

**AN INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY BERNARD O'NEIL WITH MR LEX WALKER OF MITCHAM IN REGARDS TO THE HISTORY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA. [THE FIRST INTERVIEW WAS CONDUCTED ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2003; THE SECOND ON 14 JANUARY 2004.]** [Square brackets incorporate corrections supplied by Lex Walker in March and April 2006.]

Lex, perhaps if we could just start with a little bit of your personal background and outline of your involvement perhaps, to fill in some of the details for us.

I was brought up on a farm, just north of Clare in South Australia. It was a small cereal and sheep farm. Right?

Yes.

There were three of us. I have two sisters – one older and one younger. I went to the White Hut Primary School, which was only a short distance away. Then I went to the Clare High School. At this time, the depression was having its effect and I felt that I would like to be in agriculture. I tried to get into the Education Department but they weren't interested in taking me at that stage without any further qualifications. But I won a scholarship to go to Roseworthy College and I was there for three years graduating early in 1934.

And that was going straight from the secondary school.

Yes.

An area school was it?

Clare High School.

Clare High School, yes.

I had taken a scholarship from Roseworthy, the John Ridley Scholarship, which gave some assistance in going to the university. I went to Adelaide University and enrolled in the agricultural science course, which was a 3-year course if you had a Roseworthy diploma behind you. I completed the course in 1939 and was immediately offered a job at the Waite Institute in the Agronomy Department, working on the control of one of the serious weeds in South Australia – Cape Tulip.

This of course was just after the outbreak of war and after a couple of years I put my name down to join the Air Force and was accepted into the Air Force in July 1942. I stayed in the Air Force until January '46, as a navigator finally flying in Liberators.

[4.08] Lex, perhaps if we just backtrack slightly on a couple of things like date of birth and a bit on the family farm was the other thing I wanted to ask you about.

I was born in December 1916 and as I said before the farm was a mixed cereal and sheep farm.

It was a small farm. Particularly in view of the economic situation at the time, I could see no prospect for making a living on the farm and I was more interested in doing the teaching or some other activity involved with agriculture.

As a boy did you work very much on the farm?

Not a great deal, no. There were jobs like milking cows and so on but I didn't play any real part in the major farming operations.

What about your parents: were they interested in you staying on the land?

I don't think so. Shortly before the war was over my parents were thinking, wondering about whether I would be anxious to go back on the farm. We had a discussion in correspondence about it. I told them then that I had no wish to go back on the farm. I had already started at the Waite Institute and I felt that this was the sort of work that I was interested in. Then the decision was made to sell the farm.

What happened after you left the Air Force?

I went back to the Waite Institute and I was there until late in 1950 when there was an opportunity to go to the Department of Agriculture. At that stage I was unhappy with some aspects of my job at the Waite Institute and I felt anyhow that I was more suited to the work of the Department of Agriculture. When this opportunity came I was very pleased to put my name down and to accept the position for which I applied.

At the Waite were you lecturing or research work?

I was doing some lecturing and some research work.

Your special interest at the time?

As I say, I was working on the control of Cape Tulip but I was also interested particularly in pasture work as well. Necessarily, I had to devote more of my time to the work on weeds.

I was just wondering whether you were thinking broadly about other areas?

I was certainly more interested in pasture work really than in weed control. But really the prospect of being associated with work which was of direct benefit to farmers, I thought was more in my line of business than in trying to push back the frontiers of knowledge.

[8.05] The Waite Institute was then a CSIRO organisation or ...?

No. The Waite Institute was part of the University of Adelaide. There were some elements of CSIRO were stationed there like the Soils Division for example.

So it's a university organisation, a university institute.

Yes.

Did it have any affiliation with the Roseworthy College or were they kept separate?

It had no real relationship with Roseworthy College, except as far as the faculty was concerned, perhaps indicated by implication earlier, you could get a degree in agricultural science either over a four-year period – one year of which (at that time) was spent at Roseworthy College. But if you went to Roseworthy College first and obtained a diploma, then you obtained your degree

with three years study at the university. Later on there were various combinations of things that could be done. The students spent part of two years at Roseworthy College and so on.

In retrospect, how well equipped were you coming out of your Bachelor degree? Do you think you were well trained?

I think so, yes. A good deal of the work at Roseworthy College was in some of the more menial tasks associated with farming but there was a background of teaching of farming skills. And the university course was a pretty good one.

When you were teaching and researching at the Waite, did you see that as an ongoing career initially? You made the comment that things had changed and you wanted to leave but ...

Yes, originally I did yes.

So it wasn't as if you were just on a learning curve to acquire some experience and then look elsewhere or anything?

No, at the time when I started there I envisaged going on.

[10:55] You mentioned Lex, the move to the Department in 1950. How did that come about? An opportunity opened up in the Department or ... there's some dissatisfaction at the Waite obviously.

Things had changed in the Department of Agriculture in that Dr Callaghan had taken over as Director of Agriculture I think in 1949. He was making changes to the staffing of the Department and especially in the field of agronomy. The area of agronomy had been in the past, tackled by people with a Roseworthy diploma. There were very few, well really no, graduates involved with that particular branch. There had been a new Soils Division that was brought in to meet the needs of coping with soil conservation. It was called the Soil Conservation Branch and that was a branch which was headed up by a graduate. The main people in it were graduates also. But in the agronomy line, it had been run by people with Roseworthy diplomas and manned by them also. Callaghan came in and had some positions created for research people. One of them was a Senior Research Officer and that was the job which appealed to me.

Was that a job that was advertised?

It was advertised yes.

Had you had much contact with the Department prior to this? I'm assuming you had through the Waite connection but in practical terms were you ...?

In that area I don't think there had been a lot of contact between the Waite and the Department. One of the other things which had some bearing on this was Kangaroo Island was being opened up for soldier settlement. Considerable problems were being encountered there and there was a need for research work to enable the returned servicemen to cope with these problems. It had been decided to set up a new research centre there and this was ... I suppose a fairly urgent need for new information on a particular set of problems there. One of the appointments made at that time was a chap called Carter who had recently graduated from the university. Another

appointment had been made. So there were a couple of graduates there, people with whom I could work pretty comfortably. Sorry, go on.

Would you have known these graduates through your ...?

Yes.

Likewise, did you know people in the Department even if you hadn't been ...?

I only knew some of them but I didn't know any of them well really. The Department had been doing quite a bit of experimental work. Some of the work was done by very good fellows and some of it was quite good work, but their approach was not a modern scientific approach. The word 'crude' is not the right word, but they made more simple comparisons of different treatments but the treatments weren't randomized and weren't replicated in the sort of way which was accepted as being necessary to reduce the error involved in experimentation and being able to calculate what the degree was of that error. There were research stations at Kybybolite and Minnipa on Eyre Peninsula (Kybybolite in the South East). There was another station, Turretfield near Gawler, which was known as a seed/wheat farm and one of its main purposes was the multiplication of new wheat varieties and the distribution of seeds. At all these places there were opportunities to do further research and to improve on the style of research work which was being done.

Your interest in research and so on: were you based in Adelaide or did you go out to these research centres and work there?

No, I was based entirely in Adelaide.

[17:10] The Department: you're giving the impression there of lots of graduates and cadets and so on coming in. Was it a big organisation at that time, 1950? Talking numbers or size, the spread of the place?

It increased considerably over the next 10 years. The granting of cadetships certainly increased. That's my impression. As I say, the cadets previously had either gone to horticulture or to soil conservation. So agronomy and animal husbandry and areas like that picked up more cadets in the future.

One of the other things that Callaghan [brought up to date] ... in a sense – not at that stage, but one of the other things which were being done was the reorganisation of some aspects of the animal husbandry area. Whereas previously you had an expert in things, one in wool production, one in beef, cattle and lambs and you had a poultry section. All these people, they were responsible directly to the director which was a different sort of structure from what you'd expect. So this was taking place at that time and that was causing quite a bit of heart burning among some of the fellows. That's just a comment there as I was more or less a spectator at the time.

You were at a lower level in the organisation, just starting out.

It was a different area. It didn't really concern me personally but it was an interesting thing that was taking place at the time.

[20:00] Was there a sense, therefore, that the Department was very structured into these separate areas of soil, animals and not much overlap between them? Did you sense that at the time?

Yes. There was a certain sense of a certain insularity in some departments. What previously was the Stock and Brands Department, a separate department, had been brought into the Department. Horticulture had been a separate Department for a time: it had certainly been quite discrete from the rest of the Department as far as placement was concerned. At the time that I joined, we were about to move camp and I'm not too sure where all of the Department was placed. When I joined I went over to the Education Building and nobody quite knew what to do with me! I was sitting there in what had been the Head of the Department office. A man called Colin Scott who had expected to become the new Director of Agriculture in Spafford's place. But he missed out and his health packed up anyway and he never came back to work again. Over the next month or two, Horticulture went from some building around the corner and some people went from the Education Building. The old Stock and Brands came from somewhere else. We all got pushed into that great barn at the Simpson's Building in Gawler Place. This brought everybody together physically anyway, whereas before they'd been scattered all over the place.

That wouldn't be anything unusual of course for departments to be spread around Adelaide I think.

Is that right, I didn't know that.

Just depending on the size of the organisation, they'd move branches here, there and everywhere to use up any office space that was available perhaps. The Simpson Building, that's no longer there is it?

I think that's right, yes.

That's right. OK.

It wasn't mourned by anybody! (both laugh)

[22.40] I can understand that! Did you have any sense of a plan or an idea for what Callaghan was doing. Did he come along and talk about this is what the Department must do and here's some sort of direction for us? I suppose in a roundabout way Lex, I'm asking why was Callaghan appointed to head the Department.

He'd shown himself to be a man of tremendous energy and ability. I would have said that he appealed to people like Tom Playford as the sort of fellow who would get things done and get things moving.

Was Callaghan from within the Department?

He had been at Roseworthy College. The other thing he'd been in, of course, I'm not quite sure of his actual title, but after the war there was a War Service Land Settlement Scheme. They had to find land and Callaghan was in charge of that section of the Lands Department which was

very important and they were developing a bit of land on Kangaroo Island. That development came under his control and down the South East ... he was concerned with acquiring land down there. I'm not quite sure what his powers were, but he had a very big job, the whole War Service Land Settlement Scheme.

I was aware of some of his background, that's why I was just wondering whether he had been brought in as not so much a fix-it man but there's an idea that the Department of Agriculture could be something different to what it was before. That may not have manifested itself to you and the work you were doing.

... While I think he was brought in because he was a fellow who was successful as an organiser and a planner and had stacks of energy, I think the Premier – Tom Playford – had certain reservations about the amount of research work which the Department of Agriculture did, which I discovered later from one of the Ministers that the Premier had said he didn't want little Waite Institutes being set up all around the country, which was not a very sensible comment really. I could see what he was getting at but.

You could see it but was there a sense that was happening? Half-a-dozen research centres, the Waite and Roseworthy?

I suppose the Premier thought that. But the fact of the matter is that for lots of these things you need to have applied research done under the right conditions ...

[26.40] Of course, we're only talking here about one particular aspect of the Agriculture Department and focusing on agronomy and so on. With something like Minnipa, did they do other work there like with animals or were you talking about specific research centres doing specific tasks?

One of the things that had always been done in a place like Minnipa and Kybybolite was showing farmers what could be done on that land, whether it be stock improvement and practices of crop production and pasture seeding and ...

Sort of like demonstration farms or something?

Yes. So they were demonstration farms but later on they became places where quite a bit of good applied research work was done.

What about the support from farmers and people on the land and so on? Did you get any feel for that? I'm thinking here of the early days, the '50s, that sort of decade. It's all very well for the premier to say you've got too many research centres but are farmers crying out for them?

There's always going to be variations of course, naturally. There's always going to be fellows that ... you know they take extreme views. By and large I think that certainly the people with problems were (demanding is not too strong a word I suppose) demanding that work be done to solve their problems. Maybe there were some people I guess, who were reasonably satisfied with the results they were getting and even though those results could have been improved, they'd still say, 'We're doing alright. There's no need for you fellows to be doing anything about that'. So there would be a range of expressions you'd get if you asked a bunch of farmers but by and large the work was well supported and appreciated.

I touched on it before in an earlier question Lex but did you go out to the research centres on visits or anything at that time? You said you were working in Adelaide but ...

Yes. Some of these were under my ... Turretfield and Minnipa and Kangaroo Island were under my control when I first went there.

So would you visit on a regular basis or just as needed?

Not strictly regular, no.

Were the people there working on, allowing for individual variations of course, but were they working on similar projects to what you were doing in Adelaide? I take your comment they were working on specific things for their specific localities but in a general sense?

At this stage I was supervising but I wasn't doing any research of my own.

OK. I wondered because you were Senior Research Officer and I thought you must be doing some things, you were more administrator?

I had no direct involvement with the research work being done.

You were administering?

Yes.

Were you the only person doing that administrative work for the research area? Were you *the* Senior Research Officer?

I was the only one in agriculture, but there was a Senior Research Officer in horticulture. I suppose later on the other branches developed that. There would have been Senior Research Officers in animal husbandry too but that didn't come till a little bit later on.

From your comment you were doing administrative work so you were becoming a more deskbound sort of person as opposed to the research stuff you were doing at Waite. Is that something that ... obviously you became accustomed to it, but did you have a hankering to go back into research as such?

In some cases I was pretty much involved with some of these projects anyway. I'm wrong I suppose: some of them I did plan, I wasn't actually doing the work but some of it I had planned anyway so I got all the satisfaction I wanted out of that anyway.

That's helpful, just clarify. How many people would have been involved? How many staff did you have working with you and supervising, roughly? A large number?

Not a large number, no. There were two research officers – Ted Higgs and Ted Carter.

[32:40] **End of Side A, Tape 1**

**Tape 1, Side B**

[0:05] Lex, when the tape ended you were just about to explain a little bit about the staff numbers and the personnel.

There were two graduates for a start. I suppose over the next 10 years, the numbers probably increased to about four to six, something like that. There would have been three or four non-graduate officers also.

They were people doing clerical duties or lab. assistants or ...?

No. They were people out in the field.

Like lab. assistants or something of that type?

Well, technicians.

Technicians, that sort of thing, OK. They could be anybody?

Roseworthy diplomats on the whole, yes.

So it was a relatively small group with tight control. Did you get any training or advice about managing groups of people like this? Or just fly by the seat of your pants?

I guess so, yes. I don't think I had any particular training no.

People of a similar age to yourself?

Fairly close I suppose ... well, within three or four or five years.

I'm thinking in particular in the early '50s, which is that post-war period, was there any additional employment opportunities for people to join the Department? I'm thinking more broadly, not just in your area. There were post-war reconstruction schemes and post-war education for returned service personnel: did that open up opportunities?

Something else came into it of course. You're talking about opportunities?

Yes.

One of the big things in the 1950s was that it was seen as a great need to increase primary production and money was available from the Commonwealth in various things like there was a Commonwealth Extension Services Grant. Also, during this 10-year period, there was an important development in the provision of funds from the industry to promote research work like the wheat research funds, barley research funds and similar sorts of schemes in relation to livestock work. So there was a considerable opportunity then for additional appointments. Probably the figures I gave you, I was thinking of the first half of the 1950s and not the second half of the 1950s. I'd have to say that by 1960 the picture may have been rather different as far as numbers.

[4.30] A much greater number, an expanded workforce. It makes sense. It's interesting that South Australia's 19<sup>th</sup> century notion of a granary capital and supplying products all around the country (even though it wasn't a nation at the time) but by the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century you've got this need for more research, the need to improve primary production and so on. I'm just wondering about the level of understanding that people would have had about the nature of the land and the work they were doing. Were there any great concerns raised at this time? You've got Ninety-Mile Desert schemes and you mentioned Kangaroo Island's soil scheme and so on. I'm just wondering what sort of level of awareness there was about the impact of activities on the land?

I don't know. There was some concern, I know, at the sort of development was taking place. It was stripping the country of vegetation and there was concern that the resources that were being used to produce this, use of fertilizers and so on. It was maybe in the long run un-



economic. We shouldn't be developing some of that country with low rainfall and it was a lot easier to get rid of the vegetation than to get it back again.

Were there a number of people commenting or making observations at the lower end of the scale do you think?

Yes, at that time through the 1960s, through the '50s and into the '60s, the great rush was still on. Land, soil was being cleared at a tremendous rate, fast vehicle entry to the Murray Mallee and so on, Upper South East. There was not a lot of worry about what was happening to the vegetation, that sort of raised concerns.

With something like the Soils Branch, was that more focused on improving the level of production, improving the quality of the produce?

The soils people were concerned about the salinity of the soil in particular, yes.

So they were looking at things like drainage schemes or better supply of water?

They were concerned about the loss of soil, either by wind erosion or water erosion, and they were very concerned with increases in salinity which affects quite considerable areas on Eyre Peninsula and to some extent on Yorke Peninsula. More recently, the work on drainage in the South East is something which increased very considerably over the last 20 years, during which I've been out of agriculture anyway.

I was thinking more of the early 20th century, late 19th century drainage schemes. Coonalpyn Downs, the Ninety-Mile Desert, anywhere where there was a patch of land, you got people trying to get some farming going. Because you were then a Research Officer: was that part of horticulture or agronomy?

I'm sorry?

Just going back to, just swapping from Soils back to your time as Research Officer.

I was concerned only with agronomy.

That was agronomy, OK. Again that distinction between the different branches, horticulture, soils, agronomy.

Soils, of course, has an impact on horticulture and agronomy but essentially ... I was always surprised that they never made one branch out of the two.

[9.25] Then you progressed up the ranks from Research Officer to Senior Agronomist and Chief Agronomist, I remember you mentioning them last time we chatted. They were essentially promotions within the Public Service? The nature of the work was ...

Yes. My promotion to Senior Agronomist: we were lucky enough to recruit a man Newton Tiver who had been in the Waite Institute. He was a very particular agronomist and he came in and he was made Senior Research Officer and I was Senior Agronomist. Essentially I was more concerned with aspects of the crop research and he was on pasture research.

Was he a local man?

He was an Adelaide graduate. We didn't keep him very long and he was in private practice and became quite a well-known figure and quite well deserved. When the man who was head of the branch retired, Len Cook, in about '55 or '56 or something like that then I got his job.

So it was just a natural progression in a sense. That applied again when you became Chief Agronomist?

Yes.

The nature of the work: did that change greatly or were you just supervising more staff?

My work?

As you went up the ranks.

When I was Chief Agronomist, that was quite a different job really, supervising all the research work and nominally head of the extension and research work and there were several other duties also ...

So extra duties that required extra time? Going to more meetings and more dealings with people?

Yes it was, yes.

Were you able to initiate any research projects or special projects you wanted investigated? Was that part of your responsibility? I'm just wondering how ...

My responsibility was in effecting decisions in regards to choice of new projects that were put up or how do we use these investigations. The formulation of such plans was the work of other people.

Who was putting up the plan? I suppose that's what I was getting at.

It came up through the Research Officers.

[13.00] Through the Research Officers or through the farmers themselves or ...?

It could go up through farmers yes.

Someone's got to spark off the idea somewhere I guess. I'm just wondering whether the farmers were making comments or ringing in saying we have this particular problem that needs investigation?

They do from time to time for sure, yes. Problems of weed control and pest control.

I suppose it's appropriate, Lex, to ask then are there any particular research projects that stick in your mind as being especially pleasing because you were able to get a good result? Not every project, I presume, had a successful outcome! But were there any that you were particularly pleased about?

The work on Kangaroo Island that Carter did was excellent work on fertiliser appliance there.

That was very good work in anybody's language.

I suppose another way of asking the question is how do you measure the successful outcome? Whether they solved the problem or couldn't solve the problem but worked out why they couldn't solve it? How do you judge a success in the research project?

In applied research projects you judge it in terms of 'pounds, shillings and pence' to use the old expression. If it enables savings of time and so on. But, of course, many, many of the

developments were made commercially anyway. New weedicides, for example, that sort of thing. Insecticides. ... lots of things. Somebody came up with answers to that, I'm just trying to think of more ...

That's OK because when the transcript comes through you might be able to think of some more examples and so on. There might be some particular techniques that were employed or pieces of technology that had spin-off benefits. Those things can be added to the record later.

Some of the things – our extension programs – some of those were quite pleasing too. There was all the work done on the windrowing of barley which was to reduce the amount of the losses caused from wind attacks when barley crops were ripe. That was quite a successful extension program. Some of the new varieties that came out of course: we couldn't claim to produce the varieties but we were associated with getting them widely used. Some of them like the barley variety [clipper], for example.

With Callaghan there were quite big programs: he was very interested in wheat so we had a number of programs aimed at improving the qualities of South Australian wheat. Some of the work done, the fertiliser work in the South East was quite good: on the ... deep sands there, some of the work that Tiver did there was quite useful.

The wide use of legumes in cereal country to build up fertility in the soils. That was quite an outstanding result over several years. Now they do it not with pasture plants but they've changed over to crops. All the rotations have been all torn up and new ones have been written in the last 10 or 12 years. It's quite interesting.

They're changing times! You touched on one thing there Lex in particular, the time frame to achieve a successful outcome or the negative not to work. It's not something to happen over just one or two years, I would presume it's something that's going on over several years to improve a technique. Are there any projects that stick in your mind for the length of time it took, that seemed to go on a lot longer than expected?

I can't think of any offhand but I'm sure there's some there though.

I was just wondering if there was something that like after 10 years you were finally able to say yes we've nailed that one, and tick that off the list of jobs done! If it comes to mind later you can ...

[19:55] We didn't get some dates down for your rise in the ranks but I guess some of that will be in the annual reports and so on, when you're promoted to Senior and Chief Agronomist. Then you became, I think you told me last time, the Chief of the Division of Plant Industries. Could you tell me a little bit about that move?

Callaghan's organisation set up – have you heard this before, the three divisions?

Yes.

You've heard all this? The Division of Animal Industry, the Division of Plant Industry and the Division of Extension and Information: those were the three divisions. Each of the two industry divisions, there was a Chief of Division. In the Division of Plant Industry there was agronomy,

horticulture and soils (three divisions). In the animal industry there was animal health, animal husbandry and dairying. So the heads of branches then were responsible to the Chief of Division. The Chiefs of Division and one or two other people used to meet. That was the policy organ of the Department of Agriculture, headed by the Director of course.

So it's a bit of a pyramid sort of thing, reporting up to the Director.  
Yes.

When did you become the Chief of the Division, roughly?  
Around about 1960 or '61.

Who were the other Chiefs?  
Marshall Irving was the Chief of the Division of Animal Industry, he became the Director of Agriculture later. Bob Herriot was the Chief of the Extension and Information.

[22.40] So did you work closely with those people and the Director?  
Yes.

When I say closely, I was going to ask you how closely? See each other regularly or regular meetings?  
No, the meetings weren't terribly regular. They weren't held closely together. Bob Herriot left, I'm trying to think what happened after he left. He went to Roseworthy College. I've just forgotten who got his job.

We'll find out from the records.  
I had a very close friendship with Marshall Irving but that was more informal than formal.

What about with your staff and people you were supervising and the people doing the work? Did you have regular contact, regular meetings?  
We didn't have any formal meetings but we were all under the same roof and we had reasonably close contact there.

What about out of hours? Was there much socialising or fraternising?  
Not a lot, no.

Weekend sport or anything of that type?  
No, no.

That's interesting. Some of the departments, some organisations were very big on a social club or have their own sports team or whatever it may be and so on. Perhaps you were all too busy!  
Well, we didn't have it anyway.

What about for yourself – working on weekends, working on evenings, did you have to go on field trips that required you to be away for a length of time? You were going out to visit research centres and so on: were you taking a week to do that?

A trip over to Minnipa took a few days anyway. There were other things that came in. I was on the Wheat Industry Research Council which met in Canberra in every May for a few days. Then in the spring we visited projects in one State or another. Then there was the Extension Services Grant which was, I mentioned before, a source of funds which supported a number of people in the Department. That involved visits to Canberra and a certain amount of time there too.

You didn't do that as part of your holidays! (laughs)

No.

On a related aspect, did you have people like the Minister or Playford when he was Premier, coming out to see you or going on any of these trips with you? I'm not thinking of the Canberra ones, of course, but trips around to the research centres, did they ever show up?

Yes. They used to go to the research centres – I wouldn't say terribly often. I can remember going to Minnipa with Glen Pearson and Gabe Bywaters and David Brookman. Eyre Peninsula, Kybybolite. So, a fair amount of movement around the Ministers, yes.

Did that apply to the other chiefs and the Director? Were they ...

I guess so, yes.

I was just wondering whether you were all going out as a party in one trip, or whether they just tended to go whenever they had interests or a need to see something? Premier Playford with his ...

I think it would be with the people who were most interested, otherwise it could have been a bit of a circus.

[26.48] How much contact did you have with the Director of the Department? Were you seeing him on a regular basis there? I'm just wondering how the administration structure flowed down from that pyramid.

I used to see a fair amount of Strickland. Callaghan, of course, left in 1959. [I became Chief of Division after Callaghan left.] I saw a reasonable amount of him. We had a big grasshopper plague, a locust plague, in 1955. Come to think of it, it occupied our concern for quite some time. It was a hell of a thing to cope with 'cause they were on us all the time. I never saw a lot of him after that. I saw quite an amount of Strickland when he was Director. Later on, I saw a lot of Marshall [Irving], I was quite close friends with him.

Was that partly also because you were higher up the rung then?

I suppose that was partly it, yes.

I just wondered how they operated as directors passing on their duties to you and to your staff and so on? Was it very much a hierarchical autocratic sort of system, talking the '60s into the '70s?

Strickland [stood on] his dignity quite a bit. Marshall – he was an extremely likeable fellow. He had pretty definite ideas but he [was informal].

Were they both people who had come through the Department?

Strickland had been in the background for a long time, yes. He came in as Director of Horticulture, I'm not too sure when but he was there for a long, long time. Marshall came in at the time that Callaghan set up the divisions. He came in from the Northern Territory: it must have been about 1951, '52 or 3, something like that. Strickland had been there a long time before that.

So long careers in the Department: departmental ways are very much entrenched in the way they operate I presume? I'm thinking that by the time we get to the '70s, you're starting to get modern management ideas coming through and different emphases for the Department with overseas projects and things of that type. Vastly different from perhaps when you started. Did you get involved in any of that broader overseas work and the 'big picture' things for the Department?

Just enlarge on that a bit, what you're getting at. Sorry I'm ...

**[31.42] End of Side B, Tape 1**  
**Tape 2, Side A**

[0:20] Just ending off that other tape Lex, what I was getting at I suppose was the extension of South Australian knowledge, transfer of that knowledge, to overseas. I asked if you got involved with any of these overseas projects. There's a really big shift from an inward looking department focusing on what it can do for South Australia and perhaps Australia, to suddenly we can export all this expertise that we've developed over to African countries and Middle Eastern countries and so on. Are you able to comment on that sort of transition for the Department?

One thing I would say is this. In Libya, our interest there was, if it wasn't initiated by this at least it was stimulated by the South Australian seed growers who were looking for markets for their pasture seeds. They went over there and as well as trying to sell their seeds there, they stayed and worked with them, showed them how to sow them and so on. They might have had many things prompting this, but one of the things undoubtedly was the opening up of a market for them. So when a South Australian went over there and others, Western Australians went there about the same time, a lot of this I felt sure was the provision of markets for South Australian products. Not only pasture seeds but fencing, farm machinery and so on. I wasn't involved with it personally although I did on one occasion call in and see our people in Libya.

Had you been overseas on another trip?

I was overseas with the Barley Board, yes. Maybe that's how I see it as it was very much with Australian produce in mind.

I suppose that fits in the context of Britain joining the Common Market and a change in international market opportunities for Australia.

Yes.

[2:55] You mentioned being overseas with the Barley Board. I suppose it's appropriate to just ask you now, a little bit about being involved in the Australian Barley Board. How you came to be involved and what sort of things happened there, your time with the Board?

The Australian Barley Board was set up during wartime. South Australia by far produced most of the barley in Australia. After the war when the Acts were changed, the Board was limited in its powers to South Australia and Victoria, and barley production increased in other States but

because the name Australian Barley Board was well known, it was retained even though it applied only to South Australia and Victoria.

An influential chairman of the Board had been the late W.J. Spafford. When he died he was replaced by the man who was at the time Director of Agriculture in South Australia, Geoff Strickland. He wasn't really a barley man, he was a horticulturalist but nevertheless he got the job. When he died early in 1970 I was asked by the Minister if I was prepared to take the job on and I did so. I served as the chairman of the Board until August '85.

And that was after you'd retired from the Department; you maintained that.

Yes, some time after I'd retired from the Department.

So when you joined the board, did you come on as a board member first or as ...?

No, as chairman.

You were appointed as chairman.

The members were ... Some of these were elected by the farmers, some were appointed by the Maltsters and Brewers, but the chairman was a government appointee.

Was that work in addition to your departmental work?

Yes.

So after hours and ...?

Yes.

Was that the only board you were involved in?

Yes.

Things like the extension ... the funding for the extension schemes and various ...

That was all part of the departmental work, yes.

Yes. Of course, that story about your time on the Barley Board is covered in their history book I expect?

Yes.

That role of chairman continued beyond your time with the Department. You retired in 19..?

1977.

'77, thanks. So what had you been doing leading up to retirement? Why did you retire? Were you getting close to 65?

I was close enough.

So early retirement?

A slightly early retirement. The fact that I was still chairman of the Board meant that I still had some interest in agriculture and I didn't feel entirely that I'd been put out to grass. It was quite pleasant to have a bit of extra time at my disposal.

You decided to retire about four years early. Was there anything going on in the Department at the time that prompted you to consider early retirement? Reorganisation or just been there long enough?

It just seemed a good thing to do at the time!

What other work activities had you been involved in for those last few years? I know we've been jumping in sort of 5 or 10 year spans but looking at the '70s I think your title was at one stage (correct me if I'm wrong) Assistant Director of the Department?

Yes. I don't think there'd been any dramatic change. There had been changes made, of course, in the Department. The appointment of Jim McColl, who was a good director. I felt I had done my dash really. It wasn't a bad thing for me to leave and leave it to someone else to carry on.

[8.55] Was the appointment of McColl a bit of a catalyst in a way? Would you have aspired to the top job yourself?

I applied for the job when it was advertised. I didn't get the recommendation and looking back on it I can see that I would not have enjoyed the job. I had certainly no regrets that I had missed out on the job.

What about the appointment of Jim McColl, an outsider coming in? Had you had any contact with Jim at all? Was he completely new to you?

He was completely new to me, yes, but I thought it was a good appointment. He did very well.

He had (laughs) trouble with the Minister but I don't think that was his fault.

I was going to ask you about the Minister eventually (laughs), so it's good of you to mention him! I'm going to have a chat to, hopefully, the Minister (former) and Jim certainly is keen to tell me some things (laughs) so we'll probably cover that from a different angle. What about Ministers more generally? You mentioned Bywaters and Pearson and so on. By the end of the '70s you've got Casey and Chatterton.

Tom Casey died last week.

I noticed.

Chatterton, yes and ...

Ross Storey, he was about the start of the '70s.

Yes. They lost the election and I don't think Ross got back in as Minister again did he?

No, '68 to '70 I think off the top of my head.

That would have been Ross Storey.

It would have been Ross, yes.

There was Tom Casey and Chapman. Ted Chapman I think was the next Liberal Minister.

Yes, a bit later. Did you have much to do with Casey and Chatterton, those two in particular?

I didn't have very much to do with Chatterton. [I retained friendly relations] with Tom Casey: he was someone who was easy to get to know and a likeable chap.

What sort of dealings did you have with him in particular? Was it to do with legislation or just taking an interest in what the Department was doing? How did the Minister operate at that time?



The dealings that I had, I don't remember really much in the way of official dealings with him. It was a sort of pleasant personal relationship. I don't think he was a very effective Minister really but he was very ..., just a pleasant fellow.

[12:45] Did you get involved yourself with forming legislation or putting forward policy proposals, drafting regulations even? Was that something that ...

The only legislation I was concerned with, that was quite early in the piece when I joined the Department, was in the *Agricultural Chemicals Act*. This was back in the '50s or something like that. Through some of the people I had quite a lot to do with them. I had a bit to do with the *Weeds Act* but not a lot.

Did you have to enforce some of these Acts? Was that part of your duties?

The *Weeds Act* came within it, yes. We had some minor strife there. The *Administration of Agricultural Chemicals Act* – it was rather strange in the way it was handled by someone who officially was in charge of the Ligurian Bee project of the Department. He was in charge of taking samples for analysis, then they went to the Department of Chemistry, so they were involved in the administration of the Act.

[14:35] So it was more an administration thing rather than helping frame policy? You're more implementing rather than framing it?

I was concerned with the framing of the policy but not of the implementation of it.

OK. When Acts are being drafted, rules are being prepared, people in the Department can quite often be called in to offer some comments or to look at drafts. We've got you up to retirement and you said you continued on the Barley Board until '84, '85. Had you maintained any interest, involvement in agriculture since that time, or just a casual observer?

I had a casual observer's interest, probably the way of expressing it, yes.

We might have to take you a bit beyond casual observer as this project unfolds! (laughs) We're only testing the waters I think today Lex, we tried to open a few things but it's probably an appropriate point to call a halt to today's session unless there's any burning issue or topic that I haven't been able to prise out of you?

There are a number of things that I did which ... for example, there were a couple of committees I served on. I served on one committee and I was convener of another one involved in the placement of deep sea ports in South Australia. I had a couple of jobs over in the Barley Board before I was on the Board.

This is about 196...?

In the 1950s or '60s, '60s perhaps.

There were a couple of enquiries or something about deep sea ports.

Yes. There was one that led to the development of Point Giles. Then there was one which a chap from the Harbours Board was convener of that. There were a couple of others I was

convener of: one would be reporting on the need for a deep sea port on Eyre Peninsula, southern Eyre Peninsula. Then one [in the] Ardrossan/Wallaroo/Port Pirie [area].

You were contributing advice and comment from the point of view of what the industry would need for shipping cereals and stock and so on?

Yes.

Certainly quite a few of those reports are Parliamentary Papers or documents on the records so I'll be looking at them with some interest to see what you said! (laughs) No, to see what was said. (laughs) There will be other things that I haven't touched on or you might want to comment further on. When the transcript comes through that will be an opportunity to add more to the record. We can certainly do a more detailed, probing interview if necessary as time goes on. Hopefully the project will proceed to that level. Perhaps for now if we call a halt. Thanks for your contributions to the project, Lex.

[18:30] **End of interview session**

**Tape 3, Side A**

**AN INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY BERNARD O'NEIL WITH MR LEX WALKER OF MITCHAM, SOUTH AUSTRALIA, IN REGARDS TO THE HISTORY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA, CONTINUING AN INTERVIEW OF THE 30TH OF SEPTEMBER 2003. THE DATE TODAY IS THE 14TH OF JANUARY 2004.** [Square brackets incorporate corrections supplied by Lex Walker in March and April 2006.]

[0:30] Lex, it was good of you to contact me about the possibility of doing a follow-up. You had a couple of comments to make in regards to our last session so perhaps I'll just throw it open for you on a little addendum and correction I think.

I was going to say, I referred to the slight build-up in research after 1950 but on thinking it over probably it was a reasonably bigger rate of progress. Extra funds were available. One of the things is that there were many more graduates to chose from then. At the time that I graduated, in 1939, I was the only one of that year and there were none in the previous year, but by 1950 the numbers were coming through, 40 or 50 a year, so there was a little bit of difference there. Another thing that I didn't ...

Just on that point Lex, there's an active policy to recruit? You've got this pool of graduates coming through so obviously there's an active policy to recruit graduates? And as many as possible?

Yes.

So you got a lot of support from government for funding the positions.

Funds became available from the Commonwealth also, which we'll probably talked about later.

One other thing which I thought was worth mentioning particularly, it may have been emphasised elsewhere, there was what was seen almost as an urgent need to increase the value of primary production in Australia from the point of view from building up exports, it was a big thing in the Commonwealth and the State also was well aware of the situation.

What sort of steps were taken then?

I'll refer to that later too if I may, alright?

[3:00] Yes.

On the list you've got here: regionalisation, is that alright?

You're referring here to the list of topics I sent you at one stage.

That's right. This was something which we were all interested in regionalisation I expect, but there was quite a resistance to it by some people who felt that they didn't want their people stuck out from Adelaide hundreds of miles away responding to somebody not in their branch. Therefore, the view was a pretty negative one in that sense. There seemed to be obvious advantages. These were brought home to me in a trip that I had overseas. This was a trip financed by the Department of Primary Industry, the Commonwealth department. There was somebody from each State that went away with somebody from Primary Industry. We visited South Africa, Holland, Great Britain, the US and Canada. As a result of this, I felt that regionalisation was something which had a great deal to offer us. This was probably the view of most of the other people too.

When I came back it was discussed in a seminar and there were lots of private discussions. There were still reservations by some people. Anyhow, about this time, as you know, Callaghan was asked to give a report on the organisation, the Department. I'm not sure of the Minister who was involved: it might have been Tom Casey, is that right?

Yes, I think that's right.

I saw Callaghan and the views that I put to him were very much in favour of regionalisation. As far as the implementation of this was concerned, this mostly took place after I'd left anyway. I really don't have much more to report on my interest in this at all.

Your trip overseas preceded Callaghan reporting?

Yes.

Do you think that ... presumably Callaghan was aware of the concept?

Yes. My impression was that he was in favour of the proposal yes. Have you seen the report?

Not yet. Everyone refers to it. It may sound remiss, but I haven't looked at it. I ... in due course. But how much before Callaghan's report was it that you were overseas? His report was about 1973.

This was in 1970.

1970, right. Was that the focus of the trip or was it something as a by-product you saw?

No. This was the focus of the trip: the organisation of extension work. This was financed specifically by the Department of Primary Industry as part of the Commonwealth Extension Services Grant.

Was regionalisation, the concept of regionalisation, picked up by other States?

Yes. I'm not sure to what extent they put these into practice but in the larger States, apart from Tasmania, there's been at least some implementation of regionalisation.

[7.55] The model that was implemented in South Australia, it seems to fit quite well given the nature of the State, the geography and so on having five or six regions. Did you come back with ideas about how it might be implemented? Did you have to, for example, report to the Department or to the Minister?

I didn't report to the Minister but I certainly had discussions with the Director about it.

Was there any feel within the Department that it was a worthwhile step? I'm thinking here of your immediate return when you were having initial discussions. Were people excited by it or did they tell you to go away: say it was a nice idea, a nice trip, let's forget about it.

There were some people who expressed support for it, enthusiasm for it but one or two in the department felt that it was taking away their control of the people, they were reluctant to see that happen.

Callaghan comes along with his report and they decide to adopt regionalisation and that coincides with your departure from the Department?

That's around about the story, yes.

OK. Do you have any comments Lex, that you could make from the outsiders perspective on seeing regionalisation coming into practice? You know in your other roles with the Barley Board and so on?

I'm not quite sure what you mean: from my other roles?

From an outsider's perspective: regionalisation comes in after, in effect, you'd left the Department. Did you get any feel for how it was working as an observer?

No, I didn't really I'm sorry. You would have to go and have a look at it which I didn't, and I wasn't in a position to do really.

So it's lived on in various forms.

As I understand Port Lincoln was the first place but it's certainly going down in the South East of the State. From a recent visit down there, it wasn't in any depth but it seemed to be working quite satisfactorily there.

The Department itself has changed so much from the last decades.

It's true.

Thanks for your comments on that. Other things on the list?

Moving on to the Monarto episode.

[11:00] In order there. [On the list.]

It was something which ... I think everybody had their [eyes poked?] who was not in favour of it. We made some tentative steps towards getting ready for it, not putting it into practice but deciding what we would have to do and then suddenly the whole thing was axed anyway. Everybody was very pleased about that.

Was Monarto, not in departmental terms but just the concept, a reasonable idea? Decentralisation?

No. I wouldn't think so, no. Was it some form of regionalisation? Not really no, I don't think so. It's changing the position of headquarters that's all. There were lots of advantages in having headquarters near the centre of government where other departments are so you've got more contacts with other departments and bodies. Monarto didn't seem to do anything much for the Department at all as far as I'm concerned.

[13.00] Were you involved in the planning of Monarto, from a departmental point of view?

I didn't do much planning. I don't know that we did a lot of planning. We went there and had a look at it and we were told where we were going to be and so on, so there was a little bit of thought given to it but it wasn't taken very far as I recall.

I was just wondering whether it got to the stage of designing buildings or ...

No, no.

If it had gone ahead do you think you would have stayed with the Department or moved with the Department?

I would have been stuck with it I guess. (Both laugh). I didn't have any other place to go.

Like it or lump it?

It would have been a like it or lump it thing yes.

Some people I've been talking to have suggested that they were prepared to move or prepared to travel that far if that was required.

Yes, I would have travelled. I wouldn't have moved. As far as Northfield's concerned, we thought that was a good idea in the Department. When I say we, most of the people I talked to felt that that was a good idea bringing much of the research and the other people into close contact, having one base. The laboratories there were going very well. That was quite a successful move to set them up. There were some other research elements there. There was a piggery and, of course, the dairy was there. It was close to the Artificial Breeding Board although that was a separate entity. It looked to us to be a good proposition. You could argue perhaps that again it's taking the Department away from the centre of things but it's not a big move away from the centre of things out in Northfield. I don't think it would have had the some sort of effect that a move to Monarto would have entailed.

It would have been about 10 km or so from ...

Something like that yes. Anyway, we were quite firmly told that that was it, it was finished, out.

Both those issues there, Monarto and Northfield, were they happening around you? Were you concentrating on your own work and these were just issues for other people in the Department to confront?

By this time I was a Director of a Division there and so these were things which we – the Director and the Divisional Directors – discussed around the table. It was something that I was involved with to that extent.

[17:00] I was just wondering and you've answered it, whether someone was delegated to look after the issue and they just went off and did it and really didn't have more than a chat over a cup of tea, so you've answered that.

The next thing you've got here is the Department's relationship with groups. I had relationships with the farmers – there was the wheat and woolgrowers and then the other people which became the Farmers Federation. My relations with them were always very cordial. The Department generally got along well with the farmers organisation and the stockowners. On the fruit side you would have heard about from Tom [Miller] anyway.

Of course, as far as the farmers were concerned, we had a lot of contact through the Agricultural Bureau movement, which you've heard a lot about perhaps. There were bureaus and bureau conferences. That served a very useful purpose in providing a link between the departmental people on one hand and the producers on the other.

Other organisations. I had some contact with the Barley Board, long before I was offered a job or given the job of becoming chairman! I chaired a couple of committees to discuss such things as whether bulk handling of barley was desirable and, if so, how would you classify barley? Also, I became involved with three inquiries, two of which I convened, on the location of bulk ports. This was done through the ... originated from the Minister of ports – Marine and Harbours.

Marine and Harbours, OK.

They were quite interesting groups of people: we had somebody from Marine and Harbours and somebody from the Railways.

Were you part of the inquiry or were you making submissions and representing the Department in that sense?

No. I wasn't making submissions as much as correcting submissions from the farmers.

Did you find, Lex, with these different groups much difference of opinion? Were you able to have good relations with the Farmers Federation, for example, or were there sticking points that came up where they were at loggerheads with the Department? Inevitably there's going to be some sort of conflict or disagreement somewhere, but does anything come to mind?

I don't think so. I might have seen a ... (laughs), I don't recall any particular things.

We can always add some more to a transcript or whatever, but as I say in any family, no matter how happy the family is, there's always some level of disagreement about something. Whether it be individual farmers or ...

There's always individuals of course, who want to go about something: there's no doubt about that. I can't think of any serious disagreements of substantial groups of people.

[21.53] In one sense you're all working to a common goal, to improve agricultural production. It's a question of how you're going to get there, whether it be by government regulation or private industry, a private push, you're working towards a common goal I expect?

Yes. I'm still thinking about the other thing but I'm sorry I can't think of anything else.

[22:35] As far as the Royal Show is concerned, I had a long association with the Show in various ways. There was an agricultural produce section and I was a judge for 3 or 4 or 5 years. Then I was a member of the [Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society] Council ... It's something which is of very small importance really. Because you were judging the best bag of wheat sort of thing, there was nothing to say what it would cost to produce: for all you know it was hand-reared and it could have been handpicked. I would never have said this to the Show Society, but it was a bit of a bloody joke really! The dairy people: they had a part to play in the dairy exhibits. In the livestock: Marshall Irving was on the Council as far as beef cattle were concerned. The Department had an interest in the show, but in some respects it was a bit trivial. On the other hand, we had an Agricultural Hall there where we used to put on exhibits which were aimed at telling people what a good job the Department's doing. That was the idea. That became tempered a little bit with the thought, it's an agricultural show but 90% of the people who come here are city people. To make it attractive to them you have to bear in mind you want something which just isn't geared up for Joe Blow the farmer. Anyhow, there was something which [required?] quite a bit of trouble because it was waving the flag for the Department. You could do two things: you can compromise it a bit – you can have things that are interesting to anybody but it can also be showing what useful work the Department's doing.

The Department did see a public relations role in participating?

Yes.

Did you notice any great change in the attitude of the public going along to these shows?

Yes. It's measured by the number of people who are there, yes, I'm sure. Some of the early ones, there'd be odd people going through but if you had something which was of real interest to people, like animal husbandry showing young animals or something like that, you could see it generated a lot more interest by the public.

Also, I was thinking there of people in the '50s or '60s who were accustomed to having their chooks in their backyards and fruit trees around their own home blocks and so on. They were in touch with (although they might be city-based people) the farming concept. You look at now, the '80s, '90s and into the 21st century: it's very rare for there to be chooks, fruit trees are coming down and so on. (both laugh) They lose that connection with the land.

Yes.

[26:40] The other one there, Lex, that I had down was the rural shows and the field days.

Yes. The rural shows – there wasn't very much in Adelaide. There was a chance for the local people to go along, that's all. They used to go pretty regularly I imagine and they'd be seeing the people whom they dealt with. I don't think anything very much was done to fly the Department's flag on those occasions. As far as field days were concerned, there were field days that were organised by the Department. We used to hold field days at our research centres. Other field days like machinery field days and so on, the Department had a small role to play with those only.

The Department was not the main organiser for those?

No, not for things like machinery field days and so on. Some of them were commercial ones showing agricultural chemicals, that sort of thing.

But the Department saw a need to be involved obviously and participate.

Yes.

The ones that were in the research centres, were they more like the open day we would have now where people could just come along and inspect the facility?

Yes, but there would be a planned program. You'd be taken around and shown particular things. There might be exhibits or experiments showing particular points – efficiency of weed control or the effectiveness of fertilisers on the crops. Animals came into it too of course.

Would you have people from the Department attending, apart from the research centre staff – from Head Office?

Usually, yes. Usually there'd be people from Head Office there.

In terms of that public relations role overall, how much time and effort would the Department have put into participating in these Royal Show, field days etc.? Did it seem to take up an inordinate amount of time?

I don't think so, no. The week of the Show might have involved – how many man days, 20 or 30 man days perhaps.

[30:00] Relationships with other departments and agencies. With the Lands Department, there was a reasonable amount of coordination there in some things. The War Service Land Settlement Scheme: of course, when I joined the Department (I'm not speaking from what happened before because I didn't know) the developmental work of the War Service Land Settlement people was well underway. There was quite a lot of discussion between the two organisations there. The co-operation between them should have been good because Callaghan was chief of both of them at that time. (both laugh)

The Pastoral Board I always regarded as something or other. They were basically ... and they tended to be a law unto themselves! I don't think I had a lot to do with them really.



There was a quite clear distinction between pastoral activity and agricultural activity?

Yes. The Pastoral Board used to go around and have a look at what improvements had been made and so on and so forth. There were people who'd had a long association with the pastoral country and I think some of them felt that if anybody spent less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of his time up in the pastoral country he's hardly worth listening to. Not that I had any personal grudge against them, they were only just looking at it from a distance.

What about, I know it's outside your area of agronomy, but what about things like livestock? Were the people in the livestock area in contact with the Pastoral Board or pastoralists?

I don't think there's a lot of co-operation between the two. Obviously, we had livestock inspector around Port Augusta, for example, but he covered the whole damn area north of there. Then ,of course, there was the irrigation people: there was co-operation there with horticulture.

**[32:30] End of Tape 3, Side A  
Tape 3, Side B**

[0:05] Did you have any reports from the soils people in the Mines Department, for example? Talking of improving production in a certain area, you want to know the nature of the soil. Who did that work?

The Mines Department. I'm not aware of that happening.

OK.

They were using various State and Federal governments over the time. There was a level of support for, and understanding of agriculture generally. I indicated that in turn say the '50s, early '60s, there was a very strong feeling that we had to do what we can to increase production and do it by exports and so on. This was certainly the view of the Commonwealth, and the State too. The view seemed to be at this time, certainly in the State. We gave it everything we had and it didn't seem to matter about the cost. That doesn't mean to say we had money to spend but there was no thought of saying 'We'll do this if we can get some payments from the producer'. If we could spare money on displaying something, changing people's minds onto ways which we thought were more useful and productive, we would do that regardless of the cost if we had the money. That seemed to change in the 1970s when people started talking about getting paid for what was done. It seemed to me that it was quite a marked change in attitude within a comparatively short period.

[2:25] Any suggestion how, why that came about?

No. I remember (I'm telling you the whole thing!) on one occasion, the Minister and I were over in the Public Service Commissioner's office, talking with Bob Bakewell, who was a fairly senior public servant and had been a confidant of Don Dunstan. We were talking about something and he came up and said, 'Why should agriculture expect a different deal from other

industries? For example, why should we be helping farmers when say people who make ping-pong balls don't get the same sort of assistance?'. (laughs) I thought that was a remarkable statement to make! Because (I'm biased I suppose) but it seems to me that agriculture – and I think this is recognised – you're dealing with something which is an important source of exports. Come wartime it's an absolute necessity, you know fuel and fibre. You're helping look after the land, which is a permanent asset and so on and so forth. To compare this with ping-pong ball production, I would have thought it was a joke except I know that it wasn't.

Would this have been the early '70s?

About mid '70s I'd say.

I'm thinking in terms of the Callaghan Report coming out of that famous memo: 'Justify the existence of the Department' ... just coming in ... if you could pin point that sort of transition phase, it's all part of that early to mid '70s, but at the same time you've got the Commonwealth government still with lavish funds under the Whitlam ...

Yes, that's right.

Interesting.

As far as the various governments are concerned (you may not want any more), the various State governments? I thought mostly they were in support of agriculture, except for Don Dunstan. I'm not too sure whether he supported the Department as keenly as he might have. He referred in one case to the 'dead hand of the Department of Agriculture', which didn't endear him to us in particular.

Another one who had an interesting view was old Tom Playford. At one stage the Minister of Ag. told me that Tom had said, 'You've got to watch the Department of Agriculture. We don't want a whole lot of little Waite Institutes bobbing up all around the country', which suggested that he was not really in favour of running research institutes for doing research, but rather just demonstrating what ought to be done. Nevertheless, Tom gave us a reasonable deal. He was probably one of the people who thought that all you needed was a good practical farmer to go around and tell people what he did.

[6:40] It's interesting, Lex, your comment there in this case Playford and Dunstan at the premier level. What about the ministerial level? Did you have strong Ministers, good Ministers, from your observations?

Most of them were pretty good Ministers, yes.

Did they have an understanding of agriculture?

With one about one exception they'd all been farmers anyway. That one exception was Gabe Bywaters who was a very pleasant fellow and wasn't a bad Minister either. The others ... I don't think they were the strongest members of the Cabinet, but they weren't the worst either.

You were there at the Chatterton era were you?

Yes. You've probably heard something about him.

Always open to new comments!

I don't have any particular comments about him. (laughs)

They were certainly interesting times, in all seriousness. It stands out in the Department's history as a very critical time.

Indeed, yes. Quite extraordinary.

Did you have to interact with the Minister and his assistants and so on, directly? With Chatterton?

With Chatterton? A little bit. I really had little contact with him really. He reappointed me as the chairman of the Barley Board. There was some talk at one stage that (laughs) (Jim McColl mentioned this to me) they were talking about looking for somebody else to run the Potato Board, something which I wouldn't have wanted to be associated with actually. No, I didn't have a lot to do with him.

You might have been lucky in that respect!

Yes. I'm sure Jim's got a good story to tell about him. Where am I now?

[9.50] We've probably covered the importance of the Commonwealth Extension Service last time. We talked about cadetships last time.

The law enforcement role: this is not law enforcement strictly, but one of the first jobs I had when I joined the Department from the Waite was to liaise with somebody in the Department of Chemistry on the preparation of the *Agricultural Chemicals Act*. That was an interesting exercise. I'm not too sure who administered the Act. We had to inspect this [realignment?] really in terms of chemicals. I went around taking various samples and sending them on to Chemistry to get them analysed. I'm not too sure whether we or the Department of Chemistry then received the prosecutions if any.

The *Weeds Act* was something that was administered by the Department of Agriculture. [District Councils also had responsibilities.] sure whether we administered it ... That was the Industry Council Committee that administered the Act. That was ... The Department provided advice to them, technical advice. The District Councils were purely administering their role I guess.

Across the board, across the range of legislation and regulations, was the Department very strong on enforcing or do you sort of tread softly and advise landowners and farmers they should be doing something differently? It's hard to generalise over a 40-year span.

That varies. A lot depended on the quarantine aspect of things. I'm not quite sure that anything ... As far as disease was concerned, we would have been tough in that regard if somebody had say lice or foot rot or something and wasn't doing the right thing. As far as the weeds were

concerned, we tended to in some ways to sort of soften the approach the Council was taking so we got into bad odour or something just for that reason.

That could be ...

Turn that thing off for a minute.

[13:45] Another area which comes under this general heading I suppose were the *Soil Conservation Act*. There were local bodies set up and there was a controlling committee from Adelaide. The obvious objective was to try and control erosion – water and wind erosion. Salinity was something which we were very much concerned with also. This is getting onto something you had in here on environmental issues.

[14:35] We don't have to stick to the list!

Environmental issues, salinity, Soil Conservation Board. We had a grasshopper plague, one in particular I remember in 1955 which involved a fairly major effort by a small branch of the Department. Of course, there were things like fruit fly control, which was an important aspect which I'm sure you've heard about from Tom [Miller] and quarantine generally, both from the plant and animal point of view, that was a very important aspect of our work.

You mentioned the land clearing Lex. Can you explain a little bit more about that, the Department's attitude? Did the Department's attitude change over time? There was obviously a lot of land clearing before you joined the Department, before the Department existed! There's a century or so of land clearing in South Australia. Did that sort of carry on or ...?

It was still going on quite actively through the 1950s and perhaps early 1960s, they were still clearing the land which was outside of Goyder's line of rainfall. A lot of the land was ... To be quite sure I've forgotten now exactly what control we had over that, I'm sorry about that. I'm sure there was a lot of land cleared which should still be mallee growing all over it. There was a rush to clear land and normally, of course, there was some fertility build up over the years so anything like reasonable seasons you'd get crops for a year or two. This encouraged farmers to plough a bit further back. A lot of people were saying the resources we have are things like superphosphate are limited, should we be more careful in allocating the use to which this is put. A bit was said about that. I don't know that anything was ever done about that.

Thinking of the big schemes in the South East, the Ninety-Mile Desert and so on. Superphosphate and fertilise and improve the quality of the soil. That in a sense is not land clearing – land improvement.

Well it's land clearing I suppose. But there were still some very severe salinity problems down there too being handled.

I had a bit of a chat with Newton Tiver about some of that, some of the work that he was doing. It was only very general. He referred me to a couple of the papers he had written about the topics as something to pick up. We're going to talk about travel now.

[18.50] There were good opportunities for people to travel. Interstate: the conferences which were held on the various topics like plant disease or insects or plant breeding and so on. There was quite a range of products and topics which gave a lot of people the chance to travel interstate. Overseas travel was reasonably generous too.

People could go interstate, overseas to study the latest developments or report on experiences in South Australia?

Mostly learning, yes. There were some conferences which were held which they attended and maybe a paper presented, but most of the ones they were trips with something hopefully fairly specific in mind to go and examine.

The Department, as you've indicated, supported and encouraged people to participate in these trips, as a rule?

Most people didn't need a lot of encouragement (laughter) but they were susceptible to propositions put forward yes.

What about conferences or seminars within South Australia? Did you get involved in national conferences that might be held in Adelaide or interstate? Local seminars you had to attend?

There were some of those. Some were held from time to time, but sometimes people would take part in, say, seminars held at the Waite Institute which was an opportunity to hear what was going on there. Perhaps other States might have been represented at that also.

There seemed to be a lot of seminars and conferences organised by the various industry groups, industry associations and so on as well. In that sense, there may have been less of a role, less of a need for the Department to organise things and more just to attend.

Yes. I if you're talking about the Department organising them that's true. We didn't organise a lot of seminars. As you say, they were industry seminars.

The Department's going to participate in those obviously and send someone along. The national, the Standing Council, for example, that had been done in turn by the States?

The Standing Committee on Agriculture; the Agricultural Council.

Did you go along to those meetings?

I went to some of them. Towards the latter part of my time there, but then after Jim McColl came I didn't go to anything. Just prior to Jim McColl coming I suppose.

There's one thing here which I had made a note of somewhere about the sort of conditions we lived under and worked under. Where was that? [break] The working conditions: we were for many years we were in the Simpson Building which was a converted warehouse, it was a warehouse just as much as it was converted! I don't suppose you were ever in that building.

[23.40] I wasn't personally but ...

You've heard about it I'm sure. There's one thing about it: it brought most of the Department, if not all, under the one roof. Prior to that there had been – I never experienced it – at the time

that I joined, I was shown into an office in the Education Building and within three weeks we had moved to the Simpson Building. I was in an Education Building with the Agriculture Branch and the Director and so on. The old Animal Health Branch, which used to be called the Stock and Brands Department, they were further up Pirie Street. Horticulture were in another building back behind Flinders Street. There were at least three groups of people. So while the Simpson Building was a poor building, at least it achieved some purpose of getting people together. That was an important thing because there was a tendency for those three groups to regard themselves as part of a separate group rather than one of the whole.

So it's sort of a sense of unity then?

Yes.

Was there a depot or a work/storage area outside of town?

I'm not sure what sort of storage.

That held vehicles or equipment?

The vehicles, they came from ...

The government garage?

Yes, that's right. They parked the vehicles. Any other stuff was stored ... For example, Horticulture I presume had gear up in the Blackwood Orchard. I don't think the Agronomy Branch or the Agriculture Branch had any gear like that at all, except what was needed in the various centres like Turretfield and so on. It was a poor building.

The rest of it [the list] is ... I don't think I'll comment about any of those things.

Ultimately, though, you moved to Grenfell Street.

We moved then to Grenfell Street, yes.

You were there for that move?

Yes. That was a big move forward there's no doubt about that.

Did I have any bad experiences? No.

In relation to Fisheries, I don't really have any comment about that.

Was that about the time that you left?

No. It was before I left that the amalgamation took place. I played very little part in relation to Fisheries. I can say really that I don't have any comment about this and those questions.

[27:12] That previous matter there, when we were talking about the work environment and the conditions and so on. You said you didn't have any comments on those things but I wanted to ask you Lex, did you belong to any professional organisation? An Institute of Management or Public Administration or ...?

No. Apart from the Public Service Association I was still a member of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science. I was sent along to Mt Eliza back in 1964: there's a staff college there, which is an interesting exercise.

Did that set you on the path of management in the sense of new management theories or new ways of ...?

There were all sorts of things there that I'd never thought about and I realised how ignorant I was about what were elementary management principles. In the university there was even less than what I had encountered at the Department of Agriculture. It was a very worthwhile experience.

How did that come about? Did you apply or volunteer?

No. Somebody from the Public Service Office said that I'd been selected. I was called by the Director and he said that I'd been selected. I said I wasn't too keen on going unless you tell me not to be damn fool I suppose, which I did.

Were you aware of the college and the courses – before you got selected?

I suppose I was aware but I didn't know anything about it.

Not something that seemed to appeal to you?

No.

Someone noticed some talents hidden away there then.

They probably decided there was a need there for something.

You weren't the only staff member, of course, to go to Mt Eliza or to a training college of that type.

No. Later on John Potter went. My son has since been [chosen to attend].

Was it a case of grabbing opportunities as they arose or did the Department or Public Service have a plan to send people?

I assume they had some plan. Maybe there was some arrangement that there would be so many from the South Australian Public Service. There may have been others but I know John Potter's been.

There's more written down here [the list]. You wrote about publication there; where was that?

Yes. Publication, reports and getting information out, promotional material and scientific reports.

Publications. For a long, long time the important publication book from the Department was the ...

The journal?

The *South Australian Journal of Agriculture*, yes.

The journal.

The people who were in the Extension Services thought very highly of this. The Bureau seemed to value it. A lot of attention was given to it. Sometimes results of experiments would be written up in it but it didn't have any great standing as a research publication.

Was it more an information ...?

Yes, information. Just incidentally, suddenly Brian Chatterton shut it. We didn't have any money for it any more and there was almost a tearful response from the fellow who was in charge of the Extension Division at that stage, to be told that the journal was going to be no more. There was some material that got published outside in outside journals.

[33:05] **End of Tape 3, Side B**  
**Tape 4, Side A**

[0:17] Lex, we were just talking about publications and the cessation of the *Journal of Agriculture*.

As I say, some research articles were acceptable in other journals outside of South Australia (Australian journals). Round about 1970, we formed a journal of our own for publication of this sort of material: for the life of me I can't remember what the name of it was, is.

We'll check it out.

It was a small Editorial Committee of which I was a member or chairman – one or the other. It just shows you that as you get older, you don't remember too many things.

We'll get the name, don't worry. You had an Editorial Committee. Did the Department have an editor for its publications?

Yes. There was a girl down there and I can't think of her name because I see her down the shops occasionally. I can't think of what her name is.

Was the editor someone with a scientific background, an agricultural background? I'm thinking of the *Journal of Agriculture* putting in information: you've got to have someone to ...?

I don't think she had an agricultural background. It was up to the Editorial Committee to look after that side of it.

To vet and approve?

Yes. Reg French and Albert [Engel]. Of course, the conferences which were held, that was a very important way of getting results out. With the proceedings of the conference, it was one way of getting it down on paper anyhow.

Were there things like monographs or research bulletins and research papers where a limited number might be needed but you want to get some information out to colleagues up at the Waite or up at Roseworthy or wherever? Did the Department have a publishing program for that sort of material?

Not that I recall, no.

Did you have information brochures or publicity sort of brochures for the general public?

Yes. It was part of our extension program.



What about the annual report? Were you involved in compiling and preparing, either personally or as an Editorial Committee?

I don't know who the Editorial Committee comprised but I would have been responsible for some bits of it depending on which stage I was at in the Department.

Heading up a division you've got divisional reports, presumably, or approve what has been written by one of the officers!

I would approve, that's more likely, yes. One of the things I meant to say before, sorry what were you going to ask me?

I was going to ask an important question in regards to the publications and particularly the annual report. There was a gap in the annual reports. There was a period when they weren't produced. From about '72, '73 for the next decade or so.

Is that right?

Am I telling you something you don't know? (both laugh)

Yes.

I've been trying to find out why there were no annual reports for this period of time. It's curious to me as a researcher trying to find out what was happening in the Department, there's this gap. If they were prepared, they weren't printed but they don't appear to have been prepared.

Right. Trumble can't throw any light on that?

The common story is that there was no statutory requirement, therefore they just ... But they had been prepared up until that time, so that's the curious thing.

Extraordinary.

Given that you were on the editorial side of things, you might have been alert to something like that.

No, no.

[6:05] I'll keep digging on that one. Back to you.

I was going to say in regards to Extension Services and so on, one of the interesting things was that after a trip that the fellow who was in charge of Extensions at the time, Bob Herriot, made to America, when he came back he tried to jazz up, make our Extension more effective by studying the community in which you're dealing with, the community of farmers. Trying to work out the structure of the committee as far as if it's to do with livestock say, who is the fellow that most of the people look to to follow. If it's to do with hay making, it might be somebody else or the various aspects of the general activity on the farm there could be ... there's not just one leader that everybody follows. That's one of the things that the fellows were aware of. It was an interesting aspect to their work.

This was followed by realization, it became obvious, that if you knew the person's financial status, business aspect of his financial status, you could give much more meaningful advice to him. At the same time you're not just looking at the physical effectiveness of things, but what

effect it has generally on the business of the farm. We had a number of farmers who were prepared to take part in this. It was pretty costly in terms of time and it meant that the number of people that could be handled was fairly limited. We got a start with this, particularly in the Jamestown area. Of course, there had been in some cases people who had gone in on a private basis. Somewhere you've seen there were opportunities for a position outside of the Department. Well this is one of the comparatively small number of alternative activities which are available to some of our people, giving whole farm advice to people not just the particular side of it but as it affects the whole farm business.

The staff who participated in that would have been trained up or developed some sort of background? We had a small economic section and one of those fellows was a chap who had had some experience in this and he gave enough advice to get one or two people going along these lines. Since then, of course, the advent of computers coming in, it's quite likely that one man could handle a much greater number than he could have in pre-computer days, but I don't know about that.

Computers don't solve all the things for you. It comes back to the individual – got to have some knowledge; the man on the land has to know about the land and the values of it. You can crunch numbers as much as you like but you're not dealing with a static thing in a real life situation. The Economics Branch: was it called that as such in the Department?

No, it wasn't. The people weren't in the Economics Branch. They were in the Agronomy Branch. Whether people were doing the same in the horticultural field or not I just don't know.

That sort of suggests that people in their own areas, in a sense Lex, go their own way. Horticulture could develop as it wanted; agriculture, Agronomy rather; Livestock.

They're different sorts of things, aren't they?

But say at your level (when you were Director) and sitting around the table and so on, was there a lot of sharing of ideas: 'This is what we're doing in our area: it might apply to your area'. Does that sort of thing happen much?

I think so, yes. There was some sort of cross-fertilisation sort of thing.

Probably it wouldn't be so direct and so explicit: it would be more 'We've had this problem. This is how we got around it'. It would have been a day-to-day managerial problem or administrative problem or whatever.

That's the feeling that Jim McColl had too. He was private practice before he came in.

[12:55] Did he have to be trained up? I mean he's from Victoria and from private practice. He had to learn the South Australian ways didn't he? (laughs)

I suppose so.

Can I ask you what was Jim like to work with – to work for and to work with? Because he was the Director.

Very good. I have no criticism of him at all, no.

He had to go on a rapid learning curve but once he had gotten through that and had come to grips with South Australia ...

He was a pretty bright boy. It was a disappointment to Peter [Trumble] that he didn't get the job.

They seemed to resolve that.

Yes.

The historical 'what if'. Things may have been different if Peter had been in charge. But, then again, it would have been Peter dealing with the Minister!

Yes.

What about Jim's predecessors in Marshall Irving and ...?

Marshall was a fellow that I had a tremendous amount of time for. He was a great director. Doc Callaghan was ... I got along very well with him. He was a good director. In between there was Geoff Strickland, who was a different character. I got along quite well with him but I never had the same sort of feelings for him as I had for Marshall.

Of the three, Marshall Irving is the one I know least about. There's not a lot about him. I know I'm putting you on the spot but are you able to elaborate a little bit more about Marshall's style as a director, his personality?

Yes, a bit. He was very relaxed, he was really quite a relaxed fellow. He felt very strongly about some things. He was a great beef man. He was a vet. If he delegated something, he delegated it.

So the person who got that task was in charge of it totally?

Yes. He certainly ... You've put me on the spot thinking about this.

You can always add more later. What was he like as a character? You said he had some strong views and so on. Was he a personable bloke?

Yes. Most people liked Marshall I'd say, yes. He was a very popular fellow. He was very interested in the Artificial Breeding Board. While this was a separate thing in some ways, he had some control. I'm not quite sure what the nature of his control was but a fellow called Bill Rose was running it. His ideas and Marshall's didn't agree, so he kept poor old Bill on the same salary, he didn't give him any [salary increments] for years and years. He hardly had a good word to say about Bill. Of course, Bill had very few kind words to say about Marshall. He was tough in that sort of way.

Strickland was a different sort of fellow. He stood on his dignity quite a bit. Marshall didn't have any dignity. He didn't worry about that sort of thing! Strickland at one stage was chosen to be the deputy of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, he was the representative on some wool committee. He was a fellow that had a very average sort of narrow horticulture all his life.

That caused a lot of ill feeling amongst some of the other directors. That rolled off his back without any bother.

Did you work closely yourself with Geoff Strickland?

Reasonably, yes.

Did he like to be hands-on with issues and keeping tabs on things?

Yes, he did a bit. He was the sort of fellow that ... Well when the Doc was there, the Doc had two committees with wheat research: there was the Policy Committee and then the Technical Committee. I think he was head of the Policy Committee. He made me head of the Technical Committee. Strickland was a bit peeved because he was senior to me ... He was the sort of fellow who would say to me, 'I see you had a meeting with Bob Herriot the other day? What did you have to talk about there?'. (laughs) [This refers to the Extension Services meetings chaired by Herriot; Branch heads, not Chiefs, attended.] But that's not really telling you anything about Marshall. I'm sure Peter Trumble – he's better with words than I am now, especially as the older I get the harder I find it is to get the word that I'm looking for. But he was a very likeable, easygoing fellow. He had a tough side when it was needed.

There's an unfortunate end to this story for Marshall Irving (and for Callaghan and Strickland also), the ill health of Irving towards the end of his time.

Yes.

A bit of a poisoned chalice perhaps being Director of Agriculture!

It was, but he used to laugh about it. A number of us took him out to lunch about a year or so before he died. He was very 'anti' the people who said butter and cream were bad for you and margarine's the stuff ... He saw red. He gave up membership of some society, the British Society or something, because they had sandwiches with margarine! So he went along to the doctor and the doctor told him his cholesterol level was high and it was no good. The last time I saw him we took him to lunch somewhere in town. He was telling us then that he'd been to see the doctor after a period and his cholesterol level was exactly the same as it had been three years previously. He was laughing about it. A few months later at the end of the day, he comes in after working in the garden and dies in the bedroom. I'm sure if he could look back on it he'd say, 'Well, it's no worry to have'. He wasn't going to give in to all that damn nonsense of cholesterol. That's right, 'Cholesterol', he said, 'was a pile of rubbish. The body makes it's own cholesterol'. He wouldn't hear of any controlling cholesterol levels by dieting.

He had been on some leave before he retired had he not? He'd been unwell for ...?

Yes. He retired a bit early.

I got the impression there was a bit of stress in the job, stress and the strain. Did you sense that at all?

No. His health was worrying him I suppose but he still wasn't going to change his views about eating fats.

It sort of coincided ... We mentioned earlier this memo from the Premier asking about the justification for the Department's continued existence. That coincides with the Callaghan Report. Then he goes on sick leave. So there must have been a fair bit of stress in what he was doing. If it's not work related it must be another ...

Yes.

It's a bit of a poisoned chalice though. The people applying for the job after him – three directors in a row all had some health concerns towards the end.

Callaghan lived till 89 so he didn't do badly. How old was Marshall? I've forgotten. He only made 65, yes.

Strickland was not long into retirement?

Well he never quite reached retirement I don't think.

[26:05] Well that's some good insights into the directors, unexpectedly, because they weren't on my list of things to ask you Lex. Are there any other things you've got related to ... I've let you off pretty easily: I haven't asked about managerial styles and techniques you developed and that sort of thing.

No, no, nothing there.

[26:40] You must have learnt something at Mt Eliza? (laughs)

Wheat quotas. That was another thing there was some ... Something I had was wheat quotas which came in in 1968. No, following 1968 wheat quotas were introduced. That was a hell of a lot of work.

A lot of work for you?

Yes. We had a big committee down there working out everybody's quota. It worked for one year and then it poured seed everywhere. Then we bloody forgot quotas: we never used it again.

What was the purpose of the quota in South Australia?

It looked as if it was going to be like wool: we'd build up a huge surplus of wheat. So we decided that to limit this and to avoid costly build-ups of stocks, we had to limit production. Come '69 it's a dry year, we finished up importing a bit of wheat.

This quota on wheat was for domestic consumption or export?

The quota was not to grow wheat, to limiting the amount that you could deliver. You got a quota of – I don't know if we talked bushels or if we talked in [tonnes] but that was the sort of thing it was – your quota is 1000 bushels or 10 000 bushels.

So that only lasted the one year?

Yes.

Then you abandoned the quota. Is that something fairly common throughout the agricultural industry: abandon quotas and ...

Yes, yes. Australia-wide, of course.

Should it be a free market, a total free market? Produce what you want and deliver what you want.

I always admired that. We were able to get ... There shouldn't be a single export desk involved.

That's a wider issue with barley.

We can whinge about some of that with the Barley Board.

Yes.

[29:30] We did talk last time about your involvement with things like the Barley Board and various post-departmental activities. A good point to finish on is your involvement with the Retired Officers Group, you keeping in contact with former colleagues.

I have contact with former colleagues through this little group that Tom [Miller] was running.

That's the only organised form of contact that I engage in. I'm a member of this Retired Officers Fund: I pay my \$6 a year or something like that because I feel that if they're doing anything for me I ought to put in my \$6. They have meetings in town but I've got enough meetings to go to without that. I could go if I wanted but I never quite get around to it.

Do you go to the luncheons – the Retired Officers Luncheon?

Yes, I always go to those. We've been having excursions once a year recently which we go on.

So you're keen on the excursions?

They are interesting, yes.

I was staggered to find the number on them – a bus load or more! (laughs)

Yes. A number of them are ... The first one to ask questions is a girl who's been a typist all her life, drives up the front.

I doubt if you get anything out of me but never mind, I'm sorry.

It's good that you're involved. The fact that this is quite a while after your retirement from the Department suggests you still maintain that interest in agricultural matters and in the land.

Yes. I'm sorry I haven't done very well for you Bernie, but there you are.

If you think of more, you can jot down notes and we can add them to the transcript in due course. It's probably a good point Lex to call a halt for today. You can always add more in either recorded form or note form for the transcript. Thanks very much for having me back to record a bit more. We'll call it quits now.

[32:25] **End of interview**