

Eight hours discussion

To the East - Virginia, Custer, Gullat, Birch Lake, Aarow, Hoyt Lake, Bodgett, Ely.

NOTES

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

TACONITE PLANT
MT. IRON, MINNESOTA

MAY 7, 1967

Center of the Range

Ford Plant - near Custer

7
Merritt Prutton
(Sagin Iron men)

Johns
Roads
Public works
Harbors
Bridges

The story of the taconite industry is a story of people working together.

It took a lot of people, from many different groups -- all pulling together -- to put the taconite amendment across by an overwhelming 80 per cent vote of the people of Minnesota.

The farmers from southern Minnesota, the businessmen and manufacturing industries from the Twin Cities, the people in the resort industry -- all joined hands with you Rangers to pave the way for a program which would benefit this entire state, as well as the Mesabi Range.

To the West
- Chisholm
- Kiameg
- Buhl
- Hibbing
- Keewauwin
- Nashwanet
Calerain
Bowling
Pengilly
Grand Rapids

Mesabi - Indianwood - for Sleeping Giant
Cuyuna - G. West
Vermilion (Ely)

Fantastic as the taconite story is, it wouldn't have been possible if we hadn't had men of courage and vision like Dr. Ed Davis, whose relentless research made possible the technological breakthrough.

↳ It wouldn't have been possible if John Blatnik hadn't been 20 years ahead of the times when, as the youngest member of the State Senate, he authored and saw enacted into law the first, the pioneering taconite tax law.

↳ A lot of people, ~~including John Blatnik's own father,~~ really believed nothing would ever come of that law ... that this whole taconite thing was just a pipe dream ... that the good red ore was inexhaustible, and mining as the old-timers knew it would go on forever.

↳ But they were wrong.

↳ A steady drain of two World Wars and the Korean conflict quickly depleted our high-grade direct shipping ores and left the development of taconite as our hope.

↳ The new departure in tax law thinking and resource development which John Blatnik initiated led directly to the 6 hundred million dollar investments and over 6 thousand jobs of Reserve and Erie Mining Companies in the mid-50's, and from there to the taconite amendment of 1964.

↳ If it hadn't been for John Blatnik's thinking and acting ahead of his time, being a leader in the real sense of the word, a man of vision and heartfelt concern for the well-being of his people, in the 40's, 50's, and 60's, the Range would be mired in the trough of an economic slump far more bleak than the great depression of the 1930's.

One of the greatest tributes to John Blatnik is that he is always thinking ahead and never stops working. He was one of the first to realize that the taconite industry is only a building-block in our Iron Range economy.

↳ Taconite is the central core, but never again must we allow ourselves to be caught in a one-industry squeezeplay.

↳ That's why he worked so hard to pass the Area Redevelopment Program, the Small Business Program, and the Economic Development Act.

↳ John Blatnik saw that the Range needed these economic tools to diversify in order to be strong.

↳ In the Range economy of the future, we have to attract new technology that is independent of the mining industry.

↳ We have to train our people in new job skills. We have to provide this area with a real spring-board for growth -- growth that will liberate us from the seasonal shifting of the employment tide which we have been accustomed to during the past half century, and which has blotted out our opportunities to share in the nation's general prosperity.

John Blatnik has always been a fighter for the Iron Range and for the people of northeastern Minnesota. But no one can do this rebuilding job alone.

new jobs

It takes cooperation on the local level and leadership and initiative from all the good people across the Range to put our Iron Range on the road to the prosperity and progress it so rightly deserves.

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