eastern Star. They encouraged us uh, they encouraged us in our- in our thinking, in our movements, in our activities, in every- in every respect. And so I uh, I was very proud of them.

**Stanley:** Remember who the key organizers amongst the women were for-for the uh, organizing of the Ladies' Auxiliary?

**Melvin:** [crosstalk] Uh, here-here in Calgary?

**Stanley:** Yeah.

**Melvin:** Uh, let's see now. I do know that uh, Napoleon's Sneed's wife, she was very active in uh- in this type of thing.

**Stanley:** What's her name?

**Melvin:** Um-

**Stanley:** Willy?

**Melvin:** Willy, Willie, yeah, Willy. And then also Roy Williams' wife was very active, and uh- in this particular move. Um-um, what was Roy's wife's first name now? Um-

**Stanley:** Cordy.

**Melvin:** Cordy, Cordy. Cordy was very active in, uh- in this particular move. And, um- And then there was, uh, Viola King. Viola King, she was, uh, a very encouraging person. She wound up to be a lawyer in, uh, in Ottawa. And uh, with her-with her knowledge, she helped us in many ways to, uh, stay on the right track, uh, the right legal track. And so I got to mention, uh, Viola as being, uh, a very uh, very important figure in, uh- in the Ladies' Auxiliary, and-and-and also in other areas as well. Well, let's-

**Stanley:** [crosstalk] Well, you mentioned-

**Melvin:** -see.

**Stanley:** -a lot of, uh- of, uh, men who, uh, were involved in the organizing of the men-

**Melvin:** Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** -of the union.

**Melvin:** Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** The two names that I had noticed you haven't mentioned, and uh, I was just wondering if you could gimme your comments as to whether you know what their role was. One is Charles Baldwin of Toronto, Charlie Baldwin.

**Melvin:** Charlie Baldwin. Uh, as I said-- as I previously mentioned, I'm not too familiar with the east, but I have heard of a Charlie Baldwin. I've heard of him, but I-I'm not too familiar with-with him. That's the reason I didn't pass a comment. Yeah.

**Stanley:** How about Harry Gairey?

**Melvin:** Harry Gairey? No, I'm not familiar with a Harry Gairey. Now, the name rings a bell but, as I say, I don't know these men. No.

**Stanley:** All right uh, would you care to make some concluding comments or observations about the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and uh, its meaning to the local communities, the Black community. What uh, contribution did-did the union make with the progress in Canada?

**Melvin:** Uh, yes uh, the unions- the unions played-played what you may term as, um, an opening up of the door for the young Black uh, men of Canada uh, who became porters on uh, the Canadian Pacific Railway. And I'm one of the ones that helped to open that door, along uh, with being a member of the union. What I mean by that is the- the conditions, the conditions under the next generation of porters uh, under the conditions they had to work. We, firstly, the union. Then, secondly uh, we, members of the union helped to pave the way for the next coming generation. We did, and uh- and uh, this I am proud to have been a part of, to make, to-to-to know that we did, helped to pave the way for my next generation coming behind me.

**Stanley:** How?

**Melvin:** Well, how it was because uh, they didn't have to go through the trials and tribulations that I had to go through, nor did they have to, did they uh, receive the-the-the-the-- the-the money that they received for the duties that they performed uh, exceeded what I received in my duties performed, uh, uh, threefold, threefold. And-and I was one of the ones that helped make this possible for them. And it was the union that-that did the whole thing in general. It was the union. Now, now, I-I say that-that even at this time which I mentioned to Dick Bellamy, I-I think that the company--I know it's not possible, but it would be something for it to be made known, that the-the pension today, for all CPR employees, when-when reaching, uh, a pension age, they are-- they, they receive somewhat of-of uh, \$1,200, \$1,500 for-for-for services rendered. When we were pensioned off at our- at our time, when putting in the number of years required to put in, we received \$300, \$250, and I don't think that that's fair. I think that still, those of us who were put in- who put in twenty years of-of-of-of-of good service during that time and still living, and still living--I think that they should be given, uh, some kind of a-a-a consideration uh, for services at-at-at the time that we didn't have this type of thing.

And I will say that the porters in those days excelled the service of the porters of today threefold. You do not have the service today that you had in the days gone by, and this is one thing that I uh-- It-it makes me feel very, very, uh, uh, uh, distasteful when I see the service that the-the CPR is a paying their men to perform, and with what we had to- what we had to do to be accepted on the job as porters. There's as much difference as night and day. There's no way that the porters of today could have kept up with we porters of

yesterday. And I dare say that the-the-the-the reason for a lot of the services, or the-the-the-the passenger service, the decline in the passenger services is on account of the service that the company is accepting and doing today. And-and this doesn't only pertain to the Porter's Department. This also pertains to the Dining Room Department. This also pertains to the the-the-the-the news agencies, or any other employment, any other employers that the service isn't there. So, consequently, the customers, the-the public, they-they don't have to tolerate with this type of thing 'cause they can always resort to flying, and those that don't wanna fly, they can always take the bus. They would rather take any kind of- any kind of service rather than to put up with the neglected service that they receive on the trains.

**Stanley:** Okay. Can you tell me of uh, any interesting things that happened to you, or humorous things that happened to you while you were a porter? Any anecdote?

**Melvin:** Yes, indeed. [laughs] Oh, there are so many things, Stanley. It would take me from now 'til morning to tell you, but I'll tell you in very short words. I remember this particular incident. I'll never forget it either, as long as I live, I'll never forget it. Now, we had-- Coming up, during the summer months, we had-- This the height of the, of the tourist season. Uh, we had, uh, customers coming up to Canada, and wanting to see Banff and Lake Louise and Jasper. And uh, these customers coming from Alabama, Georgia, New Orleans, way down, way beyond the Mason-Dixon Lines, and down there at that time was the height of discrimination, the height of discrimination in those years. It has changed now, but in those years.

**Stanley:** Because of race.

**Melvin:** Racial, racial. Yes, right. Now uh, we had these people coming up to visit us, and they would come up as far as Minneapolis. Then they'd have to change trains, to get off the American trains, to get onto the Canadian trains, and we pick them up in-in, in the, in uh, in Minneapolis and we would bring 'em from that point to Banff. And they would unload at Banff, and then uh, we would wait for them until they finished their- until they finish their sightseeing. And then we would take them from Banff over to Lake Louise. And then we would be sidetracked, and we'd put them off at Lake Louise. They'd sidetrack our trains, and then our trains were left there, and then we had a chance to come to-to Calgary until they got finished the week of ho-holidaying and visiting Banff and-and Lake Louise. So then now, when we get back to uh, we're gettin' ready to go back now to-to pick up our customers after they had finished their holidays, now we've got to-- They're-they're headed home. At that time, poor Pullman Company didn't have enough sleepers to change trains, to change trains, and get onto their sleepers at Minneapolis. So they thought authorities in Minneapolis are phoning authorities in uh, in-in-in Calgary and-and-and-and Moose Jaw, that they would have to have their porters to go through with the uh, customers because we don't have enough Pullman cars to-to change Pullman trains.

So then the- then the uh, the uh, conductors-- I mean, officials would tell the-the conductors and the- and the inspectors that inform the porters, so and so, whoever is on that car, that he has to go through to New Orleans or Georgia, because they don't have- we just got word, they don't have the cars. And so a lot of our Canadian porters accepted this, because they wanted to see Georgia, they wanted to see the country. But me, I turned it down. I said,

"Oh, no. No, no, no." I said I don't go beyond on-on-on-on Minneapolis, because I says, "I don't uh, I don't like their conduct. I don't like the conduct down in Georgia or beyond that Mason-Dixon Line." They says, "Well Melvin, we're not concerned what you don't like. What we want you to do is stay on the car until you get to Georgia." I said, "You, evidently, is not listening to what I'm saying. I says I'm not going beyond Minneapolis." Now, I says, "When I get to Saint Paul, I says I'm gonna get off." Now, I says, "That's as plain as English can be told." I says, "Now, whatever you think you wanna do, you would better inform Minneapolis to get a porter ready, American porter ready, to relieve me when I get to Minneapolis, 'cause I'm getting off." I says, "Do-do you understand that?"

**Stanley:** [chuckles] [inaudible 00:17:50]

**Melvin:** Oh, yeah. He says, "Well, I-I think your job will be gone, because you're refusing duty." I says, "Well, I'll take care of that." And I never did, never-- And I got off at Minneapolis and I deadheaded for Minneapolis back to Calgary, and I was immediately called into the office, and I was immediately assigned to my next movement to take a troop train up north to Dawson Creek. And I never did during my- during my service, never had to go past Minneapolis. Never had to go past Minneapolis.

**Stanley:** That's one anecdote. Can you give us an anecdote ha-ha?

**Melvin:** Beg your pardon.

**Stanley:** Can you give us a ha-ha anecdote?

**Melvin:** Uh, in-in what way?

**Stanley:** A humourous something you were [inaudible 00:18:32].

**Melvin:** Oh, oh, oh I see. [laughs] Yes I uh, I had a number- a number of humourous, humourous. There was, uh, one incident where this little kid, he got on at Banff, again he's a Canadian, a little Canadian boy, and he would be about-- I would say about three or four years old.

**Stanley:** White kid?

**Melvin:** Little white boy, yes, and um, I was always good to my customers regardless of uh, age, regardless of who they were. I always went out of my way to try to make everybody feel comfortable, and this little fellow, he started following me around uh, watching what I'm at. "What are you doing now, porter?" And so I said, "Well, right now, I'm getting ready to take some, uh, clean-clean uh, face towels into the men's washroom." "Oh, I'm gonna go with you. I'm gonna follow you." I says, "All right, come on." I says, "What is your name?" So, he's, "My Name is Jimmy." I said, "Your name is Jimmy." "Yeah, what is your name?" I said, "My name is Melvin." "Oh, you're Melvin?" I said, "Yes, that's my name." "All right, fine."

So, anyhow, this went on like all day long, and so when it came time for bedtime, this little fellow wouldn't go to sleep until he said goodnight to Melvin. Now it must be about eleven o'clock at night, and the mother is trying to get him to go to sleep, and he kept telling her

that he wanted to say goodnight to Melvin. Now, she's thinking that Melvin is some- somebody that they met- he met in the dining car or up in the observation car. And she's trying to tell him, "Oh well, never mind Melvin, uh-uh-uh, Jimmy, we, yeah we we'll see him tomorrow." "No. I want to see Melvin now. I want to say goodnight to Melvin." That's what she said she-he said to his mother. Now then he says, "Well-well, where would I find Melvin? She says-he says, "Well, he goes, he's the one that makes up our beds. He's in the building, so-in the car." So, uh, she, "Oh, you mean the porter?" "Yes, the porter. That's the one, the porter." So she rings the bell.

I-I look at this-the indicator, and it says the-there's a burden. So I go down. I say, "Yes, madam, did you ring?" So she says, "Yes." She says, uh, "You know my boy, Jimmy?" "Jimmy-Jimmy?" I said, "Oh, yes. Jimmy. Yes. He-he follows me all around during the day." She says, "Well, he wants to say good night to you. And he-he swears that he's not gonna go to sleep until he says good night." I says, "Awwww, where's Jimmy then?" So she unbuttoned the curtain and he stuck his little head out, and body out there **[inaudible 00:20:53]**. I said, "Oh, Jimmy goodnight. And I hope you have a good night." Now he said, "I wouldn't gonna go to sleep until I said good night Melvin," and that's-that's one of the most humourous things I'll never forget as long as I live. It was little Jimmy.

**Stanley:** All right, how about, um, nicknames for porters? Do you have any nicknames for porters?

**Melvin:** Uh, nicknames for porters? Yes um, I was nicknamed, uh, Sammy. "Sammy, would you, uh, bring uh, bring us uh, this or bring us that?" "I says yes, I would, but before I did that, I would like to clarify my name." I says, "Um, now if you don't care to address me as porter, my name actually is Melvin Crump. Now, anytime that you wish for me to do anything for you, I would appreciate you using that- using those titles, either Porter, or Melvin, or Melvin Crump." I says, "And it would be more appreciated if you did that than it would by addressing me as Sammy."

**Stanley:** Right.

**Melvin:** See? And, uh, that is the name that-that is one of the names that I was addressed. And this would be by, uh, by the American- by the American tourists.

**Stanley:** But I-I was thinking more of uh nicknames uh-uh, used between porters.

**Melvin:** Oh nicknames used between Porters? Oh-oh-oh-oh, yes. Yeah, I know what you mean. You mean porter talk? You mean porter talk? Well, uh, uh, some of the porter talk names I wouldn't wanna mention on tape, because if I did uh, it would shock some of the readers or some of the listeners, but they had a language all of their own, I'll tell you. And some of the conversations that they would get in between themselves. I couldn't dare, I wouldn't dare to start to-to mention none of those things.

**Stanley:** There were some respectable nicknames, such as uh, the Count Duberry. Did you know him?

**Melvin:** Uh, Count Duberry? Yes I remember the Count Duberry, oh, in that regards. Uh, [laughs] Oh, I had one that mentioned to me, sleep-- Take 'em pass. Take 'em pass Crump. I

used to take quite a lot of my customers past that point, because I'd be sleeping. I'd be-- [laughs] And they'd call me, "Take 'em pass Crump." That's what they called me. That was the nickname for me. Oh, yeah. Oh, and several incidences, you know, Stan. We would uh- this was down in the [inaudible 00:23:21] down-down the Kettle Valley line. I'd taken past five passengers, not only once, but through during my years of-of working. Five times I've taken passengers by. I was sound asleep. But uh, but what had happened, what would- what-what the trains would do, was that we would uh, have a junction of about 50 miles up past the point that we met the incoming train, the other going train, that we would transfer my customers back onto that train, and take them back to their-their uh, put off point. Yeah, and-and they-they- my customers would give me \$3, \$4, \$5 tip when they got off. And they said they couldn't understand me sleeping-sleeping in, "Because as hard as you work Melvin, we can understand that."

**Stanley:** [laughs]

**Melvin:** He says, "Do the best you can, do-do better next time." "Oh fine." And I-I got written up. I got written up twice, but once again, they didn't fire me.

**Stanley:** Okay, we're gonna leave the CPR now-

**Melvin:** Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** -and go to the Northern Alberta Railroad.

**Melvin:** Northern Alberta Railroad.

**Stanley:** The Brotherhood had a contract with that railroad.

**Melvin:** Oh, yeah.

**Stanley:** And used a few porters out of Edmonton alone.

**Melvin:** Yeah, well, that would be, now you're speaking of Canadian National now.

**Stanley:** The National?

**Melvin:** Yeah, that's Canadian National.

**Stanley:** You remember who the uh, the original porters were, or the original officers were for the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters' division?

**Melvin:** Uh, the officers going north? Uh, up there?

**Stanley:** That's the union officers from the Northern Alberta Railroad.

**Melvin:** Yeah.

**Stanley:** I'm trying to get the [inaudible 00:24:56].

**Melvin:** Yeah-yeah. Uh gee--

**Stanley:** Persons or executive.

**Melvin:** Yeah, um, I do know of a Dan Estes that worked on that Northern Alberta Railroad, and I know of a person named, uh, um, um, uh-- See, these are- these are other-other out-out of our jurisdictions now. You're speaking of.

**Stanley:** Yeah, we just thought that's what you--

**Melvin:** Yeah, I-I-I understand. Um, yes, there was, um, Alexander. There was Cliff Alexander. He was another one that was on that Northern line. And, um, I think there was, uh, I think there was a Jesse Jones, that was a porter on that line as well.

**Stanley:** He was a runner out here?

**Melvin:** Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** Jesse Jones, who was quite a- quite a track star?

**Melvin:** Ah, yes-yes, he was a track star. Now-now wait, now, am I right in saying this? Uh, Jesse Jones, did he work on that Northern Alberta Railroad? Jesse Jones-Jesse Jones. Yeah, that's the track start. Right. That's right. That's him, but I'm wondering did he, um, was he one of them? Yeah, he's-he's, that's Jesse Jones. Right. I played ba-- in the band with him. Oh, yeah. Um, well, maybe-maybe I-I could be. Maybe I better not say that he was one of the ones, because I-I can't say for sure. So I better not say that.

But there was Cliff Alexander. He- I know he was one of the ones that was up there on that line. And then there was a- there was a-a Bouton- a Bouton, Johnny Bouton. He was another one on that line. Uh, uh, I-I'm sure of that, and this Dan Estes, I know that he was on that line. But whether I know that he was one of the, uh-uh, members of that uh, executive board, or-or uh, one of the officials of the union, I can't say that, because as I say, I was Canadian Pacific, and they was Northern Alberta.

**Stanley:** I see. Thank you very much, Mel.

**Melvin:** It was a pleasure.

**Stanley Grizzle:** End of interview with Melvin Crump of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Essex Silas Richard Bellamy, nickname Dick, being interviewed by uh, Stanley G. Grizzle at his home in Calgary, Alberta, on the 1st of November, 1987, at approximately 7:24 PM. Mr. Bellamy.

**Essex Silas Richard "Dick" Bellamy:** Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** Uh, just for the record, would you give me your full name sir?

**Dick Bellamy:** Essex Silas Richard Bellamy.

**Stanley:** And your address.

**Dick Bellamy:** 27 Farn Crescent, South East, that's in Fairview.

**Stanley:** Right and where were you born sir?

**Dick Bellamy:** Pine Bluff, Arkansas.

**Stanley:** Uh-huh. Date of birth?

**Dick Bellamy:** Date of birth June the 30th, 19 and 1902.

**Stanley:** Right, and uh, when did you come to Canada?

**Dick Bellamy:** I came to Canada in 19 and 27.

**Stanley:** And uh, why did you come to Canada.

**Dick Bellamy:** I happened to be going to school at Fisk University. And that year, they sent the Superintendent from Winnipeg to Nashville, Tennessee, to hire men for the summer. And I figured that uh, I needed a job to further my education at Fisk University. So I decided to come to Canada in 1927. We came from Fisk, uh--

**Stanley:** Fisk is in Nashville, Tennessee?

**Dick Bellamy:** Nashville, Tennessee. We came with a fella named by the name of Chet Brewer. We drove from-

**Stanley:** Spell that name.

**Dick Bellamy:** Chet Brewer. C-H-E-T, B-R-E-W-E-R.

**Stanley:** Oh yes.

**Dick Bellamy:** And he worked for the Ford Motor Company in Detroit. So after driving from Fisk to Detroit, and then from Detroit into Windsor, and from Windsor, Ontario, into Toronto. After we got into Toronto, we were met by the uh, uh, Odello.

**Stanley:** Who was he?

**Dick Bellamy:** He was the- he was a porter instructor in Toronto.

**Stanley:** Yes.

**Dick Bellamy:** Uh, Mr. Odello seemed to be a very, very nice man. We spent three days in Toronto, uh, uh, by ins-ins-instructor, uh, Odello givin' us instructions as to how the CPR operated, and what we supposed to do in order to make good porters. After we had spent the three days in Toronto--

**Stanley:** May I ask you- may I interrupt you here and ask, what other, uh, porters or to be porters were with you?

**Dick Bellamy:** Uh, there was JK Streeter, RO Wilks, Bob Easton, and a fellow by the name of RO Watkins. Now I don't know what his first name was. The four of us left Toronto after our instructions and went to Winnipeg. We all stayed in Winnipeg and-- I'm a little ahead of my

story, because while we in Toronto, we had to take some flu shots and some cold shots. Then after we got to Winnipeg, we had to take some more cold shots and some flu shots.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm.

**Dick Bellamy:** And then we were put under the instructions of WC Jones, Winnipeg instructor. He instructed us for three weeks in Winnipeg, three weeks, and after the three weeks instruction in Winnipeg I realized that there was so many men on the extra board, that it would be almost impossible for me to hold any kind of a spare board in Winnipeg. So they decided they needed three men in Moose Jaw to run between Moose Jaw and uh, Saskatoon. And they needed another three men to run from Moose Jaw to, mm, I can't recall his name.

**Stanley:** Prince Albert?

**Dick Bellamy:** P-P-Prince Albert, to Prince Albert. The rest of us were sent to Calgary. After being in Calgary uh, they needed three men to go to Vancouver. I went to Vancouver, but due to the fact of the weather conditions there, I-I knew that uh, I wouldn't be able to stand the climate there. So I returned to Calgary from Vancouver, and I remained in Calgary. I've been in Calgary ever since, working out of Calgary.

**Stanley:** May I ask what were you studying at Fisk?

**Dick Bellamy:** I was working for my Bachelor of Arts degree.

**Stanley:** Did you ever go back?

**Dick Bellamy:** No, I had to stay out for one year in order to try to make up- keep up- get a-get enough money to go back. But I wasn't able to-to do that, because my mother. Home was on the mortgage, and the Simmons National Bank held a mortgage on that home. And I knew that at her age, she wouldn't be able to work. She told me she could get a little job. My mother has never worked a day in her life outside of the home. I often wondered what kind of job could she get? So in order to keep her from working, after my father died, I took over the reins of looking after my mother. And I did as long as the CPR employed me. And the wage that CPR paid me every payday, which was every two weeks, I sent my mother some money, and she never worked another day.

**Stanley:** When did your father die?

**Dick Bellamy:** My father died uh, approximately 10 years uh, before my mother passed. Yeah, 10 years.

**Stanley:** But your father died before you came to Canada? [inaudible 00:35:07]

**Dick Bellamy:** Uh, he died-he died before I came to Canada.

**Stanley:** Uh-huh.

**Dick Bellamy:** Yeah, mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** All right uh, and uh, how long were you were a sleeping car porter?

**Dick Bellamy:** Sleeping car porter from 1927 until 19, and 67.

**Stanley:** And now, can you describe some of the working conditions under which you worked as the porter, um, when you first started that is?

**Dick Bellamy:** Oh, the working conditions? Uh, the description-the description that you is- I presume that you're speaking of, they were pretty rough at times. However, I can truthfully say that the super, after taking the instruction from our, uh, porter instructor, WC Jones, some of the things that he pointed out, in order to be a successful porter, you have to learn one thing, which is patience, which is uh, uh, learning how to deal with the public is one of the main things in life in order to be a successful porter. And by that I mean, there are times when things are not rosy for you. But you had to just do the best you could. Sometimes it is I don't know who said it, but sometime, whoever said it, you- sometimes you had to stoop in order to conquer. And I did that quite a few times. Not that I wanted to do it, but in order to have good luck, and be a good porter, I felt that it was my duty to give the public the best service that I possibly could.

**Stanley:** I was interested in-in-in the working conditions, which were later improved.

**Dick Bellamy:** Oh yes. The late- the working conditions were later improved considerably. Especially when, uh, although we were not affiliated at that time with the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. Uh, under Mr. Philip H Randolph or Mr. Benny-Benny Smith. So therefore, we have what is known as the Porters' Mutual Benefit in order to, uh-

**Stanley:** Is that the PMBA?

**Dick Bellamy:** Yeah, PMBA.

**Stanley:** Porters' Mutual Benefit-

**Dick Bellamy:** Association.

**Stanley:** Right.

**Dick Bellamy:** And, uh, they went, I can truthfully say, if we had a problem, we had to take it to the Porter's Mutual Benefit to see if they could help solve it for us. And I can say- I can say that they very seldom objected to going to the front for us.

**Stanley:** What's- the Porters' Mutual Benefit, was that before the Porters' Welfare Committee? Because there was a Porters' Welfare Committee as I-as I understand it, and then there was a PMBA, which had an insurance, didn't they?

**Dick Bellamy:** Now, which one was first? Hmm, PMBA.

**Stanley:** They carried the life insurance policy, didn't-didn't they for the porters?

**Dick Bellamy:** Yes-yes, mm-hmm, that is right.

**Stanley:** But uh, was it not the Porters' Welfare Committee that-that handles the grievances of the porters?

**Dick Bellamy:** Yes, mm-hmm, they handled the grievances of the porters.

**Stanley:** All right.

**Dick Bellamy:** Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** With the company that is?

**Dick Bellamy:** With the company, mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** Good.

**Dick Bellamy:** The founding porters for the Calgary District were as follows. S Armstead, better known as Slim Armstead, BO Coble, C-O-B-L-E, RM Moore, M-O-O-R-E.

**Stanley:** Yeah.

**Dick Bellamy:** Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** Alright, uh, well if they were so effective uh, how did the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters come into the picture? There must have been something lacking in their representation?

**Dick Bellamy:** Well, possibly there were. But I can recall on several instances uh, if a porter got into trouble, Mr. Armstead, Mr. Coble and Mr. Moore would go to the superintendent and try to iron these differences out. And they- and if I must say so, they were very effective, very effective. And, uh, they won quite a few-quite a few cases with the superintendent.

**Stanley:** Why did you join the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters then?

**Dick Bellamy:** Why did I join?

**Stanley:** Yeah.

**Dick Bellamy:** I joined the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, because-

**Stanley:** In what year by the way?

**Dick Bellamy:** Uh, when Mr. Randolph and Brother Benny Smith come up here.

**Stanley:** You don't remember the year?

**Dick Bellamy:** No, I cannot recall the year.

**Stanley:** Alright.

**Dick Bellamy:** No.

**Stanley:** Do you want to tell us why-why you joined?

**Dick Bellamy:** I was listening to Brother Randolph. I was listening to Brother Benny Smith first, after he came up. And Brother Philip H. Randolph, he followed later on. And after listenin' to his- one of his speeches, I said to myself, "That is the man who come to deliver us from some of the--" How shall I put this? From some of the, um, problems that we have been faced with for years. And I shall always be grateful to Brother Benny Smith, Brother Randolph for what he has done for the porter- for the porters.

**Stanley:** What were some of those problems that they helped to rectify?

**Dick Bellamy:** On one occasion, I can remember there was one porter. I can't recall his name, or who he worked for. I mean, who he was home, he-what district it worked out of, but I think that it had- it was a drinking problem. And we went to Mr. Randolph, and Mr. Randolph and Brother Benny Smith went upstairs to see the superintendent. And the outcome of that was that the porter had been uh, having fa-family problems at home. And the superintendent gave-gave Mr. Randolph-Mr. Randolph and Brother Benny Smith, uh, got the man off scot-free. And he was not given any demerits.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm.

**Dick Bellamy:** I remember that myself.

**Stanley:** Um, so you joined the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and uh- and uh, did you ever-- Were you-were you, uh, one of the founding members?

**Dick Bellamy:** One of the what?

**Stanley:** Founding members? The original members?

**Dick Bellamy:** Yes-yes, mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** All right, do you know how long it took to organize the union? How many years?

**Dick Bellamy:** I cannot remember how long it took to organize that [crosstalk].

**Stanley:** Because-because I recall, Fred Collins in Vancouver tells me he joined in 1939.

**Dick Bellamy:** Oh, yes.

**Stanley:** And then CPR didn't sign a contract with the Brotherhood until 1945.

**Dick Bellamy:** Mm-hmm, '39 to '45, five years difference.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm. So I'm wondering, was there a long authorization period here in Calgary? Do you- do you remember? Or you-were you involved?

**Dick Bellamy:** I-I think I was one of the- one of the members, um, one of the members to join at that particular time.

**Stanley:** Your name is not on the charter?

**Dick Bellamy:** It should be. It's on that charter in there.

**Stanley:** Well, that's not a charter. That's a-

**Dick Bellamy:** Wasn't it, isn't that the charter? Well, it's- my name should have been on the charter.

**Stanley:** Who-who were the key organizers here in Calgary, that you recall?

**Dick Bellamy:** Uh, now that comes back Brother Williams.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm.

**Dick Bellamy:** Brother Holmes.

**Stanley:** Roy Williams?

**Dick Bellamy:** Roy Williams, Brother Odell Holmes, Brother John King, Brother, uh, Lee Russell-

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm.

**Dick Bellamy:** -and myself.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm, alright.

**Dick Bellamy:** Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** Was Brother-Brother Clay involved?

**Dick Bellamy:** Brother PT Clay is right.

**Stanley:** Right-right.

**Dick Bellamy:** Yeah. Page T. Clay.

**Stanley:** What was the, uh, joining fee? Do you remember the joining fee was, and then what-what was the monthly dues?

**Dick Bellamy:** I think it around \$15 or \$16 a month?

**Stanley:** What, to join?

**Dick Bellamy:** To join. I think so.

**Stanley:** And the monthly dues?

**Dick Bellamy:** Uh, \$2.50 a month or something like that.

**Stanley:** I see.

**Dick Bellamy:** Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** Can you recall uh, when the union came on the property of the CPR, what the big changes were, that were very noticeable to the porters? What improvements were there for the porters when the union- after the union's first agreement was signed?

**Dick Bellamy:** Uh, I think some of the major improvements after we joined the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, after Brotherhood of Sleeping Car union—

**[END OF AUDIO]**