

PETROLEUM INDUSTRY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE: Lloyd Hatlelid - CSEG Presidency

INTERVIEWER: David Finch

DATE: March 2000

Video: 11:00.51.20

DF: Today is the 27th day of March, in the year 2000 and we are with Mr. Lloyd Hatlelid at the offices of the Canadian Society of Exploration Geophysicists in Calgary. My name is David Finch. Can you tell us how you first heard about the CSEG?

LH: I guess I heard it from day one. It was formed in 1952 I believe.

Video: 11:01.16.17

DF: '49 it was formed.

LH: '49 okay, '52 was the first Doodlebug Golf Tournament, sponsored by the CSEG. But I was never in Calgary. I remember when we were in Dawson Creek, we belonged to . . . it was just an Oilman's Club there and then when we moved to Edmonton, I belonged to the Edmonton Geophysical Society, which was kind of a sister society, but much smaller than the CSEG. We were still entitled, being members of the Edmonton Society, we were still entitled to go to the Doodlebug, which I did just about every year. Then when I came down to Calgary in 1972, then I took an active interest in the CSEG.

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DF: What did you do in those early years in the CSEG?

LH: I think it was in the same year I came down that I was asked if I would be the Vice-Chairman of our annual convention, which was held in 1974. They always like to form their committees at least a year ahead, in this case about a year and a half or two years ahead, to get everything organized by the convention. That was my first experience with the CSEG.

Video: 11:02.37.20

DF: Tell us about working on the convention, what all did you have to do, any stories to go with that?

LH: I can't think of anything off hand. It involved a lot of meetings. There wasn't any problem getting people to volunteer to give papers, it was screening the papers to see, and to them together to organize them in such a way that, in a certain afternoon you might hear papers on some such thing, that connected. Then of course, one of the big things about the convention was the booths that were rented out to the seismic data gatherers and the data processors. They all would have their booth space. They played a big part in these conventions, because that was one of the interesting things about the conventions, if there

wasn't any paper to go to, you could walk around and visit with the people in the booths and see what's new in the industry.

Video: 11:03.42.10

#027 DF: Where was your convention that year?

LH: It was in the convention centre, I think. I think we had the convention centre then, I can't remember now. That's where it was held later. I think it was open at that time, yes.

Video: 11:03.58.02

DF: What else did you do on the Executive, before you became President?

LH: I was asked to let my name stand as Secretary I guess, that was about a year or two later. So I was Secretary for a year. That's when I became interested in being President, a year or two later then, I let my name stand for the Presidency and was elected.

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DF: The year you were President was 1979, membership was 1,644, quite a healthy number, do you remember why it was so big?

LH: Well, it was getting bigger every year. We were a little disappointed that year, because 1978, the year before, it increased quite dramatically and we had a good increase but it went up to 1,644 from 1500 something, so we were pleased with that, yes.

Video: 11:05.02.17

DF: What was happening in the industry to encourage so many people to join at that time?

LH: That was still in the boom years, in the late 70's and that's why it was growing, more people getting into the business. And of course, with the big boom in data processing, it required many more people to run that part of the industry.

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DF: There was quite a few crews in the winter time, 100 crews according to your report, it dropped off very badly in the summer time and in your report you said that you and the Alberta government were trying to figure out ways to increase summer work, tell us about that?

LH: That was a problem because. . .there was two problems of course, they didn't like us to work where we were damaging the environment and of course, we didn't want to do it either. And then we had the problem, as I mentioned before, working in soft areas, you didn't get the data quality that you did in winter time, when it was frozen. I can remember our committee having meetings with the government but I don't think we ever established anything definite on it. We tried.

Video: 11:06.14.03

DF: Tell us about the 1979 convention with the CSPG, the joint convention.

LH: That just happened. . . that was arranged 2 or 3 years ahead of time, so I had nothing to do with the arranging but I enjoyed being President at that time, because it was a very successful convention, both in terms of the quality of paper and attendance. Having geological as well as geophysical papers, it was just a very interesting convention. And

we had a good turn out. We made quite a bit of money that year I think. And of course, the geologists liked it too, because there aren't as many companies working for geological. . . in the geological industries. . . I mean the. . . what am I thinking of. The processing, we had the data processing and data gathering companies and there weren't such things in the geological industries, so we were sharing expenses and profits with them. So I think it was a good deal for us, in terms of quality of papers and quantity of everything, so it worked to mutual advantage.

Video #11:07.31:23

#062 DF: How did you increase our relationship with the university?

LH: That was a continuing thing. We had committees that always had a close liaison with the universities. I remember that year in particular, we were helping with the funding of a Chair in Geophysics at the university and looking back, that was one of the highlights of the year for me, was having that to work with. The Chairman of the committee was Wes Rabey, he was very active in the industry and a very successful chairman on that particular committee. I remember having the university President at one of our monthly luncheon meetings and presenting him a cheque for \$25,000 as most of our profit from that convention that we had.

Video: 11:08.35.21

DF: Was that enough money to create a Chair?

LH: Well, no. That took quite a few hundred thousand dollars. But there again, we were successful in getting our own membership to donate and our contractors to donate. The contractors were very good towards donating to this. I don't know the final amount they collected but it was enough to establish a Chair there and put a person in that Chair for so many years, I don't know how long. I don't even know if they still have that. With the fall off in geophysics the last few years, I don't know.

Video: 11:09.16.13

DF: What does a Chair in Geophysics do at a university?

LH: He's responsible for the geophysical program in the university, that's about all I can tell you.

Video: 11:09.26.06

DF: The CSEG has always been perceived as sort of the poorer cousin to the geological societies and so on, what did you think about that?

LH: I don't know. I never felt that we were a poor cousin, maybe we were. I think we had a very active Society. I don't know if I mentioned this but we had two prime objectives, one objective, first, was to promote the science of geophysics and the second was to promote fellowship among the members of the Society and I think we accomplished those objectives, in a very good way, you know through the year.

Video: 11:10.14.14

DF: Give me some examples of how you did that?

LH: Our monthly meeting was the first thing. Those were very well attended and people used to like to come, just to chat with the others over a drink outside first and then. . this was a luncheon meeting. We'd have lunch first and then we'd have a paper presented by, either a member or maybe a guest that was brought in for this purpose. The of course, also for fellowship, we had the Doodlebug Golf Tournament, which was very well attended. They had waiting lists of I don't know how many. I made the comment, at our annual meeting, that now that I was going off the Board of the CSEG, maybe the Doodlebug Committee would invite me to go on their committee. I said something about them, they seemed to be having such a good time. Well, I found myself on that committee the next year but I could only stay on one year, because then we transferred to Indonesia for four years.

Video: 11:11.19.15

#098 DF: Tell us about. . any stories to go with the Doodlebug?

LH: I guess I could tell a lot of stories but. . .

Video: 11:11.29.14

DF: Just one or two, come on, give us something good.

LH: No, I can't think of anything. They were just a terrible lot of fun though. Of course, you always like to win, but if you didn't win you felt you were having a good time anyhow. We used to be set up in groups of 8 for the tournament. First of all, we'd go out and have a practice round the first day, for those we'd play with our wives, with another couple. This was always a lot of fun. The next day, we'd play the first round of our match and take three days to finish it off, to pick your winners. And the winner would get a big ceramic trophy that was the envy of everyone, over the years I did win two of them.

Video: 11:12.19.08

DF: Good for you.

LH: Well, I just had to be the best of the 8 players for that particular tournament.

Video: 11:12.28.22

DF: How did the weather hold up for you?

LH: Some years it was good, other years we played in snow. But generally it was good. We played the first week after Labour Day, in fact, the week following Labour Day, we'd start on Tuesday.

Video: 11:12.48.29

DF: Quite a big event then. What can you tell us about the formation of the Manitoba Geophysical Committee?

LH: I was invited out to that, so I took maybe two others from our committee with us and went out there and sat with them. They were anxious to have us there, they were anxious to get started with the committee there. Most of them were members of the CSEG but

they could never attend the meetings here. So that was very successful. I never did go back but we'd hear from them. They kept it up for, at least, to my recollection, for the next few years.

Video: 11:13.33.00

DF: Any stories that spring to mind, about the CSEG and how it's contributed to the industry?

LH: I think I've mentioned that I think it has contributed. I mentioned the liaison with all the universities and working with them on, well even to the point of what they were teaching the students in various years. It was important that they come out of university knowing something about data processing and different things. I think our relationship with the universities was very good.

Video #11:14.12:20

#126 DF: The booms and busts really affect your part of the industry? What do you think of what a university can do, it's such a lead time?

LH: That was the bad part of it, when we established that Chair or we helped to get that Chair established and then a few years later, in 1982, I think, was the biggest drop, when oil prices fell and maybe the National Energy Policy had something to do with the drop off too. That was pretty hard on the industry and they quit hiring people and that made it tough, yes.

Video: 11:14.50.16

DF: Any humorous stories that you can tell from your time on the Executive?

LH: No. Maybe I'm not much of a raconteur, because I really can't think of. . .all I remember about the group I was with, they were just a wonderful bunch.

Video: 11:15.09.20

DF: Who were some of those people?

LH: Don Simpson was the Vice-President and as such, he was responsible for getting all the speakers for our monthly meetings. He did a tremendous job. Of course, as I say, it wasn't always a hard job getting speakers, it was just maybe culling and making sure you had papers that would be of interest to the group in general. Don Gale was on the committee, he was the Business Manager. He was President of Gale Resources, he had worked for Kenting for years and then he started up his own geophysical company. Bruce Fenwick, I haven't seen him for a long time but he was in the business then and Larry Fichtner, he was another one on my committee. I ran into him on the street here last week, I hadn't seen him for along time. So I had a good talk with him right on the sidewalk. They were all really professional people that just did their job well and just made it pleasurable to work with them. So I've got no bad experiences or comical experiences I can think of.

Video: 11:16.43.16

DF: Anything you'd like to say to the CSEG on its 50th Anniversary?

LH: Yes. I sure do wish them all the best. I should say, maybe you've been told this, CSEG,

besides being a Society in its own right, a registered society, we're also considered a branch of the SEG. The SEG is headquartered in Houston, or maybe it's in Oklahoma, I can't remember, but we've always been considered a branch of that society and as such, we've always had members of our society on the Board there. I remember being on the Board there for about two years and we'd attend certain meetings. I don't think they even listened to us, but we were there anyhow. Next year the SEG is going to hold it's 2000 year convention in Calgary. This will require a lot of work on the part of the CSEG here, they'll have to be all the organizers, whereas the SEG will be taking all the money. But it will be great for the Society, we'll have I don't know how many hundreds or thousands of people from the States coming up. I was just talking to Heather now and she said, she's going to try to get a past President's lunch worked in there someplace. Maybe I'll get in on that somehow.

Video: 11:18.25.18

#168 DF: That's this August, isn't it?

LH: This August yes. That should be good. We've had SEG conventions here in the past. They had to quit having them here because there wasn't enough room, but now with this new convention centre, I guess they've decided there's enough room for it.

Video: 11:18.44.22

DF: Any other people that have been associated with the CSEG that you'd like to talk about?

LH: There's people in my own company, like Sheldon Gibson, I always thought of him as my mentor during my year's with the company. I don't think he was ever on the CSEG Committee but he was always in the background doing things.

Video: 11:19.18.15

DF: How did he help you along in your career?

LH: He was my immediate boss for quite awhile. And then as I say, I always considered him my mentor.

Video: 11:19.29.04

DF: Did you take formal courses in geophysics at any point?

LH: I don't recall I did. No, I never did, but you learn.

Video: 11:19.41.20

DF: Was there any in house training, did Imperial have. . . ?

LH: Imperial had a lot in house training, maybe not so much in geophysics, except we'd have meetings out at our lab at various times. But Imperial did have a lot of training programs, supervisory and management type courses, and one thing and another.

Video: 11:20.03.13

DF: Anything you can think of the CSEG can do in the future?

LH: No, I don't think so, I can't think of anything they should be doing that they aren't doing now, I guess is what I'm saying. We still have . . . they bring us out to a past President's dinner once a year, usually in November, it seems like often I'm away for it, but we keep

in touch with what they are doing. They seem to be going along just at the same. . maybe even better, but the same basic philosophy.

Video: 11:20.41.03

DF: Good. Anything else you'd like to share with us about your time on the CSEG Executive?

LH: No, I can't think of anything. I mentioned it was just one of the highlights of my life, of my career, I always think. I just really enjoyed it.

Video: 11:21.02.17

DF: So on behalf of the Canadian Society of Exploration Geophysicists and the Petroleum Industry Oral History Project, I would like to thank you so very much for taking this time to meet with us today and tell us your recollections, thank you very much.

LH: Well, thank you very much, I found this a real pleasure.

DF: We'll end the interview at this time.

LH: Okay good.