

The Institution of Engineers, Australia

Sydney Division – Monaro Group

Oral History Program

INTERVIEW TAPE LOG

Interviewee: Morrish (Tim) BESLEY Tape Numbers: IEA Monaro MH27-29

Interviewer: Matthew Higgins Number of Tapes: Three (3)

Place of Interview: Leighton's Building, St Leonards, NSW

Date of Interview: 26 July 2001

Restrictions on Use: Not stated

Log prepared using (make and model of machine): Optimus Box Voice Activated Cassette Recorder Model CTR-107

Tape: IEA Monaro: MH27, Side A

Time/ Counter	Subject	Proper Names & Keywords
000-058	Name and birth details. Reasons for developing an interest in engineering; school and university details. Tells why he became interested in the Snowy Scheme and how he applied for the job. Arrival in Sydney and first appointment.	State Hydro Design Office Mr Merrigan, Associate Commissioner of Snowy
059-180	Describes first projects, exciting atmosphere. Threat to shut Scheme down; imperative to get Guthega project going quickly. Menzies eventually great supporter of Scheme. Successful public relations program created great public interest in Snowy. Talks about taking part in an inservice training program with US Bureau of Reclamation which gave young engineers field experience in design and construction.	Alexandria Office, Sydney Manly Guthega project [Robert] Menzies [Sir William] Hudson Public support Public relations T1 and T2 Power Stations US Bureau of Reclamation [Tom] Lang Folsom Los Angeles Denver New Zealand
181-290	Returned to Australia; moved to Cooma then Cabramurra in Major Contracts Group administering and managing contracts. Talks about various contractors; his experience with contract writing and specifications.	Cooma Cabramurra Eucumbene-Tumut Tunnel Tumut Pond Dam Snowstorm Kaiser Walsh "Good housekeeping" T1 Power Station Tooma Dam Thiess
291-394	Discusses various types of dams and their suitability to the site, availability of materials. Consulting engineering geologists and their expertise. Discusses T1 and T2, and Tooma Tumut Tunnel.	Types of dams Diamond drilling Tooma Dam Tumut Pond Dam Danny Moy Roger Rhodes (?) Raymond Hill

		Tumut 3 Tooma-Tumut Tunnel T2 Rock pressures Tooma Tumut Tunnel Don Faulkner (?) Aqueducts
395-560	Became Office Engineer to Associate Commissioner Tom Lang, discusses him. Talks about decision re rockbolting in tunnels and US Bureau's view. Describes visiting the tunnels, drilling at the face etc. Learnt a lot from Lang about the importance of keeping good records. Began working in Development Division; integration of Snowy electricity into NSW and Victoria.	Hydraulic model testing Tom Leach Rock bolting US Bureau [of Reclamation] Industrial deafness Cabramurra Upper Tumut Acquisition of land Snowy Mountains Agreement
	End of Side A, MH27	

Tape: IEA Monaro: MH27, Side B		
Time/ Counter	Subject	Proper Names & Keywords
000-128	Continuing the discussion about integration of Snowy electricity into the States. Relates incident about South Australian Premier taking out an injunction regarding diversion of rivers. Use of computers at this time. Lang great supporter of latest technology and methods. Relates interest in practical application of politics. Treasury's agreement to provide extra funding ahead of budget to pay contractor who was ahead of schedule. Power of public relations.	Tooma Sir Thomas Playford Diversion of rivers Tooma River Tumut River [Robert] Menzies [Mr] Dryden Eucumbene Murray River Storage needed Stream flows Use of computers Sir William Spooner [Tom] Lang [Mr] Merrigan Alexandria Politics Canberra Sir William [Hudson] Public relations program
129-260	Changes made to specifications regarding controls over expenditure. Contractor's role. Describes negotiations with World Bank for loan. Recruitment of engineers in South Africa, UK and Europe. Inspection of overseas hydroelectric projects and technology.	Control over expenditure World Bank Washington Jack Garrett (Deputy Secretary of Treasury) Sir Roland Wilson South Africa French engineering techniques Testing of welds London
261-352	Talks about welding techniques and construction materials used on the Scheme; "Spirit of the Snowy"; long-term intangible benefits and impact on Australia as a whole. Discusses time with Tunnels & Aqueducts Branch and use of rockbolts for tunnel supports.	Thiess Tumut Pond Guthaga Southern Portland Cement Australian Welding Institute Tunnels & Aqueducts Branch Howard Dann Rockbolting
353-500	Talks about time as Assistant to Commissioner, describes type of person Sir William was, a man far ahead of his time. Relates safety measures introduced by Hudson, setting up of rehab centre, Joint Safety Council. Aesthetics Committee set up to ensure buildings in harmony with surroundings. Hudson always referred to him as "Mr Besley". Lady Hudson very involved with the women.	Sir William Hudson [Robert] Menzies "Lion of Cooma" Merrigan [Tom] Lang Excellent safety measures Joint Safety Council Rehabilitation Centre Donald McLurgan (?) Jindabyne "Mr Besley" Pete Bowmeyer (?) Lady Hudson
501-580	Talks about Sir William's attitude to industrial relations, his care and concern for employees in the "blowfly incident" at Geehi and his immediate action made great impact. Never any industrial trouble. Re-vegetation issues, rolls of turf pioneered by Snowy Scheme. Freeze/Thaw cycle.	"Blowfly incident" at Geehi Charlie Oliver [Secretary? AWU] Commissioner Taylor
End Side B, Tape MH27		

Tape: IEA Monaro: MH28, Side A		
Time/ Counter	Subject	Proper Names & Keywords
000-136	Continuation of explanation of freeze/thaw cycle and subsequent stress on materials. Gives comments on possible mistakes made during the Scheme. Talks about Hudson's philosophy. Increase in silicosis premium; change to law. Precautions taken against silicosis; attitudes of contractors.	"Freeze/Thaw" cycle Concrete testing Needle ice erosion Torsional stress Mistakes [Sir William] Hudson Nuclear energy Tom Leach [Minister] Fairbairn Dept of National Development Lennox Hewitt Silicosis Insurance premium
137-274	Life in Cabramurra; fierce snowstorm; survey conducted on stoves in houses; great spirit of co-operation among families; safe environment. Relates incident of "Peeping Tom". Talks about birth of his children. Describes houses and heating systems. Great camaraderie, lasting bond developed among those who worked on Scheme.	Cabramurra Tumut Valley Cooma "Peeping Tom" Nancy [Dr] Dick West
275-415	Hard life for women; various clubs formed. Antipathy from "locals" at first. Fund raising for swimming pool, "Snowy" help in flood mitigation, generated good relationship with community. Anecdote about snake in Cooma nightclub. Prostitution in Cooma. Discusses interaction between Snowy staff and contractors.	Cabramurra Cooma Lindsay Haine(?) – Mayor Flood mitigation Nightclub "Pasha" Cooma nightlife Prostitution Tumut Peter Berents
416-546	Comments on exaggerated stories about accidents on Snowy, safety record second to none. Talks about people who played significant roles in the Scheme. Recalls time working with Merrigan, Lang and Hudson, comments on difference in personalities. Hudson great man, very tough. Talks about Hudson's illness. Proximity of work to home.	Lady Hudson Snowy ABC [Tom] Lang Mr Merrigan Ivor Pinkerton Danny Moy Tom Leach Inspectors' Training Course Doug Price Ken Johnson? Johnny Hunter Montgomery Hudson's handshake Dr Dick West Jim Robinson Hepatitis
End Side A, Tape MH28		

Tape: IEA Monaro: Tape MH28, Side B		
Time/ Counter	Subject	Proper Names & Keywords
000-160	Talks about relationship with Hudson, who regarded himself as Australian. Describes Lady Hudson and her interests, ideal wife for Hudson, softened his image. Describes type of clothing worn by Hudson, always in coat and tie. Talks about working hours. Important role of wives in Snowy Scheme. Compares spirit of camaraderie in Snowy with that of being in the Army. Spirit of Snowy missing in Australia today. Could Snowy be built today? Extremely difficult due to environment impact studies, important but too controlling. Comments on cross city tunnel.	[Sir William] Hudson Lady Hudson Women's Auxiliary Hudson's dinner parties Acting Commissioner Peter Collins Tobruk Rats "Spirit of Snowy" Sustainable development Cross city tunnel Kosciusko State Park
161-310	Talks about controversial aspect of Scheme which didn't go ahead. Relates reasons for leaving the Scheme in 1967 and circumstances surrounding application for new job. Talks about working for Dept of External Territories, and later the Department of Treasury.	Spencers Creek Glacial moraine Smiggin Holes Spagnum moss Hydrology Garrett George Warwick Smith Dept of External Territories Northern Territory Cocos, Norfolk Island Clunies Ross Treasury Department Foreign Investment Division Foreign Investment Review Board Committee on Foreign Takeovers Whitlam government Philip Lynch Doug Anthony Sir William Pettingell? Bede Callahan [John] Howard [Malcolm] Fraser
311-512	"Headhunted" to become head of Monier, gives details of company and subsequent changes. Studying for law degree. Asked to become Chairman of Commonwealth Bank by Paul Keating. Gives reasons for being selected. Also Chairman of CIG. Describes other Boards he served on. Comments on "interesting" time with ministers during privatisation of Commonwealth Bank and when buying the State Bank of Victoria. Interesting times, great days.	Monier Ron Brierley ? Hawkins Paul Keating Chairman of Commonwealth Bank Bernie Fraser Chairman of CIG BOC Pyrethrum operation Amcor Board Stan Wallace? AMP NSW Board Fujitsu Leightons Stewart Wallace John Fahey Joan Kirner
513-560	Discusses his view of Snowy's management philosophy and how his time there equipped him for this phase of his life.	Snowy management Thoroughness Rhodes Hill Safety issues from top down
End Side B, Tape MH28		

Tape: IEA Monaro: Tape MH29, Side A		
Time/ Counter	Subject	Proper Names & Keywords
000-066	Continuation of discussion on his view of Snowy's management philosophy and how his time there equipped him for this phase of his life. Comments on his appreciation for opportunity to work within and outside the public service, the contacts he made, and how to muster legitimate support - relates example.	Hudson's philosophy Lang's approach to science Merrigan's expertise Team of top people Monier Accident frequency rate Leighton John Button Gareth Evans Paul Keating
067-102	Talks about whether his Snowy experience had any great significance in his dealings with politicians and other business people in the last 20-30 years. Makes a summary comment that working the Snowy for 17 years was a tremendous experience he will always look back on with a great deal enthusiasm and joy, and the contacts made there are lifelong. Great place to work and great to have been associated with such a successful Scheme that was done on budget and on time.	
103-134	"Words of wisdom" for young engineers graduating now. Seize opportunities; don't see things as "black and white"; broaden horizons with further study, MBA. Law etc.	
End Side A ,Tape MH29		
END OF INTERVIEW		