

HON. A. C. SHALLENBERGER

Private Secretary Risley Gives a Resume of the Work Accomplished in Two Years

I am persuaded that the average citizen is unacquainted with the amount of work it falls to the lot of a congressman to perform in the discharge of his whole duty to the people of his district. I have determined, therefore, to give somewhat in detail what has passed under my observation during the two years I have served Hon. A. C. Shallenberger in the capacity of his private secretary.

During that time there have been received and answered approximately 5,000 letters and postal cards making requests of various kinds. This is one of the larger tasks imposed. As to the distribution of seeds, of all varieties of garden, vegetable, flower, lawn grass, sugar beet, sorghum, forage crop, etc., 30,000 packages have been sent out. In addition to this, a great many requests for wheat, oats, alfalfa and other grains have been filled. To this feature of the work may be added the sending out of about 300 trees, 300 strawberry plants and 100 grapevines. Practically two-thirds of the garden and vegetable seeds, 20,000 packages, have been sent out to individual addresses over the district. The remainder have been turned over to newspapers whose editors were kind enough to assist in getting them into the hands of the people for use. The minor supplies of various kinds were sent out upon request.

Over 40,000 farmers' bulletins have been distributed, these in the same way as the seeds; while over 5,000 doses of black leg vaccine have gone out to those needing it. Of public documents of one kind and another, embracing some of rare value and the whole relating to some branch of the governmental service, more than 7,000 have been distributed.

During the two years, 50 petitions for rural free delivery have been received and indorsed and their early establishment urged upon the post-office department, while 35 new routes have been established. During this period 5 new postoffices have been established and 15 new star mail routes started. This fails to include departmental work, necessitating many trips to the various officials, for the purpose of securing passports for some who contemplate traveling abroad, of looking up the war record of some old veteran, the present whereabouts of some Spanish war veteran, the perusal of land titles, the transferring of mail clerks, the examination of patent claims, and a vast number of other details, many of them small themselves, but in the aggregate considerable.

Of the pension business, all that need be said is that this is the largest single feature of the congressman's work. Of the period of which I write, some 600 cases have been looked after in the pension office, more than one-third of which have been allowed and the remainder materially hastened toward adjudication.

Of the work more closely connected with congress itself, it is now proper to speak. Mr. Shallenberger has introduced some 75 private bills, of various tenor, such as those to grant pensions, to give war medals, to correct military records, etc., and of these 6 pension bills have already passed both houses of congress and been signed by the president. He has introduced one resolution of inquiry into the conduct of the war department, and presented 200 petitions of one kind and another from various societies, organizations and citizens of the district.

His most noted bill has proven his anti-trust measure, much discussion of which has occurred in committee and in the press of the country. Mr. Shallenberger has introduced three other bills of special importance to certain towns. His bill appropriating \$125,000 to erect a public building at Hastings passed during the first session of this congress. The bill to appropriate \$10,000, to purchase a site for a public building at Grand Island, will pass this session, while the bill for the benefit of McCook remains unacted upon. His reputation as an orator has been established by the delivery of six speeches, two on the Fowler bill, one on trusts, one on irrigation, one on oleomargarine and one on the Rebecca J. Taylor civil service case. Of these about 40,000 copies have been distributed.

Of Mr. Shallenberger's stand upon public questions, and particularly local affairs of interest, the people are generally familiar, and this short review of the work done will be convincing that he has left no stone unturned the turning of which would benefit the Fifth district. That this vast amount of labor could be per-

formed in two years will be surprising to many, but it will illustrate the advantage of sending to congress men who by energy and talent are equipped for the place. H. W. RISLEY.

Taxing Coal Mines

Editor Independent: I have just seen your editorial of January 22, "The Situation," for the first time. As the conditions are still essentially as they were then, it may not be too late for a few words. You say, "there are coal mines sufficient to furnish all the coal the people require there are railroads enough to haul it to consumers; there are people with money in hand ready to buy," and you say there is a widely extended coal trust, with enormous powers of extortion. All this is true, but, to my mind, you omit the most important consideration of all. You say nothing of the fundamental feature which enables a few men to form such a mighty trust—the feature which is, in fact, the basis of all successful trusts, viz: the control of the sources of supply.

Now, extend your analysis to the end and you expose this condition, abundance of coal to be had for the digging, thousands of men anxious to dig it, and other thousands anxious to buy it when mined. But standing between these two groups is the coal land owner, requiring tribute from both parties. He refuses to let the miners dig unless they give him all the product but a bare subsistence. He refuses to let the consumers buy until they pay "all the traffic will stand." Owing the coal land, he has no competition. He can sell to whom he will. So the coal dealers, in the cities at least, have become but mere agents of the mine owners and we have the intolerable condition of a coal trust, "refusing to sell coal except at exorbitant prices," and idle factories and perishing children, as results.

The remedy, in my judgment, is not to be found in jailing dealers, or even mine owners, for refusing to sell coal. They have as much right to hold their coal for a higher price as farmers have to hold their corn. But this remedy, even if applied, would be ineffective. The owner would say, "Very well, I will sell what I have, but I will not mine more," and the old condition would soon return. The law does not compel, and it cannot compel, the mine owner to hire men and produce coal any more than it can compel a man to make brick of the clay in his yard. Neither is the remedy to be found in a government railroad, greatly to be desired though that is. A government road to the very heart of the anthracite fields would not compel the sinking of a single shaft. All the hard coal beds are actually or virtually owned by the same parties, and there are, as you say, ample transporting facilities now.

While law cannot compel these mine owners to furnish coal as it is needed, it can, by means of a tax, make it profitable for them to do so and exceedingly unprofitable for them to refuse. This, I think, is the simplest, if, indeed, not the only, effective remedy for this private monopoly. Therefore tax coal lands till the Pennsylvania railroad cannot afford to hold them idle. Then still further encourage mining by exempting shafts, machinery, tools—all products of labor, from taxation. The result will be more mines and more coal. If the Pennsylvania railroad refuses to haul it another road will be built by either private or government capital. The situation will then be, for the miner, wider opportunities and higher wages; for the consumer, fuel at cost of production; for the general public the added benefit of increased revenue with taxes more nearly in proportion to the privileges enjoyed by the taxpayer.

A DISCIPLE OF HENRY GEORGE.

(Our friend forgets that there are yet great areas of undeveloped coal fields which cannot be developed because of railroad discriminations in freight. Out in western Colorado and eastern Utah the mountains are full of coal; but only a few mines are developed beyond what is necessary for a limited local supply, because the coal cannot be shipped over the railroads to other points. A government railroad would enable these mines to market their coal in other cities in competition with the product of other mines.

If the Pennsylvania railroad is powerful enough to successfully refuse to haul coal, or refuse to do any other thing which is required by law of a common carrier, isn't it probable, or at least possible, that it might be powerful enough to refuse to pay the tax which our friend seems to think would solve the coal problem?—Ed. Ind.)

Some people lean so heavily on the Lord that they forget how to use their legs.

"Seed Potatoes"

You cannot afford to plant knotty, scabby, water soaked potatoes for seed this year. What you want is good, solid, regular sized, free from scab potatoes and you get all this when you buy our Red River grown potatoes. In dry years these potatoes will yield a bountiful crop while native potatoes will yield nothing. Parties who have given these potatoes repeated trials find that the northern potatoes yield from one-third more to twice as much as native potatoes and you get a crop that you are proud of, one that is much earlier than the native potato and one that sells much better. We have one car on the way now from near Fargo, N. D and more will follow. One party has already placed an order for 250 bushels.

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