

**Scott and Lorraine Jenks
Narrators**

**Edward P. Nelson
Interviewer**

April 20, 1977

EN: Today is April 20, 1977. I am at the Scott Jenks farm. My name is Ed Nelson.

Mr. and Mrs. Jenks, how long have you been farming in this area?

SJ: We've been farming here since— We moved here December of 1952. We started the following spring.

EN: So you've been here almost sixteen years?

SJ: Twenty-five.

EN: Twenty-five!

LJ: Twenty-five years.

EN: What kind of farm do you have?

SJ: Well, it's a stock farm. We do diversified farming here. We were one of the first ones to start out with feeder pig operations. Then we got heavier into dairying, and we gradually got out of feeder pigs. That's when they were quite cheap. We went heavier on account of cattle. We were one of the first in the area to put in a barn cleaner. We modernized our barn a little bit and went heavier into dairying. Then we were into that until approximately four years ago, because we decided to get out of dairying when the prices went down. So we sold out. From then on, we've been just a grain farm. And we're still a grain farm today.

EN: What's your source of utilities here? Which cooperative do you get your electricity from?

SJ: Runestone in Alexandria.

EN: Okay. When was the first time that you learned that there was a powerline coming and that it was coming here?

SJ: It's about a year ago, wasn't it?

LJ: We didn't know it a year ago. A year ago it was—

SJ: Well, they were talking about—they were having the hearings in Glenwood.

LJ: But we didn't know it was coming here until after June 3. They were having hearings, but we were not on the preferred route. So we did not know it was coming here. In fact, we didn't know it until it came out in the newspaper, and people told us that it was going to be right close by Lake John here. That was after June 3. Our son graduated June 2. It was not until after graduation that we heard.

EN: So all the hearings and things took place before it was coming across your land.

SJ: Yes.

LJ: Yes.

SJ: But, see, they would always talk about a preferred route, and that was south of Starbuck. Now we knew these other routes were in here, but they didn't talk about them.

LJ: You were talking at the hearing one time, and they told you that you didn't need to speak, because it would not go across our farm, because our farm was not on the preferred route anyhow. It was in there, but they were not coming here.

SJ: Lorraine, they didn't say exactly it wouldn't go across here. They said we were not on the preferred route and they didn't think it would go across us. They said they didn't think it would go across this farm here.

LJ: And I know the first time, we heard about it was about mid-June last year, when our sons came home and they said that the powerline's going over our farm. And we said that no, we didn't think so. And they said, "Well, yes," and that people had told them that. They had heard now that it was going here. The next week it came out in the paper. We looked [at the map], and you had to look very closely, but you could see it was close by Lake John.

SJ: You see, that's when the EQC changed it—the routing—from down south to up through here. At these hearings in Glenwood, I heard some of the people, in the southern route, talk about not going across wildlife lands and their turkey farms.

LJ: Their airports.

SJ: And their airports and stuff like that. Not so much the airports, but— We heard them talk about that, and they were really professionals. They had studied this for many— They were involved with this powerline two years before we were—two whole years.

LJ: They knew the right answers.

SJ: And they had studied this. So when I was down there the only thing that I could talk about is to ask why go across my farm at a diagonal? Why not go on the line fence? That's when they

told me that I wasn't on the preferred route. See?

LJ: Then when you read those hearing [transcripts] now, when you see how this was really pushed on us by those professional—I mean people that had been in it a long time, for instance, like some of our state representative Delbert Anderson and some of them—and Harold Hagen. They knew just what to say so they make it sound really good, so they could get this line off from there. But when Scott and some of the other neighbors around here talked—we read the hearings—they almost sound like a second grader talking compared to them, because it was all new. We just didn't know.

SJ: We really had no concern about this because from what you read or what we knew about this land south of us, it was much poorer land, and it was going over some wildlife and other land that was used for other than farming. Everybody around here thought that was a logical place for a powerline, because it was a lot of non-farm land that it would go across.

EN: So you didn't receive a notice, a proper notice type thing from the company or anything until—

SJ: No. The only thing we received was information in the paper and that was when they rerouted it. And that's all there was told about it. Nobody came to talk to us or anything, no. They haven't to this day.

LJ: They haven't! And, really, all of us that are really protesting and going to the Cities and going to try to influence people, it's because it was pushed on us. We can show you on the map here how it was pushed on us by these influential people. They were able to influence the EQC on how they wanted the powerline to go.

SJ: See this was the original route coming down through here like this.

LJ: The red.

EN: Okay. That was pretty straight then.

SJ: Yes.

LJ: Yes.

SJ: And it came down here, and then it made a turn. From this turn where it goes north, right there is Lake John.

LJ: Here's where it was pushed, see.

SJ: It's seventeen miles further from there over to here—down into here.

EN: Looks a lot more crooked, too.

SJ: Right, it is more crooked. You see, some of this land down here isn't real good farmland at all. And here it stair-steps down. I don't know just where Pope County stops here. But Pope County is seventeen miles further than this northern route.

LJ: Now Rural Route through Pope and Stearns is about 40—

SJ: 39 miles.

LJ: 39 and 9/10. And even this thing here from the final Environmental Impact Statement—even in there it states that they—

When I read it, you will see why we say it was pushed up here.

It says— “This alteration requires 2 and 5/10 miles of line and three angle structures.” That's more than before. And down here it's three angle structures. “And the original route crossed less intensively farmed areas than the new routing in an effort to utilize non-irrigated, sandy outwash soils. Without irrigation these soils are low-yield, more suitable for transmission lines.” That's the one down south.

“In contrast the new routing crosses more productive soils. Individual farms along the new route are generally smaller than those along the original route. The longer length of the new route is a result of the stair-stepping rather than the original diagonal routing. It will affect more landowners and require additional structures. Routing on the property line provides individual landowners with less specific farming interference. But the effect of the additional miles and the increased number of affected landowners tends to offset the benefit.”

And then down here it says that, “The new routing requires approximately 10 additional miles of transmission line and approximately 40 additional towers.” That's in the different section. See, these are by like Section 18 and Section 20, and this was another section.

See, when he talks about the different miles. “Because of the stair-step pattern of the new route many of the required additional towers are angle structures. Also associated with the additional 10 miles of transmission line are the following: impact and aesthetics, increased electric transmission losses, increased maintenance impact, a reduction in reliability and increased costs.” So you see—

And over here, in another couple sections 28 and 33, it says— “Three minor angles are used in this alteration to avoid a double crossing of the North Fork of the Pope River. The new route is closer to Big Swan Lake and mostly at a diagonal.”

And here's another section, 32 and 11. “The new route is across low lying terrain rather than the original route. And in addition to the routing alterations MEQC has specified a 50-foot minimum of ground clearance for the conductors over cropland in Minnesota. The original design called for ground clearance of 35 feet. In order to comply with this requirement a structure change is

necessary. Like the original structure, the new structure is a self-supporting steel tower. Both are similar in appearance, the major difference being the height. The original structure averaged 132 feet, while the new one is approximately 147 feet in height. The increase in structure height is necessary to provide the additional ground clearance. The major environmental disadvantage to the new structure is the increased visibility.”

“Now, while it is our opinion that the previously approved route, as specified in the Federal Impact Statement, represents the least environmental impact, the route specified, the MEQC has been studied by REA and found to be an acceptable alternative.” See, this is put out by the power planning officer of the North Central Area Electric. And it’s the final Environmental Impact Statement.

EN: So essentially what this is saying is that there were a lot more costs and problems with the new route.

SJ: Yes.

EN: And that some people who were representing their own self-interests were able to somehow make them incur these new costs.

SJ: Yes.

LJ: Yes, that’s right.

SJ: I talked with a lawyer. I asked him just why this route was changed. He said it was because of influential people—they did it.

LJ: You see, from the beginning and all the way through we don’t seem to have anybody that helps us. No one to show that this shouldn’t have been pushed on us. I mean we haven’t had a fair chance since the very beginning.

EN: I didn’t realize that.

LJ: Have you ever seen this before?

EN: No, I haven’t.

LJ: That map came together with this, and it came from the United States Department of Agriculture. And we were able to acquire it because this little notice, public notice, was in the Glenwood paper. I have a better one that you can read, I guess. It stated in there you could send for that. That was in the January 20 Glenwood paper this year. So we mailed for it. And that has revealed many of these things that people have talked about before, but it hasn’t been [unclear] in fact.

SJ: See, this line is the original. This was the original line way back here in Grant and Traverse.

Right here it comes down into Pope County. I guess that's the Pope County line right here. And that's when she sneaks a dickens. Most likely it goes just that much different. See? It's got a step— It's way farther north.

LJ: So I have told this to them when we've been down to the Cities to the governor and different people. They don't seem to understand. If they really want to know why we have put up such a protest here, it's because we haven't had a fair chance. It was just pushed on us.

SJ: The EQC did this. It seems to me like the EQC has got more power in the state than anybody else has and they can just do as they please. From what we understand in the latter news— As a matter of fact, they're getting more power.

LJ: Mr. [Donald] Jacobson—when we talked to him in the Cities—he said, the other day we were down there, a week ago today, and he even said, “You're not supposed to have the route. It was pushed on you by Delbert Anderson and Harold Hagen and other influential people.” He said, “We don't really blame you people for protesting.” And Mr. Nordberg, the president of the UPA, he said the same thing. And Al Kingsley out here on the hill, when they were having to deal with him, he said so too.

SJ: So we got Jacobson.

LJ: Yes, Jacobson was out here, and he said so on TV one night. “I don't blame those people for really protesting,” he said. “I'd do the same thing if it was pushed on me.” So they know. See, this is from them. They know.

SJ: The EQC did it. The EQC gave them the route, and they have to go by what the EQC says.

LJ: And even the surveyors out here would keep talking about the fact, saying, “We don't want to be here. We should be down in the south route. That's where we wanted to be. We're not supposed to be here.”

EN: How many towers will be supposedly on your land here?

SJ: They never told us. They say four to a mile. And it's about—when you go corner to corner ways across—see, we've got a square 160, and we have an 80 lying alongside of it. If you go across—we presume there'd be three towers, but it could—it just depends on where they come into our land at. And then I think they're going to go on top of the hill. They might miss us. They might get by with two towers. One might be just across the fence on our neighbor's. But—

LJ: We don't know.

SJ: They have never told us. It doesn't say so in the easement [request] that we got in the summons. It doesn't say in there how many towers it would be.

LJ: Although you saw the map down at Glenwood, and it shows the line going by 300 feet from

the barn. There's a map in the Pope County Planning and Zoning Office.

SJ: It shows the towers measured off on farm plat [map] that we bought. We haven't got it yet. It just measures 300 feet from our barn. Now whether that is going to be—whether he was accurate enough for that we don't know. We have grain bins about 30 feet closer than that.

LJ: Thirty feet big. It would be closer to the tower.

EN: I know you mentioned the routing of the line. The day that I went down to the Cities with the bus there seemed to be a lot of concern about the health hazards. Now if you say it's going to be 300 feet from your barn, is that a major concern? Obviously it is.

SJ: Well, the power people say that they can come that close to your dwelling—300 feet, and you're still safe. But this is an experimental line. We all know that. They told us it was an experimental line. And the people that we have— What do you call this guy out east there that studied this line?

LJ: Marino Becker.

SJ: Yes. Marino has said it is a health hazard. But the UPA and CPA, they said there is no health hazard. But they have not had like a ten or fifteen-year study of it to prove it isn't. So, what we have to believe is that— The people that tell us that there is a health hazard, they have studied this for years, and so we're leaning to their side and saying that we believe it is a health hazard.

LJ: Well, it seems only reasonable they should have—at least it was suggested to them several times—that they should put out a section of the line some place and study it before they build the whole line. They'd say, you know, if it proves a health hazard or something, probably they'll cut it down or do something. Well, it's too late after it's up. They should, you know, not experiment with us. If it's so dangerous that duck eggs won't hatch—which they say is true—that the duck eggs will be sterile, and even animals grazing under there will be sterile, whether they're—

SJ: Will become sterile.

LJ: Become sterile. Well, why should they experiment with us?

SJ: Now, we can't prove any of this. It's what we've read and what people have told us that have studied it before.

LJ: Yes. But they do know that duck eggs don't hatch. That's why it won't go over DNR land. I mean they know that.

SJ: They say there's a continual noise from this line. In certain types of weather there's more noise. And if this same line was right in town, you would perhaps never notice the noise it's making. But out here in the quiet of the country, if a line is making noise— I know when we used to ride ponies to school, and we'd go by just a telephone pole it would make a humming

noise. You've probably heard it yourself. Well, that would just right by you. People tell us this will make a noise that you'll hear for quite a distance from it. Now out here in the country where there is quietness, and you come along with this continuing noise, it's going to be gnawing on your nerves all the time. You never will get used to it.

EN: How about for like television and radio reception? Is there any—?

SJ: The power people say that won't affect it. That's another thing that we don't understand or that we don't know. They say as long as there's a DC line, it will not affect our television or radio. Although on the other hand, at the hearings when that question was put to them, and they said that if you have any trouble with your television or radio, we'll come out and make adjustments. Now what adjustments they could make more than I could make or anybody that's knows about your power—

LJ: It states right in here—

SJ: —your television or your radio—what would they do to make adjustments? You know yourself that if your carburetor in your car is wrong—running too lean or too rich—a mechanic can make adjustments, but he doesn't put any parts in it. Now, if they can come out here and make adjustments on my antenna more than I can, why, I don't know what they're talking about. But if they would come out here—if it really caused interference, they could come out here and put a cable from my house to the other side of this line, so I could receive a program better, but would they do that? I doubt it very much that they would go to that much expense. They said right down here in the court that they would make adjustments. I don't know what they mean by that. I don't know. And they didn't even tell us.

EN: They didn't offer to put it in writing—

SJ: No.

LJ: Well, that electric field, I was trying to find that paper about that. I've got so many—

SJ: That's another thing.

LJ: The electric field—you know, where things become electrified under there—that is very dangerous. We have many articles on that—showing the lines out east.

SJ: We have confronted them about that too, but people say that they don't know. Then we have asked them, too, about what will happen. They have proved that you could take a fluorescent light and walk under a 345 [kV] line—just walk under it and hold the tube in the middle—it'll light right up! If you get the top directly in line with the line and the ground—that fluorescent tube will light up.

EN: There's that much electricity in the air.

SJ: Yes. Where this 345 [kV] line crossed over another powerline, they walked down that powerline 300 feet away from where the lines crossed each other over them, and it still lit up—almost all along the line. That’s been proved and shown. We know that.

They tell us also that this current can build up on a piece of equipment that’s setting near this line. It’s all the rubber, if you would go there and touch that—you would want it to be grounded before you ever touched it. You could get quite a jolt. They have told us, too, that perhaps if you would run out of fuel or something close to this line, like on a combine—which it isn’t apt to do, but it’s all possible—and if you would want to refuel that combine—that would be a gas consuming, a gas tractor, combine—if you refueled that, it would advise you to pull that combine quite a ways away from this line because of electricity that could spark and cause an explosion. Now that’s what we have been told about all this.

LJ: Well, it’s been proven out east, Scott. That article—if I could just find it—I maybe can find it yet.

SJ: And we believe it. That’s another reason that we just dread this line coming over us.

LJ: These facts about this electric field, those have really been proven on powerlines not as huge out east. They aren’t quite as large as this one coming.

SJ: Take my home place right here. I have a little grove out here where I park machinery, like in the summertime, so that it stays in the shade. If you park something on all rubber, and if it is close enough to this line to accumulate this electric charge— We have grandchildren that come over here and play. If they would go out there and get hurt on it, it wouldn’t be very good. Depends on how much of a charge they would get, of course. I know children who have gotten hurt quite badly on just an electric fence. I think this is much worse than an electric fence.

EN: The day when I was down in Minneapolis with the bus, they were talking with the lieutenant governor about the responsibility for the tower. We asked, “What if we ran into it?” “Well, how about if we did that in a combine? Would you reimburse us?” They haven’t talked about that.

LJ: I’m sure they wouldn’t, no.

SJ: All the power people talk about is their own equipment. They don’t talk about us or our equipment. Even this ozone that there has been a lot of talk about. They kind of smoothed over that, because one fellow backed off of his statement. They had told us we’d have to have about a \$10,000 instrument in our house to measure ozone—in our house. But if we woke up with sore throats—that’s what they think can happen—probably first it’ll be a sore throat. If we went to the doctor, we couldn’t prove that this was ozone causing us to have sore throats, unless we had a \$10,000 instrument in our house to measure ozone that came in. So you could hardly sue or expect that UPA or CPA to pay a doctor bill for us, since we couldn’t prove it. They wouldn’t do that unless you did prove it. There aren’t very many farmers who are going to go to that high an expense as to have an apparatus in the house to check for ozone.

LJ: No. But it does even say here about this—

EN: It says some pretty scary things on this: loss of hair, fatigue, headaches. A lot of these things you said you could attribute directly to the line, but they could deny responsibility.

LJ: Yes, they would deny the responsibility, if any of this happened to you, they would deny it.

SJ: You understand that if I went out here, and, say, we had some children here and we're taking care of them, and a child went out and got all wet and came down with a sore throat—even if this child was old enough to know better, and he did it against our will—when his parents come home, they would hold us responsible for that child getting a sore throat. We told him to stay out of the rain or the wetness, and he went and did it anyhow, so it really wouldn't be our fault. See, if this child was of an accountable age to understand things. But we would still be responsible for him, because if we were like—say we were foster parents or we're just taking care of some children, we would really be responsible for them. But if the child did it anyway—that's a little bit different than this, because we could connect this wetness, or this having gotten a chill, with the sore throat. But this powerline and this ozone, there's no way to connect that unless you have this \$10,000 equipment or, like myself, I never have a sore throat. Now if I would come down with a sore throat and complain about it, then the doctor, he would know himself that since this never happened to me before— But what could you do about it?

LJ: I have a sore throat a lot. So—

SJ: What could he do about it because there was ozone in my house? He couldn't do anything about it. I don't think he could even—I don't think he would even have the authority to say that that powerline did it.

LJ: Now here are some facts on that ozone. This is from the Environmental Health in Volume 10 in May of 1965 in an article by H.E. Stokinger, Ph.D. "Five to twenty parts per million of ozone causes death by destroying nerve endings in the respiratory tract. Even smaller amounts are toxic to plants." Now these were facts that have been handed out that are supposed to be reliable facts.

And it says, "Readings taken by the Bonneville Power Authority under existing lines of the same size in Tennessee showed amounts between 18 ppm to 21 ppm. Fifteen samples were taken over a three month period."

But now here are the things on safety factors. "All building anywhere near the line must be grounded. And they still are not safe from shock. Electric fences pick up charges, even when turned off. Operating equipment in the right-of-way is dangerous because of shock potential. Refueling equipment in the vicinity of the line is not to be done according to the testimony by Mr. [Robert] Banks of the State Health Department before Representative [Willard] Munger's House committee. The biological effects of EHB lines are not known, but are of a great concern. The primary shock threshold for adult males is 6 milliamps and less for females and children. Fences running through the right-of-way have picked up charges greater than the 6 milliamps.

Wildlife won't go under the lines. Migratory flight patterns of birds are disrupted. Exposed cattle become sterile. And many other things." Those are things that people have found on other—

[Tape interruption]

EN: Who would pay for grounding it? Is that left up to you then?

SJ: Well, the power people will come and ground it once. I'm sure of that. But how do they ground electric fence wire? It can't be grounded.

LJ: They haven't said they would come and ground it.

SJ: Yes, they have said it. Well, I thought I heard it said that they would ground, like your buildings, if they are close. They will ground them. And maybe we have to do it ourselves. I'm not real sure about that. It seems like I understood that to be the case.

LJ: Now, another thing. The power people said they were only going to take seventy-five acres through the whole state of Minnesota. But the right-of-way extends eighty feet on each side of the central line. "Twenty acres per mile of line are of a limited or of no use for agricultural purposes." Now that's just exactly what we figured out for our farm that day. We did, do you remember that? "The proposed line threatens to take 8,500 acres of prime agriculture land." The power people figured just this little number of square feet under each tower. It isn't a small amount either. It's 45 by 45 or 50 by 50. But that is all they consider to get their number of acres.

SJ: But, you know, when our land is condemned this 160 feet of route is theirs. It's not ours anymore. They've condemned it, and they've taken it. We can still farm under it—if everything operates right—but that 160 feet is taken off of this farm.

EN: So if they go diagonally across the field, actually they're splitting your field in half.

SJ: Yes.

LJ: Oh, yes.

SJ: I can't understand why— If this line ever becomes hazardous—so that there's been accidents—there's nothing in the world that is going to stop those people from fencing this line in. Then you won't be able to get in there or if you do it, you'll do it at your own risk. I'm sure of that.

LJ: Also in all of these deals that they sent us, like this here, that they sent out at the beginning here about the line, the statement that they sent out about— This is one thing we didn't—they didn't send this to us—we asked to receive this. It states in there that if—let's say you have this line here and you have a crop growing under it, but if there is something that they need to get to, they have the right and the privilege to drive—if there isn't a roadway to it, they can drive right through your field to get up there and destroy any crop along the way. And then they say they

will pay you if they drive through there, but the experience we've had with them so far makes us think that that's very doubtful. We doubt that they would ever even come to speak to us about what they're going to pay us, because so far they haven't spoken to us about anything.

SJ: They, perhaps, would pay us, say, if they would knock down one acre of corn or any other grain, they perhaps would pay you for that if your corn yielded—they might pay that. But they wouldn't pay you for disturbing that ground. You have to go in there and work that all over again. And you wouldn't get a crop that year probably. But just the idea that they disrupted your fields and if they went in on a wet—or on real muddy ground, then you're going to have your black soil, your clay and everything else all mixed up, if they make ruts and stuff. And it takes quite a while to get that all fixed up. They won't pay you for the time you take to level that off again or straighten it out. They might pay you for just the crop, but that's it.

LJ: Well, yes. The experience we've had with them, they—

SJ: They want everything their way.

LJ: When they come out here, they feel they can just step on your ground and take it. They've never spoken to us once. So I imagine if they wanted to repair that line, they wouldn't ask—no matter what you had there. They'd just go on it.

I think their big problem all along has been public relations. If they had had better public relations, they'd probably be building the line. But it's just as if you had a—well, I asked a president, Mr. [Jacob] Nordberg of the UPA, what he would say if one day we came down and we wanted to have a picnic and we stopped right in front of his house. We couldn't find a place to eat our lunch. When our children were home, we always had a picnic, when we went some place. So we just put our picnic basket out and sat down on his front yard and ate our picnic. I said, "What would you do about it?" He said, "I'd get you out of there in short order." He said that he would call the authorities, if necessary. I said, "Do you understand this is what you're doing to us?" I said, "You're coming to put these towers and lines up. We didn't have a fair chance in the beginning to even protest it in the hearings, because we didn't know we were getting the line. It was pushed on us. Now that we have it you will not listen to us." I said, "You're just taking it from us. If you had asked us, we might have sold you a piece. But you're just taking it."

EN: You said that this line has been pushed on you, and all the information that you've got here looks like a lot. You had to more or less go get that on your own. It must be awful frustrating to try to fight something when you have to more or less educate yourself to what you're doing. How have you gone about fighting this? Have you used lawsuits or things like that?

SJ: In the first place, we belong to two organizations.

LJ: You'd better start from the beginning. He doesn't know about— Well, last year, they had surveyed clear up to here—up to our place is where it stopped. They had surveyed through the county up to here. And the day that, the 4th of November—

SJ: He's talking about lawyers—

LJ: You didn't know about this up here.

EN: No.

SJ: He doesn't know about that.

EN: I just heard a little bit about it.

LJ: In fact, Scott and I went to the Cities together with other people that day. They needed someone to go to the Cities to a hearing, and Scott said, "Let's go. We'll go because I don't want to be home when they survey across my farm anyhow." They were going to be surveying here on that day. He said, "I don't want to be home, and we can't stop them anyhow. I just can't stand to see it." So we had wanted to go to the hearing anyhow, but that was an additional reason to go to a powerline hearing in the Cities. We figured when we'd come home, well we wondered if it was all done. We discovered it wasn't, because the next day we were sitting in here having lunch in the morning. No, we heard they hadn't surveyed. So you and Tony pulled some boxes out.

SJ: No, we didn't. Here's what happened. We were having lunch, and a neighbor came up and told me that they're surveying out by our mailbox.

LJ: That's right, yes.

SJ: So we went out there, and here's what they were doing. They were down by his railroad tracks, and they were surveying just two miles down the road, and they were trying to survey from this road down here across Pritchard's farm and across Tony's farm and across this eighty [acres] right here.

LJ: Of ours.

SJ: They were supposed to—and there's a big hill right here—they were trying to survey across here. But they are not supposed to survey across our land at all. They're supposed to survey—there's a road here—they're supposed to be able to survey along the roads. But they were actually surveying across our land. Well, Tony Bartus and I went down and we got— There's a hill right here. On this side there's a hill here. We pulled a chalk box right in line where they were surveying out there. There's a guy standing right here on—

LJ: This is on Highway 55.

SJ: He was holding that stick. They were surveying into it, see. So we put it right in front of him, this chalk box on Tony's own farm. Actually he was surveying right across the farm. But they weren't supposed to be doing it. And this guy here, he smarted off a bit. He said, "You ought to get something higher." And his chalk box was quite huge. And it made Tony quite—kind of mad

about it, but we didn't say too much about it. But anyway, we stopped them there. And they just milled around. Finally they pulled out of there. And then they come back down here at this corner and were going to survey from this corner up to here. And right here is this hill where we stopped them.

LJ: Coming in the driveway. This road you—

SJ: So a guy come up to this hill, and he was going to stand here with this—right on top of this hill, and they were going to survey from this mile up to this mile. That's where we stopped them there. We pulled our trucks in there because they had started going across our farm, which wasn't lawful for them to do. They said it was lawful for them to survey along the road, but when they started across our farm, we came up here and stopped on the road, too, because we saw what they were trying to do. They wanted to survey right across the back of the farm here, or about the middle of this farm, right across three farms. They were going to go across there, not down the road. So we stopped them there, and we came over here and we stopped on the road, and they kept doing this. They said it was legal because the laws were such that they could survey along the road. Well, this particular road here is just a farm to market road. That's what it is. I own the land to the center of this road, and Tony Bartus owns the land to the center of this road from here. We're really paying tax on that land. We felt that they had no business out here. So that's why we got a bunch of people together. And every day we'd get more people. Then when they tried to survey we milled around them, and we stayed a right distance away from them—from the sheriff's tent. But they still can get in the way.

LJ: Not any of it was planned, though. It just happened. After this box was out. After this happened early in the morning, then about eleven o'clock we were having lunch, we were sitting just like this. Scott and I were here, and Tony comes in and says, "They're surveying by your mailbox. They had moved right up here." So then another man came along, he had the CB [Citizens' Band radio] and the news spread. Before we knew it, we had so many people out here. I think we must have had 150 people in a short time. They were all over. When they heard there was any possibility of stopping this, they just kept coming. It happened that day, and the second day, and they came back. The surveyors were stopped that day. And they had never gotten anything done yet. This went on all of November.

SJ: I think they got it done because—

LJ: Yes, but I mean they never have gotten back here. But all of November, it just was day after day of people and people and people.

SJ: We were under a strain all this time, and we didn't want to [get arrested.] Like I told the sheriff—see, I had my truck parked along this ditch out here one morning before they even got here. This is my road, and this is my land right along, and I parked my truck there. They come out later in the day, and they set their tripod right in front of my truck, and they complained to the sheriff that my truck was in their way. Well, I felt that I had just as much right out there as they did, and I was there first. So about an hour or two after that the sheriff went—they had some conversations down in Glenwood—and they came back. They said I had to move my truck or I

would be arrested. I asked what the fine was, and he said, "It'll be \$300, and maybe 90 days in jail." Could be one or the other or both. Well, I said, "What will happen if I'm arrested? What will happen to me?" He didn't know. He said, "The judge will have to decide that." Well, I talked to a few farmers around here some of those that were out there.

LJ: A few? It was many.

SJ: Yes.

LJ: The whole group.

SJ: They said, "Just pull your truck out." So I pulled my truck out, and another got put in right behind me. And they had to tell him the same thing. Then that went on for two or three different times like that. Different guys pulled in behind. So they still didn't get anything surveyed. I don't know how they've done it since, either they've done it by plane or they just used our plat books.

LJ: And then one day to stop them, you, so that they couldn't get— This was another day then— so they couldn't talk to each other—they went out there with chainsaws and just run them out in the field. And then they couldn't hear.

SJ: Yes. You see, it was against all the rules, I guess, or it was against the law to get in their way.

LJ: So then they quit using trucks.

SJ: So the surveyors had CBs. They were talking. They were from this point down to the road down here to [section] 28. And the people did mill around them, but then we used the chainsaws just to make some noise on their CBs. We were standing back here—back here on our fence line—on our line, but they could still make a racket, you know, just terrible on the CB. They couldn't hear. So we just— We tried that.

LJ: And that worked for one day.

SJ: And that worked for a day or two—I don't know. Maybe it was just the one day.

LJ: And then, of course the power people weren't very well-informed, because they wrote in the paper that the farmers removed their mufflers, and chainsaws don't have mufflers.

SJ: Well, some of them might have mufflers, but on ours, the muffler is built right on the housing.

But they couldn't even talk to one another. Even when they were talking right in one another's ear, they couldn't understand each other, because there was so much racket.

LJ: But it was a lot of strain because—all of this time you never knew whether you were going

to be arrested. One time I know we sat around this table here, about six or seven farmers one night. They were wondering if they were going to get arrested, you know, for these trucks and all of this—and whether there really was going to be any arrests coming through.

SJ: But you understand, as all of this has been taking place, the power people have never yet come to talk to us about going across our land.

LJ: They've never come in all of this.

SJ: They never did.

LJ: They'll never talk to you.

EN: So this was an attempt to stop them, plus to get somebody to listen to you.

SJ: Right. See, up to that point we were just the farmers out here doing this. And every day we did this more, we got more people—even from towns all around us—they was joining us—knowing that if this line goes through here, there's nothing saying that there won't be some more lines going right along through here, maybe on my farm or maybe another one. And pretty soon there'll be— The farmers aren't going to put up with this kind of stuff. Now, I've got my farm for sale, if this line goes through, and if I sell my farm, who's going to buy it? It'll be some company that will probably buy it and just hire the work out to be done. And whether anybody will live here— They don't care. They'll buy it for their own price perhaps. I'll still have a chance to put my price on it. But this is going to hurt Lowry, Glenwood, Starbuck and all the towns around if very many farmers do that, because we won't be here to patronize them. It's going to hurt the towns very much.

EN: So it wasn't just the people whose land was being crossed—

SJ: No.

LJ: Oh, no, no. When we've been going to the Cities, people from Glenwood, the merchants will just come right with us—right on the bus with us—and go along with us down to the governor's office.

But now another thing, over here one day, they cut out the road—or took the culvert out.

SJ: But anyway, the merchants right down here in town had told me that if it wasn't for the farmers, they wouldn't be in business. Now a merchant realizes that. He knows that he's got to do a little bit to help, whatever he can, to help us stay here.

EN: So then the action did work. You started getting a lot of people together. Well, where did you go from there? When did you join the organizations or when did they form?

SJ: Yes, I was going to tell you. We were in an organization that's called SOC.

LJ: Save Our Countryside.

SJ: Yes. That's Save Our Countryside. That is a big organization right in this area here. It covers from where the line started way up here in Douglas County, and it goes down—it doesn't go down to south of Starbuck because that's CURE down there, but it includes people all over the—

LJ: In the corridor.

SJ: In the corridor, it includes.

Okay, we belonged to that for—

LJ: We still do.

SJ: We still belong, but they weren't doing very much, because some of our officers—this line was taken out of their area, and it was put onto us. We felt they weren't fighting. They and their lawyers were not fighting as much as they should have been to move this line off of us again. Because even if it was more logical if it was moved off of us, it might go back onto them, on either side of us. Some down at CURE, and some up in Douglas. So, there was a bunch of us farmers decided that we weren't quite satisfied the way it was going. We would get some farmers involved—just those under the line—and then we got another lawyer. So we had contacted Mr. George Duranske III. He was a lawyer for SOC. Well he's a lawyer for several others, too. There are three others with him, but SOC— We asked him if he would go along with us. We got another lawyer. He said he'd be glad to. So, everybody under this line, we joined an organization called FACT, and that's Families Are Concerned Too. Then we got another lawyer, his name was Dave Grant. He's from Minneapolis.

LJ: Broker, Henderson and Grant.

SJ: Oh, yes, Broker, Henderson and Grant,

LJ: —of Bloomington—Minneapolis.

SJ: He's in with them. And we contacted him through a lawyer clear down in Texas that our neighbor, Barham, has a lawyer down in Texas that he knew. He was real good. There was a book of top lawyers and we went through that and got this Mr. Grant. Now, he is helping us farmers just under the line. We've got this sixty-day stay already. It says that they can't do any building or construction. He was one that helped to do that. And he is working with George Duranske. We just talked to him yesterday. What do you call those stinking court things?

LJ: Briefs.

SJ: They've got their briefs together, and they've got a good thing going for us. So we feel that by getting our own lawyer, adding one more lawyer to the group, is helping. They work together.

And two is better than one we thought.

LJ: Now, you see this bit about, you know, if you're under the line or if you're two miles over here, it makes a whole lot of difference, because you're concerned if somebody else's children are ill, but it never matters as much as if it's your own, you know. You're interested in this, but you don't feel it nearly as much as you would if you knew that tower was going to be over your head, and you're going to have this danger, and you're going to have the devaluation of your land, and you're going to have this electrical field and probably radio interference and health problems and all of this. I mean you're concerned about it, but if you were going to live here, it would hurt a lot worse.

SJ: See, our driveway comes in just like this, and the house is right here. The barn's down here. And our grainery's over here. And the woods are over here. And then this powerline will be just 300 feet over here from this barn. Now you know as well as I do that we have tornadoes in this area. And this tower—what did you say, it was 174 feet?

LJ: 150 feet high.

SJ: And the posts are 45 feet apart.

LJ: Some 45 [feet], and some 50 [feet].

SJ: Now if we have a real twister in here, we know that twisters can pick up locomotives off of railroad tracks. They moved them. You can't guarantee that this won't come down. It'll come down going towards my buildings and this whole area—this ground is going to be electrified. It's going to be charged. The way they talk, like these—what do we call these shut-offs—clear up there in Underwood, way out here in North Dakota—will not shut off unless— They're geared to shut off at a certain danger. But this tower could be on the ground—charging the ground before that shuts off. If we went out of this house and just took a few steps out there, we'd be electrocuted—or any dog or any animal out there could be electrocuted on this wet ground around here.

LJ: You see, here is supposed to—

SJ: That's been told to us, and it seems logical.

LJ: It's supposed to come in sort of corner-ways here, and then turn, and then it'll cross every bit of land that we have.

SJ: This is our farm right here.

LJ: Yes, across everything.

SJ: Our farm's just coming across here. It goes across [Highway] 55, and then it goes off down that way—down west. It comes up here across 28, and then it heads off this way.

You know, ever since we've been fighting this—I know I'm fifty-nine, I'll be sixty—so I'm not feeble and all yet. But you know when you've got this powerline constantly on your mind, your mind is occupied with two things, the things you're doing right now, and in the back of your mind you're wondering what the power companies are doing today, what your lawyers are doing, and about the fears that can be ahead of you, and you just don't— You forget a lot of things that you shouldn't forget, because you've got this constantly on your mind—you're thinking about this powerline. You do this all day long and all night long for that matter.

LJ: We had friends come up and visit us from—well, they're really relatives of mine from Northwood, Iowa. They came up this winter. We weren't expecting them, but they were sure we were going to be home, so they came right in the house. That day we had been meeting with the mediator. So they came in the house, and they were there when we came home that evening. Well, they told us they hoped that this would soon end. They said, "You aren't the same people anymore. You're just not the same. We just don't hardly know you. It's changed you so much." She said, "Nothing seems to be the same for you. You don't have the same interests or enjoyment or anything. All you have on your mind is powerline, and it has really hurt you."

SJ: And another thing that happened. We, with four or five other people, went to a private meeting with—he was on the board of UPA or CPA, I forget which one it was. But it was private, and this fellow, he asked us, "Is there a syndicate behind you guys, you farmers?" I said, "What do you mean?" Well, he said that he's a farmer himself, and he had belonged to the NFO [National Farmers Organization] and a few things like that, and he said that he's never seen farmers hang together like they do here. He thought there's a syndicate behind us. I should have told him that there was some real great syndicate and he'd better watch out, but I didn't. I said, "There's no syndicate behind us." I said, "What do you think we are?" And he said that well, he couldn't understand, being a farmer himself, why we hung together like we are—and we still are—and it really isn't natural for an unorganized group to do this. But I'll tell you all the farmers that are fighting this, they have heard some facts that we consider are the truth and even if the power people deny them, we're all in this for one thing—to stop this powerline.

LJ: It is to stop the line. Now this man that we met with, he was hoping all evening—I think that we must have been about six people probably—and he was hoping all evening that one of us would make some kind of a statement that he could grab a hold of. He hoped there was something that we would take—except a powerline—like pay. If there would be just one thing, really, he was really looking for the word—some type of a settlement that we would take. He was very disappointed because we just—

SJ: We didn't mention pay—about any subject—

LJ: This is what we don't want—

SJ: —money at all—whatsoever. Finally he had to mention it himself. Could you take more money?

LJ: “Would you take more pay?”

SJ: I said, “We aren’t talking about money.”

LJ: We were talking about “No Powerline.” And we told him also that if the public relations would have better, there might have been a time when he might have been able to talk about pay. Now they’ll also ask us—the power people, now, like he said, “Well, what can be done? We’d tell him, “Nothing for this line. Just get this one out. But if you’re going to ever try it again, have the correct public relations before you ever start.”

SJ: Because they realized they did it wrong.

LJ: They said, “Well, we have engineered this thing so precisely. Everything is just done very precisely and very accurately and so on.” And then, “Except,” they said, “we forgot about you people.” “We forgot about the people.” Now this has been made in meetings that we’ve been to, like in the governor’s office and oh, I suppose we couldn’t even begin to tell you all the meetings we’ve been to. It’s just no end.

SJ: And we’ve only been in it for two years—or for one year.

LJ: We’ve only been in it since the middle of June last year.

SJ: The rest of them have been in it three years now.

LJ: And you think this is a lot. That desk out there is just full.

EN: Sounds like it’s more or less taken over your lives, you know, like collecting the information and, like you said, people call you as, you know, look to you, and like being at meetings. Now, just this last week they had a rally for the powerline. I saw you on television.

LJ: That was really a— That was a day for—

SJ: Well, you see, that’s another thing—what happened is— I have said that UPA-CPA has been mismanaged from the very beginning. Now that deal down there, the UPA and CPA started that, and I wouldn’t be a bit surprised that our own governor was behind it, because the UPA and CPA or not, they didn’t—but the REA’s down there, the Rural Electrification, they paid for the buses. They paid the people \$3 for a meal and to come up to St. Paul. And the signs that they had were—they weren’t signs like we made. We just made our own signs.

LJ: Oh, no, these were prepared signs. Printed!

SJ: These were prepared signs. These were fancy signs. And the UPA and CPA was behind that 100 percent.

LJ: They paid for their signs.

SJ: They got these local REAs to do this so it would look good for our governor to have a big backing of people that wants power, and they want us to quit this. But it's all right for the UPA and CPA to use the cooperative money's to furnish buses and pay everybody's meal ticket, a \$3 meal, to go up there and protest against us. And here we're paying our own way. We haven't asked anybody to pay our way yet.

LJ: When we go to the Cities, we pay our own way. But the way they're doing it, we could just as well ask the REA to pay us.

SJ: The fact is the last time we went in the Cities, the bus wasn't full. If the bus is full, it costs \$120 to get us down there and back. That's about \$3 a person. The last time the bus wasn't full, so it cost us \$4.50 a person. That ride cost \$9 to go down there and we paid ours out of our own pocket. We have to pay our own lawyers, and actually we are paying the UPA— We are paying the light bill, which in turn takes care of the UPA and CPA. Every rural electric operator or buyer is paying for the UPA and CPA's costs.

LJ: When we were down there that day we found out that the utilities were—how those people were being paid—because when they all came with signs alike, we asked them how they got them. We asked if they were paid for. And they said, "Yes." But then this one—we know another man that's on the board, and this is that same man we had a private meeting with—and he said he wrote the check to pay for the buses.

[Tape interruption]

LJ: —figured \$3 a dinner. You can figure out how much that is, not counting the bus bill. And then no wonder our light bills are high.

EN: So, actually you're paying for the other side.

SJ: Right. They jacked up our light bill. When we had 100 head of cattle here—we had almost forty milk cows, and the rest were the offspring of them. We would keep about 100 head a year—all year. And our light bill was—milking those cows and cleaning the barn and running water and all that—it was around \$40 or \$50 a month.

LJ: Heat lamps.

SJ: Yes, we had the hogs and heat lamps.

Today we've got just our household here—just the household. We've got a barn down there, but very seldom do we use any lights down there, and we've got water just for the house.

LJ: The kids are gone.

SJ: Our light bill is still right around \$45, \$47 a month. And it was the same way— What was it?

Three years or four years ago we had all that livestock?

LJ: Four years ago.

SJ: Four years ago. Our bill was just as much four years ago as it is today. But in comparison, our neighbors here have a light bill around \$150 or \$200 a month with budget power. Our light bill just keeps going up. And this is a proven fact.

This happened out in California. The California people, the light bill was getting greater and greater, and they always said to cut down on it. So they decided to do that. I forget which local REA it was out there or where it was, but this was the people that lived out there. So they all cut down. They cut down from a 100-watt bulb, they put in a 40 or a 60. And they cut down very much. Do you know what happened? They had such little light bills that their local power resource, whatever it was, REA or what it was, they raised the rates. They raised their rates, so they had to pay more because they were using less. They used less electricity, and they watched everything they used, and they cut their own bills down. What had happened was that their local REA, or whatever it was, raised the rates so they could operate, because they couldn't operate because the people were cutting down. So you can't win for losing.

EN: What kind of progress is being made now? Now they've got the injunction. You said that was for sixty or ninety days?

LJ: We got a sixty-day stay from March 22, I believe it was—but we got sixty days that the power people can't construct. That was won before a three-judge panel in Glenwood—that court down there. Then after that we are having our court case. That will take place in about a month from now, when the lawyers will bring in their briefs, and all of the things against the power company.

SJ: What's happening right now is that our lawyers are trying to—

LJ: Stop our condemnation.

SJ: Stop the condemnation. What they are trying to do—

LJ: So we have our summons.

SJ: And if they can get that stopped through the courts, well then we're okay. If they can't, I don't know what we're going to do. But they say if we win this three judge court down there, the [Minnesota] Supreme Court, if we win there, this land that's condemned will be automatically void.

LJ: Then they have to start over.

SJ: Then they have to start over somewhere.

LJ: They have to do something. See, that is against all the people.

EN: These are all the people that oppose it.

SJ: Some of them passed away already.

LJ: Yes, they haven't even got it correct.

There are many people on there that aren't even living. Some have been dead for ten or twelve years. And it's against everybody involved in the farm, whether you're a—no matter what, like a farm over here—

SJ: Tenant, owner or breech owner. I mean a half owner. If you have owned the land and sold it, you'll get one. If you're a tenant— Even like we've got our boys over here farming the farm over here, and they each got one. And the tenant in the house, they each got one, because they're renting the house. Our boy's renting the land. The owners got two of them.

LJ: And then there's several owners of that farm. In fact that farm over there, we have seen that one—they got nine letters. And it cost \$2.23 apiece. So that's from the power people spending the money.

SJ: Nine of these summons, too. They got nine of these.

LJ: Nine of those. And the sheriff brings this to you personally.

EN: Boy!

LJ: And the sheriff said it cost them about \$1,200 for Pope County—a bill for Pope County to get these delivered to the people.

SJ: We're helping pay this bill, too.

EN: Yes, through your taxes.

SJ: Through our taxes and through— Then the UPA is sending out the letters that they put out.

LJ: We're paying them. They're getting money from us.

SJ: They're in turn getting money from the power—

LJ: The letter is \$2.23 per letter—no matter how many they go out to. And even, like everybody that you owe money to, every mortgage place, they get a letter. And they get a summons.

SJ: Like the Federal land bank down here.

LJ: Lutheran Brotherhood.

SJ: Lutheran Brotherhood.

LJ: Farmers Home Administration.

SJ: They all get one.

LJ: Any bank that has money out or anything.

EN: So this is all going on during the stay, and if— So they must be pretty sure they're going to win the trial or that would seem to be the—

LJ: Yes. That seems to be. And, of course, in the stay they did ask—they would not consider not doing legal things, you know, on paper, but perhaps we realize now maybe why they did that, it's because— You see in here they have a description right where it's going on our farm—and on everybody's farm. Since it isn't surveyed, they must have gotten a legal—they asked for permission to continue sending—or doing these legal things, not construction outside, but doing their legal work. So evidently they knew already that they had gotten descriptions of the land through either a plat book or through survey.

SJ: By air.

LJ: By air. So, see, the sixty days— They didn't come out anyhow until this was over with. So that isn't really hurting them.

EN: So either the government or the legal system, something isn't working, as far as actually doing what they said it was going to do.

LJ: I don't know.

SJ: They couldn't come in here.

LJ: They insisted that they had to continue with their legal work. Of course since it wasn't construction, why, the lawyers granted them that. But they would rather grant them that than not get any time.

SJ: I think the lawyers argued—I personally think they wanted us it to go through so they could stop us if at all possible. If it was never condemned, they could never stop it. Now it is condemnation. The condemnation started. And now they've got a chance to stop it. See?

LJ: And we talked to our lawyer yesterday, and he said that if he could stop one, he'll stop everything. I mean just one—

SJ: If any lawyer could stop them in just one case—one or anything—it's all taken care of over

the whole state.

EN: Is that—

LJ: But this— I forgot what I was going to say. There's a court on June 28, as you will see here. We have to appear with all of these names. Everybody there can appear to the court in Glenwood.

EN: Is that the main hope then of stopping this—or how about the governor now? You said you talked with him at different times. Is there any—

LJ: Well, at first he seemed like he might have been willing to help, but now— I know I just had a letter here where I heard him say on TV one day that the line must go through. So, we really don't know exactly. We really aren't counting on him.

SJ: The lieutenant governor told us right to our face that there was absolutely enough power right now—power available for—

LJ: He told us that on January 18 in the governor's office—that it did not need to do that.

SJ: There's plenty of power available right now at the present time. But they're talking about 1988 or something like that for this line.

LJ: Now they seem to have forgotten that. They seem to have forgotten they ever said that. There were a lot of things they said in the governor's office on January 18 that they forget.

SJ: Even our legislatures and representatives are not helping us. We aren't getting any help from Congress or any place. The only help we're getting is in the lawyers that we hired.

LJ: And the support of the people.

SJ: And the support of the people, right. That's the only help we're getting. Our governor isn't helping us. And he had told us right out that he wasn't for this kind of a deal. He said that he had this happen right to him on a piece of ground that his wife inherited or that he had—forget how he got it—but it was up there where he lives. A powerline went across that piece of triangle right at an angle that ruined that whole thing. And he wasn't very happy about that. He told us right out that he was for the little guy—for us—and that he would do what he could to help us. But that was just so many words, and that's about it. But, you know, he's not elected yet.

And if enough people can realize that he isn't for the little person, I hope the little person gets him out of there.

LJ: Now, even in this paper here that tells about how they're going to construct it, I can't help but read it. It says how they're going to—even when they're constructing the line out here, this is how they're going to construct it. (Reads) "Wildlife habitats will be avoided whenever possible,

and special care will be taken by the construction forces in these areas.” Now this is just put out by the CPA. And this is the method that they sent out about when they start construction. And they’re going to avoid—“special care will be taken by the construction forces in these areas—in the wildlife habitats.”

EN: But it doesn’t matter if they dig up your fields.

LJ: No, it doesn’t matter, even if they hurt us, I guess, because we’re—

SJ: We’re just human beings, you know. They don’t shoot us to eat. Perhaps they should have, but they won’t eat us.

LJ: So this— I couldn’t help it. I remembered seeing this once before. But it seems to mean a lot more now than the first time I ever read it.

EN: Well, I guess it’s getting pretty late. I guess we’ve covered most everything. I was just wondering if there’s anything that you had to say just in closing.

SJ: Well, what I’d like to say is that the EQC has got way too much power. The EQC and the DNR, they have got more authority than they need. And, you know, they— Now like the DNR is nothing associated with agriculture. Now that’s really— Maybe it’s okay to be that way, but the agriculture has done nothing to help us stop this line. And we are in agriculture. We’re producing food and fiber for people to eat and dress and live right. But agriculture has not helped us one bit. It seems to me like the Agriculture Department should have more say over the DNR and the EQC than they have. If the agriculture had had people backing them up, saying, “You can’t take our good farmland for this powerline when there’s state land. There’s DNR land, and there’s all other types of land can be used.”

Why use our gradually disappearing agriculture land? Why use it? And I knew the statistics not too long ago. How many thousands of acres of land is taken every day from the country for residential and industry and parks and roads and that, how much is taken away from the farms every day. How many thousands of acres was that, Lorraine? [unclear] told us this. We could find out. But there are thousands of acres disappearing every day.

It’s about time that the agriculture had enough authority given them to take over when something like this happens. I’ll say that I and all my neighbors from all through Pope County, all through Stearns County, all through Wright County, Meeker and Grant and Traverse and all that, we are farmers. We’re producing food for you guys in town to eat. We’re producing meat and clothing and what have you. It’s about time somebody gets behind us and realizes this land is valuable for production of food.

If they can’t find out that pretty soon, we’re going to have to— It’s going to be a— It will be just like gasoline and our energy is right now. They’re going to tax food enough so that the poor people won’t eat and the rich people would always have what they want. This is like our Governor Perpich is today. He wants to keep putting a tax on gasoline, so the poor guy’s got to

use a little, and the rich man—it doesn't make any difference to him because he's got oodles of money anyhow. He can just keep on using all he wants to. But the little guy's going to go without the gas. And when we get in a certain stage the poor fellow will go without something to eat, and the rich will always have it. And that's just what's going to happen.

But before that happens there's just liable to be a revolt right in our whole country and people will think enough of this kind of stuff. And that could happen, too. Everything is just leading towards it because of the greediness of uncooperative cooperatives—the way they do things. Just like this taconite place up there. If they would have pushed a law right to the letter to start with, they would have never had that. They would never have had one dumping of this taconite in Lake Superior. Would they?

EN: Probably not.

SJ: They wouldn't have one load of it. If they'd have gone right from— If the DNR is so fussy about—and your DNR—like right here in Glenwood, a guy pushed a few rocks out in the lake—

LJ: He doesn't want all that.

SJ: It's the truth. They thought they could make him take that stuff right back out of the lake, because he did something wrong to the way the fish were spawning there—that was all wrong. But they let it go up in Lake Superior—just let it go. And here they'll do the same thing with this land. If this line goes through, they're going to let it go, and we farmers have got to live around it.

LJ: In this one, there's no way they can solve this one, except to stop it entirely, because people have been hurt emotionally and financially and in every way. People have been hurt on this line. I mean we have been really hurt. And there's nothing that's going to solve it, except to not build this one. But if they wanted to do it another time, if they would go out and speak to people before they plowed his field and before they get the wires out there, and let you know what's going on. Our people are reasonable, but not when they just come and take things that you have. It's no different than if I went up and told Governor Perpich or any of the legislature, "I want your car." And that's what they're doing to us, you know.

SJ: Worse than that. We feel this is a hazard here.

LJ: Well, this is a hazard, and besides just being a hazard, besides not just taking it from them, but it's also a hazard. And you have to change your pattern of living. We built this house just about four years ago. Well, if we'd ever known there was ever going to be such a thing as a powerline, we'd never have built the house here.

SJ: Now here's another thing on my particular farm here. We've been in dairying, and we—

LJ: You told him that.

SJ: Did I tell you about chopping peat?

EN: I'm not sure I remember what you said.

LJ: It doesn't matter if you tell it again. But you keep telling it.

They often ask you at meetings when you go, "Well, how can this be solved?"

"Well, if there's no powerline—"

The way we have been treated. But they could start over and do it right. Then our legislators also, they will tell you that—I had one of them tell me that—"well, you should have been fighting this five years ago." Well, we didn't know about it five years ago. How could you?

EN: Well, thank you.

Minnesota Powerline Oral History Project
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