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tricians. A lot of us wanted to get in the Electrical Department because we knew the work in the Electrical Department was easier. And they'd go over there perhaps and work for awhile. And the first thing you know--if they kept you over 30 days in those days, they somehow were forced to transfer you (to that department permanently). So before those 30 days were up, they would send you back to the General Yard. Say they didn't need you any more.... management. A lot of the foremen and supervisors, of course, resisted it. But once we had that principle accepted by top management, then the union job was to police it to make sure that they didn't discriminate. But they could find ways to do it, covertly, you know.... Sometimes they would make out an application pretty well tailor-made to the guy they want. He's the only one that had the qualifications.... Laughter. In those days, they never used to put up applications. It was only after the union got strong, the union said, "From now on, if you want men in your department: no more nepotism. You're not going to be able to allow your department heads to make the selection. You're going to put applications up so everybody could apply." That was a union regulation that they forced on immediately to a super summer throughout Cape Breton County!

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But the union became stronger after the war. And people like I mentioned--Cecil Palmer and Jim Ryan and Frank Smith--fought against these discriminatory tactics that were going on. And it wasn't so popular then for people doing those things. Became exposed. And people who would do it would make sure they did it in such a manner so they would not be exposed. (So the times did change.) Of course- it changed. You've got to understand, too, that in a time of economic downfall, you're not going to get a lot of progress. Are you? Everybody is an individual, and everybody's interested in self. That's the nature of human beings. So, if I don't have a job, I'm not worrying whether you've got one or not. Am I? (Well, there are some people who are more self-sacrificing. But not generally.) You know, you can't expect that. That's not the way society works. If the dominant race in society don't have employment, you think they're going to worry about minorities?... (Was there ever before a black president of the steelworkers union?) No. No, I was the first, and the only.

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