

PETROLEUM INDUSTRY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE: Thelma Cameron

INTERVIEWER: Nadine Mackenzie

DATE: December 1984

NM: This is Nadine Mackenzie speaking. I am interviewing Mrs. Thelma Cameron. Mrs. Cameron, thank you for having accepted to participate in our project. Can you tell me, when and where were you born?

TC: I was born in Oklahoma City in 1912 and my father, my parents, came to Canada, to southern Alberta in 1921. They were farmers and it was a new??? irrigation project, it was very exciting for my parents because they had such new lands. I went to school in a one room schoolhouse, it was the only thing we had in those days, then I went to Medicine Hat to high school. In 1932 after high school I came to Calgary and took a business course with Henderson Business College. These were in Depression years.

NM: Did you want to become a secretary?

TC: Yes, I did, I took a secretarial course. That was shorthand, typing, accounting and that, but in those years it was awfully hard to find a job. Most of us going to the college had to work for our room and board, we had no money. As a matter of fact, a lot of them, they almost tried to make housekeepers out of them in those days. We were babysitters, housekeepers and then when we got out it was even more difficult to get a job. My first job, if one could call it that, was. . .one of these people whom I had met, was a lawyer, Hugh O'Roarke. He was also a promoter. Sometimes I got paid, at least we got by, one way or another. But the experience I gained from this law office came in quite handy in later years.

#027 NM: What did you do for him, were you running his office?

TC: Yes, I was the only girl in the office, the secretary in the office. There was the odd job came up. They were few and far between. I remember one contract, one job I did, I was the typist of course, was the formation of the Calgary Associate Clinic. They were in the same building, and that was the old Dr. McNab Clinic. You may have heard of McNab, it's over here at the Holy Cross, the McNab Wing. Quite an interesting character whom I got to know in later years. But it was small jobs like that, we made a little money and we were able to survive. But at that time there were a few people around town, including O'Roarke, who was a promoter and was trying to promote the oil industry in eastern Canada, trying to get people to come out here to put their money in it, with not very much success. So when I was in that office, one day there was a dapper little man showed up, shoes highly polished and immaculately dressed. It turned out to be Sam Nickle, Sam Sr., this is Carl's father. He and Mr. O'Roarke had been in eastern Canada trying to raise money. This was after the discovery in Turner Valley and in fact, Mr. O'Roarke had started a well, this was the old cable tool drilling, up in the foothills. They didn't have the

equipment, as we know today, was quite inadequate. But these old pioneers, there were several of them, they spent most of their time in the east, Toronto, Montreal, trying to raise money from the entrepreneurs in the flourishing mining industry, was one of them. The manufacturers and people with money to invest, with no luck. They wore out their shoe leather and usually were going around with the soles of their shoes, cardboard in them. They actually used cardboard, but they would be highly polished shoes. Their cigarettes, they would roll the cigarettes and carry them around in silver plated cigarette cases, because they couldn't afford a 5 cent package of cigarettes.

NM: But they had the cigarette case?

TC: They had the cigarette case and they were immaculately dressed. In the hotels I often heard, they probably had a loaf of bread and a can of sardines and that's what they lived on. These were the real heroes of the oil industry to my way of thinking. But these were people much older than I was. And then shortly after I had met Old Sam, we called him Old Sam by the way, it was always Old Sam and Little Sam Nickle, Mr O'Roarke died and I went to work. . .well, Sam came in. He knew him so well. About that time he opened an office in the Michael Building. Now the Michael Building was one of the Burns sons I believe, in any case, on the corner of 1st St. W. and 9th Ave., a very nice building. Sam opened a restaurant which lasted for a period of 3 or 4 months, a very plush restaurant and of course, it just didn't survive. Then he had ??? selling of a shoe store, the Nickle Shoe Store was closed some years before, he'd been selling correspondence courses. So between Old Sam and myself, we decided to try publishing a correspondence course in typing and shorthand.

#083 NM: That was a good idea.

TC: Well, it was. It was really quite something. We did sell a few of them. I don't know what ever happened to it, it would be interesting to follow through with the thing we put together and sold. From there I think. . .well, I got to know the Nickle family and I more or less grew up with the family for those years. Then periodically I worked for a brokerage firm, D. M. Duggan Investments, during a little oil flurry. That didn't last long either. Then I got a job with an oil company called Davies Pete. Maynard Davies, he was one of the early men to have developed Turner Valley. Oh yes, R. A. Brown had been drilling in Turner Valley in those years too. It wasn't awfully big, this would be the north end of Turner Valley. It was new, a new extension to the Turner Valley field. I worked with Maynard until 1939 when war broke out. From there I went to Indy 13, that's ??? trade district 13, it was the head office. I was taken in by an engineer at the engineering department. There was lots of activity and lots of things to think about in those years. During that time we built the Suffield Experimental Station, Curry Barracks, everything had to be done in a big hurry and in an engineering department you can well imagine how fast it was. The way I had got in there was by my reference. I had the second top job but only because of my reference I'd had with someone I had lived with, a family I had lived with, Sid Miller. He was district treasury officer in Calgary, a very astute person and great on detail. I never worked for him but it was really quite a privilege to know him. He was sent back east to Ottawa, almost immediately the war broke out. Colonel Harcourt wasn't

going to have a woman in his office, he refused to have any women in his office. But when I showed up with the reference, they needed people badly because they were working all day and all night on building Mewata Building at Sarcee and housing. So I worked there for quite a few years, then a few years later. . .well, I married Stu Cameron, the cartoonist. About that time he was transferred out to Vancouver, with no place to live, living in army camps. The army weren't very popular in any suites or housing. So I stayed in Calgary and I went back to work with Carl Nickle. After being with Carl for quite a few years, there was another lease broker that had been working for McCall Frontenac, it was known as at that time, it was later known as Texaco. They had been drilling wells in Alberta. With not too much success either, but they had spent millions of dollars in here. They convinced me and Carl that I should go out on this project east of Edmonton, there's a little Ukranian town called Mundare. This was my first real lease job, which was quite an interesting experience. I was on loan from Carl's office for a month to do this job and then I had planned on going back to Carl's office. It paid \$10 a day, which was really big money. Carl said, Thelma, I can't afford to pay you \$10 and I wouldn't want to keep you from this job. Plus commissions, I ended up with commissions. This was just after Leduc as a matter of fact, when the activity really started on its way, I forgot to mention that.

#155 NM: So they were trying to lease more land?

TC: The various companies were trying to lease land in almost any district. This area that . . . well, Imperial had been in there as well. As a matter of fact, they were in there about the same time. So I did have some competition, but I was in there a few days ahead of them. Of course, the boys in McCall Frontenac, Bill Howells and Ed Lamar, he was the lease broker for them that talked me into going into it, they sent me up to Mundare and had it all set up. All I had to work on of course, was searches.

NM: How did you go up there, by car?

TC: No, I didn't, I went out by train. That too, was quite an experience because I'd lost my dog in Calgary and all the way up to Edmonton I'd been bawling my head off because I couldn't find my job. When we arrived out there I was to meet the key man, in nearly all these projects you go to in these small towns, you have to find the key man. More or less, he's usually a Commissioner for Oaths and all of the farmers come to him for advice and this sort of thing. When I arrived out there, there was a sports day on. So the man I wanted to meet was taking tickets on the gate, a big Ukranian, lovely jolly old gentleman. He was really very excited when he knew we were bringing money into the town. I think we were paying about \$1 an acre, and maybe, I'm not sure what the lease rentals were, maybe 50 cents an acre per year. I can't remember the man's name. Anyway, he started talking, every farmer that came through the gate going into the fair, he talked with them to see whether or not they had their mineral rights. And arranged for them to come and see me. I used his office, which was an old flour mill. It was a little room with a counter, it wasn't as big as this room, there was just room in front of this counter for men to come through. He had the men lined up for a block. I had all the searches of their land in my briefcase, so I would know whether or not they had their mineral rights and they just came in one right after the other and signed up. I was signing up for 3 days solidly when I

got there because it had all been organized.

#203 NM: What about the searches, how did you ???

TC: The company, Texaco, had already searched it here in Calgary. No, it wasn't searched in Calgary, it had to be searched in Edmonton, that's right, it was the North Alberta Land Registration District. From the searches, you usually had a history, you knew who owned it, you knew their names, you knew probably how long they owned it. There's a lot of things one can read into a search but you have to use a little imagination along with it, to read who they are. So in Edmonton, Bill Howells and Lamar, and the Imperial Oil people, landmen from Imperial Oil and other companies, they were in the Macdonald Hotel, they didn't know I was out there working you see, which was an advantage. On that particular project I had searches and it's a fairly big block of land and by searching through directories and telephone books and so on, we located this big land owner. Well, he wasn't a land owner, he had only kept the mineral rights. He had been in the area years before and he had bought up the mineral rights through what was known as Indian Script. It was a trade of some kind or other with the Indians, I've quite forgotten now what the story of that Indian Script was. But I had to go to Vancouver to meet him. His address I believe was Victoria. He had a small ??? and at that time, you see, Stu was living in Vancouver. So I let Stu know I was on my way out to meet this party. He had a boat, I was much more anxious to get the job done and get back but I had to go out on the boat with him. He had his favourite little boat to discuss this sort of thing. Well, he didn't want to give it all up, so I talked him into keeping, reserving to himself, 40 acres or 80 acres in each section of land. He must have had 8-10 sections of land and that ran into a fair amount of money, at \$1 an acre. Which he agreed on. I think I had to raise my price with him but I had got authority, I phoned back and Bill Howells said, okay, I may have paid him \$2 an acre because it was such a huge block of land. 8-10 sections was quite a bit for mineral rights. In the meantime, Imperial Oil I think, was still looking for him over in Victoria. In fact, there were 2 landmen from Imperial on the plane going out. Which scared me sick, it really did. But as it turned out, they didn't know where to find him and I did. I suppose I was in that district 2 or 3 times and I got to know the couple who owned the hotel. They were a very, very nice young couple and they treated me like royalty. When the restaurant was closed on a Sunday, if I happened to arrive in there on a Sunday I was taken to someplace, something that was going on all the time. There was either a Ukranian wedding or a shower or even a funeral. And there was always a big feast.

#274 NM: So they really welcomed you well.

TC: Oh yes. In fact, when we closed up out there they put on a big banquet for us, invited Bill Howells and Lamar and people from Rio Bravo and we all went for this big dinner.

NM: That was very nice.

TC: Yes. It was really nice knowing those people. Once in a while you would run into a very sad case. I was given a particular block which may have included several townships of land and I met an old couple that had farmed in another area, maybe 4 or 5 miles south of the block I had been given. I searched out their title and they had ??? sale, whatever it

was, and found that they did own the mineral rights. Of course, I got permission from Bill Howells that I could include that, I could lease it, which I did. They were very, very anxious to retire, which they were able to do on the amount of money which they got on all of their lands. The lady had arthritis and they wanted to move to the coast and turn their land over to their son, which they did. It helped them out a great deal to retire. Once in awhile those things would come up, and even possibly someone just across the road. Texaco, McCall Frontenac as it was, they were very nice to work for. Mind you at this time, they didn't have too much production, if any. This is why they called Bill, Dry Hole Howells as I told you before. And then, this was quite in contrast, my experience with the Ukrainians and what I later ran into in St. Paul. They called it St. Paul ???, which means half of them were Indian, ??? but I can go into that one later. Then I had, on another trip in Edmonton I had hold outs. That was out at Spruce Grove. There had been some oil out there which later petered out. Texaco had a rig sitting on the railway track.

NM: This is the end of the tape.

Tape 1 Side 2

TC: At the project in Spruce Grove, with the rig sitting on the railway, ready to sput in. These hold outs were practically adjoining the well site so I had to get them. There was about 7. I got most of the, with the exception of 2. There were 2 really tough hold outs. One case was an elderly couple and it took days working with them to find out just why they were afraid, it was straight fear. They were afraid of people taking away their land. They were immigrants from the Ukraine, it hadn't been too many years before, maybe a decade, not too much earlier that they had come to that country, maybe 20 years, it could have been longer. They had cleared the land by hand, they were very hard workers, they were making a good living. And of course, they couldn't understand what mineral rights were, they knew it was a part of their land. I was out there just about every day. I had hired a bellhop in the Macdonald Hotel to drive me out about 10 miles or so each day, to try to convince these people that I was giving them something. No way, they wouldn't budge. Finally I thought I've got to get them away from the farm. Someone had mentioned it too, and they put it this way, get them off their own little manure pile. So it worked really, they hadn't been in to Edmonton very often and never in the Macdonald Hotel. I had phoned ahead, a friend of mine, a lawyer friend who I had known for a number of years, Ted Manning, to be at my room in the Macdonald Hotel. I had promised them a lawyer, we can go in and see my lawyer, we can go and see yours if you wish to have a lawyer but my lawyer will tell you what you're doing. That was fine. I can always remember that lady, her eyes, when we walked in the front door of the Macdonald Hotel, they had a great huge big chandelier, that chandelier was huge. I think it was in the form of candles, I think it looked like all candles, yes, that's what it was. So the first thing this poor old lady noticed was this and she just gasped. She had on a fur coat. I can remember, that fur coat, she didn't take it off. The room was pretty warm. So I took her in and introduced her to Ted and Ted explained to her what she was doing and then he asked them, would you like me to read this to you. Yes, they wanted the lease read, which I'm quite sure you

know, these legal documents are quite long, 2 full big pages, small print. I'm sure they didn't understand a word of that, other than what Ted had explained to them, what I had been explaining to them. Well, they finally signed it up. But in the meantime, I was working on another one. The other couple, they had been going by a lawyer they had. I had known of him, what he had been doing for years was doing transfer of land for many couples and instead of charging them a legal fee he was reserving the mineral rights to himself. Oh no, he was taking 10%, he wanted 10%. No, that was another lawyer that did that, that took the. . . I'm sorry I'm getting that mixed up with an old Haliburton, another lawyer out in Vegreville. No, he wanted 10% of everything.

#058 NM: On top of his fees?

TC: Yes. So 10% of the mineral rights you see, that was being signed. So he pulled the agreement apart for this couple and they came back to me with all these scratches on it you know, we worked on that for about 3 or 4 days. They were very, very nice, they wanted the money. But the lawyer was trying to talk them out of it. So after they had brought back the agreement from this lawyer 2 or 3 times I said, look I'd like to see your lawyer and discuss it with him. They had brought back the agreement, I said, I wouldn't pay him 5 cents for this agreement, it's not worth it. Everything he scratched out in this clause isn't worth a nickle, it's not worth the paper it's printed on. I said, now I'll go back, I'll go with you. So we arranged to meet him in his office, 9 or 10 o'clock in the morning. His office was right across from the Macdonald Hotel. I was there waiting with the clients and this agreement and the first thing he did to me, I was quite young looking, he said, the clients told him who I was and they wanted to discuss it and he was very, very nasty to me. He looked at me and he said, what do you know about this lease. I was standing almost in the doorway, my back to the door and I said, mister, I'm not a lawyer but I know what's in this agreement. I called him, I said, now you old ten per-center, I called him and old son-of-a-bitch and a ten per-center and I looked at his clients and said, that's the man you're dealing with and by this time he'd turned red in the face and he started for the door like this to throw me out. In the meantime I had just slowly walked out his door and was in the hallway because I was on safe ground, I wasn't in his office. Well, I walked down the hall and in the elevator, before I got down to the main ground, I thought, dear god, what am I going to say to Bill Howells when I tell him I called him an old son-of-a-bitch. So I had no sooner got out on the street than this couple was right behind me. They came down and they said, Mrs. Cameron, we believe everything you have said, we want to sign your lease. So fine, we walked across the street to my room in the hotel, I got a witness in, my lawyer friend, they signed up.

NM: That was great.

TC: All of those people who had been hold outs, the company drilled and they drilled a dry hole on the location. But they had a nice deal out of it and I'm sure they were all very, very happy from nearly all of these deals. I've often thought about those people, especially that old Ukranian couple. Their treatment in the Ukraine was pretty grim and you have to learn almost what the people are thinking or what their circumstances are to .

#110 NM: So in fact, they were frightened to lose their land here, like they lost it in Russia.

TC: That's right. But it was quite in contrast to another assignment I had here in Alberta. It was for Hudson Bay, BA and Union Oil. There was 3 different things up at St. Paul. I'll explain the projects first. Number 1 project, there was gas, the city had its own gas wells and many of the merchants in the town had taken up Crown leases, this is provincial leases from the government and had been holding them for 3 or 4 years or more. Now the companies wanted an option on those particular leases, there may have been 20-25 of them. Fortunately I was told by the landman, who's a lawyer, about one clause that might cause difficulty in the option agreement. It covered the company from a drilling commitment but was in the Crown lease. Do you follow? ??? Because when I . . . yes, I'll go ahead with that story first. On the way, I had to get to the key man or lawyer who was the member of parliament, I think his name is Maurice Lambert. He has been a member from that district, he's retiring this year, I often watch him in the House. I met him on the train going out, he was just returning from Ottawa and I suppose the train arrived there some time around 7 or 8 at night, no dinner. We went straight to his office and I told him what I was doing and that I had planned to call on him and I was very glad that I had met him on the train, so he took me right to his office. I had to have his consent and approval before any merchant in the town would have ???, so this was crucial. He and his assistant in the office went through the agreement. Sure enough, they saw this clause. So for hours, until I'm sure it must have been long hours in the morning, they went through this word by word by word, interrogating me. I gave them what I thought or what I had learned, that certain clauses meant, that one was a real stickler. I finally convinced him. I don't know what time but I know I had a headache, such a headache I could hardly see straight. I was sick almost all the next day. Then there was no food, everything was close up you see, you couldn't even get food in the town at this hour. In any case, I was well underway on that project. It was a very bulky document, about 20 pages and I had to obtain the certificate of titles from the merchants before I could make up the contract to insert all the dates and the details. Each one by one, you had to do this. It was the most awkward agreement I've every worked with but I managed. As it ended up I succeeded in getting all of them, they all signed. And they got paid a nice little bit of money for it and of course, they retained a royalty, they were getting a royalty on it. The second project I had in there was very

#179 simple. It was a drilling deal for the City of St. Paul. That I had help on. 2 of the men, 1 from BA, a landman, they were both lawyers, from BA and Hudson Bay came up. I arranged the meeting, set the meeting up with the towns council people and then they came up and held a meeting with the town. Well, it was so different from coming from the Ukranian district to a French-Canadian area. We had to wait, they couldn't hold the meeting because they had a party going on. A big party, corsages were sent out from Edmonton and everyone was dressed formally, it was a big sham for a small town but anyway. But we weren't invited. Just because they were bringing money into the place, they didn't even consider this. We went bowling, the 3 of us had to go bowling and wait until they were ready to hold their meeting. That was a very minor deal, I didn't have to

do too much on that one. But the other project, it was much more interesting. In the early years, I think maybe the 1890's and possibly earlier than that, it may have been some time between 1880 and 1890, when the government of Canada was bringing out immigrants to this country to settle. They had given out a block of land which was called the Irish Settlement. Now, I don't know how many Irish people came out, I suppose it must have been a number of them, and Scottish people, came out to this country. I suppose they had a pretty tough time getting here and it really was a boondocks in those years. But they gave them a house, it was probably a log house, they gave them a plow, a team of horses, seed grain, and a quarter section of land. They were to work the land and pay off, over the years, a very minimum amount. In fact it wasn't terribly expensive, but even to this day, there isn't one clear title in that project. At least there wasn't at that time, that's 20-30 years ago. But now it had passed down through many different nationalities. The Scots and the Irish, the land was not worked, it was deserted, of course, they were pretty rough years I would guess. Finally it was all settled by French Canadians. None of them could speak English and here they are, maybe 60-70 miles, not more than that, from Edmonton.

They had not been in to the city of Edmonton, they didn't try to speak English. I hired a young man, he'd be about 37 at the time, I was younger than that of course, who had a big car and of course, knew the farmers and spoke English. There again, I had to find the key people in the town. No, it was through Lambert I guess I had met this. . . anyway, I had a chauffeur and an interpreter. Interpreter was most important. And not knowing where you were going. I was hiring him at \$10 a day, which he had never heard of. \$10 a day at that time was something like \$500 today.

#255 NM: So it was fantastically good money.

TC: The first day I explained to him where I wanted to go and I wanted him to tell the farmers exactly what I say. The first day out he opened up his glove compartment and brought out a mickey of liquor. I was so mad. And I can get pretty firm when ????. I said look, you put that bottle of liquor back in that glove compartment and don't you ever come out with liquor in your car. Because you don't work for me. That was my first encounter. Mind you, it was 40 below zero and I had to finish that project and get to all those people before, I knew that if the weather started to warm up we would have drifting on the roads and we would never be able to get to them. So it was important to get them done, and even so, the roads were not too good getting in to many of these places. I had the documents you see, all made out from the searches, all we had to do was to sign it and witness it. I also used him as a witness you see. And I was a Commissioner for Oaths, so I was able to take their affidavits. I think we worked for about a week, even 10 days. I only had a few leases left that I had to sign up. I was in my hotel one night after we had finished and I had got to know the local garage people. As a matter of fact, a very nice young couple that owned the garage there, with whom I had become quite close friends, we were friendly, one of them came up and told me that my driver was sitting down in the beer parlour telling everybody in the beer parlour, he was going to take over my job. How nice. He knew all about it, he knew how to do it, he was going to take over, he was going to cut me right out. So I thought, it's time I got a new driver. I went down to the beer

parlour, here he was, guzzling beer and talking, a big show among his friends. ??? Well, I took a cheque down with me, I had it made out what I owed him, I paid him off and right in front of his friends I said, you're through, you're fired.

NM: What did he say?

TC: He was really shocked. So were his friends, they all started giving him a good laugh. I didn't even wait to see it. So in order to finish the job I went out and I hired a taxi. There was one taxi in the town. So I took the taxi out the next day, I arranged that night to finish up. There was only 2 or 3 left that was important. So I went out and finished it up myself. The taxi driver could speak French too. So this was quite a contrast from working with the Ukrainians. The Metis??? in the town, they were really quite something else again. You know, they had the largest RCMP unit in St. Paul, in Alberta. Of course, they had a much larger territory too, because they went quite far north but that's the headquarters of the RCMP.

NM: This is the end of the tape.

Tape 2 Side 1

TC: The Metis, some of them got pretty rough at time, but I had got to know the couple who owned the garage. I was over there one night, after work, talking to them about people in the district, getting to know the town. The RCMP too, one of their friends was there, no, there was just the three of us, this man, his wife and myself and one of the half-breeds got pretty rough, he was drunk. Well, they locked every door, I think they knew that we were having a drink. He chased around that front, I thought he was going to break windows and everything.

NM: He wanted to join in.

TC: He wanted to get in. We had a dreadful time. But this was just one of those things that you'd run in to in the town at that time. No wonder they had to have the largest detachment of the RCMP in St. Paul. I think that's just about the end of that one. I had other assignments I can think of which were very interesting. It was with Mennonites, they were on a Mennonite colony. I had a couple of days work out southeast of Calgary, I think it was for Union. Of course, I had searches and I had a driver and I had a car. You can't concentrate on your work and drive and try to find these places that you need. This driver was a Calgary man, we had to go by township and ranges and so on, in order to find the people. It was in the early spring, and the roads were very, very bad. They were dirt roads for the most part and the frost was coming out of the ground and there were a lot of mudholes we had to get through. I always carried my searches in the back of the car, we came to this mudhole which the driver should never have tried to go through. He got stuck right in the middle of this mudhole and the water was coming right up through the car. The more he tried to get through, naturally it was frozen underneath and it would slide off into a deep ditch. I crawled over the back seat and got my briefcase and got my searches and got out of the car, waded out of the car and out of the mudhole. By this time a few cars started coming along. The first car that came along was this Mennonite, this big jolly old fellow, with about 4 or 5 women in the car. You know, these black hats and

things they had on.

#045 NM: Long skirts.

TC: And long skirts. I walked up to him and I had my briefcase and said, your name is so and so, whatever it was. He couldn't believe it, he said, how do you know that. I had studied my searches and I knew it had to be, there were other similar names too but I knew almost at once who it was. So he got quite excited, this is really quite something. I told him he had so much land on which he owned the mineral rights and I was paying him so much an acre and told him how much it would be right in the middle of, practically in the mudhole. So he got somebody, there must have been somebody else there who went for a tractor and I left the driver in the mudhole to get the car out the best way he could and this old Mennonite took me in his car, front seat, the women all in the back, down the road a mile or two, to the colony, to the big farmhouse. It was really quite interesting. There was a great big long table and the women all sat around. He sits down at the head of the table, now tell me all about it. So I started all over again, and had to explain what drilling was, what the oil industry was. You just do, I had to remember that it was completely new and something they had never heard of. They owned something that they didn't even know they had. He signed up, and it was a fair amount of land at that. As you know, some of these colonies owned 2 or 3 sections of land. Another thing I had out there, I ended up in the hotel. The place had just been painted and it was pretty grim. As a matter of fact, some of these little hotels are really grim in the country. They'd have maybe some plumbing but no plumbing in your room at all really. Maybe you had, in most cases you had a wash basin or something. Then usually, in a small town, most of them were Chinese restaurants. I survived it. The hotels were quite interesting. It also had fun times too. I recall one day when I was out at Mundare, I'd been working all day, and it had poured rain. It was so much fun, they had a beautiful sunset in the distance, a gorgeous sunset after this rain. Little ducks, little ones, came running down to get into the mudhole in the middle of the street, it was sweet. It was quite a scene. And you know, sometimes these sunsets with the elevators, railway tracks in the background on the prairies, it was fascinating. During those years I was in and out of Calgary, working on various projects in Alberta. And I was always using Carl's office, Carl Nickle. And I could always bring my documents back into his office and finish them up, which was a very nice association to have with Carl. I had planned at that time, to go back out to Vancouver. Stu was living out there at that time, as I told you. He was just starting. In fact, during that time too, I was promoting Stu's cartoons. Stu had done a series of cartoons that are really quite famous cartoons.

#104 NM: What type of cartoons?

TC: He was a political cartoonist. He was an excellent political cartoonist but in any case, these were special things he was doing on his own time. I was selling them through various outlets here at the Calgary Stampede. Of course, I overprinted as ??? do. I hadn't done as well during Stampede week as I had thought I would do, and I needed to pay the bill, and it was a big printing bill. So I got another phone call to go to Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan at that time, Imperial had been in, Canadian Superior and Rio Bravo. Canadian Superior and Rio Bravo were pretty well the same people. That was to lease land, it was just straight land, no prospects or anything. Exploration in Saskatchewan had been delayed, I would say, 10-15 years at least, through the provincial government at that time, under Tommy Douglas. The origin of the NDP. He had planned to take over all the mineral rights that were owned, they come from homesteading but they were owned by the private companies. Freehold land. And he did start in the province of Saskatchewan, to confiscate the mineral rights in every title. You see, the farmers had no idea what mineral rights were. There was a mineral tax in Saskatchewan. They did not receive statements from the government, they didn't know what their taxes were adding up year after year. They didn't even know they had to pay taxes. In fact, they didn't even know what mineral rights were. So Tommy Douglas started, in the land titles, methodically, from the border, which was . . . [phone rang]. There was a tax on mineral titles, which the farmers didn't know about. They didn't receive a bill or anything or notices from the Saskatchewan government. They didn't even know what mineral rights were. They knew nothing about the oil industry really. But Douglas started methodically from the border, which would be township 1, and range by range, you all understand what the various ranges are. The meridian range runs right down somewhere between the Saskatchewan and Manitoba border, in that vicinity. They had taken over all of the mineral titles that were within this area, in 7 different ranges and right up to past Humboldt, I would say, wherever there was a freehold piece of land, they had confiscated or taken it over for taxes. This was in the courts at that time, and utterly illegal. The companies knew this. This is one of the things that kept the oil companies out of Saskatchewan. One of many things. There were many

#164 other things which the NDP government was demanding from the oil companies. Otherwise Saskatchewan would have been developed at least 10 years before. So when I went in to lease, this landman I worked with, Lamar, he had sales or contracts for a number of leases from different companies. He was buying land for about 10 cents an acre, and selling it to various oil companies. He insisted that I had to come down and take over. What he did, he went in to Saskatchewan, he opened a great big office in the hotel, he hired a secretarial firm with about 20 girls in this hotel office, then he picked up landmen, it didn't matter who they were. It was an awful mess. I was determined, he knew I wouldn't come down because I was going to finish working on Stu's cartoons. But as I said before, I needed the money so I went down and this is what I found. It was really hot, hot weather. The hotel you could almost suffocate, it was dreadful. And when I saw what was happening with this secretarial crew I said, Ed, for god's sake, what do you think you're doing. He had stacks of leases with girls typing them up, using razor blades to erase errors. They couldn't type. And all these documents, I'll just say the whole shebang, I went around and I gathered up every razor blade in the place and I talked with Ed and I said, Ed, if you want me here I'm going to run this operation my way. He knew that I would because before, when I was up in Mundare, and all the leases coming in so fast at one time, I kept an eye on the office. I said, now you get the hell out of this office and leave me alone, don't you touch one thing in this office. He knew how I operated. So

he said, all right I'll go along with that but he said, we'll have this lady over in the morning and you can have a talk with her. I said, you just give me about 3 girls that can type. Oh it was hot, the lady who was in charge, it wasn't her fault, in fact, secretarial services were almost unheard of in those days and she was the only one of course. So I talked to her, I showed her what her girls were doing, and I said, now get them out of her and give me the 3 girls who can type. They all use razor blades, all this stuff, machines and everything, out they go. so I got that under control. Then Ed had an area at Humboldt, he'd given me a choice of 2 areas that were available and I said, okay, I'll take the Humboldt one. That's northeast of Regina. I could see there was ??? and he had people waiting for lands in that district. I forget now how I got out there, I don't know how I ended up out in Humboldt. But of course, there again, I had to find the key man. The hotel was dreadful, almost impossible and I think I had to wait there for 2 or 3 days too, for some fair or something

#233 to get over, before I could go to work. I hired an elevator man, he turned out to be quite something. And several people I showed them what I wanted and how to sign up a lease and no mistakes, and if there were a mistake each one had to be initialled. They were coming in quite well and I told them, I said, I don't care what time of night you arrive here with your lease, if you work all night. If you come in at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning, I'll be here, take your leases I will check them. But you're not going to take one lease from me the next day until every lease you have brought in during the day was correct. If they weren't correct, you take them back and then you go ahead and take more leases. So this was my rules. And it was fine. There was one, I'll never forget him, he was classic. He was an elevator operator and he was very religious, he was a lay preacher, Pentecostal or something, I've forgotten. We call them holy rollers or whatever. And I didn't realize, I think he was embarrassed coming in, he couldn't get things straight and I would show him over and over again how he had to initial the errors that were wrong. And had to take them back to the farmer and get them initialled. But I didn't realize that he was a little dubious about his wife, so he brought his wife in one night and that helped. He had to prove I guess, to his wife, as to where he was all night and where he was working. Oh it was interesting. But I finally to whereby he could take a good lease. You see, he was a Commissioner for Oaths and this was why, I had to hire people like that, with a Commission. Or I had to get them a Commissioner for Oaths, which usually cost you \$5. Later on, some time later, after I left the area, I let this man keep on taking in leases and send them in to me or bring them in to me in Regina. One day he showed up, I paid his commissions and he brought in leases, and one lease one time he came in and saw me in the office and he said, Mrs. Cameron, you overpaid me, I want to pay you, you overpaid me.

#286 NM: So he wanted to give the money back.

TC: Yes. Of course, I said, well, that's fine, we'll just forget it. He worked for only a year or more. But in any case, after this fiasco in that office with Lamar, we came back to Calgary, and I had, in commissions alone, I had built up quite a nice little account. I would say about \$20 or 30 thousand ???. [So he tried to just ???]. I said okay, I was so

mad, I said, you either pay me, I'll make a settlement with you. Finally I made a settlement with him for \$10,000, it sat in my account and wasn't doing anything. Later on, the bank wondered what the devil I was doing with \$10,000 in the bank without touching it. So I no sooner got over with this thing with Lamar, of course, by this time he'd taken all sorts of stuff in that wasn't any good. I'd corrected everything that he had. . .and both leases were good and he had sold them to Royalite and I don't know who else. I was working, we had next door to Carl, an office in there where I processed leases and things. I was walking down 8th Ave. and I ran into the lawyer from Western Leaseholds, whom I knew. He stopped to talk, wanted to know what I was doing and I told him, I told him what had happened with Lamar. ??? I'm leaving something out here. But in any case, this was after I'd broken up with working with Lamar, he said, you better come over and talk to the old man this afternoon, which was Eric Harvie. Which I did, and that started a new project.

NM: This is the end of the tape.

Tape 2 Side 2

TC: Well, during this time when I was buying leases with Lamar, I had come up, he needed some land in a hurry for Royalite. I came in with a suitcase full and believe me, they were in good shape. During the time we were working with Ed, I'd been back in Calgary, ??? what we had on hand and I'd been processing a suitcase full of leases that we didn't have sold. Lamar was somewhere up in Banff or somewhere, I don't know. But I was in a restaurant for old Sam Nickle and I met old Sam over there and I was having coffee with him, he wanted to know what I was doing and I told him. Sam had been working down in New York, Montreal, trying to promote deals, which he always one way or another was doing. When he learned that I had these leases, he had a contact with Empire Trust in New York. He was very excited, Thelma, how many leases do you have over there, how many acres do you have. Oh I said, I think maybe, 20,000 or something like this, I'm not quite sure Sam, I'm just processing them now, I haven't added them up. Well, can you sell them, I said, yes, I know they're not sold, yes I can sell them to you. So I made a deal with Sam right on the spot. He went up to see Ted Arnold, Ted Arnold was a lawyer. In the meantime he hadn't been getting on very well with Eric Harvie. No, not at that point he didn't, what he did, Ted Arnold was a partner with Eric Harvie. That's right. And Sam beetled over to his law office and to Ted Arnold and I believe, that group of leases, Sam bought and I think he sold it to Eric Harvie. And that's where he got his original money, with his commissions for that. Then he learned, Eric Harvie was turning them over to Empire Trust, so there was quite a little thing going on here between Eric Harvie and Sam Nickle. So Sam, Thelma, will you go back, how many more can you get, how much more land, can you get 100,000, can you get 200,000 acres. Sam always talked in millions, never dollars and cents. From the O'Roarke days I knew him well and I knew how to work with him. So I said yes, I can go back, I can pick up the same lease men I have. They're finishing up some things down there. As it turned out I may have had 10,000 acres in my suitcase or something, which I turned over and as I say, then later on, I think

Eric Harvie and Sam got, they became enemies at this point somewhere along the line. So Sam wanted 100,000 acres for himself, so that meant another trip down to Saskatchewan, picked up my lease men and went to work again. I'm sorry, I was still with Lamar at that time and it was after that deal that I broke up with Sam because this was where the big money came in. Because I must have leased or brought in, a minimum of half million acres or more I would think. What Sam was doing, he was taking them and selling them to Empire Trust ???.

#053 NM: So you were making a lot of money for him.

TC: Yes, this is right. And then when I came back, that's when I broke up with Lamar because this is how I had accumulated an account of well over \$30-40 thousand. Back in those days you could retire on it. So we made a settlement for \$30,000 and I never want to see you again. I walked down the street, that's when I ran into the lawyer from Eric Harvie's office and as I said, earlier he said, come on over and see the old man, as he called him. I went over and I saw Harvie, I talked with him and immediately, when he saw what was going on, he'd been pretty mad at old Sam too you see. Of course, Harvie was ruthless too, a very ruthless man, but a good man, he was just a good business man. And they have to be ruthless, well, I don't know whether they have to be or not but often they are. For old Sam we had been buying mineral titles, a half interest in the mineral titles, not just leases but a half interest in the mineral titles. This is what interested Eric Harvie. So first thing I knew, I had a contract with Eric Harvie and back in Saskatchewan, for the third time, to pick up mineral titles for him. This went on for a good year. In the meantime Harvie didn't want the leases. We bought a half interest on the mineral title, a lease on the other half in most cases. Or lease it, that's right, we leased the whole thing. Yes, in one agreement you would buy it, then you would lease and we also leased the other half. I think that's the way it worked. I accumulated quite a lot of leases and I had a tough time getting my money out of old Eric Harvie. So I came back here, I had lease rentals which were coming up, after about a year's time and it must have been \$80,000 or more, and I hadn't a clue how I was going to pay for it, until I collected from Harvie. Because Harvie wasn't paying me.

#088 NM: Why is that?

TC: Oh he was like that.

NM: He wouldn't pay?

TC: Oh yes. He would hang in, he always had to bargain and was always knocking you down on your price. I had certain prices that I was selling to him for, in various districts, depending on which district it was in. He kept nagging me on this. As I say, I'd been accumulating these leases, I had a man working with me and I gave him a partnership in the damn thing, which was stupid of me, ??? Mike, a front man. He was just a straight front man. He was off in New York and went and [bought an airplane]???, which was a dumb thing to do for him. Anyway, he was down in New York trying to make a deal to sell these leases you see, he had contacts in New York, and this was important to me, the contacts he might have. One day I was back in the office and I had a meeting with Eric

Harvie, well, not Eric, Eric wasn't there, he had Hod Meech and yes, I think Harvie was there. Hod and I got to be great friends after this. I had a meeting with Eric Harvie and Hod Meech and his staff. They kept trying to beat me down on the price, my price and it was rock bottom and I wanted to be paid for the money, for the documents they already had. They kept putting me off and off. Finally I got mad and I said, look, I'm going back to my office and if I haven't got a cheque there for what you owe me by noon today, you start assigning every one of these documents back to me because I can go right down the street and sell them. And I had old Sam in mind, they knew it too. Hod knew it, Hod was a good head. Of course, in those days, Hod had pressure too from the old man. So honestly, you could have hit me on the head with a meat axe and I wouldn't have felt it. Because we hadn't settled the leases and I didn't know how I was going to pay these lease rentals. So as usual, I just went down 8th Ave. and I can remember buying a new suit. I didn't go back to my office, I had an office here in the Barron Building then, I went down the street and I bought a new suit for something to get my mind, clear my brain of this thing. I always remember that suit, it was just when the long dresses started coming in and it was quite a snappy little, very small black and white check suit with a long skirt. I got back into the office about 1:00 or 2 and the girls in there, where have you been Mrs. Cameron, where have you been. Eric Harvie's office has been calling you since noon today, they've got a cheque there for you. I said, fine, just phone them and tell them to send it over.

#132 NM: That's the way you got your cheque?

TC: I had no more trouble with collecting on prices or anything, from Eric Harvie. Of course, Hod had an awful lot to do with it, Hod was a very, very fair man. And a good business man, he was always fair. In fact, he ran Eric Harvie's business. And he knew how to handle old Eric Harvie, which he did from those days and did an exceptionally good job of it. But I must say, on many occasions after that, whenever I went in to see Eric Harvie or talk to him, believe me, he'd have a lot of respect for me. Because Hod had told him that I wasn't the quiet, little, meek person that I looked. When I said something I meant it. So I got paid. So off I went, back to Saskatchewan, and then I went into Manitoba, I had a job in there, took up some leases in Manitoba. And right down in the area today, where the new oilfield is, Omega, where they're finding a nice little field down in that country. One other thing I can recall, one of the experiences, when I was working down there, I got a call from Calgary from someone I knew. There had been a discovery around Maple Creek. No, not Maple Creek, I'm sorry, it was near Swift Current. And this was in the middle of the winter. I was here in Calgary and I got the call. I phoned my office in Regina. I was on the train here for Moose Jaw, the land titles was in Moose Jaw, that's right, it was in the Moose Jaw area. I had the staff with a Dictaphone and the key people who made searches there overnight. I arrive sometime in the middle of the night because I knew that once this strike got out, as it turned out it wasn't going to amount to very much and I knew there was very little freehold in the country. So we plugged the land titles. Now that means, we had to know where the freehold land was, only by searching these huge big books that they had at that time. Those books were 6" thick and maybe at least,

about 12 x 24 or something, huge, big books, which held the duplicate certificate of title which you had to search. So I had someone reading it off into a Dictaphone and someone typing up the searches. Then we hired snowmobiles, even to get out to some of them. We picked up what freehold was available, which was very, very little. But by plugging the land titles office, I had enough people in there, searching through the books that if anyone else came in we had the books, we were working on the books. There were people there trying to buy searches from my people, from the staff I had working there. One man who I'd had working over in Manitoba, he drove all night from Winnipeg to get over there to work, to pick up leases. You see, I was paying them pretty fair commissions and they needed it for the most part.

NM: This is the end of the first interview with Thelma Cameron.

Tape 3 Side 1

NM: This is Nadine Mackenzie speaking. This is the second interview with Thelma Cameron.

TC: Well, I had made the original agreement with old Sam as we called him, Sam Nickle Sr., when I broke up with Lamar, because I didn't get paid, I had quite a large account which I made a settlement of \$10,000. Of course, that was from when I went back to Saskatchewan on my own taking out mineral titles for Eric Harvie. Now during this period I had the original lease broker as my competition. I was working for Harvie and Lamar continued with the contract of Sam Nickle. I had my men trained my way, and when Lamar went back on his own with another partner, which he had picked up in Calgary, they sent the lease men out to sign up anything they could, any way they could get them, the best way they could. As a result they had quite a number, maybe 20 or more men working in the field. They were going around telling tall tales to the farmer which was completely outrageous. For instance, some of the farmers were signing up documents were led to believe that they were buying a portion of an oil sands project in Alberta. That originated through the fact that the partner of Lamar was promoting a mining project in the tar sands, in Alberta. And it was completely outrageous that the men were lied to . . .

NM: That was a lack of integrity.

TC: of course, I heard all this from my men coming in from the field. Another thing they would do, I found, when one of my men drove into a farmer's yard, the competition would drive right up. So they were signing documents without a Commissioner for Oaths, taking it in to the office and completing it. The documents weren't worth the paper they were written on. I know I instructed my men who were working that if they were to tell any lies to the farmers they were fired. As a matter of fact, I had one or two that thought they could make more money by going over to Lamar's group and they did. That's fine, I don't want you, you can't work for me.

NM: How many persons did you have working for you?

TC: I had I would say, about 10 or 12, on an average. They varied. And of course, I had an office staff as well, processing the documents, before they were turned over and sent in to Calgary. However, this later backfired, and as a result of the questionable validity of the documents, it ended up in court. And an investigation, the farmers went to the Attorney

General in Saskatchewan. There were so many complaints. . .

#048 NM: That was very serious.

TC: Yes, it was a very serious thing. That lasted for at least a year or two. And as a result of this, any landmen going into Saskatchewan had to be licensed, which was a move in the right direction. Although it didn't . . . it put a stop to a lot of taking documents that were not legal. What really happened to the mineral titles that were taken, several years later, about 3 or 4 years after this investigation had taken place, old Sam had to send men back into Saskatchewan to resign them. And I understood that this cost him at least \$1 million. They were paid first of all for having signed them up for Lamar and then they had to go back and resign them. It was a dreadful fiasco but some good things always comes out of it. And cutting down on this sort of activity, which didn't do the industry in Saskatchewan any good. But it didn't stop the companies from going back in. Of course, any land department in any oil company would check anything like this, turn it over to them, they would have to check titles. All this was not without some of its cloak and dagger business as well. I often laugh about one of my competition's men phoning me and wanting to meet me at midnight in a dark restaurant. What he was trying to do, he had copies of all of Lamar's searches and he wanted to trade them to me for some of mine or wanted me to buy them. Of course, I was very stupid ever to go with him, today it couldn't be done. But in those days, there was not too much of a risk. It's just one of the little small instances that went on. Sometime later, I had received some criticism from a trust company back here in Alberta when this first started, when they heard I was on my own. It was from Prudential Trust, and the old boys knew me. The mineral titles that had been taken by Lamar had been taken into the name of Prudential Trust. ??? was the head of Prudential Trust at that time. Word had got back to me that Dawn Rogers ??? was down in Saskatchewan, making a fool out of herself. In fact, I had even phoned him and told him what was happening. As well I had phoned Sam Nickle and told him what was happening, however, these things were being taken. So as it turned out, some years later I heard from Ted Arnold who was a very well known lawyer and he was old Sam's lawyer, who later said, Thelma Cameron was the only one in Saskatchewan who knew what she was doing. My documents were never questioned. Some of them were in pretty poor shape and they looked like a dog's breakfast sometimes, the way the initialling. I think I explained that before, how I wouldn't allow them to bring anything in unless it was properly signed. I would sit up all night checking documents so that the men could go out the next day. Well, I just about wound up my activities in Saskatchewan, with the exception of the leases that I had acquired over and above the mineral titles which I had taken, were sold in New York and I came back to Calgary and I had an officer here. And from there I ventured into drilling one or two wells on my own in areas that were supposed to have great prospects. One did, I did have oil in the well but I found the hole had been completely ruined by lack of knowledge and incompetence on the part of an engineer. That quite frequently happened here. A number of the engineers were not. . . they made a lot of mistakes. For instance, this one well, I'm referring to, I later tried to

salvage the pipe and I found it had been cemented right to the bottom. No wonder they couldn't recover the production the second time, when this cement was pumped into the hole. That's just one of the many things. And then, in those early years, I'm sure you have heard of this from others, we didn't have the technology nor the geology that we have today. Of course, that's something that builds up through development. I would say that the knowledge and the technology that the companies were working on 30 year ago has changed so often, and is still changing, which is one of the interesting things about the oil industry or any other profession. I believe the same thing happens in medicine or law or any of the professions.

#132 NM: Mrs. Cameron, which year did you retire?

TC: I retired in 1956.

NM: You were the first Canadian female landman. Was it difficult for you to be accepted by men, was it a struggle?

TC: No, not at all. In fact, I think the men in the business had a good deal of respect for me. And it wasn't difficult. Naturally I had to work a lot harder, but men as a rule are very fair. In fact, many of them in those days would have been tickled to death if they had been able to do the things that I had already accomplished. But they didn't resent it. I was treated as an equal with men. In one case one of my men called in and he had found some lease rentals that had not been paid and the lease had expired. He wanted to know if he should lease it. I told him yes, to lease it, we'd pay the farmer and when he brought it in I phoned the oil company, I believe it was Royalite, in fact there were several instances where this happened, where actually the offices, while they might have thought they had a fool proof method for lease rentals, it also had to be developed. I turned over several leases to the various people who I know had just neglected to pay their lease rentals. And they respected me for it and it soon got around to many of the oil offices. As a result, I believe I was in Home Oil one day, just visiting with the landmen, and they told me that, they said, Thelma, you are welcome in this office any day, that door is open to you. But a lot of these wild land people in the business now, we won't let them past that front door. I think this is because of being straightforward and honest with people or with the companies. They'll treat you pretty fairly.

NM: What was the reaction of other women towards you?

TC: I didn't have much contact with them frankly. Other than secretaries in offices, who, their role, if they had to process my work there was no problems. As a matter of fact, it's just a matter of having a job to do and getting it done. That in fact, is all I did. I think that men treat women in business the same as they would treat a man.

#182 NM: There are more and more women in the oil business now.

TC: Yes indeed, it's very enlightening to see young women in the oil industry today. They're treated as individuals and they're paid for the type of work they do. There are many advantages that women have today, through training and through the knowledge that has been gained over the years. I think a good deal depends on the individual and what they're prepared to do. You know, the difference today from 30 years ago is that women

are entering into a business world, possibly through necessity, to supplement the family income or to provide for a single woman's supporting the family. The oil industry has opened up many opportunities for young women, the same as it has for men. I don't believe that group psychology for the purpose of gaining recognition for women, any more than for any other minority group, it creates militancy in many cases. If I had a business I didn't want to hire women with all their demands for maternity leave, I think they get something like 4 months with pay and day care. There's no end to their demands. I don't believe that any business can afford this, regardless of what the business is, whether it's in a profession or ??? any kind of work that women are involved in. I think that the young woman who is really serious and is progressing in her work wouldn't have the time for anything other than what she was doing. When one really looks into the matter I would think that many of these women are making far more pay than their husbands. Women who are making the loudest noise are those who have probably not had to work from the bottom up. Women, I find, who are advocating such drastic changes, are for the most part, publicity seekers. All they seem to need is a university degree ???. Young professional women, who have had to use initiative to get ahead are not the ones making a lot of noise. To sum it all up I would say that women are defeating their own purpose, by not being their own individual selves and using ingenuity. There's far more to gain by integrity than by demands or even militancy which this whole thing could eventually develop into. I would prefer any day to work with men. I feel quite adequate to compete with them, and I'm sure many other young women feel the same.

#244 NM: Mrs. Cameron, what do you think of the National Energy Program?

TC: I believe, as I explained earlier in this tape about Tommy Douglas, had set the development of the oil industry in Saskatchewan back by 10-20 years, through government interference. At that time no oil company was prepared to go into Saskatchewan, with his confiscating freehold mineral rights, for non-payment of a very minor mineral tax. That can compare today with nationalizing the oil industry. It took a while for Saskatchewan to reinstate mineral rights to their rightful owners of the freehold land, which Douglas had confiscated. And of course, the oil industry was well underway during Tommy Douglas's period as premier of the province. So he gives himself full credit but that's not really true. What really is not recognized today, nor given credit for, is the determination and the ingenuity of the oil companies that came up from the United States with their technology and their experience in the business at the time. This of course, has been developed through these last 30 years and conditions today, while they have progressed considerably, are completely different but one has to start someplace. It's the same in my own case, I didn't know anything about the land picture until I got into it and through the years I had to progress. I would say this is happening to many people. Another thing I see in the last few years is, regardless of so many companies in western Canada that have been taken over by large eastern corporations, it's no longer Alberta companies. For the most part they're opportunists, even though they may call themselves, they are entrepreneurs, but we have many entrepreneurs right here in Alberta and possibly even today. I have met a number of young men who have worked in the major companies.

These young men have had to go off on their own and they've started small or medium sized oil companies. While it's been very, very difficult for them to survive, they have managed to do so in the conventional business. It's approximately the same thing that was done 30 years ago, except in recent years the companies were built up, such as Home Oil, which is today is now a conglomerate, owned and operated out of eastern Canada. Norcen is another company I can think of, which is a conglomerate of many smaller companies that started in Alberta, in the same way that smaller companies are springing up today in the conventional oil development. I feel that the National Energy Program has been a disaster to this country. Not only just to Alberta or western Canada, it has affected the manufacturing industry in eastern Canada, it's been very, very narrow minded.

NM: This is the end of the tape.

Tape 3 Side 2

TC: Nationalization of the oil industry has never worked in any country in the world.

NM: This is the last question, looking back at your career Mrs. Cameron, what do you think of it?

TC: I think I did a job, at the time, that had to be done. That's it.

NM: This is the end of the interview with Thelma Cameron. Thank you very much for this interview, I've really enjoyed interviewing you.