The state of Minnesota in 1901 adopted a direct primary law for the nomination of Representatives in Congress, and Mr. Steenerson was nominated and elected by a large majority. As already stated, he is now serving his seventh consecutive term, and is the ranking Republican member of the Committee on Post Office and Post Roads, one of the most important Committees in Congress.

During the sixtieth and sixty-first Congresses he was also Chairman of the Committee on the Militia, and was largely responsible for the enactment of the "Dick-Steenerson Militia Law," an act, "To promote the efficiency of the Militia," approved May 27, 1908. The merit of this law is being more and more recognized as the years go by.

Mr. Steenerson has favored the Hepburn Law, and all legislation for the effective control of interstate railroads and utilities, the conservation of natural resources, and progressive legislation generally. He has aided in opening large areas of the public domain to settlement and development, and, being familiar with pioneer conditions, and appreciating the courage, fortitude, and sufferings of the pioneer settlers everywhere, has favored liberal laws and administration in public land matters so far as the settler is concerned. He has frequently secured the passage of acts for the relief of settlers on the public domain, where the harshness of general rules or administration has justified such action. In northern Minnesota were large tracts of land ceded by Indians, which were subject to homestead entry only upon payment of from $1.25 to $4 per acre, the price at which the Indians had sold the land to the United States. This land was so wet and swampy as to be unfit for occupancy until drained. He secured the enactment of the Act of June 21, 1906, providing for a drainage survey of ceded Indian lands and free public lands, which was executed by the United States Geological Survey, and the report thereon demonstrated the feasibility of the proposal. Later Congress passed the Act of May 20, 1908, which made public, as well as these ceded, unsold Indian lands, and entered lands not yet proved up,—all subject to the assessment for drainage improvements under the State law, the same as privately owned lands, and directed, in default of payment of such drainage assessment, the sale of the land to any qualified homesteader and the issuance of a patent to such purchaser upon his payment of the drainage assessment and the price, if any, due to the Indians. The effect of these laws has been the reclamation of more than two millions of acres of land and the construction of three or four thousand miles of main and lateral ditches without a single dollar having been expended from the United States Treasury. The projects are initiated and carried out under state laws, and financed by the issuing of county bonds.

A son of a veteran, himself, Mr. Steenerson has always taken an active interest in legislation and administration affecting the veterans of the Civil War. He has gladly devoted his legal ability and his time to the prosecution of their claims, both before the Department, and before Congress.

His most important service to the public, however, has been rendered as a member of the Post Office and Post Roads Committee of the House of Representatives. He has aided in perfecting the laws against fraudulent use of the mails, he has favored the improvement of the postal service in every branch, and has worked especially to better the wages and working conditions of the thousands of faithful and hard-working employees in the humble and lower grades of the service. He was active in the establishment and development of the Rural Free Delivery Service, and the establishment of parcels post and postal savings banks. He is a friend of civil service, and lead the opposition in the Sixty-third Congress to the proposition to abolish the position of "Assistant Postmaster," in first and second class offices, and to put rural delivery on a contract basis, as an attack on the merit system and civil service. Although these propositions were supported by the administration and a majority of the Democratic members of the House, they were