

BILL FRENZEL

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I asked about his Senate race. "We gave a lot of thought to it in the fall. We did extensive polling and the polls showed that Anderson was weak, that I would do best against him, but that the other guy in the race would do almost as well. It seemed to be the weakness of the incumbent not the challenger that made the difference. I guess the main reason we decided against it was that I never have thought I would be unfulfilled if I didn't become a United States Senator. I never had a burning ambition to be a Senator. You need it to do that job. Besides my talents, such as they are, are suited to the House. I ran for and was elected to a minor House leadership position and I've enjoyed that. So I guess you could say I'm fat and sassy--mostly just fat... The campaign would have been fun. The thought of running against Wendy was especially exciting. What bothered me was the thought of running for the next six years. I wouldn't know how to represent a state. I would have to be back there all the time. Now I have a tight little 500,000 person district. I know everyone in it. When I get out of step or they get out of step we get together and iron things out. How could I do that if I were a senator? I'd have to be driving a snowmobile in International Falls, riding in a parade in Pipestone and canoeing in Winona--all at the same time. How could I represent that mess?

Toward the end he seemed to touch on his lack of support among Republicans. "I know there's no such thing as a draft in politics--not since George Washington, and he had the army. But no one seemed to be clamoring for me to run. Actually I got more letters from Democrats urging me to run than Republicans. That ticked me off. Here I've been representing the Republicans all these years

and the ones who ^{write} ~~vote~~ are Democrats temporarily dissatisfied with their Senator. I was not overwhelmed with expressions of support."

He talked about Anderson's weakness. The polls showed Anderson 43 - Frenzel 38 with Frenzel having a lot of "unknowns". He said Anderson weakness has 'stayed with him'. Started because he appointed himself "which doesn't go over in American politics." Then "He came to Washington under difficult circumstances with Humphrey the demi-god as senior senator and Mondale in the White House. So he couldn't get a line of ink. Back home he threw out hockey pucks and cut ribbons. He had a beautiful wife and a nice family. But down here it's a different ball game and the impression has continued that he's weak. And he is weak. The press only pays attention when he makes mistakes. They lambasted him when he appointed himself and have been giving him a bad press ever since. I used to think Republicans were the only ones who took it on the chin from the press. Not any more."

"A good Democrat will beat a good Republican in Minnesota ten times out of ten."

When I asked him why he was staying in the House when so many fellow Republicans were leaving, "Most of them wanted to run for the Senate when they first came here--Bill Cohen did; he almost ran against Muskie last time. Everybody knew John Heinz would try to be a Senator. They had ~~a~~ the burning ambition that I lacked. They always regarded the House as a stepping stone to the Senate. I always thought of the House as a stepping stone to somewhere else--private life."