

CER 19 Bio
Borger

2 bodies found
17/9/73

Centremen Borger wants to coach team

"The Liberal party in Alberta is like a losing football team. And its coaches are getting fired with regularity," says Liberal party leadership hopeful John Borger of Sherwood Park.

"But I am satisfied that I can rally the support of the majority of Liberals in the province.

"This will really be the acid test of the new leader. Will the people work with me and not against me? If the latter were the case, then obviously I wouldn't be a leader," Mr. Borger says.

He will compete with Nick Taylor, of Calgary, for the party's leadership at the convention in the Chateau Lacombe Friday and Saturday. The election will be held on Saturday afternoon.

It is only natural for Mr. Borger, 39, to use football and business world jargon.

He played for the Calgary Stampeders in the late 1950s. "I was the smallest centre in Canada, about 50 pounds too light. It was a bit of a psychological handicap."

Mr. Borger weighed about 185 pounds at the time.

He has also been active in the business and academic world. He helped put together Orion Construction Ltd. and Arctic-Mackenzie Consultants Ltd., consultants in matters relating to the environment and petroleum production.

Mr. Borger, who was born on a homestead at Lynburn in the Peace River country, went to high school at Concordia College in Edmonton. From there he enrolled in the educational faculty in an Illinois college.

While athletic director at Mount Royal College in Calgary — shortly after his football career—he acquired a masters degree in chemistry from the University of Calgary.

Incidentally, when he was coach of the Mount Royal Cougars, crowds watching the college team play increased from an average of 200 to 10,000.

Following his career at Mount Royal College he returned to Concordia College in Edmonton, this time as teacher of mathematics and



John Borger

science. And still not satisfied with his own academic achievements, he acquired a PhD in bio-chemistry from the University of Alberta.

"I developed an interest in politics early. But first of all I wanted to become academically independent. I would want to feel free and easy when working with advisers in business, in politics or in government.

"I wanted that before going into politics," he added.

That point in time had come in 1972 when he unsuccessfully contested the federal Pembina riding. He lost to Progressive Conservative Dan Hollands.

Defeat didn't discourage him from remaining active in politics. Early this year, Mr. Borger decided to contest the leadership.

"I was encouraged by many in the Liberal party to get the party moving again. Before Alberta Liberals can once again make an impact in Ottawa, they have to build up the party provincially."

Mr. Borger is confident there will be a Liberal presence in the legislature after the next election. "We will have and must have a voice in the provincial house," he adds.

And carrying the thought a step further, Mr. Borger says, "the Liberals will form the government some time in the

not too distant future, or I wouldn't be running. Moreover, the time is right to mobilize all small-L liberals in the province."

As Liberal leader he would focus his criticism on the performance of the present government. For instance, he is opposed to draining the province's energy resources overnight.

Also he believes the next oil sands plant should be owned and controlled by Canadians, not foreign investors. Nevertheless, there is no reason for the government to go into business the way the Lougheed administration is doing it.

Strange as it may sound, in Mr. Borger's opinion the PCs are too socialistically inclined. "People still want to do their own thing. They want to form their own businesses, they want more Canadian control, but they don't want to go the government route."

Mr. Borger also feels the people of the province are not getting through to their present government. "They have yet to speak on energy matters. People can't get through to ministers and their departments. That's the reaction I am getting," Mr. Borger says.

In effect they have been put in the position where they don't have anything to say until the next election, he said. Why are people in general not being encouraged to have a say on the manpower problems related to oil sands development, Mr. Borger is wondering.

Education is another area in which the government is depriving people of decision-making autonomy or at least a say, he says.

In short, "every government needs a good opposition, and every group in the province should have a voice in governing the province," Mr. Borger says.

The Liberal party in Alberta will accomplish both, he concludes.

Mr. Borger is married. He and his wife Doreen, a native of Drumheller, have six children: four boys and two girls. They range in age from six to 16.

Two people working in Banff have been found dead at the bottom of a 70-foot cliff 10 miles west of Field, B.C. RCMP say Leslie Catherine Borger, 17, of 102 Larch Court, Sherwood Park, and Melvin Otko, 20, of 9318 72nd Ave., died some time early last Saturday morning when the car they were driving left the road on a curve and fell 70 feet to rocks at the bottom of an embankment.

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