CSEA HISTORY PROJECT

JOE REEDY INTERVIEW

4/13/05

MR. REEDY: This is the straight side and I can talk to you about the local government side too if you wish.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Great.

MR. REEDY: Uh-huh.

INTERVIEWER: All yours. Okay. I've been told that when we start this thing it usually sounds like a deposition but, just for the record, why don't you tell us your name and spell it for us, Joe.

MR. REEDY: My name is Joseph P. Reedy, R-e-e-d-y.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And what -- what positions did you hold with CSEA and what was your work history here?

MR. REEDY: I came to work in 19...in February of 1968. I was hired as a collective bargaining specialist. Towards the end of my eighteenth year I became the executive assistant to, at that time, President Bill McGowan. Because of the politics involved at that time when McGowan retired, I also left and I came back six years later as the regional director for the Capital Region here in Albany and I

performed those duties for ten years.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Let me ask you this. When did you first become aware of an organization called CSEA?

MR. REEDY: Actually about a year before that I was working as -- I was the president of an independent union in a meat-packing plant here in Albany and a friend of mine ran into a guy named Joe Dolan, who was workin' for CSEA and he inquired about my whereabouts and he was advised by my friend that I was in the labor movement and I was unhappy and I was lookin' to do somethin' to turn my life around.

He then indicated there had recently or was gonna be a law passed called the Taylor Law and I should contact him, so somewhere around '67 --

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, but you didn't have any real awareness of CSEA otherwise, what they were or what they did?

MR. REEDY: No, sir.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And so when -- when you got here what was -- what was the scene

like in 1968?

MR. REEDY: You know, I -- confused might be the wrong word, but these people were very apprehensive. There wasn't anyone here, with a couple exceptions, a guy -- gentleman named Manny Vitali -- the only one I can think of that had any real labor experience when it came to negotiating and administering contact -- contracts.

The field staff was primarily responsible for makin' sure the Civil Service Law was followed and things of that nature, but no -- no contract and no enforcement, so they were -- they were very apprehensive.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of staff was there at that time? Was there a large staff, small staff?

MR. REEDY: Well, you know, at the time you might say -- I'd say small. I don't exactly know what the numbers were but we did have -- well, they weren't called regional directors but field staff, and they had field staff supervisors and they were spread throughout the state. We had a research

department. We had some attorneys assigned here and I -- I don't know. I'd have to think a while but that's pretty much it, you know? We had attorneys, we had a resource department and field services.

INTERVIEWER: And why were they apprehensive because of the Taylor Law coming into enactment? The need to respond in a different way than they had previously covered their membership?

MR. REEDY: From my perspective they were gonna have to negotiate contracts. They were gonna have to represent people and in most cases they didn't even know how to get to the bargaining table to talk down and put together contract proposals. That primarily -- that became my primary responsibility.

I was responsible in a large capacity to developing contract language for the field staff that were trying to put together language out in the field and they would call me and ask me, you know, to put together contract language as they went through the process, so they were very apprehensive.

They also had to organize. We did have an organizing department. We had, I think, one or two organizers and one organizer I was familiar with was Jack Pender, so they had to organize, too, and it was a whole perspective. We were competin' with other unions.

There was dues involved and we were looked at as a social organization, while labor out there was looked at as the big tough guy, so they were apprehensive. It was just a whole new ballgame for them. They hadn't been there, and quite frankly I hadn't been involved other than a little bit of organizing myself.

I was attacked by the Amalgamate of Meat Cutters in my final years as the president of the Independent Packers, but that was the limit of my experience, but I did have probably the most experience anybody had here in negotiatin' and puttin' together contract language.

INTERVIEWER: When you say CSEA was largely looked at as a social organization was that the way it was looked down upon by -- by AFL-CIO unions or was that the way the

organization perceived itself at that time?

MR. REEDY: I'd say a combination of both. You know, we had our conventions, we had our insurance, supplemental insurance and we didn't have to do anything other than, you know, the little mundane things like, yeah, I mean it was our feeling, and I say probably from the top down, that we were looked down by even the Commissioner of Labor.

They allowed people to go on leave without pay to organize. John Cramer and John Payne, who worked for the Department of Labor, were out there organizing wherever I went and it didn't matter what the challenge was. They were out there, so there was a lotta, lotta contempt for probably what we had because we had a lot of people tied up in this health insurance -- not health insurance but supplemental disability or whatever, sick insurance.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I mean that -- obviously CSEA had a very extensive network, had a lot of members signed up. Was that primarily because of the insurance program --

MR. REEDY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: -- or other things that they did?

MR. REEDY: No, it was the insurance program probably. I mean I'm guessin', at this point in time, 'cause I wasn't out in the field. Actually I never really served as a field rep. We did have to make sure that the Civil Service Law was followed, so they did things in that area like the one-out-of-three and people's qualifications and that, and they were constantly dealing with the Civil Service Commission, so we had that type of a rapport with the membership.

We were the only show in town, so to speak, at that time, so we had the numbers and they -- they had -- yeah, they were jealous of what we had goin' inta this election.

INTERVIEWER: You know, as I read back about some of the history, it looks like the Association did do some -- or make some strides in terms of -- terms and conditions of employment through legislation --

MR. REEDY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: -- at least on the

State side.

MR. REEDY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: I mean is that what they also did on the local government side or would they enact through State legislation the coverage for the local government, do you know?

MR. REEDY: Where it applied. Like they would make the retirement available and the -- and various degrees of retirement that you could participate in available, so that anything that was covered under Civil Service Law, if it had application with local government, they would be at times included.

But we were without a doubt, and probably right up until, well, I'd say ten years, maybe longer, we were always considered a State union and a State dominated in numbers. And, you know, we always had -- the State side always had the numbers, so the board of directors was controlled by State members and so, therefore, that's where the balance went.

So that was the reputation and the ID we had out there. Local government didn't really have, because they were so diversified

and there were so many of them, they didn't fit into the picture quite as cleanly as the State did.

INTERVIEWER: Let's talk a little bit about the State because when you came on staff the Taylor Law was recently enacted. Was CSEA recognized at that time as the bargaining unit for -- for the majority of State employees?

MR. REEDY: Not to my knowledge. There was elections called for to determine who was gonna represent the workers. There was a commitment supposedly made by Governor Rockefeller at the time that there would be one unit and that's what we were pushing for. Joe Lochner, our executive director, and DeGraff Foy, our Counsel, thought they had a deal with Rockefeller that we were gonna have one unit.

We knew that if we had one bargaining unit based on our membership or our Association we could win, but that didn't happen and they agreed that there would be six or seven bargaining units. I'm not sure exactly, but there was the Administrative, the Institutional, the Operational, the -- I don't know if I said

the Administrative -- and the Professional, Scientific and Technical. Then there was the State Police and there was a Security unit and maybe a couple others followed later on.

I know that Office of Court Administration and Division of Military and Naval Affairs came on later, so there was some more fragmentation down the road but -- so we felt that, you know, we had been double-crossed by the Governor at that time.

We as an organization were very resistant to the change and we had some real problems about the Public Employee Relations Board because we felt it was a wing of the Governor. He appointed the staff and so they would be controlled by him, so we didn't feel as if we could get a fair shake out of that group either.

INTERVIEWER: This was all unchartered water at this time.

MR. REEDY: Right. Right. The best resource we had was over in Massachusetts they had a similar law and it's ironic that I can remember this, but a guy named McCloskey did a

workshop for us up in Brubacher Hall at SUNY and he was good and he told us about the law, et cetera, et cetera.

And one of the things that he said that -- if you can't accept this in the labor movement you should probably get out and he said that there's nothing more constant than change and I'll never forget that. And I -- there's a lot of things and that some of our frustrations as we go through this is the change, and for you, as you know, the change can be by the hour, by the half hour, by the minute, so it was true.

And you know, I don't want to jump ahead of myself, but you'll see that as the Taylor Law is implemented. There's constant changes, you know?

INTERVIEWER: So they've established then basically six -- six bargaining units. How did they -- what kind of procedure was set up for who was going to represent those first bargaining units and how did that person --

MR. REEDY: There was -- we're gonna -- first of all, there had to be a showing of interest which meant you had to have designation

cards. I wasn't involved in that because at that point in time I was, you know, involved in my local government responsibility. This was being done by a law firm and some people on -- in Joe Lochner's office.

I came on the scene when I got assigned to the Operational Unit and that was when I really officially took over my responsibilities on the State side, but there was a showing of interest and then there was a mail ballot and the balloting and the count of the ballots was done at the Washington Avenue Armory.

We had an entourage of staff and employees from each one of those bargaining units assigned to count the ballots or to be observers in the count of the ballots and each day was scheduled for a different unit to be counted.

Interesting too, we knew that we were weak in Downstate 'cause that's where the strong labor force was, so we devised -- whoever we are -- but we devised a concept that we would challenge certain ballots that had Downstate ZIP

Codes on 'em and we would figure out a challenge, whatever it might be, but then ballots would then be put aside and they would be only counted if they came into play, so we came to the table with some ideas of how to -- how to play dirty pool. I'm sure our friends did too.

But we were successful in four of the units. We didn't win the Security. We didn't win the State Police, but we did win the PS&T, the Administrative, the Operational and the Institutional.

And I have to tell ya, there were some scenes up there in the Armory that got outa hand. There was some punches thrown and there was some stuff that happened at the various tables. It was a -- you know, there was 50,000, 40,000, 30,000 ballots being counted in one day and they were spread over 50 or 60 tables with observers at each table, you know, looking at them; you know, the envelope, lookin' at the postmark, then openin' 'em and all of that, so it -- it was hectic. It was an experience, so it was not a -- it was not a cakewalk.

INTERVIEWER: And this was right here at the Washington Avenue Armory?

MR. REEDY: Right. Yeah. Joe Dolan ran it for CSEA, Harry -- Harvey Marlow was there from PERB, and they had certain staff that were runnin' the election, but yeah, and it was -- it was a week long.

INTERVIEWER: Was there -- was there an actual campaign that led up to this? What happened out in the field?

MR. REEDY: Yeah, there was a campaign and certain people that had come on staff had certain responsibilities. People were hired from those units to go out there and campaign. Nothin' as sophisticated as you might see or as complicated as you might see us today, 'cause we were really happenin' fast and we had the numbers.

So once again, I wasn't out there, you know, to do a lot of that campaignin' but we had rallies and we had meetings and we did presentations and we talked to the law and we talked about their rights and things of that nature.

A lot of concentration was done on the Thruway area and work locations five miles off the Thruway and the major institutional units because that's where you had the big concentration, whether it be the Administrative, the Operational or the Institutional workers, so we focused on those places and we had a jump start on the other unions, no doubt about it.

INTERVIEWER: Who was CSEA's major competition to have representation.

MR. REEDY: You know, it was the AFL-CIO. There was a guy named John Cramer and Bob Payne who were put on leave from the Department of Labor. They're the two names I'm familiar with. There was -- SEIU was out there all the time and they were tough. Oh, Champo was a guy you mighta heard about. I can't think of his first name but he was with SEIU. He marched with Martin Luther King. He became a national figure. He was out there and I -- and they were nasty.

INTERVIEWER: What about AFSCME?

MR. REEDY: And AFSCME was out there -- I don't know how much AFSCME was out there in

the getgo. I -- I'm not sure. I don't know when AFSCME became AFSCME. You know, if they were considered the AFL-CIO. You're talkin' about 40 years ago.

INTERVIEWER: M-m h-m-m.

MR. REEDY: You'd hafta go back to see when the Amer...when the -- when that group was even created. But I have to tell ya --

INTERVIEWER: I thought it was Jerry Wirth's brother who was --

MR. REEDY: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: -- pretty much heading up the AFSCME council that put together --

MR. REEDY: You're right. It coulda been. It coulda been. Jerry and Al Wirth. That's right. You're absolutely right. I didn't know they were called AFSCME though. Now that you remind me, yeah, because they were out in the Thruway against me too, so it was Wirth and his brother Al. And they were affiliated with the AFL-CIO, but the AFL-CIO stood alone, so AFSCME was there and Cramer and Payne were back and forth and Champa was there with SEIU and the Teamsters were out there to some degree.

There was about four or five unions 'cause I know when I did the Thruway elections I had at least four unions on my tail, so, yeah, it probably was AFSCME that broke our back with the PS&T, I know that. So --

INTERVIEWER: After CSEA gets recognized, what -- what happened in terms of the State units and negotiating a contract with New York?

MR. REEDY: Okay. We won the Operational Unit which was the blue collar workers, the Institutional Unit which was the people that worked in the ward series in the mental institutions, and the PS&T Unit was for the professional, and then the Administrative, we took kind of the clerical type people.

I was assigned to the Operational Unit which was the blue collar, Bob Giles was assigned to the Institutional Unit. He had come out of one of the -- Marcy State Hospital. He was a local president there. Then there was Bernie Ryan came from I don't know where. He was hired as a CBS but he -- he was assigned to the PS&T Unit and John Conaby who had been on

staff as a field rep was assigned to the Administrative Unit.

And teams were brought in, negotiations were prepared and it was determined that there would be coalition negotiations on those issues that impacted on all four bargaining units and then the bargaining units themselves would do independent unit negotiations. But the big negotiations were the salaries, the health insurance and things of that nature.

INTERVIEWER: What was that whole process like because -- I mean you were saying this was sort of a new territory --

MR. REEDY: M-m h-m-m.

INTERVIEWER: -- for CSEA. You had some experience in negotiating or putting together a framework but you also had these teams of rank-and-file members or activist members coming together, so what was that first experience like?

MR. REEDY: It was -- it was -- you know, it was a great experience. It was also very frustrating because the employer a lot of

times would hide behind the Civil Service Law and they would say things aren't negotiable because of the Civil Service Law. There's some other law covering that. But it was -- it was a -- I guess it was a great highlight of my exp... my life, my experience.

With a great deal of -- you know they -- I would have to say a lot of people came to me because they thought I knew more than I did know, because I had that identity, but I -- I certainly didn't know as much as some of them thought I knew, but they relied on me because of my experience and I had been at the table for three contracts at least; two as a president and one as vice president.

So -- and everybody was very apprehensive but they got comfortable and, you know, there was a lot, a lot of infighting. As a matter of fact, I'll digress for a minute but I represented the Department of Transportation and my chairperson at the Department of Transportation was a guy named DeCleary out of Syracuse. He was an engineer and there was so much disparity between the blue collar workers,

a laborer and the professionals and benefits. I mean they didn't have -- they didn't have uniforms, they didn't have job protection.

A laborer didn't have job protection. My gang had nothing, really, to speak of. They were political hacks. They got appointed when there was a change in politics and they served at the pleasure of whatever party got them there.

The professionals had job security because they had taken tests and got there. There was a lot of discussion about whether there'd be a flat dollar raise or a percentage raise and our professional people were arguing that it had to be a percentage raise. When the contract was -- when the agreement was reached it was a flat dollar amount.

For the Operational Services Unit I think our total package figure was like 40 percent.

For the Institutional Unit the -- the total package was like 15 percent. Don't hold me to these numbers, but we got some real big numbers and I think that's what started to

fragment and cause the stress between the PS&T Unit and the other three bargaining units, and probably ultimately why we lost them because we always got this flat dollar -- it was a catch-up process for the lower three units that we represented.

Dick Cleary after that contract never spoke to me again. He never -- like I had somethin' to do with it, but he never forgave me or CSEA for selling him out and getting this flat dollar amount through, so that was one of the interesting highlights of my life and one of the things that CSEA as an organization had to deal with because percentages for people that were makin' 15- and $12,000, ten percent was what, $1200 bucks. And say if you were up there at whatever they were at, 27,000, and I'm pickin' numbers out of the sky, it was a lot different.

And our board had a lot of PS&T people on it at the time and they were vocal people, so it was -- it was a real nightmare for CSEA to try to balance that and continue to maintain those lower workers and the choice we made was

to bump them up and bring them up to the other group, which ultimately -- I think that surprisingly enough, that Operational Unit has caught up in some respects to the private sector, which I never thought I'd live to see.

And the ironic part about it is PS&T never got any further -- they never -- they never -- they always stayed where they were. They never made any great inroads because they were professionals. They always took our settlement, whatever that was, and had to live by it because that was the way it was.

INTERVIEWER: So after the first contract was put into place, you talked about when we were chatting before about --

MR. REEDY: M-m h-m-m.

INTERVIEWER: -- the fact that they then went back into departmental negotiations and how did that work?

MR. REEDY: What happened was because we didn't know what was out there throughout the State, all CSEA and the State, it was decided that we couldn't resolve these issues at that particular time and place; that we would have

departmental negotiations and we set up ground rules, the dates and time frames to commence departmental negotiations, and the purpose of that was to bring these things into focus and find out what was out there and agree on what we could agree on.

The significant ones were like time off for social leave, the conventions, and there was two conventions at that time. Time off for social events such as a clambake or somethin' that was unique to the department, whether it be Tax or Motor Vehicle what -- they all had their clambakes and they all had their Christmas parties and they'd get two or four hours off dependin' on how powerful the president was at that particular time.

And some of them had office space and there was a lot of other unique things like time off and things of that nature and -- and so they -- we all decided we would bring this all into departmental negotiations and we had 'em. I'd have to say that it became a nightmare because, you know, there -- some of the departments were willing to do it and some of the departments

were very apprehensive and some of the departments were able to hang onto things, but it was very frustrating.

It was actually more frustrating at the time than it was the statewide negotiations because it was difficult to bring things to a wrap-up, particularly in the smaller departments, but to the best of our ability we got the job done.

INTERVIEWER: Now did those departmental negotiations lead to what was called the Easter Sunday strike?

MR. REEDY: Yes. What happened was these departmental negotiations, in some instances, were put in writing and what happened was the State became aware. The State here in Albany became aware of there were things goin' on out there that they didn't sanction, so they came to the table with what they or we called "take-aways" and it was the attitude of CSEA at that time that we had only had one contract and we were quite fortunate to reach an agreement and we were not gonna give up any of those benefits we had whether they be prior to the

Taylor Law or since the Taylor Law.

INTERVIEWER: When you say there was -- when you became aware of things that were going on basically like side agreements or --

MR. REEDY: Right, right.

INTERVIEWER: -- local agreements --

MR. REEDY: Right, the little agreements that were happenin' down in the City or happenin' out west or even here in Albany where the commissioners had a lot of authority and it was never questioned. I mean SUNY, they were a little, you know, what would you say, not fiefdoms but little, I don't know --

INTERVIEWER: Very independent.

MR. REEDY: Yeah, very independent. Along with Tax and Motor Vehicle and DOT, those commissioners had a lot of authority so they had a lot of sidebar agreements and the Governor's Office wasn't aware of it, so they came to the table with takeaways and we as a group agreed that we weren't gonna negotiate takeaways so on Good Friday probably, I would say, one, two o'clock in the afternoon, the institutional people walked out of negotiations and then the

other three units followed and that was the beginning of the Easter Weekend strike.

INTERVIEWER: So it was kind of the institutions that were driving it and what actually happened?

MR. REEDY: Well, it was that the Institutional was a bigger group. They were the vocal -- probably the more vocal group at the time, but we had agreed privately that, you know, we weren't gonna give up and so it was a done deal, you know? It happened.

And you know, we were -- then the Attorney General's Office came over and tried to serve notice on Wenzel and put some notices on the door and we took Wenzel out of the building and the other officers, Tom McDonough at the time, and hid 'em out in the Governors out on Western Avenue and then we came back and we were in the DeWitt Clinton, which was across the street from the Capitol, and negotiations were bein' done between the law firm and ultimately on Monday everybody went back to work.

There was -- but that was another thing that caused some internal strife though

because dependin' on the local and the unit, some people really went out on strike and had to pay the two-for-one penalty and others did and they didn't have to pay any penalties, so there was a lot of scab, no scab, gutless stuff goin' on within the organization itself that we hada, you know, rise above but it was a problem for us.

INTERVIEWER: What -- I mean -- and you say it was basically resolved by Monday. Did CSEA come out on top of that circumstance?

MR. REEDY: That's a hard one to determine. We went back to the table. I don't quite remember exactly what the agreement was, but back in those days we had good agreements. It was a long way to come and so I would say at that point in time I was happy, you know.

Probably the Operational Unit got some good numbers and probably some good benefits and I was thinkin' about the Operational Unit at that time. But we did some leaps and bounds in that year because there was a lotta room, a lotta latitude to move in, so puttin' the strike aside I think it was, you know, it was a good

agreement.

INTERVIEWER: Was that CSEA's first job action under the Taylor Law?

MR. REEDY: Well, I'm not sure of the time frame. We did have a job action in Dutchess County where the people went out. We had a job action in Columbia County. We had various little stops here and there but I don't know the time frame. Dutchess County was a biggie. They were out for a while and they paid some pretty serious consequences but I think I can remember being down there for a week.

INTERVIEWER: Was part of what was happening at that time testing out the law, seeing if the State would uphold the provisions of the law and kind of like trying to learn the parameters?

MR. REEDY: Test the law or -- you wanta ask a question?

INTERVIEWER: Go ahead.

MR. REEDY: -- or what the purpose of what we were doin'. I don't think we were so much testin' the law but the -- the big test was, from my perspective, there was language in

there that said you could strike if there was extreme provocation and we definitely were testing that and myself and a lot of the staff were constantly puttin' pressure on our superiors that there was extreme provocation.

And I think that might have been litigated in that Triborough thing over the, you know, the tunnel shutdown and the fans in the tunnel. I'm not sure, but there was always extreme provocation and in some of the cases you might, if you went back in history and checked, there was -- and maybe even in our case there was some leniency because while PERB didn't agree there was extreme provocation, it was questionable, so we always paid the two-for-one, but the penalty might have been of a lesser degree.

And that was the big thing we were testin' and if you check with Jerry Lefkowitz in the past couple years, he tells me it's still in the law but you never hear about it and I guess it's not about to be challenged today.

So, you know, that coulda been it, but I don't think we -- we were constantly bein' --

there was constant questions bein' raised about what applied. The law, whether it be the Taylor Law or Civil Service Law and that was really a frustrating thing for myself and a lot of my peers.

Management would say, oh, that's in the law. That -- we can't negotiate. That's Civil Service Law. Well, history will show ya that many, many, many things that they said were non-negotiable today are just as a matter of fact being negotiated, with very few exceptions.

INTERVIEWER: And I suppose in a lot of ways that's sort of a microcosm of how CSEA has evolved in that much of what the union does today is about working at the negotiating table and also working through the political action process to address laws or circumstances that may be beyond the scope of the bargaining.

MR. REEDY: Right. And I think there's probably less focus but I don't think there should be on the Civil Service Law, you know, the one out of three and those type of hearings but that -- at that point in time they were dramatic. Today, while it's there, I don't

think we emphasize or get on it as much because it's more like you said.

INTERVIEWER: There's a very well-known provision that's sort of an adjunct to the Taylor Law and that's the Triborough Amendment.

MR. REEDY: M-m h-m-m.

INTERVIEWER: I wonder if you would tell us a little bit about the history of the Triborough Amendment and what it -- what it actually means.

MR. REEDY: Okay. Well, what happened early on, and I don't know the exact years, I came here in '68, but there was a strike on, the bridge and tunnel people that were covered by the Triborough Bridge Authority group, and the president was a guy named Tony Maurio. They walked off the job because they claimed that they were being exposed to carbon monoxide which had an effect on the workers and that was due to the lack of maintenance on the fans and the clean air in the tunnels.

So they went off on strike and if you can imagine, people walk off the job on the tunnels in New York City, the chaos that it

created. I mean it shut the state down; it was awful. It was -- it got national attention.

So they went back to work but one of the things that Governor Rockefeller agreed to was that he would put together a Blue Ribbon Committee, whatever you call it, to study the impact of the lack of fresh air in the tunnels and whether there was any permanent effect from this carbon monoxide.

To my great surprise and pleasure I was appointed by Governor Rockefeller to that committee. We met periodically in New York City. Carl Maddi, who was the Commissioner of Labor, was the chairman of the committee. Several doctors and other big name people were involved. Tony Maurio was the president of the Triborough group. He was on the committee and obviously I became his best friend and we served on that committee.

I don't know how long it took to make the study but ultimately they came out with a document that, God, it was probably two and a half to three inches thick, that basically said there's no permanent effects on being

over-exposed to carbon monoxide or words to that effect, so they just white...in my mind it was a whitewash.

At that time I was upset but I wasn't knowledgeable enough to really -- to argue the issues, although I did raise some questions and I was shot down rather quickly by the doctors, but what happened as a result of that strike, there was -- the Triborough group was back to the table and increments were being denied and benefits were being denied because they had been bad and they were being -- penalties implied.

And so they litigated the actions of the employer and PERB and the courts made certain determinations on what were permanent benefits and that could not be denied because of a job action, and one of -- the most critical one was the increment and whether the increments had to be carried forward.

There was a lot of other issues and so you'll hear people talk about the Triborough document and you can't do this because of the Triborough document. You can do this. It's all relative to the strike that took place down

there in New York.

INTERVIEWER: So what -- how would you describe the Triborough event in terms of what it does when you're at the negotiating table coming up on contract expiration?

MR. REEDY: Well, today it's good because, you know, the precedent is set there and the employer knows that they have to continue certain benefits and therefore they just can't take everything away from us. And I'm not -- I'd have to go do some readin' to remember what good and bad about it though.

So I think it's really been good for labor, as I sit here today, going through the growing pains and not knowin' and not havin' the decisions made and the appeals goin' on. It was somethin'; it was kind of chaos, but I say today it has clarified a lot of issues.

And one of the things, to digress again, when I was considering takin' this job I had a good friend of mine who was an attorney, wound up being a federal judge, said to me, Joe, this is a very good opportunity for you because it's a brand new law and you're gonna watch this

law develop and be able to be a part of the change and he was so right.

It was either that or sell insurance, so here's where I came and I'm very, very happy about it, so there's a lot of changes out there but I don't know them off the top of my head.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me what you remember about Ted Wenzel.

MR. REEDY: What do I remember about Ted Wenzel. Ted Wenzel (laughter) on a personal note went out with my aunt, I found out after I came to work here, so sometimes he was a little embarrassing to me at meetings but he was, I would have to say, somewhat eccentric?

He was -- he was different. He was an educator. I believe he was misplaced, but for me as a person he -- he was -- he was supportive, although I could tell ya, once again, I was involved in the Thruway negoti..the Thruway Unit representation stuff and we had two units we were challenging out there and we won one unit real big and we lost the other unit, and Wenzel's gut reaction was to get Reedy outa there.

So while I say I had a good rapport with him, he -- he chose to pull me but he didn't because Joe Lochner, God bless his soul, just said, look it, go ahead. Just don't tell 'im you're out there and go ahead and do what you been doin' and we did and we won.

So -- but he was -- there's some very, very classic personal stories you could tell about 'im but he was misplaced. But he was an intelligent individual and he -- because of that he wasn't really bullied around by the attorneys. I mean they, you know, he was their equal, you know, on his feet when it came to intelligence. Was he their equal when it came to the law as it refers to the Labor Law and the Taylor Law? No, but he didn't -- he was bull-headed and he didn't back off but he was really misplaced.

What would you -- he was the doctor of education, you know?

INTERVIEWER: So by means of transition then, tell me about Bill McGowan and how he became president of CSEA.

MR. REEDY: Well, not -- you know,

Bill McGowan was the chairman of my Operational negotiating committee, I don't know, the first or second time that we did the negotiations, I'm not sure, and he was a blue collar electrician technician out of West Seneca up in Erie County.

Entirely different, "dese," " dose" and "dems," the cigar in the mouth, rough, understood the law, understood the people, was very close to the people and entirely -- I mean it's -- it was as different as day and night.

And he was just -- from the union's perspective and the membership and that, and even -- believe me, I had some major, major differences with Bill McGowan but he was a diamond in the rough. He got in on a very small vote. I think there was a recount. It was always questionable about, you know, how it came about.

I wasn't there. I don't know, but Bill came on and a lot of things changed and we became more of a -- actually we were recognized by our peers more as a labor organization and Bill was a people people, you know, and he wasn't -- and he was good at the job, so he was

the right person at the right time and he, yeah, he was a lot, lot different than Ted Wenzel.

But for those three units that we continued to represent, Bill was, I mean, just a real, real diamond in the rough and brought the organization to some high -- high levels.

Now, having said that, he did get a lot of support from his staff and his attorneys around him, so he -- Bill was willing to listen. You know, and even with Wenzel, it was an entirely different attitude about staff. We were asked and we met and we gave input and we actually made decisions on what cases should be appealed and how we felt about it and what was goin' on out in the field and Bill became more of a -- that type of person when it came to the staff and he was closely aligned with the staff.

And he, you know, he had more problems at the end. The board drove him -- you know, I was there. It was very, very difficult, but we had some good years under Bill.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about, kind of two sides of the same coin, 1978 losing the PS&T Unit and then the affiliation with AFSCME.

MR. REEDY: This is an area that I'm not that familiar with. What happened about in '78 was I know I had been in the Operational Unit for ten years and I chose to leave and there was an opening for collective bargaining specialist in local government, so I bid out so I still -- and I'm not even sure whether I was in the Operational Unit at that time because it was a ten-year period and I was out in the -- I was out in the local government.

I was not here at headquarters at the time this came down. I was involved in the elections to some degree but as I mentioned to you earlier, staff was kind of removed from this challenge, but then Bill -- and having not been privy to any of this, only through hearsay, Bill and Jim Roemer was Chief Counsel at the time, went to Washington or wherever and met with Terry McEntee and -- no, Wirth, Jerry Wirth and those people, and worked out an agreement for an affiliation and then there was a meeting held out at the Italian Club, I believe, on Washington Avenue and everybody was locked in.

The board was called in and staff were

assigned to doors and people weren't allowed to go out and if they went out they had to go -- somebody had to go with them to the bathroom, to make this announcement that this affiliation had taken place.

I had mixed emotions about it, you know, and there's nothin' -- there's nothin' I could say or do that woulda changed it. You know, I guess I wished we had affiliated sooner but I'd have to say I was one of the people that probably didn't want to affiliate 'cause I thought we could do it without 'em and do it better, but we didn't have the manpower. We didn't have the money. We just couldn't continue this battle forever. They were just drainin' us.

INTERVIEWER: By draining us, there were raids by --

(Simultaneous conversation.)

INTERVIEWER: -- other CSEA units?

MR. REEDY: Right. And AFL-CIO internationally was puttin' money into this, so they had a bottomless pit and we didn't and we did a great job while we were in the fight.

So, you know, I wish like everybody else that we had been able to cut a better deal but we didn't and I think it was the right move at the right time. I would never ever be one to say that it was good that we lost the PS&T Unit, one of the major things I might have disagreed with Bill on, because Bill did say that, once in a while, I'm just glad we got rid of 'em, and -- but they were a source of irritation to Bill.

I mean 35,000 members is not -- it's not a good loss, but it happened. And the affiliation was the right move and I suppose there was pressure in those rooms and I know my good friend, Bev Stack, has got a few gray hairs over what it cost us to continue to be affiliated but, you know, I wouldn't have wanted to change places with those people that to put it together at that time.

So I have no -- no qualms or any second-guessing of what happened at the time, but it was historic. We survived, you know, and we're here.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember, were there two challenges? Was there like one

challenge from the PS&T Unit that was fought back and then they came back again a year later?

MR. REEDY: I'm not sure of that but if you told me that was true, I would probably agree with you because it appears that I was not out there with the Operational Unit when that PS&T was in a challenge period and they were doin' it on their own, and I think at that time a guy named Paul Birch was headin' up the PS&T Unit, so if you tell me that's what happened I would have to agree.

INTERVIEWER: And you talked a little bit about having mixed emotions about the affiliation. Was there difficulty for staff especially or even within the organization of kind of making that transition to become a part of the AFL-CIO when, in fact, they had been raiding us for all these years?

MR. REEDY: Oh, yeah. Yeah, and breakin' bread with some of these people, I mean, the Champas and those people that we ran into out in the street and, to this day, I mean I always felt as if we were a little bit above them when it came to the service of our people

and what service we provided and what representation we provided for the membership.

So, yeah, I mean, yeah, we had -- we had some barroom brawls, we had some pretty heated discussions with these people, we had some one-on-one confrontations, so it was tough for the staff but we kinda kept away from 'em, you know?

There was a gradual transition and except for the hierarchy, we didn't get them shoved down our throat, so to speak, and I think that AFSCME knew better than to -- to really force their will upon us and I never felt really that they were infringin' upon what I was doin' in any way, shape or fashion.

But I only speak for myself. I'm sure there was other people that felt differently but, and you're right, there was people that resented it and were angry about it and there were board members -- don't forget. We lost our PS&T Unit, we lost all those people on the board with a couple of exceptions, and you know who they are.

So, yeah, I -- I didn't -- I wasn't

impacted like a lot of the people here. At that time I had pretty much gone out into local government and was doin' contracts out there, so it wasn't -- the transition wasn't as hard for me as some other people.

INTERVIEWER: We'll come back to that in a second about the local government side but, yeah, you talked earlier about constant change --

MR. REEDY: M-m h-m-m.

INTERVIEWER: -- that here you had McGowan who was just a very different kind of leader of the organization, the affiliation with AFSCME. Was that where CSEA really turned the corner and became much more of a labor organization as opposed to a professional association?

MR. REEDY: Well, obviously they had to. They didn't have any choice so, yeah. That was the -- we were a part of the nationwide, we were part of the brotherhood or whatever you want to call it, so just by the fact that we did affiliate we became more identified and more familiar with the labor organization.

But I have to tell ya, as I sit here today, we have a lot, a lot of membership that don't understand that, and maybe even some of the staff people, but on -- in theory and in concept in the change, it was dramatic, yes.

And it had a lot of benefits to it, too. It had a lot of benefits to it. You know, I digress once again for a moment. When we did our very fir...we put together our very first contracts, the booklet, the question came up about a union bug bein' on that contract, and we hadda have a union bug.

And our communications people designed this little small bug that they called the "union bug" and put it on the contract. It was not a union bug any more than whatever, but they created this little thing like a union bug and I don't know -- I'm sure it's changed, but I -- at the time Joe Rouler and maybe even Marv Naylor, but they sat down and created this little thing that went on the contract and they called it a union bug.

We weren't gonna send out our contracts to have some union shop do it and

admit that we weren't' union so -- yet we weren't affiliated so that -- that type of thing was gone.

INTERVIEWER: Let me come back to the issue of local government. You said in that time frame, in the late seventies, you were doing some work on the local government side. What was the -- what was the scenario out in local government for CSEA at that time?

MR. REEDY: Well, I -- you know, I -- let me tell ya -- let me not go there for the moment. Let me tell ya, when I first came here, I was doin' local government and it -- local government, we had gotten voluntary recognition. A lot of the employers were glad to grab CSEA because we were so what nonunion, wherever we were, and they were willin' to come to the table with us and cut a deal and make a contract and my responsibility was -- was puttin' together contract language and ultimately I went out and did negotiations.

The first contract I did was in Jefferson County and that was early on, in the late sixties or seventies, and I have to tell ya

this because I'm gonna try to give you the difference in that and ten years later.

But it was easy at the table in them times. Except up in Jefferson County they brought in a professional to come in from the community college there and they had a professional from the county and they come in with a study plan on salaries called the Smith Plan.

And what it was doin', it was gonna bump up all the management people, some of the management people, and the guy across the table from me, Clark Hamlin, I remember his name, he had one arm, he was gonna get like a 30 percent boost, and some of the people in the Labor Department weren't even gonna get any money.

So after a whole lot of negotiations and heated negotiations and we wound up with a six percent across the board and we got a ratification on that contract, that -- an overwhelming ratification and the next morning I headed back to Albany and I called in to make sure that everything was okay and tell 'em of my successful negotiations and I was told I better

turn around and go back to Jefferson County because the -- Clark Hamlin had told the membership that we had sold 'em out and that -- went to these people that were gonna get these big raises and told them that we had undermined 'em and sold 'em out and they were callin' for my head.

And it was on the radios, it was on everything, and it was a nightmare. Ultimately I went back up and I accused 'em of bad faith and the guy from the community college agreed with me and I got apologies and I had some problems, but everything worked out in the long run.

Ten years later, well, no -- the same period of time, I was sent to do a more difficult merger of school districts up in Essex County. Two school districts merged and they had dramatically different benefits and they assigned this -- he looked like Gadabout Gaddis or something, old-school administrator, to do the contract with me and I had committees from both school districts with different benefits.

Long story short, they gave me the

latitude to meet with this guy and we would sit down and just meet and discuss: We gotta do this with the sick leave, it was a big difference. Sick leave, holidays, vacation and, you know, I'd go into him and say to 'im, look it, these people are only getting a couple hundred dollar raise. Can you bump 'em up another 300? Can you do this? Can you do that?

In some cases he'd agree with me, but ultimately we were work...we were able to work this out in the basement of the school district, go back and get some -- get the contract ratified and, you know, there was a lot of other issues there, you know?

My president got kicked off the team because he had knocked some student on his ass, but anyway it went well. Those were the old days.

Ten years later, now we're -- I'm doin' local government. We've got lawyers out there, we've got people at the table that are more sophisticated. We've got contracts in place and where you had maybe weak administrators, you've been able to get some

really good benefits, and now you've got some people comin' in and sayin', you know, they got too much. They're gettin' too much.

Retirement became an issue. The big thing was retention. It was a whole different ballgame ten years later because now local government had realized that, you know, they had some authority. We used to tell 'em a lot of things and they'd just buy it. They didn't have these attorneys, so it became a lot more sophisticated.

I worked out of Albany and what would happen was if -- the more difficult contracts, the staff would say or if the staff had problems previously they would ask for some help out of Albany and myself and three or four other staff would be assigned to those contracts or McGowan would -- and don't ever put this any place but here, but McGowan would say to somebody, oh, I got this guy up in Albany, Joe Reedy, he's great. I'll send him down to do your contract.

So you'd go down there to do the contract and the president would be so happy he got this guy from Albany. You know, I was no

better than the -- probably the negotiator they had there, but that was a resource he had and he used it, so -- but they were the more difficult negotiations.

I had a lotta latitude. I didn't have the lawyers here in Albany and people makin' -- second-guessin' what I wanted to do. I was in charge of my own destiny. I was able to create my relationship both with the employer and the staff and I was much happier.

That's why I left and went into local government, because I was gettin' -- there was more control and more involvement by the legal side of the aisle and so, you know, you would say somethin' and then you'd have to renege your -- you know, you couldn't live up to your commitment 'cause somebody would say, you know, you shouldn't have said that.

So that became my frustration and I saw some things I didn't like, so I went out to local government. It was -- workwise it was a great period of time for me, a lot of self-satisfaction, a lot of rewards.

Two or three times around it became a

little bit more enduring because you run into the same people with the same scenario and all of that.

Downstate, close to the City, became more difficult because they wanted the money that everybody in New York State was making. Upstate was somewhat easier and I did very little negotiations in the Capital Region with Jack Corcoran and that, but I did a lot in Region III and some in IV and V and VI and very little on the Island.

But we were busy, so it was different because, you know, it's like it is today. I mean you have to be creative to come up with other things other than the health insurance, leave time and salaries.

But there was that great ten years that we did a lot of great things and I had one of my peers say to me, you know, Joe, I don't try to get -- I walk away from that table with whatever makes my team happy because I know I have to come back next time.

So there was two different concepts out there, too, but I think, you know, we've

reached saturation point. They loved us. They liked the fact that they had a union to speak up for them, but ten years later and today it's a whole lot different, you know.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember much about the fight to get the PESH in, the safety and health act?

MR. REEDY: No, I actually had -- because I had the blue collar workers, you know, I had a lot of problems with safety stuff, but we were always able to -- to, I think, resolve 'em whether it be through the grievance procedure or what, so I had very little involvement with PESH; actually, none.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Let me jump forward about 20 years.

MR. REEDY: M-m h-m-m.

INTERVIEWER: What do you remember about the big fight over the State contract in '99 and 2000 when the membership voted the contract down and there was kind of a statewide campaign for about a year to try to put pressure on the State?

MR. REEDY: That was a very difficult

time for me. You know, I -- that's a tough one for me to talk about. I'll -- it was difficult. It was a very difficult time and I -- I think though we were very, very fortunate in the way we were able to pick a year and turn this thing around.

It was probably one of the more difficult times for me, working for CSEA. We had always set the pattern in the State, you know, and now I'll do a little Joe Reedy stuff, but in -- when I went in to Bill McGowan's office, I had been -- Bill pulled me back. I was out in the field at that time to do the Office of Court Administration contract. Bob Giles had gotten sick and I didn't want to come back.

As a matter of fact, I filed a grievance against Bill McGowan and I was sittin' in Bill McGowan's office lookin' at arbitration against Bill McGowan with the FSA 'cause I was on a leave of absence from the job, but I wanted -- what had happened, the previous time frame was -- and it was the first time frame that we had ever allowed another organization to settle

before us, and it was the State Police.

We allowed that; that's my opinion. With the numbers we had and the clout we had over there, it shouldn't have happened.

So when I got into Bill's office I said, Bill, you know, we can't let them settle again ahead of us, and my two years in Bill's office was working with Nancy Hoes. He brought in Ernie Brevelinski from -- from AFSCME and I became very close to him, but my responsibility at that point, and I'd say with the greatest humility, I put that thing together.

I mean these little sessions with Nancy Hoes and Jerry Dudakanat, and it was a terrible experience for me because I'd go to Nancy and I'd say, we need this, and she'd say this, that, and I'd go back to Bill and Ernie and I'd say we can't get that and she'd go back and tell the (inaudible) and I was constantly gettin' beat up.

So I had a real involvement in that process so when this thing come down, maybe I knew too much, you know, or maybe I'd think I know too much, but I -- I was unhappy with that

and, you know, Danny and I had not a major, major issue about it, but I had a suggestion I made to him that, you know, caused him to go a little off on me, so that was -- but in the -- as -- in the end, I think that we were very, very fortunate.

I think you and I think everybody here did a great job of turnin' that around, so in retrospect I said, you know, we caught up. We did good and I guess no harm was done except the aggravation of myself and a few others, you know, and probably you too, at least from (laughter) from whatever you had to do, yeah.

So, yeah, it was -- it was a bad day, a bad time in our history.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about some of the other memorable characters you remember with CSEA.

MR. REEDY: Jesus --

INTERVIEWER: For example, you mentioned Joe Lochner earlier.

MR. REEDY: You know, there was -- you wouldn't -- this has nothin' to do with the labor movement. Henry Galpin was Joe Lochner's

assistant director and he was a very, very brilliant guy but had no place -- he was probably equal to Ted Wenzel. He was smarter than you could believe and it has nothin' to do with any of this but we were at the convention down at the Concord and he's out on the ice-skatin' arena with a scarf around his neck skatin' and Joe Lochner, who I truly, truly had awful problems with but I -- he made this organization. He -- without Joe Lochner there would be no CSEA today and he was a tyrant and he was tough, but he was also a good friend.

And he went crazy with Henry. He was always screamin' and you would constantly hear Joe Lochner and Jack Rice fightin' and arguin' in the hallway. I mean Joe was just a tough-headed Dutchman and Ruth Bailey, I guess, was his secretary and then there was Mary Blair who actually interviewed me and hired me for the job, who I to this day respect and love; was very, very intelligent. She was our expert on the Retirement Law.

Then you had -- we had a series of executive directors, Dolan bein' one. I can't

think -- Bernie the Shoe, whoever -- you heard them talk about Bernie. I don't know what the shoe was. You had Larry Scanlon. They -- but Bernie -- Larry Scanlon was the staff person that worked his way up and was deserving of the position. The Shoe come out of nowhere. It was hard to come into that -- this organization with that type of -- with, you know, no -- no support, so to speak.

We had the board of directors. We had Sol Bendet who was, you know, Sol Bendet -- they used to say Sol Bendet will die when he decides it's time to die, you know? And my friend -- I didn't get involved with Sol Bendet but he was a tyrant.

There was a guy, Afro-American, Randy Jacobs, on the board. He was tough. Probably one of the -- another character that I just truly loved and thought the world of and had a good relationship was Irving Flamingbaum from -- from Long Island and he -- he and I got along well. I didn't go out with him or socialize with him, but we had a mutual respect for each other.

Tom McDonough who was a vice president and always lookin' to become the president and I got along well throughout the years, and he was a character, constantly running for office.

Joe McDermott and I got along relatively well, but I had problems with his support of the law firm when I was in Bill's office and that.

Who else was there were characters? There was a guy named Jimmy Lennon who was regional direct...or not -- the regional president down in III who was a character. He worked for the Bridge -- yeah for the Bridge -- yeah, yeah, I think the Bridge Authority.

Of course, Pat Masholey, I politically got involved in a couple of his campaigns but I was outside at that time. Jimmy Moore, who's still here.

Another real wonderful, wonderful person I met who has since passed away was a guy named Johnny Clark. Came from Letchworth Village. He was chairman of my negotiating committee after Bill ascended to the presidency. Just a great guy. He was captured in the Battle

of the Bulge, was a prisoner of war for nine years -- or nine months. I kept in touch with his wife long after he passed way. He died of throat cancer.

I thought and still think -- I had a lot of -- he'd be surprised to hear me say this, but I really had a lot of admiration for Lattimer and respect for Lattimer. Lattimer was a people person. He just -- and I had dynamic differences about the law firm, along with Al Mead, and to this day I consider myself somewhat of a friend of Al Mead.

You had Nels Carlson which had a -- he was a collective bargaining specialist which had a good relationship with McGowan, actually put a lot of thoughts into McGowan's cap prior to the negotiations that I was involved with. We went away on a think camp up there at Canoe Island and Nels was there with myself and Bill and a couple other people puttin' together our plans for the negotiations.

Conaby was the administrator of the staff involved in the Administrative Unit, was always considered aloof, not too well-liked by

his peers, I would say. I don't know. He's a kind of a friend of mine.

But there was a lot of characters out there, you know? Dave Stat just brought to my attention Dr. Bernard -- I can't think of his last name. He's from New York, just passed away. He was on our board of directors. He was a surgeon, quite a physician, and we had some real characters on that board.

We had -- I mean without a doubt, Jack Rice will always be held on a -- in a special plateau for myself.

I continue to be friends with Fred Riester who was with the law firm and assigned to me on most of my responsibilities.

Featherstonhaugh who was a character had me in his home, supposed to be a haunted house, and he was very, very close to staff.

Marty Langer I haven't seen in a few years. I guess I could go on and on and on but -- and I can remember back those years, probably sometimes a lot better than yesterday, but they were good years. They were trying but, you know, you think about it now and it's --

although I have to tell you, Steve, it hasn't changed that much.

You know, comin' back after bein' gone for six years, the members are still the members. They're -- we're constantly tryin' to do creative things but I notice even goin' through my old files, some of the creative things we're doin' today are concepts that we had years ago.

I shared this with Jerry a couple years ago but in my old files of a copy of The Leader, there's a copy, big headlines, CSEA Demands that Jerry Lefkowitz Be Fired.

And then there was Marge Carow as Chief Counsel, you know, when the law firm was dismissed. So, yeah, I guess if I had the education and the ability myself, I think I could write some pretty good stuff, coming from the private sector today and the characters.

And there is a big difference with the staff, because I don't -- I mean I love the staff. I thought I had great staff up in Region IV and I would never change it for the world, but they're different. They're different

than they were years ago. You know, there was I think more of a commitment to the job. We did everything.

I organized. I did it all. I mean I went wherever I had to do, did whatever and there was never a question asked and there was -- not by anybody else. You were out there doin' organizing or whatever it called upon to do it, and we had our good times so --

INTERVIEWER: I realize that. Did they ask you about the Palace Theater? What happened at the Palace Theater in 1975?

MR. REEDY: CSEA decided that they were gonna have a strike. I'm not sure what motivated the strike but we were gonna have this big strike and we were gonna have this meeting at the Palace Theater and it was set up that Marty Langor was gonna make the motion to strike and they had somebody lined up to do the second and it was all done kinda sporadically.

I don't e...I don't even know what we were mad about at the time, but probably inability to get a contract or a strike for the sake of a strike, somethin' like that, and so --

but Sol Bendet and some of his people got wind of it and they didn't want any part of any strike and they had a board meeting.

Did they have a board meeting the day of the strike call? I think they might have had an emergency board meeting, but we were assigned to the Palace Theater and all the delegates were comin' in and it was a -- it was a fiasco.

And before Marty could even get to the microphone there was all kinds of chaos, and I think Marty did get up to make his motion to strike and he just got blown out of proportion and the membership, those delegates, went after Wenzel who was on the stage, and he became so scared, I remember goin' -- he says to us, and I was always there. Boy, I was always there -- follow me out to the car, you know, so we had to hush him out to a car literally and shove him into a car. People were reachin' to grab 'im and we took him to a Holiday Inn here in Latham and hid him.

And then I -- I don't even know how we bailed out of that one, but that was (laughter) -- that was not a good moment in our history. I

have to say, it coulda got physical because it was like, it might have been midday, and our people, if they come in the night before, especially my people, would have a tendency to have a drink or two, so I'm not gonna say they were liquored up or anything like that, but they were ready -- ready for bear.

And Wenzel was not that type of a labor leader and he couldn't handle it. He just panicked. It just went crazy so gettin' him outa there probably saved a whole -- and I don't know what happened at the Palace after that because our responsibility was to get him where we had to get him and, boy, this is good. That was funny. (Laughter.)

INTERVIEWER: We'll let you get a drink here and we're gonna ask you one final question. Can you handle that?

MR. REEDY: I got it.

INTERVIEWER: Why do you think CSEA has been able to be around for a hundred years?

MR. REEDY: I think because they do a good job. I think they do a good job. I think that they're -- they have a good relationship

with the membership. They understand the State and recently they -- they know how to lobby. They always knew how to lobby, you know?

Bryce was a good friend with Warren Bridges from Buffalo at the time, so I -- I just think that we have -- you know, it's not a perfect world but I think we know the membership and we know 'em a lot better and proof is in there. We know 'em better than PS&T knows the membership, you know, because I think the group that we have and the people that we represent are, to my mind, kind of the grassroot people now yet out there in the field in local government.

We have a lot of high management people but I just think that we've always done a class job and, you know, do I wish it was better? Sure. But I think that we're head and shoulders above our competitors out there.

And our competitors in my experience are removed from the membership, you know, and a lot of our people come up through the ranks and file. You know, my association with the Teamsters was very, very good and when I had my

strike those people were very good to me.

But -- but by the same token, they were not a democracy like we were and, you know, God bless his soul, I mentioned Johnny Clark used to say, what we should be is a benevolent dictatorship, and we might be a little bit closer to that than we were years ago 'cause we have taken some of the control, a lot more of the control than we had back then with the board.

You'd go to bed one night and get up the next day and tell you you gotta change things, so I just think we do a good job. I think we're a class organization. I'm, you know, I'm proud to have been a part of it. So with very few exceptions, I just think we're -- you know, I wish these guys, these ladies and them that we hire today probably had a better understanding, you know?

I think some of 'em think it's a job and it's a well-payin' job, but then again, you know, they look at you and say, you know, let go, you old man. It's time to let go. It's not what it was and so on and so forth, and so I

think we do -- we do do a class job and that's why I think we survived.

INTERVIEWER: Wonderful.

MR. REEDY: Now I had -- are we done? 'Cause I have a thought that I want to lay on you and --

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Go right ahead.

(Simultaneous conversation.)

MR. REEDY: (continuing) and see what you wanta do with it.

We had this problem with organizing, okay? I don't have any answers for organizing, but I do know in my heart that the unions nationwide have been unable to organize white collar workers, computer workers and those type of people. They don't seem to want unions.

I live up in the Saratoga area. They've been talkin' about 10,000 workers comin' up there to the Luther Forest area that are gonna be associated with these chip factories, I guess, and the projection is 10,000 employees and they're talkin' about gettin' water from the Hudson and all of that.

I think -- I'll have this conversation

with Danny if I ever do -- we as an organization oughta start lookin' at that group, whoever they be. They're gonna be high-paid people. They're not gonna be low-paid people. Somebody oughta start lookin' at that group, what they're gonna encompass, who they're gonna be, where they're gonna come.

Maybe, you know, I hear this word salt from organizing, but maybe we should be startin' to look at where these people are in the universe and be ahead -- be ahead of the game. When they start movin' these people in out there we could start organizing them as opposed to goin' in after the fact.

Chip plants they are.

INTERVIEWER: M-m h-m-m.

MR. REEDY: But I know my wife keeps tellin' me, they're gonna be high-paid white collar workers and they're talkin' 10,000 and I have no concept other than the basic understanding of organizing, but there's a group we should be lookin' at and we should be lookin' at now, not five years from now, 'cause they're not gonna be there for three or four years, you

know?

Maybe -- maybe the unions and research, or somebody, can find out what type of people commonly work in these jobs. I don't know, but that's a number that we should be lookin' at. So that's just a thought.

INTERVIEWER: Now I can respond to it.

(Conclusion of interview of Joe Reedy.)