

photo by Gail Folda

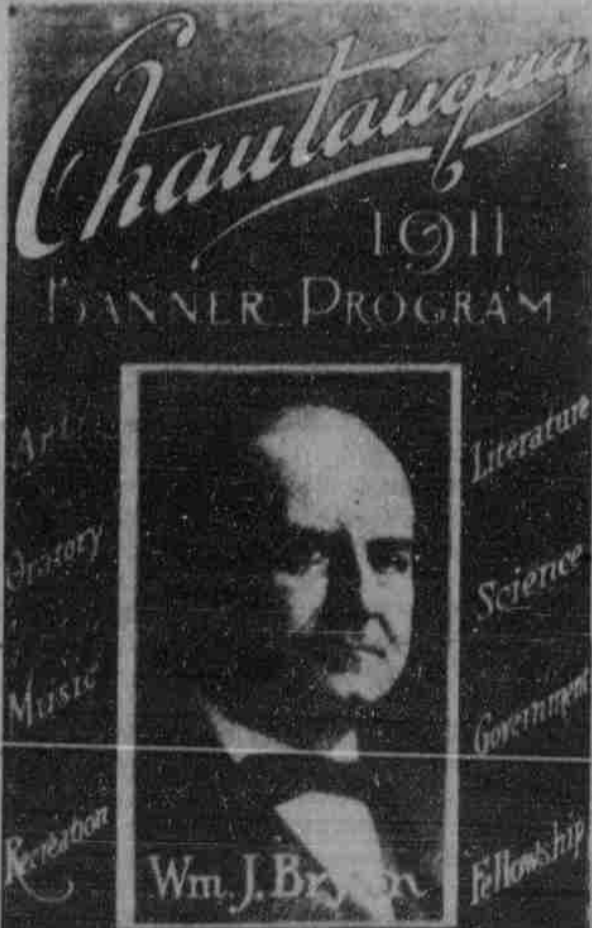
## CHAS. THONE

"Charley Thone: A Man You Can Trust," herald posters from the building at 12th and O Streets.

Diagonally across the street, the Congressman from the first district was working in his office. After a day's campaigning in Fremont, he was preparing for a dinner in Beatrice that evening.

Congress recessed late this year, allowing him two weeks to finish his campaign. Now, Thone said, sitting at his desk, he is sandwiching official duties between campaign stops throughout the First District.

After Watergate, Thone detected "a concession toward more open government. President Gerald Ford is part of that trend," he said.



Woodbine, Iowa

"I know Jerry Ford pretty well," he said, "and I think, even though mistakes will be made, he is sincere in his philosophy toward more open government."

### Mistakes covered

Thone sat munching a popcorn ball, drinking a Thermos-sized glass of milk. For the past 25 years, he has preferred milk over coffee, he said.

"Graft and corruption will prosper," he continued, "whenever there's secrecy. There's no question of that. Elected officials, of course, want to make themselves look good by covering up their mistakes."

### Frustration

Thone said the legislative process—"compromise on top of compromise"—can be "frustrating."

"Anyone with strong feelings is going to be frustrated," he said. "No one can set everything on fire when they are first sent to Congress. There's no way. You're a junior member, only one of 435 people. You just do the best you can."

"It's inefficient, it's cumbersome, but that's what democracy is all about," he said.

The first concern of Nebraskans in the first district, he said, is inflation, the "cruellest, most insidious tax of all." Thone said he has opposed raising taxes. What is needed, he explained, is reduced federal spending.

"Proposals to impose higher gasoline taxes or a surcharge on middle income people simply makes the job of making ends meet more difficult," he said.

### Tax reform

Tax reform, he said, is easy to talk about, hard to achieve. The last major tax reform bill, he said, came out of the House Ways and Means Committee in 1968. Since that time thousands of bills have been introduced, more than 3,000 this year, but never advanced out of committee, he said.

Thone opposes wage and price controls, claiming that "we need less government, not more."

Thone said he has voted for cutbacks in military spending, pointing out the waste in the defense department. He also said he voted against the bombing of Cambodia in 1971.

"I felt strongly about that," he said.

### Amnesty

Although he described Vietnam as a "rotten" war, he said he did not approve of blanket amnesty for draft resisters. "I think these cases should be taken up on a case by case basis," he said.

The next day in Thone's campaign headquarters in the Cornhusker Hotel, people were working to insure Charley Thone had the opportunity to become a good Congressman.

### Hectic day

Stevens sat at a corner desk, answering phone calls. Things were hectic in Charley Thone's office last Thursday; that morning the Lincoln Star had endorsed Hess Dyas for Congress.

The Star's stand was expected, Stevens said, but didn't tell both sides of the story. The Star criticized Thone for being wishy-washy about impeaching former President Nixon and about President Ford's pardon of Richard Nixon.

Thone wouldn't commit himself for impeachment, Stevens said, until beyond-a-shadow-of-a-doubt evidence was produced. But after Nixon's admission on Aug. 6 that he had hedged about Watergate, Thone then said he had no choice but to vote for impeachment, Stevens said.

### Apathy issue

Apathy, Stevens said, is an issue in the campaign. After one-and-a-half years of Watergate headlines and a consensus that politicians are "wheeler-dealers," people have no time to canvass or study the issues, he said.

"It's terrible. If everyone voted, we would win this election with 58 per cent of the vote. With a poor voter turnout, it's anybody's ball game," said Stevens.

"But I'll tell you one thing, if we lose this election, it's because we've thrown it away." Stevens complimented the organization of the Dyas campaign, which has closed the margin between the candidates to within 17 points.

"They're professionals," he said. "Dyas' strategy is to attack. They've been working to make Charley Thone look like he can't be trusted. Their idea is to get Dyas into the paper and make him a household word, and they've been doing a good job."

### 'Misrepresented facts'

But in some cases, Stevens said, they have misrepresented facts. "Take the point about closing tax loopholes," he said. "Everyone says they want to do that. It's an old campaign gimmick."

Dyas charged in a position paper discussing tax reform, that on June 27, 1972, and June 12, 1973, Thone voted against tax reform. According to the Congressional Record, Congress did not discuss or vote tax reform on either date.

Dyas' campaign, Stevens said, has received "thousands of dollars from outside sources." Some of these contributors are special interest groups representing labor, he said.

### Contributions

Dyas' contributions from non-Democratic Party groups outside Nebraska amount to \$11,800 according to the Dyas for Congress Committee financial report to Oct. 14. Some of these contributors were: the Transportation Political Education League of Cleveland, Ohio, \$1,100; the Machinists Non-Partisan Political League of Washington, D.C., \$500; and the Railway Clerks Political League of Rosemont, Ill., \$1,000.

The Dyas campaign has raised a total of \$93,045.31, according to the report.

Thone has limited campaign contributions to \$100 a person, Stevens said, refusing money from special interest groups.

"We've had groups like the American Medical Association (AMA) offer to contribute, but we've had to say, 'No, we're sorry.'"

"Charley's his own campaign manager," Stevens said. "He wants to keep a close tab on everything that goes on. Everything has to be cleared through him."

Which, Stevens said, causes hassles and sometimes bogs things down. The office would run smoother, he said, if the office would hire a full-time campaign manager, giving Thone veto power over his decisions.