

Interview with Don Samuelson

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Central Minnesota Historical Oral History Collection

St. Cloud State University Archives

Interviewed by Carl Gower and James Robak

Gower: Today is July 20, 1977. And this interview is being conducted for the Central Minnesota Historical Center. The interviewers are Cal Gower and James Robak. Today we are interviewing Mr. Don Samuelson of District 13A, is that correct?

Samuelson: That's correct.

Gower: --of Brainerd, here. Don, let's begin with a little biographical background. Date of birth and place of birth.

Samuelson: Well, I was born right here in Brainerd. As a matter of fact I was born right in my mother's house. In those days often times they had their babies at home, I guess. So I was born right here at Brainerd in 1932 and have lived here ever since that time. Attended the Brainerd schools and had an opportunity at one time to continue on to college, but I chose not to. I moved into the bricklaying field. Stayed involved in that, but basically this is where I've been raise, and have lived all my life.

Robak: What was the specific date of your birth in 1932?

Samuelson: It was August 23, 1932.

Gower: What was the background of your family? Did they-had they lived in Brainerd a long time?

Samuelson: Yes, both my mother and father, they were born and raised in Brainerd. My father was a member of the bricklayers union, very active in that group, as well as my grandfather. My grandfather died, named Ben Samuelson, did come over from Sweden when he was a very young boy. And my grandmother on that side of the family was English, she came over from England. So that side of the family, my mother was a Gallagher, so oftentimes I'm teased about – I call myself the Swede, yet there's probably more Irish in me than anything else. My mother's side of the family, my grandfather Gallagher was a railroader, was what they called a brakeman on the railroad. He traveled across the country quite a lot as a brakeman, so they both come from hard working families. My mother's family was nine children. My father's side, there were I guess it was six. So they both were brought up more or less the hard way in the hard times, but both born and raised and went to school here in Brainerd as well.

Robak: Still Gallaghers around?

Samuelson: There's still Gallaghers around in Brainerd. I have three uncles left in Brainerd. One has moved out to California. Some of the young girls in the Gallagher family live out in Portland, Oregon. On the Samuelson side they're all gone. They have all passed away. My father was a member of the 194th Tank Battalion here in Brainerd. He served on Bataan, and he didn't make it back. He was killed-or not killed, but died in a prison camp in Ludkin, Manchuria just one year after the war broke out. I can hardly forget that day. It was December 7, 1942. The Japanese army informed us he had passed away in a prison camp. So there's a lot of memories along those lines. I was very young. I was about seven years old when they left, my mother and my one sister. We followed them to Fort Lewis, Washington where they were based at that camp for training. Of course, there were a lot of rumors of war, that was in 1941. And early in the year, they left in January. We went out there when school was out in June. We lived there, and he was

training there of course in the camp. One day they had been out on bivouac, and one day the tanks came rolling through town and threw a note out on the street. Someone picked it up and put it in out at our mailbox in our house, and our mother went out and picked him up. But everyone knew that something was happening. They got their orders to ship over to the Philippine Islands. It was at that point my mother decided to take the kids home, because school was about ready to start, so we went home. And they left about a month later and of course it wasn't too long after that December 7, when the war broke out, but, oh, and it--I remember two or three letters was all we got from him. There wasn't much time, and the mail was stopped. They knew what was coming; they were waiting. They expected the Japanese to attack, and he said I wish they'd hurry up and get it over with. But sometimes life is funny; he was 35 years old at that time. And he had the opportunity to get out both before they left Brainerd and before they left Washington, and when he was over there because of his age, they said, you could be exempt. But you know when you're in an outfit and you're with all your buddies, he chose to stay with them, and so that's what happened. He survived the death march if you recall that. It was quite an infamous thing. An awful lot of the guys died on that death march from where they were captured on Bataan to what they called Camp McDonald, that's a prison camp in the Philippines, and I talked to some of the fellows that were in that march. And they said, ya, we seen him when he got to the camp, and he was fine. But they took what they called the healthier ones and put them on a ship to China to work in the mines, and he got sick, when they were on the boat. And they dropped him off in Manchuria, and that's where he died.

Gower: Is your mother still living?

Samuelson: Yes, she lives now-is remarried--she lives in Tacoma, Washington and married a--he's a very nice guy who is a railroader, of all things. His name is Kenneth Anderson. He just

retired a couple of years ago now, and they still live in Tacoma, Washington. They come home to visit, I say home to visit, so they have been out there since the 1950s. So it's their home out there. They come home to visit once or twice a year, and I've been out there a couple times.

Gower: Did you have anybody in your family, I assume not your father since he died so young, who was involved in politics before you?

Samuelson: Well, it's really hard to tell. I am told my grandfather died when I was just a sophomore in high school, so I never really had the opportunity to really see it in operation. I'm told that both of them were active in one way or another. They weren't elected to an office, but as an example, my grandfather was very involved in union work which in a sense is somewhat politics in itself. He was president of the bricklayers union. My father was a secretary when he was still living. They spent an awful lot of time there, and of course by being involved in a labor organization, you become involved in city politics. You become involved in some way or another in politics, simply because you are in that kind of position that you're interested in what's happening to working and the laws that are affecting working people.

Gower: How strong are the labor unions in Brainerd?

Samuelson: Well, in the Brainerd area-is very strong. We have the Northwest Paper Company which is one hundred percent organized. They have about seven hundred employees out there. The Northern Pacific, the Burlington Northern now, railroad shops which employ around four to five hundred, and they're all hundred percent union, the St. Joseph's Hospital which is organized, the state hospital employing about seven hundred people now, and then the building trades themselves, which are very well organized. So the area's quite strong union. I'd say about ninety percent.

Gower: This is a lot stronger than St. Cloud then?

Samuelson: I'm sure it is. I'm sure it is.

Gower: That would be my impression.

Samuelson: That's right.

Gower: Then how did you get involved in politics?

Samuelson: You know it's always interesting. I guess everyone has got their own story of how it happened, somewhat by accident. I came up, was determined; absolutely determined despite my grandmother and my mother not wanting me to be involved in a bricklaying trade, because it's hard work and they've seen some very hard times. I was determined I wasn't going to school; I was going to be an apprentice bricklayer. I was going to follow my grandfather and my dad and an uncle who also was a bricklayer. And when I did, I immediately became interested in the union as they were. I was still an apprentice when I was elected to an office within the union, recording secretary. Went along for a number of years in that position and soon was elected as secretary treasurer--moved up a little. As I was doing this, I became involved in some city things. I'd be going to city council meetings finding out what was going on. I became involved in our Central Labor Union, the Trades and Labor Assembly, and the Building Trades Council which begins to be politically active. I attended one meeting in the early '60s in St. Paul on behalf of the labor movement, appeared before a committee. I guess that was the first time I really became involved at all in the legislative process. I was elected chairman by somewhat by happenstance of DFL party in Crow Wing county, in about 1961. And it was just shortly after that it was in '65 that the then representative, Charles Halstead who had served about thirty years in the legislature, became ill, and he was elderly at that time. And right away they started looking for a

candidate, and there just seemed to be nobody around our party who was that interested. So they begged me to be the candidate, and that was just the start of it. I had never ran for a political office before, I just got into it. Lost the first time.

Robak: That was in '66?

Samuelson: That was in '66 and--

Gower: Had you thought about running until people came to you?

Samuelson: No, I hadn't really given it the foggiest notion. I had worked very hard in Congressman Alec Olson's elections a couple two, three times. I've had many visits, never forget a visit with him one time out in an old friend's house, and he said, "Don, you know you might want to think about this, Representative Halstead is getting up in years." I think he was 70. He's not going to be there a real long time. You might think about considering running for office. I said, "Oh, I can't imagine something like that. It just doesn't seem possible at all." Lo and behold it sort of came about.

Gower: I've got a couple of questions there along that-in the union is it difficult to get people to serve in the union offices? To get the union members to serve?

Samuelson: Yes it is. It's a constant hassle to get people to do that, in fact, it's very difficult to get them to come to a meeting in the first place. And what they don't seem to realize, at least in modern times is that the union is no stronger than the members themselves. The business agent, or the president of the secretary is not the union. The members are the union. And it's just very difficult to get that across. It's sort of like, "let somebody else do it. I'll belong, but I don't want to be too involved."

Gower: And the other question I had along this line is would you say that Brainerd is a pretty strong town for the DFL?

Samuelson: Historically it has been.

Gower: It has been.

Samuelson: Although the records will show that it's somewhat marginal. Representative Charles Halstead, who was a Democrat, represented the area for like I say some 25 or 30 years. And I don't go beyond him. I wish you had done some of this interviewing at that time.

Gower: Sure, right.

Samuelson: But I don't really know the politics of the thing beyond his time.

Robak: He had served for quite a number of years?

Samuelson: Yes, that's right.

Gower: And he was a Democrat even though he was non-partisan?

Samuelson: That's right. He was very political active with the Democratic Party. He was defeated I understand after about ten or twelve years. He was defeated for one term, and then came back again and won and served another ten or twelve years. So that's the only time that I'm aware of- of a Republican being elected in the last--

Gower: Since the 1930s?

Samuelson: Well, Halstead came in about that time. Then when I was defeated for the election there was a Republican elected. So four years out of the last probably 36, there's been a Democrat in office in Crow Wing County.

Gower: Is, was Senator Rosenmeier district, did that include Crow Wing County?

Samuelson: That's right, at that time it did.

Gower: So that would show maybe part of that marginal thing you were talking about.

Samuelson: Yes, I think that's true, and I think that people in Minnesota and Crow Wing County and Brainerd are very independent kind of thinkers and voters. I think our history shows that. They don't really generally follow party lines that close. Some funny things happen in Minnesota. Now just look at the history of our governorships. They have a tendency to switch every couple of terms. The parties switch around. Although the Republicans did have control of our Senate for 110 years, I don't think the Democrats will have control that long. I think Minnesota has this history of very independents. They vote a funny pattern. Oftentimes vote for a Republican for president, then turn right around and vote for a Democrat for president. Interesting state that way. I think our area reflects the whole state.

Gower: Now when you started there in 1964, you ran, or 1966, how did you approach that campaign? Did you do a lot of door to door campaigning and things like that?

Samuelson: Yes, I did, and I worked very hard. It's funny when you lose an election a lot of people don't think you worked hard, but I felt I did work very hard. I made a lot of mistakes. It was the first time, of course, I was quite young, had not had a lot of experience in campaigning myself, but I hung very hard on my labor background and on the fact that I was a Democrat. I

think when it was over with in retrospect, I realized I was making a mistake because I was relying too much on those people around me instead of myself. And I think that's mistake that far too many politicians, or people for candidates for office make. I relied heavily on then Vice-President Humphrey who was campaigning hard at that time. Another thing that happened to us at that time if you recall, the Karl Rolvaag and Sandy Keith battle was on. I remained the chairman of the county DFL Party, while trying to run for office at the same time, which was another mistake. I'd go to the plant gates for example, and they had this dispute going. And I'd go to the NP shops, and the guys would come out and say I can't support you. You're for Sandy Keith. Well wait a minute I'm not running against Rolvaag. Somebody else is. I'd go you the paper mill and just the opposite would happen. I was squarely in the middle. Then Humphrey agreed to come into this area and campaign for Karl Rolvaag and at that time, Alec Olson was running for reelection. John Zwach was his opponent, of course. And so we had it set up; something really nice. Of course I took almost two weeks out of my campaigning to help set it up. We had a lot of secret service people in here, and it was quite interesting to go through that process, but it was a mistake for me to do it. Someone else should have been doing it. So anyway we had it all set up. We put a lot of flyers out. I would guess we had maybe six, eight thousand people at the airport to meet Vice-President Humphrey, just a tremendous crowd, and here I am leading the thing. I had two bands out there and I got fire trucks, police and flood lights. It was just really set up, can't believe it. But this is in early November of 1966, and it can get kind of cold. But on top of that, they were coming from Willmar. I believe it was and their plane broke down in Willmar. They were scheduled to get here something like nine or ten o'clock that Sunday morning, Monday morning, excuse me, Sunday evening, about ten o'clock in the evening. Well keep in mind that you've got a lot of shop people and paper mill people, and

who've got to go to work-get up at six in the morning and go to work. But we had them out there. They were out there and they wanted to see the Vice-President. Well, they didn't get there, and they didn't get here, and they didn't get there, and we kept getting calls, "They were on their way." Well, the fact was that they were broke down. And pretty soon the crowds started peeling away, and here I am with a blow horn saying, "Wait folks, they'll be here, they'll be here." Well, they showed up at three in the morning.

Gower: Oh no.

Robak: And that was a disaster for you--

Samuelson: Yes, to say the least. When I drove home from the airport that night, and I said to my wife, "I don't ever want a Vice-President to come to this town again."

Gower: It is rough.

Robak: "Thanks a lot, Hubby, huh?"

Samuelson: Yeah. Of course, the Vice-President was upset because a lot of the Democrats had gone home, and the Republicans did stick by. I was kidding and said that those guys didn't have to go to work until nine o'clock, didn't have to get up at six, but it was very interesting and a tremendous lesson for me. I would not do that again.

Gower: Who was your opponent that year?

Samuelson: A fellow by the name of John Laurian.

Gower: John Laurian.

Samuelson: He was a businessman in town, a car dealer.

Gower: Was he your opponent next time around?

Samuelson: Yes, he was. He won and served that one term, and then I was able to defeat him. It was a very close election that year, despite the fact that the Democrats were badly defeated in Minnesota, just a wipe out. Because of our split a lot of people stayed away from polls, but despite that I only lost by 250 votes. So I was able to come back and win by about, I think it was around 1500 the second time around.

Gower: In '68 did you feel then that the Rolvaag-Keith thing was a major factor in the defeat of Democrats in 1968?

Samuelson: Oh, yes, no question about it – absolutely no question about it.

Gower: Like Olson was defeated?

Samuelson: Yes, yes, yeah.

Gower: Well, did you do things, what did you do differently then that second time around in 1968?

Samuelson: Well secondly, the second time around, I had an awful lot of advice from very nice people, and I said “Well hold everything, I’m going to do it my way.” And if I don’t make it there is nobody to blame but myself. Some things I did differently. Number one, I did not emphasize constantly that I was the labor candidate. I’ve lived in this area all my life. People know my family background, my background, with my activities within the DFL party. I didn’t have to hammer anybody over the head about that. The same thing. I didn’t have to remind an awful a lot of people that I had been active in that area for a number of years. I think what happens is when you do that you throw a red flag in front of some of your friends who may vote

for you, who are on the other side. But you can't hit your friends over the head constantly, so I stayed away from that. I didn't tie myself to an incumbent candidates. I just went out myself and knocked on doors. That's what you have to do. I didn't do anything really any different that way than I had done before, but I stood alone instead of leaning on anyone else.

Gower: Were there any particular issues then that year?

Samuelson: The sales tax was a big issue. As you recall the '67 legislature passed the sales tax. My opponent voted for it. That was a very big issue.

Gower: Oh, uh huh.

Robak: And that probably hurt him in '68 then, you feel?

Samuelson: Oh I'm sure it hurt him, but I don't know if that – it hurt him, I don't know if that was a major reason or not. I don't think that he worked as hard – as hard as I did. As far as knocking on doors and these sort of things, that you have to do. I don't mean to criticize my long ago opponent. I also don't think he did some other things right, and that is just simply answering his mail when he was in office, making sure his telephone calls were answered. And the constituent things that you have to do to remain in office. I don't feel that he did that, and that hurt too.

Gower: Did you tend to push aside any kind of national issues and so on in 1968? You were trying to concentrate on your own district?

Samuelson: Absolutely – my own district. Mainly my own district, and quite frankly, I probably didn't know what all the national and state issues were. The sales tax sure was a big state issue, but I had a tendency to concentrate on local issues, local people, and those sorts of things.

Robak: What does your district comprise geographically?

Samuelson: Well, I have approximately two-thirds of Crow Wing County. So for a rural legislator, I have a pretty neat little package for a district in comparison with many, many others from the rural areas. So I'm very lucky that way. Brainerd is the – I have all the city of Brainerd and that makes up nearly half of my population. Brainerd and Baxter would make up about half. So it's a fairly neat package for a rural area.

Gower: This morning we interviewed Glenn Sherwood who doesn't have a neat package at all.

Samuelson: That's right. I think he has parts of about five counties. And if you go up north and look at Representative Erv Anderson's district the huge county of Koochiching plus parts of Itasca, Lake of the Woods. I can't remember what other county he has up there. His district is bigger than the State of Rhode Island.

Gower: This is a House district?

Samuelson: This is a Minnesota House district. That's one of the things that so many people don't think about when they talk about reducing the size of the legislature. It would be kind of neat to think we don't need so many people sitting in St. Paul, I suppose passing laws as far as the legislature is concerned, but the minute you reduce the size, the number of people in the legislature, you also increase the rural district because the population is in the metro area, its about 52 percent of the population and you're going to increase their membership by cutting down the numbers. And it just gets, if you're a full time legislature, maybe, that's a different story. But it's very difficult for some of these people to get around in their district, keep in contact with the folks, and people expect you to be out and around.

Gower: How did that go for you that first time there when you went into the legislature? Did you spend a lot of time just getting acquainted with the operation?

Samuelson: An awful lot of time. You know, like I've mentioned I had only to been to St. Paul once to the capitol. Somebody took me right to the room I was to be to, then when I left, that was it. I did not know my way around very well at all. Fortunately, I had a couple of friends there that were able to make sure I got along well. But in 1969, my first term, I, of course, went in as a freshman in the DFL party which was a very small minority at that time. About the same as the Republicans are now. So a freshman in the minority does not do very much, in those days, although it was a great improvement, I understand all we had was a desk, telephone, and filing cabinet stuffed in a room with maybe 40 other legislators, and that was a big deal at the time. We were in pretty good shape.

Gower: Did you have a secretarial pool?

Samuelson: Oh yeah, we had a secretarial pool. I think we had about one secretary for five members. So sometimes it was difficult to get your mail done. But one of the things I learned quickly, I believe it has always helped me, and I feel strong about it that is making sure that your constituents are taken care of. It's the most important thing that a person in the public office can do. There's a lot of important issues to work on the statewide level and you could spend a lot of time at it. And it's important--somebody's got to do it. That's for sure. But I always emphasize to any of my staff or my secretary or anybody that is trying to help me in St. Paul--I want my constituents, the problems taken care of, number one, before you do anything else. I want to be sure that I'm informed if someone has got a problem, or if an important letter is there, whatever it is that's number one and the other things will just have to wait. I think that's been one of the

reasons that a lot of people have re-elected me and felt that perhaps that I've done--that I've done a little something down there for them.

Robak: They can get back to you if they do have a problem?

Samuelson: I try--

Robak: At least you hope they can.

Samuelson: Yes, right and of course as a part-time legislator, a lot of people don't understand this, I have a job I have to do, which takes me away from home. As business representative for the bricklayers, I travel in 28 counties in northern Minnesota. I've been gone a--this week--just got back here early this morning, and will be gone again tomorrow. So sometimes I'm very difficult to catch, to get a hold of, but I try basically to keep myself in the Brainerd area on Mondays and Fridays and take care of legislative business, any local problems I may have, and then I'm on the road a lot.

Gower: What happens with your job when you're in the legislative session?

Samuelson: Well, with the bricklaying, cement finishing business in the winter time when we're in session January, February, March, there is very little work going anyway, so I've been fortunate that way. I take a leave of absence and if there is a problem, I simply call one of the other officers and say, "Hey looks like we've got a little problem on this job in Moorhead, could you take a run over there and see what you can do?" But I haven't had to have too much of that because we're a well-organized trade, like I say, in the winter time there is very little going on anyway until about mid-May, that we don't have to worry too much about it.

Gower: What do you think about a full-time legislature?

Samuelson: I think it will come someday. I don't really believe we are ready for it yet. I like the citizen legislature type approach. You know, it's pretty easy in human nature to forget what you used to do, be pretty easy I suspect for me to forget that--hey I used to be out there laying brick and finishing concrete and doing these things and being out there and realizing what it is like. To see the unemployment lines and to be involved in it once and a while. It really helps you you get a really different perspective on things. I think too often that's what happens to people. It's just a human trait of fault that you do forget what you used to do, have a tendency to learn a different direction. I like the citizen legislature approach because you get a wide variety. The farmer down there perhaps goes home and gets out in the field and has to work and he's going to have a different outlook when he gets back to St. Paul. The small businessman and the attorney and unfortunately we don't have anybody in the medical profession there anymore. A cross section of people I think is important. I hope we can maintain a good deal of that over the years.

Robak: Which committees did you serve on your first term in '68 do you recall?

Samuelson: Yes, I served on the Transportation Committee, the first time. That was one of my top request because, oh, one of the reasons was the – Representative Halstead who served so many years did serve as chairman of that committee at one time. It is a very important committee, and I wanted to serve on it. And I was able to get that as one of my choices. I served on the Veterans Affairs Committee, the first time as well, and from some sentimental reasons I guess. And I like my work on that committee. Let's see, I also served on what, they used to have a State Claims Committee, which some people didn't like to serve on, but I found it extremely interesting to listen to all the various cases that people would bring in to the state against the state. And accidents that happened to them and they thought the state was negligent and it was a very interesting committee to serve on, you served almost like a jury and they'd bring their case in

and you'd make a decision on you know, "Should we provide them with some type of assistance or not?" So I learned a lot on that committee. As a matter of fact it's interesting, Representative Henry Savelkoul, who's now the minority leader was chairman of that committee, so I enjoyed my work there. I also served on the Natural Resources committee at that time. Can't frankly remember what the other ones were.

Gower: Did you get the committee assignments that you pretty much wanted even though you were in the minority group?

Samuelson: Yes, I did. At that time I thought it very important for me to serve on the Labor Committee. That was my first choice, and I was disappointed when I was not selected for the Labor Committee. But since that time I could have had many opportunities to serve on that committee and chose not to. Part of the reason is that first of all, they don't need me on that committee. There's plenty of people there with knowledge of the labor problems, and so forth. Secondly, I think it does me good to be on committees involving other issues. The labor issues I'm going to know about anyway, and sometimes I think it is better to stay away from a committee when you're too closely tied in. So I chose purposely not to serve on that committee.

Gower: Have your committee assignments changed somewhat now then since that time?

Samuelson: Oh, not too much, actually I decided I have served long enough on the Natural Resources Committee, so I didn't put in for that again. I was, the second year when I was still in the minority, I was chosen for the Appropriations Committee, which was a very important assignment of course, not realizing at the time that I may have an opportunity to be committee chairman, but I was very pleased I was able to get that what was considered the best committee in the House, of course. I still remain a member of the Transportation Committee which I like

and the Veteran's affairs. One time I served on the Indian Affairs Commission. I think that's an experience just about everyone should have, that's an interesting group to work with. Now I'm on the IRRRC, Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Commission. Then I also just been appointed to the Legislative Audit Commission--which is a group that has been made up just for the last couple of years that has investigating power, and all of the departments of state to be sure that they are operating correctly, to be sure the intent of law is being handled properly, and that's becoming a very, very important commission to work on.

Gower: Are you the chairman of the Appropriations Committee?

Samuelson: I am chairman of what they call the Division of Health, Welfare, and Corrections. I handle that budget for those departments. We also include the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. We threw them in this year. The budget that I've handled this last session is something over one billion dollars, so that becomes quite an awesome responsibility.

Gower: Is that the single largest?

Samuelson: No, Education is the largest, and then this committee is next.

Gower: Can you explain briefly the procedure of getting on to these committees. Have they changed any from '68 to now? Do you just write your name down that you'd like to serve on this committee and hope that you are? Who selects here? Can you explain that?

Samuelson: Yeah, it's basically the same operation that they've had I guess for many years. The Speaker of the House has the appointing authority, and he appoints all the chairmen, he appoints all the vice-chairmen, and he appoints all the committee members. That's his sole responsibility. He does have you indicate what your interests are, then he tries to select people for committees

based on geographical area, I think primarily so you have a fair approach from all corners of the state. He tries to get people in a cross-section of business or industry, or trades, so you don't for example have all attorneys serving on one committee or be overloaded. So it's a difficult job for him to do. Of course, you also take into consideration those committees you're always serving on. If you choose not to leave a certain committee, he's going to honor that request. That's basically the power the Speakers have. It is quite an awesome power. When you have the control over all the committees and the chairmen and the vice-chairmen, that's quite an important position to be in. But I found that Speaker Sabo has been very fair. And I think nearly everyone will say that. You always have some disappointment. You think you should be on something you're not on I guess. But I thought that when I was in the minority, the then Speaker, oh, I served under Speaker Duxbury and Aubrey Diclam, I thought they were both very, very fair people. They treated the minority group fairly, as they possibly could, as well. I like the system. I think it is good. Some would like to see a change, they'd like to see a committee appointed that would decide who was going to serve on various areas. I don't particularly like that system. That is what the Senate does. I kind of like to have it the way we have it.

Gower: What did you think of the change to partisan designation?

Samuelson: I was in favor of it. I've always been in favor of it because I think that in some sense the people ran campaigns that were not very open. They would run giving the impression that they were from one party, and actually when they got to St. Paul caucus with another. I don't think that was fair at all, or even made good common sense for the electorate in the state of Minnesota, they didn't know who they were voting for. I think it's fair. I voted for the change in the law, and one of the first things that the DFL did when they went into power. I think it is a good change

Gower: Now there are some DFL, at least they say they are DFL'ers, who still don't want DFL endorsement. You wouldn't in your own particular case, anyway, you don't follow that bent.

Samuelson: No, I don't think the DFL endorsement in my district is important and wherever you serve is important. But some of the things that can happen in parties, unfortunately a small group of people can take over any particular political party. Something like the unions you were talking about a while ago. Too many people don't want to be involved. Well, you could pick up a nucleus of 20 or 30 people here in Crow Wing County and I think you'd go in and virtually take over, if that's what you chose to do. You could then with that group of 20 or 30 people decide that Don Samuelson shouldn't be our candidate. Well, I guess I would question the validity of that kind of an operation, and then I may say, "Well, I don't think the DFL endorsement in Crow Wing County is very important anymore." If 30 people can move in and run it, then I guess it wouldn't be too important, but if it's open and fair, and people are reasonable then I think that the whole process is very good.

Gower: I still, I don't know, maybe I'm unfair, I still think that some of these people still want to operate the way they were before, as you were saying you don't really know which group they belong to. So then they do this even though I'm sure that every time they get down there, they caucus with the DFL.

Samuelson: Yeah or the Republicans...

Gower: And there might be people on the other side that way too.

Samuelson: Sure, I think that's true, of course, they look at their district, and if their district is very close they are a little leery to know which way to jump. But I think if they really want truly to be independent you can be independent, just don't caucus with either party when you go to St.

Paul. You don't cast your vote for Speaker of the House. That's the key for lining up who is going to be in control of the state for two years.

Gower: Would you lose a little influence then if you were an independent?

Samuelson: I think you would because the one party or the other is going to be in control. You have no chance of being chairman of a committee. If you're right down the middle, why I shouldn't say no chance, it's up to the speaker of course. But your chances are quite slim because he's obviously going to pick those people in leadership who are going to stick with him, and stay with the caucus. But there have been independents from time to time. I'm thinking back of a guy by the name of Gus Johnson, came from Mankato, and elderly guy when I was in the legislature. I think the smallest guy that ever served. He was about four foot two, I believe and just a peach of a guy. But he served for something like, quite a number of years, 12-14 years, whatever it was, as truly independent. He did not caucus with either party. In the last couple of terms he finally did change and caucused with the Republicans because, well, he was getting up, he was almost 70 years old, and he just wanted to be truly a chairman of a committee. And they were in power, so he caucused with them and he became a chairman, and served a couple of terms as a chairman and then retired. But there had been independent people who served, they like I say you just don't caucus with either party, and you go your own direction.

Gower: Was Charlie Berg an Independent?

Samuelson: I believe he was although if I recall right, I think he did vote for Republican leadership but did not caucus with them. I don't remember for sure. He was considered an independent, did not try to align himself with either group, or he said he didn't, but sometimes

when you look at a person's voting record you find out if he is truly independent or not. Because if you constantly vote with one group or the other, then I guess you put the label on yourself.

Gower: How did your elections go in 1970, '72, '74, '76? You were re-elected each time there.

Samuelson: Right, I was, we have been re-elected by substantial margins, actually since the first time I ran, which is a--

Gower: Have you had a different opponent each time?

Samuelson: Yes I have. I've had, of course, Representative, at that time Representative Laurian, ran again. There was a fellow by the name of Janacek who was retired army officer who ran actually, he ran three times and didn't make it. He was my single opponent in the following year, and then I ran against two other fellows. And so I have had virtually different candidates every time.

Robak: Were there any major issues over the last three terms, that were controversial at all or that you took a strong stand on?

Samuelson: Oh, one of the most difficult issue before us constantly in recent years has been the abortion issue, and there is just no way a person can answer or come out on that because no matter which way you go, you're going to irritate a certain majority of people. The Democratic party in their caucuses have, a no matter how they've voted they bring out a resolution pro-abortion. It can't pass because how they've voted to do it. So it's that type of issue although neither candidate can bring it out as an issue because then you know, say it's a no-win proposition. But I think that the toughest issue that we all have to face-any incumbent, I think regardless of what party you're from are inflation factors that we've been involved in the last few

years-spending. Everybody likes to hit you over the head about you spending too much. Yet there is no one who has the answers on which programs they want to cut out. I remind my friends when they like to get after me and say that I'm a rascal because we spent too much money; okay which would you like to cut? Would you like to cut the football program at the high school, or the basketball program? Where would you like to cut so we know which direction we should go? So people don't want to cut their own parochial interest, but maybe yours or yours but not mine.

Robak: The continuation of this interview will be on side two. This is side two of the Samuelson interview. We were discussing some of the issues of major concern.

Samuelson: Like I mentioned inflation as just been very much on peoples' minds.

Unemployment has very much been on peoples' minds. They are important issues. I think that in all honesty I think that very, very seldom the issue that is going to be the major factor for the defeat for a candidate or incumbent, particularly the incumbent, I think it's primarily not so much an issue but things that happen in your community. I think people will respect you regardless of how you vote, if you're able to explain it and you're open about it, and you try to take care of constituents and try to vote your district and it is important, as best you can. Know what the people are thinking, and try to stick with them.

Robak: Be involved and be concerned in other words.

Samuelson: In the local issues that is correct. You find there's times when you just can't absolutely follow, you may put a questionnaire out. It's nice to do that and it's nice to get the answers back, but it's not always an absolute true test of the thinking of people in your area either. I think you just have to feel the pulse of what the people are thinking or doing.

Unfortunately for someone who is active in politics or public office, thinking can change. You

know folks in your area can be very strong on one side of the issue, and it passes. Then they suddenly decide they didn't like it so good. Six months later, you now feel that "My gosh that was terrible and how did our guy vote. Well, I'm not going to support him anymore." No fault insurance I think is a good example of that. No fault auto insurance, 80 percent of the people in my district are, were at least in favor of no fault auto insurance. After it passed, was implemented, tried, I think that has changed dramatically, not only reversed itself I think we're more like 50-50.

Robak: Did you follow your constituency in favor of no fault?

Samuelson: Yes I did. And I think that I based a lot of my voting on their thoughts, on what their wishes were because I frankly don't know that much about no fault insurance. I listened very carefully to a lot of my friends in the legislature who were supporting it and tried to understand it, but quite frankly I looked at the results of the polls and what people were saying about no fault, and thought, "Hey, that's, I better hang in there with that one."

Gower: Supposing that you were in a place like Little Falls, and you voted in favor of abortion reform, wouldn't that pretty much kill you don't you think now?

Samuelson: I guess I think it would in Morrison County, but then you don't really know like I say any one issue is pretty difficult to say, it's good or bad. I don't like people who, and I try to tell my constituents even if they're all in favor of me and against my point, "I hope you don't base it all on one issue. After all I vote on 3 to 4000 different things, in any one given time."

Gower: Yes, what about this fluoridation issue in Brainerd for example too?

Samuelson: Well that's been a very intense thing in our town and there are so many sides to that story that it's difficult to even know where to start. Been around for a long time. The '67 legislature passed the mandatory law, I did not serve in that legislature so it may be fortunate for me.

Gower: Was Mr. Halstead serving?

Samuelson: No, my opponent Laurian was in at that time.

Gower: No, did he vote--

Samuelson: He voted against the mandatory law, so did Senator Rosenmeier, so that was not an issue in our campaign. Matter of fact when the issue passed the legislature, it was not quite that intense as it is today. People didn't pay much attention to it. All of a sudden there it was, and it became more and more intense then as the years grew on. In fact in 1969, I don't recall for sure, I don't think we even tried to repeal it because, I guess the health department hadn't tried to force the communities to implement the law yet. So folks in my community probably were not that aware of it, until a reasonably small group of people started to protest, it grew and grew and grew. But it's an important issue to my community, and I think it's important for any legislator on any issue to try to help people who feel they have a problem. I guess I think that even if I were for mandatory fluoride, that it's somewhat my obligation as their legislator to present their case. Sometimes you have to take a little bit of the personality out of it. If I was just thousand percent in favor of it, where else could these people go to? They could do to some other legislator I suppose, but that's kind of difficult to find, say Glen Sherwood who doesn't represent Brainerd and get him to fight the cause, so they have to have someone that will at least present their case, even if they are the minority, and I think that's important that you try to do that. And,

of course, that's what we have tried to do. As this thing has developed in the past six, eight, ten years, I come more and more to think like, "By golly maybe they are right. Maybe there is something bad about fluoride. Maybe we should know about it." I certainly don't know. I'm no chemist, no expert in that area, but the more documents that I have received over this issue and telephone conversations and all the people I've talked to, I've come to think that there's two sides to the story. So far only one side the, those who are in favor of fluoride have had the real opportunity to convince people that they are right. The opposition has not had an opportunity. The legislature frankly has not listened at all very intensely at all to the opposition, to those who claim to be experts in the anti-fluoridation movement. Sure they have appeared before the legislature, but I've sat there and I've sat at enough committees to know what happens. The sub-committee has their mind made up. You can talk all you want to. They are not going to be convinced by the evidence. Unfortunately you can bring evidence from every side of the issue, looks good on paper you know, and it just doesn't work that way. So I'm particularly pleased that we were able to pass the law we passed, and asked that the governor somehow find a way to appoint a nonpartisan or noninvolved group that can act on this issue with an open mind.

Gower: This was the law passed just in the last session?

Samuelson: That's right.

Gower: Now there was a law, in fact, did you introduce a bill to exclude cities from the mandatory? Was that in this last session too?

Samuelson: Yes, the law that I was able to pass in the House would have called for a local referendum.

Gower: Yeah, that passed in the House.

Samuelson: That passed the House, it a--

Gower: But it didn't pass in the Senate.

Samuelson: It failed in the Senate subcommittee.

Gower: But then there also was this law that passed, which you said was to set up an independent commission to study this problem more?

Samuelson: Right.

Gower: Oh, I see.

Samuelson: Right, the way that, that came about was that when I realized that we couldn't pass our fluoridation bill in the Senate it was getting of course very late. As chairman of the Appropriations Committee and also of the Conference Committee at that time, I had the opportunity to present an amendment to the conferees asking for funds for this separate committee set up by the governor to study the question, and I was able to pass it in that conference committee. Of course, one neat thing about the legislative process-you cannot amend a conference committee report on the House floor or the Senate floor. It has got to pass in total the way it is. Well, one little amendment involving something like this, I think it was \$15,000 that we put in the bill, the bill is a one billion dollar bill. You know, they are not very likely to send that entire package back to the conference committee for one small item even if there is strong opposition to that approach. But we found that it was a good approach because it's pretty difficult for anybody to argue that, "Well, at least let's get a committee together to look at it." It doesn't say that they can't put it in if they don't want to. So far all it says is the Health Department shall not enforce the law on any municipality until this report is in by the special

committee. Now if some city chooses to put the fluoride in that's fine and dandy. The only thing is we prohibit the endorsement of the '67 law.

Gower: Is there a deadline on the committee report.

Samuelson: Yes, it's, ah, in '79.

Gower: '79.

Samuelson: Uh huh.

Gower: I mean the courts--that's been exhausted, right?

Samuelson: The courts have been exhausted, right.

Gower: Because they went to the Supreme Court, National Supreme Court?

Samuelson: That's right. They refused to hear the case, is what happened there.

Gower: So that pretty much wipes out the court approach then?

Samuelson: Yeah, some of the people in Brainerd were basing their protest on the issue being unconstitutional. That the state could not force them to do so. I guess quite frankly, I thought they had a rather weak argument there because you could take almost any issue--you could take speeding through downtown Brainerd on this highway and say, "Well you can't prevent me from driving as fast as I want to drive, so you can't. I don't think they had a very strong case there at all, as far as the courts were concerned. I wasn't too confident they could win there. But this approach I think is an--as a matter of fact I had a bill drafted that would have done this exact thing, but quite frankly in running this through I thought to myself, "This is a good thing to keep in my hip pocket for a last ditch approach. In case all else fails I can't imagine anybody too many

being opposed to studying this thing for another year. See if we can get a group together that is not too much involved in either side.”

Robak: One question concerning the legislature, a couple years ago and just now last year, the pay increase, how did you vote on that? What are your feelings in regards to the pay increase?

Samuelson: Well, I voted for the increase, As a matter of fact in the legislature, since I’ve served I have never voted against pay raise, or increase for anybody. The members of the legislature, the courts, the state employees, or whoever it might be, I’ve always been pretty much aligned with thinking that no matter where you serve or work you deserve the same consideration for increase that anybody else might get. I guess I feel that perhaps it’s just a question of picking a figure out of the air. As far as the legislature is concerned, I don’t know if the proper figure was selected by the committee that worked on it or not. You could argue I suppose that it should be \$12,000 or \$14,000 or \$25,000. I don’t know what that figure should be, but once the committee who worked on it and did a lot of study on it and made the decision, I went along with the judgement of the committee. And I think you find in the legislative process you do that often. They have much more facts and figures in front of them and studied it more than I could possibly have. The issue of course has been around, it’s around forever, it never ceases to be around, and it’ll be around long after I’m gone and somebody else will have to make the next decision. No matter how you make it, it’s difficult. The Congress is trying the other approach where, well, if they don’t vote against it then it goes into effect, but in sense it’s the same kind of a thing, you are in one way or another having to vote for a salary increase for yourself. It’s not easy to do it. It never is. It’s just very difficult.

Robak: Have any of your constituents’ kind of spoke out against your voting for--

Samuelson: They really haven't, and quite frankly it somewhat surprises me, I expected there would be a lot of criticism and when that happened. I voted for the salary increase two years ago. And my opponent made a major issue out of that. He hammered me over the head quite hard about that, although the governor did veto the bill you recall. And it didn't seem to have any effect at all on the election, and since this vote was taken and the law passed, I don't think I've had two or three people criticize me for it. I did hear one letter I believe in criticism, and I thought that guy had a legitimate gripe. He happened to be a pensioner and didn't feel that his pension was adequate, and I agree with him, and don't know what to do about it, but I agree with him. And of course, in the letter of criticism, he indicated that that was too big a salary increase. I think he certainly had a right to be concerned.

Gower: Do you enjoy being in the legislature quite a bit?

Samuelson: I really do. I enjoy it tremendously. It has its ups and downs like any job would have, but there is a lot of excitement to it. I quite frankly enjoy being able to help people. Someone calls me up they've got a problem collecting their unemployment compensation, or their workman's comp, or their social security or whatever it might be, and often times you can open doors for them. You get on the phone, you call the governor, you call the senator. You call somebody. And for some reason it sometimes aggravates me too. They'll listen to me, but they won't listen to that person. I think it's unfortunate in a way. It takes up a lot of my time. I'm happy to do it. I want to do it, but it's too bad they have to go through that extra step to get something they deserve, they should have, and so on. And I'm, it's just very pleasing when you can help someone that way. And I've been very successful. I worked very successfully with then Senator Mondale, now Vice-President Mondale and still work with his staff on workman's comp issues as an example, or social security, disability, veteran's affair problems. He has an excellent

staff, and I've gotten to know the people in his office by first name. Now, I can call up and say, "Hey, guess what? This is Don, got a problem again for you, gee, I hope you can help me out." Just a matter of hours you get something going and it's very pleasing when you can be a spokesman for people, and an advocate for people in that manner.

Robak: Have you enjoyed the campaigning every two years?

Samuelson: No. Campaigning is difficult for me, and I guess anyone who says they really enjoy getting out and campaigning is kind of unusual. Some types of campaigning I like. I like to talk to groups of people or talk to people, any group or individual and so on. Difficult part of campaigning for me is door knocking, standing around a shopping center and trying to shake somebody's hand, or a plant gate or these kind of things. I really don't cater to that at all. I don't like it. I force myself to do it. As far as getting out and talking to groups of people and those kinds of things, I enjoy that. I was a candidate just briefly for the Seventh Congressional seat when it came open when Bergland left. So I got a little taste of campaigning on that kind of an approach, you know you run from here to Bemidji. You run over to Thief River Falls, Detroit Lakes, Moorhead. You're just really on the go. You're running to this meeting and that meeting, and you get up and talk to a large group of people. Then you go to the next place. That was exciting. I really enjoyed that. I would like to campaign on that kind of a level, but on the local level it is much tougher, I think much, much tougher to campaign on the local level.

Gower: What, you were talking about how you were interested possibly in that Congressional seat? What are your plans for the future?

Samuelson: Well, I don't really have any. I just sort of take it one step at a time. I believe that you hadn't ought to want a political job too bad. I think you aren't doing yourself or your

constituents that much good. If it happens, if happens. Sure sometimes you've got to help make it happen. You've got to push a little, but I think you can get too pushy in these things. If you do sometimes you can be too disappointed. And I think you just to let things take their course. As I said earlier, I didn't go running out searching to be the candidate for state representative, it just sort of happened. If I had just slight different background, in this Congressional thing, I probably would have worked a little bit harder at it. I wasn't too sure what I wanted to even do. Go to Washington, you know, truthfully to live in Washington, doesn't have the greatest thrill. I've been there a number of times, and it's not too hot a place to live. Be exciting to work in the United States Congress, although many of those personal friends of mine who have, and who are serving in Congress kind of pull their hair out every now and then because it is such a huge bureaucratic mess. You're on if you're in the Congress, in the House, you're one of 435 members. You don't have an awful lot to say for quite a number of years. The state politics, the state government is exciting right now. I've got ten years in, chairman of very important committee, and I like what I am doing right now.

Gower: So you definitely think you would like to run for the House again anyway?

Samuelson: Oh yes. I'm sure that I'll run for the House again.

Gower: Possibly then maybe then some other, if anything else opened up--

Samuelson: If something should happen along then, we will take a look at that when it comes. I didn't think that, although I was out on the campaign trail with all the other, I think there was 14 candidates on the DFL side for that Congressional seat, and I went to every meeting that the candidates were invited to. However, I think I only called personally six or eight delegates to see if I could get their support, out of how many hundred there were. I just didn't, I wasn't too sure

of myself, I didn't know how bad I really wanted that job. So when we went to the convention, and it came my turn to get up and give my spiel to the committee, the Steering Committee they call it, I made a decision as I walked in the room that I was going to withdraw based on a couple things. One, I decided that if I didn't think I had 20 votes on the first ballot I'd withdraw. Didn't think I had the 20 votes, I thought I had about half of that. Secondly, I just wasn't sure that I was ready for that kind of a campaign, right when the legislative session was going to start, and I'm committee chairman of this very important committee, it means I give up that committee chairmanship because I couldn't do both and would have to turn that over to someone else, at least for temporary. But if you do a temporary and you're gone for two months, guess what? You're kind of out of the picture when you come back. So, I don't know, I had a lot of mixed emotions. I stood there speaking to delegates, made the best speech I ever made in my life, gees, they were cheering and stomping, and I was having a heck of a good time.

Robak: And you were wondering again--

Samuelson: And I was relaxed--

Gower: Sure, because you didn't care that much.

Samuelson: Yeah, then I said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to announce that I am withdrawing."

Robak: (Laughter) And everybody's mouth dropped.

Samuelson: My friends out there came running, "What did you do?" My campaign chairman he just stood there.

Robak: He didn't know what to do either.

Samuelson: No, absolutely nobody. I just made my decision as I walked out there to the podium.

Gower: Oh, I see.

Samuelson: I threw my notes away and I started talking. That was the best speech I ever made in my life. Somebody came up to me and said, “Wow, gees, I didn’t think you could do that.” I found out afterwards that I had a little more support than I figured I had. I still don’t think I’d have had the 20 votes. Lots of people would tell you that when you’re out of it, “Gee, I was thinking about you and well, you didn’t tell me that you were thinking about it.” But it was a good experience for me. I enjoyed the campaign. I wouldn’t mind doing it again, but if I did it again I’d want to be certain that in my own mind that I really want that job, that, that’s something that I can do good at. A lot of my friends wanted me to, okay, you should run that is fine, said to me, “Don, you know I’d like what you’re doing where you’re at. And we think you’re doing us just an awful lot of good. Being unsure, we ain’t so sure that you shouldn’t just maybe stay where you’re at. That makes you feel good to. (Inaudible) I can save it too.

Robak: You’re still satisfied with where you’re at now?

Samuelson: I am. I really am. You know I guess we all undergo somewhat of an ego trip now and then. It would be pretty nice to be a Congressman of the United States, one of 435 people in this whole country. Well, it’s a tremendous honor. But with it goes a lot of other things that you have to be ready for and at least at that particular time I wasn’t sure I was ready to accept all other responsibilities. I think that if you’re the right guy it can grow on you anyway. Often times said that I don’t think you know, Presidency of the United States is an example, I think often times the job of the Presidency of the United States makes the man, it isn’t the man that makes the job. And I think that happens often times in our country in that regard.

Gower: In that campaign there for Seventh district did it complicate things because Winston Borden was running too?

Samuelson: Well, a little.

Gower: I mean you're both from Brainerd here.

Samuelson: Yeah, it did a little, although the only way it complicated things is that Crow Wing County had 13 delegate votes. We're either the first or second largest delegation at the convention, I think Clay County had as many or maybe one more. So the outcome of who may get most of these delegates was quite important to how that particular candidate looks. And um, no I thought that I had a pretty good percentage of the Crow Wing County delegation. Although again I didn't think I had very many anywhere else. I didn't try very hard anywhere else. So consequently I thought, well, if I was to say in the race and get say nine or ten of the thirteen votes it's going to make Senator Borden look very bad. If I get out I know he is going to get nine or ten of those votes. He's got others elsewhere. I know he had fifteen, twenty in other parts of the district, and this was going to help him. So that was another, I think, not a number one reason, but one of the top half dozen reason that I decided not to stay in that race.

Gower: Sure.

Robak: Were you surprised Sullivan lost to Stangeland?

Samuelson: Yes, I was, I was very surprised. I expected him to win. I didn't think he was the best candidate. I like Mr. Sullivan. I didn't think he was the best candidate we could pick. That's the way, sometimes when you have that kind, type of a campaign the endorsement, this is what

happens. On the other side, I didn't think Mr. Stangeland was a very good pick for the Republicans either. But he proved to be a better campaigner than Sullivan did.

Robak: May I ask who you felt might have been better for both parties?

Samuelson: I think on the Democrat side Representative Eken would have been a better candidate. I think Senator Moe would have been an excellent candidate, in fact, I think I would like to see him take a whack at it this coming time. I think, although I didn't at the time, Representative Wenstrom from Fergus Falls would have been a very good candidate. On the other side, but those three guys I think would have been excellent candidates for the job, I don't know. I thought the mayor of Moorhead, who had run for lieutenant governor, would have been a very good candidate.

Gower: We were talking to a man named Fred Hughes who is a lawyer in St. Cloud the day of the election and he said of course that Republican (Indiscernible) out there is just going to get clobbered so--

Robak: We never have gotten back to him.

Gower: No, we haven't. That's kind of interesting.

Robak: I think it was the day of the election and the results of course weren't in.

Samuelson: If you think back Mike Sullivan made the same mistakes I made the first time I ran office.

Gower: Right.

Samuelson: He tried to coat-trail everybody in the county and they didn't like it. People in this state are independent, and they're not going to be told who to vote for. You've got to go it yourself.

Gower: We interviewed the Mayor of St. Cloud, Al Loehr, well, we had two sessions with him and on Monday he said that he thought that, that was a terrible mistake that he brought in all those people. Tried to win in that way, Sullivan.

Samuelson: I think that no matter who the Democratic candidate would have been, the same thing probably would have happened. Because after all Bergland is going to come back to his district and try to--

Gower: Bergland, I think, might be a little different, though then--

Samuelson: But chances are if Vice-President Mondale's office called you and you're the candidate, and they want to come out and help, you're not going to turn them down.

Gower: Oh no. That's right.

Samuelson: And so, I think that those people would have been here anyway, but I think that someone else who had been more experienced in being a candidate himself like Eken or Wenstrom or Moe would have known how to be out there in front, and not be coat-trailers. They were here for a day or two. That's fine, and they got some good press and all that. But Sullivan relied only on that. He didn't get out and really prove that, "Hey, I'm the one who's running." In fact I would even do things different if I were seeking endorsement, than I did before. Everybody was running for that endorsement as though they were in the shadow of Bob Bergland. I think if I were to do it over again I would cast that aside, and I would tell those guys, "Look, don't

expect another Bob Bergland. I'm Don Samuelson. I'm different. I can't be another Bob Bergland. Nice guy, forget about him. He's gone. I can do as good a job. I can do a better job" I think as--

Gower: You're into a new--

Robak: You've got to appeal to the people.

Samuelson: I think as I watched that endorsement process, people began to get sick of hearing you know Bob Bergland this, Bob Bergland that, Walter Mondale this, you know who you going to represent, us or those guys?

Gower: It's a new era and you need new people with different views. Okay do you have anything else?

Robak: No, I'm drained of questions.

Gower: I think we've covered everything. Did you want to add anything else?

Samuelson: No, I enjoy the work I'm doing, no doubt will be a candidate. I'd like to serve. I feel at this point in time, I'd like to serve about four more years in the legislature. That'll be fourteen, see what happens after that. That's quite a while to be in one position. Telling my staff the other day that this being Chairman of this Health Welfare and Corrections Appropriation Committee begins to be a little old, you know, It's also an important job and all you have such tremendous pressures on you that it's kind of nice to be in a sense a part time legislator and away from St. Paul and the kind of lobbying pressures that you have so you can get a second breath.

Robak: That's understandable.

Samuelson: And think about it somewhere else.

Gower: And your family is real sympathetic with your being a legislator?

Samuelson: Yes, they're just excellent about it.

Gower: That's real important.

Samuelson: Yes, they've just been excellent about it, and of course my kids are beginning to grow and be gone now. I have four and I only have one left at home. So she'll be a junior in high school this coming year, so all this time the last ten years my wife and family have been at home, while I've been in St. Paul. And they don't, they don't care to come down there at all. I think my wife's only been to the capital a half dozen times since I've been in office. But, very understanding and I think in many ways they enjoy the kind of work I'm involved in too. It certainly keeps the mailbox full and the phone ringing.

Gower: (Laughter) Yeah.

Robak: That's one thing for sure. Okay. That concludes this interview and thanks a lot, Dan.

Samuelson: Thank you.