

**Oral History Number: 396-008**  
**Interviewee: Ty Robinson**  
**Interviewer: Bob Brown**  
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Bob Brown: We're talking to Ty Robinson and Ty was a lobbyist in the 1950s and '60s—

Ty Robinson: And '70s.

BB: But he has a political legacy in Montana and especially in Flathead County that goes back maybe even into the '30s or into the '20s.

TR: Hardly that.

BB: You mentioned Governor [John] Erickson. Governor Erickson was governor between the 1920s into the 1930s. [1925-1933]

TR: That is correct.

BB: What were your recollections of him?

TR: Only that I remember he came to our house a couple of times and I was quite young. My father was a friend of his and I remember my father killing some deer, taking me over to the Ericksons'. I remember that phase of it. I just knew that he was "The Judge" and in those days that was all-powerful and you were very fearful of "The Judge." He was a rather tall man in a sense, in those days. He had a nice way of presenting himself as I recall. I guess that's about all I can tell you, Bob, about the man because I know that when I was in high school there, Judge Erickson made the commencement address at one time to the graduating class. I remember that, unusually, probably a good public speaker. I'm not aware fully of that.

BB: He was a district judge, I think in the 19-teens and 1920s perhaps. Then he was elected governor in 1924. He defeated Joe Dixon in a hotly contested campaign.

TR: That is correct. He defeated Joe Dixon, of course, because the Missoula Mercantile Company and the Anaconda Company unloaded Joe. The Missoula Mercantile Company was primarily responsible for helping Joe to become that. He made a mistake, as you and I both know, and suggested that we have a mineral mines tax. That was a red flag to some of the corporate bodies of this state and Mr. Dixon was removed.

BB: Now there's a connection between the Missoula Mercantile Company and the Anaconda Company?

TR: No, there never was a direct connection there except...Yes, there is a connection in the way the history shows. I suppose you could say Marcus Daly was very active and Marcus Daly was the Anaconda Company. Marcus Daly owned one third of an interest in the Missoula Mercantile Company and that was not known until I dissolved the company in the late '50s and early '60s and found to my chagrin that he did have a one-third interest.

BB: So what I remember is a young person in the Flathead Valley, the Kalispell Mercantile.

TR: That's right that was—

BB: We called it the KM.

TR: The Kalispell Mercantile, Kalispell Grocery, and the Kalispell Feed and Grain. They were all belonged—and then there was some land down there to Demersville that the company owned. They had some other land—

BB: But the Kalispell Mercantile and the other businesses that you mentioned—they also were owned by the Missoula Mercantile.

TR: One hundred percent.

BB: Did the Missoula Mercantile have commercial enterprises in other communities too?

TR: Oh yes. When they built Western Montana and that's a story all of itself, they built the main store here. Then they built stores down in Hamilton and Stevensville and Frenchtown, Arlee, St. Ignatius, and Ronan, and also in Polson. They went as far as Troy. Now they did something else, Bob. They built banks in those towns. I remember when I went to the Missoula Mercantile Company in the spring of 1948, The Missoula Mercantile Company was at that point dissolving itself or moving away from that phase of it. My job was to go out and get rid of those banks. We sold them generally to the people who had been running the banks for them. You're familiar with the Olsen people up at Ronan?

BB: Yes, the banking family.

TR: The banking family, but that was a Missoula Mercantile Company bank.

BB: Really?

TR: Yes, and that along with the bank in St. Ignatius—it was the same everywhere.

BB: Now Marcus Daly, of course, died here at the turn of the century, but you said he owned a third of the Missoula Mercantile Company. Did his heirs then inherit that and is that what you dissolved in 1950 or did the Anaconda Company?

TR: No, his heirs—and he had no heirs except a lady who was the sole heir of the whole dynasty of Marcus Daly. Marcus Daly III, who went to school here in the 1950s at the university, was divorced and married a girl in Las Vegas. She had been a stripper. Marcus Daly died and Marcus Daly III died and when he did, this was the last of the line. So she was the beneficiary of that interest in the Missoula Mercantile Company. She's a lady that's been on the Foundation Board out here at the University through the years. She owns that little island up in Flathead Lake.

BB: Oh I think I remember that, yes.

TR: Three Mile or such as it is. She comes up in the summers to enjoy it.

BB: I remember when I was a state legislator that there was some kind of a legislative conference in Las Vegas. I don't remember exactly when this was, but some of the Montana legislators were invited over to the home of Marcus Daly III and he might still have been living or perhaps the widow was. I think the connection was to the University of Montana, the Foundation there.

TR: He probably was still living at that time, Bob.

BB: This would have been maybe in the late '70s.

TR: That would be all right. He would still be there because he died in about '84 or '85.

BB: Well you know then Governor Erickson was replaced by—well actually it was kind of a funny series there.

TR: Very peculiar.

BB: Frank Cooney until Roy Ayers became governor. Do you have any recollections of any of that?

TR: Oh yes. And remember that Erickson opted to go to the United States Congress and when he did, why that moved somebody else up from the vice governor, so to speak.

BB: That was Frank Cooney.

TR: That was Cooney. He moved up. Now, Cooney was not elected—Cooney got sick and died. So then the powers that be, and these are the Anaconda Company, Montana Power, railroads, oil companies, Farm Union, labor, pretty well got together and Elmer Holt, who had been in the Senate and was Bob Colette's father-in-law was put in as the interim governor.

BB: I think Elmer Holt was the president *pro tem* of the Senate.

TR: That was what he was.

BB: So he became governor and of course Bob Colette was an important official in the Montana Power Company—an attorney?

TR: He was the attorney for the Montana Power Company and his brother Jack was the president of the Montana Power Company.

BB: It was your impression that Elmer Holt was agreeable basically to the—

TR: That's why I—

BB: Key players in Montana politics?

TR: Most of them, yes, at that time. Because after Erickson had opted to get out and Cooney was there for a short term—remember this is in the middle of the Depression. Montana was in turmoil. We had the IWW [International Workers of the World] people out of Plentywood and that area that were raising thunder. We had the people in Butte who were threatening to strike every other day. Whoever they got in as governor came in there on a consensus more than normal, yes. Elmer Holt was that type of fellow. He was a Republican as I recall. In those days, you'd know better than I, but the Republicans pretty well dominated the political scene.

BB: I think, Ty, maybe in the '30s, that wasn't so much the case. Wasn't Elmer Holt a pretty conservative Democrat?

TR: He could have been a Democrat for all I know, yes.

BB: I think he was a pretty conservative Democrat. [William Elmer Holt was a Democrat.]

TR: That could have been it and that was probably the reason that there was a consensus on him. The whole state changed from the old Republican base to Democrat during the Depression. There's no question about that. Of course Franklin D. Roosevelt became our hero.

BB: And your dad was a county official in Flathead County during that time and elected county sheriff in Flathead County in 1934.

TR: He was first elected, yes. He was elected first as county treasurer and later as assessor and then sheriff.

BB: Ty, there was a fellow that I remember hearing about who was quite a prominent legislator from our part of the state, from the northwestern part of the state in the '20s and '30s. In fact,

he was associated as an ally of Governor Joe Dixon, who we've mentioned a little bit earlier in our conversation. His name was Bob Pauline.

TR: Bob Pauline, yes.

BB: Do you have any recollection of him? I think he ran a laundry or dry cleaners or something in Kalispell. He was a state senator and a fairly prominent one for a long time.

TR: He really was. He had a little ranch right south of Kalispell. Yes he was a lone senator. That was in the days when one senator represented each county. I remember the name of Pauline, yes. When I was in high school, we were very active with the agricultural people. I don't know whether it was the 4-H or what it is—whatever you might claim. A man by the name of Kaufman kind of headed up that department. As a matter of fact, this is aside, but they took over the gym for the agricultural people. As a consequence, Flathead County High School had no gymnasium.

BB: Holy smokes.

TR: I happened to be on a basketball team at that time. At three o'clock every day we had to get in the car and drive to Whitefish and practice in their gym under the eyes of Mr. Hinderman.

BB: Oh no.

TR: The old KG man so we could never beat Whitefish—

BB: Because they knew all your plays?

TR: Any time we ever got ahead of Hindy—the lights would go out in the gym for a matter of five or ten minutes to break our momentum. Ol' Hindy was—

BB: Boy, there was a lot of competition, I know, between Whitefish and Kalispell.

TR: It came about because Kalispell became the county seat instead of Whitefish.

BB: Whitefish was on the railroad.

TR: Yes, and Kalispell had the railroad first and they decided that they'd rather go the other route and went through Whitefish instead of going out west of Kalispell. The original route, you know, came through Kalispell and was going up through Wolf Creek and that area and so forth. Back to where we were, Bob Pauline was a power in the Senate. There wasn't any question about it. I can remember my dad talking about it and other politicians. At that time I was just becoming aware of what politics was. I know that he was, in my mind, rather outstanding at the

time along with Ory Armstrong who was also well-respected, a Republican that served for many years.

BB: Was he in the house at one time or another?

TR: He was in the house and he had been in World War I. So he was very strong with the veteran's groups and he was a leader of the veterans.

BB: Gurney Moss?

TR: Gurney Moss was an outstanding senator from Whitefish. I had the opportunity when I first went to lobby at the legislature to work with him. Since he knew my father very well, he kind of took me under his wing. Many times I would get ready in the morning to have breakfast in the Placer Hotel where he lived and usually held court after the session was over out in the lobby. He came in and sat down and would visit with me and he said, "You look worried." I said, "I am." He said, "Well don't worry, everything will be all right." He said, "As a matter of fact that bill you're worrying about, I wouldn't even go up there today and appear on it." I said, "You wouldn't?" "No. Senator Robinson and I will take care of that."

BB: That was Fred Robinson.

TR: Fred Robinson from Malta for whom we named the great bridge, yes. Those were the days when the Senate was pretty well organized in one party.

BB: That would have probably been in the late '40s, I'm thinking?

TR: Coming into the late '40s, the late '50s starting in the '50s. I went to the legislature to lobby under Bill Jameson, who was presumably my boss—

BB: —who became a federal judge. He lives in Billings. He was a prominent attorney. In fact, I think he was president of the National Bar Association at one time?

TR: He was. He was one of the few presidents we ever had of the National Bar. He was given all the highest honor of the national bar could award him.

BB: Now Ty, he lobbied for the—

TR: The railroads.

BB: All of them?

TR: All of them.

BB: Northern Pacific, the Milwaukee, the Great Northern?

TR: There were seven different railroads at that time.

BB: So you went as an understudy of his.

TR: That is correct.

BB: How did you happen to get that job?

TR: Well how did I?

BB: Yes.

TR: Well our office represented the Milwaukee Railroad from the time the Milwaukee entered Montana. Jameson's office represented the Northern Pacific.

BB: That's your office here in Missoula?

TR: Yes.

BB: So you'd graduated from law school and you were an attorney then?

TR: That is right. I graduated in 1948 and went to work for the Missoula Merc as its in-house counsel. Six years later, I joined up to a law firm that has been in existence here since 1877.

BB: What firm is that?

TR: Garlington, Lohn, and Robinson is the name of the present firm. Early on it was Murphy, Garlington, and Pauley.

BB: I see, that's when it was when you were affiliated with it?

TR: Yes. And Mr. Pauley and Murphy both died the same year. So Garlington and Sherman Lohn and I organized the present firm. At that time, we represented the Anaconda Company, represented Montana Power. That firm represented most all of the sawmills of western Montana and represented many banks. We were a corporate firm, so to speak in that respect. I was tapped to go over and be there part of the time in the legislature because Mr. Jameson and Mr. Newell Gough—Newell Gough represented the Great Northern Railroad.

BB: Okay and he was an attorney in Helena?

TR: Yes he was in the firm Weir, Gough, and Booth, which exists there today [as Gough, Shanahan, Johnson and Waterman]. The three of us constituted the Montana Railroad Association. Then one morning Mr. Jameson called me and said, "I'll be leaving here before noon today. President Eisenhower has nominated me to be a federal judge. So I have resigned as a lobbyist. I'm going back to Billings and you take over." From that day on, I did. And I had the fortune to hire John Willard and John Delano. John Connors, whom you know, was an attorney. I had the benefit of a boy by the name of Arthur Lamey, who was an attorney down in the big firm in Billings. Arthur and John read the bills and then I kind of spent my time up on the hill.

BB: Now Ty, your father was a Democrat. You were probably raised more or less a Democrat.

TR: I really can't—my family was a dysfunctional one. My mother was a Theodore Roosevelt Republican, and my father was kind of a Jeffersonian by our terms today.

BB: Where I was going with that is that I know sometimes lobbying teams have a fellow that kind of specializes with the Democrats and a guy that specializes with the Republicans. I wondered whether you were the designated Democrat. That was the question I was going to ask.

TR: No, really I think it turned out finally, Bob, I was kind of a eunuch. People used to ask me, "What are you, a Democrat or a Republican?" Brother Cal, my brother in Kalispell, who was a lawyer, was a Democrat. He, until a couple of years before his death, decided that he got mad at them for some reason. Be that as it may, I suppose I have been more over on the Republican side most of my life because I was representing corporate activity. I was representing the business side. I became president of the Montana Chamber of Commerce in 1963, which is purely a business-oriented organization. So I'd say that on that. But you're right. We hired people in our lobby purposely whether they were Democrats or Republicans for that very purpose. We wanted a Republican to come in and lobby you. We wouldn't let John Lahr come over and do it. I had John for a few years there.

BB: Most of us remember him as a lobbyist for the Montana Power Company but was also a lobbyist for the railroads in the beginning.

TR: He was to begin with. He started with them. What John was doing—he was a call-boy down here in the Northern Pacific Railroad.

BB: Here in Missoula?

TR: Yes. He would call these fellows out for their jobs in the mornings. I had come to know John through—he was a debater in high school here. I sat in as a judge one time. I was impressed with John. So I talked to him and sure enough, he married LeRoy Anderson's daughter. You'll remember that LeRoy Anderson was an outstanding senator in the Democratic Party.



BB: He was also a congressman.

TR: Yes, he was. That's right. He went to Congress after he represented really eastern Montana. When we had the two congressmen, that is true.

BB: Now Ty, as a lobbyist, you saw the lobbying operation of the Anaconda Company.

TR: That I did.

BB: I guess I've kind of gotten mixed reports on this that, I've heard that there was a rivalry between the Montana Power Company and that there was a close relationship and an alliance between the Montana Power Company and the Anaconda Company. Perhaps both of those are partly true. Can you shed any light on that?

TR: Both are true because the Anaconda Company really owned the Montana Power Company until 1948 when their interest had to be divested. The part that they owned in it was all moved over into the open public. The public at that time bought Montana Power stock, which no longer belonged to the Anaconda Company. Yes, but during the legislature, they worked very closely together. The Anaconda Company had outstanding lobbyists, a man by the name of Wilkinson.

BB: Al Wilkinson.

TR: Al Wilkinson was their top lobbyist. Bill Kirkpatrick, who later came along to be a fine lobbyist. They had several people who lived in Butte, all of them came out of Butte. Once in a while, they would have maybe somebody from their Great Falls operation, but normally mostly all Butte. It's true that what you said—both sides of that coin are available to us. There were at times some contests that might arise where the Anaconda Company might benefit from a bill that was in that would hurt the Montana Power Company, I'm sure. I think that they all managed to get it together. You must remember that the Anaconda Company had the largest room in the Placer Hotel—what we call those rooms—

BB: Watering holes?

TR: Watering holes later. They were all there. The railroads had one and I operated that. The labor people had one. The truckers had one. The insurance people had one. The Montana Power had one. But the Anaconda people really had the large one because every day after the session was over, you'd find the delegates from the Butte, Anaconda, Deer Lodge, and maybe one or two neighboring counties—people from the Boulder area. They would all be up there getting fed at night. That was expected. They may vote against the Anaconda Company the next day, but the people who worked for the Anaconda Company had been elected to the legislature. The history of that was, if there was a tough bill against the Anaconda Company,

you'd find many of those delegates in the bathroom at the time the vote came up. Those legislators, particularly in the House and at that time, I think Butte must have had four and I think Anaconda had at least two, Red Menahan was there forever, as was Joe Quilici from Butte. You're very familiar with—they're friends of yours.

BB: Do you remember a fellow by the name of Mervin Dempsey?

TR: Yes.

BB: Back in the 1950s.

TR: He came from Butte. He was rather a heavysset fellow. I'd say he must have weighed 250 pounds easily. I don't think he was over maybe five nine [five feet, nine inches], yes. Mervin was one of the group fighters. In the Butte delegation—

BB: What group?

TR: The Butte delegation, you would find once in a while some labor people, labor agents. That's what Mervin was mainly.

BB: I see.

TR: So there were things that came up for labor at times that could hurt the Anaconda Company and there would be a little infighting within the group. Then the entire delegations would—

BB: Was it your impression that the Anaconda Company tried to cooperate to some extent with organized labor?

TR: They did.

BB: Did they have an interest in doing that?

TR: Yes, they did. They sat down and prior to the time of Jim Murry was head of—there was a man here from Missoula. I can't think of his name at the moment. He was head of AFL-CIO labor. They had difficulty working with him of course.

BB: Jim Umber?

TR: Jim Umber, you're right. You're correct. You're right on it. Your mind is better than mine. That's the fellow.

BB: He was more open to working with the Anaconda Company.

TR: Yes, he was more open than Jim Murry by far. In those days they recognized that labor wasn't going to ultimately win all the time because the politics, I think, in Montana was heavily against labor in some areas, particularly in the eastern areas of Montana. Butte, Anaconda, Missoula, Great Falls were probably the main labor spots and eventually through the years we've seen Billings and Bozeman and Kalispell.

BB: It sounds like the fellows that hung out on a more or less regular basis there at the Anaconda Company hospitality room tended to be people from the Butte and Anaconda areas.

TR: One hundred percent.

BB: Did you ever encounter other legislators from other areas there?

TR: Yes. Great Falls people were there once in a while. Great Falls Democrats—they would mostly all be Democrats. You wouldn't find many Republicans up there. There would be some because they would invite them. Each room had its different décor. For instance, in the room that I had for the railroad, we invited the husbands and wives to come. We were very genteel about this. We would have whatever they wanted in the way of an imbibement. We might have little nice hors d'oeuvres. We closed our room, well, by 6, at the latest 6:30. Those other rooms might run on until 8:30 or 9 at night.

BB: So I think what I hear you saying Ty, is that you might have—you might have fed more Republicans than Democrats at yours. There were more Democrats at the Anaconda Company room, maybe the insurance company had a mixture.

TR: The trucking companies likewise. Most of the trucking companies I'd say, you'd have selected people that they might invite.

BB: So you couldn't just drop in?

TR: To their place, I don't think you could just drop in. Leonard Eckle was the man—

BB: The lobbyist for the truckers?

TR: The truckers. And at that time I think Leonard, and a fine lobbyist, but I think they were prone to invite people to theirs.

BB: So in your case, where the railroads were concerned, at the end of the legislature, was known that you had a hospitality suite that was opened to anybody that wanted to come along with their spouses?

TR: Absolutely, anybody. We did that because at first there weren't too many spouses that came with their hubbies. As they did, they seemed to be left out. In order to have some place to go—and in those days, Bob, believe it or not—this is in the '50s and '60s mainly. The legislature was all done by three o'clock in the afternoon.

BB: Gosh, I just can't imagine that.

TR: You can't imagine it, can you?

BB: No I can't.

TR: Lots of times it didn't get started until noon. In those days, we didn't have the complexity of life that we have. The culture was a little different.

BB: The volume of legislation wasn't as great.

TR: No, not at all. In those days, I should tell you that lobbyists served a purpose as—you're familiar with what lobbyists do and what purpose they serve. There was one additional one: if a legislator wanted a bill put together, he'd talk to a lobbyist and we'd put it together for them, having nothing to do with us, having nothing to do with why we were there.

BB: In fact I've been told, Ty, that you were someone that was especially gifted as a drafter of bills and you drafted a fair number of them.

TR: I don't think I was gifted, Bob, but—

BB: Experience didn't matter.

TR: I was experienced. This was before we had the legislative counsel people. The process today takes care of that. We did a lot of it, yes. One of the faux pas that I pulled—Tom Haines, who was a legislator here from Missoula and a friend of yours, wanted to do something about getting, was it margarine, yes—he wanted to get margarine so right after World War II so to speak.

BB: I think if I remember—there was something about that. There was a law that said that margarine couldn't be sold if it was colored yellow. It had to be sold colored white. Then the lady could mix in the yellow coloring with it. It looked kind of yucky when it was white.

TR: Did you ever do that?

BB: I don't remember it, but—

TR: We used to all have to do that—have that little package of coloring and you would mix it all in to get it looking like butter.

BB: So the housewives and the grocery stores thought, “Well why can’t we just sell the stuff with the coloring in it?” I think the dairymen maybe didn’t want that. I don’t know who the opposition was, but I know that Governor Aronson was committed on one side of that. He and Haines were on opposite sides perhaps. It was a hot controversy in the 1950s.

TR: Yes. It was very hot. Tom had to have a bill, so I of course put together a bill. What did I do? I copied a bill that had been used in Wyoming. The only problem was that I forgot to take out the word “Wyoming” down at the very last sentence. It went all the way through to the governor’s office.

BB: Nobody caught it?

TR: None of the clerks caught it. Nobody caught it except George O’Connor, later to become president of Montana Power, who was a lobbyist and potent lobbyist for the Montana Power Company.

BB: And he was a legislator prior to that.

TR: He had for many years from Carbon County had been a legislator, right. He called me and said, “That bill of yours, you know, is haywire. It’s in the governor’s office and just see—it’s not going to work.” So he called me at night and I got a hold of, I forget who it was, in the governor’s office and got him out of bed to tell him not to do anything in the morning. I got a hold of that bill and we took it back to a committee in the house where it started and I had to get that little thing stricken and get the word “Montana” corrected in there. It took me a couple of days to get it back through before I got it down to the governor. I think the governor—that was Governor Bonner.

BB: The railroads had no interest in this.

TR: No, none whatsoever. There were many bills that I drew that—

BB: It sounds like you took kind of an interest in the bill, it sounds like. I mean because—

TR: Oh I took a great interest and I felt that as a lobbyist over there on my part was there to help every legislator, regardless. I learned immediately when I arrived from Bill Jameson that as a lobbyist, you don’t want to tell any legislator anything but the truth. If you didn’t know it, tell them that you didn’t know it. With that standard, I stayed with the lobbying through nine sessions of the legislature.

BB: Certainly that was always your policy?

TR: That was completely.

BB: Now you know, we've mentioned Governor Bonner. Do you know, was there any relationship between Governor Bonner, say, and Al Wilkinson and the people—

TR: You know, I'm not up-to-date as to how—whether the companies, whether the power brokers so to speak were involved in his election. He had come home from the war after World War II and he was a war hero. He was elected. That's all I know. I had just arrived home after his election. He was elected in November and I didn't get home until the following March. Likewise with Arnold Olsen and others from the Democratic Party. I don't know, Bob.

BB: You didn't have a close working relationship with Bonner particularly? He was governor just as you were starting out as a lobbyist.

TR: That's right. He appointed my father to the State Board of Equalization. I knew John Bonner and knew him well through the years. Bonner himself became a lobbyist in later years, do you remember?

BB: Yes, I do. Did you know Governor Aaronson?

TR: Very well. I happen to know Governor Aaronson because I had met Governor Aaronson before either one of us even got into this business. He was working up in the oil fields south of Cut Bank. I was a border patrolman out of Sweet Grass. We used to meet out around the oil wells where there was nothing else for the border patrolmen to do. So I would be out there. Here would be this big man with something on each shoulder, a big—it looked like water jugs, so to speak. It later turned out to be the thing that they pour down into the oil wells to blow things apart.

BB: Oh I see. A chemical of some kind?

TR: I can't think of the name of the chemical. You and I both know it, but if he had dropped one of those, neither one of us would be—he wouldn't have been governor and I no longer would have been a lobbyist. Yes, I used to visit with him. The thing about it when he would shake hands with you, his hand was so big, yours was just lost in it. I came to know Governor Aronson, his wife very well. Rose was a wonderful lady. In those days, lobbyists were called into the governor's office just to visit with him. Maybe you'd have a half a dozen people there, not all lobbyists. He wanted to know about this, this, and this. He was a man that I take it made a judgment, not particularly a political judgment. He made it from the seat of his pants. He was an uneducated man, you remember. He got a third grade education at the most. His judgments as I look back on them were really unequal in many ways. He was as a governor in those days, we didn't have many problems. The state had a good financial surplus. We didn't have the problems that had risen subsequently.

BB: Go ahead.

TR: No.

BB: Do you remember Governor Nutter?

TR: Governor Nutter and I were in law school together. Then I went out and worked for Governor Nutter and I had great faith in him. I felt that he was going to be one of the great governors of Montana, certainly in my lifetime. He was. He was an understandable governor. He and I, if I may just digress for a minute, I'm president of the State Chamber of Commerce, I happened to be in the capitol on the day of January the 25th, which is my birthday. I left my office that morning and my secretary said, "Now you'll be sure and be back. You're getting back today aren't you from Helena?"

I said, "I'll be back. I'll probably get back here by four-thirty or five because I'll be all through over there by two o'clock." I was in with Frank Murray who was the Secretary of State at the time. I got a call to come down to the governor's office. Nutter told me that he was going to Cut Bank that night to make a talk and he'd been trying to get a hold of me.

As president of the state chamber, he wanted me to make a little talk ahead of him. Could take ten minutes to make a talk? Well, I said, "I'll find out because I have a commitment back in Missoula that I'm supposed to be doing something there. I'm not quite sure, but I'll find out, Don."

I got a hold of my friend and partner Sherm Lohn and he said, "Ty, there's a great big surprise birthday party for you tonight at the Florence Hotel. We've got about 150 people coming to that party for you. You've got to be here."

So I went back and told the governor my situation and he said, "Oh, well I really need you up there, but if that's the case, I guess..." and we all know what happened to that airplane ride that night.

BB: What a story.

TR: So the angels were on my shoulder. I felt so very bad because Don and I were good friends. He and I had refereed some basketball games after World War II. He was a good referee and we both refereed a state tournament in Butte. It was the first time I really worked with him. I got to know him then pretty well.

BB: How would you describe him?

TR: He was a dynamic and a rather forceful fellow. I think once he made up his mind, this was going to be it. He felt that he was right. He was a senator from his county over there—

BB: Richland County.

TR: Richland County in eastern Montana. He was very vocal in the Senate. He wasn't afraid to stand up. By that time he had graduated from law school. He had a legal training. He was rather an outspoken spokesman for the Republican Party in the Senate. He was a very fine fellow to visit with, to get along. He was a great, good friend.

BB: A good sense of humor?

TR: Excellent sense of humor. That's what I think kept him going.

BB: Now how did he and Tim Babcock happen to run as a team?

TR: You have to remember Tim Babcock came out of Glendive. Richland County, being the neighbor of Glendive, I suppose that they had become friends. Tim was in business in Miles City but they were both young Republicans, active. That would be the only way that I would say, Bob, that they had probably become well acquainted.

BB: How would you compare them? How were they similar? How were they different?

TR: Well rather much different. Tim Babcock is, as we know, a laid back fellow. It seems to me Tim Babcock has about nine lives. He gets into some of the worst jackpots a politician can get into or any human being, but he always lands on his feet. Now Don was more pragmatic. As a governor, I think he was pretty well organized. I'm sure that maybe, I'd have to say at times, the people working around Tim Babcock were organized but Tim wasn't always organized. Tim was a great friend of humanity. I remember being in Governor Nutter's office one day and trying to get some money for western Montana roads. He was telling me, "You know, that's great to talk about that. There's only so much money and I have to make a decision here. The people up in Plentywood and northeastern Montana, they haven't had their roads fixed for 18 years. You have a man by the name of Harry Bell who's been on the State Highway Committee and he's been getting money practically every session of congress for something western Montana. So he said, I'm telling you I'm going to help those people in northeastern Montana."

Now had that been Tim, Tim would say, "Well let's see what we can do. We only have so much money, maybe we'll divide it and give them a little so they can get started and we'll give you a little." That was the difference that I would see. Their personalities were different, but they were the same in that they were happy-go-lucky fellows in the end, both of them. Nutter was really a happy-go-lucky fellows. He had been through the war. I think his experiences were no different than Tim Babcock, who you remember was in the Battle of the Bulge.



BB: Tim was a combat infantry man. In fact, I'm going to interview him too, I think. The story I remember, and I'm dying to ask him about this, is that after the war was over, somehow he met General Eisenhower. Eisenhower was no longer president and Tim was just a new governor of Montana. They met at a golf course, at some golf something; I think a fundraising event at a golf course. They had an opportunity to talk a little bit. Eisenhower was fascinated that Tim was a buck private, just an enlisted man in the infantry in World War II. He said, "I'd like to visit with you about that. I'd just like to understand how the war looked from your viewpoint because it was very different from mine." So apparently Tim spent a long weekend at the Gettysburg farm of General Eisenhower's back sometime in the early 1960s. I'm dying to ask him about that story.

TR: I want to get a hold of Tim. As I was boarding an airplane the other day down in Palm Springs, a man behind me heard me say something to somebody about Montana. He said, "You live in Montana?"

I told him I did.

He said, "Do you know people in Montana?"

I said, "I'm fairly well knowledgeable, yes, we don't have too many people in the state."

He said, "Would you happen to know a fellow by the name of Tim Babcock?" It turned out that he was a partner in the Battle of the Bulge right alongside of Tim as a buck private.

BB: Wow.

TR: He said, "We went to the 50th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge together over there. That's the last time I've seen Tim. I understand he's still alive and healthy."

I said, "He very much is." I think Tim is a doer and a goer.

BB: He's remarkable.

TR: Isn't he?

BB: He goes to the Kiwanis Club meetings and the Pachyderm Club meetings every week regularly. He always has a spring in his step and a sparkle in his eye. He's a good guy that's for sure. You know, now you obviously knew him as governor and have an impression of him. Then he was followed by Governor Anderson.

TR: He was a fraternity brother of mine. Another very good friend, but I'd have to say this: He isn't here. He's dead and I don't think lightning will strike me, but Forrest Anderson was a good governor. He was well organized and he was a fine political governor in the sense that he hued

very close to the line. You were in the legislature at the time. You knew what kind of a governor you're dealing with. But he was the kind of a man that said, "I'm going to do something."

You'd say, "You can't do that, governor. That's illegal."

So he was telling you that he was going to do something illegally but he was being honest about his illegality. And I used to tell him that. I was on the board of the Montana Power Company, as was Bob Corette, his good friend, and he'd get after both of us about wanting to buy a piece of land up in Canyon Ferry, up near Wolf Creek. We said we couldn't do anything. Montana Power owned that land and neither one of us could deal on that with a governor. We were sorry. He said, "I'll get it." Eventually we found that the power company did make a sale of land. They made it to his brother-in-law. Then his brother-in-law deeded it to Forrest.

BB: Why would that have been illegal for him to buy it?

TR: Not illegal, but illegal for us on the power company board. We're right in the middle of the legislature and it's during where there are a couple of lobbyists—

BB: It seemed improper to you?

TR: It was highly unethical, we felt. It didn't bother Forrest.

BB: I see. It could have been interpreted that if you'd have given him too good a deal as a—

TR: He was a highly political man. I had a young man working for me who had been a senator from Drummond years ago. He was very active with the American Legion and others. He was a Democrat and Forrest wanted to appoint him to the state labor commissioner position; I believe it is the job. The minute somebody stood up in the Senate and said, "Wait a minute, he's lobbying for the railroads. He's lobbying for those people there. We don't want anybody like that." The next thing I knew, I got a call to go down to the governor's office and he said, "I want to tell you, I like your boy very much. I'm not going to appoint him. I'm pulling back the appointment. I don't want you to do anything about his job if you want to keep him and so forth." But it was strictly political of Forrest. He was a wheeler and dealer but a good governor in the sense that the state ran well. We didn't have many problems. He was a strong political man in the sense that he was a Democrat all the way through.

BB: He defeated Tim Babcock. Then he didn't run for re-election and he was followed by Governor Tom Judge.

TR: That's right.

BB: Judge was the first governor to be governor entirely under the new constitution.

TR: I think that's right, Bob. I think you're absolutely right.

BB: The transition took place between Governor Anderson's term in office. Do you have any—?

TR: I think you're right. I can remember that time because I served on the constitutional— whatever they called the constitutional committee that we spent about seven months ahead of that time preparing information for the Constitutional Convention. A man by the name of Gene Mahoney had been a previous senator, as you know, from Sanders County. He was the chairman of that commission. I think we had Forrest in one day to talk to us on matters. It wasn't education, but it was something else I can't recall. Yes, you're right. I think he was the governor.

BB: You lobbied for several sessions after the new constitution. Did you notice any particular differences or anything that would—I think maybe the differences would become more apparent as time has gone on. Do you have any thoughts on that or any perspective?

TR: Well I don't know whether it was the new constitution that did it, but we more or less phased out the watering holes. I think maybe we were looking at things in an ethical way more than anything else perhaps when we closed them eventually finally all together. We were a little more hesitant about taking you legislators out to lunch or dinner in the evening. I think the legislators became a little more reserved and stand-offish to the point where they are today. They are very reserved. I think it was a slow-moving change in culture. I don't know whether that came about because of the change of that—the one change we saw as lobbyists was the phrase in the legislature, that statement having to do with the environment, a free and open environment for all of Montana. If you were in the utility business or you were in the business of natural resource, and remember the railroads were, so the biggest change I saw probably came about there.

BB: A greater emphasis on environmental protection?

TR: Yes.

BB: To associate with the new constitution?

TR: For instance, we had in the sawmills in western Montana...what we call teepee burners. You were familiar with those where they burned the refuse after they had gone through the mill and so forth.

BB: They were just a big cone-shaped kind of a—

TR: That's what it was. It looked like a teepee.

BB: Like a teepee and they were filled with bark and chips and branches and sawdust from the sawmill.

TR: That is exactly what—

BB: Then that refuse, the mill waste—that wood waste would just smolder and burn in there and it would give off a certain amount of smoke. At night I can remember you could see them glowing at night. When I was a young person in the Flathead Valley, there were a lot of teepee burners up there. So the reason they were controversial was because of air quality issues.

TR: That is correct. They were polluters and if your wife hung out your laundry on the line, you might find it very well speckled with all the little residue of the carbon that was being burned out. Yes, that was one change that came about for our sawmills here in western Montana. There's no question about that. We set up committees to study air pollution. The first committee that we had in Missoula County, I happened to be the chairman. People couldn't understand how that could happen. How could I be a chairman when we represented all these sawmills? But we saw the necessity of health being a premier factor in our lives. If these things were, such as the teepee burners, unhealthy then something had to be done about it. Then the next phase was the big pulp mill we had here in Missoula. That was set up in 1959. In '72, 13 years or later, these changes came about. The pollution that we smelled in Missoula, usually every morning, finally came to an end mainly and only frequently—maybe two or three times a year, maybe we still have a little of that. But it was necessary for operations like that mill to put in the necessary scrubbers to take care of that type of odor and the pollution. They've done it. That, I think, is the direct result of the 1972 change in our law.

BB: In the constitution.

TR: In the constitution.

BB: We've talked about the corporations in Montana and how they were involved back in the 1940s and '50s. I've been curious too because I guess I thought that hospitality rooms were more of melting pots where you had Democrats and Republicans and maybe even a few liberals sprinkled in with the conservatives who would get together and just shoot the bull at the end of the day. I hadn't realized that they were—you might have separate groups going back to separate places each time. The 1972 constitution went into effect and these laws we talked about that were designed to protect the environment easily passed the legislature and were signed by the governor. You'd think back in the '40s and '50s when people were less concerned about the environment and perhaps the influence of the corporations in the state was greater that those bills wouldn't have had a chance of passing. Do you think that's accurate?

TR: That is 100 percent accurate. In my opinion, back in those days, there hadn't been the public concern, public esteem for environment as it existed. We were moving out of our

wilderness area, so to speak, of the development of the time that we were developing Montana. We were a heavy natural resource state in the '40s.

BB: Ty, was it that the Anaconda Company, the Montana Power Company, the railroads and so on had lost enough of their political clout by the 1970s that they were able to stop that legislation from passing? Or did they just think, "Well maybe this isn't in the public interest and we might as well kind of reluctantly go on with it"?

TR: Well, the latter is pretty close to that because we had several bills and some of them were very rather extreme environmental bills. One by Representative [Elmer] Flynn from Missoula County here had been put in and was getting more attention than some people thought it should. Then there were a couple of more moderate bills put in. Finally it was the Anaconda Company itself that went down and suggested to Tim Babcock it would be better to sign this bill because obviously if you vetoed this bill in any way, the next session we might get a more extreme bill. "We" as corporate polluters, so to speak, or people in that business, in the mining business—we might get something more drastic. That was really the key point. I know that is exactly what happened. So you were right in that the time had come for people to say, "Yes, maybe we're better take this." But back in the '40s, '50s, in the first part of the early '60s, it was difficult.

BB: The corporations wouldn't have had to compromise much of anything then, is that what you're—if they didn't want to?

TR: Normally not, because they had pretty good control of the legislature.

BB: Now Ty, I've heard that. I'm curious to know how that worked.

TR: Were you ever acquainted with a man by the name of Boo McGillivray?

BB: Yes.

TR: Boo was an assessor in Polson, Lake County, and he was hired by the Montana Power Company to be their tax advisor on real property that they owned throughout the state. He had counterparts with a lot of companies and the Anaconda Company was one. I know the Farm Union had their people out. Boo's entire 365-day job was to go out and get legislators lined up to run and get them elected. Then I think in the late '40s—

BB: This was after he had been an assessor in Lake County?

TR: Yes. He went to work for the power company in about 1944, I think it was.

BB: Had he not been a state senator too from Lake County?

TR: Yes, he had.

BB: So, what he'd do, is he was a full-time employee for the Montana Power Company...

TR: That's right.

BB: He would just travel around the state and he'd try to talk fellows into running for the legislature—

TR: Trying to get candidates lined up and if they would run, then he'd see to it that they got help. In those days, the money matter was not what it is today as far as a matter of concern, probably. Anyway, he'd see to it that the people in the community got behind his candidate and got elected and when that candidate arrived, Boo and similar people—the telephone company and the other utilities all were very concerned about getting their own people in there. Let's take an example that there were some trucking bills in the early '50s—'59 session—that the truckers certainly didn't like. What did they do? In the next two or three sessions, you found a lot of truckers elected to the legislature. They were going to take care of that, do you remember Harry Northey and the rest of them? They were the type of people that were going to see to it that it wouldn't happen again.

BB: So the people that McGillivray—that Boo McGillivray—might have recruited to run for the legislature generally would—because we hear about the Anaconda Company being this colossus of power in the legislature. But McGillivray worked for the Montana Power Company.

TR: But Wilkinson and Denny Shea from the Anaconda Company were out doing the same thing. When those legislators arrived, did they feel beholden to them? No, but they knew they had a friend there that would help them if they needed it. I can't recall the session, but it seemed to me that the Senate was tied up almost even-steven and they were having quite a time trying to get organized. Finally, I know that Al Wilkinson was called in to sit down and George O'Connor from the Montana Power Company and the local manager of the telephone company, [George] Redhair was his name. He's statewide for the telephone company at that time—to sit down to talk to these people because they'd reached a point of desperation probably. How were they going to do this? Those three fellows helped them. Here's the top of the—lobbying for the Montana Power and lobbying for the Anaconda Company and the telephone company. I know that they held those sessions and finally everything was decided how they were going to do it and who was going to be in charge, who was going to be the president *pro tem* of the Senate and who was going to be such and such.

BB: Were legislators involved in the meetings?

TR: Yes, legislators were all there.

BB: But also these corporate officials were there in the same room at the same time.

TR: Exactly.

BB: Helping them figure out what they were going to do.

TR: I got a call and I was supposed to have been there.

BB: Now was it just the Republican Party?

TR: No, it was both because Wilkinson himself was a Democrat, a good Irish Democrat.

BB: So this meeting would have taken place like just in a large room, guys just sitting around talking it over and figuring out what they were going to do?

TR: That's exactly what they were going to do—how to get themselves organized to get underway. This was the second day of the legislative session and they couldn't get organized. They were having difficulty. As I recall, it was almost a tie, both Democrats and Republicans. They were there. Both their leaders were there as I recall from both parties.

BB: Where did the AFL-CIO and the Farmer's Union fit into this?

TR: They would fit—

BB: They weren't involved in that meeting?

TR: No, they were not, not as I recall that.

BB: Were they an effective opposition to the Anaconda Company, the Montana Power Company, the railroads, and that sort of thing?

TR: To begin with in the '50s, I didn't think the AFL-CIO was that effective, no. They didn't get the legislation they wanted, but the Farm Union was a little more eager to work with some of those people to get some things they needed. It really didn't bother the Anaconda or the Montana Power because this is agricultural out here. We have to have agriculture running. The railroads certainly wanted agriculture to be dominant in their own field. That connection, I should tell you, Bob, in the days before we had many of the bureaucracies set-ups that we have in Helena now to determine what might happen the next two years after the legislature goes home, the finance and claims chairman was a man by the name of Senator James from up in Chester.

BB: David James.

TR: David James and a man by the name of Bill Groff, finance and claims.

BB: From down here in Ravalli County.

TR: And Norris Nichols who was the Chairman of Appropriations also from Ravalli County, and a couple of others would sit and they would call in various people, including me, to say “Can you railroad people tell us what your people back in Minneapolis, St. Paul, Chicago and elsewhere have determined what we might have in the way of crops coming up? What kind of crops will we have for the next two years? What kind of an economy will agriculture have out there?” And I had to supply that information, which the railroads had. They had it. Now that was in the days before we had state government making those same determinations.

BB: But you honestly provided the best information you could and that was a basis, I imagine, for trying to make some kind of budget projection?

TR: Yes, exactly. That was the purpose of it. I know that others were called in for the same reason. The oil people, the oil lobbyists were in there I remember. They were coming in after me on my way out to do the same thing. They had—all of those things spoke to the economy. That’s the way that the legislature determined their budget. It was a little different in later years, wasn’t it?

BB: I got there at the end of that. I can remember Bill Groff carrying the little torn pieces of paper. He used to have a piece of stationery and he’d tear a piece of it up into about eight pieces. He’d have numbers written on each one. You’d go up to him in the hallway and say, “Bill I’ve got a question about the budget. Can you tell me about how much we expect to spend on the Highway Department? What I’m trying to do is see if we can jar loose some money for an overpass somewhere near Whitefish or something like that.” If I had a question like that, and he’d say, “Just a minute. Let me see, Bob.” He’d reach in his pocket and he’d dig out the papers. We’d sit down and he’d shuffle them around. He’d take out his ballpoint pen and do some calculating and that sort of thing. I’d ask him some more specific questions. He’d say, “Well I don’t hardly see how we can do that.” Or, “Well yes, I think we might be able to do that. Why don’t you go talk to so and so?” Then we’d talk it over. He would make important decisions just standing in the hallway talking to us. We didn’t have the computers. We didn’t have the spreadsheets. We didn’t have the complexities. We didn’t have all the cooks involved in making the broth.

Most of us just trusted whatever Bill had written down on that piece of paper. There were a few guys looking over his shoulder. I think Bill Bertsche and Matt Himsl and Norris Nichols and a few others, no doubt Dave James. They were trusted and it seemed to work pretty well.

TR: It did work.

BB: Later on, of course, we got the computers involved in the process and we hired Chase Econometrics at one time and I don’t remember, there may have been other economic



forecasting organizations. They helped us to have a professional way of understanding what was going to happen in the future, which hasn't always been accurate either. We would have special sessions to balance the budget. I do remember the end of that. I remember it fondly.

TR: That's right. Bill was all-powerful in that respect, I'd say. He tried honestly. In those days just as you did, you knew you were elected to come and run the government of the state of Montana. You know we've had term limits and other things that I think now bear on that where inexperienced people there having some difficulty.

BB: Now Ty, you know because of term limits, I think it's difficult for legislators to attain a high level of prominence. Where a legislator in a relatively short amount of time in which they have to serve now, which is eight years, they probably don't become like a political legend in Montana. You served with some pretty important people, pretty distinguished—

TR: Let's mention Dave Manning. He was a longtime senator from over in Eastern Montana and a man that had been there long enough to know that he was elected to serve the public, even part of the Democratic Party. Those men, you could ask them questions and get direct answers as to whether this was right or wrong so far as their manner of thinking was concerned. There were a lot of those people in the past that I wish I had my little books that I maintained all the years, each year. Do you remember the little roster book that's put out? To think back to some of the giants that we had, yes.

BB: Jim Lucas?

TR: Outstanding lawyer from over in Miles City. I must confess I feel guilty every time I mention his name. He, too, was in law school here with me. We convinced Jim that the time had come in Montana that we needed a sales tax. He was going to run for governor. So he ran for governor and we all know what happened to the sales tax question and we know what happened to Jim Lucas. That was the end of his—I think of the Lieutenant Governor from down in Dillon that we had.

BB: George Gosman.

TR: He was an outstanding man, type of personality. He was a longtime Republican, but a fine legislator in the sense that he, like Dave Manning and others, knew they were there to see that the state of Montana operated properly in those days.

BB: Do you remember a fellow who was speaker of the house in the late '50s by the name of McDonald? Was it John McDonald?

TR: I think his name is John. I can see his face, yes. John McDonald—I'm trying to think. Was he the McDonald that came from Geysers? [He was from Dutton.]

BB: Could be. There was a hot issue in the 1959 legislative session involving what they called public utility districts?

TR: Oh yes, yes, yes. That the Montana Power and the co-ops were fighting as to who was going to be serving certain areas. It was a very hot issue. Thank goodness I've not been involved in anything like that. It was finally settled somewhat amicably and seems to work out—did work out and is working today. In the urban areas Montana Power was to serve and in agricultural areas it would be the co-ops to serve, and it has. The big argument came over the fact that the cooperatives were not paying a full tax that the Montana Power had to pay because of the taxation situation. One was being for-profit and one being in effect, not a nonprofit exactly, but something like that. They were borrowing money from the federal government at one to two percent interest. It was unheard of for the private utilities I'm sure.

BB: Let's see—Clyde Hawks?

TR: Clyde Hawks from down in—

BB: Hardin. And Speaker of the House in '61.

TR: Hardin, yes. [He was from St. Xavier.] He was a legislator that carried lots of bills. He carried too many bills as I recall. We used to try to tell him that he couldn't do that. I think he was trying to carry them for many people and he was on an Indian reservation. It was the first effort, I think, that anybody had made to bring Indian legislation up. He was not a real leader in the sense, he was just carrying it. Clyde, a very likeable fellow. He was a very good legislator. He was very attentive and I don't think he'd miss any sessions. He'd be there.

BB: Frank Hazelbaker?

TR: Frank Hazelbaker from the great Hazelbaker family of Dillon. He was a good Republican politician. He was happy go lucky. Knew where the bodies were buried. I think in those days you'd have to say, the people that I've mentioned along, he was a—well, Gosman was his mentor. Frank, yes, Frank wanted to be governor.

BB: Frank's father was Lieutenant Governor and ran for governor. He lost a close race.

TR: He did that. Then following that, he became—I want to say governor of Hawaii when we appointed people out there. He was in charge of Hawaii after that, before that became a state. Do you remember that?

BB: That doesn't sound like too bad of a deal.

TR: Frank ended up living here in Missoula, you know. Yes, Frank Hazelbaker.

BB: Jean Turnage?

TR: Jean Turnage was an outstanding legislator. He came to the house as a lawyer. He, too, was in law school at the same time I was so we were good friends. This was all to my benefit and the only reason I say it, if you're going to lobby over there, you have to have friends. They have to be your friends, but they have to trust you. You have to be trustworthy. Knowing people like Lucas and Jean, Jean was a very—he's very intelligent. There's no question about it. He was a good lawyer. We used to call him a country lawyer, but he did very well first as county attorney in Lake County and then on to the legislature. Jean was an awfully good friend of mine, but he could never help me because his father was a railroad—I'm trying to think exactly what he was. I think he was a signal repairman for the Northern Pacific Railroad from Polson down to Thompson Falls. So when railroad bills came up that were contrary to what the railroad management thought, I would be on one side and Jean would be on the other.

BB: Jean generally voted with the railroad employees because his father-in-law was—

TR: His father. He used to tell me very flatly. Joe McElwain, who was a legislator from Powell County, later to become president of the Montana Power, his father worked for the Milwaukee Railroad. He was another that used to tell me, "Don't come and lobby me. Don't talk to me about this."

BB: Real labor issues.

TR: They were labor issues, issues that labor had not been able to get accomplished through bargaining, they brought to the legislature. It was my job to—

BB: Put the squelch on them if you could.

TR: Try to hold your finger in the dike. It became a pretty good hole at times.

BB: Then of course Jean Turnage went on to become chief justice.

TR: Yes, he did and a very fine chief justice in my opinion.

BB: Jim Haughey?

TR: Jim Haughey represented the oil people in the legislature, so to speak, because the law firm where he came from represented all the oil people of eastern Montana, the big oil people, just as I was there for the railroads representing the Milwaukee Railroad. Jim was an easy-going lobbyist. The rest of us might be working our head off. Jim floated, but he got his job done.

BB: Then he went on to be a legislator.

TR: Yes, he was a legislator.

BB: In the '60s he was a legislator from both the Senate and the House.

TR: Both the House and Senate. He was there with that group of—they were all about the same age. The Nutter group, Clyde Hawks, you can go through all those fellows about the same age together.

BB: Jim Felt?

TR: Jim Felt was a lawyer from down in Billings. Hard working, very serious minded legislator. If he suffered a defeat, he took it badly. He couldn't quite roll with a punch like many did. I suppose that was normal for human nature. He always used to be very upset if something didn't work right. However, he worked hard on some legislative matters. He was in competition with a fellow by the name of Towe. Tommy Towe, another legislator who was the exact opposite of Jim Felt and they sparred. Both of them were from Billings. They were both very articulate. That was the thing. You had Senate arguments and if you knew that a bill that was coming up that they'd be on, the Senate galleries would be packed to listen to both of them. That often happened with Turnage too. When Turnage was floor leader and majority leader of the Senate, we'll say, he handled things very well but he was a man that could help compromise. He could mediate. So we didn't have too many of those startling debates. We had them with Tommy Towe.

BB: I've heard it said and I got in enough of this to probably agree with it too, but even when Turnage was the minority leader in the Senate, he was very influential.

TR: Very.

BB: I don't know if it would be fair to say he was the de facto majority leader, but he could usually—it was almost impossible to beat him if it was important to him.

TR: Yes, it was. He used to have us doing things. This is something that happens to lobbyists that people don't know. You might be called on to get in and help do some things that had no connection to what you were there for. Sometimes you felt you were being kind of crossways. Turnage was the one that would come to you, as Nutter would do once in a while, and say, "Look I've got to have some help on this. You're a good friend of so-and-so over there. Now you go over there and tell him that Senate Bill 34 is just what we've got to have. He's hung up on a thing and I want you to take him out to dinner. Do whatever you have to. Get him full of wine or something. Drink him up."

BB: And you're thinking, "What in the heck does this have to do with me?"

TR: It had nothing to do with me, but you know this is part of your job as a lobbyist. You're there to help legislators legislate. Take the example of a man from here who was a senator, Eddie Dussault. Eddie couldn't possibly get around to read all the bills, so I used to read and we'd give Eddie printouts, one, two little paragraph printouts about the bill every morning to kind of keep him up to date.

BB: Who's "we"?

TR: My office, the railroad office that I operated where I had readers, as I told you John Connor and Arthur Lamey Jr. They would prepare this for me at night. We were working in our office until midnight usually every night. It was a tough go to do those things and you were up at six or six-thirty in the morning out to do things. Maybe you had meetings with legislators, maybe other lobbyists. We had a group of lobbyists that met every Monday morning at seven o'clock. Usually after Tim built his motel out there, and it was headed up by various people, Jerry Anderson, who you know, was very active among those. Most all of us were graduates from the University here.

BB: What did you have in common?

TR: We had in common two or three things: one, if we saw that something was coming down the pipe that was going to cause a lot of discussion, maybe it was going to disrupt somebody like Leonard Eckel, say, "We've got two trucking bills and they're going to put us out of business." It was none of our business, but all of a sudden that became a concern to us. If we had a chance to tell somebody that we could sit down and visit with about those bills, we did it. It didn't matter who we were. So we kind of tried to help each other. The other thing that we met for was the whole University's system. We had people there that had gone to school in Billings and we had lots of Bobcats among us lobbying. They were all there together. We wanted to be sure that we got the money for the University system.

BB: It wasn't just Grizzlies. You had Bobcats and Grizzlies and everybody. So these were association lobbyists pretty much? You talked about Leonard Eckel was a trucker and Jerry Anderson represented what—?

TR: He was representing Green Stamps.

BB: At that time he represented oil, if I remember.

TR: I think he was involved with the oil people.

BB: You represented the railroads. Was the Anaconda Company or the Montana Power Company involved in that group?

TR: No, not particularly. We didn't have anybody in that group. Bob Corette wasn't there and no, George O'Connor wasn't there. No, that was just a group of fellows that wanted—on the university mainly and we were concerned to see if we could get things. I remember I dealt with a man by the name of—I wish I could recall his name, a senator from over in eastern Montana who was second on finance and claims. He was handling the university appropriations. He called me in and it had been just after we allowed the dormitories to be both men and women in the same dorm, co-ed dorms. He was very much—

BB: Cornie Thiessen.

TR: Cornie Thiessen. He was very much a religious man. I think he actually was kind of a preacher, was he not?

BB: Yes.

TR: He called me in and sat down in the office and said, "I want you to get the word back to the president over at the University that if he will cut out those co-ed dorms, there'll be an additional 800,000 dollars going to the University. So of course I'm right on the phone to President Bowers telling him right now.

He said, "That's terrible. What are we going to do? What are we going to do?" Well, how do we handle things like that? Makes it a little difficult because Cornie had been good to me and we got along fine. But on that point, he was quite upset. It's nothing to do with railroads, but it's the University now.

BB: He knew you had that connection.

TR: Oh yes, he did.

BB: Now Ty, I'm curious to know. You mentioned that this group of association lobbyists, mostly business lobbyists, was it by invitation or did you just meet on a regular basis?

TR: We tried to meet every Monday morning if we could. We wouldn't always have the same number of people there because they'd have other commitments.

BB: You'd just kind of talk over generally what was going on in the legislature week?

TR: That's right.

BB: If you possibly could, you would try to help each other?

TR: That's what we tried to do.

BB: Do you know if that's still going on?

TR: No. John Delano tells me it doesn't happen anymore. I usually had John there with me in the morning, or maybe John Willard, one or the other. Yes, we enjoyed that. Let's go one step further, if I may, just to talk about the fact that—talk about Jean Turnage. Jean was in the Senate and somehow, I'm not sure, but he apparently was the majority leader. The question arose about a matter of a 10 million dollar bonding bill to build a new building out here, which later was to become the TV building, Fine Arts and TV [PAR-TV building]. President Bowers was the president. President Bowers, bless his soul, a fine man and had a tough time out here as president, he couldn't make up his mind on anything. The situation came down to this: yes, the legislature, you fellows in the Senate said, "We'll do this. We'll give you 8 million dollars, but it's up to you to get the other two million." The other presidents of the University group were very much opposed to this.

They said, "This is setting a precedent. It means that any time we come in here to get money to build buildings we're going to have to go out and get some private money to finish the job. That isn't the way the state is supposed to be doing it. They are supposed to be allowing us to bond and so forth and so on." Well Turnage and I were working on this. I am the in-between liaison between Dr. Bowers. He had a vice president by the name of Patty Douglas. A very bright girl, but she was completely impatient to everything in the world. A good friend of mine. They were staying together, Jorgenson's had rooms adjoining each other. They were working on their budget all the time, a matter with the legislature. So I would go over there in the evenings and sit down with him and tell him what Turnage had told me we were going to have to do. He gave us a deadline.

He said, "You go tell Dr. Bowers that by ten o'clock tomorrow morning we have to have a decision on this one way or another or the bill is dead. We have other fish to fry."

I said, "Okay." So I went over that night. We had a terrible time trying to come to a conclusion.

Finally, Mrs. Douglas said, "Now look, either we do it, or we don't right now. The question Ty has to have this to go back in the morning."

He said, "Well I'd like to think about it tonight. I'd like to think about it. Can you be here at eight o'clock in the morning?"

I said, "Sure I'll be right here." We had another meeting at eight. He had the same indecision.

He said, "The pressure on me is terrific from the other presidents and the other staffs, particularly over at Bozeman." I forget who was president at that time. I'm dealing with the vice presidents I know from Bozeman who really wanted to get this thing moving because they had some fish to fry too. Finally, he said, "I don't know what I'm going to do."

“Well, is it yes or no?”

She looked him right in the eye and he said, “Well,” and he shook his head like that.

She said, “Ty, it’s yes. Get out of here.” So I ran and I went up to see our friend Turnage and told him that the bill went through. In the meantime, I didn’t know where we were quite going to get that money, but I was visiting—

[End of Interview]