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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

RECORD OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

Tuesday, September 18, 1979

10:10 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Mr. Richard Blakeman
Former Shift Foreman, Mechanical Maintenance
Metropolitan Edison Co.
Gibson B.C. Canada
604-886-2466

I called Dick Blakeman because he was quoted in an April 16, 1979 article in the Philadelphia Inquirer newspaper (attached). Mary Bishop was the reporter for the Inquirer who had called Dick in preparing the story. Dick believes that generally he was fairly and accurately quoted by the Inquirer.

Dick worked at the TMI site for eight months, December 14, 1977 to August 14, 1978. He had never worked at a nuclear facility before. His job was as Shift Foreman Mechanical Maintenance and he though he was responsible for both Units 1 and 2, he spent only 10-20% of his time on Unit 2 because Unit 2 was not in a maintenance mode at that time.

When TMI-1 was shutdown for refueling, he spent all his time there (46 days). Nobody really wanted to work on Unit 2 because it was a mess - equipment was not uniform throughout the unit (e.g. many different brands of similar pumps) and nothing ever worked right. Unit 2 was always talked about as a joke. General attitude was that Unit 2 was a white elephant.

Overtime work was excessive. He personally knew of two employees who worked 32 hours straight. McGarry, a higher level manager, often ordered Blakeman to work overtime. McGarry was not a good manager, came to work drunk, and no foreman had a good word for him. Most people wanted overtime money, even if it meant working 24 hours. When Dick quit, he laid everything on the line in his exit interview with Personnel Dept.

Dan Shovlin, Superintendent of Maintenance, hired Dick. When Dick left, Met Ed offered him to come back within 90 days as if never left.

The only specific shoddy work Dick recalled was the snubbers testing and lack of machine maintenance.

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He feels the snubbers were tested with a piece of junk. Sam _____, a young engineer from Reading, ~~poked~~ nearly all the snubbers "with a magic pencil." Dick recalled that the attitude was that the snubber testirg was on the critical path and that things had to get moving.

Regarding machine maintenance, failure to perform lube and oil changes were the most flagrant violations. Minor work orders sat around for years.

The most knowledgeable person about the plant is Al (unknown), a Mechanical Maintenance Foreman with an engineering degree. Reportedly he disappeared after the accident. Norm Reismiller and Dick Snow should know how to contact Al _____. Also, Gene Light an electrician, knew alot about the plant.

Dick never spoke to an NRC inspector and didn't know of anyone who did. People would be reluctant to talk to NRC even if they had a complaint because of fear of losing job.

One concern Dick had was the ease of getting a workers exposure limit increased. If a worker was nearing his quarterly limit and was needed to perform work that would increase his dose, it was easy to get a HP to "up the quota." Employees went along because they wanted the money.

Regarding problems with Lonergan valves, the decision to replace came down after weeks of testing. Dick recalled an older man from Lonergan, possibly Jerry Schmidt (Chief Engineer for Lonergan) tried numerous tests but nothing worked out.

No one ever told Dick that TMI-2 had to be on line by a certain date. There was a general attitude that the quicker we get it on line, the quicker we earn some return on the investment.

Even though he lives in B.C., Dick is still a U.S. citizen.

An awful lot of Furmanite was used in Unit 1. One valve he remembers had 5-10 Furmanite plugs. The attitude was if Furmanite holds, don't replace the valve.

Dick wrote two letters to Shovlin explaining why he left after 8 months.

Dick can't recall any instance of someone being ordered to fake a test.

Employees were generally a bunch of dedicated people. However, they never went home with a sense of accomplishment, so eventually they said the hell with workmanship.

Larry Vandenberg