In 1922, when the convention system was the means of nominating candidates for office, a "grass-roots" committee sent a circular letter throughout the Ninth District to the newspapers and party leaders advocating my nomination for Congress at the district Republican convention. There was no concerted campaign made. The proposal had not interested me particularly. I was on-the-fence. The incumbent Congressman was re-nominated but failed to be reelected in November.

In the 1924 campaign State Senator F. H. Peterson, attorney, Moorhead, was nominated by the Republicans to run against the Farm-Labor incumbent. Senator Peterson would have made a very efficient member of Congress. He understood farm problems and had high rank as a lawyer. But he was defeated.

The years rolled on. The farm depression remained in an acute stage as is indicated in the previous chapter. Two great needs confronted the farmers: first, that the farmers themselves seek to form large, national groups that could speak for the farmers; second, that groups be formed in every Congressional district to wake up the people and what is more, keep them awake. Iterate and reiterate and drive home the facts the people of the United States should know about the state of the nation's agriculture.

When in Washington in 1924 I took a look at what was being done by various groups in presenting their views to the House and Senate Committees. There down the street from the capitol I found the American Federation of Labor's home. Across the street from the capitol that of the Railroad Workers' Unions. Labor at that time, spoke with one voice, as these two groups worked together. Farther down the street directly across from the White House, stood the massive marble building housing the United States Chamber of Commerce. Business, industry, finance and commerce spoke with a single voice.

I looked in vain for any outstanding building housing the spokesmen for agriculture. I looked into a telephone directory and what I read astounded me. There were no less than 51 "national?" groups purporting to speak for the farmers!

I felt I could do two things: first, encourage and urge the farmers to organize; second, concentrate on the farmers' marketing problems and urge other groups to do the same. Follow this up with campaign of public education. Use as an illustration the need of adding one leg, agriculture, to the existing three legs of a table representing labor, industry and commerce to make a firm setting for our national economy.

By 1926, the conviction grew that the farm relief issue was emerging as a vital national problem. It would be solved only when the two major parties had been won to the cause.

Both before and after our three months' sojourn in Washington, I had attended many regional, state and national meetings and conventions where farm problems
were studied and discussed. I had come to know many of the national leaders. Increasing attention was devoted to farm prices in relation to the prices the farmer had to pay for what he needed.

Legislation was discussed particularly at meetings held in North Dakota, St. Paul, Des Moines and Chicago. The membership in the National Grange and the American Farm Bureau Federation was increasing by leaps and bounds. It did appear as though something might be achieved through legislation and there would be an opportunity for service if I were elected as a member of Congress.

My closest friends were all for it. The School and Station had been developed almost as fully as possible as a regional institution. In fact, I had begun to feel there wasn’t very much more on which to spend my energy there. I consulted frequently with my wife. She was happy at the Station but she knew the needs of the farmers, also.

2.

Minnesota had recently adopted the primary election system to nominate party candidates for office. Four candidates filed for Congress on the Republican ticket in the Red River Valley (Ninth) District in 1926. I was one of them. The four candidates came from different counties. Before the June primary election my time for campaigning was limited to week-ends. No visits were made to the counties in which the other candidates lived.

It was a friendly contest among friends. Nothing was said or done to “dim” our friendship with each other. I carried all the counties excepting the home counties of the three other candidates. In one of these counties I was within a few dozen votes, as I recall it, of being the winner.

There was no presidential election in 1926 so Minnesota voters were mainly concerned with state and local issues. But the farm problem in several districts, including the Ninth, overshadowed all else.

During the summer I spent my vacation campaigning. I was not a stranger in most places. I found I had friends everywhere. I made no political speeches in the sense of the word that I was primarily seeking votes.

I stressed it was my ambition to serve the district more fully and if they wished to send me to Washington, well and good. I stated my conscience and judgment would determine my stand on all issues. I made no commitments in advance. I was happy in my work at Crookston but was willing to serve my district, state and nation if they decided to send me to Washington.

There were, of course, many exciting and interesting experiences during the ensuing campaign for which the University Regents gave me a month’s leave-of-absence, without salary in October. At the close of one meeting in western Marshall County a woman who sat near the front and listened intently was heard to remark as she left at the close of the meeting, “Ja, nu veit du!” (Yes, now you know), with strong emphasis.

A huge black bear, which had wandered from the Red Lake Indian Reservation in northern Minnesota added plenty of excitement during my 1930 campaign for reelection to Congress.

While giving an address at a political rally at the farm of R. S. Austin in Clearwater County near Clearbrook, Bruin ambled towards the open air meeting while 200 farmers scrambled desperately for the open spaces.
"It was a comical sight," said one man, whose nimble feet had carried him far enough away to become a spectator. "Some climbed trees; others displayed speed they had never known they possessed."

After Mr. Austin had obtained his shotgun the unwelcome visitor departed and the meeting was resumed.

But my audience during the rest of the meeting kept one eye on me, and other in the direction whence the bear had gone.

I was elected by a small majority in November. It was both a lively and a hard campaign. My supporters predicted victory but we knew it would be close. On Thursday afternoon the unofficial returns indicated I had a safe majority of nearly one thousand votes. My home county, Polk, and the banner Republican county, Ottertail, gave me leads which exceeded the opposition in several Farm-Labor counties. Col. Theodore Roosevelt made two speeches in the district for the Republican candidates.

3.

In Washington, which I had visited many times since 1896, I was welcomed by my Minnesota colleagues in both House and Senate. I had broadened my acquaintances among Congressmen during our three months' sojourn there in 1924. Those interested in agriculture, the Great-Lakes Waterway and in the tariff as it affected agriculture became co-workers. Members of Congress must specialize. Committees hold hearings and develop the facts dealing with the bills presented. No one can follow, minutely, every measure but keeps informed through conferences and committee reports.

During my first term I teamed up with many on both sides of the aisle who were interested in the farm problem and worked closely with them. Today the names that come to mind include all the members of the Minnesota delegation; Ketcham, Michigan; Snow, Maine; Barbour, California; Hope, Kansas, who entered Congress when I did; Timberlake, Colorado; Summers, Washington; Haugen, Dickinson and the next Congress, Campbell, Iowa; Hall, Illinois; Brand, Ohio; Burtness and his colleagues from North Dakota and the South Dakota delegation. I have omitted, I realize, many names.

In social affairs, my wife and family, greatly enjoyed life in Washington. Dinners, luncheons, teas, receptions and social gatherings were numerous and enjoyable. My wife became a member of the Congressional Club and enjoyed many happy hours there. Our daughter, Margaret, and our son, George, attended George Washington University. Our daughter, Helen, who graduated from the University of Minnesota, and who had helped during the campaign, continued as my very efficient and helpful secretary. Before going to the University, she took up shorthand knowing that would be helpful later in her class work.

There were many Minnesotans in official life in Washington. Congressman Walter H. Newton resigned to become one of President Hoover's secretaries. Honorable Frank Kellogg was one of Minnesota's senators and Henrik Shipstead the other. William D. Mitchell was U.S. Attorney General and G. Aaron Youngquist, Crookston, one of his assistants. Col. C. H. March, Litchfield, was a member of the Federal Trade Commission and my former Dean, Dr. Albert F. Woods, was chief of Agriculture's Bureau of Plant Industry. Later he was head of the graduate work division in the department.

We came to know Presidents Coolidge and Hoover, Speaker and Mrs. Longworth, Congressman Hull, Tennessee, later Secretary of State; Speaker John N. Garner and his wife, Senators Borah, Johnson, McNary and others.
An invitation was accepted by Congressman Harold Knutson and myself to represent Minnesota, August 10, 1927 at the dedication of Mount Rushmore Monument in the Black Hills, the first national memorial federally authorized. President Calvin Coolidge was vacationing at Rapid City at the time so we decided to call on him and accompany the group to the mountain top from which we could view the site where the heads of four Presidents would be sculptured on the solid rock face of Mount Rushmore. Accompanying us from Minnesota were C. C. Strander and Charles Loring, Crookston, and Mr. Peterson, register of deeds, Walker.

We enjoyed a pleasant chat with the President at his summer capitol. I recall that farm relief was discussed. He wanted to know what was the trouble. I had been elected in the previous fall so I was fresh from the hustings. It fell to me to inform him that the farmers were really on the warpath and that he'd better be doing something about it.

At the dedication exercises John Gutzon de la Mothe Borglum (Gutzon Borglum); Senator Fess, Ohio; Governor Bulow, South Dakota and the President made appropriate addresses. What I most vividly recall is this walk up the mountain in a broiling sun that I and many others unaccustomed to such a feat made to reach the speakers' platform at the top of the mountain. The President and Senator Fess rode horses. They were arrayed cowboy style and cut quite a figure. The President's hat was hard to balance because of its size, his boots were resplendent.
I was given good committee assignments for a freshman member. The Committee on Agriculture already had a member from my state. He is still a member being next to Congressman Hope, Kansas, in seniority. He has had a very important part in shaping agricultural legislation since he entered Congress in 1924. My committees were Flood Control, Roads, Census and Invalid Pensions.

Flood Control Committee had as its first problem consideration of the Mississippi River Flood Control Bill. The destructive flood of 1927 made it necessary to seek means to prevent damage from future floods. The hearings continued over six months. A bill was drafted which included two provisions which would increase considerably the eventual cost of the project.

I joined Congressman Frear, Wisconsin and four other members of the Committee in submitting a minority report which President Coolidge and the administration strongly endorsed. The bill as passed authorized the expenditure of $325,000,000 over a ten-year period. It was really the first over-all approach to the solution of the Mississippi River flood control problem.

As a member of the Roads Committee I voted to increase the federal appropriation for roads to the states from fifty to one hundred and twenty-five millions, annually. During that period appropriations for the Memorial Bridge and the Mount Vernon Parkway projects were authorized by this committee.

The Census Committee held protracted hearing on a re-apportionment bill which resulted in the enactment of the law currently in force. This provides for automatic apportionment of the number of members in the House of Representatives from each state based on its population as disclosed by each succeeding census.

I became a member of the Labor Committee in 1930, relinquishing membership on the Flood Control Committee. As a member of the Labor Committee I favored holding the first hearing ever held by Congress on Old Age Pensions and later addressed the Committee on the bill before the Committee. I find, also, in the Congressional Record, of July 1, 1930, the speech I made on Old Age Pensions.

The main work lay in advocating the McNary-Haugen farm relief bill, with the equalization fee provision included. In the Congressional Record there are fourteen of my speeches on that subject. The bill was vetoed twice by President Coolidge and these vetoes caused the agricultural districts in the Midwest and Far West to seek farm relief through the medium of electing a Democrat for president. What has happened since is now history.

Before entering into any activity relating to the tariff schedules affecting agriculture I conferred with the leaders in the House. I have letters from Congressman Hawley, Oregon, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee; Snell, New York, chairman of the powerful Rules Committee; Tilson, Connecticut, majority leader, and Timberlake, Colorado, member of the Ways and Means Committee. All of them favored upward revision of the schedules, known as the farm schedules.

Hawley wrote on May 18, 1928, “The agricultural schedules should be revised upward.” Snell, August 13, 1928, “Revise the agricultural schedules upward to such an extent that will absolutely protect the American market for the American farmer.” Tilson, May 19, 1928, “I am in complete accord with the conclusion of your argument in favor of legislation by the 71st Congress increasing the tariff rates on agricultural products.” Speaker Nicholas Longworth informed me he favored limiting tariff revision exclusively to agricultural schedules.
I conferred with many members of the House and Senate on this subject. Among them was Senator Shipstead of Minnesota. He favored increases in the agricultural schedules and the enactment of the McNary-Haugen bill or a satisfactory substitute. In his letter of February 2, 1928, he states, "I think the most important bill as far as agriculture is concerned is the McNary-Haugen bill including the equalization fee... In my opinion one (tariff adjustments) without the other (McNary-Haugen bill) would not be effective at least in numerous cases." This was my position.

I set myself the task to study the agricultural schedules with the intention of submitting new tariff rates to the Committee that would be comparable to the schedules dealing with other imports. This entailed a great deal of work which kept my secretary Martin Widsten, and myself busy for weeks. I was a new member of the House who desired above all, to get results. I therefore asked Representatives Timberlake, Colorado; Dickinson, Iowa and Manlove, Missouri to come to my office as I desired to confer with them regarding the revised schedules I placed before them.

They agreed these new rates were necessary. I then suggested that the schedules be divided among the four present, each to choose those of major importance to their sections of the country, and that individual bills be introduced. This was done.

During the next few months I placed in the Congressional Record facts and figures supporting the proposed changes in twelve extensions of remarks. It was a part of the program of education.

In 1928, the Republicans gained a majority of over 100 in the House. Immediately a movement began to revise the entire existing tariff law. The result was the rates on commodities the farmers needed were increased thus adding to the cost of farm operations. Because the schedules for farm products were increased, many urged us to vote for the bill.

Five members from Minnesota, including myself, and several from adjoining states did not do so, but this bill heavily weighed with increases in non-agricultural tariff schedules was passed by the House. A letter bearing the names of over 1100 economists from all parts of the nation urged President Hoover to veto the bill. He signed it. I have always felt I was right in voting against the Smoot-Hawley bill. Events since 1930 have firmly justified my stand.

6.

There were other measures that I favored during my three terms as a member of Congress. I felt the St. Lawrence Deep Waterway would benefit the entire nation. I was against a federal sales tax. I favored federal participation in helping the states provide Old Age Pensions to rid our land of the ignominy of "poor-houses." I favored Philippine independence.

Matters of interest to my district and state were constantly before me. They were of minor importance as compared to farm relief but they were of importance to my constituents.

These included Lake of the Woods boundary project referred to the International Joint Boundary Commission; settlement of claims in the Mud Lake project; Roseau River flood problem, also involving the Joint Commission; bills relating to the Red Lake and Chippewa Indians in my district and procuring an appropriation for a monument commemorating the signing in 1851 of the "Old Crossing Treaty," with the Indians. This was unveiled at Old Crossing Park, in Red Lake County, with appropriate exercises on June 25, 1933. (See appendix.)
OLD CROSSING TREATY MEMORIAL LOCATED IN RED LAKE COUNTY NEAR VILLAGE OF HUOT. (See appendix.)

"Marks place Indian Treaty was signed."

In a bronze plaque at the base of the monument is the following inscription:

The Red River Valley of the North
Then included in the State of Minnesota and the Territory of Dakota
Was Ceded to the United States in a Treaty Signed Near this Spot on October 2, 1863, Negotiated by Commissioners Alexander Ramsey and Ashley C. Morrill and the Chiefs, Head Men and Warriors of the Red Lake and Pembina Bands of Chippewa Indians.
Erected by The United States 1932.
Minnesota's governor in 1931 vetoed the bill providing for redistricting the congressional districts of the state. The census of 1930 reduced the state's representation from ten to nine. There were many disappointments over the bill which the Legislature passed. It was impossible to repass it over the veto by the Farm-Labor governor. The result was that in 1932 all the members of Congress in the state ran for election "at large," that is, by the state as a unit, instead of by districts.

Minnesota's population was heavily concentrated in the area of the Twin Cities (Minneapolis and St. Paul). In an election "at large" it was inevitable that nearly all of the congressmen would be elected from that populous area. This proved to be true.

There were thirty-two candidates for Congress on the Republican ticket, with nine to be nominated. My district was in the northwestern corner of the state, from 200 to 400 miles from the Twin Cities. Among the 32 were a former governor and a former state auditor who were well and favorably known throughout the state. Both were Republicans.

The primary election took place at the crest of the strength of the Farm-Labor party. In the primary I ran eighth, thereby gaining a place on the November ballot. I made a state-wide campaign but was handicapped for the lack of funds and a state-wide acquaintance. Even so, received 304,848 votes, running eleventh, and only 8,373 votes behind the veteran member, Congressman Harold Knutson. I felt I had made a good "run," considering the circumstances.

Elected in November were five Farm-Labor candidates, one Democrat and three Republicans, including the former governor, the former state auditor and Harold Knutson. He was first elected in 1917 and continued in service until 1949. During his last term he was chairman of the powerful Ways and Means Committee. His total term of service was 32 years.

There is not much more to tell. I became seriously ill in February, 1933, from a severe attack of the "flu." This led to infection of my "good" ear which seriously impaired my hearing. Several of my colleagues were elected in 1934 in their districts but I was not a candidate. My physician advised against it.