INTERVIEWER: Dianne Zieman

DATE: March 24, 1972

TIME: 1 hr. 40 min.

INTERVIEW:

1. Mr. William James Barr
2. Wife's maiden name was Jelly.
3. 29 Wellington St., New Liskeard
4. 647-5151
5. Life insurance representative - Canada Life Assurance Company - the oldest Canadian insurance company - started in 1847; has been in business for one hundred twenty five years.
6. Born in Maynoott, North Hastings - about 25 miles from Bancroft, Ont.
7. Both his mother and father were born and raised in that area. His father's people were Scottish and they came out to Canada when he was just a small boy. Irish and German ancestry on mother's side.
8. Married.
9. Will be sixty-five in a month's time. Was Mayor of New Liskeard from 1952 to 1960.
10. Educational facilities: Seems to be a controversial subject. He is not exactly sold on the idea of large area schools - sees disadvantages to that system as well as advantages. Example, at New Liskeard Secondary School, there are some children who have to travel forty miles or better - pretty hard on the children. This aspect is not good. The advantage for the schools is that they have overall educational programs - greater facilities than that of the small school. Actually, outside of the transportation angle and the distances involved, the facilities are pretty good.

Economic Situation: Pretty fair - we have a pretty stable payroll here and quite a variety of types of employment for people, which is very good because that way, we are not depending upon one individual payroll or industry to keep the economy level. New Liskeard is the centre of the area of about a radius of 40 to 50 miles away. Good economy - rather fortunate in this town to have such facilities for a small community - eg. lake

10. continued..... and beach - good sporting facilities.

Job opportunities: The wage scale has probably improved in the last few years. Two main factors that did it - the educational end of it is one. The Northern Telephone's affiliation with Bell has improved the economy. Opportunities with the telephone company for employment - some types of special training possibly as far as communications setups are concerned. Electronic equipment which is pretty up-to-date. The Hydro have their own training - quite limited as far as numbers are concerned, but it does have opportunities and openings for young people. Population would not allow for as large a number. In the New Liskeard Secondary School, their commercial and trade classes provide training - these students go out as auto mechanics or whatever. The more experience they get, the better they are. Need to be qualified to take these jobs. The variety isn't too great; however, Eplett's has a fair number of employees; Campsall's provide work in the plumbing and heating trades in the area.

City facilities: Operation of the community as a whole is on a good standard with any other municipality. Things are under pretty good management here.

Private enterprise: Taylor's started the George Taylor Hardware Store - was a third generation business when it was sold. The personal contact was lost - greater percentage of senior employees have gone to other occupations. That store used to serve northeastern Ontario and northwestern Quebec. Wabi and Eplett's haven't changed with their takeover. At Eplett's, products are manufactured here and taken to other municipalities by trucks. Means a lot to the area - supplied by dairy farmers - operates a creamery.

10. continued .....The town council is limited in the amount of encouragement they can give the private enterprises, because of legislation. At one time, a company might be given certain tax concessions for operating an industry in an area, but this is not allowed today. However, there are other ways to encourage people to come in - by extending to them advice to location, types of facilities that are here. Fortunate in New Liskeard to have a good supply from drilled wells which gives us #1 water - good, or rather adequate sewage disposal system. Good transportation facilities with rail, highways and air. Air travel is a bit limited, but not too bad really. Travel facilities by water.

Recreation facilities: All types of outdoor sports such as boating, fishing, swimming and hunting. Then, we have the beach program; ball diamond facilities. Doesn't know whether or not the old racetrack is still there. Three-quarter mile long sandy beach, with supervised swimming areas and swimming instructors, lifeguards. The town council is presently working on a trailor park between the curling rink and the north side of the river at the point - hope to have that established by summer '72. Have to put in water, hydro, sewage facilities for use in spring, summer and fall. The ballpark has lights for evening ball games. Tennis court curling; hockey, skating, etc. The schools are really going into athletics.

Entertainment: Outside of the few organized dances (eg. Kiwanans Club has a New Year's Dance and one for Easter on April 15th), entertainment other than shows is probably a bit limited - usually is something organized by a local club, such as the large Music Festival which runs 4 days.

Sports: Good skiing setup here, curling and skating. Hard to estimate what might take in this area. Something that you do lack in a small community is a variety of good entertainment - just too expensive to get in. If you have a big enough population, you can expect more support. Just a certain percentage of any population will support a specific event;

10. continued ... unless you have a large population, not enough potential from which to draw.
New arena will add potential to entertainment facilities in the area.

11. Doesn't know whether or not anything should be changed - have to watch very closely the conservation aspect of our waterways and guard against pollution and this type of thing. This can not be overemphasized - the conservation of our natural resources; must avoid pollution as much as it is possible. We are too free to consider these things as they are and to not pay attention to what must be done to preserve them.
Cannot see much growth, unless we can get industries to come in; although industries must be something that the local people will promote by making use of what we have. For example, pretty well anything that was started here was started by local people - Eplett's, Rexwood, Northern Ontario Dynamics (these people are very serious about eventually manufacturing furniture from local products. The new factory will be for that purpose.) Natural resources at our doorstep - then process here to our advantage. Previously, everything has been shipped out. There is potential in the agricultural end of things - example of beef cattle and other forms of agriculture.

12. Lot of changes but kind of a natural growth. Northern Telephone expansion, increased Hydro for local people, as well as farmers. New fuels for heating have made tremendous changes in living conditions for people. The average farmer will now burn oil, whereas once they cut their own wood and burned it. New facilities; for farmers, about 15 years ago, indoor plumbing was unheard of practically. Pressure systems, etc. He can remember when the highways were not opened in the winter. His first trip to Toronto was in 1937 in the wintertime - driving was all right - few more turns in the road then. Used to figure on four hours driving time to North Bay and two and a half to Kirkland Lake. He also remembers going to hockey games in Kirk-

12. continued ..... land Lake by train and getting on at 3 or 4:00 in the morning. Sometimes, the trains had the old wooden seats in them too.
13. Nothing outside of keeping the area a good place to live with a level economy. People with low incomes can afford to live in this area. Industry and increased employment would give the town more things.
14. Local government and residents can pretty well bring about the changes; basically, smaller types of business would have to develop locally.

THE PAST:

His wife's people came in by boat at the turn of the centrury. His family came in by train in 1915. His first impression - doesn't remember that but does remember having to walk two miles to school in the country - graded roads with no gravel. "Heavens Yes!" to a question about the mud in the spring - a lot of it. Can remember that right in town, if there was a real shower, would have to put chains on the tires of the trucks and cars before the streets were gravelled. The streets were straightened; main streets were gravelled, possibly in 1915; but the side streets were not gravelled until later on. Most of the transportation was horse and buggy; not that many automobiles until sometime in the 1920's and onward. With the coming of the cars, meant increased facilities. However, not until about the 1940's that they thought about plowing out the side streets as the use of cars in winter was quite limited.

He lived on the farm for the first summer in the north; then moved into New Liskeard in the fall of 1915. Lived on Rebecca Street - the school was where the present public school is now. No water, no electricity - coal oil lamps and they carried the water from about a block away. Water from an out-side tap - kept by the town, and left running all the time so that it would not freeze.

Education:
Mr. Hogarth was the Principal in the public school at that time. Some of the teachers were Miss Quants, who is married and presently living at the Mat; Mrs. Johnson; Miss Foster; Miss Greenwood; Miss Lindhorn;at the high school, at that time was a Miss Dobie. The high school was where the Cenotaph now is located. A small percentage of students went to high school - an even smaller percentage to university.

Medical facilities: Dr. Fisher, Dr. Fields, Dr. MacNaughton and too, two Dr. McCulloughs - brothers. Usually, the doctors had an office in their house. Hospital was the old Lady Minto, now an apartment building. The present hospital was opened in 1952.

The town has always had a pretty good community spirit, for example, they raised over $100,000 to build the hospital. For the nurses residence, they raised $75,000 for that. In 1928, the present arena was built by local funds. They sold shares; some people donated land, others things for the arena. The park on the beach front - done through public funds - maintenance and development.

Employment: His first job was driving a horse, delivering groceries for Charlie Fritch. Located on the corner where Reward Shoe store is now. Earned $7 a week; his working hours would be around 7:30 in the morning and home at 6:30 or 7:00 at night. On Saturday, they worked until 12:00 at night. By 1942 when he left the grocery business, he was working 65 hours a week. Worked for Lafond for several years, then the Greenwoods store for 14½ years; and has now been with Canada Life for 30 years.

People worked for stores; Wabi; Hill Clark and Francis were established, and they manufactured doors and windows for a wood manufacturer in the south. Would have had 300 employees in the summer and in the winter, about 75 - located where IGA is now.

Hill, Clark and Francis were a big factor in the development of the North id a lot of the contract work in places all over the north - same as Taylor Hardware. Northern Canada Power until the Hydro took over in the 40's was another employer. Lumbering close to the town - farming, etc. Actually, there used to be a mill near where Rexwood now is; and also a match factory. The mill was foreign-owned, by a British firm. Apparently the exchange of currencies affected the operating expenses. There was mining in Cobalt.

Farming has changed a lot - they used to operate on an 80-acre farm; now they need 400-600 acres. No more small individual family farms.

Depression: certain people were on welfare, although the situation was really not too bad. He never lost any work through the depression years but one didn't look for another job if you already had one! The biggest impression that he got was that working in the grocery store, there were men going north looking for work. People with university degrees - just could not get work. A pharmicist that he knew could get no work in his field - finally found a job in a mine.

The towns used to give people work - would have people go out and cut wood on town-owned land; they would get the wood for just cutting it. Heating was by wood or coal, no electricity then for heating, or oil, or gas. Welfare was operated differently then - people were given vouchers for food and clothing and would go the store with the vouchers - only allowed so much a month. The vouchers were for necessities - no allowance for things like cigarettes or tobacco - sometimes the stores would let them take tobacco in place of something else. Some settlers were brought up from around new Toronto and put on the Henwood Township -ten or twelve families settled there on farms.

These settlers were given food and clothing vouchers until they got established. Probably no one left on the farms out there now - moved into town or else out of this part of the country. The governments were re-locating people then, during the depression, placing them in the north, and hopefully, in better living conditions. Depression was not felt as much up here as in the cities in the south.

World War 11: Many people from this area in that age category went to war - majority of them went in the services. Voluntary enlistment - here the Depression was just starting to break out and in a lot of cases, the young men were glad to have something to do. There were fund-raising drives for Canada Saving bonds - this town's portion was one of the highest in the country for bond purchases. Rationing through-out the whole country - people carried ration cards - only got so much sugar, etc. The majority of cases, the rations were quite sufficient if one was reasonably careful. Even certain types of clothing were hard to get; but mostly, sugar and butter. Remembers that good quality canned salmon was very hard to get. No need for anyone to go hungry though.

Fire of 1922: Just west of the railroad track, some houses and fields were burned. If the wind hadn't changed, the town would have been wiped out. In Haileybury, from the block this side of the Tri-town hotel, south - pretty well all burned. A lot of Haileybury residents lost everything. The second morning after the fire, there was six inches of snow on the ground. Even out to Belle Vallee, farms were burned out. Trainloads of relief supplies were brought up, as well as building supplies, to help the people. It was fifty years ago this October - apparently the Province of Onatrio will put up a plaque of some type in Haileybury.

Mr. Barr has a book that was published in 1910 - Agricultural Temiskaming; the book tells the advantages of the farm land in this area and encourages more young men to come north to settle the land.

FOLLOW-UP:

Not too many of the older people left; however, there is a Mrs. Menary at the Manor - she is the sister of Mrs. Anna Gibson.

Mr. Ally Bateson - both he and his wife had been here in the early days, and have good memories.

There's a plaque in the Library to commemorate Dr. MacNaughton - perhaps it will give some information.

Mr. Sweetnam - former Public School Principal - came here in 1930's or early 1940's.

Dr. White, the dentist, must be between 40 and 50 years of age. Was away for a while but then came back - may have some impressions that others would not. Mr. Nixon is his father-in-law.

The Barrs have one daughter who married in 1962 and moved to California; they are out of touch with most of the younger people. However, suggests contacting Mr. Ron Gibbons at 235 Grant St., 647-5373, who works at the Telephone Company and is working on a Kiwanas Project - the K Canada Club for young people.

Also, Joanne Donohue Dennison - living at Moore's Cove, Haileybury - teaches at Haileybury Public.

C. Barlow, on Paget St. - an old-time family (his daughter Nancy taught at Haileybury Public School for a few years) Phone no. 647-5486.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Used to be streetcars between New Liskeard and Cobalt - only way to travel. Good girl hunting over in Haileybury and Cobalt - actually, would go over mostly for sports and to visit people. Used to be a lot of public skating; there were no organized sports then, so people would get a group together, and off they'd go. Dances in the summer. Usually met girls through mutual friends who would introduce you - pretty much the same as now.

HIGHLIGHTS - continued

Remembers the farmers bringing in their covered carts and leaving them at the livery stables. The farmers would then take the train up to Kirkland Lake to the market - return to New Liskeard on Saturday afternoon, then buy their groceries in town and head home. In winter, they might come across the frozen lake with their team of horses and covered in wagons - would also go to the markets in Cobalt.

Early steamer travel - the steamers would take boatloads of people down to the Old Mission for a Sunday School picnic or whatever, then bring the people back. Quite a bit of freighting by steamer and scow - both sides of the river bank (Wabi) would have loading facilites - would put a plank out to the scows. A lot of transportation up the Blanche and White Rivers by boat - a lot of the early settlers came in by boat.

Once the lake froze, the people were isolated outside of walking, or using a team of horses until the railroad came through in 1903-04.