

AN INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY BERNARD O'NEIL WITH MR TREVOR ROBERTS OF GLENGOWRIE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA FOR THE PROJECT ON THE HISTORY OF THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

[The first interview session was on 21.10.2003; the square brackets incorporate corrections supplied by Trevor Roberts in March 2007.]

[0:25] Trevor, we going to cover some of your career, of course, in the Department, being the nature of the exercise. But it would be really helpful if we could get some personal background just to add a little bit of flavour and a context to Trevor Roberts, the person. So perhaps your full name and date of birth, place of birth perhaps?

My name is Trevor William Roberts. I was born on the 13th of December 1928. I believe it was a difficult birth! I was a breech baby.

Born locally?

I was born at Rose Park as a matter of fact, yes.

A hospital?

The hospital at Rose Park, which my wife goes to out there for a physiotherapist. I keep looking at it and she says everyone that comes in here says, 'I was born here'. It's a private home type of thing, a private hospital, Rose Park. Sister Penny was the ...

Fairly well known place.

It was in those days but no-one would ever know it was a hospital at the moment.

So that's 1928, In a sense you were a Depression child: born in the Depression years.

Yes, yes.

You grew up during the Depression. In Adelaide?

I grew up during the Depression in Adelaide, yes.

What suburb where you in?

St Morris.

Were your family from ...

No. They're from Kadina and Wallaroo. My mother was from Wallaroo and my father was from Kadina, Willamulka. He was farming up there with a group of his family: eight others who had mixed farms and as a consequence of the [First] World War, dad came down to town in 1928 where I was born.

After the First World War?

After the First World War. Yes, I was a Depression child because I remember my mother's sister lived with us because the bank foreclosed on the mortgage of her house, they were out of work. Another brother came down from the farm, couldn't make the farm pay, had to sell up. He was living in the back room of the house at St Morris (laughs) so I sort of half grew up with the family for quite some time – until '38, '39.

Almost an extended family?

Yes, very much so.

Had they sold the farm?

The farms were sold and divided up amongst the other remaining boys and girls that stayed in the district farming. They married and that.

Did you ever go up there as a kid?

Yes. I was sent up there most probably every time you could think of. In holidays for 8 weeks. I knew more about the farming practices than my uncles. I was prepared, that I thought I was going to go back on one of the farms but that never eventuated.

You thought about it personally or ...

Yes, personally and by several of my uncles who wanted me there, but it never eventuated.

To go and work there initially and then to take it over?

Yes, in a way but it wouldn't be a take over because they were all pretty hard, mean people.

You'd have to buy and purchase ...

I meant take over the land to ...

Yes. A lot transpired in the mid '40s. My grandfather died and they had to distribute a couple of farms and a townhouse in Kadina and property at Wallaroo and property at Moonta – divisible into [eight]. There were some family arguments, if you get what I mean. So they all decided 'Right this is our share. We'll divide it by [eight] and forget about who was going to run this and who that'. It was dissolved – the farming community was dissolved and they all went their own ways, farming in different areas. Two of dad's brothers ... One went to America never to be sighted again. Another one married a French woman from the First World War (he'd married there). He told his father, 'Go jump in the lake. I don't want to get on your ... farm'. He came down and where did he work? Oh, he worked at the long-range weapons, after the war, '45, that long-range weapons. Subsequently he died in '55 of gas poisoning from the First World War.

That's an interesting connection with the land then, the way it unfolds.

I've always said to my sister ... Just yesterday she said, 'You were never home'. I said, 'No, I was shunted off up to the farm all the damn time. I was cheap labour, slave labour'. That's what I used to call it but in the Depression time and then during the war years ... I remember I worked up on the Blyth Farm and I could do anything. I would sew any amount of bags a day and anything like that and I could drive the header all at the age of 14, 15. I was in charge of an Italian prisoner-of-war. We were given prisoners-of-war to work the farm and he used to live down in the old shearers quarters there. I learnt a lot from him. He was a dentist as a matter of

fact, a professional. He came back a couple of times in '47, '48 and saw the family – not the family, but the family up there type of thing at Kadina.

That's interesting the trials and tribulations of what happens on the land. I mean you're getting a boyhood experience, it's a different perspective to what your elders were going through and what they were doing.

Yes, oh yes.

[10:15] Did you go to school in Adelaide?

Yes, St Morris and Norwood High School.

You went through to high school?

Yes, yes.

Were you much interested in schooling?

Yes really, but seeing that I couldn't get to the farm or anything, I really was looking at carpentry. I was quite handy because I used to help my mother's brother-in-law – an uncle I called him, Uncle Les Moeller We made a few caravans when I was 15, just a few caravans and wooden boats. That's all they were in those days, clinker built boats. Then one of his friends said, 'I'll get him a job in the school holidays' type thing. He was a builder; Eric Vivien a builder.

The first job I had was down in the Amgoorie Building in North Terrace pulling floors up. Of course, under the floors were dead rats like you've got no idea. They'd been there for hundreds of years I tell you. I thought I don't think this is my job, for a carpenter. But with my hands, I could work pretty quick with my hands.

That was more a demolition job than one than building?

Yes. They had to put in new floors, the Amgoorie Building in North Terrace it was, just down past the *News* [building].

So you were perhaps interested in being a tradesmen of some sort with carpentry or ...?

Anything outside, external, outside I wanted to do ... I applied for the Public Service specifying [an interest in Lands Department]. You could say what Department you would like to go [into].

[12:10] Trevor after that break for the doorbell, just to backtrack slightly. You've been talking about your interest in working outdoors and so on. That leads me to ask about your life in Adelaide with school and in the suburbs. What sort of things did you get up to as a young lad? You weren't always up in the country on the farm?

No, no. Most of our activities (this was out of school) we had sport, I was a very keen tennis player, footballer, cricketer, not so much baseball, terrible runner (I couldn't run anywhere).

Around about [1942, '43] there was a group of us who built a shack up at Gumeracha, in what is now a big place. It was on a property by the name of – doesn't matter, I can't think of his

name – but he allowed us to build this tin and iron shack on the banks of the Torrens, just over the bridge by the crossovers of the road going to Gumeracha and the one that goes down to the Gorge and the other one that goes around to the Williamstown Road, on that we could keep the rabbits down. There were five of us ... We built that [We all helped to build the shack.] ... We used to ride our bikes with a bag of cement on the front handle bars and got plenty of sand down there from the river and everything prior to that. [Our] parents used to take up the timber and the stove, the wood stove, and we made bunks out of [Hessian] and straw and that. We'd go shooting. We'd go up Friday night after school. We would most probably get [rabbits]. I could fit at least 20 pairs on my bike around the handle bars and on the back of the carrier, except the only thing is that they might get caught and you'd hear them clicking, their heads clicking in the [spokes of the wheels]. We could get at least 20 pair and we were getting skins, we were getting 4 shillings.

You were getting a bounty on the skins?

Yes, a total of about 4 shillings for a pair of rabbits. That 4 shillings was a lot of money. I've still got the bike in the shed that I used to use. Anyway, it was a fair push going up the Gorge, about 23 [miles; 35+ km]. And you could always [take your time].

Rough roads?

No it was a bitumen, it was a bitumen road then.

Would it still be rough?

Yes, it was rough but the traffic would be going along – It would be in the night, be after school time thing of a winter or something – and you would hear, 'Hey, there's something coming' and you could see the lights going on and there would be an old buckboard coming back there. You would just stand at the side of the road and wave them off. Half[-way] point used to be Cudlee Creek and we used to get an ice-cream there or something: try and get there before 6 p.m. before he closed. We would get an ice-cream or a drink or something like that and then we'd move on. It was only about another 5 miles but up hill all the way, but when we had finished, going home [down hill] we could just sit up and away you'd go right until you got to the [bottom]. At Athelstone we got what we called the quarry hill and you'd roll down and then you've got to go up a hill, there's a hill through the cutting, the cutting it was, that was hard work.

Then when the ... I'm trying to think of the chap's name, well-known apple orchid people. After a while we found we could make more money trapping water rats. We were getting 15 shillings a skin but you couldn't find anything to sufficiently skin them because we would have to peg them out. The only way we could find a suitable knife to skin them was a hacksaw blade. You'd break a hacksaw blade and then you'd get it on a grinder, a bit like a scalpel, and then

you could go around and get these beautiful water rat skins. Of course, you better not tell the environment people these days, they'd shudder at that! (laughs)

We were good shots with rifles and then we'd go out in the night with a spotlight. We'd work in two's. I would generally shoot one night and the Saturday night I would carry the battery. We would have a motorbike battery with two [spares] on an army haversack on our backs. So I had to walk with the gunmen and BANG! All head shots, no problems, none whatsoever.

You'd go out as pairs?

Yes. We went in pairs, but one had to go that way and one [the other way]. And there was no shooting to the left. Oh no, it was all well pretty organised I would say.

Who paid the bounty? You were getting a bounty for the water rats ...

No, the skin.

The skin yes, but who paid for it?

No, there was no bounty really. I'm just saying the bounty but what we got from the price of the skins from ... I forget. There were merchants.

Was there a butcher or a wool merchant ...?

No, a proper merchant ...

Skin merchant.

Skin and wool merchants like Michell's, somewhere like Michell's, well known. They were down at Hindmarsh but we'd take that down there.

You used the word bounty and I thought that might be a government bounty.

During the day we'd go fishing there and get plenty of trout in the Gumeracha reservoir. In addition we'd go bird nesting, we'd collect those. Huge collection of birds' nests, various birds' nests. Climb gum trees to get an eagle's nest, magpies. That was part of it. Then if we didn't go up (we didn't go up every weekend), the other weekends we would meet up the corner of where K-Mart is because there's a creek going through there on Glynburn Road where the K-Mart is.

That sounds like it's near Firle?

Yes. We'd meet at the bridge cross over. We would get on our bikes and quite openly we'd have rifles slung across our shoulders and go up to Morialta and knock off some foxes. We would try to whistle them out and they'd come out and you would hear the shot echo, 'Boom, boom, boom'. One lad, he had a 30/30. They were powerful. At one point you could hear the echo go right around up to Gumeracha I reckon.

There were only two houses there. One house belonged to a chap by the name of Neale who was the caretaker of Morialta Reserve. He was employed by the Botanic Garden in those days.

In the meantime I played tennis at night and in the afternoon.

Did you do that for a couple of years?

Up until the stage when we got interested in going to the dances. I'd say, 'We've got to go to the dance (go to the Palais Royal or something) and look out after girls'. I met Joan in about 1948. Mum would often ring her, 'He can't come Sunday to see you or anything. He went up to the shack and he's got this damn bronchitis'. I'd get a cold. What I'd do is get that sweated, hot with rabbits hung around my neck and all that, I'd get a chill. I'd get a chill, all the time. I'd get this chill, not a bronchitis but a [cold].

Were there other kids out doing the same sort of thing, hunting?

Only this group.

Were there other lads you knew who might ...?

Yes, but not in this particular area we went to because it was too hard a work to go up there.

So you had your own patch?

Yes, yes.

You almost gave the impression of gangs of kids riding up.

No, we were about the only ones. There were a few that used to go fishing up in the Gorge there. Then I met some friends from high school who had market gardens up at Athelstone, [just prior to the first Gorge weir]. There was a house built right on the side of the road. He was the caretaker of the weir. There was a little jump and you'd go down the hill to the quarry and go around. A chap by the name of Taylor, A.A. Taylor & Sons, they had four boys – the biggest larrikins this side of the stump. We had a great time up there. I used to go up there weekends and that. And then played for Athelstone Football Club. Then played for, after Athelstone, Norwood Union and then back to Athelstone. It was a very adventurous!

A pretty active life?

Very active, extremely active.

And this is leading up to, and part of, World War II time?

No. It's during World War II, while I was at high school. '42, after I found out I wasn't old enough to have a license to shoot with a gun! It was 16 then or 19 but you could ride a bike.

So just putting a timeframe on it, so that was '43?

'43, '44, '45, yes.

So you were too young to enlist?

Yes, I was only 12 or 13.

You mentioned Duntroon.

Yes. 16 – you could apply at 16 that or the Flinders Naval College, either one.

You mentioned Duntroon, I know we talked before about that.

I had an interest in that because I had quite a few relations in the First World War in the 10th Battalion and a friend of my father was a permanent man in the 10th Battalion in the First World War. When the second war started – he got the Military Medal in the First World War – he was a permanent army officer, chap by the name of Frank Allchin. I used to talk to him and then when he come back from the Middle East (when everybody come back) and we had soldiers all billeted all with us, I used to listen to all his stories and then go out and see them up at Brookside there. They'd be all doing manoeuvres and doing exercises in their Bren gun carriers and Vickers machine guns firing blanks and all this business. You would go up into that and, of course, there were no young chaps about – a little bit older than me, there were a couple of chaps older than the group that I went with, but they were bullies. They were in the navy. They were about 3 years older than me and they were real bullies ... That gave me that interest for that Duntroon training. That was it. It never succeeded of course.

The interest in going there to a military college, perhaps if you could explain just a little bit about that. Because of the cessation of war hostilities in September and the intake wasn't until January '45 type of thing, that was it. Didn't want any more [applicants], so then I applied for ... [Joan speaks in background]. I applied for the government. A chap who would be at the church with me, a chap by the name of Philip [Berry], he was Deputy Commissioner of Taxation for Adelaide, the Deputy Commissioner here. He said, 'Why don't you come into the Public Service?'. He called it the ... What was the Commonwealth service called? Oh, to be a Civil Servant not a Public Servant. I wasn't that keen on applying for that because I thought I might have to go interstate. So he gave me a reference. He said, 'There's a chap I know in the Government Public Service by the name of Schumacher, go and see him'. The time I saw him he was the Public Service Commissioner: wasn't quite the bloke to ask for! So I remember him asking, 'Where would you like to go?'. Anyway, he referred me back to a chap by the name of Tillet who was the Secretary of the Board, the Public Service Board. Then I was put back down the deck a bit, to I suppose the interviewing offices or whatever they were.

You had the choice – not a choice, but where would you rather be? I had no idea where I wanted to be. They said, 'What about the Lands Department?'. 'OK, I'll work at the Lands Department'. Some other was the hospitals or something, not what I wanted but they put that and the hospitals.

You'd changed interests at that stage ...

Yes, yes.

... from the outdoor life ... to ...

Yes, yes. Yes, because it was that or the bank because in those days it was what you wanted. It was all women workers, there were no men because they were all off to the war. It was just devoid of any men and, of course, young ones were then re-appointed subject to if someone came back in that job you were doing, you would be relegated back to delivering letters or something. (laughs) I don't know what it might have been! But the girls went first. They were on condition that they had to go once the chaps returned. Of course, '46 when most of them returned we managed to hold our job there. I was in the Survey Section. I didn't want that anymore. There was too much maths.

Too much maths. And then going out in the field at all?

No, that didn't worry me. You had to do your two years, three years in surveying. It was mostly all mathematics.

Did you have to be able to deal with the maths?

Yes. I didn't like the mathematics so then I went in and started accountancy and that drove me to (laughs) ... I think it was Accountancy 1, Accountancy 2, Auditing 1, Auditing 2.

Where were you doing those courses?

School of Mines or whatever they call it. Institute of Technology now or whatever they call it.

Now the University of South Australia. What level had you reached at school?

Only Intermediate, yes. You were channelled off like that. To get into the Leaving, you had to be pretty smart because for instance often the lads did Intermediate, two years, third year was Leaving, fourth year was Leaving Honours. It was the top 10% did Honours in those days. You never had time because you entered a trade because a lot of the parents at the war and the wife, the mother wanted a little bit of income coming in.

You weren't particularly interested in university?

No, none whatsoever. There were more things in life in those days but if it was a different position (and I'm in a different position altogether now) I would have been. No, that didn't even enter ... You would have to get top Honours to get in, for one thing. Second, your parents wouldn't be able to afford it. There's no way in the world you would be able to afford it in those days. This is before scholarships came in. Our kids got scholarships to go to uni., we didn't pay a thing did we Joan? [Side comments] If you went on ...

Did you have mates who joined the Public Service with you, school mates?

No, as a matter of fact. Oh yes, from the same school. You mean high school?

Yes.

Yes, but not the same department, no.

No. Did you go at the same time?

There were about 20 of our class, about 23, and the rest went into the bank, Bennett & Fisher, Goldsborough Mort. A few took apprenticeships, mechanical toolmakers. One lad, a toolmaker, he's a millionaire now: got the contracts with Holdens just doing door handles and that. He's retired now.

The choices are always interesting.

Yes. A couple of plumbers here I know are very, very well off now. My age.

You were saying you didn't like mathematics when you were in the Survey Department and then you go off to do accountancy and ...

Yes. Figures I'm pretty good at, I can do any figures you like, that's easy.

But the mathematical concepts are a different thing.

Oh, X and Ys – I couldn't understand why you had to deal with X and Ys instead of minuses and plusses, it didn't make sense to me. (laughs)

Were you just an assistant, holding the rod and that sort of thing?

Yes. It didn't last long because I went back to the Drawing Room then and it didn't last long from there so they put me into what they called the Chief Clerks Branch. It entailed the Director, the Minister and a group of other men. They ran the Department type of thing and I mean ran the Department. I walked into the office of Mr Craig who was a Superintendent of the Lands Branch and my job was to fill his ink well and get rid of the [used] blotter [and] make a clean blotter. The third morning I went in there and as I was walking out it was 'Mr Roberts. Would you come back here please? The backs of your shoes have not been polished'. He pulled open the drawer and out comes the black pot and I had to polish my shoes etc. Also my tie wasn't on straight and such and such. They were tough boys. In fact, the Lands Department was more than likely run by the army. The Accountant was a Major in the [27th] Battalion, the Superintendent from the Lands Branch was a Captain in the 10th Battalion. There were three people in the [27th] Battalion, great friends with Tommy Playford: a chap by the name of Penhall, Harvey, Hambidge (a Surveyor-General) – all powerful men. But powerful from the Army. They brought that power, not power, but ...

The discipline?

The discipline, the discipline.

Were they ex-World War I?

Yes, all World War I. This chap Herbie Craig, he still wore a collar (these tight collars you see with black ties) and he'd always put on a black suit coat over the top of that. He was ... When I started he would have been about 64, real old.

[33:05] **End of Side A, Tape 1**
Tape 1, Side B

[0:05] ... the Treasury Building and so on.

Yes. In the Lands Office they shared a lot with the *War Service Land Settlement Act* and the *Land Development Act*, where a lot of the work was in the preparation of plans of subdivisions of areas bought for the reallocation of land to war service settlers. That was more of a land type of thing. I was only a very minor part. I was only a junior but I had the adaptability to understand the terms of, I wouldn't say the research people, but the people who were trained in agriculture, which some of them very early ... There were no degree men because degrees didn't exist in Ag. Science until what? The late '30s or something, at least then. They were experienced, most probably RDA men. They were. All our inspectors in the Lands Department were RDA – Roseworthy Diploma of Agriculture men. A lot of time was spent within the *Land Development Act*, which was headed by Doc Callaghan. He was the Chairman of the Land Development Executive, as well as the Director of Agriculture. So there was a lot of taking messages to him and backwards and forwards to my Director. I had to go and see Dr Callaghan with, 'Sir, This is the latest sub-division of Penola Estate or Wrattenbully Estate or the land in Kangaroo Island or Loxton North. Can you arrange [inspections]? What's the Director got here, to arrange for an Agricultural Advisor to give on the suitability of what type of land this would be for the planting of citrus or wheat maize'. I was like the little boy running backwards and forwards. (laughs) A lot of the time was spent with doing that most of the time. Not most of the time but then in the late '50s I became engaged in the selling of land under the *Crown Rates and Recovery Act*, which meant the non-payment of rates. Solely that was my whole responsibility, a shocking job it was. Then I became more conversant with the pastoral industry, then I was in with the Pastoral Board. I was only just the boy around but I was thrown things all the time because I could do it and I had adaptability with people.

So you were getting familiar across a wide range of areas?

Yes on the land, very wide from pastoral to irrigation. Of course, then on the Jubilee Train. I was on the Jubilee Train for the 10 weeks that was there.

[3:15] That was the one in 1951?

1951. I learnt a lot there in discussion with farmers. They thought I was most probably a well-trained agricultural person. It was just the normal know how that I had that I could adapt to communicate with a man on the land quite easily. I remember even the stage when we were at Barmera, I was pointed out by a chap of the name of William Gilchrist, who was the District Officer at the Barmera Department of Lands Irrigation Office. He subsequently became a member of the Land Board in the Department of Lands, but he was a diplomate [RDA: Roseworthy Diploma of Agriculture]. He was a nice chap. He was pointing out to me the

necessity of the Department and the E&WS Department had to do something about the salt of the River Murray. That was in 1949 and 1950 and here we are 52 years ahead and they're still only talking about it. It's amazing, it's amazing.

The wheels are turning slowly.

Yes. I mean he most probably knew about that before the war that there was a problem, big problem.

Or he could see that problems may emerge?

No. He was scraping salt off. I remember seeing him scraping this salt off. We had to get up in this old Ford A. He had a tourer – Ford-A. That was his Departmental car. That was '49 that was, '50 because I had to do an appreciation course of the river. I said I wasn't conversant that much in irrigation practices if I'm going to be put on this train. So I was given a quick run-around of the irrigation areas of Loxton North, Cooltong.

Learning very much on the job.

Yes.

You were on the Jubilee Train for some time?

The full length of the whole period was 10 or 11 weeks or something. I was the only permanent one: I was permanent with the army, the navy and the air force chaps. I was the only other permanent public servant, and the youngest.

When did you become a permanent?

Permanent? 19th of March '48. That was under the *Commonwealth Employment and Establishment Act* for returned soldiers. You weren't allowed to be made permanent whilst there was a returned soldier who hadn't then returned. He might have had to go to that job but I think there was a 3 year or 3½ year period and after that there was a whole great bulk of us in the *Gazette*. You'll find hundreds of them most probably, because I started on the 19th of March 1945: '48, of course, I was permanent ...

First started '45 ...

Yes, but everything goes back to '45 for what do you call it, long service leave, superannuation. In fact my first fortnightly was £1 9 [shillings] 7 pence, less tuppence [2 pence] duty stamp. (laughs) It was £96 a year that was what we started on.

There will be a record of that in the ...

Yes, most probably. I wondered whether I had it in my wallet somewhere but I think it's disintegrated. (laughs)

That would have been an interesting few years then. You've got the end of the war. As you mentioned earlier, you've got women in the workforce and their jobs are being taken back by the men returning and so on. Then there's the influx of people with world experiences and so on.

Yes. At that stage married women weren't allowed to be employed for one thing, so there was this influx of young people my age. They've all gone now.

Also you've got the troops coming back, the returned servicemen. They had a completely different set of experiences.

Exactly. Different, and a lot of them did not continue. There was a chap in the paper today [who died] – Des Mackinnon, he was a dentist. There were two or three back from the navy; two lawyers; a judge (Frank Boylan, he was a judge); Des Mackinnon, Bob Sampson – two dentists; Arthur Daw he was still with us. He was [an] Assistant Director of Education. I remember him going to university. We'd be having drinks and he'd have to have 3 pints before he'd go down to lectures at night. He got Honours in Economics. But a lot of them went to the Commonwealth Bank. When the Commonwealth Bank started in '47, '48, there was a big request for public servants. Advertised: they put big signs up. A lot went to there because you were getting about £100 a year extra, which was big money. There were about six I know of that went from there. Kevin O'Connell, he used to teach me to swim, competition swimming, down at the City Baths at lunchtime. We'd go down there, run down there and run back. Say I was 20 then or 19, he was about 32. He was a prisoner of war. He said, 'I can't put up with this. I've been locked up for 3 years and bashed and belted'. He went for about 12 months and then he took up music of all things. Kevin O'Connell. He did his Bachelor of Music down at the uni and then he went to Sydney and he was doing the program for the ABC for years, music and operas, you name it. You would never think it. He was a larrikin and he drank like a fish. A lot of them went out and then that gave us positions, permanent positions, as well. But the girls they sort of ... By '47 there weren't many except typists. There were no clerical component. I reckon they had all gone by end of '46.

The typists and secretaries?

They were still there, where as during the war a lot of the men were competent typists and shorthand typists. All my bosses were all competent shorthand typists and typed, they had no problem.

[10:15] You mentioned before the system of discipline and so on. There seems to be a fair degree of regimentation or structure.

Definitely a structure. Even the promotion – you could see where you were going to be in 4 years time, in 10 years time. Everything was structured but that was the old system.

That was the old system but it was also something that many people were comfortable with.

Yes.

Life had an order and in 4 years time you'd be here.

Yes: 'I'm aiming at this one'. I always used to think that 'Fancy, if I was a Director of Lands, £1012 a year. Fancy getting all that!'. Looking in the old stud book, that was his salary in the late '40s, [£]1012, plus an allowance of £50 as chairman of the Botanic Garden Board. I remember that one.

You studied the way ahead!

There was a chap by the name of Arthur Henry Peters, the meanest man in the world, Tea was rationed and I had to go down to Ebenezer Place, Synagogue Place sorry, to line up to get tea for him. It used to be 1 [shilling] and a penny for a pound. He'd always give me the shilling: 'I'll give you the penny next time'. I never ever got those bloody pennies! (laughs) And he was the Director! Eleven times more salary than I was getting. (laughs)

These are the days of wartime rationing?

Yes. Of course, the rationing was still going on 3 years afterwards. There was petrol rationing still going on.

You got sent out to collect the rations?

Yes for the tea. It was always available at Synagogue Place. I don't know what place was there but you could get the tea there, with your ration tickets of course. That went out about '46 or something but they were still rationing petrol in '48 and '49.

That went on for a while because there were other things that flowed on with building controls and ...

Yes. It was all black metal and it was all ... Yes, that went on for some time. Clothing went out quick, within a couple of years. I remember getting a suit from Peoplestores. Do you know them?

Yes.

Peoplestores – the tailor was a friend of my mother who lived next door to the St Morris picture theatre ... I went there to get a tailored one and he said, 'You've got to have your tickets'. That would have been '47, late '46 and you still had to have the tickets for your clothing and your suit would take a damn lot. Then it disappeared after that.

It certainly went on for a little while and then applied to different items and so on.

Yes because Stan North who was the secretary for the Department of Agriculture was formerly the Commissioner for Rationing. I don't think it was called rationing (it was some other word), but he was the man that ran the Department.

[13:55] You must have seen quite a few of the senior public servants! You started with Schumacher!

Yes I did. In fact, going away on the Jubilee Train, the man in charge of the whole train and it was run on an army basis (don't worry, it was pretty strict) was Bernie Schumacher's brother. He was the Chief Engineer for Railways headquartered at Murray Bridge for all South Eastern.

He was the South East District Engineer. He was a tough man. He'd have a go if your shirt was sticking out here or if your trousers weren't right he'd tell you to go back and iron the damn thing.

What sort of things happened on the train?

We went through every town that was served by rail we visited in South Australia. It was made up of I don't know how many carriages – say 20 carriages. The two carriages in the front were where we lived (that was the permanent people). I had a desk, a bunk and a washbasin. It was quite comfortable.

Luxury!

Yes it was. We pulled in to every town, like school kids, the farmers would go through. Each department and each commonwealth – the navy the army, they had maybe half a carriage or a full carriage. The display was put out there.

So people actually came through the train?

Yes. They'd start at one end and come through from the back door. They'd walk right through up to the [sleeping quarters] and then they'd walk down.

Everything was contained within the train?

Yes, everything.

No displays outside?

No, nothing. Everything was inside the train and they'd stop at every station. You had a list that was always published in the paper saying the Jubilee Train will be at Kadina on such and such that day, Wallaroo ...

Basically at a day per station or half-a-day?

Port Pirie ... Mt Gambier we were there for 2 or 3 days I have an idea. Some of the bigger stations, Port Pirie, Port Augusta. Some of the smaller ones you were there in the day ... We travelled at night. They went straight from Port Pirie to Port Augusta: we'd travel at night. All the meals were met by the hotels. We were all marched ... those that were permanent ... oh, the people, you'd go and have breakfast at the hotels. The administrative man in charge of the train was a man [Mr R. De Lance Holmes]. I've got the little book about it here. They brought him from England. He was an ex-military man again, a colonel, one of the Royal Hussars or something. He was very good to me. He congratulated me on my dress attire. He said, 'You're always so spritely ... (indistinct comment mimicking Holmes)'.

As you were one of the few permanent people on the train, were you representing the Lands Department or ...?

The Department of Lands. I was just ...

But other people from other departments would have come and gone?
Yes, every one week most probably. They'd be there for a week.

Is there any reason why you stayed for the whole length?
I don't know, perhaps I did a good job I don't know.

I was just wondering if they volunteered you ...!
No, it was the Chief Clerk: he said, 'I'll know you'll do a good job'. Daniel Vincent O'Dea, the best Irishman ever. He said, 'You'll be right'. He rang me up every Friday night saying, 'How are you going? Do you want to come home?'. There were others who wanted to go on it, but no I spent the whole length of time.

Was it just you or was there someone else from the Lands ...?
No, only me. I would take notes if I was in doubt of something and then I would go and ring. We were connected up to the phone. There was a booth where we could make [calls]. There were two or three phones there. If we had a survey question or a land development question or something on the river, I had the names of the big bosses. Arthur Gordon who was the Secretary for Irrigation. A.D. Smith was Surveyor-General. I knew all the big boys. C.C. Mackenzie was the Superintendent of War Service Land Settlement. If a returned soldier came in and said, 'What about my allocation? My rents too bloody high' or such and such, I'd ring these men and they'd ring me back with the information and then I'd have to [relay back to the person].

So it was an information service as well as having displays?
Often the displays though gave the person what they wanted to talk to. Then they said, 'What about such and such, what about this?'. So it posed questions, not always. I mean, when the kids came in they'd just shuffle along and to-ing and fro-ing ... Farmers were all good: they were all very interested. It was just at that time when land settlement was happening, and the [90-Mile] Desert by the AMP was just starting to be explored properly. But all the land settlement, all the South East, the government bought thousands of acres down there and big estates – the Rymill Estate, Padthaway Estate, 8 Mile Creek which they developed, there were 112 dairy farms down there they created. Big properties were being really developed.

In that sort situation ...
Kangaroo Island, half of Kangaroo Island was bulldozed. You wouldn't do that now but it was!
There were a couple of hundred people settled over there, more – 240 people settled on blocks.

In that sort of situation, Trevor, going through those bigger estate areas, did you try to stop at sidings?
Yes, where it was sufficient. Penola, Padthaway – do you know Padthaway? It's not very big but we stayed there anyway. There wouldn't be more than 50 in the town but there was quite a few who came there.

That's what I was wondering. How many would come in when you'd go to a small siding?

You see we would only be there between 9 and 11 [a.m.] and then on to Naracoorte or Penola was the next one.

Did you find people were coming in from all over?

Yes, yes my word. Even up at Eudunda, Kapunda, Robertstown, which is the end of the line, and Morgan! Gave us a hell of a surprise, the number of people who got to Morgan, we were there for the weekend. Half of Cadell Gaol came too as it were! In those days cars ... When we were at Morgan, we were there a Saturday and Sunday. Generally Sunday was an off day; you did your washing and so on. But we were entertained by someone from the big station up there. The son of his was on the train: he was an army officer. Can't think of his damn name; isn't that shocking?

You can fill it in later.

This was say '51, the big boom, the war boom. We were taken out to this station in these new Jaguars, (laughs) in the back of these leather-seat Jaguars. You know Jaguar cars!

Yes.

Then we went up in their boat on the river and a big BBQ. I can't think of their name. Gee, it's going to worry me now. Well known, they were very well known. [Warnes.]

Again, you can fill it in later. But with that sort of experience you're getting to see a fair bit of the State.

I saw every town in South Australia. I'd already seen most of it. There's no town I've never been to. That right Joan?

Wife in distance, 'Sorry'.

That right?

'What's right?'

I said I know nearly every town in South Australia.

'Yes'.

There was a chap by the name of [Duane on the train]. He was a navy chap, and there was another chap and his parents were very wealthy people in Melbourne. They weren't from South Australia. The army chap was the army man who was from this station. Well-known people, out from the Burra they were, a huge station they had. The man from the Taxation, he was a federal chap; he was on it the whole time [with] some of the Commonwealth departments ... the army, navy and air force ... The police used to have one every week. I met ... quite friends Inspector Vogelsang he did a lot favours for me. Then Inspector Sharp, Superintendent Sharp became Assistant Commissioner. I had a lot to do with him. I was the next cabin to him. He used to borrow my wireless. I had a wireless about that wide, that high and it had two big

[batteries] you had to carry it and just lift the little lid down and dial it with [guesswork]. It was a huge weight, a big box like that. You had to have [aerials] then you'd rig them up around the top and I'd get the firemen to rig it up permanently. He got screws and drilled in the roof and had this permanent thing and then we had to have a proper earth wire but no, it was excellent.

What was the reception like?

It was good, anywhere we'd go. It was marvellous. It was a 12-valve. It was like a car: if you had a 2-cylinder one but as you got up with the valves, they got more powerful.

By the way you're describing it, Trevor, it's about 18 inches and about a foot or so high?

Yes.

I'm using the old imperial measures but that's something you can ...

Like your case, but by a big square.

Like the Departmental briefcase [which was at the interview].

No, no and they were very heavy, very heavy.

I can well imagine.

It had two big batteries. It wasn't electrical because on the train, when they would come to town they would connect up straight away. The telephone would be there and the Electricity Trust would be there. They would rig up straight away. It was pretty efficient. And De Lance Holmes, De Lance Holmes, I can't think of his first name though, he was always in this grey suits with beautiful ties and he always had a little pearl stud there or a diamond stud.

I'll have to do a little bit more work on that one because it's an interesting experience you had: Jubilee trains don't come around that often.

Can you stop it?

Trevor we've had a bit of a pause there and we've been looking at information on the Jubilee Train and you've kindly shown me a Jubilee celebrations 1951 booklet on the train. From there we can get some of the dates. It's clear that it was in the second half of the year you were on the train, some time from the end of July through to October. There was a range of departments and public organisations and so on that are on board. Got a photograph there of yourself as the engine driver.

Engine driver, yes.

As I said, you had a pretty interesting set of experiences, particularly as you were on the train for the whole time.

The whole period, yes. The only State public servant that was on the train the whole time, with the exception of the engine driver and that. The fireman was changed over. The engine driver was there for the whole time, only because of his professional knowledge of the train. You had to have a good driver.

According to the booklet, the train was ...

And Schumacher. He was a permanent one too but he was a bit above all of us.

The booklet indicates that it covered pretty well the entire broad gauge network of ...

We embraced the whole of it. I don't think there was any exceptions.

So was this before you got to see a fair bit of the State?

We were in some little sidings that you'd never heard of really, a little wheat siding. But then all of a sudden out came a little school from down the Never, Never and there might be 15 kids but they stopped for them. A lot of this was done prior in advance, finding out from the population or rather someone found that – it might have been the local policeman who said, 'I can get the school from such and such – Oona Whoop Whoop Stone Hut Cottage or something – and we'll bring them in'. So they stopped at the little station and it gave often the chance to fill up with water and that. She had to fill up with water all the time. That was one thing that used to annoy us in the middle of the night. They'd stop. 'What are they stopping for?'. You'd hear 'Whoosh', all the steam going and everything like that. It would wake you up at around 2 a.m. in the morning. They had to have two teams, two drivers, they had two drivers that's right. There were four: they would sleep in and sleep off.

Stay on all the time.

Yes. Because you couldn't have a man up all day and then drive the train – I won't say all night, it might only have been 3 or 4 hours but by the time ... You see, they had to shunt in and shunt out, change carriages around and back to front them. We were always shunted off the main line and some of these little towns didn't have a main line. You had to be there for x minutes. In fact, a couple of times I was told, 'Here are the detonators. Now if anything happens you've got to get out and start running backwards and forwards to drop detonators'. 'Why a detonator?'. That warns that there's something there. I didn't know anything about that. I thought they were pulling my leg but there was the box of detonators.

To alert another train?

Yes. Run back as far as you can, someone's got to run back and put them on the line and 'Boom!'. They didn't show me the noise it made, but they were going to but I ... (laughs)

You didn't have to use them then?

Bernie Schumacher, he was around. They were going to do it. I had my rifle there with me.

Did you have to use the detonators at any time?

No. I had my rifle. I remember shooting around Strathalbyn around the back of the main street down by the creek. We got some good rabbits there. That's right, I had a gun there.

Shooting a few rabbits. Did you shoot any roos while you were out in the bush?

No, only rabbits.

So you kept your shooting skills up?

Yes, yes. This chap [Tony] Lord, [an Army man], he always took the bolt out. He kept the bolt in his room and I had the rifle in the other, minus the bolt – you know a single shot bolt.

A bit of control.

Good control. He didn't want some young little such and such running around with a loaded rifle or sitting on top of the carriage aiming at bottles or something. We'd have practice. There was the navy chap (swarthy one I called him); we'd go out to a quarry or something like that. I asked the locals down there. He'd bring up a lot of old medicine bottles, don't ask me where he got them from. We'd knock them off. I said, 'Look, we haven't got any long rifles left' and he'd say, 'Don't worry, don't worry'. He always came up with ammunition: 'Don't ask me, don't ask me' ...

No questions!

No questions. Don't know where. He couldn't have pinched them. I don't know.

He had a supply. Trevor we've covered the train aspect, we've covered the start of your career in the Public Service and we've only got up to 1951! (laughs) We might have to pick up next time on '51 and onwards in partly your career in the Lands Department and partly the Ag. Department, of course, which is the main focus. We're probably out of time for today, perhaps we could pick up next session and carry the story forward. It's been very interesting to hear about the different experiences you had boyhood-wise leading into the career. It's great.

[32:10] **End of Side B, Tape 1** – end of session

Tape 2, Side A – Session of 28 October 2003

[0:25] Trevor, we finished last time about the point of your Jubilee Train 1951 experience when you were working with the Lands Department. It's probably appropriate to continue on with some of your career in the Lands Department leading up to you joining Ag. Department and, of course, any experiences you might have had in terms of relationships between Lands Department and Agriculture Department would be of interest as well as your general activities in the Lands Department. For example, you seeing Doc Callaghan.

Just prior to the Jubilee Train I was engaged in a job, it wasn't a classified job or anything like that, but it was the preparation of land plans in various development areas, mainly Wratonbully Estate, 8 Mile Creek, Parndana and the Wanilla project. From that, I had a lot to do with the land development executive. It was chaired by Dr Callaghan, the Director of Agriculture. He was the chairman. There was a permanent staff of Rowland Hill, the Chief Executive Officer. We didn't call him that then: I've got no idea what it was called then. A chap by the name of Crisp and Bill Simms was the secretary and it was made up of other agriculturalists who were formally – I won't say they were employed by the Department of Agriculture but they had qualifications in agriculture and livestock. I know at least four or five of them were ex-RDA people, so they would have been familiar with other people in the Agriculture. The different plans I had to draw up: they were called block plans, it was just to draw up information for the Land Board so they could allot land or allocate land to a war service settler after they'd

interviewed and what type of land. Much of this information was sought from the Agriculture Department in regards to pastures, livestock, dairy breeds, cattle. But mostly pasture: how would we treat this land? Because it was just pure scrub one day and the next day it was just burnt out scrub and roll and wait, by far the best way to ... That was done by what they called agricultural overseers who, I don't know whether they were formally from the Department of Agriculture but it was liaised through the Department of Agriculture. They would see that the reports were furnished. That was my first interchange of knowledge with the Department of Agriculture. Not in as much as personal people but movement of paper.

Dockets and information would go back and forth?

Exactly. The Department of Primary Industry had a big say in it as well, that's the Commonwealth Department of Primary Industry. They were in a building in Gawler Place on the 4th floor above Reid Murray: now don't ask me what the name of the building is down there. (laughs)

I can find that out. They had an interest, of course, in the soldier settler scheme?

Yes. They were supplying the money, they were supplying the money. They had a big say in it.

In what sense was it a big say? Just administrative allocation of funds or did they actually get hands on with facts and figures?

No. They would want to see and a lot of things had to be approved, sub-divisions had to be approved and they had a big say in it. Actually, the Department of Lands were the agents of them, that was all. They were the principals: the DPI, that's what they were called, the Department of Primary Industries, they were the principals. But the people who had the biggest say was the RSL. They had the biggest say of the lot. Tommy Playford took all the notice and [Sir] Cecil Hincks – both ex-servicemen, First World War. They made sure that everything was down to the ball but you couldn't argue with the RSL then, they were a very powerful body, extremely powerful.

Were they just in an advisory role in this?

Yes. If a chap had a problem and thought he was being treated unjustly ... or his loan didn't come through for a certain amount of money, they'd write to the RSL and get out Brigadier Leane on the phone (VC [Victoria Cross] etc.) and on to the phone to Cecil Hincks, yes.

It's interesting that you mentioned the federal authorities being involved, the Commonwealth Department and so on in that post-war era. During the war and post-war, that sense of federalism that things are being done on a national level. Was there any sense of cooperation or, conversely, antagonism with a couple of authorities?

No, not really. There might have been a little bit of personal between people on personal levels but not on decision making really.

The Commonwealth Department was putting up the money, therefore Lands and Agriculture ...

The Land Board used to throw some ... If you've heard it or not, because I can't think of the chap who was in the DPI then, I've got no idea. He was not a powerful man, but he'd rub you up very easily.

Was it in the State's interests, for example, to have lots of soldier settlers taking on smallish to medium-sized blocks?

Yes. The aim of the Act was to settle ex-servicemen on the land.

I was just wondering whether it might have been better to have had bigger blocks and fewer soldier settlers?

No, there were some blocks that were quite big, it all depends on the land and where it was.

And what they could produce?

You'd get blocks up the river, the citrus blocks and things like that. They were quite small but they certainly gave a good living. You had the dairy farms down at 8 Mile Creek, Mount Schanck, Port MacDonnell – they were only small blocks, 10 acres or something like that, but enough to run a herd, 50 or 60, not like these days where they have 300 or something like that. Kangaroo Island, I forget what they were, 400 or 500 acres, not big but not small. It was to sustain an adequate living, that was the opinion of what the Land Board said. A lot of those farmers over there have done pretty well out of it all.

Was it being done under Commonwealth legislation or State legislation?

No. *War Service Lands Settlement Act* was Commonwealth. Then there was the *Land Settlement Act*, which is a State one, which permitted the growth of the AMP. That was done by the AMP but they did pass an Act for what we call the 90-Mile Desert, all that development right down to Bordertown ...

Coonalpyn?

Coonalpyn, all through there. That was done through an Act to enable the AMP to develop it, not the State.

Did you have any involvement in that or was that ...?

No, no. That was past the desert. They had a few – Jim Richards, he went and worked for Agriculture No not really, the AMP had their own people.

Did they have some collaboration with the Agriculture Department and the CSIRO, particularly the fertilisers and the phosphate issue?

Yes. That was a big issue that.

The Lands Department didn't get too heavily involved?

Not really, except for when the blocks became allocated because it was Crown land, a lot of it was Crown land. The initial split up was under Miscellaneous Lease. There were some

thousands and thousands of acres and they were split up into maybe 25, 50 farms, but one man owned that. I'm not mentioning names or anything like that but there were huge tracts of land down there, pure scrub, just scrub as far as you could see. That was all split up and sold to the government really.

That was the mid '50s?

Yes. It started mid '50s and it phased out late '50s. It sort of came after land settlement, under the *War Service Land Settlement Act*.

How long did you work on the land settlement issue, the war service ...?

That would have been up to mid '50s.

Quite a few years?

Three or four years on and off, backwards and forwards.

That was your principal work?

Yes.

So you just developing a ...?

Yes ... most probably, principal work there. Often someone would go on leave or be sick for a month and you were switched around. You'd be going around everywhere. I worked on the ... when the Law of Property Act was enacted, I had to go into that for a while. That was if you were an alien, or rather you were a new entrant, you had to get approval from the Department of Lands to buy a block of land. That was massive, you've got no idea! You had to get police reports, you had to get reports from immigration, you had to go back to London or somewhere where they came from or to France.

From all over Europe and ...?

Yes. There'd be lines of people waiting to get their approval before they could buy. You were being hassled by land agents. (laughs) I remember the time I was at, what's his name? When I see him he gives a laugh. He was the head of the [SANFL] football – Basheer.

Max Basheer.

Max Basheer. He is about 2 years older than I am. He had only just been a new graduate type of thing and 'We've got to have this and we've got to have all this' because they were doing all the land transfer.

He was a lawyer?

Yes. But all the land agents – you've got no idea. I remember Murray Hill, he'd be coming in extremely (this was before he was an MP or anything) ...

He was a land agent.

Yes. They were Hill & Co. ... I remember a lot of solicitors were engaged in preparation of the transfers and that because there weren't too many land brokers in those days. In fact, the course only started in the mid '50s for land broking. A solicitor was entitled to do the brokerage on the transfer or mortgage or anything like that. Then the School of Mines brought in the land brokers course. It might have been the '50s but that was tough. There were 100 applicants and only 1 of 10 [passed]. Yes, that was very tough. It was an extremely hard exam.

Is that something that was coming through the real estate sector or through government?

No, government. Perhaps the real estate did push it more than likely, I don't know. It might have been going prior to the war but there were very few land brokers, very few. A Notary of the Public could perform some and a bank manager could perform some, in preparation of memorandum the transfer, memorandum of the mortgage. I wasn't into it then. I was a bit too young to be worried about what you should do and what you shouldn't. (laughs) I was just told to do things full stop!

[14:20] You were working with people, other people were helping you on the land settlement?

Yes. It was quite a big group really. You were working with people from the accountants, from the registrar's area, the land registrar, the land development, the Land Board. There was what they called the War Service Settlement Branch, which were tending the First World War settlers. They were looking after the interests of those; collecting the [rents], looking after the properties. They had a very big added job to do. There were a lot of settlers under the First World War who settled, especially up the river. There were a hell of a lot of people up there and around the land. But that seemed to phase out because then I went into the recovery side, chasing up all the [settlers who had amounts in] arrears.

Recovery in the sense of people would ...

Money. Mostly in the recovery of outstanding rents.

So it could be anybody, not just soldier settlers, it could be any person who ...?

It could be anybody [who owed Crown rents]. With soldier settlers that was treated with the utter [care]. You put a label on there and that would have gone up to Mr Mackenzie at War Service and let them handle the recovery side of that. A chap by the name of John Redman Ryan (I think he had the Military Medal) looked after those things. He had the way of [ex-servicemen], Sergeant Ryan.

Were there many people who fell behind in their payments?

Yes, hundreds of them. Not so much with war service but right throughout. Once the good years were OK. It's just like now. You meet ... people. At Morgan and that these chaps didn't have mortgages really: the land was allocated to them, but anything they took out, say to

purchase a tractor, became a stock and plant mortgage. So if they wanted a tractor, the department would advance them so much money. It was just the same as a mortgage on the land or cattle or whatever they wanted. There would be a bill of sale over it. If they didn't keep up their payments, I was advised of it then I would write letters [asking for payment] ...

Did any of that work involved liaison with the Agriculture Department?

No.

You're talking about advancing money to buy stock or whatever but were you getting any advice from the Agriculture Department about the necessity to have extra stock or the risk involved?

Not really, because the [district land] inspectors were [qualified] – I won't say ex-agricultural boys, but they were trained in agriculture. It was put up to them for report and recommendation.

Because they were Lands Department ...?

[A request on the following lines would be sent to the appropriate district inspector:] 'Mr Joe Roberts of Section 351, Hundred of Paringa, who settled on fat lambs, wishes to purchase a spreader, a header and ... tractor valued at £3000. Would you please report on the recommendation on the viability of him maintaining payments of such and such? Does he consider that the property will be sustained as such at mortgage'.

Those inspectors, they were Lands Department?

Land Department inspectors.

Do you know if they would have had any liaison with the Agriculture people?

I would imagine, but not to a great extent.

OK, that's something I'll follow through Trevor, that link up between the inspectors and Lands and Agriculture people. It's obviously not something at your level ...

No, no.

... but at another level it might have been.

I know in the Irrigation Branch there was a tie up with Agriculture, but then I don't think they had that many officers up the river there. I know there was a tie up with Agriculture because Arthur Gordon, who was the Secretary of Irrigation, had quite a lot of contact with Tom Miller. Tom's told me about it.

[19:40] Tom was the Chief Horticultural Officer.

Yes. So there was quite a bit of cooperation or unison with the Agriculture on the irrigation side. The Lands Department (the land development) would have had that through Doc Callaghan. The things would come up and he'd say, 'Yes I'll fix that'. I don't know but he was the representative so his voice, what he said went and they took a lot of notice of him.

Did you see him, Callaghan, about the place?

Yes. He'd come over, I think it was every Friday afternoon that they had the Land Development Executive Meeting. He'd come around with his wavy hair. He was a gentleman, an absolute gentleman. An extremely smart man. He redeveloped the Department of Agriculture.

It was about this time wasn't it, the mid '50s. that ...?

Yes, late '50s I should say. When I got there it was just starting to work into it, into the formation of the various divisions. He split it up into various divisions with a head of division like Lex Walker was the Chief, Division of Plant Industry and Marshall Irving was Chief, Division Animal Industry and the Chief Extension Officer, Wheat Extension Officer, was [Bob Herriot] down at ... He was the Principal of Roseworthy, or subsequently became the Principal. He divided it up and then each division had a [chief]. It was really good, it worked really well.

Was that something he'd implemented based on other Departments?

No, he did it himself as far as I know. It's a little bit too high for my line of thinking.

I know it's a long way removed now, but were other departments ...

No. Everybody said about what Doc Callaghan did and that.

How senior a public servant would he have been at that stage? Where would the Head of Agriculture be in the pecking order?

Pretty low. Agriculture wasn't very [important]. A man [named] Christian was one of the Ministers there ...

Agriculture is known to exist as a department, but it hasn't got the status of an E&WS or Highways or that.

The Minister of Highways, that was the big boy. He was the Commissioner of Crown Lands.

Including Treasury or the Auditor?

The Auditor-General was different, but the Treasurer played a big part – Under Treasurer I should say, Freddie Drew. He was the Under Treasurer. I reckon he'd be second to the Premier.

Someone like Callaghan serving on the Lands Settlement Committee, is that really by virtue of being Head of Agriculture?

Yes, I would imagine. I don't know who picked it or who formed it or anything but it would be the Commissioner of Crown Lands who formed it. I suppose Playford said, 'You shall have this man and you shall have this'. I don't know. (laughs)

I'll follow that through.

At that time, who was it? It was Reg Rudall who was the Commissioner or, rather, the Commissioner of Crown Lands. There was the Minister. Then the other was the Director of Lands – a chap by the name of Arthur Henry Peters. He was the biggest miser this side of the

stump! (laughs) He's the one I told you when I had to walk down to Synagogue Place to get his [packet of] tea: 11 pence and a shilling and he gave me a penny and he never paid me back for about 6 months then he'd give me 4 pence or something.

[24:20] You've still got that IOU on the slate!

As far as the strategy or whatever you like to call it, the politics of it, I wouldn't know about that really.

Were you not much interested in it?

No. You couldn't dare speak out of turn. You couldn't say a thing whether you liked it or not.

You were there, but seen and not heard, that's it.

A suit and tie?

Yes, suit and tie. A coat on too.

Summer and winter?

With your shoes polished, and I mean polished!

So a fairly regimented work environment?

Yes, the Lands Department was very much so.

They worked to the clock?

Exactly to the clock. At 6 minutes past 5.

So you had a 5½ day week?

Yes. 9 to 11.30 I think it was.

So it would be about 44 hours?

44, yes. It was 44 or 48, no 44. 9 to 5, that's 8 hours a day and that's 40, so 44.

44.

Half past 8 to half past 11. I know it was 11:30 because if the footy was at Adelaide Oval we'd all rush down there and you'd grab a pie or something to see the first play at half past 12, quarter to 1, the Colts or it might have been whoever there was playing.

If you were not out playing sports yourselves and so on?

Yes. Most of the time when it was like that we ... Can't think when it finished though. Must have finished I've got no idea. I know the 5 o'clock stopped and then it was 6 past 5 and there was that half-hour type of thing, 48½. I don't know how it worked but that 6 minutes past 5 times was a half-hour, you worked an extra half-hour. I don't know how they worked it.

At lunchtime, a regulated lunch break?

Yes – 1 till 1:45.

Is that the same across all of the departments?

Yes. There was no such thing as work [unclear] that's why at 1 o'clock – Some people ... I know when I went to Agriculture people could work in that any daytime, not any time but between 12 and 2. Others, in the E&WS you'd see this mass of people going down Gawler Place and down King William Street at about ten past 1 going down to Rundle Street. Then you'd see them all going back at a quarter to 2. You'd go back there at 2 p.m. and there wouldn't be a soul about because it would be all public servants, thousands of them, [had returned to work].

A very structured daily existence. You were saying earlier, catching a ...

Yes. Signing the book: there'd be always someone waiting to time back to below the line. If you were below the line, well you'd to have to explain it. At a quarter to 9 we started, yes a quarter to 9 because the line used to be ruled at ten to 9. If you were over that you were late and you had to report to the Chief Clerk or whoever in the Accountant Room and give reasons.

Did you get docked pay?

No.

Just an explanation required.

Might be wrong: I think they had the power to make you work back. Used to get 3/6 tea money if we worked back past 6 o'clock.

So there was a special allowance?

Yes, 3/6 for tea money. You got tea money. We'd work overtime ... During that time then there was a big shift to Gawler Place to get rid of all our files because they were trying to make room for the Air Photography Unit in the basement of the Treasury Building but there were files there and most of them went back to about 1836: Crown Lands Office, the SGO Office, the Immigration Office. They all had to be shipped around to the 5th floor of Simpson's Building – the top of Agriculture – the Simpson's Building there. We would do that two nights a week. There would be parties sorting the dockets out with the rules put down by the Archives. There wasn't that much, but personal, leave of absence things and exams passed, all of that had to go.

What to keep, what to throw out.

Yes, throw out. Transfers of land had to go out, mortgages could be thrown out but anything dealing with the land itself, that was kept. 1836, 1838 I remember files there. Then they were all shifted around. We could work till I think 8 p.m., that was the maximum. We'd get tea money, no overtime.

And no time for tea!

We used to have tea, it might have been 5 shillings or so. That went on for weeks and weeks and weeks.

This is the accumulation of records that have built up in the ...?

In the Department of Lands, they had the oldest records in the State.

You didn't have to ship them off to the Archives or anything, you just held on to them?

Yes. Shifted them around to the [Simpson's Building] up there, up the top [floor].

That's just shifting them into Departmental accommodation again. You hadn't shipped them off to the Archives or anything like that at that stage?

No, not at that stage. I think there were a few. There were some of the early 1840 survey ones, but then there were all the maps and plans and everything like that. There was a hell of a lot.

Were you involved in sorting the stuff out?

Yes, all the dockets and the files and all that. There were teams of us doing it, like six to a team type of thing and a supervisor.

That's something separate to your recovery work?

Yes, that was at night time. You enlisted to do that.

How did you get involved in that? Did they call for volunteers?

No call. You were told Tuesday and Thursday nights you'll work back.

Appointed volunteers as such!

Appointed. (laughs) You could have gotten out of it really but you had been appointed. One Saturday morning there was one of the bosses there that used to stay in. He never used to do much. We told him to go home, we could look after this. We played cricket then! That's in the Agriculture building, because there's a huge wide expanse and they were building all these files and everything like that but there was still any amount of room. We played a good game of cricket actually! (both laugh) With a soft ball though. All the blue books and everything like that, there were miles and miles of them. Bound things, lovely beautiful big brown gazettes and all that, like the *Government Gazette*. Most departments would have had that in any case.

Were they going into storage there?

They were going into storage, yet they were utilized.

[33:05] **End of Side A, Tape 2**

Tape 2, Side B

[0:05] That building had just been ...

And even dedications of lands. There'd be a lot of lands that were dedicated under care, control and management of a council. Perhaps that council doesn't really exist; more so, they'd chase it up and find out exactly how it was dedicated, why it was dedicated because they were going to build a town there, the 'town' was surrounded in wheat paddocks and absorbed into someone's property. So then they had to take the necessary steps to isolate the title or create a title and then

merge it with the fellow's land. They had a small price added on and made it a freehold area. There were any amount of blocks, township blocks we called them: there was a town created, but it was never set out and it was all absorbed into the neighbouring farms. Then they would go back to these old files and dockets and find out the purpose why it was.

Surveyed and not laid out, and that sort of thing?

The survey had been laid out and the town and everything, but nothing there in the first place. It might have been laid out in 1850 or 1840 or so on, when the surveyors went out. There were plenty that were done by Light that was original, but Goyder did a lot. He did a lot of survey of towns and that and some of them are quite big towns now but a lot of little ones too that don't exist!

The idea seemed good at the time.

They sort of followed where the railway lines were going to be and they thought this was going to be a good spot. I don't know whether you'd find some of the structures of the [towns], what were called perpendicular [designs] – all the roads go right up and down and then all the subdivisions were all in squares, often see that.

A grid sort of plan?

A grid, yes. 1838 that was formulated, the grid plan. When you'd get in the hills they're quite different, but out in the [plains], especially Yorke Peninsula and Mid North, it's all grid, everything.

[2:30] The thinking of the time. Ironically, the building you're using as the most convenient and readily accessible building for your storage purposes is also the building for the Agriculture Department.

Yes. That served the Agriculture Department. While they went into it, there was also the Woods and Forests there and the Public Stores Department was there on the 3rd floor. The Soils Branch was down in Gawler Place. The Horticulture Branch was at the back of the Education Building Lane where the Automatic Data Processing was built. The Stock and Brands were down in Flinders Street. They then threw the Woods and Forests out and they threw the Public Stores out and gained two storeys out of that and they brought all the Agriculture into one, Agriculture building, Simpson's Building – the most horrible thing ever.

Was that down the southern end of Gawler Place?

No. In between Pirie and Flinders going south on the right-hand side, opposite where Sven Kallins used to be and Steve Phillips the hairdresser.

You know it well!

The State Bank was on the corner, then there was a lane, then there was the Agriculture building and there was another lane because that goes to Flinders Street and then there was

Motors Limited (Morris, Reilly, MGs), British Motors or something like that and next to that was a big car park, undercover car park and you could walk in. The other part of Simpson's Building was around in Pirie Street where they used to make the washing machines next to the State Bank. That was taken over some time before that. There's quite a history there. (laughs)

If the building for Simpsons had been taken over for government, as in being used for government purposes ...

I forget when they left. Perhaps in the late '70s, '79, '78, '79 we went into the 'Black Stump' I think it was. I can't think of it actually.

When you joined the Department, that's where you were based?

Yes.

[5:00] Just to finish off with the Lands Department, you worked in the Recovery Section there. Did that take you through to the end of your time with the Lands Department? You were talking about the late '50s?

Yes, just about. It would have been. I went into the area – all the information had been put up by the technical people and it would be forwarded to a room called the writing room and there'd be four of us dictating letters all day, based on the information. If we didn't have the information, we'd get it. You'd have to run over the survey diagrams and make an interpretation and do it, then you'd write your letter. It could be from transfers to allocation of land, to camping license to Aboriginal reserves.

And someone would type it up for you?

Yes. There was a great many typists and you'd be dictating all the time. You would dictate all morning (your letters) and in the afternoon they'd come back and you would have to check them and sign them. If you thought you had the authority then they used to put A.H. Peters; if it had Director of Lands it was per TWR. You had to make sure that the initials were plain and clear. Mr Peters did the signing and it had your initials on that.

The filing system and the file reference.

And the file reference. That was a thing that went on most probably back from the 1800s. What other way was there with the communication that you had?

You grew up with that system, work-wise.

Yes.

[6:50] That sort of rounds out your time with the Lands Department. Perhaps we should look at your time in the Agriculture Department. The most obvious question is how did you make the change and why did you make the change in about 1962 or so? What are the circumstances of the transition?

Most probably I applied for a job in the Public Buildings Department. Advancement, that's all.

You had to advance and you couldn't go on in your own department you had to go wherever. I applied for one in the Police Department.

Were you doing any courses, any part-time stuff, with a view to advancement?

That's right, yes. As I say, I started accountancy and went through that: Accounts 1, Accounts 2, Audit 1. Gave that away and then I started on – it was run by the School of Mines – the Business Certificate. A 4-year course it was: did a couple of years of that. That was no good to me. I don't want all that rubbish. You don't need all that.

Part-time study?

Yes. Lectures were 6 till 8. I wasn't taking time off or anything like that. Saturday mornings. Just for advancement because there was quite a block in competition. When I started in '45 there were eight of us lads, ten of us I think there were (I think there's three of us left) all vying for that one vacancy when someone died. That's how it was. If someone died or transferred out ... A lot of people from the Lands Department never transferred out. They'd been there from 1905 or 1910 or something. Then you had to wait until they died. I took over from Frank Bond, a hell of a nice chap he was. He dropped dead. Mr Daniel Vincent O'Dea came to me and he said, 'I want you to do that job', said I could apply for it, he helped me in applying for it too and I got it. That was how you got it! (laughs)

So there was no special attraction for your transfer into Agriculture?

That came because it was still mixed up in land and everything, especially with Doc Callaghan and things like that and through the Jubilee Train because the Agriculture one was next to us and I used to see the people on that and we'd yak ... That was it I guess.

What was the job in the Department?

It was listed as Correspondence Clerk (laughs) but I had to start up some systems with correspondence because they never had any, none.

Was that part of the expectation when you got the job? Did they expect you to do that or was it just something you found when you turned up to work there?

In a way, I had to start it up. In a way it was a base there really. It was just a name they had to put on to get that particular classification because the Police Department had one, the Public Buildings had one (a Correspondence [Clerk] at that rating of whatever it was, 3 or 4). So they had to call it that. That was how the system worked in those days. They created a Project Clerk. There was no such thing in the State government. They'd say, 'We'll make him a CA1' or whatever. That's how they did it in those days. If you could find a comparison in another department, when you applied for a re-classification if you could find someone in another department doing similar working who was getting £500 more than you, you could base that reclassification, and generally you'd get it most times. That's how the jobs were created. It didn't correspond ... I remember it finished up I was in the damn Dairying and goodness knows what with the Secretary of the Advisory Committee for the Improvement of the Dairying.

(laughs) That took more time than anything really. Then the Secretary retired and I got appointed Assistant Secretary with the Department. Then they altered positions. The Secretary was made a Director of Administration: that was Hughie Matthews. They made the Secretary's job called the Chief Admin. Officer – this was subsequent to that. The Chief Admin. Officer, Harry Shaw got that, he was from the Audit Department, dealing with finance. The next one they wanted a general person who had responsibility of looking over the whole umbrella of the clerical people in the country and everything and they called him the Senior Admin. Officer and that's what I was dealt with (laughs), Senior Admin. Officer. Then I had the whole umbrella of all the people.

How far down the track was that? You joined in '62.

The '70s. Everything changed in the '70s, everything.

[12:45] We've got a lot to get through before we touch on that. You were coming over as Correspondence Clerk. As I asked you a moment ago, was there any expectation about what you might do? You talked about setting up systems, but was it understood that that is what you would be doing or was that just something you found when you were there. that you needed to ...?

I found that was a job to be done, yes. At that stage, a chap called Stan North was the Secretary, he was everything. No-one argued with him. He was an Agriculture man, but when he said something, that was it. He arranged the housing for all the officers, he arranged the interviews for all of them, anything dealing with administration. There was an accountant there but no-one would dare to get the estimates without going through Stan North. He ruled everything. Even the heads of divisions – Lex Walker: no, you've got to go see Stan North and not the Director.

How long had he been there, Stan?

I don't know whether he was there before the war or not. I don't think because before the war he was head of rationing, the Commissioner of Rationing I think he was. I think that's what he was, the Commissioner of Rationing. Could you find that out?

I could find that.

He had something to do with the rationing.

The War Time Rationing Commission.

Yes. S.T.N. North ... I don't know, I'm only guessing. Anyway, S.T.N. North. I thought he'd be on that list? No, that's the old ...

You've got the '64 list. He might be ...

Is this the '64 list?

That's the '64 one. This is out of the 1964 Public Service List, Trevor.

Yes. Stan North was the Secretary of the Department. He commenced in the service on the 24th of January 1916, but I can't tell you where he started. But he was a true old Public Service type that would go by the rules and that was it.

If he joined in 1916, and he was there when you turned up ... that's a ...

He was 62 when I turned up ... He was 62 and he lasted three years then and that's when a fellow called Bill McGee [became Secretary of the Department].

He'd come through the era of pencils and paper and letterbooks, pressing the letters in the books and so on through the carbon paper.

Yes. Indelible pencils there for the copies and everything. He would have gone through all that.

I would imagine ...

[Stan North] was a very strong man and a very smart chap he would have been too, very smart chap. He did everything. He ran that whole Department. Not the research or the extension work or the agricultural people but the running, the finances ...

The keeping control of everything.

Yes.

Even the finances?

Yes.

Where did the Accountant fit in?

Just a boy!

He [North] was a pretty powerful man.

He was the Secretary of the Department and the secretary of the departments in those days were pretty powerful people.

[17:10] He was your boss?

Yes, yes. No, no. The Chief Clerk was the immediate but he was two up from me, but he was way up in salary of course. I got on quite well with him. He would lay it down the line and say, 'This is what I want from you. This is what I expect. That's what I've got you here for'.

Were you working in the same area in the Simpson's Building? The administration.

I was next to the Directors office, Strickland's office. Stan North was behind him. If you were facing into Gawler Place, there was myself, then there was Strickland's typists, then Strickland, then Stan North and then over here was the Assistant Secretary and then here was the Chief Inspector of Chemicals.

So you got to see a fair bit of people coming and going?

Yes. Of course, within that area where I was by the end (my office), there was the Mailing Branch and the Transport Branch. There was a chap by the name of Church: if people wanted a vehicle he would throw them the keys and they'd all sit on his desk and wait for another vehicle to come in. It was a complete meeting place. Everything got moved in there, that was the only trouble. He'd say, 'Can't you see I'm bloody well working. Come back. 'When can I have this car to get ...'. 'Go on piss off'. He'd ask people, if you were asked him about it, 'Ask Church'. Next to it was the dairy laboratory where they made the yoghurts. Then it became a printing room, a stationery room. This was on the first floor. Of course, the Director's office was there. I forget what was down at the back there – oh, the Accounts Branch.

It seems a bit of odd mix to have with the Director's office there. Did it impact on Strickland's work at all?

No. He was just in that office and no-one ever saw him. You'd see Stan North, he'd wander around a bit.

He kept much to himself, did Strickland?

Yes, he did. He kept to his boys there; Lex Walker and ... that's what Lex was for. They would answer all to him and they had to look after their division and he looked after the whole Department.

Was he out and about very much?

I think he was. He was on a lot of committees and things like that.

You'd see him coming and going; he wasn't hibernating in there?

He would always go to lunch when everybody was still working and he'd come back when everybody had gone to lunch. He always said 'G'day', but that would be about it, you wouldn't get much. See him in the lift. No, he'd walk down the stairs, he didn't want to see anyone in the lift. Yes, he was a funny chap but a very confident man in agriculture he was.

Had you been aware of him before he joined the Department?

No, only through Doc Callaghan.

And that he had replaced Callaghan as the boss?

Yes. Doc Callaghan then went to the Wheat Board. He was chairman of the Wheat Board and then he went to the American ... Ambassador to Washington or something like that.

We'll follow that up. Strickland, was he ... You say in the office situation you could observe people coming and going. Did you see somebody like the Minister coming to see the Director or ...?

You're joking! (laughs) Not in those days.

So the Director was called to see the Minister!

Exactly right. At that time I don't know where the building was, where the Minister of Agriculture was. I think it was in the Education Building. But then when they put up the Reserve Bank they were in there. I can't think of when the Reserve Bank was put up. It might have been the '70s again.

We haven't gotten there yet. I wasn't joking because you've got that hierarchy and, of course, the Minister is calling the Director in to see him and there might be regular meetings for example of once a week, once a day or whatever. Did they have a fixed basis for a meeting?

He would go off and see the Minister. I can't think when he would go.

Some places have it on a regular basis and others only if something crops up or an emergency situation would you see the Minister, but other places had regular meetings.

I presume he did have a regular meeting with the Minister. I mean it was subsequently. Later on with McColl there and Radcliffe, there was a regular meeting. And with Chatterton when he was there, there was a regular meeting.

That situation, Trevor, in those early days where you were sitting right outside the office. I suppose you could see the Department overall, the comings and goings, see the relative performance of Horticulture, Livestock etc.?

You weren't working with them but you had contact with them all the time through the mail and the correspondence and everything like that. Then I worked in all of them, all the branches. I was with Tom Miller. He said once come out because there was fruit fly. He said, 'You've got to prepare plans. They've got to be published in the *Gazette*'. I had to go and do it. I was in that area. Then I was in the Soils Branch there doing the aerial photographs. Then I got a permanent position in the Animal Health, the Senior Clerk of the animal industry, and I was the [Registrar of Brands]. That was quite involved. I did a lot of that. Then I was appointed Quarantine Officer, animal quarantine: that was in conjunction with my duties.

In those situations were you going off to work in their areas or where you staying in the same spot?

I was in the Animal Health. I was up on the 4th floor.

You went up with them?

Yes. I went up with them and then on the 2nd floor I was next to Lex Walker and Tom Miller. Lex Walker was there, I was there with the three girls and Tom Miller was over there. Behind that office was our wine tasting. Every Friday night we'd have cheese and wine tastings. That was quite good.

While you were there with the Horticultural Branch?

Yes. Under the Plant Division was the Horticulture, Soils and Agronomy with Lex Walker on top. I was the Senior Clerk responsible for all the clerical functions.

So you had a few people working for you?

A couple of girls and ...

Typists or ...?

Yes, typists and a chap by the name of Cyril Rogers. About three or four. They'd come out, 'I want this. I want that'. Most of them were quite good really. Then I went to the animal side, that was another one again. All the vets would come out, 'I want this and I want that'. (laughs)
[But] I got on well with everyone!

That time outside the Director's office, was that when you were first joined as Correspondence Clerk?

Yes.

For a year or two?

Yes. It would have been a couple of years.

Then you started being moved around ...

Just after the Northfield Laboratories were open at Northfield there, I had to go out there and organise the clerical components out there until they appointed another chap from the Lands Department to take over that. That was quite good.

So you were based out there at Northfield?

I'd go into work in the morning and at 10 o'clock I would go out there and come in at 3 o'clock type of thing. I had a EH Holden to drive in and drive out. That was in its raw state then but there was still a lot of work to be done in as much as the building, co-operation with the builders and everyone like that. You know, the waters not leaking here, such and such is not going on here. Even though there was an officer [in charge], Reg French was the man put in charge of the laboratory, they had to have someone. Then it started to fill up and that's how I got to know a hell of a lot of people through there and then all of the buildings started to come up and then the diary was built and by that time I had got back in to town again. I can't think when it was ... '66?, when it was opened, the Northfield Research Laboratories.

I'll check the chronology later and give you a date. That seems a bit early, '66, but ...

Yes, I think a bit later than that.

But that experience you had...

'70s. While I'm taking about the '70s, when I started there there was about 350 people in the Department of Agriculture. By the late '70s, excluding Fisheries, there were over 860 people. So in that 10 years there was an extra 500 people employed under what they called the Commonwealth Extension Services Grant, not all of them but a lot. In fact, I said to a chap yesterday up at Uraidla, 'I bet you were employed under the CSG'. He said, 'Yes. That's right, '50s' because when the funds stopped, the government had to find funds to employ these people under the Barley Research, the Wheat Research, the Australian Meat Research. The

Commonwealth Extension Services Grant was the big one. Talking big money then. You could get anything then. I won't say you could get anything, but a lot of the big meetings between Lex Walker and the Directors where they convened with the DPI over in Canberra, that's where there was a lot of money, because of Donny Dunstan and his compatriot, what was his name?

We'll probably pick up on that in a subsequent session because that's a big story. I'm thinking here of those early years, those first few years – particularly when you were going out to the different sections, you were starting to get a feel for the whole organisation you were seeing Horticulture, seeing Animals and so on. Were you comfortable in that notion of being moved around?

Yes, I enjoyed it.

Were you at the same level as the ...?

No, I moved up a few levels, classifications.

The work responsibilities differed a bit? You say you were going up the rungs so you were supervising a bit.

Yes. The responsibility went up a lot to ... When I was Senior Admin. it went up. I was mixed up with a couple of work programs and everything like that and in charge of purchasing more motor vehicles and I had 5 or 6 million bucks worth to play around and put up to the Minister [for Cabinet approval] ... When regionalisation came in, that's another story. Monarto was another thing. We had worked out how we were going to go up there, where we'd take our car this week, four of us would go there. Someone said, 'There's no pub up there'. 'Well we'll stay at ...' and never did.

We're going to come on to some of those big issues. I'm just looking at these early days and how you're getting the extra experience and developing that feel for the Department. Obviously, by taking on extra responsibility, you're thinking of staying. You're getting promoted.

Yes. I felt happy and said, 'I can't be bothered any more'. Everyone's on the bandwagon trying to advance. I did alright so that was that. I was quite happy there. The main thing was that I just got on with people and they got on with me. There were a few that got upset but I was straight talking to them. That was the main ... I don't think I had an enemy in the whole place. Just built up a rapport with them and that was it.

Perhaps in a follow up session we can have a look at a bit more of your work experiences and the particular things you got involved in. You just mentioned cars, for example, and the day-to-day activities are of interest.

There was the transport and the various responsibilities. Then Fisheries came there was a big amount of work there. We're not worried about Fisheries here but back in Strickland's time ... It must have been Strickland because he was in a hell of a mess and he said, 'We've got to have a JP here' and I was appointed JP [together with Don Harvey]. I had to go through the procedure and I've been a JP for the last 30 or 40 years now. That was Strickland. I remember him saying he didn't want to go to the office of the Minister just to get things signed. Someone came in, let's say a prosecution under the *Vine, Fruit and Vegetable Act*, and Tom Miller would

have a big sign saying they would have to go over to the Minister[’s Office]. Bert Rush then was the Secretary and he was a JP. They couldn’t ask Bert to come over there. I wonder where that office was. I must find that one out.

That gives you a little bit of homework there.

[They were both in the Department and we were all appointed and sworn in on 20 July 1967. After retirement in 1986 I had intentions of being a Justice of the Quorum, which is a special Justice trained to handle minor matters in the Court. However, family sickness prevented me from enrolling in the instructional course.]

[32:45] End of Side B, Tape 2

Tape 3, Side A – Session of 18 November 2003

[0:30] Trevor, last time we were talking about some of your activities as the Administrative Officer in the Department. We ended the story where a couple of big things were about to start, happen in the Department. One of those was the push for regionalisation. Perhaps if we could pick up on that theme and your involvement in the Department’s regionalisation program.

I was on the committee, a Steering Committee really, to effect the implementation of regionalisation throughout our Department, not throughout the whole Public Service. There was a lot against it but there was a lot of the people who were resident in the country then they were thinking that this was great because the areas of responsibility laid with them alone in respect of carrying out their duties and the staff duties of crop inspections or any inspections or anything like that. Personally, I feel that it was a great thing really. But there were a lot of people in Head Office who were thinking, ‘We’ve lost responsibilities here so, in fact, there we shouldn’t be being paid this amount of money because we haven’t got the responsibilities’, because that was what you were classified on, responsibilities, in those days.

The plan was to separate the State into regions or the Department into ...?

Into the Eyre Region, the Northern Region, the River Region, the South East Region and the Central Region. The central region absorbed Kangaroo Island. The Northern ... I can’t just define the boundaries now, but below Port Pirie. Then the Central Region went up to say Gladstone. I forget now, but it was quite defined on the map exactly where you were.

So there would be a regional office ...?

There were regional offices, but in Eyre the Chief Regional Officer was stationed at Port Lincoln and then there were regional offices at Streaky Bay, Minnipa (in as much as the Research Centre there) where there were some of the local advisors, and Cleve where the soil people were. In the Northern Region, Port Augusta was the head office or the Chief Regional Office. There was a Chief Regional Officer there and he was responsible for the Upper North, right up there with all the cattle and the BTB and all the diseased cattle and you know what. The Central Region was here in Adelaide: that incorporated Yorke Peninsula, Fleurieu

Peninsula, the Mid North – I can't think where the boundary was, it was most probably Murray Bridge, the river most probably was the boundary. [For the River Region the headquarters was at Loxton.] Then there was the South East regional headquarters which were stationed at Struan House at Struan. That was quite big area there, quite a big complex. A lot of research was being conducted at Kybybolite and Struan and a lot of advisory work. They still even had an economist stationed there. Then when the Institute of Med. Science merged with us, rather the Veterinary Science of the IMVS, they had their local laboratories there created at Struan Research Centre.

This is making the regions much stronger, so it's enhancing the role of ...

Self-supporting, yes making them self-supporting really ... The Chief Regional Officer he had good powers: he could hire and fire staff, to a degree. He left us (me and my offsider) to appoint clerical staff because he didn't want to be bothered with that, but he would always have one of his people sit in.

You mentioned earlier there was some opposition within headquarters.

There was some opposition. It didn't worry me, but I could see [the benefits]. Perhaps it might have been jealousy, I don't know. I never queried those.

Were there instances of people leaving, saying that they didn't ...

I don't think so. On the other hand, there were people saying, 'I'm not going up there. I'm settled in here'. There was a bit of ill feeling, because I know of one chap who was going to be sent but he said, 'I'm not going, that's for sure. That's it'.

That's the other thing I wanted to ask you Trevor. Were people who might have been opposed to regionalisation finding themselves being told they had to move ...?

Yes. The Chief Regional Officer he applied for that position and then the people who were resident there became part of his control. That was alright. Then if they took a project and I remember one there was a chap and they said, 'Right, that's going to be conducted at Minnipa Research Centre, not at Turretfield'. They were going to transfer [an officer]. He didn't want to go to Minnipa. There's no way in the world he wanted to go there. I don't know what transpired. They brought him back. But there were those type of things. Loxton ... No, Loxton was quite good: most of the advisors, the horticulture advisors, had been there all their life just about; and then the soil advisor and ag. advisors, they were already there.

That moving, did that apply to the head office as well? Allowing for the fact there's a Central Region, but were there people being asked to move from Adelaide to the regions?

Yes. Some of the technical staff, professional staff yes. Some wanted to go, but some didn't.

There was a tapering off of the head office type of thing really.

You're talking here about the early '70s, mid '70s?
Mid '70s.

Do you know much about the background to the regionalisation idea?
No, only that it was a government [initiative].

The government endorsed it.
... endorsement. It was a government, what can I say, initiative. Yes, it came from the government.

Was it something that it applied to other departments that you were aware of?
It was, yes. It applied to all. We didn't have much time to worry about it (laughs), because just prior to that we'd only got over the Monarto business and then we were staggered with regionalisation. That's right, the Fisheries boys were all embraced with us then, the [Fisheries] Department was embraced with us then.

Would Monarto have been part of the regionalisation?
This was just the forerunner of it until it got knocked on the head. (laughs) That was the biggest joke ever.

We'll come back to that.
Truly, the planning that went on in that, oh dear.

[8:30] We'll move on to that shortly. Just looking at regionalisation. You mentioned you were on the Steering Committee, so what did that involve?
Dealing as I said with the implementation of the Department's activities.

Did you have a big committee?
Yes, they were representative. The first Chief Regional Officer of the South East was appointed and they made that a model and then it went on from there. A chap by the name of Ron Webber, he was the Chief Regional Officer of the South East. A very capable man. He died early of cancer, unfortunately. But they made that the copybook type of thing, then it went on straight from that.

When you say they, you're referring here to the Steering Committee or to the management of the ...?
The management. The Steering Committee would put that up to the management but I mean Jim McColl was the Chairman of the Steering (laughs) ... Jim was pretty strong. Back when we started to give away things, he wanted to have Minnipa remain and others wanted to get rid of it, it was way over there. He wanted to make that a 'centre of excellence'.

In agricultural research and other ...
So he channelled a lot of money but that's another story. But Trum. [Peter Trumble] would be able to tell you ten times more: he was on the effective side of it – 'You shall do this and you

shall do that'. I was only a voice amongst the committee as far as the administration. At this stage I was being thumped on every damn thing I could find. The Director of Admin. and Finance complained that Roberts wasn't doing much of his work because he had too much to bloody well do on committees, which was true really.

How much time would you have devoted to the Steering Committee for this?

Not that much really, not that much. We had a meeting once a fortnight or something like that.

But there were activities that flowed out of that?

Yes, there were a lot of activities.

A lot to do?

Yes.

[10:50] You mentioned before some basic things, Trevor, about ordering supplies for example. The regions were now given power or authority to ...

Authorities to purchase up to a given amount. Like if it was the chap in the Northern Region, he wasn't so powerful or something, he may have only had \$500, the chap down the South East might have had \$2000.

The limit would vary from ...?

Yes. They were much bigger, the South East was much bigger. There were most probably 50 or 60 people. I don't know how many people, but there were quite a few.

Until this time, to use a very simple example, if somebody wanted a pen or a pencil ...

That's putting it to the extreme ...

But up until regionalisation that sort of supply was [submitted] through head office?

They had a petty cash thing. Petty cash is the worst thing in the damn world. They would have to go down to the shop to get a ream of paper and they'd pay for it in cash. Then if they wanted some mechanical work done on the harvester or the reaper or the car ... The car was alright because we would then initiate an order for the petrol, which was Mobil, but then they could effect any repairs. Just signed the order and the chap was paid – I'm not saying straight away but still ... (laughs)

Within a timeframe. (both laugh) Does that mean that, before then, if work was required or some reams of paper were required, it always had to come through the central office?

Generally that was the way, yes. They used to put in a stationery order and that would be the stationery allowed in. They would ship it, freight it all out and be all picked up.

Did you have a Departmental vehicle doing that or did you just use the trains ...?

No, trains or whatever, Port Lincoln boat. No, that was all sent around.

I was just wondering if the government had its own courier service for the ...?

No, no. Public Buildings had one and Education Department had a local courier service. We had a courier service between [head office], Northfield and Waite: it was under my control – [jointly] with the officer-in-charge at Northfield [and fully with him] when the Northfield Laboratories opened. We had a courier between taking people in and out because the transport system, the public, didn't exist really to get to Northfield.

I was thinking about earlier, these outlying areas and so on, the E&WS, Public Buildings and Education, if they were sending good over there, that hopefully other departments the could tag along. But nothing like that?

No, not to my knowledge. Individuals ... We had people live up the river at Waikerie, Berri, Renmark: there were four district offices there but they would order their own but back in the Lands Department days everything went to Barmera because he was the Resident Superintendent and he dished it out. He'd have a master store and then they'd dish it out. Then with regionalisation, no they still retained ... Geoff Thomas, Chief Regional Officer, would say, 'That chap at Berri wants that. Let him get it himself. Let him be self supporting. Why rely on him. It's just like him having to rely on Head Office. We don't want that to ever happen again'.

What were the limits in that autonomy for the regions? You mentioned hiring of staff and so on or appointing staff.

Daily paid staff and things like that.

They could make their own arrangements?

Yes, for most of it they could. Generally, they could hire and fire type of thing. I'm talking about daily paid staff. Once we come under the *Public Service Act* then that was a different matter. They could make the recommendation and we could write it up. Subsequently, we had management services officers and personnel officers: they would write up the recommendations and left us out of all that rubbish.

What about equipment and things, not for repairs and so on but ...?

They could do it providing they got the offers. It might have been say anything over \$10 000 had to come to town where we called tenders. We couldn't beat the *Supply and Tender Board Act*, we had to confine [to the Act]. I can't think what the amount was. I know the Fisheries, they'd never been under [real] financial control at any time: 'We wanted a new reef runner [vessel]. How much?'; '\$76 000'; 'Joe Blow down Quinn's have got one of those. Do you reckon we could go and get that?'; 'No. You've got to call tenders. You've got to call out and make up tender specifications'. Opened people's eyes. (laughs)

Was that part of your work as Admin. Officer?

Yes, the Supply Officer was responsible to me. We worked together pretty well.

The Supply Officer would organise the tender specs and so on?

Yes, in conjunction with the technical man but he attended to all the paper work and get it to the Supply and Tender Board and get that all fixed.

You were managing, you were overseeing and making sure that was being done?

Yes, that was all.

[16:35] You mentioned the South East being the role model for the regions.

In my opinion that was the role model.

I think that was the first one set up.

Yes.

How long did it take for regionalisation to be implemented? The Steering Committee go for some time?

We're going back now 25 years. I suppose it was all finished and accomplished in 12 months or so. I don't think it was done in one hit.

No, you started the South East and the others had to be implemented.

They had then the Director of Regions who the Chief Regional Officers were responsible to, the Director of Regions. He was a bloke by the name John Potter, J.C. Potter. Hard to say when.

I was just thinking that it would have taken a little bit of effort to implement the South East and then you've got to introduce that in the other regions, so it certainly takes a little bit of time, perhaps a year?

It might have been going for 12 months and then they started it all up in earnest. That's something that's a bit of a blank there. There's a blank there somewhere. Ron Webber was the first. He was utilised a lot in the creation of the other regions. In fact, Ron was on the Steering Committee and 'You better not do it. We've found problems in such and such, and such and such'. But they were sort of self-supporting.

Looking back, do you think it was implemented smoothly?

I think so.

Any major problems or sticking points?

Communication with head office and head office interfering to a degree, that might have been a part. That took a while to get over, the system, it hit the system a bit hard.

[19:00] Hard to organise frequency of communication ...?

There was a thing – this was well into the piece but John Radcliffe and myself were on capital works and we would designate who had capital works. Radcliffe was feeding the information type of thing. But we'd say to the Chief Regional Officer, 'What do you want in capital works?' and he'd give us about five pages of anything over \$5000 or whatever it was in those days up to a \$300 000 auto header or something like that or a great big wheat-carrying truck

worth \$180 000 or something like ... So it went on like that and we'd allocate funds out because we knew what money we had from Treasury and what we'd try and bargain with, whether it was 5 million or 6 million. Then we'd have to measure it out in proportion to their demands, the Chief Regional Officer's demands and what we had to feed the whole State. This was a bit hard. I learnt a lot from Radcliffe. There was no mucking about with Radcliffe: 'That's what you got lad!'. When John went, Roger Wickes was my counterpart in that. He was the boss, but he used to say I was the boss. I would say, 'You're the younger that's why'.

It gave them [independence]. Before they would have to put everything in individually like Struan or Kybybolite would have to be sent up to the Superintendent, Research Centres. Then he would have to argue with the Director. They [now] put it up to the Chief Regional Officer ... Then the Chief Regional Officer would decide, 'I don't think they want that. I don't think that people over in Struan want these new cattleyards, they can last a bit. I think preference lies with a new tractor' or something like that. Because he had the local knowledge of it, which was a good thing. Then he would put them up in order priority: 1, 2 that would be his 10 priorities; if there was enough money we would fill the 10, if not, we'd fill it in accordance with his wishes. But then we had to meet in those wishes, the priorities of the other four regions and that was the hard part.

You mentioned communication and even in that latter period with John Radcliffe and Roger Wickes. I presume you would have to bring the regional officers together, the Chief Officers, to discuss some of these things. It's not something you can just do by letter or phone. Did they have regular meetings?

No. There was a date and they had to get their stuff in there. We knew how much money there was and we had to start pruning things about. With Radcliffe's knowledge or Wickes's knowledge, if there was anything in doubt, we'd either go there – no, we didn't want to waste money to go there – but we'd communicate on the phone and get the person who really wanted that. He might have been a young research officer out at such and such a block working on some trial plots and he wanted a plot digger or something like that. This was very important. We'd talk to him. He'd say, 'This has got to be blah, blah, blah' without taking any notice of ... and then you'd get back to Webber. It was a criss-cross type of thing. There was no [red tape].

In that sort of situation, are you talking in terms of annual budgets and meeting [that] or are you talking on a regular basis?

No, annually: capital works program was on an annual basis. That was something you couldn't give to the Chief Regional Officer in total, to say you've got half a million to spend. You just couldn't do it because the Treasury treated you as one department: 'Your capital works program was 7 million' and you'd have to argue and argue and argue. Amongst that you might have to replace another 200 motor cars or something. That was my job again, the replacement of all motor vehicles.

So you had to work out your priorities, where the money would be spent and so on?

That's exactly right. Someone in head office had to do that, convene them all together and put it all together and then argue with Treasury. I had a good lad in Treasury: I wonder where he is now? I can't think of his name, but he was a very brainy boy. I got on well with him. Over a few beers I might get an extra motor vehicle or something like that. (laughs) The motor vehicle was my sole thing. I had to put up the Cabinet submission for the purchase of motor vehicles but that was fairly easy.

That's organising the fleet?

Yes, the fleet.

Someone else obviously is running it and the Transport Officer ...

The Transport Officer was running that. I just had to organise the overall responsibilities for the purchasing, but that was easy. It was a 2-year replacement or 40 000 [km]. Someone made up a computer program for me, one of the biometricians. It would show me everything that was spent on [a vehicle and] the mileage. Every month I would get a running order – 'Hey, hey he's up to 44 000 [km]. That's only 12 months old. Get rid of it', because we would get a 'Please explain' from State Supply: 'It's no good you selling this vehicle at 2 years old [by then]. It's going to have 60 000 [km]. We're going to lose \$3000 on the sale of this. We want to maintain this profit basis'.

So 40 000 km.

40 000 km or 2 years, whatever came first, it had to be replaced. That was in passenger vehicles. It was based on the economical life of the vehicle. If it was a truck, utility, 4-wheel drive it might knock up 60 000, or 70 000 for a 4-wheel drive. The chap up north might say [it needs replacing]: 'This is stuffed. Believe me, if you want to come up', he said, 'I wouldn't be able to get you over the first sand hill' type of thing. So we'd replace it. I could argue and they [Treasury] would say, 'It's only 3 years old. What do you mean? Aren't you using it? Look at E&WS they run them for 8 years'. I said, 'We're not the E&WS'. I'm trying to think of his name, a little lad he was. A pretty powerful boy there in the Treasury.

We can add that later on.

Yes.

In this case you're replacing vehicles pretty well all the time then because some vehicles, as you say, would come up with 40 000 pretty quickly, some would take some time.

The thing was done on an annual basis. We'd replace them through the year once the money came out. When was the first meeting? About August–September when the Treasury approved the estimates. Then what were the first ones? We'd put our orders through and the Department

of Transport would arrange the transportation of them or if it was a local we'd buy them from Roberts Motors at Mt Gambier or [other local agents].

The Ag. Department would be paying for the vehicle out of its budget ...

Yes, out of the capital works program.

... and the money from the sale through State Supply and so on ...?

That goes back to revenue. If we had that it would have been marvellous. It would have been marvellous because you'd be making profits, there was no sales tax or anything like that. I could give you a whole story on motor vehicles. When the Labor government came in they put embargoes on cross-ply tyres. Radial tires came in and, of course, all the country boys were saying, 'We've got to have these'. We had to put up a Cabinet approval for radial tyres. Anyway, the Government Garage tossed that one out. The police could have them but we couldn't. Then radios. We had to get special approval to have a wire[less]. The excuses some of the country boys used to put up and I used to put it in the Cabinet submission, not going to the Minister! It was relegated back to the Minister. If you could see any of the rubbish that was put in by them, which I had to support – a \$10, £10 wireless or whatever it was in those days, \$10 wireless that's all. And how it kept them awake on the long trips and so on and oh! Then the next one came was air conditioning. That was a Cabinet approval and you had to be above the line the government put out. You had to be above Minnipa and Port Pirie, a line above there, then it went down. [Below the line] people would say, 'At Loxton it's 43° here and Port Pirie it's only 37°'. Oh truly. Now that's what you call administrative nightmares.

With that sort of approval for the radios and air conditioning and so on, was that something being done on a Departmental basis? You're saying ...

Yes, there you just got the car as is.

But the Ag. Department is putting up a submission for vehicles to have air-conditioning, it wasn't the whole Government fleet?

No, this was only ours. Now it's all on a fleet basis. In those days every department had their own transport sections and we had about 400 or 500 cars at one stage. That was a lot. That includes trucks and everything.

Just to clarify another thing ...

Then with the Fisheries, they had about 12 inspectors and then there were boats with it.

When you took them over it's a ...

That was another headache.

We're going to come to that in due course. Just to clarify another thing, you mentioned government control on cross-ply tyres. Was that a Commonwealth or ...

No, State.

... It was a State ...

You see there was a new thing that came out, radial tyres. All the cars were equipped with cross-ply but these new radial tyres they were something really good. No, they were additional.

I wasn't certain which level of government you were talking about.

No. State government they imposed it. You got the basic car and that was it. And it was basic.

Of course, these days they run around with cruise control and goodness knows what! Oh dear.

Were there any requirements from the government about where you would purchase the vehicles? A local manufacturer?

Yes. The contract went out every 2 years. If you wanted a passenger vehicle you either had a Holden or a Valiant (or a Holden or a Mitsubishi now) and that was it. No Fords. Couldn't buy Ford because it was manufactured in Victoria. You had to stick by the Valiant. That or small cars, there was a Sigma or what was the one before – the little one, Lancer?

The Lancer. Galant?

The Galant and the little Colt. They were excellent. Then if it got into special vehicles you called tenders. Say you wanted a lightweight 4-wheel drive, we would call tenders and you'd get little Subaru – Brumbies – and then it was up to the individual to find ... We had great success with the Subaru Brumbies, the little utilities, until they overcome the pocket in the CV joints (constant velocity joints), because up in the north they would pierce and the oil would go out and your drive would go. Once they found that, they could go to sandhills like nothing, instead of the great big heavy [utilities].

There were particular requirements for people working in different areas?

Yes, in different areas, yes. You couldn't send someone up at Port Augusta a HQ Holden or whatever it is, an FJ. You couldn't send one up there because he may be required to go off road, so it was always 4-wheel drives. Otherwise sedans or station wagons. Then we had station wagons, jokers would throw dead sheep in the back of them and oh! We had a vehicle was up for sale and did I get roasted by the Chief Storekeeper, not in writing. He said, 'I'll send it to your Head'. It wasn't my fault, but anyway it went through us, but [the vehicle had been used in the locust program]. It was sprayed for something you used for grasshoppers. The smell went right through all the carpets. They had to take all the seats out and the lot. They couldn't do anything about it. They sold it as a wreck. The car had done 37 000, 38 000 [km].

Been used for one of the treatment programs for something like locusts or grasshoppers ...?

[33:00] **End of Side A, Tape 3**

Tape 3, Side B

[0:03] ... [Apparently the spray had leaked out] in the back of the station wagon and permeated the whole car. They took seats out. They did everything but they couldn't get it out and they

just had to sell it as a wreck. Of course, there were wrecks every year. There'd be write-offs and goodness knows what.

Accidents?

Accidents, yes.

Were you involved in that? You've got the Transport Officer ...

The Transport Officer would handle all those.

But you were overseeing ...

Yes.

Were there any particular instances of accidents, bad accidents, people being injured or anything?

Yes. There were a few but I just can't think of names now.

Did the Department have something like a driver training course for people working in the regions?

Not really. I went to one. Yes, we had a few going but then the money started [running out] ...

Out at the, not the aerodrome, what's the raceway out there?

Mallala?

Yes. We had a few 4-wheel drive people. No, not really you had your license and that was it. Then people who had a 'P' plate, that caused a bit of concern with government cars through the Government Insurance Officer because he said, 'These girls are learning to drive with the 'L' plate on and it starts to get real tricky with the insurance'. The government was holding their own insurance type of thing. They finally relented after a while but there was a lot of discontentment from Treasury. Not only us; it most probably went right around. They had to have a car for some of the people.

That's more the regions than the city is it?

In the city as well. A lot operated from the city, like Lesley sitting next to you yesterday [at the Retirees Luncheon]. She operated from the city [but] she was out in the bush most of the time. She was in the Extension Branch and they operated from the city. Her office was in the city. She most probably had to go three or four days down to Wanbi and Loxton and around to the Womens Ag. Bureau meetings and hen meetings and such and such.

That was Lesley Tideman?

Lesley Jacobs, that's what I call her. Yes, Lesley Tideman, that's right.

That's one thing you don't see much of, of course, is government cars running around with 'P' plates on them in the city.

No, no.

You could understand in the rural areas where ...

Even in those days, if an officer wanted to come to Adelaide he had to get special approval to carry any passengers other than a government ... Very strict. There was a fatality; it was in the

Department of Lands. A chap was killed in an accident out from Whyalla. He wiped out a chap on a motorbike. The person travelling with him was not a public servant and it caused a huge amount of insurance bother. He was killed, the other chap. [The driver became] a paraplegic but they killed the man on a motorbike and I don't think the pillion passenger. The family of those [killed took the matter to court] and there was hell to pay over that. I'm going back to the '50s. There was always that bit of fear: 'Are you covered?'

Those issues you had to deal with, as you were saying before?

Yes. Of course, once regionalisation it was up to the Chief Regional Officer. He had to decide. We granted him approval and said, 'Look you can take the kids up. That's OK'. Providing there was an approval, provided someone wrote down – 'Approved for the carriage of family'.

You had a system or a set of rules or a policy of some sort?

There was a policy before.

Something you would have devised in the Ag. Department for your own ...?

No. I've got an idea it really came from the Treasury, from the Government Insurance Officer. It would have been in respect of [all government vehicles]. But then you'd go to another government department and you'd see all the kids pour out and they'd be down at the Coles shopping centre at Port Lincoln. That was taboo for us.

[5:00] Did you get involved in cross-agency, cross-department work?

Yes.

Was there something in particular ...

Yes, quite a bit with Public Buildings, a lot with Public Buildings and the Housing [Trust] because the Property Officer was responsible to me through to the Chief Administration Officer ... In properties and things like that: buildings, the purchase of buildings.

That's one-to-one, like you're dealing with public buildings, you're dealing with the insurance etc. Were you involved at all with broader committees or committees that brought in other departments to look at policies or ideas?

Not really, no not really.

You tended to stand alone and do your own thing in this Department?

Yes. There was something on the Public Service Board but I forget what it was now. That was too early really.

[6:00] There was an issue that flows on from regionalisation and that's the Monarto episode. I just wondered if you were involved there? They had broad committees looking at the Monarto plan. Were you personally, or the Department, involved?

Yes. The Department, yes. We had to put up a plan to the Monarto Commission, who at that time ... There was a chap by the name of Barry Greer. Do you know Barry Greer?

I know of him.

Barry was in the Monarto [Commission]. Barry was an engineer who was with the Railways. He subsequently came to us as the Director of Admin. and Finance, Barry did. He was a hell of a nice chap. I got on well with him. He'd say, 'Go on Trev, you can do it. You know more about it than I bloody well do'. That was how he was, but he never swore, never swore – I shouldn't have said that. Good chap Barry. They put up the submissions to you and I remember going [to a general meeting]: 'These are the houses that will be available. This will be what you have. This is where you're going to be [housed]'. They knew where we were going to [live]. One chap said, 'I'm not bloody well living next to him! Bugger that, I don't want to be next to him, work with him all day and then come home and look over the fence and see his silly face'. There was a lot of, as I said, discontentment.

That was when the Monarto idea was well advanced?

Yes. That was when it was well in plan because they had architects showing us all these [ideas]. It must have cost millions, just for starters. They were coming around, they'd hire the big hall, the big theatres and that in the Education Department. We'd have big glorious pictures showing this is what it is and drawings and all the lovely tennis courts. I can remember one fellow yelling out, 'Where's the pub?' (laughs) Dear oh dear. I had already planned it with the chap up the road. We weren't selling our house. I wasn't going to sell it. I thought, 'No. Damn it, we're going to drive up'. We already had planned what we were going to buy, [a vehicle between the] four of us. There was a chap up here, a surveyor in the Department of Lands and another chap around here in the Lands and we were trying to get the Minister's Secretary, Bert Rush; he died poor chap. We were going to go up every day, and the car would be in the joint four names. It would be a Monarto car. Not a government car, a Monarto car. Not our own car, we didn't want to wear that out because there was no freeway in those days. I'd picked out the house that we would most probably [require], if we'd wanted it but I didn't want the house ...

So you would have gone up daily rather than go up and stay for a week?

No. Go up daily and come down Friday night and stop here. We had the kids to worry about, school and such. I'm trying to think ... Do you have any idea when it was?

We're talking here in the mid '70s.

'76 I reckon or 1975, '76.

'75 to '77.

That's about when it was. That's right, I had kids at uni then and I thought, 'Goodness, this is not good'.

I gather there was a lot of opposition to moving to Monarto?

That's right. Dunstan couldn't carry it through. He had a mass of public servants against him. The Public Service Association were really down on it. It was the mass of people. I don't think there was anyone agreeable to it.

Were other people thinking the same thing?

Yes. We had a meeting in the Town Hall if I can remember and I doubt there was one person for it. I think it was in the Adelaide Town Hall. A number of people, a lot of people, some hundreds. I think it was organised by the PSA, well it would have been.

There was a long period of discussion about this project.

A lot of discontentment, oh dear.

The idea I was talking about before: Agriculture Department and Lands Department to move entirely ...

Yes. Woods and Forest, I don't think they were going. Mines, were they?

No.

There were a lot that weren't, but the Lands Department was definitely going, Agriculture was definitely going. There were a few other departments.

Were there plans ... You were talking about housing and so on. Did you see plans for departmental offices and work laboratories?

Yes, yes that was our job. That was all under control of the Admin. and Finance Director, and had to work out the requirements. We had to send it all out to all the research people, Northfield and all these places saying, 'This is what is going on. What do you want? How do you want your laboratories?'. The planning in that and the designing, that's a big, big job. I can't think whether the Fisheries were with us then.

If they were thinking of dairy, for example ...

This wasn't only housing, it was laboratories and offices yes.

I'm trying to work out what you ... You're saying you had plans for housing but I wanted to find out what sort of plans you had for the Department, something like a dairy at Northfield.

That had to be submitted to the Monarto Commission to say, 'This is what we want'.

In that process then, do you then say this is the best sort of dairy you could have rather than just replicate what's at one of the research centres or Northfield or whatever? Do you actually ...

No. They were designed like Northfield.

That's suggesting therefore, Trevor, that the plans were well advanced at one level, but at the same time ...

At the same time there was a lot of others to do.

A lot of grass roots opposition to the idea at all?

I presume the survey had been done of the town and it showed you the streets and the public buildings and where the main office would be. There was a government office, similar to Albury–Wodonga. Some of them went over there to see the Albury–Wodonga set up; from the Department. There was a general office with the Lands and Agriculture – I can't think of the other departments, but there were other departments. Hell, there were quite a few other departments. There were branches of the Public Buildings, Education.

They were a bit more regional?

Yes.

In your case Ag. Department headquarters would be at Monarto but you'd have a regional Education office or a regional ...

More than likely, but there were other [offices]. I'm sure there were other total departments that were going.

I can follow that through.

That would be curious, because it wasn't just Lands and Agriculture. I'm sure there was part of the E&WS going there too.

Despite that opposition or reluctance from people to move, do you think the idea could have worked? Is it feasible that the Ag. Department could have moved there given the amount of regional structures and so on?

Looking at what the Victorians ... They were all moved up to Wodonga. Never worked there.

You ask any of the chaps. They sort of left in dozens and dozens, the Victorian Department.

In this case here you've got your regional offices and that sort of ... You'd gone through the stage of setting that up in the mid '70s and ...

It was a matter of moving the head office up to there, that's all it was. All the other boys were all out in the country, they couldn't care a damn. They didn't worry about it.

That's why I asked whether you think it mattered ...

A chap from Murray Bridge said, 'I won't have far to go now. I can see you at Monarto'.

That's why I asked whether you think it might have worked?

It most probably would have worked, yes it would have worked if they could get over the dictatorial method of saying, 'These are the houses you are going to live in. You are going to live in them'. They were going to give us very good mortgage rates. I said to someone of the commission, 'You couldn't get any better than my mortgage rate' because they were talking about 7½% or 8% or something. I said, 'I'm paying 1¾ under the super. and if it was paid on due date or quarterly it was 1½%. Can you compete with that?'. 'No, no. We're on different times. We're not back in the early '50s'. I said, 'Yes but that's what I'm paying. I don't want to go into a mortgage that's going to cost me a lot more money'. Then someone yelled out, 'Give

him a rise' or something. Oh no, it was a bit of a circus at times! But most probably it would have worked because you would have found out who would go up there and who wouldn't. But it would be a lot of damn travel. I was prepared to travel every day. The four of us would take turns.

Makes for a long day.

We'd have a joint car. We were going to [purchase] an ex-Departmental vehicle. We would have picked the best one and gone and bid for it at the auction and that's what we'd have done. I mean there was no gas in those days or anything.

You couldn't have got a vehicle from the Department itself obviously. They would have said you had to ...

No, no. That would roll on too much then because the issuing of personal vehicles was very much frowned upon, except for the country boys. The Director had a [full-time vehicle] and Trumble had one. He wiped one out too Trum. He was lucky to live. It was the Old Belair Road, winding and going up there and coming around a truck, he took the whole roof off of the Valiant. With Valiants, you sat very low down in them. If you were sitting up high he would have been gone. It wasn't Trum's fault either. This truck came around the bend.

A close shave.

My word.

We've talked a bit in the negative sense about Monarto and the opposition, but were there people in favour of it?

Yes, yes.

Within the Department?

There were the younger people who were looking for accommodation or just married. They thought it was good.

They weren't established and settled in the same way you were with a family and so on?

No, no. A young married chap would think, 'Good, this would suit us'. He knew that he had to go to the bush sooner or later, a lot of the technical people. Here's an opportunity to get a nice new home at a low mortgage rate. I don't know how much lower it was, but it was. There was an incentive there. There were other incentives but I just can't ... I was thinking the other night what they were, but there were other incentives. It was a well-planned thing. There must have been many, many people and they were top brains in it. There was every type: there were engineers, architects, financiers, bank people, everything. But they never approached the people first, that's the big one fault.

In terms of the Department itself, were there any great .. You've got your mob for it and your mob against and presumably a few people sitting on the fence didn't really matter. Was there any great schism? Did it create any friction within the Department, either personally or ...?

No, I don't think friction. There was discontentment but then some others said if, 'If I've got to go, I've got to go'. But they were the younger ones perhaps, but there was a chap by the name of Jim Walkley who had just come back from Edinburgh and had done his [postgraduate study] there. 'There's no way in the world', he said, 'I want the facilities around me like the hospital'. He was doing [work on] genetics and goitre of sheep etc. 'There was no way in the world I am going to go down'. He wouldn't have gone. He said, 'I'll just resign. That's it'.

That's a good example. In setting up a new town, a new region like Monarto, you could say, 'We're going to give you the best facilities, better than you've got in Adelaide'.

See we had only just had Northfield really. I mean late '60s, '66, I forget when it was. So that was only quite a new establishment really.

Some people might have been tempted by the notion of having even newer, better facilities with Monarto?

Could have been. Say 10 years on things improve don't they? There were new innovative types of procedures and equipment and everything like that. It most probably would have been successful with a new design type of thing, new lots of people.

You mentioned earlier Trevor that you saw it very much as a Don Dunstan as Premier initiative, but how much support did it get from people like the Minister of Agriculture or the Director and so on? Did you have any feeling there of the level of interest they had in this?

In Monarto?

Yes.

No, I couldn't ... Perhaps the Director could have sensed it but no, it never got passed ... Whether ... I don't know who the Minister was. Was it Ted Chapman? No it wasn't.

It would have been Brian Chatterton for some of that time.

Yes. Forget about it, he would have been pro, he would have been for it definitely. You couldn't get on with that man, so what's the point. It would have been Chatterton, that's right. Mrs Chatterton ... He wasn't that bad.

Were there people in the government who were opposed to the idea?

There were. I had an idea Corcoran was opposed to it.

I know there was a lot of opposition from the Lands side of things.

Corcoran was the Minister for Lands too wasn't he? No, from Lands there was quite a bit. I'd love to know what the other one ... Naturally Harbours Board wouldn't have been.

I can follow that through.

I must look that up myself somehow just to satisfy my curiosity.

Then the plan faded away and nothing happened.

Just disappeared. The next minute they had a ... 'What are we going to do with all this staff?'

They sent Barry Greer over – 'Barry Greer, that chap at the damn Monarto. We used to give him hell [as regards the Monarto project]!' – as our Assistant Director of Finance. They had to relocate a lot of them because I don't think ... They most probably appointed them permanently, I don't know the state of it. A lot of the architects went and things like that. But it was a commission, wasn't it? It was a government-appointed commission, an Act of Parliament.

Had any Agriculture Department people gone over to the commission? Do you remember anyone?

I reckon there was. I reckon there might have been one or two consultants in soils when they were doing all of that. Yes, I reckon there was. It might have been only temporary but attached.

But then you picked up a couple of people from when the commission folded up?

Yes. I'm sure there were a few of our soil boys that were temporarily attached. They were going up there quite regularly, doing all the contouring. I don't know which ones there were. It might have been that chap yesterday [at the Retirees Luncheon], Bill Matheson, I was talking to.

I was going to ask about the soils.

Looking back, it most probably would have worked, but you've got to have the support of the people though.

[24:05] It sticks out as a major thing. You were talking about relocation of a whole department. You've already mentioned Northfield.

I would say most of Northfield would have remained there. I don't know what research facilities they were going to put up.

There was an attempt earlier or a suggestion earlier that the department itself would relocate to Northfield when Northfield was established.

Yes, they were going to go out to Northfield the Department. Yes. I was ready for that. That wasn't that bad, driving out there in those days. I'd go back and get my old motorbike and sidecar out or something. My mother's place was at St Morris. She said, 'That would be ideal. You could live out there'. Then my sister said, 'Hey, hey, what's going on here?'. (laughs) But it would have worked for me, I didn't mind.

That was a decade earlier than Monarto.

I don't know what stopped that.

Were you involved with any of that planning?

No, no. That would have been early '60s and I would have only just got into the place from the Lands Department then. I don't know why that didn't go on. Trum. would know.

They put in the facilities out there, but not the headquarters, not moving the headquarters.

They put in a total research centre, laboratories. It was all laboratories with a few offices for the staff and then all the outbuildings. It was strictly research. There was no room for staff. In fact, when I went out there to start up the clerical section of it until they appointed somebody, we just had a room about this big, had the typist here, the receptionist there. Of course, we had a mailing thing here and every research chap or field assistant would come in with his dirty boots and put them up and talk and yap. You couldn't do any work whatsoever. Until they got permanent clerical people there, I'd come out every [morning]. That would have been about '63, '64 because I had a car. I had [departmental] a car to go out there every morning, as long as I was back by 1 o'clock. (laughs)

You were making daily visits?

I'd go out there and do their work for them, do their pay sheets which I'd take into town and different stationery and any of their ordering and making sure that the typists were fixed.

Just you doing that?

Yes, I was doing it. Then I had go back and do my other job.

In the afternoon?

Yes, that went for about 3 months until they made an appointment. In fact, in the end they appointed a chap from the Lands Department, a chap by the name of Alan Stevenson.

So he became the permanent clerical officer?

Yes, he was the clerical officer in charge of them.

Just for the tape, the room we're in now is probably about 15 by 20 feet, something like that.

Yes.

You were describing how many people in the room: it was reasonably compact.

Yes. In fact, the job became quite a bit in it for the senior clerk out there because he had to look after all the air conditioning, all the rapport with the Public Building of course the air-conditioner was breaking down, everything that was new was starting to break down. He had to employ daily staff, he had to make sure that the gardens were kept, he employed the gardener.

And supervising all of the facilities, the pig area, the dairy and so on.

In fact, it was left up to Radcliffe and co. to do within the dairies but he did all the purchasing for them. He had a lot to do there really, there were about 70 or 80 chaps there I would say.

Not only that, they were all in different areas.

Yes. Then the seeds laboratory. The seeds sorting: that was quite important, there were most probably about 10 or 15 girls we'd employ at uni. time. There might be 20 or 30 people employed out there, daily paid people. My daughter went out there and then they transferred

her out to the soils building at Waite and she was helping a chap do his PhD but working out there. She was a maths expert so they sent her out there and she went down in the basement with this old chap doing his second PhD in the soils of such and such.

Getting a bit of work experience?

Yes. That was uni. Alan did all that. He arranged through the university to send people out to be interviewed for jobs.

I presume over time that the clerical functions at Northfield expanded? Saying here there was a senior clerk after you'd had your turn ...

There was still only the senior clerk there.

But the work rate must have increased.

No doubt it would have.

Did you still have to go out there and keep an eye on things?

No, no. Alan Stevenson, we left him supporting them. Then another chap came by the name of Peter Phillipou, a clerical chap. He was the senior clerk out there. Peter was a pretty bright chap. He could run the place.

In terms of your overseer's role, making sure things are functioning, were you communicating by phone and ...?

We'd go out there once a week, once a fortnight or something like that. Any function, the Christmas function, we'd be invited out there, I'd be invited out there.

Just the occasional visit rather than the ...?

No, we'd have the occasional visit and that. That's how I got to know a lot of the technical boys out there.

It's an interesting theme in this project, of course, that liaison between head office and Northfield, and Northfield and other areas, and so on. It's stuck out there ...

It was strained a bit because when you were at Northfield, you looked out and you would say, 'There's the Black Stump'. You could see it sticking up. This was later in the stage. Northfield was stuck out at and it was quite high and you would look over and see the Black Stump. There was the 'brainstorm' in there, I won't mention names but you've met him: 'We want to be here. This is it. We don't have to be putting up with all that rubbish'.

You can see from the lie of the land, that view over Adelaide.

You could. It's quite high and you could look down into Adelaide really.

The plans to move the whole Department out there.

They were going to build ... The plans were drawn actually. It was going to be north of the area. There was the car park and it was in the next paddock from there, over that house there where it was going to be built. That's right, I remember that now. The new Secretary that came

in, a chap by the name of Hugh Matthews, he had awful dealings with that, all the problems with that one. That's right. Stan North retired and a chap by the name of Hugh Matthews came in. He was from the Harbours Board, an accountant.

It's interesting that the plan came and it went and all you got out of it were the facilities at Northfield.
Yes, that's all.

Monarto came and went and nothing happened. (laughs)

I wonder why, I wonder why. I wonder them getting away with it. At that time, there was a fairly ...

[32:35] End of Side B, Tape 3

Tape 4, Side A – session of 2 December 2003

[0:30] Trevor, perhaps if we can just look at a few nuts and bolts sort of issues about your time in the Department and a couple of discrete issues as well. I thought perhaps we might start today's session with that little story of how Fisheries came to be involved with the Agriculture Department in the mid '70s and then how it got hived off subsequently. I'll throw it open – the amalgamation of Agriculture and Fisheries. Are you able to comment on how that came about?

No doubt it was a government decision, but once we were in old Simpson's Building we really had a part to play with Fisheries because for quite a number of years our Accounts Branch prepared all pays, salaries, wages, payment of accounts and invoices on behalf of the Fisheries. Part of the bosses were in that building: the Chief Inspector of Fisheries, a chap by the name of Frank Moorhouse at that stage, later followed by – can't remember, I should know him, I know him well enough. After the government arranged to have the Fisheries absorbed into, integrated into the Department of Agriculture, there was some of that part that was known to us but not the research, they were quite independent. They were at Port Adelaide at this time. We still carried on the accounting work which was no problem to the Accounts Branch, it still did the same thing except inspectorial staff and the administrative staff (that included the top man) went down to a new building down the back of Education Building in Gawler Place. I've got an idea it was somewhere by the old ADP building. Do you recollect that?

That computing building or something. Just a quick question, Trevor, on that accounting work the Department was doing. Do you know why it was that Agriculture was doing the Fisheries accounts? Was it a tradition or ...?

It had been a long tradition really. I can't go back but it's because they were situated in the Simpson's Building there for a while, it could have been.

Or had the same Minister?

Yes, same Minister.

So there was probably some administrative arrangement?

Some administrative arrangement because on that same floor, I can't vouch for this, the Woods and Forests were on the third floor of the building plus the Chief Storekeeper. Whether the

Accounts Branch of the Department of Agriculture undertook all the accounting duties of those three departments I don't know. It would have made sense really because Woods and Forests was only little, Agriculture wasn't that big, Chief Storekeeper was only a small department that managed to fit on half of the third floor. In fact, my Uncle Sam Coombe was the Chief Storekeeper, unfortunately. I didn't like to see him in the lift every 10 minutes. It would be interesting to find out that one.

When I started in Agriculture, one of my first jobs was with a chap by the name of Bill McGee who was then the Chief Clerk. The Secretary had gone away and Bill McGee became the Secretary for a short period. He said, 'Trevor, would you be prepared to do overtime at Christmas?'. I said, 'Why?'. He said, 'All the Fisheries licenses expire. There's 15 000, 20 000 that expire in December and we get all the returns in, everything at once'. He said, 'We're all out over Christmas break. We come in and we process the mail, we issue new licenses etc. in order for the Christmas break so the chaps can have their fishing licenses'. That was my first introduction into Fisheries and it was just after ... It must have been the late '60s when someone had the sense and the brains to phase it in steadily, each license (January, February, March, April), just like driving licenses. In fact, it might have been around about the same time as driving licenses. It was a stupid thing, everything expired on the 31st of December, the licenses. There was everybody's money; there was money piled up and cash. You've got no idea.

So they then changed it to an annual renewal from the date of ...
The date it expired.

The date of application.
The date of application or something like that. So that was all changed. That was my first part of Fisheries. We didn't want Fisheries at all.

So you had had some dealings with Fisheries before ...?
Before the integration. Yes, quite a bit really. There were other parts that we helped and then there was the Government Garage and some vehicles, but more in the accounting work really, that was the main thrust of it.

But it was only your area, administration, accounting and finance that dealt with Fisheries? Other parts of Agriculture were they ...
No, not to my knowledge. Definitely not. Accounting had the big effort in it.

But here, in the mid '70s, you pick up the whole Fisheries Department, research and licensing.
Research, licensing, the administration. Rather the licensing came under administration whereas before it used to be a separate branch – the Inspectorial and Licensing Section – where the person who they were responsible to, the Chief Fisheries Officer ... But then they elected

the Chief Fisheries Officer to be on the research, on the technical side and let him worry about the fish captures etc. and the fish populations instead of worrying about what licenses and what fines were needed etc. So it was part of our admin. side of the Department of Agriculture [the Chief Administrative Officer] that took over the responsibility [of licensing and inspectorial functions].

It sounds like it didn't add much to your daily activities?

Not really, but when the Act started to be changed my head up there, the Secretary, and the Chief Admin. had a terrific lot of work involved in the Act, a lot of work.

Updating the legislation?

Updating the legislation and the new fisheries regulations and Act. There was quite a lot in that. Very messy and there was a very messy program came in when they were withdrawing the prawn licenses. A [prawn fisherman] by the name of Puglesi, he tore the government apart at times. That was a very difficult time but that was dealt with up on really top level, even Jim McColl had to step in a lot of those places and the Minister. Then the reduction in tuna. The tuna licenses were reduced because the quantities were being eaten into too much. But more so the prawn licenses here in the Gulf [St Vincent]. Do you remember anything about them?

If you'd like to tell us a bit.

I don't know – there might have been say 20 licenses there and they found the stocks were starting to diminish and there was only one thing to do – stop fishing. Some of these chaps had invested some millions of dollars into their big, I'd say tuna boats, but their big prawn boats. So they had to be paid out by the government. They eventually paid out a lot and left say five or six, I don't remember the numbers but four or five of them were left in the gulf. Then you had a limit, say 10 t a year or whatever it might have been, there was an embargo on how much they could catch. These people had invested all this money and you've got to pay it back. They had borrowed most probably on the basis of 2 years ago when they could make their million dollars a year and they could pay back half a million a year. So there was a lot of nasty nasties that went on. I wasn't involved in all that. That got up too high. There were politicians, there was every Tom, Dick and Harry.

It was something you were aware of as an issue.

Yes. But it didn't affect the licensing side or anything like that to a degree because the decree had to come from the top policy: 'What you're going to do about it? You've done this and what are you going to do to satisfy the demands of the fishermen?'. This went through right over the tuna people as well. Now you can see the good times that eventuated out of closing a lot of these areas. The other one too was one of the key fisheries products that are sold – abalone. That was another can of worms type of thing.

It sounds like they had quite a few issues.

A lot of other issues that I was involved in were just procurement of special type vehicles. This would be according to their specifications. It wasn't messy, but it was highly involved. You just didn't go and get a whole new utility or anything like: it had to be a special 4-wheel drive equipped with special tyres, special [winches]. Then it became involved with the normal run of the sea boats and then they got bigger and bigger until such time of the *MV Verco: Joseph Verco* was a ... I don't remember how many ton it would be but I suppose a 60-footer or something like that. That was definitely a research vessel, which went out for weeks at a time out in the [Great Australian] Bight measuring stocks and water temperatures etc. and strengths of currents. That, unfortunately, sank at the wharf at Port Adelaide.

Was that in your time?

Yes.

It seems like there's a fair bit happening in the 4 or 5 years of Fisheries.

Rob Lewis, yes. Old Rob, yes. I still don't know what happened there, I don't know what happened.

The boat just went down?

The boat went down ...

Salvageable?

I daresay: it was sold to Hong Kong or Singapore, they pumped her out and took it somewhere. Then there was another big incident where one of the inspectors was drowned off Penneshaw or Kangaroo Island. Then came the question of radio. A chap by the name of Ian Chislett started off getting the specifications, which is a very difficult one because you had to get into then the Post and Telegraphs then or Telecom or whatever they might be to find out the intricacies of UHF and VHF radios etc. I know Ian delved into it when we used to go to Codan and they would spell [out to] us about what we want. We drew up various specifications. I didn't but Ian Chislett did and I was often with him. Codan drew most of the specifications up, but even though they were successful there was no-one with our expertise. We went to the police and we got a reasonable amount but they were having problems themselves getting a proper [system]. Eventually we got it because I remember I had to go up to Lenswood and we had to survey a bit of the land out at the Lenswood Research Centre for [a site for our radio] aerials ... They're still up there no doubt. But just in case Fisheries went to another Department, what's going to happen to all this thing? Lenswood might say, 'We don't want your damn towers up on the site'. So that was quite a big effort there, a big change.

What was the rationale for the radio system? The fact that the inspector had drowned?

The inspector had drowned and the government said ... At the same time there was another chap dragged behind a vehicle. He found someone committing an offence and the chap drove off with his trailer and boat and dragged this poor chap and he had very shocking injuries, attempted murder if you could put it really. The other person they had no means of communication and they made it a true law: 'You shall not go out without another person [being present]'.

So taking a ... out but ...

That made a big difference because everywhere at that ... Say the office station at Cleve, Streaky Bay (forget about Port Lincoln there were always about three or four there), Robe and Kingston, they had to put two officers there: not one, two. If you had to go out that was it, especially out in the boat. They went through some pretty savage seas type of thing.

One person on the shore for communications and one person on the boat?

No. They had it in the boats and they could communicate with Adelaide straight away, just like the police.

OK. I wasn't sure whether you meant they were reporting back to their base, their port at Robe or wherever.

Not necessarily. They would have been tied up to that. but they had to ensure that there were two to the boat. If a chap falls over, who's going to help him?

How big were these boats?

Not big, up to a reef runner stage which was 22 ft, double 150 horse[power] or something in the back. Shark cats were quite common, twin hull. Then if it was a 1-man show or a 2-man show ... Port Lincoln had shark cats. They were the big twin hulls. They went from here to over to [Port] Vincent, went over in about half-an-hour. They were 45 knots, 50 km an hour so it didn't take long to go over the Gulf [St Vincent]. Following the radio, then we set up the helicopter patrols. That was quite an exciting time. We had to call tenders for that. The people [who were successful were Lloyds Air Charters] ... I had my first ride in a helicopter and I thought it was going into the sea because as they go up their nose goes down and I thought I was going into to the sea. We left from Outer Harbor by the wharf there and I thought we weren't going to go far! That was another thing whilst the Department was there.

We had small parts to play, but in as much as the wireless, the radio network, the Department could see that not only that Fisheries was going to enjoy this, the Department of Agriculture was because all the boys out in the bush, if they'd been bitten by a snake what were they going to do out in the middle of the paddock? Someone said, 'Crawl to your car and die!'. Someone said that terrible thing. They could see that and then it really got the Department ... The only

one who got into it was for the locust programs, they fitted wirelesses to that. The locust program and the fruit fly eradication unit so that they could have instant ... people reporting back. Without me saying it, there were some quite no-hopers working there [at the Fruit Fly Unit]. They were just called in from Centrelink or whatever it was. They'd just say we want 50 chaps and they would ring up and 50 chaps would come out. They could be the biggest soakers or slops or drunkards and you just took them on. Things have changed though a bit like that. So from that radio network the Department was going to have it, but they only had it in parts because by then integration was ceased.

The impetus for adopting the radio network was Fisheries?

To my knowledge. As far as I'm concerned that was the catalyst. They may have had it in mind before but they had a fairly short-range type of wireless in between, ship-to-shore type of thing. They were going out to sea a fair way. Of course, the big boat, the *Verco* already had a system in there because that was done by law. With the fishery regulations, if you were 5 km out you had to have some means of [radio] communication.

They would have been reporting to marine authorities rather than ...

More than likely then, but the wireless room was ... I can't think of where it was: not in our building.

That meant you had to have a wireless operator within the Department?

Yes, more than likely they would have. That wasn't my worry.

The helicopter patrols, for example, was that another idea that could be expanded through Agriculture, say using helicopters in the bush, for spraying programs?

More than likely it could have. I don't think it was because it was very expensive. I've forgotten what the cost was per hour, but it was very expensive. Inspectorial used it quite a bit because they lost a few cases in the court – it might have been on the tuna or it was on prawns: big money, hundreds and thousands of dollars – because of a false position, or not a true position. We never had GPS systems going in those days but with the aid of a helicopter ... I believe that they had a point that they could get a firmer direction or further bearings. It did assist somehow. I don't know in what way. I wasn't into navigation then; I just went out to sea in my little boat from here and came back again because I could see the lights of Adelaide. I didn't worry about that.

So it was mainly for the Fisheries work?

Yes.

As I said before Trevor, there was a lot happening in a relatively short period of time. Fisheries were only in the Department for ...

Four or 5 years, yes a lot happened.

[23:15] You mentioned earlier that it was probably a government direction for Fisheries and Agriculture to merge. Do you have any ...

No doubt. That was a Ministerial, Cabinet decision. A lot of other departments started to merge.

The Lands Department started to merge with the Lands Titles: they were quite separate bodies.

Do you have any recollection of the integration process? How did the people in Agriculture feel about it?

It didn't have much to do with really because we were quite different. Aquaculture and agriculture – they were miles apart really. They gained a little bit in the offices. At Port Lincoln we had a good office group there in the Police building and Fisheries came into that. They did have the assistance say at Kangaroo Island, Kingscote; they could utilise our clerical service, the typists and that. Whereas the other chap would do his brief for prosecution, so he could utilise the services of the girl clerk at Kangaroo Island or Streaky Bay because there was always girls coming to do the messages and the typing etc.

The Department acquired the Fisheries staff: did they have to take on any extra staff or shed staff?

No. A lot of our staff in the country were still the same. They just took on the extra duties. They had to do the Fisheries office type of thing. They didn't have to take any extra on in accounting or anything because they were already doing the pays, leaves, salaries, payment of accounts, invoices.

So it was just a matter of merging the Fisheries administration and its structure into Agriculture: the Chief Fisheries Officer and the inspectors and so on just became, what, a separate branch?

They became a separate branch just like we had the Livestock Branch, the Dairy Branch, there was the Fisheries Branch. There were two, there was the Licensing Branch and Inspectorial and the Fisheries Research. So it was just another division. Doc. Callaghan would have called it the Fisheries Division: he liked to call them divisions.

The merger only lasted 4 or 5 years.

That was another government decision.

Did it seem like it would be long term?

We thought it was going to be a long-term thing. I don't think it worried the Department except when these prosecutions started to come up and they started to get very political.

Legal issues and the small 'p' politics and so on.

The legal issues. Was Chatterton in there then? When was Chatterton: '74?

Yes, around on to about '79.

He was involved there. There was a certain amount of disarray there. (laughs) It wasn't a good time for the people up the top really I don't think.

The de-merging there of the Department of Fisheries from the Department. You said that was a government decision. What practical steps happened? Just the change of name and letterhead or ...?

Yes. Most of our signs ... I know our supplier had a great headache because we'd only just finished putting up new signs saying 'Agriculture and Fisheries': the big timber ones that are etched all out at all the research centres and the gateways leading into the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, two-column on a beam or something like that. They were done by the Woods and Forests, but we had to pay for them. All the vehicles had 'Agriculture and Fisheries' on them. The boats had 'Agriculture and Fisheries'. The boats had ... There was mention about costs.

You had a new logo?

New logos and everything. Yes, we had a logo. Jim McColl got a logo done for us.

Were you involved in that at all?

No, no. The artists were doing it.

I would have thought as an administration task you might have ...?

We were involved in all the letterheads. The letterheads that were thrown out. I bet I've got some here, old letterheads 'Agriculture and Fisheries'. When it was separated it became Agriculture and it was different, then we had to get more. There were stocks ... When you buy stationery you don't buy it by the 10 reams you buy 1000 reams or something for the whole Department. Pallets of it, three or four pallets and you might send it up to Streaky Bay, you might send 10 reams because they only might use 1 ream a year, a minimum order. There was huge expense in that.

Did you have to go back to the old stationery with the de-merger or devise new stationery? You'd just developed this new Agriculture and Fisheries: what happened ...?

Then after Agriculture and Fisheries ...

... when you became Agriculture again?

It was Agriculture for a while and then it became Primary Industries. There would have been millions spent on changing. An absolute disgrace.

But, in between, you went back to being just the Agriculture Department?

I don't know for how long. It wasn't for long.

But did you use the same, the previous [stationery]?

A lot of us used it and just crossed it out. It all depends on if it was official or anything like that.

Then there were all the envelopes. They came up with a box number which was a general box number, not 1671 but it was – ours was box 1671 GPO Adelaide, Department of Agriculture.

That's the one that's continues now as ...

Is it?

... Primary Industries.

Right, so they use that instead of a name, just return to box 1671. But there was waste, waste, waste. In fact, I took some out yesterday to put in the photos for the Minnipa Research Centre there for DA, DAF and [DPI].

A photo of the logo?

Yes. It shows the entrance into the Minnipa Research Centre there with an old green Valiant out the front. I'm sitting in it. It's a coloured one. But, anyway, they can put it in amongst the archival ... The boats, the cars ... At least they were stick on for the cars; you could take them off, like the police. I went to the police and asked them what's the best thing. He told us where to go and we had to call tenders. He told us the best way was not to call tenders! (laughs) There were hundreds: little ones that big, big ones to cut, big ones for the big trucks, big ones for the [office fronts].

A whole range of sizes?

All sizes. They're most probably out in the store still.

I might go into the store shortly! Just to round out the Fisheries part of it, do you have any views on the success or failure of this merger?

It was a successful one really. Some of the Fisheries chaps still had their own power really. The Department didn't interfere except at Ministerial level which came through to the Director's level in those days, the Director-General, McColl. Then he'd go through to the Chief Fisheries Officer. Then again, Chatterton most probably would deal straight with the Senior Research Officer and bypass all of them. They liked that and then some others didn't like it.

He liked to be hands on.

That was his nature.

He liked to be hands on.

Yes. So they could see there was not interference to a degree. They still got all their pay, they still got all their accounts paid just as it was for some years before. They got the advantage of being something bigger within a bigger organisation.

So it became a big fish.

Yes. But we had the better buying power. We could get the vehicles that they wanted. They got things they'd been asking for for years but they never had the funds whereas we could mix it a little ... I forget what the funds I had in the vehicles, say 1½ million, but if they wanted two or three then we could offer ...

[33:00] **End of Side A, Tape 4**

Tape 4, Side B

[0:04] ... for the Department and your working career. Perhaps another discrete one to start with would be the sort of technology and the changes over time between not just when you joined the Public Service but when you joined the Department and when you left. A long career there and things changed a fair bit. Perhaps around the office to start with: things like typewriters and photocopiers and then to the computing age. Can you outline a bit there?

I can go back 50 years, 60 years ago, just in the matter of stationery or the printing or anything like that that I can see that when I started there that there were many people taking letters in shorthand, Pitman shorthand. I couldn't get over that, I didn't know what it meant or what it was. They were taking shorthand and then they were transcribing it back on to typewriters. Imperial typewriters and Remington typewriters. Great heavy things that they always asked me to shift them! They asked me whether I could put one on either hand. The progress of that then went from the girls taking shorthand ... I remember in the Lands Department they had a place called the writing room where all letters were dictated, except from the Director. Everything was dictated to the girls and the letters were produced, survey matters, everything. All the information was contained in the docket, the file, because it was there for all time's sake and then you dictated the letter out based on the information which was in the file. If it became policy or a little bit more important, it went up the line up to the Chief Clerk and then up to the Director who would most probably sign it. The Minister was the only one allowed to have his own typist and stenographer, which was a separate letterhead and everything. From there it went from Dictaphones, headphones, you were talking into it and that was in the Agriculture days there. There was less use of shorthand typists; anyway, shorthand was starting to go out because of the use of these Dictaphones.

So they were actually putting something onto a tape, into a recording mechanism?

Yes, hand held ones. Often then they had a tape which the girl would take up to them and they'd talk into that. Then she'd take this big box back again and then relay it back so she could type it. Then it went from the electric typewriters to the word processors to computers – all just a matter of printing and sending out information.

So the Department would keep up with the modern technology?

Yes. They very much did so.

Was it a matter of keeping up or sometimes did they take the lead in adopting things?

No, keeping up! (laughs) Yes, there were other departments – the bigger the department you were, the better equipment you got. You were served by the funding by the Treasury, the bigger you were and what power your Minister had in the ranking in Cabinet. The Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries was very, very low down on the ranking of Cabinet. It did change a little bit during the Dunstan era, but in the Playford era Lands Department was ranking very high, only because it was the first department really like Hindmarsh and Light and everything

like that in 1836. In addition, it was in the same building as the Premier (Playford) and in addition most of his cronies were the 27th battalion from the First World War were officers in the Department of Lands. Subsequently, in later years I could see Lands Department were going down the ladder. The 'in' thing departments of Environment and things like that were starting to go up again.

But Agriculture was more or less at the same ...

Yes, it was always just down at the bottom, getting close to the bottom.

A fairly basic activity that it ran?

Yes. Never ruffled the public or anything. It didn't affect the public really. Might have been a drought, but there will be rain next year so everything will be happy. It didn't worry the workingman if there were three droughts: where are we going to get bread to make bread, and wheat to make ...? So there would have been a lot, but it never happened. The droughts came and the rain came. The Fisheries had a little bit of an effect on people to a degree when you weren't allowed to catch so many fish and things like that but it was very small, very small.

In terms of Public Service rankings and so on, new technology or use of equipment and so on, Agriculture basically followed the requirements of the Public Service?

As a rule. The Public Service made the directions and they then brought that down to the State Supply.

Were there any particular pieces of equipment or technology that Agriculture needed that would differ to other Departments?

Not really. Computers were the main thing.

For statistical work or something like that?

For statistical work. In the early days there where we kept statistical records on herd recording and crops, but herd recording was the big one, where we started with the Power Samas punch cards. That was quite a big change from typing where we had 8, 10 operators there; a lot of machines going; specially built room in the thing with sound-proofed windows – the windows were an 1/8th of an inch thick: you could hear everybody, what they were talking about so it wasn't sound proofed!

That was the necessity to record herd numbers?

Herd production.

Herd production.

Production of butter fat because that was what the person was paid on, butter fat. The higher the butter fat went, the more money he got for his cream and milk. That was used, in addition, the high butter fat readings helped for breeding purposes. Just like a racehorse: if he runs the 2 mile the children are going to run 2 mile. It's inbred into them, the same as the cows. So they could

then cull the non-producers and who were the producers. Say a jersey would be producing 2.2 butter fat compared with 4.5 so those who were producing a smaller amount, you did not breed from that. You put him out, sold or something like that. Then you bred from the good stock which could only be ascertained not only by form and looks but by production because production is what you paid on: how much cream in the butter fat. In later years as herd recording started to finish, there was a great move to pay on protein. I don't know what happens now. I presume they are paid on protein, the farmer. I don't know. Mr Chatterton got rid of herd recording. I think it was him. Not quite sure. From that we had the punch cards and then computers. We were the first ones. The government used us, the Department of Agriculture, as the first ones for the new automatic data processing authority created for the government. They created that and they made a building at the back of the Education Building.

[9:15] Just off Victoria Square, off Gawler Place?

Yes, that's right. We were the first, they used all our records of herd recording. Of course, we got on the ground floor. There was a girl by the name of Golda Munro and a chap by the name of M.E. Jones, a great Sturt footballer. He was the one in charge. He started about my time too. He was in the paper the other day as head of some department; he was the head of some department. They utilised our figures and we got a lot from them because we got the first programs written and everything like that.

Was that as an experimental thing?

Yes. It was still working in conjunction with the punch cards but we could see the means of it, the speed of it. You can imagine the speed and the printing of it.

The punch cards would have been what, early 1970s?

'60s, late '50s, yes. Going right back they were, they were going. '60s. I can't put a date on when the ADP centre started up. It would have been the '70s I suppose.

There was a transition by the mid '70s.

Yes, that's right. They didn't have computers in the '60s, the governments didn't. We were the pilots. We started them off.

These were the big computers?

Yes, big things gosh. I walked over there and I couldn't get over it. All the rooms were all airconditioned to a certain temperature, there were these great big bank things. They put us through a course of how to operate it. I didn't know what they were talking about. Had no idea and still don't have any idea.

Were you frightened or threatened by this technology?

No. I knew it wasn't going to be in my time, but it did! Then we had computer people come over like this Golda Munro and two others. Chaps were coming trained out of university in computers. In the '70s they were starting to come out then. They knew all about it.

What about other people in the Department, particularly when you talk about keeping statistical records; were those people welcoming of computers?

Yes. Our senior biometrician, he welcomed it. He then was procuring ... He wanted to equip computers just about right throughout, for the technical staff I mean. They could record their statistical programs with crop figures and results etc.

Records of production, harvests and yields?

Yes. They started going around the country and then we had to allocate funds. As they became available, Struan can have one, and such and such shared. That was when I was leaving. I daresay everyone's got one on their desk now.

That early period Trevor, the ADP Centre trialling agriculture: were the computers linked up in any way to the regional areas, officers?

No.

So it was just mainly headquarters stuff?

Just headquarters stuff.

Could you see that ...?

I don't know, because regional headquarters had them ... No, I couldn't say: it was done by phone link I suppose.

[13:05] Was that by the time you left there were these linkages?

Not to my knowledge. I never ... I'd just say, 'You go to one of the girls'. Di Green, my assistant, she was the expert on that. When they came up with word processors I said, 'No ... If someone wants that, that's in your area now'. I knew then in '85 I was going to go. I thought I'm 55 I'm getting out of here. '86 I went, in July '86. I knew for 12 months that I was ready to go, I was sick of it all.

At that stage when you're thinking about retiring from the Department, you still had the typing pool and people on word processing type computers?

Yes. The typing pool we diminished that. We put them all out into the different areas, the different branches and things like that. I suppose we had essentially about four doing all the big work. A chap would come on with his thesis or something like that, huge amounts of technical words and everything like that. They were very good the girls there. We reallocated them all around out to the divisions and the branches there.

Did you have someone allocated to your area of administration?

They were all under my control [within the Administration Division].

I realise that, but did you keep someone there specifically for admin. work?

Yes. They were for the directors and everything; they were in the Executive as they're called it.

They would have been the days, still the days, of the pinks and the blues and the whites, doing carbon copies and things?

They were just starting to go. We still had them.

You still had that.

Yes.

You had that sort of system though?

The white was the docket copy and the green was some other copy. Yes, there were two or three copies taken.

The pink and the blue?

Yes. That was for outgoing letters though, not necessarily any reports or ... Anything that went out of the Department that necessitated a reply, there was a letter copy made and placed inside the file.

Did that contrast with the letter copies of a couple of decades before?

Yes, from letter presses. We had one in the Lands Department where we used to wind this big thing down and take out a copy and peel it off and then do the next copy. It would take another 5 minutes to do one copy in the '40s, the late '40s.

How did that work? Were you making an impression copy from a master?

An impression copy, yes.

So you had to make several ...

I thought that was a specialised job. In the Lands Department there was an ex-printer that did that because he had the knowledge of printing. He was the ... What do you call him? I forget what we called him. I won't mention it on the tape anyway. It was this big screw thing and the other one had a lever that came down and you held it down and it sprang back again and you took the letter out. You mustn't touch it because it would all smudge and 'Wait till it's dry', and hung up with a peg.

They were valuable pieces of paper!

... the old Department of Lands had a big printing establishment in the basement, right in the basement. He was the Government Photolithographer where all the maps were prepared for the whole State. There was big business there. Big flat top machines, big printing machines with great big stones. They'd roll out the plans, there was quite a big business there.

These letter presses you were referring to, were they for special tasks or did that include ordinary correspondence?

They were generally special tasks that were done.

But the ordinary correspondence would be on carbon?

No, it was done on the typewriters.

With carbon paper?

Yes. There was a woman by the name of Doris Smith. She was the Director's Secretary. He always wanted five copies. By the time she put these five copies in, and the last copy would never properly come out and he'd roar like hell. She said, 'There were more arguments over this fifth copy ...'. She said, 'No-one knew what he wanted five copies for'. There was one for the docket, one for his personal file. We don't know where the rest went.

And the fifth one was almost illegible!

Yes, you couldn't read it ... Things have come a long way since then.

You saw the introduction of the photocopier.

Yes. The small photocopier to when I left we had some big Canons that were collating at the same time. That was marvellous. With Agriculture there was a terrible lot of printing done. We had our own printer there. He was under my control. ... offset printing and we were doing reports all the damn time and handouts to farmers and things like that.

Brochures and leaflets and things?

Yes, yes.

So you were printing your own on an offset machine?

Yes, we bought the first offset machine. That was a great experience to find out about what offset machine was and what it worked for. It was an English [Gestetner]. It was a lot of money, I can remember that. A lot of money in those days. We had to even get trained. We got a chap from the *Advertiser* who had been previously and then a girl came along. That was really fast. We had a sheet, a sort of wax sheet, the girls would type on and you'd just put that on.

That's an extension perhaps of the Roneo or Gestetner type duplicator? Obviously much more hi-tech.
More hi-tech.

But you've gone from the Roneo, Gestetner to ...?

Yes. This would print and collate. It was very fast. You just set it for 5000 copies and it had a feed of about 10 reams I've got an idea. You could just sit and watch it all.

Go and do something else?

Nearly.

Did they have a printing room?

Yes, we had a printing room.

A camera or a dark room?

No. This is the funny part. The printing room was under our control and the photography room was under the control of the Chief Extension Officer, the Extension Services Department. We were printing stuff for the Extensions Branch.

They didn't share the one room?

No. It was different altogether. The photography part these photos were going through was a different thing altogether. They had their own photographers and everything, two professional photographers.

A dark room?

Yes.

Do your own developing?

Yes.

What about mapping? Did the Department produce its own maps?

No. Everything Lands Department. Then on aerial surveys, we purchased. We had to give an order and the Department of Lands charged us for the aerial maps. We did a lot of surveys from the aerial maps. That was one of the jobs I used to be doing once for the Soils, mapping out clearing areas. A person would write in and say he wishes to clear Section 361, Hundred of Beetaloo in the County of Light for afforestation purposes. He wanted to cut down all the gum trees and plant pines. I'd have to get the aerial survey map of that section and then I'd [indicates marking map] such and such, that is the Section and send it to Bill Matheson at Nuriootpa saying what effect it has on the surrounding district for soil erosion. That was a small part I played for 6 weeks or something while a chap was away sick. I used to do that after work, used to do those things. They were used quite extensively for soil conservation purposes.

You said the Department had its own printing facility. Did you use the Government Printer?

Yes.

Bigger projects?

Bigger projects. For example, the annual report (which never existed till after the late '70s). They did a lot of the colour work. We weren't capable of colour work until later but then it got to the stage where the Government Printer said, 'You're taking work from us' and it closed up. We had to go to the Government Printer for every damn thing.

Was it sort of government instruction?

It was because a lot of departments were building up their own little printing niches all around and the Government Printer wasn't getting the run of the mill. They were getting all the bound-types problems but some of them had written a report that was say 40 pages and he wanted 50 copies of. By the time you sent that to the Government Printer and the cost of the thing –

whereas we were only charging, recharge back to the branch, we'd only charge so much a copy. Some small amount on the offset machine and it was far better than what the printer was charging us back.

Was there a policy to recoup money? When you say you were recharging ...

Yes, we recouped.

On a profit basis or just cost?

Cost in those days, a matter of cost. In the admin. under printing if we had \$10 000 we got that \$10 000 back officially, but it was still in the overall estimates of expenditure for the Department. In fact, it still wasn't expenditure because it still went from one department to another so it was money just going around really. It did serve a purpose because sometimes people would say I want 100 copies of something and they might only send out 20 parcels of it and it was just waste. So it made people think, 'This is out of my branch funds. There's going to be \$200 out of my travelling funds'. Each person had his funds. 'Oh no, that's x number of kilometres I could spend out in the bush somewhere'. So it did exercise some control, which I think was reasonable. Overall it just went around corners type of thing.

You were shuffling money within the Department on paper.

The same happened when we had our cars and we put them on. We charged them back to the admin. at cost whereas before we would have had a total cost of say a million for operating. That wouldn't include petrol and oil. Each man paid for it, his car paid for it and it came out of his branch funds. It made them much more responsible, whereas 'We don't have to pay for this. Why let it go?'. Regionalisation really set it off more so, the thought of regionalisation. When it was put in, that made people far more conscious because each region was given – 'This is your operating, Chief Regional Officer. Operate it how you wish, but that's your 5 000 000'. Excluding salaries it was but all operating costs, cattle equipment, the whole damn ..., telephones, printing, luncheons – everything. All had to be listed and it made people much more responsible and more efficient. Some of the research boys couldn't care less about it.

You would have seen in your own experience Trevor, that transition I mentioned earlier with photocopiers where presumably there was one photocopier for the Department and, ultimately, photocopiers everywhere. Telephones – one telephone per desk, one telephone per floor?

In Agriculture we were dealing with the farming community. Each person had a telephone – each officer did – because he had to be in contact with the farm.

Junior officers? Obviously you needed to ring up the typists and say come and collect something?

Yes, the typing pool had a phone. That was reasonable enough. Most of us all had a phone, especially when we went to the new building. Everybody had a phone there.

The photocopier?

In the photocopying days there was only the one printing. There were a few of the old photocopiers which were hopeless if you wanted two copies or four copies, it might work and then it was left to dry out the old Roneo. A lot of people would come down for 10 photocopies on the printing machine, on the old duplicator. The good duplicators (I forget what brand they were), they were quite good.

But then you got to the stage where you were actually photocopying the document, the letter or whatever and you had ...?

Well at that stage all the branches then finished up having a photocopier.

Were there controls on that originally?

Yes, each department had a cost factor and a recharge. You'd charge back to the central store and they were charged to recoup from each branch, under our storeman or under their store's branch. There was an allocation of purchase of paper and then we would recoup it back from the branches. It was just a control measure really. It was a lot of silly paper work but it was done all internally and in the long run it was sensible.

In some places they had a person who did the photocopying, not necessarily in a print room but a person was in charge of the photocopying. You couldn't do your own, you had to order 10 copies or one copy.

That's right. We originally had that. By the late '70s we generally had a photocopier in the branch and they did what they wanted to do. In one area, the Economics area, they had one up there but they would run out of paper every second day. I'd say, 'What's going on?'. So one of the bosses got the clerk and said, 'You're in charge of this. You tell them to go jump. If they want 10 copies, they can have 10 and they can wait for it and order it' was running around with a thesis they'd photocopy for themselves (most of them were doing their Masters and things like that). It did eventually go one to each branch, and in the division there were three branches. It gradually started to snowball.

The impact of technology in the workplace is an interesting theme to follow through. In your case you've gone from those letterpress books through to when you were leaving the computing age, the desktop computers, just starting to come in and ...

Like now I go up there and every desk has got a laptop computer, every desk that I could see. Even out at the Waite there, never sit at a desk that doesn't have a computer. It's a means of communication and frustration.

It's a big transition though. That's a fascinating transition isn't it over 50 years or thereabouts?

It's a big one, a very big one.

Generally, those changes are seen to be for the betterment of the Department or the individual or the industry.

For the individual and all concerned, I thought it made vast improvements when you look back to see those ancient means but still that was the only means available, wasn't it?

Yes. One of the things we need to look at, perhaps it will have to be another time now, will be the work environment and to look at some of the changes that have happened in the work environment itself. We might have to ...

... matches to the furniture and things?

Everything. Occupational health and safety now, ergonomics, there's all that furniture. It used to be just a desk and a chair and now it's got to be ergonomic.

... the Agriculture Building of a morning, after a day of 90° (I go back to the old [Fahrenheit] because that's what it was, 90°) when the east side as the [sun] would come up looking over the hills, the front offices would be around about 95 by half past 9. By 11 o'clock they might be hitting 100. No outside blinds, just dirty glass. Then it went over to the other side, the western side, and the people on the western side would be in excess of over 100° ...

[32:40] **End of interview**