MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

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DATE: **October 21,1963**
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Original Reel 3 (cassette tapes 5 and 6)
Transcript: 57 pages, photocopy of draft

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:

Beginnings of efforts to establish Quetico-Superior National Forest ca. 1925;

Major opposition to the national forest was E. W. Backus, a timber industrialist and owner of the Backus Wholesale Lumber Company of International Falls, who had planned use of the timber and water resources of the Rainy Lake watershed, including building dams, flooding, and re-routing rivers;

Organization of support for the Quetico-Superior Council and preservation of the wilderness. Important organizers were lawyers Sewell Tyng and Fred Winston; The Shipstead-Newton-Nolan Bill passed by the US Congress in 1930 which provided for (1) withdrawal from use of public lands in the Superior National Forest and Rainy Lake country, (2) restriction of logging of shorelines of federal lands, and (3) no further settlement of the area.

NOTE TO USERS:

This transcript is a photocopy, made for preservation purposes, of a poor-quality Dennison copy. Page 32 is blurred. The location of the original typescript is unknown; it is believed to have been sent to Oberholtzer for editing and never returned.

Also available: a rough draft of this transcript, annotated by Lucile Kane and at least one other person, probably the typist.

Miss K.: Now, we can start with the beginnings of the Quetico-Superior.
Mr. O.: The origin of the Quetico-Superior program really goes back to the threat of other programs that seemed of dangerous quality for the Rainy Lake watershed, in its primitive condition. There had already been various movements, some backed by the Izaak Walton League of Chicago, questioning such matters as construction of roads, particularly, in Superior National Forest.

You may recall that the Superior National Forest was set aside by Teddy Roosevelt in 1909 within a few weeks of a similar action by the province of Ontario, whereby the Quetico Provincial Forest Reserve, as it was called at that time, was established just north of the subsequent Superior National Forest. Both areas in their overall boundaries included about a million acres, even at that time. But there had already arisen a good deal of interest in that particular region of the border between Minnesota and Ontario because of problems in Superior National Forest.

Well, it happens that Superior National Forest, while it included certain boundaries and thereby surrounded some million acres, carried a much smaller proportion of federal lands. There were private lands, for instance, that had already been cut over, and there were state lands. There were more of those altogether than actual federal lands, in the beginning. On the Canadian side, by contrast, the lands were all what are called Crown lands, that is, belonging to the province of Ontario. At the time that Quetico Provincial Forest Reserve, as it was then called, was set aside, it was the understanding that the area was not to be cut at all. It was to be kept in its primitive state as a beauty place far people who were interested in primitive travel by canoe, and in game, because it was a very rich game area.

So the public were already using these two contiguous areas for some recreational use, and there had arisen a considerable interest and concern about some of the policies on the U. S. side.

It was at this time, in early 1925, that there began to be rumors of a new industrial project, fostered by the great timber user of Minnesota, E. W. Backus. His

home was in Minneapolis, but as early as 1909 he had constructed a dam between International Falls and Fort Frances in the Rainy River, about three miles below the outlet of Rainy Lake, the outlet being at the town of Ranier, and the new location three miles below, where the dam was built. On the U. S. side it was called International Falls, previously known as Koochiching.

International Falls was erected just above the new dam and right opposite the town of Fort Frances, which is one of the old historic Hudson Bay towns and had been going for many, many years. A small town. Beside the original inhabitants, the area included many very capable Britishers who held high offices and who administered those with great public interest.

So it was at this time that it suddenly was rumored that Mr. Backus, the great industrialist who already had established a large paper mill at International Falls founded on the dam that he was constructing in 1909, or completed in 1909, had a new and much larger, more ambitious program that involved not just Rainy Lake and the water from Rainy Lake but the whole watershed. That meant the whole area drained by Rainy River, lying in Minnesota and Ontario like a great outspread fan and including thousands of lakes of every possible kind, all connected by waterways so that one could put a canoe in at any point and by making carries around the rapids and waterfalls could travel to any other point within the watershed, a huge area of some 15,000 square miles. And far flung, especially on the Ontario side where two-thirds of the area was located. About a third was on the U. S. side, the international boundary flowing between these two contiguous areas, as finally surveyed under the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842.

Inquiry was slow to bring out any of the facts. It was very difficult to find out exactly what Mr. Backus had in mind, but finally in 1925 the International Joint Commission, a body set up in 1910 by the two governments to investigate and report on problems along the boundary concerning both sides, held a hearing at International Falls to learn more about Mr. Backus' program. There may have been as many as two

hundred people present, most of whom were very much concerned about the effect of this proposed program, whatever it was, having already learned that any of these programs involved raising the natural water levels and flooding many areas, including homes, homesteads and other property and causing a great deal of damage, for which there seemed to be no recovery.

And so many of the local people were largely interested in that question. The outsiders, who had heard more and more of this threat, as it seemed to them, were concerned as to the preservation of the very remarkable -- in fact unique -- wilderness character of this entire watershed. And men like myself who had already traveled in there at that time for over fifteen years, year after year, in and out of these waterways, realized that this was one of the great areas of the world -- perhaps none exactly like it and certainly none accessible to the United States in North America, for beauty, for its wildlife. I myself had seen forty-four moose there in one day, and never traveled anywhere in the area a full day at that time without seeing moose. And deer hadn't come in yet on the Canadian side. They were on the American side, where there had been more logging, following the logging. They soon followed, though, when the logging started on the Canadian side. There had been some logging previously on that side by a company known as the Rat Portage Lumber Company down on Lake of the Woods and by some smaller local companies on the north side of Rainy Lake. There had been, of course, lots of logging on the American side around Ely and those small towns in that vicinity. And there was still in progress on a large scale.

Well, at the hearing Mr. Backus appeared as a proponent of the program, which he outlined, apparently with some reluctance, and only as a result of questioning. It seemed to be quite difficult to get all the facts, but on the whole it appeared through the questioning and his responses that his program envisaged the use of all the timber and water resources of the Rainy Lake watershed, on both sides, so far as any of them were left.

The timber resources were not emphasized, but it seemed apparent that the man

who controlled all the waterways would control all the timber. And tie very frankly said that he thought he should be allowed to raise Rainy Lake another five feet beyond the point which he had already raised it. There were a lot of questions as to how much that was. It was a debatable subject. Some felt it had been raised five feet already, and some thought --. Of course generally the power people said it hadn't been raised anything like that. Old-timers thought it had been raised a good deal more. And meantime there had been one especially serious flood that had done terrific damage in 1912. As soon as the dam established at International Falls and Fort Frances had had time to fill the basin we had this tremendous flood. It caused huge damage.

So the people assembled there had that memory. They also knew the water had been raised over their property, in many cases. A whole group of homesteaders on the Minnesota side who proved up laboriously in five years on their lands' in Black Bay, for instance, had been drowned out. The water had been raised right into the windows of their houses. And they had located there because there was arable land around Black Bay, which was tow-lying, and there was a great deal of wild hay, which was in demand for logging. And so they liked to have that product, something they could sell while they were proving up. They were also cutting some timber on their lands and selling that to the company for the manufacture of paper.

In addition to Rainy Lake, though, it appeared that the additional dams that had already been established at the outlet of Namakan Lake (which flows on the boundary into Rainy Lake where high dams had been built already in 1914, with the final approval of the War Department on the U. S. side, which generally oversees things of that sort) were to be raised still higher. Those dams had perhaps raised the natural level ten to fifteen feet, and they caused a great deal of destruction around the shores.

I may want to look up my figures a little as to the exact amount that was finally shown to have been added onto those lakes. But beyond those lakes, as you went up

the boundary, every large lake was to be raised, generally from twelve to eighteen feet. That included Lac La Croix, (I can't give you the exact figure on each one) and Basswood, and Saganaga at the other end of the Quetico. They were all to be raised. Then Mr. Backus frankly said that in order to make the thing perfectly logical, that he would eventually have to do the same with the large tributaries in both countries, in order to make it feasible and practical.

His plan also included shutting off the Namakan River through which all of these waters beyond Lac La Croix, east of Lac La Croix, passed down through the Canadian side into Namakan Lake, because the boundary wasn't a continuous line, as many people thought. There were several places at which the boundary went north of Hunter's Island, and that hadn't been fully understood at the time of the treaty, or of the drawing of the final boundary by the two countries, under the Webster-Ashburton Treaty.

Mr. Backus evidently sought to rectify that, though these treaties had been fully approved by the two governments. He was going to rectify it by switching the rivers forming this boundary down to the accepted boundary and shutting off their outlets. For instance, this big river, particularly the Namakan River -- not a long river, but a very large river, which carried all the water -- the upper waters, even Basswood. Basswood finally came down into Lac La Croix, and then from Lac La Croix all that water went down into the Namakan River, which was a river with many big drops, beautiful waterfalls and rapids -- only about twenty-five miles long -- down to Namakan Lake. Well, Mr. Backus proposed to shut this outlet from Lac La Croix off completely and send that water down to the boundary out of Lac La Croix at Little Vermillion Lake on the boundary, which was a separate chain. And there his plans contemplated a dam seventy-two feet high.

Now, of course, that was a startling proposal to everybody, because anybody who knew the region know that a dam seventy-two feet high in this country was bound to flood a vast area -- wooded and beautiful and natural -- and substitute for the natural rapids and waterfalls all along a huge masonry dam, besides shutting off one

of the most beautiful of all the rivers with wonderful waterfalls and rapids – the Namakan River on the Canadian side.

Then Mr. Backus was asked how would this be paid for. And he explained very logically that he expected the two governments to pay for that, but he would pay his share for the benefit of any power sites that he secured out of the program, or any that he already had, but that he'd already spent some $50,000 investigating the program. It appeared to most of the people there that when the thing was completed, it might happen that the governments owed Mr. Backus a considerable amount, and that was more or less the inference gathered by everybody there.

Well, Mr. Backus was very pleased at the start, and he was very affable and agreeable, but the questions finally annoyed him a lot. There was a widow who had lost her resort and had put all of her money into it, and she seemed to feel that in some way the company was responsible, because her land survey showed she owned certain land, but her house stood in the water. And there were a good many others of the same kind. And some of the little conflicts that arose between Mr. Backus and other people who testified, either about their own property or as to the effect of this program on the marvelous character of the region, led to warmer and warmer responses from Mr. Backus. He finally was quite indignant, and said, as I recall (I think the testimony will show that true) that it seemed to him very strange that these people should have come into that country after he had built his mill and expected to locate wherever they pleased in there without coming to his office and consulting him, which was a new aspect of it.

He had two independent countries, and it gave a paint of view on Mr. Backus' plans that was quite alarming:

Well, there were representatives there of the state Izaak Walton League and many similar organizations. There were many individuals and there were some state officials. They didn't take any active part in it, though. They asked some questions, but they didn't put up any opposition at that time. And I was there as a lain who had

spent a large part of his life, up to that time, investigating and traveling all over the region, and I think I also spoke for a group that had been set up In Fort Frances, because they were alarmed at the effect on their resources and the future of their town. There was nothing to indicate that these plans meant a lot more industry over at Fort Frances. It seemed to be centered in International Falls, though that wasn't entirely clear.

And there were a lot of other points that weren't really clear. But on the basis of that hearing, which lasted several days as I recall it, the groups who were alarmed were looking around for some more effective way of dealing with the problem. Mr. Backus had been so wholly successful in everything he had ever undertaken to get from any of the governments that the prospects for stopping a program like this -- if it was a bad program -- appeared to be very poor. One of my own friends who had been coming here for quite a number of years and taking canoe trips on the Canadian side with his friends and family was a young member of a very large law firm in New York, called Larkin, Rathbone and Perry. His name was Sewell Tyng. Up to that time, it had seemed to be very difficult to get any very definite information from the International Joint Commission. Perhaps they felt that they shouldn't -- they had nothing to give out until they heard Mr. Backus at the hearing, which might have been entirely logical. They may have known as little about it as the general public did. The arrangements for all these hearings were made through a treaty (I'm not sure it was called a treaty, but it was of that nature) between the United States and Canada, informing the International Joint Commission to investigate this proposal.

And the International Joint Commission was a body that had had, up to that time, not much to do with these problems. It had been set up by special treaty between United States and Canada back in 1910, and the various powers and duties were admirably set forth in the convention that was agreed upon between the two governments, and a table of values had been set up. For instance, navigation came very high. First came domestic uses, I think -- and navigation was very high. And there were certain others but there was no special category for recreation or wilderness values, or

anything of that sort. That was something rather new. Nobody thought very much of it when the treaty was signed.

But there might be interpretations of this treaty as worded that would cover these things. We thoug ht there were. And so Mr. Tyng was as much disturbed as anybody by the prospect of what was going to happen to these wonderful canoe waters, and the game, and all, and the substitution of cement dams for the natural rapids and waterfalls, and the flooding of shores, which we'd already seen on a large scale -- dead shorelines everywhere, and islands submerged. We were very much alarmed, and I'd been called on more and more by newspapers all over for whatever information I had, which was all to the same effect.
So then Mr. Tyng proposed that we should have some kind of a reply to file with the International Joint Commission. He said that if we could raise the money to buy the legal transcript of that hearing, which was a large hearing -----. It was a whole book when it was finally printed. He thought it would cost about $600. He would, himself, do all the legal work, if I would furnish what I knew as to the geography of the region and the character of it and all that sort of thing, and the places involved, which, of course, we were only too eager to do.

So then I undertook, of my own accord, to raise this $600 and nobody else was available. As it turned out, it didn't seem to be too difficult. We raised it, one way or another, mainly from a few large contributions made by some of the people who had homes here. The one I remember clearly was a donation by the Canadian Northern Railway. I think it was still the Canadian Northern rather than the Canadian National, but it was what is now the Canadian National Railway which bisects the area on the Canadian side from Port Arthur to Fort Frances. They had already suffered quite a lot of damage through unnatural water levels, and they were very much concerned at the prospect that this might be on a wholesale scale, and they might have to raise their tracks for many miles. So they did contribute a hundred dollars, and in that way we bought the transcript. Mr. Tyng, for his firm, prepared this brief, and it was filed

with the International Joint Commission, and so far as I know, except for general protests -disapproval by men like president Compton of Massachusetts Institute of Technology -- may I just interrupt that for a moment?

Miss K.: Oh, surely.

Mr. O.: …by Mr. Tyng for his firm and filed in their name with the International Joint Commission. And, so far as I know, it was the first and only brief for a long, long time, but the...

Mr. F.: When was this filed, Ober? Do you remember the year?

Mr. O.: It must have been 1926, because the hearing was in November1925. Sometime that following year. Of course, I could look up the exact date, but I think it was 1926.

There was a very noticeable change, it seemed to us, in the attitude of the Joint Commission when this was filed, and it evidently gave them the impression for the first time that this program might run into very serious resistance. So while they might have felt up to that time that it was more or less a routine matter and therefore it shouldn't be bothered about too much, they were now more responsive, it seemed to us. I would think I would have felt the same if I'd been on the Joint Commission.

Up to that time, Mr. Tyng had said, well, we're just like a lot of farmers with pitchforks against a man with a gatling gun. He also urged, very strongly, that we must have a constructive program of our own to meet such a huge project as that was and satisfy the public, because there was no question it would mean a lot of industry. There was nothing to prove, though, that this industry was going to be located at International Falls. None of the questions brought that out. There were the biggest kinds of responses as to why this was necessary. We were told that they had to have that additional power, and that the whole country would benefit, all the industry they had at that location had been created by Mr. Backus' company. When he was asked on what theory he thought that these dams should be built by the government and the costs borne, except where they could be divided among the various power sites, he

said he expected to pay his share, less what he had already expended.

But there was nothing that could be definitely brought out as to the absolute physical necessity for more of those dams for any plant that was there at that time, or any available timber supplies. So that was about the way the thing stood, except that a great deal of publicity was already going out to the newspapers on our side, and very little from Mr. Backus' side then.

That was in ____, let's say through 1926. Our committee over in Fort Frances was as active as it could be to send out information from our side and to gain friends wherever we could among people who had visited the area or already had some cabins up here and to try to get more exact information, which was very difficult. At the hearing, I think there was maybe one person beside Mr. Backus who spoke in favor of his program. There were probably two hundred that didn't seem to like it.

We were very active on this whole thing, that is, as individuals, and these people in the Fort were doing as much as they could do. They didn't have any funds until about ____, (I wouldn't be too sure about the date), but I think it was 1927, two years later. One day I went to town in the boat for supplies, and I found a letter there from a man I'd never heard of before, named Hubachek, a very appealing letter, very beautifully done, telling me that Mr. Hubacheck represented a group of young business and professional men in Minneapolis who were alarmed about Mr. Backus' project, and that they had learned of my interests and of my life there all those years and my attitude toward the whole thing. They wondered whether it wouldn't be possible for us to cooperate in some way and suggested that they would like to have me come down and meet with this group one evening soon to discuss the possibilities', and that if I would come, they would pay my expenses to come down there and talk with them.

I was puzzled by this. I had never heard of the name of this lawyer. It was an unusual name. I also had been warned that if I was going to oppose anything as large and as important as this, I might expect a whole lot of surprise moves on the

other side that I wouldn't understand. I could easily be trapped into some position where I'd be very sorry. I already knew Mr. Backus personally, and we were always friendly when we met on the street. I knew his wife. Their summer home was only half a mile from our own island, the small island where I lived with my mother, and they had a very elaborate home besides the senior Mrs. Backus' beautiful houseboat where she entertained. Mr. Backus was too busy to spend much time there himself, but occasionally he was there. My mother and I both knew Mrs. Backus, Sr. pleasantly, and occasionally visited there. But I knew nothing of Mr. Backus in his business, and so I was an entire outsider as to his plans.

When I got back to the island after reading this letter several times, I told my mother about it, and she said, "I wouldn't answer it. I think that's from the camp of the other side, and you better keep out of it." And I said, "Oh, I don't think so. I think I ought to answer this. It might be some help." And so I did. I answered favorably that I'd be glad to go down and meet this group of young business and professional men. A date was set and I went down there and I found they met evenings and they'd already dubbed themselves in jocular fashion as the Ku Klux Klan, because they always met at night in the basement of Mr. Toaster -- the architect's home. And they were very cautious. They told me very promptly when I got down there (I don't know whether this might be exaggerated, but anyway it was amusing) that they were all just getting started out on their careers and that it was possible for a *concern or* a man as powerful as Mr. Backus to damage every single one of them in their businesses and professions, legally and every other way. Fur instance, a man like Mr. Hubachek -- he was a junior partner in his father's firm, and his father's firm could be greatly harmed. So they had to be very cautious not to show their hand. That was the explanation given to me. And everybody laughed about this Ku Klux Klan. I was given every courtesy and taken care of while I was down there, and had a whole evening's very thorough conversation. I answered all the questions up to my knowledge.

So then they assured me that they would want to and could give us great help.

They could raise some funds to distribute information, but they had to be absolutely sure of their information, and would I, on the basis of this hearing, the testimony, and what we'd done in the brief -- would I prepare for them an analysis of the Backus project, as it, up to that time, had been outlined by Mr. Backus, so far as we could tell, you see. And could I have it all definitely paged so that you could turn to the point of his testimony. I was pretty thoroughly informed on the whole thing. We had the testimony and went over it, and I prepared them an analysis. It must have been about 5,000 words. It was pretty long, but it pin-pointed every single one of these questions and gave the reference to Mr. Backus' reply, you see, so that he was definitely, according to that, on record for certain things. Other things were more doubtful, but they were indicated, too.

Then I was asked to bring that dawn, and I dubbed it, "Conservation or Confiscation." So that was all read at another one of these night meetings, a reasonable time afterward. It took maybe a month or something like that. Not a word was changed in it, but two of the members of this group that had easier entrée Mr. Backus were asked to submit it to him, in fairness, without revealing that it was a movement. I don't know positively how it was done, but they did go to Mr. Backus and ask him to look it over, because they had an idea that they wanted to circulate that statement, you see, for not enough was known over the stare as a whole. They had in mind that they might circulate quite a number, and they wanted to be sure it was accurate. They had a pleasant enough relationship there so they could at least get to Mr. Backus. He glanced at it, and I don't know how thoroughly he went over it, but at least he indicated that there was no truth in it whatever. It was all -- I believe he said -- a damned lie. But they said, well, now, what is there particularly that you object to. Would you show us? He says, it's all a damn lie. Well, now just which one -- how about this statement -- and so then they read him that and then they read him the reference -- read what he said. And he just waved that all aside -- no importance whatever.

So they authorized the printing of this thing, which must have cost them quite a lot of money. I think they got 5,000 copies first. Mr. Hubachek or Mr. Kelly would know better than I. But my impression is that they finally published not less than 25,000 copies of it and distributed it all over the state of Minnesota, to libraries, every kind of organization. Now I don't know any of the details. I don't know any of the cost. But these young men raised this sum of money for the printing and the distribution.

Well, then, we'd gone a long way ahead. And, of course, Mr. Backus was informed. Then we began to hear from some of his lawyers and from his engineer, who was Mr. Adolph Meyer. Mr. Meyer began speaking before various groups. Then our people attempted to answer, and I think Mr. Hubachek did join in the debate on some of those things. To that extent it cam out into the open.

Well, then, through their various cogitations at these meetings, after having distributed this material, they decided that they must go much farther in the campaign of publicity. One of the members of the group was Jeff Jones, who was one of the principal workers in the Journal. I don't think he was an editor at the time, but he had a very responsible position. And they decided on a campaign, an actual campaign of opposition to Mr. Backus' proposal. And all of a sudden an editorial appeared, very forthright, but very definite in its opposition to the program, stating why it felt the project wasn't in the public interest.

The following day, as I recall it from Jeff Jones, the door opened and Mr. Backus came in and said something like this – some decorative saying: "What in hell do you mean – what do you think you're doing?" and Jeff Jones asked him: "What?" "Well, the editorial that appeared here last night. Don't I sell you my newsprint?" "Oh, yes, we've had very friendly relations, Mr. Backus. But it doesn't decide our editorial policy. I'm sorry you've gone into this. I hope we've done you no injustice," and he was very conciliatory. But Mr. Backus was then on his war horse and he went out just fuming, according to my recollection of what Jeff Jones told me.

Then the battle was on. The Journal continued to publish these editorials, one

after another, a whole series of them, you know. And every time Mr. Backus would open his mouth, or Mr. Meyer would open his mouth, there'd be a new editorial, and there were some debates. They appeared before various organizations. Mr. Backus did too.

Meantime I wasn't in on any of that part except that the next step after the publication of the analysis was that they wanted a constructive program prepared, and they wanted the recommendations for such a program. And they asked me to prepare such a thing, if I could. So I went back once more on the basis of the studies that I had made all through those years, my work at college in landscape architecture, too, what I knew of the forest service and all, and the situation here -- the fact that the timber products and the mineral products were the only things on which there was any basis for industry up here; that practically everybody who earned his living up here earned it in some way in connection with these two industries; and that it would be an extremely difficult thing, even if it had been desirable -- extremely difficult -- to stop all that kind of exploitation of natural resources.

But here we already had set up two organizations -- one in Canada and one in the United States -- which seemed to point fingers toward these as prototypes of a larger program that might be adapted to the whole watershed if it was kept within reasonable limits. And so we went on to analyze what there was here in this watershed, why this watershed was of such great concern to outsiders that they would go to all this trouble that they had already taken to oppose a project supposed to be constructive like Mr. Backus', and why they were alarmed. An analysis showed that this watershed was a unit; that it was of the same type throughout its length and breadth, regardless of any boundaries between the two countries or the state and the province; that it was bisected by the international boundary, but that it was itself a leading waterway of the watershed; that it was a large collection of lakes of unknown number, but many thousands, all connected like a great outspread fan in the two countries, and all converging on Ranier and the Rainy River, and then passing down through Rainy

River to Lake of the Woods and finally out to Hudson Bay; that all these lakes and streams were wooded, with a great variety of timber, but originally largely pine, white Norway pine; that the lakes were unusually beautiful and had attracted the attention of people all over the United States and Canada who had seen them and had become favorite places for wilderness travel in the summer, mainly by canoe; that they were unoccupied on the whole by any kind of settlement; that they were undeveloped except that their timber resources were being used and the water resources, beginning at Namakan and from there down, had been developed for power purposes and storage; that this new program envisaged developing all those big sources of water for storage, and in some cases for power development (that 72-foot dam on Bad Vermillion would have been a power development); that it was not an agricultural area (there was no conflict there nor could there by any conflict on the subject of agriculture, because this was all rock-bound glacial area with very little overcovering); that the only two resources that had shown any economic value for development in the country were timber and mining. Mining was on a very small scale up to that time, but still a possibility. There had been mines that had s started. There'd been a gold boom here one time -- the same time as Klondike, and it left millions of dollars up here in various investments that never came to anything. And there have been several other similar, but small developments -- a rush up in here and then it would be all petered out. But there were very substantial timber interests, especially on the U. S. side, because the Weyerhaeusers were operating over northwest of Duluth and north to here, and they were a very big interest, and Backus was already taking out great amounts of pulpwood fairly close by. And then there was the Shevlin Clarke’s large saw timber operations in Fort Frances. And we acknowledged that you couldn't shut those down without doing great damage, so what we sought was to have those operated under modern forestry principles which were acknowledged by the forest services of both countries and supposedly were one of the reasons for setting aside these two earlier areas in 1909. It was to make sure that any further utilization or exploitation would maintain

the beauty of these lakes and that meant the shores, the beaches, the islands, the waterfalls, and rapids. If you could keep those in their natural state so that in traveling through them, so far as possible, and with a very few exceptions to adjust the logging to it, you'd have everything the public was interested in. You wouldn't need to administer all the background in the same rigid way. If you could keep those things and then carry on all your logging and any other utilization under modern, sustained-yield basis (that would include game, fish, everything of that sort) you'd have the same ideal to follow. And you would then permit continued logging, but on this improved conservation basis, so as not to wreck the country. It would mean that it would be a long, long time recovering, but that you'd have a more sustained yield on the basis of what the country could produce; that your industries would be geared to that same production; that you would then zone, in addition to what was really a zoning of the shorelines, on a larger scale for the entire area, recognizing the principle that cities recognize for their own good, and apply this to the whole watershed to prevent the entry into the heart of this wilderness area of all kinds of conflicting uses, aside from these few industrial uses. That is, you wouldn't permit roads. You wouldn't permit railroads, or settlement, or resorts or homes in distant parts that were far away -- hard to reach. There was no thought of a plane at the time because that hadn't become a problem. Rut it was uneconomic to try to provide way off there in the wilderness somewhere for private use, private homes, or any kind of development of that sort. Those things should be kept on the outside of this whole area, on the lakes like Rainy that were already in contact with roads and railroads. That was the idea of the zoning.

And then there might be a zone a little farther in where they would permit not quite as much, but where you'd still be close to the facilities that you'd get on these outside lakes without having to do a lot of road-building. Those zones would include the lines along the railroads, and wherever you had easy connections with the outside world.

Well, then, the inner part was to be kept absolutely wild and undisturbed, so far as anything you'd see in traveling through there. That was the general principle of zoning. And since it was recognized that this was a geographic unit in the character of what it produced and in its uses, it would be highly desirable if the program could seek to secure the consent of all the governmental agencies in both countries toward the attainment of such a program. In each case, though, it would be carried on under their own jurisdiction, but with the same principles. Well, that was the general idea of this program.

So then I came down with this whole thing worked out, after consulting with a good many people. Then I was authorized and asked to go to Washington, first of all, to lay this program before the Secretary of Agriculture and the chief of the Forest Service.

There's already been (and I hadn't had anything to do with this) quite a squabble between some of the U. S. conservation organizations -- above all the Izaak Walton League -- with the Forest Service about roads in Superior National Forest. They were very critical about the road building that was being done. Well, I had had nothing to do with that. I was up here living quietly and didn't know much about it -- wasn't a member of the Izaak Walton League. When I went to Washington I first went to Mr. Ickes, whom I knew in Chicago and whose son had been here and who had been here himself. He had always been a strong supporter of Teddy Roosevelt.

So Ickes sent me to Gifford Pinchot, who was a friend of his. Gifford Pinchot was no longer a forester, but he lived in his summer home up in the mountains in Pennsylvania. He then sent me to the Forest Service in Washington with a letter, and I went on. The man who was then chief was absent, (I've forgotten what his name was) so I dealt entirely with his deputy, the Assistant Forester, whose name for the second 1 don't recall, but probably shall very soon. It was apparent almost from the start that he felt that I was a busybody who had come to criticize him and that much of what had happened -- he took more or less that attitude, you see. It took quite a little while, although I didn't at any point agree with him on that, you see. And

It seemed to me that at last I had pretty well disabused his mind of the idea that I'd been sent there to lambaste him. So then he began to listen to this thing. We read the whole thing, and he raised points that he thought were debatable, or might be difficult.

But by the end of the first long session that I had he took a very different attitude and asked me to come again. He said that he was going to give it very careful consideration, and he did, 11e was very thorough. He finally had a great many very constructive ideas. He said: If we start out approving a program of that sort, which seems to us logical, you will have to have large public support. You will have to have an organization, and I think you should do so-and-so. You should interest such people, and he gave me the names of a whole lot of people, mostly in the United States. And he said you need some more help in Canada. But he agreed to do this, finally -- to have his chief go over this very carefully and restate it in their language, and in view of all their principles. Some things he was rather reluctant to agree upon. This margin along the shores, you see. I thought it should be up to the skyline. I didn't think there should be any place in traveling there that didn't appear to be fully forested, you see. He said they couldn't do that, because in some places the skyline would be half a mile away up these shores, you see. There would be too much economic loss there. And he said, if you had two hundred feet you'll never be able to tell, Oberholtzer, from the shore, whether there's been any cutting in there at all, because it's all going to be selective cutting; and you won't see that unless you go right up in there.

So he was opposed to any skyline provision, which I liked very much, and still do. And there's been more and more approach to that since then. But he promised to have a restatement by the forester on the whole thing available for a meeting that we were hoping to hold in Duluth in November, as I recall it, 1927, et the Arrowhead Association.

Well, the Arrowhead Association had reluctantly, it seemed to us, joined in this,

and they had, of course, a good many representatives in that association of people who were utilizing the forest, you see, and not always in the best way. So their attitude was doubtful, but our people felt that it was extremely important to have the support of the Arrowhead Association, because they were the most powerful of all the organizations in Duluth. They represented power companies and lumber companies as well as recreational interests. But there was a great question in everybody's mind. They knew that, but they finally accepted the invitation of the Arrowhead Association to hold this meeting there, and in the meantime our group in their loose organization had asked for representatives of various organizations like American Legion, the Izaak Walton *League,* the game associations, the women's clubs and various groups like that. And those representatives planned to meet in November 1927, just a reasonable length of time to give the head of the forest *service a* chance to reply.

Well the reply came in time for the meeting, and the reply was highly favorable. It preserved a certain decency of independence, and it restated things, but they amounted to the same thing. Some of ours, we thought, were a little more direct, but it certainly seemed to everybody who went over it a very whole-hearted acceptance of the principles and the need for coordinating our policies with the Ontario policy, the need of zoning on a large scale, and the desire to shut out conflicting uses like these dams. That was one of the hardest things, because they are included in a multiple use program, and many of their people didn't favor that at all. It also accepted the restricted entry and occupancy of the country, which is extremely important from our point of view, because if you're going to have occupancy in the heart of the wilderness, then you've got to provide roads and all kinds of facilities. And if you were going to travel in there and think you're traveling in the wilderness and then suddenly came across a little settlement of that sort, it'd be a great disappointment.

So that program was adopted at the meeting. Now I'm sorry that I have to say so much about what I'd been asked to do. I had to do this. I had no desire to be

connected with a movement or to be tied up with anything of that sort, but I did have a very strong desire, if possible, to get some kind of a public movement that wouldn't be just dependent on a few people up here, you see, but a broader base. And here finally we had a program accepted by the Secretary of Agriculture, very warmly the whole. There was no use in going to the Dominion man, because the Dominion had nothing to do with it, but I had gone to the similar man in their forest service in Ontario, and through very good friends up there we had succeeded in getting a rather grudging consent to hold our meeting and propose this program, but nothing further.

Well, then we included several people who had appeared at that earlier hearing from the Canadian side as representatives from there, one especially who was the city attorney for Winnipeg, named Prudhomme, a very, very capable, high-grade man. So we had some representation at this meeting, but not a great deal, not as much as we would have liked. But, anyway, this program was approved with the consent of the Secretary of Agriculture. And the next thing, I was asked to agree to go out and head up this organization and to find a name for it. These were some of the things I was supposed to do. And I reluctantly agreed to go out for six months to get it started, and I suggested that they call it the Quetico-Superior Council for those two areas that had already been established, you see, because those were tile prototypes for the whole thing. Quetico was already there. Superior National was already there, and they were a million acres each. We had two million out of ten million that we hoped would be included.

That didn't mean that the ten million acres would be all forever wild, but it meant that within the ten million acres of similar land these principles would be applied insofar as they were applicable under the situation. Some places it would be all industry, like the mining towns, you see -- the mining that was going on -- a lot of that in Ely. And some places' where the sawmills were located there would have to be a good deal of tolerance. So that program was launched; that name was accepted. I didn't have any difficulty about any of that. I wasn't -- if anybody had had some

suggestion -- but nobody seemed to have a suggestion of another name, and so it was, called Quetico-Superior, and it was agreed that there should be set up an organization called the Quetico-Superior Council. And I continued to be called down to Minneapolis to confer with Kelly and Hubachek. Kelly was the junior partner, and I was turned over to him for a lot of these things. And he has followed it most closely in detail ever since.

Miss K.: Was he a partner of Hubachek, Senior?

Mr. O.: Well, he was working in Hubachek's office. I think F.B. himself was a partner; probably Kelly wasn't a partner at that time. I'm not absolutely sure. But it wasn't called Hubachek and Kelly then; it was Hubachek. It was later when the father stepped out. The father's health required it, you see, and then he died. Mr. Kelly was taken in as a partner, I think, but I don't know the exact time. But he was Mr. Hubachek, Jr.'s right-hand man in everything. He kept very careful track of everything that developed. They had all the letters that I wrote after I agreed to go out. Well, the next thing was that if we were going to have an organization like this, we had to have some funds, and hopefully we'd have some kind of a small office.

But meantime I stayed up here and continued doing what I could here. It went on a large part of a year that way. We didn't have any funds. We just did the best we could. But if there was some printing done they took care of that. Well, I think it was in 1928 that I had to move down. Then they were expecting to have some kind of a campaign to raise funds. It took a long time before they had much of anything in the way of funds, but I moved dawn with my mother in the autumn. And meantime, the debates were going on more and more with Mr. Backus and with Mr. Meyer and sometimes others, and I immediately began to be asked to go before organizations like the Rotary Club, and there was not any of those groups that I didn't talk to anywhere around the Twin Cities, men, women, and every other kind of an outfit.

After I got down there, we still carried on for quite a long time without any kind of an office. There was so such correspondence that I couldn't do it all alone,

and so then I used to carry some of the most important of this to Mrs. Clara Martin who had a letter service in the Vendome Hotel. She turned out to be a very remarkably capable woman, and I would dictate directly to her to save a lot of time – no taking down in shorthand first, you see. I could sit right there behind her and she could take it down almost as fast as I could talk, and I'd take half a day there, maybe, and get out a huge number of letters. We did that for quite a while and her price was very reasonable and she seemed to like it very much. It was different from any kind of dictation she'd ever had. It wasn't just -yours of so-and-so received, thank you very much and yours truly. It was very different, and apparently it appealed to her like everything. She entered into it with great enthusiasm, and we turned out vast numbers of letters, because one of the things they all felt -- and that had been urged by our adviser in the Forest Service -- was that we should have a large board of national advisers. So I started out to get these people, and we had a very impressive list when we finally got all their answers. It was remarkable how well they responded. We had various members of the Roosevelt family -- Teddy's family, you see. Franklin wasn't on the scene then. One was the Governor of Honolulu, or Hawaii, and -- oh, there were all sorts of people. We had artists like Lorado Taft, and scientists of all kinds -- not only the forestry scientists, but every kind of scientist was represented there, the very highest, and they all went into this quite enthusiastically. We promised not to bore them too much, but when there was something where we felt their advice was of particular importance, we asked them for it. One was Compton, and he always responded just wonderfully. He spent his honeymoon up here and he never forgot it.

So then we finally got a little office in the Grain Exchange -- I think it was ten dollars a month, and it was just a little cubby-hole up on the top floor. They held a meeting and they raised some funds. They authorized getting a stenographer, and so then I asked Mrs. Martin -- without any hope that I ever could get her, because she had a large business of very faithful clients. But she came enthusiastically

over there to us at a very small salary -- I forget what it was. Maybe I'm wrong, but I don't think it was more than thirty dollars a month. I may be wrong; I hope I am. But anyway everything was a lot less expensive than now. And she just threw herself into the work with great fervor, and she turned out beautiful letters. I think that's part of the reason we got such a good response. They were so nicely typed -- clear and fine -- never a mistake. She never let the slightest little thing -- if it was in there she wouldn't let the letter go out. She'd have to stay long afterward maybe that night to get it ready.

Well, now a lot of those things are beside the point. We got the thing established as a going concern. We had a lot more to do other than just waging the campaign. We had to see how in the world we were going to live meantime, and we had to try to raise funds. Fred Winston was extremely useful there.

Mr. F.: Did he become active after Hubachek?

Mr. O.: Well, he was in this group that they invited, and he was particularly interested in the help of the American Legion. And he and one or two others (another very fine man who died -- I'll recall his name, too) wanted it put before the American Legion. So I was invited to go before the national convention at Hibbing the first year that I was down there. I knew nothing about the American Legion, except by reputation. And of course hitherto they had been mostly spending their time on this question of a bonus. I don't know whether you remember that, but that came up after the First World War. And some of these men, like Fred, thought that they ought to be concerning themselves about a lot more constructive things like this, and some of their leaders were very strong for our program. So they dragged me up to Hibbing to speak, and I spoke before an enthusiastic crowd of the Legion fellows, and then they adopted a resolution that had been prepared for them, condemning the Backus project. Well, it was an awful blow to Mr. Backus, having the Legion -- he put a great deal of importance on that -- that was something different. He was used to the Izaak Walton League and all, but to have the Legion in on this thing too -- he was very much

troubled. And they never failed to continue to try to break up that original resolution. It was taken to the state body and approved by them, then taken to the national body and approved by them. And the resolution that the national body finally passed was written by Fred Winston. It's a beautiful piece o£ work. It's a masterpiece. It's been very, very nice. I want you to be sure you know about that. It has stood all through these years, though governors and others tried to tear it down. Oh my, yes, and the Conservation Commissioner -- he'd go to all these conventions, and there were all the reasons in the world why they should never have adopted such a fool thing, you see. But it's still there, and it was taken to the Canadian Legion, and the whole national body approved it there. Well, of course, those seemed big victories. They didn't bring us anything in particular, and that part hasn't been stressed in these later years. It's been sort of talked down, or very quiet, but it's there yet, and I think it'll come up again if we succeed in getting this area.

Fred and I had talked this over before, and he was enthusiastic about it and wrote the resolution. It sought to have the two governments, when they set up this area as an area for young people particularly that it should be dedicated to the service people of both countries in World War I. Later they added in both World Wars, the service men and women in both world wars. It is to be dedicated as a memorial -- not monuments or anything of that sort. But here would be a memorial to these survivors. It was something that had an especial appeal for young people and we thought it was a finer type of memorial than anything you could possibly do. And I think that its full impact is yet to be felt. I think that if we succeed in getting now more constructive action in Canada and ever should get the greater part of this area, that they most likely will dedicate it in that way. Oh. I'd be immensely pleased, especially if it would happen during Fred's life, you know, because his resolution was beautifully done, and it was so sincere. From then on, as long as he was able to be active in any way, Fred was always at these conventions. He seldom spoke himself; he got others to do it. He'd get the commanders of the Legion

in the state to speak, and very effectively. And usually the state would have people there. I could name a lot of them, one particularly who appeared always to try to break this up. And there would be hot arguments with him -- (that was Mr. Wilson, Chet Wilson). He thought they had no business apparently to meddle in things, of that sort. But it still stands, and it's been pretty quiet the last few years. There hasn't been the same effort to break it down apparently. It stands. Now whether it can be revived --. All the resolutions are there, just dozens and dozens of these resolutions, you see -- state and national, local and all.

Now that carries the story up to the time of the beginning of our real organization in Minneapolis and the setting up of our national board of advisors.

Mr. F.: This was when?

Mr. O.: Well, it was set up in November 1928. Now, I'll lave to check on that. I might be mistaken. Maybe it was 1927. No, it must have been 1927, because there was a lot done. It must have been 1928 by the time we had our national board of advisors. Then it was realized that we should take some action. Shipstead of his own accord had introduced (he was aware of all this publicity and the problem) a bill in the Senate which sought to curb the right of people like Mr. Backus to dam these border lakes without the consent of Congress.

Well, he had a fine point there. And so then when we learned of that, we asked whether he would consent to our modifying it to include other features of our program, and he did, and we were allowed to have a big hand in the drafting of that final bill that went in under his name in the Senate and under Newton's name. Newton was in the House representing Minneapolis, you see, and he was strong for our group. And so it was called the Shipstead-Newton bill. Newton was of a very different persuasion than Shipstead, but it was supposed to give us additional strength, you see. We had a more liberal and a more conservative man, and Newton was very close to people like Heffelfingers and some of those other big ones that were helping us.

And so that was put in. But we knew then that we were going to have a real fight when that went in. We were right in the thick of this campaign with these

frequent editorials from the Minneapolis Journal, but that was the only paper that did it. The Minneapolis Tribune, which at that time was a fine paper and was putting on a marvelous campaign for agriculture, kept very quiet. It was whispered around that they were favorable to Mr. Backus, but as it turned out, that wasn't true. I think the whole reason was that Mr. Murphy felt, well, it's the Journal's baby. And I could see that it was perfectly logical that when they took that over and pounded away, he didn't like to come in and play second, you see.

Mr. F.: Did you have any editorial support outside of the Twin Cities, or in St. Paul?

Mr. O.: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. The Ridder papers gave us good support, but the Tribune, for a long time didn't say anything, and a lot of people interpreted it as meaning friendship for the other side, you see. Mr. Murphy never said so. I finally met Mr. Murphy, and I thought he was a high-grade gentleman, that fellow; and very capable. He put on this marvelous campaign for agriculture, and very able writing. But we asked him to appear at a dinner where they were going to give funds, and he appeared and gave us one of the largest checks of all. I think he gave us five hundred dollars and he had a beautiful editorial -- just beautiful. You couldn't have wanted anything better. It all came at the same time. That was his reply; we didn't need anything more.

And so then our strategy people -- it was still the meeting of this Ku Klux Klan every once in a while, you see -- but it was narrowed down to fewer people that were working on strategy. Hubachek and Kelly had a lot to do with it. Hubachek is particularly fond of strategy; he loves it. And he's got all kinds of ideas. But I don't know where the idea originated (it wasn't mine) that we must get a joint memorial resolution from the whole legislature of Minnesota in favor of the Shipstead-Nolan measure which was pending and having hearings there, and I was being sent to them every once in a while. Backus would be there, and men like Meyer, and some of the lawyers. That's where we did get a certain advantage through my

knowledge of the region, because that was one thing I was proud of, and I never gave up anywhere there. I didn't feel that I ever need to be backward because I would have been very stupid if I hadn't known this watershed. I felt that I knew this watershed better than any man living, or probably any man that ever lived, because I don't think any man that ever lived would waste so much time on it. But it had been my business to travel all over this watershed, and know everybody in it, you see, and know as many of the Indians as possible, and certainly know about the game. I'd had papers taken about the moose, on the habits of the moose, by the London Zoological Society, and photos, and the National Geographic magazine had bought an article in which I then urged action by the United States and Canada for the protection of this whole area, you see. That's a long time ago. They bought that from me, but they bought it with the idea that if the subject came up some time they'd be prepared. They took my photos and used those for their animal book that they were just getting out (black and white photos) and they used them until just two or three years ago. Now they use color photos. They never published the article, and a year or so ago I asked one of my friends what happened to it. I said, "I suppose it's down in the morgue somewhere." He got it and sent me a copy so I could read it you see. And he said that whoever got it for him said that they wished I would write them another one, up to date, you see. Well, I don't know, he didn't write me that. I only heard of that through Will Zimmerman, who was active on our committee. But anyway, it was felt that we'd have to get this resolution.

[Interruption]

Mr. O.: Now, I don't know whose idea it was to get a joint session of the legislature to memorialize Congress to pass the so-called Shipstead-Newton bill, as it was known then. In any case, we took that up promptly and with a good deal of vigor. And we found that we were running into...

Mr. F.: What year?

Mr. O.: Well, that must have been 1929 -- the winter of the session perhaps of '29

and ‘30, but it might have been a year earlier. I'd have to check on that to be sure. But a joint resolution was prepared and introduced in both houses and led to a great number of hearings and very hot debate and very strong feeling. Very strong feelings were exhibited by many in the legislature on the subject, and a very determined effort was made to block it, and some pretty bitter things were said about the people who were trying to put this through.

The Minneapolis Journal was still supporting us, and many other organizations. The women's clubs and pretty nearly all organizations like that were over there at various times speaking to their representatives, and appearing at hearings, and it looked pretty hopeless. I think the Senate, above all, was blocking it. But though I was in this right from the beginning, going through with all of it, I don't recall very much that was startling in the way it was opposed. It was a very long drawn-out procedure before we ever got final votes on it, and I think it was right at the end of the session that it finally went through. When it did, I think it went through by a large majority. The opposition was pretty well played out, and it left them in a very lonely position as I recall it.

Mr. F.: Do you remember any of the leaders of the opposition?

Mr. O.: Well, I hadn't known any of these well before. I remember the leader in the House, and of course, he'd been appearing. That was this man at Little Fork…

Mr. F.: Representative Chilgren -- Ed Chilgren?

Mr. O.: Yes. Of course he was on the House Committee of Lands, among other things, you see. He may not have been chairman of that, but he has been for many years, and so we had to run his gauntlet. I think it was at a later performance when he made his choice speech. We'd appeared before his committee in the morning, and I had spoken in favor of what we wanted. And in the afternoon, he, as chairman of the committee, spoke the mind of a committee -- spoke it for them. His face was very red, and he had a very eloquent speech as to why in the world we should never take federal business in our hands, and all that kind of thing. And then he gave his peroration. He stood way up on tiptoe, and he says -- after he'd said everything that should have

put me in prison for many years: "He's a -- he's a hermit." I was a hermit. I've told you that, you know. Well, I figure it was probably the later thing that did that. Anyway, it brought the house down. We all laughed -- even I did, too. What his conception of a hermit Was, I don't know, but it was a very terrible thing there's no question about that.

Well, anyway, after every known device to delay it -- like committees that couldn't meet -and then they didn't meet - they were invited out to lunch or something -- couldn't get there -postponed action -- and other things were ahead of it. And you couldn't get at that. Oh, one of the things was the rules committee. Now that I do remember very well, because Fred Winston took quite a part in that. Then there was a man who was the head of that rules committee for many years, and is still living, and lives -- and has this -- you would know who he is -- he has a resort up there...

Mr. F.: Roy Dunn?

Mr. O.: That's right -- Roy Dunn was the czar of the house, and he would not let that come out, you see. Of course lie was all for the company. Fred dealt with him, and Fred was always fair to all of these people. He'd say, "Well, Ober, I'm going to go and see Roy Dunn." And he said, "I think he's a fair-shooter, no matter what he is. That's the only reason he holds his position. He's fair with everybody even if he is very conservative." And so he went to see Roy Dunn, and finally I think when Roy Dunn realized that the sponge was up, and that it was a hopeless thing, he let it come out for vote in the House. So it was duly embossed and sent on as the action of the legislature, and it was overwhelming.

Mr. F.: Among those legislators that you mentioned supported the cause was there a Representative or Senator Stockwell?

Mr. O.: Stockwell -- oh, yes, Stockwell.

Mr. F.: And Hjalmar Petersen?

Mr. O.: Yes, that's right. Maybe if I looked at the list I could think of a good many

more. Well, of course, Airs. Paige, and there were two or three women from other districts that she was always able to keep in line. She had a lot of influence with them. No, I couldn't give you a list, and I don't know as we had one. I suppose those things are all shown in the records of the House -- how people voted. But, I don't remember that with the same...

Miss K.: Was Stockwell a strong supporter?

Mr. O.: Oh, my, yes.

Miss K.: Did he speak strongly...?

Mr. O.: Oh, my, yes -- he couldn't do any more than he did. He went around angrily demanding why they were taking such a reckless stand on a bill of great public importance, you see. Oh, no, he'd go right to these various people and take them to task, and he never seemed a bit downcast if they didn't seem to respond. He'd tell them just what he thought of them just the same. The sequel of that was, though, that having got that through, the first thing I knew I was asked to go down to the session of the legislature in South Dakota where some man had written -- member of the legislature -- and assured F. B. Hubachek that if we came there we could get the same sort of action out of a joint session of the legislature in South Dakota, of all things.

Well, it sounded too easy after what we'd just been through. It was just before the end of the legislature, too. And it sounded so easy that I could hardly believe it, you see. I went there reluctantly. But the man met me and everything was laid out. I never saw anything so smooth in my life. There was a joint session already sitting in there. I came in, spoke my little piece, and they passed the resolution the same day and sent it right on to Washington. And so we had two -- we had Minnesota and we had South Dakota, you see. It was nothing, just a drop of the hat, and it was all done. I went away the same afternoon. He had that all in his hand, but apparently he was one of those unusual fellows and that was an unusual legislature, I judge, where they didn't seem to have so many controversial things, and he was influential enough so that if he said: Well, now, here, they just passed this in

Minnesota -- it must be good, and why could anybody here object to it. Of course, I didn't put up that kind of an argument at all. I put it up solely on its value for all these people.

But we had those two things then to help us with the passage of the Shipstead-Nolan Bill. There we ran into every known device to defeat it. There was the main Shipstead-Nolan Bill which Shipstead had introduced into the Senate and then permitted us to expand to include some of the main portions of our program, you see -- the maintenance of shorelines, the exclusion of entry or building and about all remaining public lands in the area being withdrawn from entry --- Let's see what the other word was that they used -- the word they did their best to knock out of there, because if that was out, there were some other ways that they could get the use of those lands, you see -- tie them up. We had an awful fight to keep in this original language.

One of the devices to destroy the bill was a bill by Pittenger, the member from Duluth who supposedly was presenting a similar, but more logical and temperate bill for the same purposes, you see. Oh, we had a dreadful time. He was the man who played Mr. Backus' game above all in the House. Among other things was this device where he introduced a highly-adorned bill for the same purpose, but it took out some of the objectionable features that weren't supposed to have lessened the value of the bill. But when you read it carefully you discovered that it authorized the very things that our bill forbade, you see. It authorized them. How he could ever hope to get such a thing through, you know, was very difficult to see, but I guess it was a device to delay and confuse and everything like that.

Mr. F.: Nolan was a Congressman, was that right?

Mr. O.: Well, he became a Congressman because Newton was not reelected. It was while this thing was pending. Newton was not reelected, though he was Hoover's secretary, and all the Hoover people were very, very strong for him. I think he finally withdrew, and then there was an election. Nolan had been Lieutenant governor at one time…

Mr. F.: Of Minnesota?

MR. O.: Yes. And he was known as a very close personal friend of Backus. In legislation his reputation was poor, the things he'd supported while he was in the legislature. So many people were dreadfully opposed to him. But when he was running for Congress in the place of Newton, and there was somebody else running, Fred Winston went to see him and committed him to our program. And he said very frankly, "Yes, I was a friend of Backus, but I don't stand with Backus on this project at all. I can assure you, Fred that that's true." And Fred said: "Would you be willing to give me your written pledge on this and that if you are elected you'd give us your utmost assistance?" "I surely would," he said.

So Fred accepted that, and we proceeded throughout that campaign without attacking him in any way. We didn't do an awful lot for him. We didn't go out of our way to, but we didn't attack hem, and he was vulnerable on some things he'd done in the past. And Fred said: "Ober, he's a straight-shooter. He told me absolutely that he will protect that." And you know when he was elected the first thing he did was to write me, and I had to go over to see him. Fred and I went over there, and we gave him a categorical statement of the various points that we wanted upheld, that we thought were in danger, and where we were running into difficulties. And he never failed us. He stuck when many other went against us.

Well, one of the devices used – oh, there were so many things that happened in the campaign because the people who were opposed (the Backus crowd) had every known device. Mr. Backus organized, among other things, a special conservation group, called The Outers' Club.

It only cost a dollar to belong, so it was easy to belong. The three main officials were all officials in Mr. Backus' company, and they got up a great many one dollar subscriptions and memberships all of a sudden. Here sprang up this organization that I didn't know anything about. I'd been presenting our side in Washington for the committee and I'd handed in a list of all the people who were supporting us. And then the chairman of the committee said: "Well, but Mr. Oberholtzer, how about this Outers' Club? This is a telegram I received this morning, that they have so many members -- I think it was pretty nearly a thousand), representative citizen of Minneapolis, and they are bitterly opposed to this legislation. They say it will do such-and-such damage and such-and-such damage. What do you think of that?" "Well," I said, "I'll have *to* tell you frankly that I never heard of them. It's something new, but I will promise to get you the earliest possible information on them." And I did, and went back and we found that the officers were all members of Backus' organization, that they hadn't consulted the rank and file at all in the meeting. They simply tools this upon themselves to wire that the organization with so many members was unalterably opposed.

So then we asked for the right to go before this new club and we were told that there were people in there Who were absolutely surprised w-en they found out, and they said if you can get that in open meeting, we'll support you to the limit. So we asked for that, and the man on the Journal, whose business it was to follow all these things, went with me, and he was a live-wire in reporting these things.

When we went there together that evening, we couldn't get in the

meeting. The doors were locked. And we were told they were in executive session, and we could wait upstairs. We were upstairs, and we could hear this great thumping and bumping and everything and this loud excitement down there, and finally we were told to come down, about a half an hour later, and present our story.

Well, meantime, some of these members who didn't know how they were being used but were for us, had discovered what had happened in their name, you see. Oh, they just raised Cain. And so the rest of them were a pretty well subdued, these Backus officials. But we were asked to speak and we presented our side quietly and told of our surprise when this organization new in conservation had taken this action. And there was an overwhelming and thumping vote for us.

That was just one of many tricks that must have cost the company a lot of money. Then they bought a magazine. It was an outdoor magazine and it wasn't too well known, but I think it was called Outdoor Magazine of the North -- some special name like that and the North was in it. The manager of it had a plane of his own in which he flew to Winnipeg and he flew to all the points in this area where people were living. He flew up here while I was away and visited most of our supporters. He called on a resort operated by a woman named bars. McPeek and this is the way she said he operated. He said: "Do you know Mr. Oberholtzer?" "Oh yes, we've known him a long time." "He's down in the legislature, isn't he? Oh, yes, he's in the legislature." "But, Mrs. McPeek, did you realize how he's representing your interests up here? Did you know that he's against you entirely? He doesn't seem to be, does he? I know he's a very

credible fellow, but you should hear what he's saying down there and what he said about these resorts." "Why, I can't believe that. I don't think that could possibly be true." "Well, you're supporting him, though -- your name was on a list of the resorts up here that wanted this bill to get through."

And that's the way he'd go on, and she reported that to me. We found out he was going to all these places and offering them free advertisements in the magazine. Then he'd fly to Winnipeg, and the next thing we knew there was quite a piece in the paper telling how the mayor of Winnipeg was for Mr. Backus' project. But he thought all those things helped. And so we had to counter those as fast as they came up. And finally it had gone through the Senate overwhelmingly, and the House Committee had taken action, but we couldn't get it out of the Rules Committee, which was in charge of a man named Snell, who was quite famous at the time. He'd held this position for years, from New York State, and any legislation that was not favored by some of the old-liners who were for the big companies wouldn't come up for a vote, and Snell wouldn't let this come out for a vote. Fred Winston was in Washington at the time, living there, practicing law there. And he was helping me a great deal. That's exactly the situation that he was wonderful at. He had lots of courage. He never hesitated when something like that came up and you couldn't get anywhere. He would go right to the man and demand to be heard, you see. That was very fine. He did that in the legislature, and he did that in Congress. I hesitated to go to Snell. I didn't know him. I didn't know anything.

about him at all, except what I heard. But we knew that it was stymied right there.

And so Fred, who always felt that you could take men like that that they had a better side -- and that if you appealed to them in the right way you could get their truthful answer. So he went to Snell and he told me: "I know what Snell does all right, but I think he, too, is a straight-shooter. I think he'd do what he says. He says he can't let this out because a sort of delegation opposes it. He didn't say whom, but he said he won't let it out for that reason." There were only a few days left in the session, and it'd gone through the Senate and Shipstead had said if you can get this to a vote in the 1-1ouse, even if they make some small amendment that'll require further action by the Senate, I'll guarantee to hold the Senate in session as long as possible to act on this so as to get it done. Otherwise it would have had to go to an entirely new Congress, you see, and we had worked like everything on the thing.

So Fred went to him and he said: "Fred -- or -- Mr. Winston, if you will go and get a resolution from the Minnesota delegation asking me to let this out, I'll do it. It'll be available immediately for vote." All right. So Fred came and told me and he said: "I've already gone to see the chairman of this committee," who was a Minnesotan from down around Red Wing. He was there a long, long time, very influential on farm matters.

Mr. F.: Andresen?

Mr. O.: Yes, Andresen. But we knew he didn't stand with us. And I wasn't pleased at all with a lot of his performance. He didn't seem to be entirely honest with us in the way he did it. He'd always have other

reasons why he couldn't do it, you see, and there was a sort of a snarl. He didn't like us; we were a sort of a nuisance. And yet he was a very influential man on account of the Agriculture Committee. He was chairman of the Agriculture Committee, as well as being on this House Committee of Lands. I guess he was chairman of that, too.

Fred went to him and asked for a session that afternoon, just a very brief session. Andresen says: "You can't get it. You can't get it, Fred." "Well, why not?" "Well, they're too busy," he says. "These are busy men. It's going to be approaching the end here, and they've got all kinds of business. We can't fool around with this now. Why didn't you come to me three months ago?"
Well, it wasn't the problem then. But Fred said, "Now, look here. We want this this afternoon. Are you going to say no? Here's our list of newspaper comment, (he had all these things right here) from the state of Minnesota, your state. Are you, in the face of this and in the face of the Senate action, are you going to say that this bill is lost because you can't get together here ten minutes and make up your mind whether or not to ask Snell?" And so he says, "I'll see what I can do." And he got them together. And Fred says: "Now they're going to meet at two o'clock (or whatever it was) in the afternoon. You're not to come, Ober, but you come with me. You can wait outside the door." I didn't want to come.

Fred went in there. And he never minced words when he did these things. He never minced words at all. He just told them point-blank: "This is something that the state is absolutely determined to have, and

you know it and you know why. And you also know why you're opposing this thing. Now is this going to go back to the newspapers in your home constituencies? Is that the way you want it to be, or are you going to do the fair thing here by us and urge Snell to let this out this evening?

Well, they took an affirmative vote on it right then and there. First man coming out the door was Andresen. He walked up to me. He was just frothing at the mouth. He says: "Oberholtzer, I'll be damned if any such outrage happens again in this committee. When some citizen comes to me and tells me what we've got to do in this committee, there's going to be something different happen." Oh, he was so enraged he didn't know what to do. He was one of those who was opposing it, but it was too late. And the thing was acted on in the House at half-past eleven the last night, went over to the Senate, and Shipstead was waiting, and there had to be one slight little change. He got them to accent that at once, and it passed, and that was on, I think, the 10th of July (but I'm not absolutely sure of- the date) 1930. And we had the Shipstead-Nolan Hill. Otherwise we would have had to start all over again.

Mr. F.: Shipstead had had no trouble getting it through the Senate?

MR. O.: Well, not too much. No, he didn't have too much trouble and he had some wonderful allies there that helped, you see. Hut there were Senators that were available, apparently, to the electric power interests. There was one electric power man there. I don't remember his name, but he apparently represented the whole industry. And the Minnesota Power and Light Company wore opposed to us, because it ran into one project they had called Gabbro-Bald Eagle up there northeast of Duluth. They had acquired it through the Weyerhaeusers. The Weyerhaeusers were in the habit

when they cut over lands of turning those over to the Minnesota Power and Light for stock. And the Minnesota Power ant Light would then use that for flowage, and they'd have more water storage, you see. And that had been a procedure for many years. And at that time, when that was done, it was possible to pay for the lands, which were really worth nothing, *a* dollar or so an acre. They'd get rid of them; they wouldn't have to pay taxes on them. But they'd get compensation in stock. And in those days those electric corporations were able, no matter how many companies they had under them, or how much stock they issued, to juggle their rates so they would always pay a dividend. And so companies like the Weyerhaeusers were taking these lands that were no longer of any use to them, turning them over to the Minnesota Power and Light Company, and they were considerable stockholders in the company and getting dividends. Of course, that was changed afterwards under Franklin Roosevelt. That was bitterly fought. He had that all changed so that they couldn't do that. They had to issue for value received on the stock, you see. There had to be a show of some additional earnings or something of that sort, rather than just transfer of these lands.

Well, that was one thing we ran into. And that ran had come to me early in the sessions one day and introduced himself, a pretty nice looking gentleman. The fellow puts his arm around me immediately and says, "Now, young wan, the Minnesota Power and Light is all for this, of course, and I represent them as well as certain other clients of very high character;" and he said, "We have no objection to this bill of yours, if it weren't for this conflict. But if we couldn't go ahead with the

Power and Light and I think you could appreciate that. We had started that before you put in your bill." It is true that they had put in these dams -the first one -- the start of them. They were only five feet high or something like that, but they flooded the shoreline. But they said they had to have, in order to complete the project, of which this was the first step, ten feet more, and without that they would lose some million dollars.

Well, we didn't know anything about this when the Shipstead-Nolan Bill went in. It came to our attention through them. When they asked us to make an exception of that project, why we said we don't know anything about it. We've got to go up and investigate it, and you can't make an exception unless there's a real difference between your projects and these of Mr. Backus. And so they said, well anytime that you want to come, we'll be all ready. We'll take you right up there. We'll have a man, winter or summer. And so during an interval in the winter I came back, and I went over to Duluth and was taken up. It was, oh, a very cold day there -- just frightfully cold. And I looked this all over and got all the facts, made all the measurements and everything. And then we had to write them and thank them and say that we were sorry we couldn't agree with them, because if we made that exception, why our bill would be worthless, if we let one crowd go through, because there was no difference whatever in the actual problem there. The only point that they had made eras that they had started it. That is, they'd put these dams in. But they had no authority= nobody ever gave them the authority. The state didn't. The Federal government didn't. And they tried to make it appear

that one of these forest supervisors up there had at least winked at it, but they had never been given any actual authority, whatever his attitude might have been. So we couldn't consistently say, well yes, that's all right, and still go ahead opposing Backus.

So then they said, well they'd like to have us to a dinner. They' have a meeting of their directors and invite us to dinner. And they invited Fred and me to dither, and it was beautifully appointed. Oh, it was excellent -- food, wine, everything. Then when the dinner was over, they made an introductory speech. The Duluth Herald was one of the stockholders. The publisher of that was there. He was one of the directors. One of the Weyerhaeusers was there. He was one of the directors. Men of that sort were on the board, you see, and very substantial citizens up then I had to get up and explain how I'd gone up there and what we'd fount and the fact that we had never been able to find a shred of authorization for these things, either from the state or federal government, and how it would place us in a very difficult position if we were openly to say that they ought to be excluded. Oh, my gracious, after they'd given us all "his hospitality, they thought we were just a bunch of bums, you know. Oh, they thought it was terrible. But we never could consent. But Shipstead was sensitive on that subject, and he had a lot of supporters there in Duluth. The company boasted that such and such a percentage of all the families in the area owned stock, you see, and that they were going to lose on account of this. And Shipstead finally insisted and he said that Norris said well, there was a question here as to fairness, that no matter what he thought, he always wanted to be fair to everybody, you see. And he thought the best way to do that was to have an amendment

which would say that they were leaving that question to the state since state lands were involved, and it gave the state an opportunity to adopt a water-power…

Mr. F.: This Was Senator Norris?

Mr. O.: Yes, Senator Norris. So then that had to go in. Well, we were sorry because it was kind of- an obstacle, and the bill finally passed with that in. The Senate had it in, too. It didn't approve what the company had done, but it said, with the exception of any enterprise started before such-and-such a date, before our bill was launched. And that made an easy way of handling it.

But, anyway, the Shipstead-Nolan Bill passed in that way, and there had been this substitute bill by Pittenger. He was a Congressman from Duluth. And there had been protests from the Ontario government. They called it a protest. Mr. Backus advertised it as a protest from the Dominion government. All that happened really was that he'd been powerful enough to get Ontario to say that they feared our bill was going to hurt their interests, and they sent that to the Dominion government, and the Dominion government in fairness had to send that to our Department of State But they didn't say they were sorry or anything of the sort. And that was easily handled, because we agreed to an amendment that said: Nothing in this bill shall be interpreted as in any way interfering with existing rights or agreements between the two governments. We didn't lose anything by that, and that removed the false objection that Backus had managed to raise, you see. And newspapermen came to us first the day before and

frightened us and said, "Do you realize what's coming tomorrow -- that Backus is going to get this protest from the Dominion government? That's very serious. How can you get your bill through?"

And I was alarmed. I went down to the big hotel there to telephone to Mr. Tyng, a lawyer in New York, to tell him about it, and was going in through the revolving door, and here comes Mr. Backus, whom I'd been meeting in the hearings, you see, but in a kind of a formal, cold manner. And he just looked as if he was going to the finest party. He was so dressed up -- a brand new suit, brand new fedora hat and a cane. And he was coming out all smiles, so happy with himself about this protest from the Dominion government the next day, which was causing me all this anguish. And he sees me. And he stops and says: "How do you do, my boy. Well, nice to see you here in the Willard." "Well," he says, "so you're still climbing the tree?" "Oh, yes," I said, "pretty tall tree, isn't it? I don't know, maybe I'll get up there yet." "Well, we'll see," he says, as he went on through the door.

Well, anyway, the day that the votes were to be taken -- it was expected they were going to be taken -- and there had been this consent to free the bill in the House so it could be voted on -- there was laid on the desk of every Representative in the Senate and House in Washington this booklet that the American Forestry Association had so beautifully edited and put out, you know -- illustrations and everything -- you most have seen that. It's a little pamphlet about that big, largely in colors. Oh, you've got a lot of them, I'm sure, somewhere. The frontispiece is a picture of a great tall young fellow with a huge muskie. You remember seeing that?

Miss K.: No.

Mr. O.: My, my gracious. I must find you one of those immediately upstairs, because I think I've got copies here. But it was a very effective piece of printing and illustrating and everything. The American Forestry Association had just gone the limit to give us everything, and then they had that lying on the desk of every member of Congress before the vote was taken. And here there'd been this bitter opposition Pittenger -- people thought he had a big backing you know. When the vote came, not

one member in either House dared to vote against that bill. There were a certain number of people who absented themselves -- not a great number, though. Pittenger did. But nobody voted against it, which was very unusual.

Mr. F.: You mean, from the whole...

Mr. O.: The whole Senate and House -- the whole Congress.

Mr. F.: Who was the other U. S. Senator from Minnesota, Schell?

Mr. O.: Yes.

Mr. F.: What was his attitude toward the bill?

Mr. O.: Well, he kept pretty quiet. We were kind of displeased with him because he wouldn't say anything, but he didn't vote against it.

Mr. F.: He didn't block you, did he?

Mr. O.: No, but he made some show of it for a while. He was the blind Senator, you know.

Mr. F.: What about the President? Did you have any problem?

Mr. O.: Let's see -- the President was Hoover. No, he signed the bill.

Mr. F.: Had he committed himself before?

Mr. O.: Well, Tyng, this man that wrote the brief, had been Hoover's secretary in the days after the First World War, when there was all that European relief, and he was the head of that, you know. Well, you don't perhaps remember that.

Miss K.: The Belgian relief.

Mr. O.: Yes, Hoover made a large part of his reputation through that. It was a very fine humanitarian piece of work, distribution of vast supplies of food and all the medicines all over Europe. And his personal secretary was Sewell Tyng. Sewell had been over there during the fighting, too, at first, among the British hospital corps, or whatever they're called. So Sewell had arranged for a meeting (and Hubachek and Kelly backed it up) with Hoover during the campaign for the bill, and of course we got a lot of publicity out of that. Let's see, that was in the summer of 1929. Yes. My mother was desperately ill at the time. They had to send for me before I got back

to come there, just a few days before she died. And she died in 1930. Maybe this was after the bill was passed, and for other reasons Sewell thought it would help to have Hoover working for us. I'm sure it was July 1930, this bill passed. And my mother died in August. No, my mother died in August 1929, so that was it. We did go to Hoover first, you see.

Well, Sewell warned me. He was to be spokesman, and the arrangements were made through others in Minneapolis including Hubachek, who had a good deal of influence politically, and it was told that Tyng was coming there and he was going to have me with him. And Sewell said, "Now, Ober, don't be disconcerted when you get there before Hoover. He may not seem to be listening to you at all, because he has a trick of doing that. He will probably go on drawing lines, or something, while you're talking and not paying any attention or asking you any questions. But whatever you've got to say, you say to him, but I've often seen him where he was doing other affairs over in Europe, and while he was listening, he was writing on a piece of paper: p-h-o-o-l. His way of spelling fool -- p-h-o-o-l. Don't mind that." Well, I, remember my mother asking me what I thought of it when I came back, and I said, "Well, I tell you. I feel it was discouraging. I don't think he has the slightest interest in the world in what we were after. But I suppose it was worth while." It was awful hot weather, and a lot of discomfort going on there at that time of the year, and I couldn't see, except for the publicity --. Oh, of course, we made the utmost of it. The papers were just flaming with this reception that the Quetico-Superior committee had had by Hoover, and how we were met by newspapermen outside and how they had gone in and got the President's interpretation of this. And all that sounded very favorable. Of course, we didn't give out anything ourselves. But they went in, and there were a lot of newspapermen in there and they went to whoever gave out the news, you see.

And we had left something there with the President which could be used, or with his secretary, before we went in. And some of that was published. So, of course, he

didn't do anything to block us. I don't know of anything that he did aside from the publicity that this was given. I don't think it was very close to his heart. Well, anyway, that was the way the Shipstead-Nolan Bill was finally passed in 1930.

Mr. F.: Before we leave the Shipstead-Nolan Bill, will you just briefly summarize the major provisions?

Mr. O.: Yes, well, the bill starts by describing an area in northern Minnesota, in Cook, Lake and St. Louis counties, everything above a certain line. I can't tell you exactly where the line is, but it ran through the southern part of Superior National Forest, and it included all the better part with the lakes in. The southern part was the part that had been largely logged, in the watershed flowing into Lake Superior, and the logs taken out that way. But the line included everything up in the Rainy Lake watershed, clear across from just below the Grand Portage Indian Reservation in Cook County, clear over to Koochiching County, which is right up here in Black Bay. It said in that area all remaining public lands were to be withdrawn from use. There was another word that they used which was very important, and our opponents did everything to get that out, and we fought to keep it and succeeded. But it meant that there was no way you could tie these lands up by lease or anything else for private purposes, you see. I'll probably think of that pretty soon. And that within that area there should be no further (and that's the one that Shipstead had worked for) alteration of the natural shorelines without the consent of Congress. That's the first big thing. The second thing was that within that area there should be no further logging of shorelines of federal lands, closer than two hundred or three hundred feet (I forget which it was) to the water. That protected the shore. And it told why. It said that in order to protect the forest, the visible shores, the islands, the waterfalls, and so forth that there should be no further change of lake levels and there should be no further cutting of shoreline timber. And the third was that there should be no further settlement within that area. I suppose you have copies of the bill. You moat have many of those.

Miss K.: Was the bill: amended or altered during subsequent sessions of Congress?
Mr. O.: Well, not that I know of.
Mr. F.: It's still in effect then?
Mr. O.: Yes, oh yes. But 1 did hear that in one of these later appropriation bills (and I've never seen the language of that) there was some provision for the sake of this so-and-so, in order to do this, that such and such a thing is withdrawn. But it wasn't a big thing. I should have looked it up, because I wouldn't have liked to have seen any tampering with the Shipstead-Nolan Bill, you see, because that's a basic thing.
Mr. F.: What regulatory Agency is empowered to enforce it? The Forest Service?
Mr. O.: Yes, they and the Indian Office, too.
Mr. F.: Now how did the bill specifically prevent raising or lowering the water level?
Mr. O.: Well, it forbade any further alteration of natural water levels without the consent of Congress.
Mr. F.: Has this been followed strictly?
Mr. O.: Oh, yes. And of course that was an awful blow. But Backus had tried to raise the point that Congress couldn't adopt a measure like that so long as his measure was pending before the International Joint Commission because he said, well, here you've gone into a treaty in which you authorize the Commission to investigate these problems. And he tried to make a great paint of that, and that's where he got Ontario to protest that the Government had entered into these treaty understandings, and that before they could ever decide here comes along Congress and says, no matter what you decide, you can't raise these levels without the consent of Congress.

Well, we knew that that was a weakness, too, because we knew that if we got this through it couldn't help but have a big influence on the decision of the International Joint Commission, you see. But we also knew that if the Joint Commission then went so far as to recommend the Backus project, we might then have had

quite a difficult time. We might have to do a lot of our work over, you see. But there was nothing in our bill that forbade them from making such a recommendation if they wanted to. That was their business. And that didn't alter the right of the Congress if they saw fit, to say well, that may be all right; you may think that these levels ought to be raised, but we'll consider it. And they could have taken it into consideration. It'd mean we'd have had to go there again and fight about that, you see. So it was of huge importance that in our next step we should, if possible, get the International Joint Commission to turn the Backus project down and favor ours, you see.

Mr. F.: How do you feel Congress has performed since the passage of the bill? Have they altered the levels seriously?

Mr. O.: Oh, no, Congress has never done one single thing, and there have been a number of hints that they were going to be asked to make exceptions. They've come from up here; they've come from engineers. And I could tell you a little bit more about those. Maybe I should do that right new.

One thing they could do here. I'm very much opposed to it, and it might win a lot of favor. There is a drop right at Ranier. There's about a three-foot differential ordinarily between Ranier and the dam. There's a considerable drop, maybe two feet, right there at Ranier. There's pretty strong rapids in there, and there have been accidents in there sometimes, too, under the bridge. And there's about a foot more going down the river. About three-quarters of a mile further there's another little rapid. And so with that three-foot differential, if the natural outlet at Ranier were blasted out and the lake lowered, you could still have, with a lower level, just as high a level, ordinarily, at the falls as now, because you wouldn't have that differential to overcome. The lake would just simply sink to the level of the bottom level in the river above the dam. It would take care of that slope of some three feet. It could easily sound like a very wonderful thing, because the company would then presumably have just as much waterpower. Let's say if

they're holding it at what we call 1107 feet above sea level, they could have Rainy Lake at 1104 or 1105, maybe. There's always three feet more, practically always, under ordinary conditions, when there's a free flow down the river. There's always a three foot differential. Well, when they fill that up, that is when they close the dam, until that differential is filled, and it's 1107 all the way down at the dam. If you raised that a foot then, you'll have a foot more at the dam right away, where before that time, you'd still have your differential going down, you see.

Well, they argue that if they'd cut out the natural barrier at Ranier they could then have as high a level as before, without holding it so high on Rainy Lake, and that's true. But in the first place you would then have to do a huge amount of engineering. You'd have to tamper with the natural outlet in every way, and you would have no assurance from the company that they wouldn't still seek to hold the lake just as high as before, and then you'd have three feet more, you-see.

Mr. F.: Has it been seriously proposed by the company?

Mr. O.: Well, they've been very careful how they come out openly, but I know that they have that in mind. It's something that they don't forget. Well, we don't like to have it come up, because it's a difficult thing to answer. And many people will be fooled by it. Many people would think, well why not? Why should he object to that? Isn't that a nice thing? We'd have lower levels. We wouldn't have to have such high levels on Rainy Lake; we wouldn't be in as much danger of flood, and it sounds very logical. But we've never seen a time since the dam was built when they gave up any of the original objectives. Now they've established this present high water mark, you see, and they won't want to leave that. The argument then will be, well why should you -- you've stood this for ten, fifteen, twenty years. Haven't we been doing very well? And haven't we got better control of it now when we immediately can let it out here, with no barrier at Bonier? Isn't that fine? And you don't have the danger going through the rapids, and people have been drowned. Isn't that better in every way, you see? But the first thing you know, you've still got the old

story all over, The people that are working for that are very strong for these additional levels all the way through. So I don't like to have it mentioned.

But here is one thing to say about that, that if they brought that up, it would immediately be in conflict with the Shipstead-Nolan Bill, which says there shall be no further alteration of the water levels. It would surely be brought up. They might argue, well this is no further. We're not raising it any more. We're lowering it, they might even say. And they might get away with it. But the language is broader than that. The language doesn't really give authority to make any further changes in the natural flow of the lakes and rivers along the border. Of course, that doesn't go down as far as down there, but you can't do it down there without affecting it up here in St. Louis County and all along the rest of Rainy Lake, you see. So it applies.

Mr. F.: Was the Shipstead-Nolan Bill the first legislation of its kind?

Mr. O.: Oh, yes.

Mr. F.: Has it been copied elsewhere?

Mr. O.: No, not that I know of. But it has always been bitterly opposed and criticized ever since until just lately. I think that practically everybody that was most hostile realized it's never hurt even the lightest. They can't show one single way in which they're hurt.

Miss K.: Did you get much mail after the passage of the bill?

Mr. O.: You mean in favor? Complimentary? Well, quite a lot, but then almost immediately the depression came along, and nobody had even stamps. Nobody had any money. We had no money. We could hardly get back from Washington and get home. And then we went through the doldrums for quite a while there, you see.

But the next year, that autumn, we introduced in the house, on account of this exception that had been made of the Minnesota Power and Light, the state Shipstead-Nolan Bill. Maybe you never heard of that, but it had the same language, was for the same purpose, and it was just as bitterly fought. You wouldn't think it could be done.

They had their lawyer in Duluth, one of the highest paid lawyers in Duluth. And he came down to see, me in the legislature, and he said, "Oberholtzer, you're just butting your head up against the stone wall. You've got very few friends in Duluth, and before we're through with you, you won't have one." Well, that was largely true, too. But, oh my, how that was fought. Oh, what a time we had. And we had big headlines that said: Shall we permit trespass on state lands. Because they'd go on state lands without any authority whatsoever and build these dams, you see, and that included L souse federal lands. So that was one of the headlines. Mrs. Paige and Mr. Stockwell together had succeeded in enabling us to put these headlines right outside the door of the legislature -- right outside the chambers, you know. Then we had printed matter which went into it at greater length. And we had a young man up here who was an uncle of this lad that's staying there now in the house -- named Schmitt. They'd had lot of damage up here. And the danger was that these things and our printed matter would be destroyed. But he had a table right there at the entrance to the legislature. He sat right there guarding them all the time the legislature was in session. He was there every day until we gut our bill through.

Well, it was evident that opinion was going entirely against them. We already had the example of the success of the bill, the overwhelming success in Washington, and it was for the same purposes, and it wasn't asking the state to do anything more for its own good than the federal government did, you see. And the terms were almost identical, except applying to state lands and forests. There was this provision that what the Minnesota Power and Light Company had done up to that time, since it was already done, would be accepted, but that they would have to clean up the lands, clean up the flowage, cut it all off, so there'd be no sign of it. And they were given a time limit on it, and they were forbidden to raise the lake any further. That's the way that was settled. It was considered fair. We felt it was fair. We didn't demand that they restore the previous level, you see. They didn't have to do that. Maybe-that was a mistake. But they had to clean it up, and they agreed to do that.

And finally, they were completely beaten. No question about it. Their lawyer came to me (the lawyer who said I wouldn't have a friend left) at Easter, just before the session closed, on a Sunday, and we got Chet Wilson, who was then out of the government, I guess, over there. I don't know just whose administration it was, but it was right after the Hoover administration, and after Roosevelt had come in, and when there was so much liberal opinion, you see.

Mr. F.: Olson was governor at this time?

Mr. O.: Well, now, I don't know whether Olson was in yet or not. That was 1930.

Mr. F.: 1931

Mr. O.: '31, yes.

Mr. F.: January of '31 tie came in.

Mr. O.: Oh, did he? Well then he was there. And so they were in rather a weak position you see, and while Olson hadn't shown his hand for us yet at that time, he probably felt very strongly, because he was for the Ship stead-Nolan Bill. But I don't recall anything, and I don't remember any dealings with him.

Anyway this lawyer who said I wouldn't have a friend left came to me and said: "We acknowledge we're beaten. We've got to accept this, and we're going to accept it with the best grace we can. We want you to meet here Sunday with us to draw up the final agreement concerning this bill, and is it all right for us to have Chet Wilson there?

Well, I thought it was, that he would be fair, and he was an outside lawyer, and we hadn't had much difficulty with him up to that time. So this was all drawn up. The president of the Minnesota Power and Light Company was there, and he would flare up every once in a while and say: "I object to that." His lawyer said: "Now look here. Didn't we have this understanding?" I was surprised. He put him right in his place, the president of the company. He said, "We have nothing else to do. We have got to accept this." So that was very nice. Then Willard came in as the head of the Conservation Commission very shortly afterward, and he granted the Pigeon River

Lumber Company the right to build a dam up on Pigeon River, on the headwaters. And we found that out, published it, criticized him severely. Oh, He didn't like that at all. It was built, and we never got it out. It's still there. I haven't even gone to see it. But we said he knew what he was doing, and he was violating the state provisions. I know it hasn't been taken out. And he didn't like it, and he said -- I forget what excuses he gave for it. I think he said it was partly built before he got in the office, or something of that sort.

But anyway, we've got that, and it's an excellent piece of legislation, I think. It puts the state on record for the essentials of all our program, you see - these essential things about forestry, flooding, ownership, zoning, everything of that sort.

Mr. F.: Now, Shipstead had already thought of a bill of this kind -- a more limited bill -- before he got together with your group.

Mr. O.: He did. That's right.

Mr. F.: Did he contact you, or did you contact?

Mr. O.: No, he didn't contact us at all when he put it in. of course he knew about all this fight we'd had with Backus. But the first I knew of it was the notice that he'd filed this bill. Then we got a copy and discovered that all it did, I believe, was that it said there should be no further alteration of lake levels along that boundary without the consent of Congress. Now I'm not absolutely sure about this, but I think that was it. And then we went to him and asked him (and he was quite hesitant about that) to permit us to make additions to the bill that would cover the main provisions of our Shipstead-Nolan Bill, as it had since been launched. We had hard work to get that just exactly the way we wanted - not because he was hostile to us, I'm sure, but because he had pride of authorship and he wanted to keep ----. He also had strategy. He felt maybe it would get too complicated, you see, too many enemies.

But he consented, and so we got what we thought was a very valuable bill, you see -- both In the Congress and through the state. And we still got those and think they're a very great protection to us.

Miss K.: Fred Winston supported you so strongly all through the yews. Just what kind of a man was he?

Mr. O.: Fred Winston?

Miss K.: Yes, you've given us some of his attributes, but we'd like to know a little hit more of them.

Mr. O.: Well, of course, I never had known Fred Winston at all until I went down to this Hubachek group where I'd been invited, and I don't recall at just what moment --. I don't think that Fred was there at the first meeting. Maybe, though. They were all new to me, you see. It may be that he just began to stand out to me a little later. But I know it wasn't very long before I was invited to his house, and he was just a newly married then, and his wife put up a very delicious dinner that I always remembered.

Well, it became evident that Fred, from the beginning, was exceptionally strong and happy about this development and what we were undertaking. And he was all for going through with it, and all for helping with money or any other way that he can -- doing his share, you see. So then I began seeing more and more of him, and this matter came up of getting the endorsement of the American Legion. There I found that he was one of the chief actors, very influential with all the top officials that they'd ever had there after the war in Minnesota far the American Legion. They'd had a number of very fine fellows. One was a man named Pat Cliff, from Ortonville, I believe. I never saw a man who could stand right up to someone like Chet Wilson, or someone else where they'd just get violent -- they'd be ready to cut each other's throat, but he just would stand there and just take it and give it. And win. And Fred could find people like that, and they were always people you could absolutely depend on when Fred got through with them. They just stood fast. Fred is a very quiet worker. He never threatened. He never blustered about it. But he was very forthright when he talked to any of these people, whether they were running for office or were in office. And he didn't mince words very long either. He didn't have

a long introduction. He just told them very quickly what he was up to.

And that gave you a great sense of support whenever you could get Fred Winston to go with you. Well, he seemed slow. He wasn't very quick on the jump about anything. I never wondered though, as I did about some other people whom I had to go with -- some very good people whom I liked very much -- but still they were awfully shaky when they got into a political place where they had to support you by word and act and do a good job, or where it suddenly appeared that there was some conflict between their ideology, maybe Republican ideology, and something that you were putting over. When it would suddenly appear that way from the argument of the Governor, or some one else, you see, they would sort of cave in. And we had some people like that. Some of those I've seen a lot of and have been very pleased by much of their performance. But I wouldn't want ever to be sent as a delegation when one of those men had to do the speaking, you see. Because that's very unfortunate. Then I got to know Fred, and was more and more in his home. And of course the man I saw most was Kelly. I saw him every single day while they were in Minneapolis, you see. But when they moved away, we wondered how in the world we were ever going to exist. They had copies of everything I did -- every single thing they had there. The thing they didn't have was this long performance before. And they may not have had all the authorizations that we got from our board of advisors. I think they're in that material that you got from Fred, most of it. So they didn't have that. And there were a few things -- there may have been a lot more than I know that they were doing on the outside to influence.

But Fred, there was never anything that I didn't know about what Fred was doing, unless it was something that he just thought might embarrass me to knew, you see, concerning myself -something like that. But he would never conceal anything that was paramount for our work. And he could always be depended on, it seemed to me, to see the side dispassionately, fairly and with emphasis on the public values that were concerned, you see. There was always this attitude. And so, of course, I had

a lot of respect for him.

Well, then when he began to cooperate actively, like when we had the office, and I'd be away for a long time, he'd go there to the office and conduct all the business, meet ail the people (we used to have many people come in there), and he'd take care of all the correspondence, and send me whatever he thought I needed right away, copies or something of that sort, and have the filing done. And I think you mentioned this great amount of newspaper publicity. Well, we had scrapbooks, clippings from an agency, and Fred paid for this himself. Mrs. Martin used to file all that as long as she was there. Fred was very faithful to that. He thought that was a very important thing to have. It was in emergencies that he'd give you a sense of strength because he'd go so directly and so quietly. Now things like Snell that I told you about and things like Nolan. Nolan had a bad reputation admittedly, but he said: "That's in the past; I don't agree with them." Of course, we had this big campaign, and he'd heard all of that, and he said, "I don't agree with Backus at all, and I'll go to the very limit to support you." And he did. Fred used to get things like that. And when I would always feel distressed about a lot of this American Legion thing -- oh, they would just go for me like everything, some of these state officials especially, and representatives of Backus who were Legion men, you see. He had one man there who was on the Conservation Committee of the Legion, and they'd have very good men like Fred, or a fellow named Brisley. Maybe you never knew him, excellent fellow. You would always have a sense of relief and power when Fred was along. He'd quietly work, and he'd have all these things that you didn't know about at all that would come up, when you'd think, well this is just about up, you see. And of course, I couldn't participate, except when I was asked to. I wasn't an American Legion man, you see, and never a soldier -- never been able to pass an army test. And so I felt a little hit embarrassed in some of those situations. But Fred was always right on the spot. Ifs didn't like to go and be out in the forefront, you see. He'd have other people do that. They'd do that. And it'd all be understood.

And he'd say: "Ober, don't worry about this. Pat Cliff's going to take care of it. You wait for Pat Cliff." And Pat Cliff would come in like a lion ready to leap, you know. Well, we had a lot of good men like that. And some others. I don't recall their names now. They were generally lawyers though.

Well, then, Fred more and more took over, but not at initiating things. He didn't attempt in any way to interfere, or to guide particularly. He was there to help. He would have been perfectly free if he thought we were taking the wrong step. He'd have said so. But he was purely and simply a wonderful friend of the program. He was always there to be depended upon in an emergency, and often to find a solution when nobody else had one, you see, which was very nice.

There was nothing in his general behavior to encourage you to believe that he was going to be able to do that, don't you see. He was so quiet and a man of few words. So then of course, I went on that way, and he took more and more charge of the office, especially when we couldn't pay to have me stay down there. I had this home and I came up here and worked from here, you see, all during the early days of the Depression. Well then the Winstons went to Washington, and they lived there for two or three years while he was in the law business, and before he went to Russia for a year. That was during the passage of the Shipstead-Nolan Bill.