

Interview with Winston Borden
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Interviewed by Calvin Gower

This is an interview conducted by Calvin Gower for the Central Minnesota Historical Center on August 7, 1973. Today I am interviewing Winston Borden, State Senator from District 13, elected in 1970 and serving in the Senate at the present time.

Gower: Okay, Winston, would you tell us when you were born, where you were born, something about your family background and your education.

Borden: I was born December 1, 1943 in Brainerd, Minnesota. I grew up on a farm in the northern part of Crow Wing County, which is currently part of my senate district. My family has been in this area since about 1880.

I attended Brainerd Public Schools and I graduated from Washington High School in 1961. I received a B.A. degree with majors in social science and public address from St. Cloud State College in 1965. I received a master's degree in government administration and juris doctorate from the University of Minnesota Law School in 1968.

Gower: What was your family background?

Borden: My father had an elementary school education and has farmed all of his life in the district. My mother is a high school graduate. I have two brothers, one of whom runs a family

farm, another of whom is engaged in the practice of law with me, and a sister who is a housewife.

Gower: Was your father ever involved in politics at all?

Borden: Politics was always a subject of discussion around the family dinner table. It frequently developed into some rather strenuous arguments on issues. But my family had never been engaged in politics in any way in terms of party activity. My father and brother have served in various local offices such as the town board. But not beyond that. I guess my family thought that politics was something to be discussed, but not necessarily to be actively engaged in the partisan sense. Frankly they would have preferred that I had chosen some other kind of endeavor.

Gower: Would you say you started in politics when you were in college in your undergraduate years?

Borden: The first formal participation that I had in politics was in 1960. I believe that Senator Humphrey was at that time running in the presidential primary. And I wrote a letter to the editor in support of him. In the 1960 presidential campaign after the Democratic National Convention, I supported Senator Kennedy and remember giving a speech in his behalf in the high school student assembly. From that point on, I guess, I was more or less actively and continually involved in partisan politics. I was a member of the Young Democrats at St. Cloud State College, president of that organization and president of the State Young DFL.

In 1964 I served an internship with the Minnesota Association of Political Science Professors and worked at the Minnesota DFL office during that summer. In the fall of 1964, I did a number of speeches in behalf of presidential candidates at various high schools, VFWs, and

organizations such as that. In 1966, I was actively involved in an endorsement battle between Governor Rolvaag and Lieutenant Governor Keith.

The Lieutenant Governor subsequently receiving the endorsement of the Minnesota DFL for Governor. Going from there to lose in the primary election. I was a staff member on his primary campaign. In 1968, I was a delegate at large to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago with all of the turmoil that went with that. In 1970, I was a candidate for state senate.

Gower: Did you emphasize political science more in your undergraduate years than other social sciences?

Borden: That would be correct. I tried to develop the broadest possible, I guess, study of social science. But it definitely had a political science emphasis.

Gower: Now then, when would you say that you decided for the senate?

Borden: I can't say that it was a precise time when that the decision was made. But we certainly talked about it was early as 1964 and 1966. When I was working for Lieutenant Governor Keith he suggested that I run for state senate. In 1970 after completing my education I did so.

Gower: This is sort of refreshing because we have asked this question of many of the other legislators or ex-legislators. So many of them have stated and, as far as I know with validity, that they really hadn't ever thought of going into politics at all until right about a month or so before and then finally they went in there. You're stating that you have been interested in politics for a long time and thinking about running. Were you thinking about running specifically for the senate as early as 1964?

Borden: That's correct. We had a unique situation in the district at that time which was made up of Crow Wing and Morrison Counties. The state senator Gordon Rosenmeier was elected in 1940. He ran again in 1958 and from 1940 to 1970, except for that time, never had any opposition on the election ballot. And I suppose that there were a number of reasons for that. Foremost certainly would have been his confidence and the fact that most people assume he was a very difficult candidate to defeat. However, I suppose if the political process means much at all, it means having a choice on the election ballot and hopefully a choice not only between two men but between philosophies. That choice simply had not been available to the voters of Crow Wing and Morrison County. A number of us have talked, at different periods of time, about the necessity for a candidate. Generally there was no one else available. And I decided to run and I think decided fairly conclusively in my own mind as far back as 1966 that I would run for public office. I would begin by running for state senate in that district. I suppose the campaign was really organized from that point on and very clearly was highly organized from January of 1970 right through Election Day.

Gower: I just want to clarify something. Mr. Rosenmeier was in the senate from 1940 to 1970, correct? So he was re-elected there in just a two year terms or four year terms in the beginning there. Was he re-elected every four years?

He had no opposition, except maybe two times in that whole period. Is that your understanding?

Yeah, okay. Now what do you think were the things that you felt would make you have a chance against this longtime incumbent?

Borden: I suppose quite frankly if anyone thought I had a chance of defeating Gordon Rosenmeier, I would probably be the only one that so believed in the beginning of the campaign.

Obviously his legislative record in terms of understanding the issues, in terms of competence on the senate floor was almost unequaled. Yet at the same time I looked at my background. I thought it would have something to offer that would appeal to the populace, sentiment of voters in central Minnesota.

In my campaign we emphasized very heavily my farm background and my understanding of the consequences of issues facing the agricultural community. In addition, Mr. Rosenmeier was an excellent legislator, but probably left something to be desired in terms of his contact with the constituency. People knew who he was, but they never saw him. And for the most part, he had almost no contact with him. So our campaign was highly personalized and tried to bring out the point that a state senator had a responsibility not only to speak on issues in the state capital, but to discuss those issues with the people he sought to represent, to reflect their views, and be responsive to their needs.

I guess we thought we could organize a political campaign in a very detailed and intense manner and we proceeded to do so. It was that kind of response from the agricultural community and from the labor community as well. An intensive campaign that made a victory possible.

Gower: I'd just like to pursue this on several other accounts, from several other angles. First, would you characterize Mr. Rosenmeier as one of the strongest members of the state senate at least in his later years?

Borden: I think that there was no doubt about his really dominance over the scene in the state senate. He was brilliant, he was a lawyer with the best of parliamentary skills. He served as the chairman of the Committee on Committees, which appoints all the conference committees.

He served as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. My recollection is, he served as chairman of the Civil Administration Committee for a time as well. He and a handful, two or three other legislators, really determined what passed and what failed when it came through the Minnesota Senate. I think that in one sense was a real credit to him. The reporters covering the state capital realized his influence. As one of them commented that his birthday fell on the beginning of the state fiscal year as an indication of some of the influence he had in St. Paul.

Gower: Another thing in regard to the matter of Mr. Rosenmeier, was the district, District 13, had that been changed recently, before 1970?

Borden: The district lines were changed as a result of a reapportionment bill in 1971, which was subsequently vetoed by the governor. Whereupon a federal panel issued a new reapportionment plan. That went to the United States Supreme Court and was overturned. Finally, a federal district panel issued the present reapportionment plan. My district in 1970 was all of Morrison and most of Crow Wing County. In 1972, for that election it was all of Crow Wing, Aitkin, and Kanabec County.

Gower: But it hadn't been changed recently there in the 1960s?

Borden: To the best of my recollection, I think, Senator Rosenmeier's district stayed almost identical being Crow Wing and Morrison County from the time he was first elected in 1940.

Gower: The district now is Crow Wing, Kanabec, and Aitkin? So actually Mr. Rosenmeier's not even in this district anymore. Is that correct? There's one other thing on this point. Do you feel the fact that Mr. Rosenmeier did not have opposition in a number of elections, may have, in the long run hurt him? Because he didn't get out and campaign as much?

Borden: I'm sure that is true. There is nothing better for building a campaign organization than to be constantly challenged from every side. If you develop a myth of power, or power in fact for a time, that carries you. But when the chips are down and you believe there is a challenge at hand, your supporters might not necessarily believe it so quickly. I think some of his supporters thought he would win easily. Until the final months in the campaign, they did not give him the kind of support that he really needed, if he were going to be re-elected.

Gower: Now is it correct that Mr. Rosenmeier did not file until very late in the filing period also?

Borden: That's correct. As I stated, we started out our campaign publicly and formally in January of 1970 and it wasn't until noon on the last day of the filing in the middle of July that he announced he would be a candidate and filed his name for re-election. I don't know at the same time whether or not that indicated that he was undecided as to how he ought to proceed or whether he simply planned to be a non-candidate and have the advantages of incumbency without the advantages, disadvantages, being a candidate until the last minute.

Gower: Now we have interviewed other people and we have had the statement made, that one of the most important issues in the campaign was the abortion issue. Would you want to discuss that?

Borden: I think it certainly was one of the issues. I guess our campaign strategy, which I think is sound for a challenger, was to attack on as many fronts as we could. Consequently during the course of our campaign, we issued some sixty individual press releases on almost every conceivable issue involved in state government. We challenged his position on legislative

reform, his position on income tax reciprocity, his position on corporate farming, his position on environmental issues, and their position on abortion as well.

It was an issue that engendered and still does, great passion in terms of the constituency, because they either agree with you or disagree very violently with you. Of the sixty press releases, three of them dealt with abortion. I think that it did have some impact, but it is very difficult to measure the exact impact because we lost the towns, which were most predominantly Roman Catholic, which was very surprising in one sense. We lost Little Falls and Pierz. We carried some of the towns that were most clearly predominantly Protestant denominations in the northern parts of Crow Wing County. So I think it is very difficult to precisely measure the impact of the abortion issue. But I would not say that it was a pivotal issue. It was one of three or four very important issues.

Gower: Now this issue, the abortion issue, as you've stated it was a public issue. I mean you issued papers on it and so on. It was not a so called "whispering campaign" type of thing.

Borden: No, I think that everything was said about it was said out in the open. I think the strategy might have been more important than the issue.

For example, my recollection is that on July of 1970, we issued a press release challenging Senator Rosenmeier to run for the state senate again and asking him when he did so to explain to the voters of Morrison and Crow Wing County why he voted in favor of a liberalized abortion bill in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee in 1969. He filed and he ignored the issue of abortion. In late August or early September, again we called on him to explain his position. He did so at that time, charging that I had deliberately falsified his position on that issue.

We responded the next day with our third release going through the history of it and the records of the State Judicial Committee and some articles that appeared in the Minneapolis Tribune and the St. Paul papers, at the time the issue came before the 1969 session of the legislature. I think more important than the issue was the fact that he chose to respond to it. I guess that if I had been him with the background, power, contacts that I would not have paid any attention to a twenty-six-year-old kid who came along snapping at my heels. I would have ignored him. His response to that challenge and to some other challenges really gave my campaign the kind of respectability that I thought it needed. All of a sudden, people started to believe that there was a possibility that in fact we could win.

Gower: What do you think were the main issues in the 1970 campaign of yours?

Borden: I think that the most important issue was a vague one of representation. People had a feeling that they weren't being represented. They did not know and they did not have contact with their state senator.

That was clearly underscored in meetings throughout the district. Where ever I would speak, I would say that I think that it was the responsibility of a state senator to be in touch with the people he seeks to represent, to know their views and reflect them as best as he can in the state senate. We did that in town meetings, in township meetings, and coffee parties throughout the district. The final days of the campaign, Senator Rosenmeier sent his law partner, the very able John Simonett out to debate me in some gatherings in the countryside, church basements and other type of public meetings.

At those meetings someone would always stand up and say, "Why isn't Senator Rosenmeier here?" There would be a response he had business elsewhere. Then the next question would be,

"When is the last time he's been in Sobieski and other towns like that?" As soon as someone asked that question, someone else would stand up and say, "I've lived here for thirty years, and I've never seen him here!"

It was that kind of issue that had a telling impact. In addition, the issue of legislative reform was the one that we used most intensively. The need for roll call votes in the senate and the need for verbatim notes, so that someone could tell whether or not their legislator was saying the same thing in St. Paul as he was in his district. The need for proportional representation on the different committees so both the minority and majority caucus would both have representation on the Senate Rules Committee, for example, which had never been the case. The need for open meetings of the Senate Rules Committee, and the conference committees, which have never been the case. That was a telling issue, the issue of lobbyist registration. The issue of corporate farming, tax lost farming, and several other issues, gas tax rebates for agricultural production, were all issues. Through those we tried to pick up the farm support, from the Grange, of the Farmers Union and the NFO, that we needed on the countryside. That was an important issue.

Then I suppose the issue of taxes is always important. Senator Rosenmeier tried to make that important as well by saying there were tax problems. Our response was, "Yes, and you've had thirty years to deal with them. Now it's time to give somebody else a chance." The issue of abortion as well, I think those probably were the most important issues. It's clear, I think, from that issues were more important that campaign than they are in many campaigns.

Gower: Yes, I think I'd agree with that. In fact we've got the impression from at least in our interviewing that quite often issues in these state legislation races are not important at all. You know maybe the interviews have been somewhat distorted in that way.

Now when you got down to St. Paul in January 1971 or whenever you went down there. Did you feel that you had a fairly easy time moving into the position of Senator?

Borden: In one sense it was easy. I certainly had more public exposure, I guess, as a result of the election than other senators. So they knew who I was, the other senators, committee staff, and the press.

I certainly was popular as a result of the victory, not because they knew me in my own DFL caucus. At the same time, I had certain, I guess, distance, perhaps a trace of respect, but more distance in terms of being an unknown quantity in the majority caucus. I think they were somewhat skeptical of me and that took a while to deal with. Then there was the issue of youth.

There were some remarkable changes in the 1970 campaign and several of us had replaced state senators, who had been in the Senate even before we were born. So it was kind of a passing of the power from the older to the younger. I recall, for example, when I came into the Senate parking lot the opening morning, the parking attendant wouldn't let me park there because he didn't think I was a Senator.

Then I went up to the Senate chambers and was sworn in, because obviously they were expecting us there. I went over with another young Senator to the back of the House chambers to stand and observe their proceedings, which is perfectly proper for another legislator to do. But we had stood there for a moment and one of the sergeants-at-arms came up and said, "Hey boys," to the other Senator and I "do you fellows have any business here at all?" We explained to him that we were Senators. I think he was a little embarrassed.

It wasn't too long after that I learned that one of my colleagues in the Senate, Senator Alf Bergerud, who had been in the legislature for many years from Edina and he was very elderly

himself, who possessed a remarkable sense of humor, was referring to some of us, the two of us who were under thirty at that time, as members of the "Senate Diaper Brigade" in his private conversations.

So that was in brief my initiation into the process. But I found it was not difficult to get in, get involved, and to work effectively with issues in the first term in the Senate.

Gower: The fact that you were a freshman senator didn't really hamper you that much then, you would say?

Borden: No, I don't think that it did. Nor should it for any senator, if he has a clear understanding of what issues are important to him and where he wants to provide some leadership, and he has a modest sense of propriety, and some good political antenna, he can know where he makes a difference and where he ought to simply sit back and wait.

But it was not my desire to wait. I hope that my attitude on issues and the number of times I rose to speak in the Senate was tempered by some good sense. But I did not feel that I had to sit in that body and pick-up tenure before I could be permitted to state my position on any issue before the Senate.

Gower: What do you think were the most important bills that you worked with in that first session?

Borden: In my first session, as I recall, I was either author or co-author on 150 different bills. Which is without any doubt too many for a freshman senator, any senator to try to deal with. As I recall, more than forty of those became law. I suppose the one in which I took the greatest pride

was the Minnesota Anti-Trust Act of 1971. I was chief author of that in the Senate and it was patterned after the Sherman and Clayton Anti-Trust Acts at the federal level.

It sought to get a regional price fixing. Monopolies that are only encompassing part of or even all of the state are not of insufficient consequence for the federal government to deal with. It requires state legislation to get at them.

That bill passed and since that time the Attorney General's office initiated numerous prosecutions against auto dealers, against farm machinery dealers, against a number of other individuals and secured judgements in behalf of the state of something in excess of \$5 million. That is, I should say, judgements or compromises and settlements, which resulted in monies amounts of \$5 million or more to the state.

I took great pride in that particular bill. Some of the ones that were most important, however, to my district, were the Emergency School Aid Bill, which gave to the most impoverished school districts. That is the school districts with the highest mill levy, the lowest valuation, and the greatest effort in terms of elementary and secondary education, some several million dollars of additional aid. There were about fifteen school districts in the state that were involved and several of them were in my district. I was chief author of that bill, which certainly had some impact in terms of how I stood with my constituents.

Another bill that I was pleased to have a hand in, was the Omnibus Tax Bill of 1971. My hand only dealt with the rebate of gross earnings to the Brainerd School District. Under our constitution, railroads don't pay any property taxes. They pay gross earnings taxes in lieu of property taxes. Our statute provides that when the railroad property in any school district is more than 20% of all of the real property valuation in that school district, then all of the gross earnings

in that area will be rebated to that school district. As a consequence, Brainerd had been getting \$500,000 a year for its school system in additional state aids which is a tidy sum of money.

In the 1970 campaign it was the issue of gross earnings was important with Senator Rosenmeier's supporters saying that only he could save gross earnings. My supporters contending that we had already lost gross earnings, and that he could not go back and retrieve what had been lost. There was a turn of events in which the Governor's office was very influential in which we changed the valuation so that Brainerd would continue to get the gross earnings rebate. I should note in explanation that we were going to lose it, because the percentage of our property, which was made up of railroad property, was falling below that 20% in which case you get nothing at all.

Gower: Then as a result of the reapportionment you had to run again in 1972. Was this in a different district that you mentioned earlier? Who was your opponent in this election?

Borden: My opponent in the 1972 election was Don Madsen. He was an employee of Northwest Paper Company in Brainerd and who had served as a Republican county chairman for Crow Wing County.

Crow Wing County's political make-up is about exactly fifty-fifty. Fifty percent tend to vote DFL and fifty percent tend to vote Republican. Aitkin County is marginally in favor of the DFL and Kanabec County is marginally in favor of the Republican Party. But the great majority of the vote is cast in Crow Wing County. Some 36,000 of the 58,000 people who live in the district, live in Crow Wing County. They have a greater tendency to get out and vote as a historical manner, than the voters of other counties.

Gower: So you did better in this election then you did in 1970?

Borden: In 1970, my recollection was we won by something in excess of 3,000 votes, which was about 57% of the vote. My recollection in the 1972 race is that we won by about 10,000 votes, which was about 67% or a little more of the total vote casted. There are fifty some precincts in Crow Wing County. We managed to carry every one of them and almost all of them by wide margins. Of the precincts in Aitkin and Kanabec County, I believe that we lost seven precincts by something under thirty votes. So the campaign just went very well.

Gower: I was going to ask earlier and I forgot to do it. How do you characterize that earlier district as to whether it was DFL or Republican?

Borden: I would say that the 1970 district of Crow Wing and Morrison Counties, which had part of Crow Wing, had the Crow Wing County part which was Republican and then Morrison, which is DFL. I think that a voter index based on Humphrey, Spannaus, and Anderson, and their opponents in the most recent years that they ran, would find the total district in 1970, 52½% DFL. The district that I had in 1971 had 51% DFL.

Gower: Now in your second session what do you think were some of the most important bills you worked with?

Borden: In my second session perhaps I should just preface it by saying in that session I served on the Senate Tax Committee. On the Senate Committee on Government Operations, and chairman of the Subcommittee on Government Structure, on the Senate Rules Committee, and on the Senate Committee on Committees. The Rules Committee decides priorities of legislation on the Senate floor and the Committee on Committees appoints conference committees. So I was fortunate in having some very good committee assignments.

Frankly, I don't know the exact number of bills that I authored in the '72 session but it was somewhere around a hundred. But fortunately they had a very favorable batting average in terms of their getting passed. I think that almost every bill I had any hopes for passing did in fact become law.

The bills that I was most pleased with in terms of passage included the bill that established the Minnesota Cable Television Commission and put the state in the business of regulating cable television services. Cable TV probably is a remarkable educational tool of the future. The extent of that opportunity is determined by how the franchised agreements are written between municipalities and the cable supplier. We have about a hundred cable contracts in existence now, and in some of them the municipalities have simply not had the resources that they need to adequately represent their interests and insure public access, local programming, the availability of a sufficient number of channels and later, ability to provide for two way communication on the cable and ability to provide for interconnection between cable systems.

That was a hotly contested bill with the proponents, which in addition to myself included the Citizens League and the Metropolitan Council Task Force on Cable Television, and the opponents include the cable industry who are highly organized.

The bill finally did get passed in the form we wanted with an appropriation of \$300,000 which was significant in terms of getting it off the ground in the way that we wanted it to do. Secondly, I was pleased with the passage of the Commission of Personnel Bill, which I authored. We have some 30,000 people employed in state government. We had a fragmented personnel program, which unfortunately did not provide a system for identifying the most talented public servants

and educating them and upgrading their training for advancement. We had just the most fragmented training program. So I was pleased with the passage of that bill.

Another bill that I was pleased to author dealt with the penalty for the use of marijuana and other drugs. It tried to make the penalties more realistic and, specifically, reduced the penalty for the first time possession and use of a small amount of marijuana, which is less than 1.5 ounces from a gross misdemeanor to a misdemeanor.

Another bill that I was pleased to see passed was the bill dealing with death benefits for law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty. County sheriffs and city policemen from different areas of the state get different compensation, if they are killed in the line of duty, some of them almost nothing at all, others fairly adequate compensation. The bill I authored provided that they would get \$25,000 in death benefits to their spouse and to their minor children in the event they were killed in the line of duty. It provided the same sum for a Good Samaritan who was acting at the instruction of a law enforcement officer.

Another bill I was pleased to see passed was one dealing with the Department of Natural Resources in giving the Commissioner of Natural Resources the power to reorganize on regional lines. Historically, the DNR had been organized by divisions of land and water, soil and minerals, and of game and fish. Unfortunately, that division did not provide for the coordinated administration of our natural resources that we so desperately needed.

Another bill I was pleased to author was the Minnesota Environmental Education Act. As I look at the 1971 and 1973 sessions, one of the crucial differences was the attitudes on environmental legislation. The 1971 session saw almost all of it defeated. The 1973 session saw much of the good legislation passed. The Environmental Education Council provided money for the

establishment of regional environmental education programs not only within the school system but beyond the confines of the classroom. If we are going to do anything in terms of environment over the long haul, it's going to be a change in people's attitude towards the environment.

Another bill that I was pleased to author was the Critical Areas Act. That became law and it provided that the state would get involved in land use planning for the first time. That when a particular part of the state, statewide importance, was being harmed by a commercial development, the Governor could move in and through executive order stop development in that area for a period of time until the plans had been formulated for orderly development of that area. If we look at Voyagers National Park, and the periphery around that as compared to other national parks. If we go the way that they went, we will find a honky-tonk sort of development beyond the confines of the park proper. That's just terribly unfortunate. People should be able to get to and enter the park with some kind of harmonious use of the land along the way. As we look at the North Shore, the historic and significant value that it has to all Minnesotans, we want to be sure as we place commercial establishments along the North Shore of Lake Superior, those establishments exist in harmony with nature as far as possible.

As we look at the St. Croix and the fact that part of it is in the National River System and part of it is being challenged by rapid commercial development, where someone's motives are purely profit rather than the total impact of the situation, we see a need for land use planning. I'm sure that in the years ahead we are going to get much more deeply involved in that.

Finally, a bill that I was especially proud of was the Minnesota Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, which I authored and was patterned after the federal act. It seeks to preserve through zoning and through some state purchase some of our most scenic waterways. The Crow Wing River, the Big

Fork River, and just a whole host of our rivers, really stand today almost as nature created them and yet they are threatened by rapid development at some points.

What we did in 1973 was to provide for the same kind and slightly more severe restrictions on the use of our river ways as we provided some years earlier for the use of our lake shores. That kind of zoning and land use development along the river is most important to me. I guess those were bills that passed that I was pleased to author and there were a couple that were defeated or are still pending that I felt very strongly towards. But frankly they never had a great deal of opportunity to pass.

One of those was a bill providing for returnable containers, which was patterned after the Oregon law with some modifications as Canada has adopted its container legislation. Which would have provided that any container sold in Minnesota which was used to contain soft drinks and non-alcoholic beverages, beer, would have to have a deposit on it so that it could be returned.

From an energy standpoint, from a resource, and litter standpoint to try to get those back into the system. One of the things that disturbs me is when you go along a road in northern Minnesota or you look at the shoreline of a lake as to see bottles and cans placed there recently and know full well they will probably be there for many years to come.

That bill got out of the Senate subcommittee and full committee quite-- In great surprise I think both to labor and industry who strongly opposed it. It is on the Senate floor for action now. We didn't proceed with it in the Senate simply because we didn't have the votes to pass it and it would have come up and been defeated. So we held it over and it will be considered in the 1974 session.

Another bill I felt strongly about, which was defeated in committee in a narrow vote, was a bill which would have authorized branch banking in Minnesota pursuant to the Regional Developmental Act of 1969. The bill simply provided that any bank, which had its principal place of business within an economic development region, could have a branch anywhere else within that region upon the approval of the Commissioner of Banking.

One of our problems in rural Minnesota is simply the availability of capital. If we are to provide branch banking in Minnesota we automatically just continuing the same loan deposit ratio, provide for about \$300 million of additional capital to be loaned out the day the bill goes into effect. In addition to that, in some areas of the state, such as the resort areas, we have a high degree of, high increase of bank to deposits in the summer months.

In the agricultural areas you have a high increase of bank deposits in the fall months. If you can allow those deposits circulate more between banks you can more effectively deal with your money. And, in addition, by allowing branch banking, you allow greater expertise, in that a bank in a small town which cannot afford to hire a full-time agricultural expert could do so if he had five or six banks in the region and had one such expert to service the loans.

Right now banks in rural Minnesota, at least the central and northern parts of the state, are very reluctant to make agricultural loans. We don't have the capital for agriculture that we need simply because we don't have the expertise to make a determination as to whether the loan is a sound one. If the bank's in doubt the bank says no.

Finally the most important reason, I suppose, for branch banking is that it increases competition between banks. Everyone is in favor of competition until they can establish their own monopoly, and then nothing is sweeter. The Branch Banking Bill would force that competition.

It's an idea whose time had not yet come and I think it will come within a few years, at least I'm hopeful that it will. But on the whole, the bills I introduced passed and I was pleased with the legislative response to them.

Gower: Now you still would hope then, for example on the deposit and return of the cans, you are still hopeful that might go through the next session?

Borden: On all the bills that I introduced that were defeated or postponed, I will continue to work for passage. I am hopeful that the returnable deposit bill will pass.

During the interim, legislative committee is continuing to review the legislation, I guess, in dealing with the returnable container bill, I've never seen such a mass of conflicting data on any other issues. The bottle industry says that it will force them out of business. The can industry says it will force them out of business. Obviously, it can't be both ways unless people are going to sell beer and pop in plastic bags.

We're trying to ascertain the facts. I'm not unmindful of some of the labor dislocation that will exist temporarily. I think on the whole the returnable container bill will result in a net increase in jobs. But some people will be forced out of jobs for a period of time. We are exploring a bill or an amendment to the bill, which would deal with the benefits for those who are forced out of a job. One of the problems we have in dealing with environmental issues is simply the job question. If we are going to maintain the environment and make it better, we're going to have to at the same time assume a responsibility to provide jobs for those who are forced out of jobs or provide them with compensation during the time that they are unemployed. We hope to do that and, in that way, minimize the labor opposition to the bill.

Gower: Now you feel that support in your district from labor is a very important part of your backing?

Borden: Yes, there's no doubt that labor in terms of organized labor is very important in the city of Brainerd and Crow Wing County. It's important throughout the district, but it is pivotally important here. I've been blessed with strong support from them in the past.

Gower: So on the matter of this returnable cans or containers, you keep in mind the labor attitude also. Is that correct?

Borden: I think you've got that responsibility to bear in mind, the attitude of your constituents. You have to deal with the opposition wherever it arises in the state, if you're going to get the bill passed.

I share their concern in terms as job loss and want to minimize that as best as I can. I try to emphasize that if they disagree with me on this issue that they still agree with me on most issues. I've said from the start that I think that a legislator has a responsibility or candidate for that office to be very specific on where he stands. As a consequence, people aren't always going to agree with you. I think they generally respect the fact that you are willing to take a stand, and hopefully they agree with you most of the time. If that's the case, you can win the election that you need to do the type of legislative job that you'd like to do.

Gower: It was in the last session, I believe, that the process was opened up much more. The conference committees opened and so on. And I assume that you were very much in favor of this?

Borden: That's correct. I suppose if I had to say what were the successes of the legislature, I would say the first success was in terms of legislative reform. Public confidence in the legislative process had deteriorated. It was clear that the roll call votes weren't there when they ought to be.

So, the reforms were enacted: first of all, the roll call vote, secondly, the verbatim records, third, the proportional representation on committees so that each caucus was represented on each committee, fourth, the open meetings, and, fifth, a vast increase of staff resources.

Sometimes legislators vote out of intuition rather than facts. In fact, most of the time we do and that's a tragic commentary on the situation. We haven't had the research staff that we need to adequately assess the merits of proposals that come down from the governor's office or proposals that come down from our colleagues in the legislature.

Too often the research comes from the special interest groups, the mining company or the railroads or those who are paying the taxes in the corporate community. That's unfortunate. We need their input, but we also need input from other areas. I guess, as I look back on the legislative reforms we made, I would say they were of a historic nature.

There were those, mostly senior in our caucus, who felt that the system would begin to crumble, if conference committees were open to the public. But we lived with the system. I think we're healthier because of it and I don't think that there are many who would suggest that we turn back at this point. I see no possibility that we would do so.

Gower: So you wouldn't agree with the statement that opening conference committee is like opening a jury up?

Borden: No, I think if there is anything that should be done in public view, it's the business of the public through the operation of the democratic process. I don't think there ought to be secrets in government. You know, one of the sad commentaries is that 35-40% of all the Congressional Committees that meet, meet in executive session. I see, except in a very few isolated cases, no necessity for that, the public is welcome. The door should be open. Legislators should have a firmness of their conviction that allows them to make the decision, they feel is most appropriate and to make it in full public view.

Gower: Now you're the assistant majority whip, correct? When did you become this? When did you get this position and what do you do in that position?

Borden: Right after the 1972 election, it was clear that the assistant majority whip was not reelected and the position would be available. As a consequence, I guess, I spent the first two days after the election almost constantly on the phone contacting members of our caucus and seeking their support for that particular position. It's a position which the caucus elects. It's third in terms of line of leadership in the Senate DFL majority.

My responsibilities as assistant majority whip, I guess changed much of my reaction to how I would deal with the legislature in the years ahead.

A legislator who does not assume an overall leadership responsibility is able to become an expert in a particular phase of legislation, taxes or government structure or environment or consumer bills or banking legislation or insurance legislation. We ever so much need that kind expertise. However, if you have a leadership position, you have a responsibility to be fairly well informed on a broader number of issues. You don't have the depth that you should have and I regret that.

But at the same time, it's a good place to be so that you can keep tabs on what's going on all about you.

As a result of being assistant majority whip, I was able to serve on the Rules Committee, which I simply otherwise would not have been able to do. I was able to serve on the Committee on Committees, which assignment otherwise would have been denied to me. So you're in the middle of things and that's where I like to be. One of my major jobs this past session as assistant majority whip I had to deal with the bills that came down from the Governor's department, Governor's office. Every department submits its bills to the Governor's office and they are referred from there to the leadership in the House and Senate for introduction.

My job was to find people who would be interested and able to carry the various pieces of legislation to see that they got introduced and to help them move through the process. In that kind of effort, I was definitely aided as well as in a number of other responsibilities, by having some good legislative interns who were from state colleges and universities operating on a volunteer basis, but on a basis in which they got some college credits. I hope was valuable for them.

Gower: I've got a question based on a recent interview of a present legislator. Do you think the number, the volume of bills that a legislator introduces or carries or whatever the expression is, is that an important thing?

Borden: Well, I suppose in the legislative process as well as any part of the community at large, there are those who propose and those who react. There are some legislators who do little more than react. In that process they make a valuable contribution. You need people who can sit back reflect and criticize what others propose do. But it seems to me, if you're going to be a topflight

legislator, if you're really trying to chart a course, if you see a better way for the state, you've got a responsibility to propose as well.

The measure of a legislator's effectiveness is not simply his reacting or not even his proposing or the number of bills that he introduces. I suppose you evaluate a legislator on how hard he works, how well he represents his constituents and what kind of contact does he have with them, not only during the campaign but through the course of the legislative period. You judge him on how well he gets along with his colleagues, how well he does under the intensity of debate, and cross examination on the Senate floor, how well he's prepared, how much faith you have in his ability, his judgment, and his integrity. All those things together are what you measure someone on, not merely the number of bills he authors.

Gower: Are there a number of instances where a legislator is asked to introduce a bill? So, it really doesn't come from him, but from someone else?

Borden: That's most important and revealing question on the legislative process. If you read the book *The Sometimes Government* by John McGregor-Burns, you find that he makes two points. The first of which is that legislators are under paid, and over worked, and can only deal with the most pressing problems. The second of which is legislators are not innovators. No legislator sits down and writes out in long hand the bill he seeks to introduce. He has a concept, an idea, which he takes to a revisor's office and they prepare it. But on the major bills many many many people are involved. Sometimes I say, somewhat humorously and somewhat seriously, that the legislator is often no more than a puppet. He takes a concept, which he agrees with. He's the front man who spews forth the facts as they're supplied to him to prove his case. But if he is dealing with a

large number of bills, if he's dealing with major problems, there are many people reinforcing him.

For example, on the bills that I introduced, take for example the Cable Commission Bill, which was authored by a graduate student at the University of Minnesota, who spent for five months almost full time supplying me with the data that I needed to prove the case. He did an excellent job on it. The bottles and cans and returnable container bill was lobbied by M.P.I.R.G. They had a full-time staff attorney working on it. The bill for the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was written by the Department of Natural Resources in conjunction with the Sierra Club. They put the whole package together and supplied an attorney and a full-time lobbyist to get it passed.

The Minnesota Environmental Education Act, the same sort of thing happened. A legislator who is busy and wants to make the best use of his time delegates responsibilities, sees that others prepare the package and brief him sufficiently so that he can answer any question that comes up. But much of the major work is done by other people. I guess I finally recall the Equal Rights Amendment, which I authored in the state senate and which had a whole host of constitutional questions, I could never begin to understand or investigate on my own and which consequently we put an attorney working on and a group of about ten women who lobbied it. We all sat down and I asked questions that I couldn't answer. They asked me questions to make sure I learned how to answer them. So that we had our case ready to prove. I think that's the best way the system works.

Gower: What do you enjoy about being in the legislature?

Borden: I enjoy, first of all, the people I work with. Seldom do you bring together such a collection of diverse people, diverse backgrounds, and to a great extent really exciting

personalities. Some of my colleagues in the Senate I disagreed with on almost every issue and yet I find them refreshing and stimulating people to be with. And I suppose the election process to some extent pivots on people's personalities. You get some exciting and unique personalities to deal with. Frankly, I enjoy that.

Secondly, being in the Senate gives a young person an opportunity to have a major, and perhaps pivotal impact on a state, on a multimillion-dollar budget in a way that you would never have if you were working in private industry.

So that is really the most important, I think, the joy of being there is the chance to have a hand in what direction the state takes in the years ahead. Knowing that after you've been there, even a short time as I have, how you feel as just one legislator is very important. If you want to get in the middle of it, you can really make a difference on the outcome of a bill or an entire legislative session really.

Gower: Did you mean, that part of it is the power that you have there?

Borden: Call it power, I guess if you like. It's the ability to get in, have an impact on the current situation and affect change. If you see so many things that are wrong in society, that's an ability not many people really have the joy of experiencing. I think that's really the major joy of it. Obviously, it's bad and can be misused if the power is directed to improper ends. You hope that the constituency that you represent, as well as the constituents around the state, will keep a constant vigil to see that their legislators are exercising their power in a responsible and representative manner.

Gower: You've already answered a question that I ask of the legislators. The question of whether you feel there is a basic self-respect among legislators. You've already answered that you agree there is. What are your plans for the future in politics?

Borden: I guess I think that political futures are very difficult to plan. I say that despite the fact that my initial entry as a candidate was well-planned some years in advance. I know that I don't intend to spend a lifetime in the political arena. I have remarkable, I have a lot of respect, and I think that anyone's remarkable who can spend many years in the legislature or in the political arena and bring continued good judgement, and a freshness of approach, and some innovation to it. I don't think that I can spend much more than ten years in it and do that. I have no specific plans knowing full well that there may be opportunities that arise at some future date, which you just can't predict at this point. If they do, being prepared to assess them at that time.

Gower: But you wouldn't close the door, for example, on running for Congress?

Borden: I think that I would. There are a few offices, which really I think are beyond my interest and I guess the United States Congress would be one of them. If you reside in a rural community and run for the United States Congress, you know that first off you're going to be representing, in my 7th District, some 24 or 27 different counties, just a large geographic area, and that you're going to be running every two years in a district that is fairly marginal. And as a consequence, you have very few moments of peace and quiet even with members of your own family and that has to be a factor as well. I guess that I would frankly say, I have no interest in running for Congress.

Gower: This concludes this interview.