Mr. F. - I see in the Sunday morning mass meetings on several occasions ministers spoke in support of the strike. Were the religious leaders, in general, sympathetic, or did some of the religious leaders counsel moderation?

Mr. H. - I can't speak totally on that. I think in their hearts I think they thought we had a just reason for going out on strike. They wanted to support their parishioners to let them know they were on their side, but I think there was a tremendous amount of the older people and some of the younger ones that thought it was an ill-timed and ill-advised strike from day one.

Mr. F. - The wage cut was mandated by the U. S. Railway Labor Board. Did the strikers feel that their fight was with the railroad or with the Labor Board? Who did they blame for the wage cut?

Mr. H. - I think the wage cut was inspired by the management, by the railroads. They petitioned the Railway Board for this cut. It was just an avenue they used and had to proceed to get their case before the Railroad Board.

Mr. F. - Some of the articles would put it this way that the railroads would say, "We didn't cut your wages; the U. S. Labor Board cut your wages, so if you are on strike, you are striking against your government." Do you recall that kind of logic?

Mr. H. - No, I don't recall that statement.
Mr. F. - That was rather self-seeking logic but I saw that. A strike committee of 21 members was formed in Aurora on July 2, 1922. Ernest George was elected Secretary. Nobody else is mentioned in any of the reports I have read as members except a Mr. Frank Doyle. Other than Mr. Frank Doyle, who else was on the committee? Do you know who made up the 21-man committee? The only name you ever see when you read the chronology is Ernie George is every day and you see Frank Doyle mentioned once, and nobody else on the committee.

Mr. H. - I can't recall.

Mr. F. - They were representatives of each brotherhood, though?

Mr. H. - There is no doubt that each brotherhood, each shop craft, had a representative on that board.

Mr. F. - In the early days of the strike when it was first getting started, was there much picketing of the shops, and was picket duty required of the strikers?

Mr. H. - Picket duty was four hours two or three days a week, and you were assigned hours. It could be four hours starting at 2:00 o'clock in the morning or starting at midnight or what have you. You were assigned and you had to report to headquarters that you were there or somebody in your group had to report that you were there. There were stews, so to speak, on there to make sure the crew came on at 2:00 o'clock, 12:00 o'clock, or whenever their assigned time was.
Mr. F. - The strikers at the beginning of the strike were required to attend daily meetings at Dillenburg Hall according to the newspaper and answer roll call. Could Dillenburg Hall hold 1700 men? Did they really do it? Did they really show up and answer roll call?

Mr. N. - The way that was handled was that the machinists were not there at the same time the carmen were there, and the tinners were not there at the same time the others were there. That's how they got 1700 people in there. That was very enthusiastically attended for about a month. Then the enthusiasm started wearing off, and we still stayed on picket duty, but going down to the hall and listening to the 'bla-bla-bla' everyday got a little monotonous, and the attendance started to fall off.

Mr. F. - But it did hang on for about a month?

Mr. N. - Oh, yes.

Mr. F. - Weekly mass meetings were held every Sunday usually in the Fox Theater. Did most of the strikers go and were the speakers well-received?

Mr. N. - In the early days I think it was well-attended, but like I say, after a bit the city fathers would be there. The mayor would speak, and some of the other city fathers would speak. At that time we had aldermen, I think in 1922. They would come up and give a pep-talk to keep
nobody went back on the 10th, so I guess it wasn't taken seriously.

Mr. H. - I don't think so, because as I said earlier, they all went out to a man on July 1. Some of them might have come back as early as July 3, but there was a straggler here and there coming back after those dates. But there was no mass return to work on July 10 because of this edict Mr. Holden issued.

Mr. F. - Ernie George, Secretary of the Strike Committee, and Mr. Pockenspugh, Superintendent of the Division, as well as Harry Modaff, Superintendent of Shops, started issuing all of those daily statements on the strike conditions which were usually contradictory. What did the strikers believe? Who did the general public believe? Did they believe what Ernie George said or what the railroad said?

Mr. H. - I really think we could see what was taking place from being out on picket duty and what have you. I believe we believed Ernie George more than the railroad, because the railroad had a reason for prophesying a very fine picture because they wanted us to come back to work.

Mr. F. - A federal injunction against picketing, intimidating workers or destroying property was issued on July 8. In making the request for the injunction, the railroad cited violence in Aurora, and there is nothing in the papers that indicates that there was such violence.
Mr. H. - There was one incident. We spoke earlier about the paint shop being converted into a dormitory for these people to sleep, and they were served dinner. They had the kitchen there and a commissary and so forth. The windows on the west wall faced the Broadway side, and they were all smashed out.

Mr. F. - Was that early in the strike?

Mr. H. - Very early, because they knew that these imports were bedded down in that area, and they threw rocks at the windows. I don't know who did it. I never heard who did it. I wasn't part of it, but at about 2:00 o'clock one morning somebody organized a group to go up there with a lot of hand-held bricks and rocks and threw them into these windows.

Mr. F. - Did this injunction that was issued forbidding picketing and the like upset the strikers here?

Mr. H. - No, I don't think so—not peaceful picketing. We were never permitted not to have peaceful picketing as long as we didn't gather in a group we were able to walk.

Mr. F. - Mrs. Demetri Ignott was arrested on July 10th for tearing down an injunction notice which was posted on the railroad property. She is referred to as "Romanian". Did you know her?

Mr. H. - I knew her son, Ignatius Ignott. They lived over here on Illinois Avenue.
Mr. F. - It said that 1800 Burlington strikers were paid off on July 13 from a paycar at the new station on South Broadway. Were you there that day?

Mr. H. - I had to get my paycheck.

Mr. F. - Was that kind of an interesting scene?

Mr. H. - Yes, I think so. Kind of an emotional one, because this was your last paycheck. You didn’t know when you were going to get another one.

Mr. F. - On July 14, the Federated Shop Crafts of the Northwest District up in St. Paul spoke of a possible separate settlement of the 17 railroads of the northwest group. Burt Jewell said a settlement would only be made on a national basis. Were the Aurora strikers worried about this? Were they expecting only a national settlement?

Mr. H. - That’s what we were all hoping that we would have a national, because if you were still out on strike all the way across the country we had a united effort. If we were going to have separate agreements whereby the weaker railroads would make separate agreements, we would lose our bargaining strength. No, that didn’t meet with very good enthusiasm.

Mr. F. - Is it true that a lot of the striking Burlington railroad shopmen got jobs that summer on farms?

Mr. H. - They got a job wherever they could find a job. Yes, several of them went to work on farms. Crops had to
be brought in, and they got jobs out on these farms. Besides that, some of our people in Aurora went to other destinations and got a job on the railroad. I suppose he fell into the category of a scab whether he went to Ottumwa, Iowa, or St. Cloud, Minnesota. You lost your identity. They didn't know who you were, and you were more or less protected, because if they were like Aurora, you didn't have to be out on the street. Your food and all the things were all taken care of on the property in Aurora, and I assume that other points on the system were the same way.

Mr. F. - So, actually, "Q" workers in Aurora would go on strike and they went out, say, to Galesburg and worked there?

Mr. H. - No, not that close. No, they didn't go to work for the "Q", but for another railroad. We had people who came from the Great Northern after we went back to work we got to talking with these people, and we learned that they were out on strike up in St. Cloud, Minnesota, because they had five children and house payments to meet. They came down to Aurora and lost their identity and sent their paycheck back home, so it worked both ways. I don't know of very many cases where that actually took place in Aurora, but I know it did transpire.

Mr. F. - After the injunction was issued, Assistant U. S. Marshalls were sent into Aurora to enforce the injunction. How were
they received by the strikers and by the public? Do you recall U. S. Marshalls being in Aurora?

Mr. H. - I never rubbed elbows with them, never came in contact with them and was never in a picket line when they came on duty. We had no way to distinguish them from railroad guards or railroad marshalls. These people were on the property and they were stationed wherever there was an entrance to the property. Most of our property was fenced off, but where it was not fenced off we had our picket lines crossing and there were men out there, but we didn't know whether they were marshalls or railroad detectives or who they were.

Mr. F. - On August 1, President Harding proposed a three-part peace plan, and part three called for all the strikers to come back to work with their seniority and other rights unimpaired. On August 2, the American Association of Railway Executives rejected the President's proposal because of the restoration of seniority provision. How did the strikers in Aurora react to this? Do you recall the President's proposal and the railroad's refusing it?

Mr. H. - I don't think there was too much enthusiasm about that. I don't recall the incident.

Mr. F. - By August, the Burlington was building up its work force every day with new men and some returning strikers. When do you think the strikers, if ever, that the Burlington
said there would be no further negotiations with the strikers as the agreement had been signed. In other words, as far as the Burlington is concerned, on the 15th of September they settled with the company union and said that it's over.

Mr. H. - I don't know what union that was but the MDA didn't come into being until some time in early 1923. When I went back to work on the 15th day of December, I was not aware of company union being in existence at that time.

Mr. F. - There was a lot about that, though, you'll see as we go on. A Women's Auxiliary (strikers' auxiliary) was started on September 26 by a Miss Anna Neary who was a representative of the Illinois Federation of Labor. Do you remember any Miss Neary?

Mr. H. - No, I don't. That name doesn't ring a bell.

Mr. F. - Do you remember any women's auxiliary? Did they accomplish anything?

Mr. H. - No, I don't remember any activity that they did. I don't have any recollection of a women's auxiliary.

Mr. F. - On Wednesday, September 27, Ernest George said almost 1200 of the 1780 strikers had found other work. Why did they consider themselves strikers when the Burlington was rapidly replacing them and many had found other work?

Mr. H. - I suppose there was never any settlement with the union in the Burlington Railroad, so the strike was, in words, still in effect.
around the place, discussing the pros and cons of the strike, what was going to happen and so forth, but as they got work, there were fewer and fewer attending these meetings. You heard the same song and dance day in and day out for two or three months and you don't go back anymore.

Mr. F. - On October 19, Vice-President E. P. Bracken arranged a tour of the Aurora shops for forty-four Aurora businessmen to show that the shops were being efficiently run. Did you witness this tour? Did you see them going through?

Mr. H. - No.

Mr. F. - You weren't in the shops then.

Mr. H. - No, I wasn't in the shops, and I was working over in Naperville about that time.

Mr. F. - You'll find this in the chronology. Some of the businessmen spoke glowingly about how valuable the shops were. I have a list of violent acts that took place. I think we will let that go for now, and I'll ask you about that later. On Friday, September 1, 1922, Vice-President Bracken addressed a meeting of the city officials, merchants, manufacturers, and professional men at the Aurora hotel. He gave the railroad side of the strike, and he criticized the strikers' record of violence in Aurora. Chief of Police Michels replied with a vigorous criticism of the
provocative acts of the U. S. Marshalls and the Railroad Special Agents. He gave strong praise to the strikers and to their leader, Ernest George. Was this still pretty much the prevailing attitude of the city officials?

Mr. H. - I think it was. I believe we had the backing and support of the city officials all the way.

Mr. F. - Was this attitude of the city resented by the railroad officials?

Mr. H. - Oh, very much.

Mr. F. - Were they getting more and more resentful?

Mr. H. - Oh, yes.

Mr. F. - During the strike, particularly during July through October, employees that chose to work in the shops or were newly hired were quartered there, fed there, and were provided with cigars and cigarettes, meals, etc. I thought perhaps you had gone back to work, but you never lived in the shops?

Mr. H. - No.

Mr. F. - How many men did live there?

Mr. H. - I would have no way to have an accurate figure, but that's a large building; and if they had cots set around that place, they would have sleeping quarters for a good lot of men.

Mr. F. - There's reference to a dining hall.

Mr. H. - They used the paint shop for a commissary, sleeping quarters, a kitchen, a dining room. These fellows were
Mr. F. - Were most of the men who took jobs from other locations?
Mr. H. - Oh, yes. They were imports.
Mr. F. - They had no homes in Aurora, so when they came in that
gave them a place to live.
Mr. H. - That's right. They came from other points on other
railroads and came to Aurora. They were railroad men
to begin with, but they shifted places of occupation.
Mr. F. - Vice-President Bracken was said to have placed 40-50
railroad detectives in the Aurora area during and after
the strike. Do you believe that was true?
Mr. H. - Yes, I believe so. They had a tremendous amount of
railroad "dicks" as we called them.
Mr. F. - These guys were secret, like spies?
Mr. H. - That's right. They weren't spies; they were railroad
detectives. They were out to protect the railroad
property. They weren't labeled in any way in uniform.
There wasn't any way we could identify them. They looked
like any other "Joe" on the street.
Mr. F. - Did the strike officially end? You told me, "No."
Mr. H. - I don't believe that it ever officially ended.
Mr. F. - Was the strike headquarters ever officially closed? Did
the Strike Committee ever dissolve?
Mr. H. - I think it just petered out, because after December 31,
1922, I don't believe there were many of them left anymore
that hadn't been working for the Northwestern Railroad
or came back to work for the Burlington at the ultimatum of the railroad. They had the separate agreements, and if we felt that Mr. Jewell could make separate agreements we would make our own.

Mr. F. - Did Ernie George ever resign as Secretary of the Strike Committee?

Mr. H. - He might have, I don't remember that. I imagine it just faded into oblivion.

Mr. F. - Did he ever come back to work for the railroad?

Mr. H. - No, he never did.

Mr. F. - Did he stay here in Aurora?

Mr. H. - As far as I know. I lost count of Ernie a few years after the strike. He was in Aurora a few years after the strike, and I assume he found other employment.

Mr. F. - I want to ask you two more sets of questions—one on the violence to see if you knew any of the people and the other is on the aftermath of the strike. On July 10, Mrs. Demitra Ignott was arrested.

Mr. H. - It was Ignats.

Mr. F. - On July 19, four strikers were arrested by U. S. Marshalls for violating the injunction against picketing. Do you recall that?

Mr. H. - I wouldn't remember the exact date, of course, but I might recall the incident. As far as that particular day, I wouldn't remember.