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THE POLITICAL LIFE OF ALICE M. ROBERTSON

by

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INTRODUCTION

Alice Mary Robertson, the Congresswoman from Oklahoma, who was the news sensation of the nation only twenty-five years ago, today is almost forgotten. Her fame apparently lies buried in the multiplicity of sensational events and people which crowd the mind of the modern American. "Miss Alice of Muskogee," "The Lady from Oklahoma," "Oklahoma's Woman Congressman," and similar expressions were extremely common in the newspapers and magazines of the early twenties. A survey of the periodicals and daily press of that time indicates that probably she was the most talked-about, written-about woman in America. Already, in her own state, even in her own district, the average person, particularly if he is under forty years of age, looks his blank astonishment at mention of her name.

This consignment to obscurity is not deserved. Alice M. Robertson was a remarkable woman, perhaps in some respects, even a great one, and merits more recognition by her native state both in its history and in the memory of its people. Her achievements, won under circumstances and handicaps that to the ordinary person would have been insuperable barriers, make an impressive list. To Miss Alice, the obstacles she encountered were but added incentives to increased effort and final victory.

The newspaper accounts of Miss Robertson's death state that she was the first woman appointed to a federal position in Indian Territory, the first woman postmaster of a first class post office in the United States, the second woman elected to Congress in the United States, the only American woman to receive the
presidential salute, and the only woman so far as is known to preside over the legislative body of a great nation.

Born into what she herself termed the "grinding poverty of a missionary home," Alice Robertson was nevertheless a personal friend of two presidents of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt and Warren G. Harding, and had the distinction of meeting nine other presidents. Throughout her long life she was a confidant and intimate of the politically great and near-great. A number of persons who moved in the highest circles of wealth and influence called Miss Alice friend. Senators, congressmen, cabinet officers, bureau heads, politicians, lobbyists, wealthy philanthropists, industrialists, lawyers, judges, secretaries to presidents, president's wives, and even presidents themselves are numbered among her many correspondents.

Miss Robertson's political career presents some strange paradoxes. She was a Republican Congresswoman from a Democratic district, and an anti-suffragist holding political office. After devoting many years of her life and a large portion of her slender financial resources to welfare work among soldiers, as a member of Congress she voted against legislation designed to benefit them. Alice Robertson had spent much of her life in educational work in Oklahoma and knew well the financial trials of poverty-stricken school districts yet when in Congress, she opposed the measures advanced to remedy the situation. When first elected to the House of Representatives, she declared her intention of working for the welfare of women and children, but when legislation, sponsored by practically all the women's organizations in the country came before the House, Miss Robertson fought it bitterly. That she found politics intriguing and
fascinating is shown by her life-long interest in the game, still she stoutly maintained that women were not fitted for politics.

Alice Robertson's election to Congress in 1920 was loudly acclaimed in Oklahoma and throughout the nation. Even some of the Democrats seemed to feel glad that she had won, but before the two years of her term were ended she had alienated so many of her supporters that she failed of reelection.

How can this be accounted for? Miss Robertson was no amateur in politics, and certainly lacked neither character nor intelligence. She should have known her constituents as few members of Congress have the opportunity of knowing those they represent. She had spent a lifetime among them, always in close contact with the public, as missionary, teacher, school supervisor, postmistress, and cafeteria owner. Still she was completely out of sympathy with the people who elected her. The reasons for this can be found only in an examination of her life, and of the forces that cast her in so inexorable a mold that she could not change even when her own best interests demanded it.

Throughout her long life Alice Robertson was true to two things, her Puritan home training, and her exaggerated pride in her New England ancestry, characteristically rock-bound and conservative in nature. These are desirable traits in many respects but hardly conducive to the high degree of liberal, progressive statesmanship which the troubled world of 1920 demanded.
CHAPTER I

FORMATIVE FORCES IN EARLY LIFE

The political life of Alice Mary Robertson was colored by the fact that she was a product of New England evangelism, embodying many of both its virtues and its faults. Her parents, William Schenck Robertson and Ann Eliza Worcester Robertson, were Presbyterian missionaries and educators in Indian Territory. They were descended from missionary and ministerial families of the northeastern states. From them, Alice received as her heritage a keen, but strict and narrow, religious sense and a stern devotion to what she considered her duty. She also received an intense pride in her ancestral line, and an overweening sense of family superiority, supported and strengthened by her life among the Indians in her parents' mission school.

Through her mother's family, the Worcesters, she was a descendant of Lucy Winthrop, sister of Governor John Winthrop of Massachusetts, and Esther Edwards, sister of Jonathan Edwards, the noted New England minister and writer.¹

1. Who's Who In America, 1922-23 (Chicago, 1923), XII, 2629. Hereafter cited as Who's Who; Grant Foreman, "Alice Mary Robertson," Dictionary of American Biography (New York, 1935), XVI, 20. Hereafter cited as Dictionary of American Biography; letter, Ann Augusta Moore to Alice Robertson, October 29, 1928, Robertson Collection in University of Tulsa Library. Hereafter cited as R.C.T.U. Some doubt of the authenticity of this line of descent may be inferred from Mrs. Moore's letter to her sister. She had just seen a pamphlet, written by Alice in the campaign of 1928, in which she referred to herself as being descended from nine Presbyterian ministers in a direct line. Mrs. Moore wrote: "Where did you get nine Presbyterian ministers in a direct line? The same place you got Winthrop?" There is, however, an unclassified slip of paper, R.C.T.U., which purports to trace the line of descent from Lucy Winthrop and Esther Edwards to Samuel Worcester, grandfather of Alice Robertson.
The life story of her maternal grandfather, Samuel Austin Worcester, had a marked influence upon Alice Robertson. Samuel Worcester was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, January 18, 1798. He was educated at the University of Vermont and Andover Seminary. After his marriage to Ann Orr of Binghampton Vermont, the two young people went as missionaries for the Presbyterian Home Mission Board to the Cherokee Indians at Brainerd and New Echota, Georgia, in 1827.²

At that time the southern states were having a great deal of trouble with the independent tribal governments of the Five Civilized Tribes. Believing that this trouble with the Indians was augmented by the presence of white people within the tribal lands, the State of Georgia passed a law forbidding their presence without a permit from the State. Needless to say these permits were difficult, if not impossible, to obtain in the current hostility of the State toward the Indians.

Believing that he was carrying on an educational and religious program which was civilizing and christianizing the Cherokees, Worcester refused to leave. He and Elizir Butler, his co-worker, were arrested in 1831, tried,

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convicted, and sentenced to four years of hard labor in the state penitentiary. They appealed to the United States Supreme Court in the famous case of Worcester vs. Georgia. In a decision written by Chief Justice John Marshal, the Court decided that the Georgia law was unconstitutional and ordered the two men released.

When he heard of the decision, President Andrew Jackson is credited with having said, "John Marshal has made his decision. Now let him enforce it." Worcester and Butler were not released until some time later when the Governor of Georgia exercised clemency to free them.³

Samuel Worcester went into exile with the Cherokees when they were forced to leave Georgia and accept land in what is now Oklahoma. He settled first at Dwight Mission in Arkansas, but later went to Park Hill, across the line in Oklahoma, and set up a printing press through which he continued his work of educating the Indians.⁴

The forced removal of the Indians from their comfortable homes in Georgia to the unsettled land in the West over the infamous "Trail of Tears" brought great hardships, suffering, and even death to hundreds of them. The Worcesters, who accompanied them, shared their sorrows, and in that sharing, according to Alice Robertson, grew to hate Presidents Jackson and the Democratic Party for perpetrating the outrage. In this way Miss Robertson accounted for the staunch adherence of her family to the Republican Party and her

own ardent support of its program and policies.  

Alice's mother, Ann Eliza Worcester Robertson, a sternly religious woman, did much to mold the character of her children into what she considered an acceptable and becoming piety. Alice was particularly susceptible to her influence, and devoted many years of her life to caring for her mother in her old age. Mrs. Robertson grew to womanhood at the Park Hill Mission and aided her father by teaching in the school. Here she met William Schenck Robertson, a young graduate of Union College, Schenectady, New York, who had been sent out by the Presbyterian Home Mission Board to become principal of a manual labor boarding school in the Creek Nation at Tullahassee, about nine miles north of Muskogee, Oklahoma. They were married in 1850 and continued the mission work at Tullahassee for many years.

Seven children were born to the William Robertson family, but only four lived to maturity, three daughters, and one son. Despite her home-making and her work in the school, Mrs. Robertson found time to collaborate with her husband in translating the Bible into the Creek language. She continued the work after Mr. Robertson's death, and for this contribution to Indian education was


7. Letter, William Robertson to John Worcester, January 25, 1857; letter, John Worcester to A.E.W. Worcester, January 7, 1861; letter, Mrs. Samuel Robertson to William Robertson, February 2, 1863; letter, A.E.W. Robertson to Nancy Thompson, August 24, 1864. R.C.T.U. These children were: Ann Augusta, born 1851; Alice, born 1854; Grace, born 1857; Samuel, born 1860; Dora, born 1863, died 1864; Twins (names unknown to author), born 1866, died same year.
awarded an honorary Ph.D. degree by Wooster College in 1892, allegedly the first woman in America so honored.  

Ann Eliza Robertson was known as a "devoted teacher and strict disciplinarian." She was loved by her pupils and revered by her children. A revealing bit of her character is shown in a reminiscence of her oldest daughter, Ann Augusta, who says of her return home after a year's absence at Cooper Seminary, Dayton, Ohio; "Captain Field took me to Tullahassee, and I remember Mother wasn't glad to see me because I came home on Sunday." This habit of the strict observance of Sunday, inculcated by her mother, clung to Alice Robertson throughout her life, and even in the heat of a political campaign she refused to travel on Sunday or in any other way violate the interpretation her parents had taught her to place upon the Fourth Commandment.

Alice's father, William Robertson, was a tall, gaunt Scotchman, thin and

8. D. Clark Gideon, History of Indian Territory, (New York, 1901), 134; letter, Howard Lowry, Registrar of Wooster College, Wooster, Ohio, to the writer June 26, 1946. This letter states that while "honorary Ph.D. degrees" are unusual, in the early days a few were given for special academic work, and the records of the college show that Mrs. Robertson was granted one in 1892.


11. Tulsa Daily World, August 1, 1922. A news story telling of Miss Robertson's disapproval of her fellow church members for signing an endorsement of her candidacy, on Sunday; Boston Herald, June 7, 1922. Clipping, R.C.T.U. Miss Robertson is quoted as saying, "I did not attend the opening of the National Women's Party in Washington recently because the exercises were held on the Sabbath."
raw-boned; his face was sun-burned, and he wore thick-lensed glasses. He was not at all prepossessing in appearance, but he was sincere and genuine and greatly admired and loved by his pupils.\textsuperscript{12} Alice seemed to inherit many of the physical characteristics of her father and not a little of his forth-right Scotch temperament.

To stimulate Alice's political consciousness and interest in affairs of state, the collateral lines of her family tree had many noted names on it. Senator Zachary Chandler of Michigan, was a cousin of Ann Eliza Worcester, and his daughter, Mary, married United States Senator Eugene Hale of Maine, who was himself a distant cousin of the Worcesters. The son of this couple, Fred Hale, was a United States Senator from Maine at the time Alice was in Congress.\textsuperscript{13} Dean C. Worcester, another relative, was United States Commissioner to the Philippines, 1899-1901.\textsuperscript{14} Julia Robertson, the youngest sister of Alice's father, married Frank Pierpont, first Governor of West Virginia, after it seceded from Virginia, at the outbreak of the Civil War.\textsuperscript{15}

Religion and politics were the absorbing interests of Alice Robertson's life. Some light might be thrown on the reasons for her attempts to retain them both, and reconcile the two, by a letter her mother wrote to a friend in 1884:


\textsuperscript{13} Letter, Alice Robertson to Mary Hale, April 30, 1929; letter, W. L. Worcester to Alice Robertson, December 21, 1898; letter, Henry L. Robertson to William Robertson, March 16, 1871, R.C.T.U.

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Who's Who in America}, 1920-1921, X, 3022.

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Dictionary of American Biography}, XIV, 584, 585.
They (the Worcesters) have been very much a family of ministers, while my mother's family, the Orrs have been more in political life. Secretary Chandler, so long of your state, was the son of my grandfather Orr's oldest daughter. My grandfather was also much in political life, but was an elder in the Presbyterian Church and his home was always open to ministers.\footnote{16}

Mary Alice Robertson, as she was christened, was born January 2, 1854, at Tullahassee Mission.\footnote{17} Her childhood home, so important in the formation of character, has been described by Carolyn Thomas Foreman as an "austere appearing place"; but there were flowers in the dooryard and majestic cedar, oak, and hickory trees shaded the grounds where the Robertson children played. There were orchards and gardens where much of the food for the family and the Indian students was grown.\footnote{18}

When Alice was not quite two years old, her father wrote his parents that, "Mary Alice is one of the fat ones -- almost a spectacle -- She begins to talk a great deal."\footnote{19} Both characteristics Miss Robertson retained until the end of her life. When grown she weighed close to two hundred pounds, and a good part of her time was spent in speechmaking.\footnote{20}

In 1859 when Alice was five, William Robertson wrote to his wife's brother John Worcester, "Mary Alice reads little books with much relish," which would seem to be prophetic of her love for literary pursuits. During her long life

\footnote{16. To Mrs. Williams, February 6. R.C.T.U.}
\footnote{17. Who's Who in America, 1922-1923, XII, 2629.}
\footnote{18. C. Foreman, Chronicles of Oklahoma, XIII, 400.}
\footnote{19. Letter, William Robertson to Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Robertson, October 12, 1855. R.C.T.U.}
\footnote{20. Letter, Alice Robertson to Frank Wyman, September 24, 1906. R.C.T.U.}
Miss Robertson wrote hundreds of articles for local newspapers and church magazines.

Alice's early schooling was very informal. She studied under her father and mother, until the family was forced to flee from Indian Territory during the Civil War. William Robertson's sympathies were with the North. Since most of the Indians among whom he worked were secessionists and considered all "Yankee Abolitionists" as enemies, Robertson though it the better part of wisdom to have his family out of harm's reach. Accordingly he took his wife and children to his parent's home in Winneconne, Wisconsin.

There Alice attended school until the family removed to Highland, Kansas, and later Centralia, Illinois. Mr. Robertson taught in both of these places and the children went to the public schools.

When the war was over the Robertsons returned to Tullahassee and began the rebuilding of the badly dilapidated mission. Alice was twelve at the time, and old enough to share some of the heavy responsibility and hardships attendant upon the work of reconstruction so courageously undertaken by William Robertson and his wife. Ann Augusta was sent back east to school, so Alice was the eldest at home. Mrs. Robertson was in ill health, and Alice had to do much of the cooking and housework for the family. She also had to assume other responsibilities too heavy for her years. When her twin baby brothers died of some sort of malarial fever, shortly before Christmas day, 1866, Alice had to prepare their bodies for burial. There was no one else to do it. The other

21. Alice Robertson, article in Muskogee Daily Phoenix, June 6, 1926.
members of the family were ill with the same malady that caused the infants' death. Undoubtedly these experiences had their influence in shaping her character and personality.  

Alice studied at Tullahassee under her father until she was seventeen. She then entered Elmira College, Elmira, New York. The President of the College, Dr. Frederick Lent, a former classmate of her father at Union College, gave Alice employment at the school so that she might earn part of her tuition and board. The rest of her expenses were paid by friends in the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches of Elmira. Her sister Ann Augusta was teaching at Tullahassee and sent her the small sums she could spare from her meager salary for clothes.  

Miss Robertson was intensely ambitious even at this early age and longed to become a writer. She thought teaching was "slow and killing" and was determined to fit herself for a literary career. She wrote her sister, Augusta, of her hopes and dreams, and said, "You've no idea how my home letters -- how everything seems to drive me on."  

While going to school at Elmira, Alice Robertson took her first trip to Washington, D.C., as an excursion from the college. The students making the trip were presented to President and Mrs. Grant. Alice was much impressed with the


25. Letter, Alice Robertson to Ann Augusta Robertson, March 13, 1873. R.C.T.U.
former Union General and his gracious wife.\textsuperscript{26} Pleasant Porter, Chief of the Creek Nation, was in Washington at the same time. Miss Robertson wrote her sister:

\begin{quote}
When I was at the Capitol with Pleasant, I told him of my note to Senator Chandler, so he brought him out and I presented it . . . The worthy Senator did not seem unimpressed by me, for he began immediately tracing resemblances between myself and the Orr family.\textsuperscript{27}
\end{quote}

Alice commented in the same letter, "I think the trip paid if anything ever did." Thus at the age of eighteen Alice Robertson was already making political contacts in the Nation's capital and learning how to use them.

In 1873 Miss Robertson left Elmira to accept a position in the Office of Indian Affairs in Washington. She obtained the position through the good offices of Senator O. H. Platt of Connecticut, Chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs, who was interested in the missionary work done by her family among the Indians.\textsuperscript{28} Alice wanted to help her younger sister, Grace, go to college, and to do so left her own work unfinished. She never went back to school, but was granted two honorary degrees, an M.A. from Elmira in 1886, and an L.L.D. from the University of Tulsa in 1921.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{26} Muskogee Daily Phoenix, October 6, 1929. Article by Alice Robertson.

\textsuperscript{27} Letter, Alice Robertson to Augusta Robertson, May 11, 1872, R.C.T.U. Senator Chandler was a cousin of Alice's mother through the maternal Orr family.

\textsuperscript{28} Unpublished manuscript of speech made by Alice Robertson before Presbyterian Assembly. No place, no date. Presumably in Connecticut about 1882. R.C.T.U.

\textsuperscript{29} Dictionary of American Biography, XVI, 20.
CHAPTER II

POLITICAL TRAINING FIELD

While working in the Indian Office in Washington, D.C., Miss Robertson made many political contacts that were to be of great help to her in after years when she was in need of friends at the capital. Among these was Dr. Merrill E. Gates, Secretary to the Congressional Committee on Indian Affairs, who became her warm friend, and her supporter when she sought her first important political appointment to the superintendency of the Creek tribal schools.¹

Some of the contacts were seemingly purely social in nature, but they all aided in orienting her and making her completely at home in the realm of High Politics. She was privileged to attend several receptions given by Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant. She met Mrs. Rutherford B. Hayes at a reception as well as future President Garfield and Mrs. Garfield.²

However, Alice was never happy in the drudgery of routine work. In 1876 she wrote her mother:

Please Mama, do not be vexed with me, do not give me up, but I do not know what is to become of me. This worthless Department is stifling out of existence the very little of good and unselfishness there is left in my nature. That is the reason I have not written home. I knew the blueness would show. Two weeks and I will be 22. I cannot realize it.³

Miss Alice continued to work in the Indian office three years. Then being unable to bear seeing her mother so overburdened with the work at Tullahassee,

1. Letter, Dr. Merrill Gates to Alice Robertson, April 12, 1900. R.C.T.U.
3. Letter, Alice Robertson to A.E.W. Robertson, December 13, 1876. R.C.T.U.
she resigned and went home to help by taking over the direction of the domestic science department of the school. She had used her spare time while in Washington, studying domestic science and stenography. She became the first, and for many years the only, court reporter in the Indian Territory.\(^4\)

The Indian Office was still paying her salary at Tullahassee, and in 1880 transferred her to a position as secretary to Captain R. H. Pratt, Superintendent of the Carlisle Indian School at Carlisle, Pennsylvania.\(^5\)

Tullahassee burned to the ground in that same year, and Alice's father, already ill, was unable to recover from the shock of seeing his life work destroyed. He tried in vain to interest the Creek Nation and the Presbyterian Mission Board in rebuilding the school. Disappointed and heart-broken, he soon became bed-fast, but carried on the struggle, writing letters to people of influence in both organizations, and beseeching his daughter, Alice, to do everything she could to help him effect his purpose.\(^6\)

Alice Robertson was much concerned about the Indian boys and girls of Tullahassee who were left without means of obtaining an education. Acting with characteristic energy and decision, she went to Washington and obtained permission for twenty-five of the most promising students to go to Carlisle

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6. Letters, William Robertson to Alice Robertson, January 1, 1881; and May 11, 1881. R.C.T.U.
and attend the school there. She obtained the money for the students' railroad fare from a wealthy cousin, E. D. Worcester, and Russell Sage, the well-known philanthropist.\(^7\)

William Robertson died in June of 1881. Alice was summoned home, but did not arrive in time to see her father alive. She felt exceedingly bitter toward both the officials of the Creek Nation and the members of the Presbyterian Board. She wrote Pleasant Porter, Chief of the Creeks, accusing the Creeks and the Home Mission Board of killing her father:

> Can you not imagine the agony it is to be here beside what was my father, and to know that he left us because his heart was broken by those he loved and trusted so? I tell you frankly that this morning when I came and found my father dead I hated you, but I do not now.

**********

He is dead now. You have helped to kill him and all your life you will know the bitter sorrow of remorse. If my life would have bought my father's you know how gladly I would have given it that he might go on in the work he loved so well. I will not reproach you. I know you did not understand, but you cannot give me back my father.\(^8\)

Alice's mother and her sister, Ann Augusta, continued to hold as many classes as they could at Tullahassee, using the outbuildings as temporary housing. Mrs. Robertson could not give up the dream of rebuilding the school her husband had so loved, and Alice, determined to aid in every way possible, resigned her position at Carlisle in 1882 and returned to Indian Territory. The Creek Tribal Council was adamant, however, and feeling that the school at Tullahassee was no longer well located for the full-bloods, it turned the grounds and property

\(^7\) G. Foreman, *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, X, 14.

\(^8\) Letter, Alice Robertson to Pleasant Porter, June 28, 1881. R.C.T.U.
over to the freedmen for the purpose of establishing a school for colored children. The Robertsons' connection with the school they had served so long was now severed.9

With the perseverance so characteristic of her, Alice Robertson set to work at once to raise money to build a new school for the Creeks at Nuyaka. Her sister, Ann Augusta, aided in the organization of the school and became its first superintendent, but to Alice fell the responsibility of providing the money needed. She went East and solicited the wealthy friends she had made in Presbyterian circles. The Women's Executive Committee of the Home Missions Board voted to give $10,000, and the Creek National Council appropriated $2,500. The school was completed in 1885.10

Alice Robertson taught one year in a day school for Indians at Okmulgee, while Nuyaka was being built. About this time she met a young Muskogee attorney, Robert L. Owen, with whom she had a lifelong friendship. Both Miss Robertson and Owen were interested in the improvement of conditions in Indian Territory, and although they were aligned with different political parties, they had a very sincere liking and respect for each other. They served together as officers of the first Educational Convention held in Indian Territory, September 29, 1884; and many times in the years that followed the paths of their interests crossed or coincided for a time.11

11. Thoburn and Wright, Oklahoma, The State and Its People, I, 467-8
In 1885 Miss Robertson took charge of the Presbyterian Mission Board school for Indian girls in Muskogee, a school known as "Minerva Home," and established for the purpose of teaching domestic arts. Alice Robertson's energetic nature was not long content with the smallness of the school, and she set about raising funds to enlarge it.\(^\text{12}\)

She again applied to the Presbyterian Woman's Council for funds. It was while she was east on this mission that she met a woman who was to be her benefactress for the rest of her life. This woman was Mary Copley Thaw, the wife of the wealthy industrialist William Thaw. Years later Alice wrote of her:

> It is impossible for anyone to know what a help and inspiration Mrs. Thaw was to me during the long period from the time when I first met her with her husband in Dr. Henry Kimball's office in New York. She not only gave liberally to the little school, but helped then as always by advice and suggestion.\(^\text{13}\)

The money was raised and the name of the school was changed to Henry Kendall College in 1894. It was moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1907 and the name was changed to the University of Tulsa. Miss Robertson was given a position as teacher of English, history, and civics in Henry Kendall College. She continued there until 1900 when she resigned to become Supervisor of Creek Schools.\(^\text{14}\)

In 1889 Alice Robertson acted as stenographer for the Cherokee Commission when it was sent out to Indian Territory by the United States


\(^{13}\) Letter, Alice Robertson to P. S. Space and Howard Irish, Executors, August 1929. R.C.T.U. Mrs. Thaw gave this advice very freely during and after Miss Robertson's Congressional career.

Government to negotiate with the Cherokees for the cession of their Outlet. Miss Robertson had some interesting and valuable political experiences during this time. She afterwards said that it was from the Chairman of this Commission, Horace Speed, that she acquired her strong belief in the principle of Protection for American industries.15

While working for the Commission she was brought into contact with many men of national importance, and even met President Harrison himself. Many years after, Alice told the story of this encounter in a newspaper article. She had gone to Washington with the Commission, when the members found it necessary to go to the capital to seek further legislation in order to carry on their work. She was present when they were granted an interview with President Harrison. Miss Alice remained in the background until one of the Commissioners called upon her to tell what she knew of the situation, because of her lifelong association with the Indians and her knowledge of their problems. Piqued because of the President's evident lack of interest in the matter, she says that she forgot all about his being President and told him quite plainly the things she felt he should know. The Commission got the legislation it needed.16

Probably the one man in politics who had the most influence upon Alice Robertson was Theodore Roosevelt. This was not because Miss Alice subscribed to his then considered radical and almost heretical policies toward the trusts and

15. G. Foreman, A History of Oklahoma (Norman, Oklahoma, 1942), 244; Congressional Record, 67th Congress, 2nd Session, (June 10, 1922), 13747-50. Hereafter cited as Congressional Record, LXII.

"Big Business." Quite the contrary, she was ultra-conservative; but when she first met the young New Yorker, his chief interest lay in civil service reform, and upon this matter Miss Alice heartily agreed with him. She had seen so much of corruption and dishonesty in the Indian Service that when the two happened to meet as speakers on the program at an Indian Conference at Lake Mohonk in 1891, Roosevelt was extremely interested in what she could tell him. He was at that time United States Commissioner of Civil Service.17

A warm friendship resulted from the meeting that amounted to an almost blind adoration on Miss Alice's part. Certainly "Teddy" had no more ardent admirer than Alice Robertson, and that Roosevelt thought very highly of her is shown by his inclusion of a letter from her in his book, The Rough Riders.

At the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, Colonel Roosevelt organized a regiment of hard-riding, hard-fighting men from the plains known as the "Rough Riders," which every adventurous young fellow in the country was wild to join. Two of Alice Robertson's students at Kendall College, Milo Hendricks and Eugene Gilmore asked Miss Robertson to aid them in joining the outfit by writing them a letter of introduction to the Colonel.18 This she did, and the story follows in Roosevelt's own words:

Two of the young Cherokee recruits came to me with a most kindly letter from one of the ladies who had been teaching in the Academy from which they were about to graduate. She and I had known each other in connection with Governmental and philanthropic work on the Reservations, and she wrote to commend the two boys to my attention.

17. Literary Digest, LXVII 56-8.

18. Letter, Eugene Gilmore to Alice Robertson May 24, 1898; July 6, 1898. R.C.T.U. Milo was killed in the Battle of San Juan and the Muskogee post of Spanish-American War veterans was named in his honor.
when the regiment disbanded, I wrote to her to ask if she could not use a little money among the Rough Riders, white, Indian, and half-breed that she might personally know. I did not hear from her for some time, and then she wrote as follows:

Muscogee, Ind. Ter.
Dec. 19, 1898

My dear Colonel Roosevelt:

I did not at once reply to your letter of Sept. 23'rd because I waited for a time to see if there should be a need among any of our Rough Riders of the money you so generously offered. Some of the boys are poor, and in one or two cases they seemed to me really needy, but they all said no. More than once I saw the tears come to their eyes, at thought of your care for them, as I told them of your letter.

Did you hear any echoes of our Indian War Whoops over your election? They were pretty loud. I was particularly exultant, because my father was a New Yorker and I was educated in New York . . .

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I am planning to entertain all the Rough Riders in this vicinity some evening during my holiday vacation. I mean to have no other guests but only to give them an opportunity for reminiscences . . . I had hoped to have them sooner but our struggling young College salaries are necessarily small and duties arduous. I make a home for my widowed mother and an adopted Indian daughter,19 who is in school; and as I do the cooking for a family of five, I have found it impossible to do many of the things I would like to.

Pardon me for burdening you with these details, but I suppose I am like your boys who say, "The Colonel was always ready to listen to a private as to a major-general." . . .20

When the Curtis Act was passed in 1897, providing for the abolition of tribal autonomy in education as well as in judicial and legislative matters,21 Alice Robertson conceived the idea of applying for the position of Federal supervisor of

19. Susanne Barnett, after her marriage Mrs. C. E. Strouvelle of Tulsa, Oklahoma.


Creek schools. Accordingly she wrote President McKinley an eloquent and moving letter asking that she be given the job. She felt that she was peculiarly fitted for it since she had spent so many years in Indian education and knew the needs and problems of the Indians. She told President McKinley that she and little Susanne, her adopted daughter, had worn McKinley badges during the recent election, when practically everybody else in the democratic town of Muskogee had gone wild for Bryan.\(^\text{22}\)

Getting no result from her plea to the President, Miss Robertson began writing her friends and acquaintances in Washington to help her obtain the appointment.\(^\text{23}\) Finally in December of 1899 she took a year's leave of absence from her teaching position at Kendall and accepted an appointment in the Census Bureau at Washington.\(^\text{24}\) Here she continued her efforts, by "pulling all the political wires" she knew how to pull.

She secured the endorsement of Paul Porter, Chief of the Creeks, for her candidacy; she enlisted the aid and sympathy of Dr. Merrill Gates, Secretary to the Committee on Indian Affairs and she asked for, but did not get, the help of her distant cousin, Dean C. Worcester, U. S. Commissioner to the Philippines. In a rather cold manner, Mr. Worcester told her in answer to her plea, that the best

\(^{22}\) Letter, Alice Robertson to The President, December 24, 1898. R.C.T.U.

\(^{23}\) Letter, Alice Robertson to Senator Hawley (Connecticut) January 11, 1899; letter, James K. Imes to Alice Robertson, January 12, 1899; letter, Senator John Ross (Vermont) to Alice Robertson, March 11, 1899, letter, Senator T. C. Platt (New York) to Alice Robertson, February 1, 1899. R.C.T.U.

way to get the job was to "prove your fitness for the job." That, he continued, was the way he had obtained every position he had held. Furthermore, he told her, he could be of no aid to her for he did not personally know of her qualifications.25

Others, however, were willing to make more generous efforts in her behalf, and at last in June of 1900 she received assurance that the coveted position was hers. Whereupon she returned to Indian Territory to take up her new duties.26 These duties were many and varied. She had charge of all the schools in the Creek Nation, appointed teachers, visited schools, audited accounts, prepared statistics, made quarterly and annual reports, and conducted two Normal schools each summer. Miss Robertson drove all through the Creek country over poor and muddy roads with a horse and buggy and spent the nights with her Creek friends in their homes.27 It was an unusual job for a woman in those days, and indeed many men would have quailed at the difficulties and hardships Miss Robertson had to undergo in the discharge of her responsibilities.

The deplorable conditions existing in the Indian Territory at that time are revealed in Miss Robertson's letters and reports while she was supervisor. In a letter to Senator O. H. Platt, of Vermont, whom she considered her "patron saint" because of his interest in her and her efforts to better the conditions of the

25. Letter, Paul Porter to Secretary of Interior, April 3, 1900; letter, Dr. Gates to Alice Robertson, April 12, 1900; letter Dean Worcester to Alice Robertson, April 1, 1900. R.C.T.U.

26. Letter, W. A. Jones, Indian Commissioner, To Alice Robertson, June 20, 1900. R.C.T.U.

Indians,\(^{28}\) Miss Alice told of the utter lack of educational facilities for the many white and colored children in the Territory. Since the whites and Negroes were in the country only by the sufferance of the Indians they had no representation in any government and consequently no means of levying taxes to support schools. Their children were not usually admitted to the Indian schools. It was hard to keep the Indian boys and girls in school when they saw the children of other races running wild and free about the woods and fields. She urged action on the part of the United States Senate.\(^{29}\)

Miss Robertson was much alarmed when in 1904 the United States Congress was considering removal of restrictions on the sale of Indian lands. She felt this would be bad for the Creeks and wrote Senator Platt urging him to use his influence against the measure. In this letter she reveals the basic difference in her attitude toward the Indians and the Negroes. She seemed not to have the slightest sympathy for the colored race and told the Senator that it would not matter if the freedman did lose their land, that it would be good for them to have to "go to work;" but that the "unsophisticated" Creeks were an entirely different matter. She thought the government should continue to protect them. In the same letter she asked the Senator to work for a larger school appropriation.

It was her constant fear that Oklahoma would be admitted to statehood as a Democratic state. She wrote:

\(^{28}\) Letter, Alice Robertson to Senator Hale (of Maine) January 7, 1909. R.C.T.U.

\(^{29}\) Letter, Alice Robertson to Senator Platt, April 4, 1902. R.C.T.U.
A public school system might even yet make this a Republican state when it comes in. Only cotton-raising Democrats are willing to raise their children in ignorance.

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Under present conditions the Indian Territory would come in an overwhelmingly Democratic state. Of course the question of politics does not count when we are considering what is best for the Indians, except that republicanism seems to me to stand for the higher and better things in life.

Miss Robertson told the Senator that she wrote him because she felt it was her duty to do something more for the Indians than just to "pray for them."30

As the years passed Miss Robertson found it increasingly difficult to carry on the duties of her supervisory position. Because of her mother's poor health and advanced age, Miss Alice disliked leaving her alone so much and felt she should seek some occupation which would allow her more free time and not necessitate her staying away from home over night, as she so often had to do. Consequently she decided to make a bid for the Postmastership of the Muskogee Post Office.

Again she enlisted the aid of Dr. Merrill Gates, who personally laid her case before President Theodore Roosevelt.31 In the meantime Miss Alice had secured as many endorsements as possible from locally influential people and had sent them to the President.32 He at once decided to send her nomination to the Senate. This was done, December 12, 1904, and the confirmation was secured without difficulty.


31. Letter, Dr. Merrill Gates to Alice Robertson, November 7, 1904. R.C.T.U.

The influential Republicans of the Territory were not too well pleased that the President had disregarded patronage rights of the party organization by giving the richest political "plum" on the list to a woman; but there was nothing they could do about it at the time.\(^{33}\) President Roosevelt had assured Dr. Gates that it would make no difference what the politicians did or said that the place was hers and that he intended to see that she got it by making it a personal appointment.\(^{34}\)

Miss Robertson was thrilled and humbly grateful to both the President and Dr. Gates. She wrote them each a touching letter of appreciation for what they had done. To the President she wrote that it seemed like living a "childhood fairy dream of a new world" but that she realized that it must be a world of "earnest, toilsome effort to be worthy of the trust" placed in her.\(^{35}\) To Dr. Gates she expressed the thought that it was God's gift to her mother for her long life of service to the Indians, and that "this recognition from the man most honored in all the world, comes like knighthood conferred upon an humble, battle-scarred veteran." She prayed that she might "come up to the Roosevelt standard."\(^{36}\)

Alice Robertson resigned as Creek Supervisor of Schools and took up her new duties as postmaster, in January of 1905.\(^{37}\) Her first year was uneventful

\(^{33}\) Muskogee Daily Phoenix, December 11, 1904; December 13, 1904; December 14, 1904.

\(^{34}\) Letter, Dr. Merrill Gates to Alice Robertson, November 7, 1904. R.C.T.U.

\(^{35}\) Letter, Alice Robertson to President Roosevelt, December 13, 1904. R.C.T.U.

\(^{36}\) Letter, Alice Robertson to Dr. Merrill Gates, December 13, 1904. R.C.T.U.

\(^{37}\) Letter, E. A. Michcock, Secretary Commissioner of Indian Affairs, to Alice Robertson, January 19, 1905. R.C.T.U.
except for a perhaps overzealous attempt on her part to adhere to the letter of the law in regard to the sending of news about lotteries through the United States mail. There was a post office regulation which forbade the use of the mails to such news. Miss Robertson felt very strongly against card playing, particularly when prizes were awarded. She regarded card parties at which prizes were given as lotteries. Consequently, when a Muskogee newspaper carried an item in its social columns concerning a benefit bridge, Miss Alice barred it from the mails. This act aroused some controversy and newspaper comment, but the offense was not repeated and apparently the incident was soon forgotten.  

Miss Robertson's personal life was saddened in November of 1905 by the death of her mother. For the first time in her life Miss Alice found herself without a financial dependent, and for a time felt at a loss but soon recovered her remarkable zest for life and interest in events of the day.

Throughout the years that she served as postmaster Alice Robertson kept up an almost constant correspondence with President Roosevelt, or his secretary, William Loeb. She kept him informed concerning territorial matters and tried to Agent. She assured Mr. Roosevelt that it would be for the good of the influence him on many occasions to adopt her point of view on them. In May, 1905, she wrote the President urging the appointment of Dana H. Kelsey as Indian Agent. She assured Mr. Roosevelt that it would be for the good of the Service since

39. Letter, Alice Robertson to Dr. Merrill Gates, January 1, 1906. R.C.T.U.
40. Letters, Alice Robertson to the President, June 5, 1905; November 10, 1905; May 16, 1906. R.C.T.U.
Mr. Kelsey did not smoke, drink, nor keep questionable company, and, what was probably the most important in her eyes, he did not break the Sabbath.

In the same letter she thanked the President for so "graciously recognizing" her in public, when he was in Muskogee. She told him of the Oklahoma people's love for him, and that Hamlin Garland had quite won her heart by saying that he was undoubtedly the greatest man who was ever President. She concluded, "Every day of my life I thank God and you for the good things that have come into my life."\footnote{Letter, Alice Robertson to the President, May 16, 1905. R.C.T.U.}

Idolizing Theodore Roosevelt as she did, Alice Robertson felt the "bitterness of death" when Roosevelt favored admission of Oklahoma and Indian territories as a single state, and recommended in his message to Congress that they be so admitted.\footnote{Letter, Alice Robertson to President Roosevelt, November 10, 1905. R.C.T.U.; Theodore Roosevelt, State Papers as Governor and President (New York, 1926), XV, 337.} Miss Robertson had vainly tried to persuade the President that Indian Territory was not ready for statehood and that it should become a separate state when it was ready. She favored the "Sequoyah Movement," but thought it should be delayed for a time.\footnote{The Sequoyah Movement was an abortive effort to have Indian Territory admitted into the Union as the State of Sequoyah. The Constitutional Convention for this purpose met in Muskogee August, 1905. The United States Congress refused admission. Oklahoma Red Book, I, 623.} She gave her reason for wanting the matter delayed in a letter to William Loeb, presidential secretary:

I believe the best future for the Indian people and for the new state that is to be would be that Republicanism should control here. To this end, while I would not for an instant compromise the right, I honestly believed that no wrong
could be done by a further stay.\textsuperscript{44}  

The basis for her hopes of Republicanism gaining control may be found in a letter Miss Alice wrote to a newspaper correspondent who had come out to the Territory to gather material for an article on the political aspects of the Statehood question. She wrote:

The inauguration of a public school system now in its second year of practical work is bringing a different class of people to the rural districts. There is great reason to suppose that a large percentage of these new people are Republicans. Two out of three of the last two years have been far better for corn than for cotton. The population that raises cotton is a shifting one . . . . While I am sorry for the people who sell goods in the towns and who buy cotton, I can never help a little feeling away down in my heart of satisfaction at any discouragement of the raising of cotton.

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Secretary Hitchcock's determined and splendid protection of the Indians by placing so many obstacles in the way of their selling their lands has been the best thing for Republicanism . . . . The land is being sold more slowly . . . to practical farmers from the North.

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I know it would be questioned very generally, but I believe that Indian Territory people as a rule, would show more of intelligence than the Oklahoma people.

The majority of grafters come to us from Oklahoma. The meanest money sharks in our town are Oklahomans.\textsuperscript{45}

This letter speaks for itself in revealing the ruling passions of Miss Alice's political life, her deep-seated dislike of Democrats, Southerners, "cotton raisers"

\textsuperscript{44} Letter, Alice Robertson to William Loeb, June 5, 1905. R.C.T.U.

\textsuperscript{45} Letter, Alice Robertson to William Curtis, Chicago Record Herald, November 11, 1905. R.C.T.U.
and Oklahoma Territory. She hated the very name "Oklahoma." She suggested to President Roosevelt that the single statehood pill would not be so unpalatable and bitter to the taste if that state were called some name other than Oklahoma.\textsuperscript{46} But bitter or not the pill had to be swallowed without being sugar-coated by a change of name. The two territories were admitted as a single state in 1907.

Miss Robertson reacted with characteristic vehemence. She wrote to Dr. Gates that she did not dare let her ailing mother know of the union with Oklahoma for to her it would mean union with the saloon since Oklahoma people were "wet;" and, as for herself, she had that morning listed her property for sale and she meant to leave as soon as she had sold. She was not willing to "profit pecuniarily" from the saloon that was bound to come in with statehood.\textsuperscript{47}

Evidently Miss Alice soon calmed down, for she did not sell her home, nor resign her position as postmaster. In fact she made quite a determined, and plucky, fight to retain her job when, at the end of the four year term, her name came up again for confirmation by the Senate.

It seems that a former assistant to Miss Alice in the post office, James Cromwell, conceived the notion that he should like to have the postmastership himself. Thinking that if enough complaints were received by the Post Office Department concerning Miss Robertson's conduct of the office, he might have a chance, Mr. Cromwell instigated charges of inefficiency and mismanagement in

\textsuperscript{46} Letter, Alice Robertson to President Roosevelt, November 10, 1905. R.C.T.U.

\textsuperscript{47} Letter, Alice Robertson to Dr. Merrill Gates, No date, R.C.T.U.
the office against Miss Alice. The appointment had already been confirmed before some of these charges were filed, but Senator Robert L. Owen of Muskogee, in justice to the people of the city, asked the Senate to reconsider until the charges could be investigated.

Senator Eugene Hale, a distant relative of Alice Robertson, championed her cause in the Senate and kept Miss Alice advised as to what moves she should make in the contest that followed. He advised her to make out as strong a case for herself as possible and send it to Senator Boies Penrose, Chairman of the Post Office Committee. He also told her that protests against her confirmation had been filed by Representative Bird McGuire and Republican State Committeeman Norris.

Whereupon Miss Robertson immediately wrote Senator Penrose explaining as best she could the reasons for the filing of objections to her confirmation. She did not know why Representative McGuire concerned himself in the matter for his district was the First Congressional while Muskogee was in the Second. As for Chairman Norris, he was doubtless displeased because he had asked her for a campaign contribution of one hundred fifty dollars and she sent only twenty-five dollars. She had felt it was useless to send more for the money

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48. Report by Carter Keene, Postal Inspector, to F. E. McMillis Chief Inspector, January 26, 1909. This report was sent to Miss Robertson by Mr. Keene after she was elected to Congress with the comment that "Democratic inspectors sometimes size up Republican situations pretty well." He had exonerated her in the report. Letter, Keene to Robertson, March 24, 1921. R.C.T.U.

49. Letter, Senator Robert Owen to Alice Robertson, January 16, 1909. R.C.T.U.

50. Letter, Senator Fred Hale to Alice Robertson, December 15, 1908. R.C.T.U.
would be thrown away since the Republicans could not carry Oklahoma. At any rate, she argued she was not aware of the fact that she had to buy her way. She thought her service should speak for itself.\textsuperscript{51}

Upon receipt of Inspector Keene's report, the charges and complaints against Miss Robertson were dropped and her reappointment was confirmed. This report cited the phenomenal growth in business transacted in the Muskogee Post Office and the failure of the Department to grant a corresponding increase in clerical help as the fundamental reason for any inefficiency in administration. It dismissed the complaints as political in nature, and trumped up for the occasion.\textsuperscript{52}

Miss Robertson was kept very busy during the succeeding years as the burden of administering the post office increased with the growth of the city of Muskogee.\textsuperscript{53} Even her relatives found it difficult to see her, so engrossed was she in her duties, and in bringing to fruition a dream she had long cherished of building a lovely home for herself. Her dream was realized when "Sawokla," a beautiful wood and stone structure was completed west of Muskogee on Agency Hill. She moved in and at last had a suitable setting for the many Indian relics and curios her family and she had accumulated through the years. "Sawokla" was an Indian word meaning "gathering place," and that was just what Miss Alice

\textsuperscript{51} Letter, Alice Robertson to Senator Boies Penrose, January 2, 1909. R.C.T.U. 

\textsuperscript{52} Report, Keene to McMillis, January 26, 1909. R.C.T.U. 

\textsuperscript{53} A booklet put out by the Muskogee Post Office shows that the increase of postal receipts from 1905 to 1908 was 135%. R.C.T.U.
made of her home.\textsuperscript{54}

The men in the United States Postmasters Association seemed to have a very friendly feeling toward Miss Robertson, although she was for a time the only woman member. They elected her to several important committees, and always gave her prominence in their convention proceedings. Their acceptance of her was due, Miss Robertson told Senator Penrose in a letter, not to the chivalry of men toward a pretty woman, but to the fact that they considered her a good postmaster. To clinch her argument she enclosed a photograph of herself.\textsuperscript{55}

Alice Robertson applied for reappointment as Muskogee Postmaster in 1912, but it was probably only a matter of form for with the change to a Democratic administration in the election of 1912 she could have had no real hope of being reappointed.\textsuperscript{56} At the expiration of her term she retired to Sawokla, with its fifty-five acres of fertile farm land.

The next few years she spent in operating a dairy and truck farm. She opened Sawokla Cafeteria at Fourth and Wall Streets in Muskogee, as a means of utilizing the products grown on the farm. At first the cafeteria catered only to the business and professional girls whom Miss Alice wished to help by furnishing

\textsuperscript{54} Letter, Mary Eleanor Worcester to Alice Robertson, January 24, 1910; letter, Alice Robertson to Ellsworth Collings, January 8, 1930; Tom P. Morgan, "Miss Alice of Muskogee," \textit{Ladies Home Journal}, March, 1921. Clipping. R.C.T.U. She used it extensively for entertaining, and the upkeep of this home was probably one of the more important reasons Miss Robertson always found it so difficult to live within her income.

\textsuperscript{55} Letter, Alice Robertson to Hon. Boies Penrose, January 2, 1909; letter, E. M. Morgan, President Postmasters Association to Alice Robertson October 6, 1909. R.C.T.U.

\textsuperscript{56} Letter, Alice Robertson to the President, November 16, 1912. R.C.T.U.
them well cooked food at reasonable prices, but pressure of others to be included soon forced its opening to the public at large.\textsuperscript{57}

Miss Robertson took a brief and hopeless fling in politics in 1916. When the Republican ticket was made up for the primary election there was no candidate for County Superintendent of Schools. Miss Robertson was asked to file so that a complete ticket might be presented to the public. She did so and won the nomination. She made a few desultory efforts at campaigning, but knowing how strong the Democratic majority in the county was, probably entertained no false hopes as to her chances of being elected. The Democratic candidate won and Miss Robertson gave no evidence of disappointment.\textsuperscript{58} The incident, however, was one more link in the chain of events that led to her filing for Congress in 1920.

With the entry of the United States into World War I, many troop trains were sent through Muskogee loaded with men and boys on their way to training camps. Often these recruits were hungry and weary and there were not adequate facilities at the depot for their refreshment when the train stopped for only a short time. Miss Alice began meeting the trains with good things to eat - doughnuts, sandwiches, and coffee for the soldiers. If they had time she took them to Sawokla Cafeteria and fed them without charge, as her contribution to the war effort. She gave many parties at Sawokla for the soldiers who could stay


\textsuperscript{58} Letter, Alice Robertson to State Superintendent of Instruction, August 13, 1916; letter, Alice Robertson to Mrs. Nettie Whenery, August 24, 1916. R.C.T.U.
overnight, and did everything she could to brighten their way and cheer them.

Others in Muskogee learning of her good work asked to be allowed to help and the work was finally put under the direction of the Red Cross. Miss Alice however never abated her personal efforts and thousands of soldiers remembered Muskogee and Miss Alice with gratitude.\textsuperscript{59}

After the war ended Miss Robertson led a comparatively quiet life for the next year or so, as well she might. She was in her middle sixties; and all her years had been active, crowded ones, full of storm and stress, many of them so marked by conflict and controversy that one would expect her now to seek some quiet haven of rest as far removed as possible from the strife of business and politics. But not Miss Alice! Rather, she embarked at this time on the most strenuous and arduous venture of her whole life, a campaign for the congressional seat of the Second Oklahoma District.

\textsuperscript{59} G. Foreman, \textit{Chronicles of Oklahoma}, X, 16. There are many letters from soldiers expressing gratitude for food and drink furnished by Miss Alice to them while in Muskogee. 1917-18 files, R.C.T.U.
CHAPTER III
THE CONGRESSIONAL VENTURE

On June 4, 1920, Alice M. Robertson announced her candidacy for the
Republican nomination for Representative in Congress from the Second
Oklahoma District.¹ Her platform consisted of three statements: "I am a
Christian; I am an American; I am a Republican." Her slogan was: "I cannot be
bought; I cannot be sold; I cannot be intimidated."²

Her decision to take this step came after several men prominent in political
circles had urged her to do so, but the man whom she specifically credited with
being responsible was A. D. Cochran, an Okmulgee lawyer.³

Miss Robertson did little campaigning in the usual sense of the word. She
visited and talked with people who came into her cafeteria, and made it a point to
have personal contact with as many as possible. She made a few speeches but no
set addresses. For some time Miss Robertson had been using the advertising
section of the Muskogee newspapers to increase the patronage of her cafeteria.
She now began combining her political advertising with that for the cafeteria, and
made these "want-ads" so entertaining, so full of pithy comment that the readers
began looking each day to see what the woman candidate had to say. Sometimes
they were disappointed, sometimes not, but in either case Miss Robertson's

1. Muskogee Daily Phoenix, June 4, 1920
2. Copy of the notice sent to all the prominent newspapers in the district.
   R.C.T.U.
3. Okmulgee Times, July 12, 1922, Clipping, R.C.T.U.; Letter, A. D. Cochran
to Alice Robertson, March 12, 1928. R.C.T.U.
candidacy was kept before the public, and the patronage of her cafeteria increased.\textsuperscript{4}

A typical example of these "want-ads" is the one appearing on August 2, 1920:

SAWOKLA CAFETERIA
4th St. just north of Broadway
Self Service -- no tips

Gone to make a speech, but the eats have not been neglected.\textsuperscript{5}

During the primary campaign Miss Robertson's attitude was that of a candidate who knows the case is hopeless and does not expect to win. She continued the routine duties connected with the operation of the cafeteria and made her campaigning only incidental in an already full life.\textsuperscript{6}

When the primary election was held August 5, 1920, and the returns were in, Alice Robertson had won over her opponents by almost twice as many votes as their combined total. The \textit{Muskogee Daily Phoenix} ascribed this to "Her record of generosity to soldiers and life of sacrifice for others."\textsuperscript{7}

After her nomination Miss Alice used the "want ads" much more extensively to advance her candidacy. One of the first advertisements appearing

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{4} Congresswoman Elected With Want Ads," \textit{Current Opinion}, LXX (January 1921), 42.
\item \textsuperscript{5} \textit{Muskogee Daily Phoenix}
\item \textsuperscript{6} Tom P. Morgan, "Miss Alice of Muskogee," \textit{Ladies Home Journal}, March, 1921, p. 21. Clipping, R.C.T.U.
\item \textsuperscript{7} August 15, 1920.
\end{itemize}
listed her total primary campaign expenses at $303.74. Of this amount $249.50 had gone to twenty-six newspapers in eight counties for the "want ads," the rest for food, soft drinks, gasoline, and railroad fare. She announced that she would need more money for her campaign for the general election and invited her friends to patronize her cafeteria.  

Miss Alice plunged at once into an energetic campaign to win the coveted office. Her Democratic opponent was William Wirt Hastings of Tahlequah, who had occupied the Congressional post from the Second District for three terms. Realizing that she would be unable to finance the sort of campaign she deemed necessary to upset the normal democratic majority of the district, she wrote to the Honorable Simeon D. Fess, of Ohio, Chairman of the Congressional Committee, at the National Republican Headquarters, and appealed for aid. She analyzed the situation and felt that she could count upon the votes of the soldiers, most of the Indians, the regular Republican, the dissatisfied Democrats, the women who were voting for the first time, many of the farmers, and a "promising but problematical labor and Socialist" group. She hastened to add that she had made no bid for the support of this last group. Miss Robertson asked that $2000 be sent her and that a manager for her campaign be chosen. She concluded with: "I have never conceded my native state to the solid South - at last has come the chance for a change."  

There is no evidence among the Robertson papers as to whether Miss Robertson got the desired help or not; but on September 16, 1920, according to the Muskogee Daily Phoenix, she gave a barbecue at Sawokla which was attended by about five hundred people. There was plenty to eat, music, entertainment, speeches and even an airplane zooming overhead with "Vote for Miss Alice" painted in big letters on the side. When the airplane swooped down low, some of the people present thought it was "a Democrat trying to break up the meeting," but when the slogan on the side became visible, the crowd broke into a cheer and everyone was happy again.

Miss Alice made a speech at the barbecue, to which she had invited many Democrats. She avoided any controversial issue, saying that she had made neither commitments nor pledges, but that she did want to do something for wounded soldiers, and that she would ask for a Veterans Hospital for Oklahoma. She closed by urging everyone to vote conscientiously even if it was against her. The other speakers of the day were not so kind toward the feelings of the Democrats present and vigorously attacked President Wilson and the League of Nations.

The pilot of the airplane, Harwood Keaton\footnote{Republican Chairman of Okmulgee County, a strong supporter of Miss Robertson's candidacy.} took Miss Alice back to Okmulgee with him to make a speech there. It was Miss Alice's first airplane ride.\footnote{Muskogee Daily Phoenix, September 17, 1920.} Altogether it must have been a rather exciting day for a woman of sixty-six.

Throughout the nation, a tide of enthusiasm was sweeping over the
Republicans. Perceiving their long awaited chance to regain the reins of
government, they left nothing undone to win the election. Party members of
national prominence visited Oklahoma in an effort to carry the state. Colonel
Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., made a flying trip to the Second District and spoke at
Okmulgee, September 8, 1920, in behalf of Miss Alice and the rest of the ticket.\(^\text{13}\)

On October 9, Warren G. Harding, the Republican nominee for president
addressed a hug political rally in Oklahoma City. Miss Alice was invited to
attend the reception that was given for the Senator and Mrs. Harding after the
speech. She accepted and although previously luke-warm in attitude, upon
meeting the nominee and his wife became their firm friend and ardent supporter.\(^\text{14}\)

The important questions before the country included American entrance
into the League of Nations, ratification of the Versailles Treaty, prohibition
enforcement, and reform in taxation. The Democrats sought to make the
Versailles Treaty and the League of Nations the leading issue in the campaign, but
the issue became clouded when Senator Harding, while denouncing the Versailles
Treaty, declared himself in favor of "an association of nations" without defining
what he meant by the term. Many Republicans who favored international
cooperation felt they could safely support Senator Harding, while those who

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14. Ibid., November 3, 1920; Letter, Jim Harris to Alice Robertson, October 5,
    Daily Phoenix*, October 20, 1929.
opposed the League were unanimously behind him. The parties agreed on prohibition enforcement and sweeping tax reforms. Both James Cox, the Democratic nominee for president, and Senator Harding made speeches favoring repeal of the excess profits tax.

Alice Robertson followed the party line in opposing the League of Nations. She seems to have confined her opposition to private conversations, interviews, and comments in her "want ads" as there is no record of her having made a set speech against it. In an interview the day before the election she told her questioner that she was against the League of Nations, but that she considered it a dead issue. She is reported to have remarked that she would never be in favor of a League that included "idol worshipers" among its members.

In a "want ad" appearing October 2, Miss Robertson went to some length to explain why she was a Republican, and why the League of Nations would not work. She reprinted a letter her grandfather, Samuel Worcester had written to his brother while in the Georgia penitentiary. The communication told of the case of Worcester vs. Georgia, the decision by the Supreme Court in favor of Worcester, and President Jackson's refusal to enforce the decision. Since the hated Jackson was the founder of the Democratic party this incident had made her family firmly Republicans. And, she argued, it showed that a League of Nations could not work.


17. Tulsa Daily World, November 7, 1920
because when the Democrats were in power they could not be trusted to enforce the decisions of the League. Although fallacious and naive this line of "reasoning" troubled Miss Robertson not at all, and she used it many times in her speeches and interviews, when she felt called upon to explain her party loyalty.

When her opponent, W.W. Hastings, attacked Miss Robertson in his campaign speeches on her suffrage stand, she replied in a full column "want ad." She explained that she had opposed the granting of suffrage because she felt that it would be but another duty placed upon the already overburdened homemaker and mother. But now since the men had insisted upon giving women the vote, she was ready to assume her part of the burden of State. She also wanted to see "if the men really meant what they said" about granting women equality.

In the general election of 1920 the Democratic Party suffered from one of those periodic revulsions of feeling towards the "ins" so characteristic of American politics. Over almost the entire nation the voters followed the dictum, "Throw the rascals out." The Republicans won an overwhelming majority in both branches of Congress, with three hundred five Republicans, one hundred twenty-nine Democrats, and one Socialist in the House; and fifty-nine Republicans and thirty-seven Democrats in the Senate. Warren G. Harding won the presidency with 16,152,000 popular votes to 9,147,000 for James Cox.


19. Ibid., September 26, 1920.


It was a veritable landslide and Miss Alice was swept triumphantly into Congress. The rest of the nation was no more surprised than Miss Robertson herself. The newspapers and magazines made the most of the story. This sixty-six years old spinster with her decided opinions and colorful pioneer background made "good copy." The anomalies of her position as an anti-suffragist elected to public office, and as a Republican who had won in a Democratic district, added to the uniqueness of her position as the lone woman congressman, aroused public curiosity and made her the focus of nation-wide publicity.\textsuperscript{22}

For the first time in its history Oklahoma was in the Republican column. This was due in part to local causes in addition to those operating on a nation-wide scale. The primary campaign between Senator Thomas P. Gore and Scott Ferris for the Democratic nomination for Senator had been very bitter. Gore opposed President Wilson and the League, while Ferris favored them. Ferris won in the primary, but when the Gore Democrats went over to the Republicans the split in the party did much to defeat the ticket, all over the state. Republican J. W. Harreld was elected Senator. Five out of eight congressional seats were filled by Republicans and the state voted for Harding.\textsuperscript{23}

Miss Robertson's margin of victory was small, but she had overcome a normal Democratic majority of five thousand votes. The official returns were:

\textsuperscript{22} There are hundreds of newspaper clippings and dozens of magazine articles on Miss Robertson in R.C.T.U.

\textsuperscript{23} Victor E. Harlow, Oklahoma (Oklahoma City, 1935), 351; Tulsa Daily World, November 4, 1920.
Miss Robertson, 24,188; Hastings, 23,960 votes; John Cooper, Socialist, 1,402. This gave Miss Robertson a plurality of only 228 votes, and made it an all-important point of political wisdom for her to retain every vote she had. It is apparent to the observer that she could ill-afford to alienate any part of her supporters by running counter to their wishes. That she could not, or would not, give up the luxury of representing herself and her New England forbears in the halls of Congress rather than the people of the Second Congressional District of Oklahoma probably contributed to her failure to retain her seat for a second term.

Grant Foreman, Oklahoma historian and fellow-townsman of Miss Robertson, wrote of her soon after her election:

Miss Robertson goes to Congress at a mature age ripened with fifty years of useful life, in which she has been a pioneer, teacher, executive, philanthropist, business woman, an exemplar of good citizenship and sincere piety.

An interviewer sent out by a national magazine recorded Miss Robertson's answers to his questions as follows:

How do you account for your election? she was asked.

I regard my election as a direct answer to prayer. God helping and giving me strength, I am going to try and make good, and I am sure I will do so with so many good women praying for me.

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24. Letter, W. C. McAllister, Secretary State Election Board, to Alice Robertson, January 28, 1921. R.C.T.U.

Have you any particular measures you will work for in Congress? she was asked.

I'll work for the interests of the women and children, the soldiers, and the Indians. I really haven't given much thought to what I will do when I go to Washington, because everybody told me I didn't have a chance to get there. Above everything else, however, I will work for the soldiers. It makes my blood boil to think that there is not one bed for a sick or injured soldier in Oklahoma. The last Congress appropriated $46,000,000 for hospital care. Thousands of soldiers in the state need attention and treatment. If they get so much as an examination they have to go to Houston, Texas. It's the rottenest thing I know of. It is a disgrace to the State of Oklahoma.

In the same interview she professed entire ignorance of international affairs. Her questioner considered her mind a "blank" when it came to such things as recognizing Russia or the Irish Republic. She said that if the question of war came up she would vote for a "righteous war" without any "whispering or whimpering about it" if this country were threatened.26

Congratulations poured in upon Miss Robertson after her election from people in all walks of life, from all over the United States and its possessions. They included former students and friends, Democrats who had voted against her but now professed pleasure that she had won, prominent Presbyterians, the president and the secretary of her Alma Mater, Elmira College, fellow congressmen, other electees to state offices, relatives (from some of whom she

26. Walter M. Harrison, Evening Post Saturday Magazine, quoted in Current Opinion, LXX (January, 1921), 41-4. An obvious reference to the refusal of the first Congresswoman, Jeanette Rankin, to vote for the entry of the United States into World War I and her emotional break-down on the floor of the House when she made her vote known on the measure proposing war. Miss Robertson often spoke contemptuously of what she considered Miss Rankin's unforgivable weakness, and seemed to take pride in pointing up the fact that she was made of sterner stuff.
had never previously heard), people who were interested in Indians, soldiers whom she had fed at Sawokla during the war, and ardent Republicans overjoyed at Oklahoma's rejection of the "Solid South" tradition. Illustrative of these last mentioned letters is this from a Republican friend in West Virginia, a major in the United States army: "Is not the results of the Republican majorities simply ridiculously funny? One cannot read the returns without laughing.27

A good example of Alice Robertson's forthright stand on what she considered questions of morality is afforded by the Hamon Scandal which came to light soon after election. Jake Hamon, multimillionaire oil man of Ardmore, Oklahoma, was the Republican National Committeeman from his state. On November 21, 1920, he was shot in his hotel room at Ardmore. His attorney gave out the story that the shooting was accidental and self-inflicted, but when he died from the wound, the truth came out. He had been shot by his paramour, Clara Smith Hamon, who was also his secretary and the wife of his nephew, Frank Hamon.28

The day Jake Hamon died a group of fifty prominent Republicans of Oklahoma met and passed a resolution recommending that his widow be appointed in his place. The common interpretation of this move was that the

27. Letters, Theodore Brewer to Alice Robertson, November 4, 1920; William Bowie to Alice Robertson, November 5, 1920; Senator J. W. Harreld to Alice Robertson, November 12, 1920; Bird McGuire to Alice Robertson, November 6, 1920; Georgia Robertson to Alice Robertson, November 5, 1920; John Dill to Alice Robertson, November 9, 1920, R. H. Pratt to Alice Robertson, November 9, 1920; William Tyler Page to Alice Robertson, November 10, 1920; Anna Dawes to Alice Robertson, November 12, 1920; Major William Nelson to Alice Robertson, November 8, 1920. R.C.T.U.

machine which Jake Hamon headed had the distribution of patronage planned and wanted Mrs. Hamon to act as the figurehead so that these plans might not be disturbed.\textsuperscript{29} It is entirely within the realm of possibility, however, that there was much more involved than this. Jake Hamon had helped carry the State of Oklahoma for Harding, at a cost to himself, so he claimed, of $400,000 and expected to be appointed Secretary of the Interior. There is some indication that he had much the same plans in mind for Teapot Dome as those Secretary Albert B. Fall and Harry Sinclair entertained.\textsuperscript{30}

Be that as it may, Alice Robertson spoke out courageously, opposing the appointment of Mrs. Hamon. In an interview on the subject she expressed the opinion that Hamon's death was a just punishment for his moral transgressions, and declared that she was not in favor of perpetuating his influence in state affairs by giving his post to his widow.\textsuperscript{31} Few politicians would have dared to be so frank in opposing an entrenched machine of the Hamon variety, and that Miss Robertson did so was more probably due to her views on moral laxity than to those on political corruption and graft. Many influential party members agreed with Alice Robertson on the matter and Mrs. Hamon was not given the post.\textsuperscript{32}

After her election, Alice M. Robertson was suddenly in great demand as a

\textsuperscript{29} Tulsa Daily World, November 22, 1920; November 30, 1920; December 4, 1920.

\textsuperscript{30} Samuel Hopkins Adams, The Incredible Era (Boston, 1939).

\textsuperscript{31} Muskogee Daily Phoenix, December 9, 1920.

\textsuperscript{32} Letter, T. A. Latta to Alice Robertson, December 8, 1920. R.C.T.U.
speaker before clubs and at banquets. She was besieged with invitations to address gatherings of various kinds from far and near. With great zest she accepted as many of these as she possibly could, and began that mad whirl of engagements and excitement which continued for the entire two years she was in Congress, a period during which she spoke of herself as being "Alice in Wonderland." 33

33. Letter, Frederick Lent to Alice Robertson, January 4, 1921; letter Lorraine Wooster, State Superintendent of Schools, Topeka, Kansas, to Alice Robertson; Muskogee Daily Phoenix, August 6, 1922. R.C.T.U.
At the very outset of her congressional career Alice Robertson became closely associated with the most conservative and reactionary elements of the Republican Party - those whom she considered the "best people." As soon as news of her election had been given nation-wide prominence, the forces of reaction began making their bid for her services in support of their program.

One of the first of these was Mrs. Mary C. Thaw, the wealthy woman who had made a large contribution to the founding of Henry Kendall College. Mrs. Thaw wrote that she would like to renew acquaintance with Miss Alice. She felt sure that Miss Robertson would be glad to know that she had contributed to the fight against that "undesirable movement" of woman suffrage. She continued:

I shall also watch with keenest interest the workings out of your practical commonsense notions. They have already commended themselves to persons who read and ponder the questions of the day.¹

A few days later she sent Alice a check for one hundred dollars,² and on January 28, 1921 she wrote Miss Robertson as follows:

I am delighted that you are going to speak at the Press Club Anniversary Banquet. Have telegraphed and now write to say I expect you here as my guest. Come a few days beforehand so as to meet some of my friends. Am sending a beautiful and suitable suit for you to wear on that and other similar occasions.

1. Letter, Mary C. Thaw to Alice Robertson, November 26, 1920. R.C.T.U.

2. Letter, Alice Robertson to P. S. Space, Executor, Mary C. Thaw Estate, August 6, 1929. R.C.T.U.
Hoping that you will exercise a wholesome influence both when speaking here and on the degenerate house.

It is difficult to understand how she could accept the benefactions of Mrs. Thaw, and of others under whose influence she later came, apparently without suspecting ulterior motives. Possibly the explanation lies in her missionary background where she was quite accustomed to accepting charitable gifts from wealthy people anxious to do "good works." At any rate Alice Robertson with her Puritanical training seems to have suffered no qualms of conscience nor prickings of pride at taking that which most people would consider either a bribe or alms.

Their appointment to Congressional Committees is always a matter of great importance to freshman members of Congress. Miss Robertson wanted very much to be named to the Committee on Indian Affairs. She wrote her mother's cousin, Mary Chandler Hale, asking her to see if her son, Senator Fred Hale, could arrange the matter. Mrs. Chandler complied with her wishes and Miss Alice got the coveted position. She was also appointed on the Committee on Expenditures in the Department of the Interior, and ironically enough, was given a place on the Woman Suffrage Committee.³

Alice Robertson was almost childishly exhilarated over her election and tried to take advantage of as many of the invitations to make public appearances

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as she could possibly crowd into her thrill-packed days. Indicative of the whirl in which Miss Robertson lived after she went to Washington in late February to take up her congressional duties is this program: On Saturday, May 21, 1921 she spoke at Lowell, Massachusetts, before the Republican Women's Club. She then went to Boston and spoke at a public meeting that night. On Sunday afternoon she spoke at Wellesley College. On Tuesday she went to Winona, Indiana to speak before the Presbyterian General Assembly, then back to Washington.4

As a member of Congress, Alice Robertson was a "regular" Republican and followed the party line as laid down by the President on most of the measures that came before the House. The only exceptions were those proposals which conflicted too violently with her own preconceived ideas and prejudices, or those that were looked upon with disfavor by the extreme right wing of the Party, under whose influence she had fallen.

Miss Robertson followed the party dictate and voted for the Emergency Tariff of 1921, the Fordney-McCumber Tariff Bill, Repeal of the Excess Profits Tax, the Army and Navy Appropriation Acts, the Veterans' Bureau Act, and the Pearce Resolution to end war with Germany and Austria. Likewise she supported the stand of the President and voted against the Adjusted Compensation Act, or "Bonus Bill" as it was popularly called. But when the Anti-Lynching Bill came to a vote the Oklahoma congresswoman was unable to overcome her prejudice against the Negro, which was about the only Southern characteristic she ever

acquired, and voted "nay." She opposed the majority of her Republican
colleagues to vote against the Sheppard-Towner, or "Maternity Bill."

Of these bills the two that aroused the most controversy, and gained the
most enmity for Alice Robertson were the Sheppard-Towner Act (H. R. 2366) and
the Adjusted Compensation Act (H. R. 10784). On each of these bills Miss Alice
took a stand opposite from that which was popularly expected of her.

The Sheppard-Towner Act was sponsored by Senator Morris Sheppard of
Texas, and Congressman H. M. Towner of Iowa, in the Senate and House
respectively. It provided for the dissemination of information on the hygiene of
maternity and infancy through an educational program supported jointly by the
state and national governments and to be administered by the Federal Children's
Bureau. Lectures on health and hygiene, extension courses for mothers and
consultation centers were to be provided. The national government was to
contribute $10,000 the first year to each state and $5,000 each year thereafter,
with an additional $5,000 for each state which contributed a like amount.

Conservatives regarded the act as setting a dangerous precedent of federal
legislation in the field of social welfare - a precedent which might lead to laws
inimical to their interests and therefore something to be feared and fought.

5. Campaign pamphlet of Alice Robertson. R.C.T.U.; Congressional Record,
67th Congress, 1st Session, April 11 -- November 20, 1921, pp. 1280, 1636,
2546, 3261, 5358, 8037, 8085, 8245, 12719.; ibid., 2nd Session, December 5,
1921 -- September 22, 1922, pp. 4447, 5752, 12719. Hereafter cited as
Congressional Record, volume and page.

6. Congressional Record, LXI, 98, 8036.
Since she was the only woman in Congress, and since the bill was of such vital interest to women, the sponsors of the measure expected Miss Robertson, as a matter of course, to guide its passage through the House. They were sadly disappointed. Miss Robertson fought the Maternity Bill with all the resources at her command. She attacked it six different times from the floor of the House; she spoke against it in interviews and outside speeches; she wrote against it; talked against it in private conversations; and altogether fought it with a bitterness and vehemence that makes one suspect motives hidden from everyone else -- even from herself.

Miss Robertson gave as her reasons for opposing the Sheppard-Towner Bill the following: it was an encroachment of the Federal power upon states' rights; "old maids" in the Washington Bureau would be given license for unwarranted interference in family life; the idea was paternalistic and led people to look too much to Washington for things they should do for themselves; it would establish more bureaucrats in Washington at a time when the government should economize; and most dangerous of all it might lead to birth control information being given out by the Bureau later, even though the bill did not make a specific provision for it. The basis for this fear was, Miss Alice said, the fact that Jeanette Rankin and a number of the other prominent women who

8. *Congressional Record*, LXI, 7980, 7981, 7982, 7983, 8640, 8643; Gertrude Lembach, Baltimore *Evening Sun*, December 7, 1921
supported the bill belonged to the National Council of Voluntary Parenthood. Miss Robertson also argued that the amount appropriated was so small that it could do no possible good, since in each state it would allow only seventy cents per mother.⁹

When making her first speech in the House against the Maternity Bill, Representative Robertson concluded her remarks by saying:

I think this is a harmful bill and I stand here and tell you so, and if I am digging my political grave in doing so, let me say that it will be a mighty comfortable grave.¹⁰

The real reasons for Alice Robertson's opposition to the measure were probably due to the influence exerted upon her, the bill's history, and its supporters. Miss Jeanette Rankin had introduced and sponsored a similar bill in the previous Congress and it had failed by only a few votes. The Maternity Bill was endorsed by the National League of Women Voters, the American Association of University Women, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the Congress of Parent-Teacher Associations, and other prominent women's organizations.¹¹ Most of these groups had also fought for woman suffrage, and Miss Alice had opposed them on that issue. Her habitual attitude toward organized political action by women was antagonistic, and she made no secret of

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⁹. Congressional Record, LXI, 7980-83. Miss Robertson ignored the fact that the purpose of the bill was the dissemination of information and not actual obstetrical help in individual cases.

¹⁰. Ibid., 8640-43.

¹¹. Pamphlet put out by these organizations asking support for the bill. R.C.T.U.
the fact.

That she allowed her prejudice against organized women to influence her vote on another measure is shown by the statement she made to Mrs. Thaw about the Ship Subsidy Bill. Miss Alice wrote that she had missed the wedding of her secretary, Ben Cook, because it occurred at the very time the voting on the Ship Subsidy Bill took place. "I hope you approve my having voted for it," she continued, "for the opposition to it was of the sort that made me believe in it." Obviously this "opposition" was the organized women's groups, for later Miss Robertson announced to the newspapers that she had been given "orders" by the American Association of University Women and the League of Women Voters to oppose the Ship Subsidy Bill, but that she was tired of being "bossed" by them and intended to vote for the measure. 12 It seems very probably that a like reaction occurred in the case of the Maternity Bill.

There were others besides Mrs. Thaw who were anxious that Miss Alice should exercise a "wholesome influence" in the House and throughout the Country. Louis A. Coolidge of Massachusetts, former secretary to Senator Henry Cabot Lodge was one of these. He was a leader of a group who felt all the traditional alarm of the "Tories" over the trend toward the extension of Federal Government into the field of social legislation. The wide publicity given Alice Robertson made her an ideal "sounding board" for the sentiments of this group.

12. Letter, Alice Robertson to Mary Thaw, April 17, 1922. R.C.T.U.; St. Paul Pioneer Press, January 10, 1922. Clipping R.C.T.U. The Ship Subsidy Bill (H.R. 12817) provided federal funds to subsidize the ship-building industry so that the Merchant Marine would not be decreased to a dangerously low point.
Louis Coolidge wired her in August of 1921 asking her to address "The Middlesex Club of 1000 Republicans" at their Roosevelt Night dinner October 27. He concluded his wire with, "Any Massachusetts representative can tell you all about the club. Also Senator Lodge, Secretary Weeks, or President Harding."\(^\text{13}\)

The fact that Louis Coolidge later headed the "Sentinels of the Republic," an organization which devoted itself to fighting the Maternity Bill and the Child Labor amendment, reveals pretty well why Miss Robertson was invited to Boston to address the Club.\(^\text{14}\) It also throws some light on why she was put up for a week at the exclusive Hotel Touraine as the guest of wealthy Mr. and Mrs. Frank Stearns, members of the Middlesex Club. Miss Alice was showered with honors and invitations and subtly flattered by references to her "Colonial antecedents."\(^\text{15}\) All this was but a short while before the Maternity Bill came to a vote in the House. If it seems strange that so much effort should be expended upon one member of Congress, it should be remembered that since Miss Robertson was the only woman member she might be presumed to have a commanding influence.

It was also during the time that the Sheppard-Towner Bill was being considered in Congress that Alice Robertson met another wealthy woman who was to have as much influence upon her as Mrs. Thaw, if not more. This woman, Mrs. William Lowell Putnam, had not only wealth but Family. She belonged to

\(^\text{13}\). Telegram, Louis Coolidge to Alice Robertson, August 18, 1921. R.C.T.U.

\(^\text{14}\). "To Arms! To Arms!" bulletin put out by Sentinels of the Republic, giving as their purpose to fight "socialistic legislation." No date, no publisher, Washington D.C. and Milton Massachusetts. R.C.T.U.

\(^\text{15}\). Letter, Louis Coolidge to Alice Robertson, October 21, 1921. R.C.T.U.
the Massachusetts Lowells, extensive owners of cotton and textile mills. Her brother, James Lowell, was president of Harvard College, and her sister Amy was the well-known American poet and literary critic. Mrs. Putnam's husband, William Lowell Putnam, was himself a Lowell, through the maternal line, and the marriage united holdings in a dozen or so industrial enterprises.\textsuperscript{16}

In the case of Elizabeth Lowell Putnam there is no need to depend upon inferences. She openly opposed the Maternity Bill and after becoming acquainted with Alice Robertson attempted to influence her vote on the measure. In a letter to Miss Robertson written shortly before the vote on the bill in the House, Mrs. Putnam adopted a comradely, chatty tone as if it were inconceivable that Miss Alice could take any other stand than that of opposition to the act. She concluded her letter with a flattering touch of intimacy, "It was such a pleasure to see you, yesterday."\textsuperscript{17}

That Miss Alice was flattered by Mrs. Putnam's friendship and the attention and honors paid her by other wealthy people is shown in numerous places in her correspondence, so it seems not unlikely that her new friends' attention.

\textsuperscript{16} Who's Who in America, 1922-1923, XII, 2541; presumably Alice Robertson met Mrs. Putnam while speaking before the Republican Women's Club either at Lowell or Boston, Massachusetts, in May of 1921. She was a guest many times in the palatial Putnam home in Boston. Elizabeth Putnam was also interested in the "Sentinels of the Republic." Letter, Elizabeth Putnam to Alice Robertson.

\textsuperscript{17} Letter, Elizabeth Lowell Putnam to Alice Robertson, October 28, 1921. R.C.T.U.
antipathy to "paternalism" in government colored and reinforced Miss Robertson's own opposition to the bill. When the measure came to a vote Miss Robertson voted against it, but it passed two hundred seventy-nine to thirty-nine.\(^\text{18}\) This was one of the few times Alice Robertson voted in the minority.

Mrs. Putnam did not forget Miss Robertson's stand against the bill and became her firm friend and benefactor for the rest of her life. Miss Alice credited "fighting the Sheppard-Towner Bill" with cementing their friendship, thanked God for it, and gratefully accepted the money Mrs. Putnam sent her from time to time as the whim struck the donor or the need struck the donee. Louis Coolidge retained his interest in Miss Robertson until she failed of reelection.\(^\text{19}\)

But if Miss Alice gained a few friends by fighting the Sheppard-Towner Bill, she lost thousands the same way. During the rest of her term, and in her campaign for reelection, she was to feel many times the wrath of the organized women's groups. No less dangerous to her chances for reelection was the hornet's nest she disturbed when the Adjusted Compensation Act or "Bonus Bill" came up for consideration in the House of Representatives. Believing that the returned soldiers were entitled to "adjusted compensation" for their economic loss while away from their jobs or business, the American Legion had requested legislation granting them back pay for the time they had served in the armed forces. A number of bills were introduced into the legislative hopper for this purpose, but

\(^{18}\) Congressional Record, LXI, 8036; letter, Alice Robertson to Ann Augusta Moore, June 7, 1922; letter, Alice Robertson to Elizabeth Putnam, February 5, 1930; letter, Alice Robertson to Jack and Jane, December 24, 1930.

\(^{19}\) Letters, Alice Robertson to Elizabeth Putnam, May 15, 1928; October 1, 1929; November 1, 1929; letter, Elizabeth Putnam to Alice Robertson, February 10, 1930. R.C.T.U.
House Bill 10874 was finally reported out of committee. By its provisions each soldier was to be paid one dollar and twenty-five cents for each day of foreign service. Immediate cash payments were to be made to those whose adjusted compensation amounted to fifty dollars or less. For those entitled to more than that the government was to purchase annuity insurance which at the end of twenty years would yield the amount due each veteran.20

Opposing the measure Miss Robertson, in a speech before the Republican Women's Club of New York, declared that when the boys asked for a bonus they were putting a "dollar mark on their patriotism." She pointed out that her ancestors had fought for their country without demanding a price for it.21

She at once received a flood of protests, most of them from veterans who protested her unfairness in branding them as "unpatriotic." Typical of the letter from veterans in her own party is the one she received from the commander of the American Legion of Major County, Oklahoma. He took Miss Robertson to task for her statement that the veterans were putting a "price on patriotism." He called this a worn out phrase and cited the fact that soldiers in other countries were receiving bonuses paid by money we sent them. He continues:

Now Miss Robertson, Get me. I am speaking as a Republican, not as an ex-soldier. The American Legion is not in politics. The favorite indoor sport of the Republican Party before the election was introducing bonus bills.

What for? You don't mean to tell me that was for effect and did not mean any effort to carry out their promises?


Now let me turn prophet. Fail to pass that bill, and next election will see a solid democratic delegation from Oklahoma in the next Congress . . . . The landslide that slid you in will be nothing compared to your slide out, should you break your solemn promise to us. I am not given to threats and this is not so intended but take warning. Get your ear to the ground. 22

A Democratic ex-soldier who had volunteered early in the war wrote:

The Ideals I fought for were crushed, when the Republican patriots joined with the Irish - martyred their President, of this, their country, and sold their birthright in the name of Partisan Politics by Lodge's whip on article ten of the League of Nations. 23

I was on the side fighting, in answer to the Clarion Call, My Country, Right or Wrong, and the affairs at Washington where petty party differences were bobbing up drove me into a frenzy of hatred against all partisans.

Before God, I lost the ideals I was fighting for, and now I demand a price for services rendered to a body of men who were not fit to kiss the boots of George Washington!

If I want that money, I want it to the betterment of my immaculate wife, and the hope of our lives, our little Irene Frances! I want it because it is due me for a $2000 economic loss that the combinations of foreigners and Republicans have received in hire.

As you can see from my early volunteering my patriotism asks for no reward; but the Clarion call has been ill-used, and now I demand an accounting from the men you feel are above me in principle. 24

22. Letter, Luther Armstrong to Alice Robertson, February 21, 1921 R.C.T.U.

23. Article Ten was the provision in the League Covenant guaranteeing against external aggression the territorial integrity and political independence of member nations. Preston William Slosson, The Great Crusade and After (New York, 1939), 289.

24. Letter, Joseph Traynor (Allston, Massachusetts) to Alice Robertson February 14, 1922, R.C.T.U.
In voting against the bonus bill Miss Robertson was following the wishes of President Harding. He took a decided stand against the bill, and Alice Robertson's desire to please him seems to have been stronger than her sympathy for the soldiers. This is revealed in her speech before the Republican Women's Club in Steubenville, Ohio. Miss Alice said that she voted against the bill and was proud of it, that the President was against it and that she loyally followed his lead. Like Harding, she said, she felt that the country could not afford the cost of it. Besides, she argued, it would be bad for the soldier themselves for they would be giving the government a "quit-claim deed" and if any serious disabilities developed later the government would not be responsible. These arguments might have seemed plausible to Miss Robertson, but they were far from satisfying to the disillusioned veterans pounding the pavements looking for jobs. A number of American Legion posts and Legion Auxiliaries passed resolutions condemning Congresswoman Robertson's position on the question, and there seems no doubt that she lost much of her former strong soldier support when she voted "nay" on the Bonus Bill.

In her stand on the tariff bills that were introduced during her two years stay in Congress, Alice Robertson was "regular", voting for both the 1921 Emergency Tariff Bill (H.R. 2435) and the Fordney-McCumber Tariff (H.R.


26. Congressional Record, LXII, 4447; Resolution of the Executive Committee American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Oklahoma, April 10, 1922; letter, Ernest Turner, Adjutant American Legion, Chelsea Post, #34, to Alice Robertson February 2, 1922. R.C.T.U.
These measures raised the tariff walls still higher, in a vain effort to restore economic prosperity to America, by crippling her world trade. Miss Robertson voted against an amendment to the 1921 bill introduced by her fellow Oklahoman, Bert Chandler of Tulsa. This amendment provided for a tariff on hides as a protection to the cattle-raising industry of Oklahoma. A part of Miss Robertson's speech on the floor of the House against the amendment is most interesting:

We want a tariff on oil down in my country and up in New England where they want free leather - and I am going to vote for them to have it - they are paying 30 cents a gallon for gasoline, just the same with oil for one dollar a barrel as when oil was $3.50 a barrel. Now I would like to help those shoe people up in New England, the bleak country my ancestors left, so that all those Yankee people may prosper with the game people of the West, because we are all one people, and what is to the greatest good of one section of our country must be to the greatest good of all.28

When Miss Alice came back to Oklahoma for her reelection campaign, however, making no mention of the "New England shoe people," she gave as her reason for voting against including hides on the tariff list, her desire to see "the little children of the Oklahoma farmer have cheap shoes to wear."29

The speech that gained the most support for Miss Alice from the business interests of the country was the one "Present Economic Conditions Affecting American Homes," delivered while Congress was considering the Fordney-

27. Congressional Record, LXI, 4197; ibid., LXII, 8542
28. Congressional Record, LXI, 3899.
29. Campaign Pamphlet of Alice Robertson, no date. R.C.T.U.
McCumber Bill in June of 1922.

Miss Robertson dwelt at length on the meaning of Protection to "woman" and the "home." Calling the tariff principle the safeguard of American homes against foreign encroachment, she argued that America would have to adopt lower standards of living if the nation did not have a higher tariff. She thought we "should do our own work and not hire others to do it for us." She concluded:

I am so glad I am an American. I am so glad I am a Protectionist. . . . I shall ever be proud and grateful that I had the privilege of voting for a Tariff Law - a Protective Tariff Law - to supersede the Free Trade Act now in operation.

Let me conclude with other expressions of my love for the word Protection. It means so much; it does so much; it insures so much; Protection for our labor and our industries. Protection for our institutions, and best of all Protection for our homes. 30

The week-end preceding this speech Miss Alice was the guest of the Wilbur Wakeman family at Eltingville Beach, New York. Mr. Wakeman was the Secretary of "The American Protective Tariff League" and a contributor to Miss Alice's campaign fund for reelection.

Other prominent business men and wealthy industrialists sent letters of hearty approval to Miss Robertson after this speech, and several of them also contributed to her campaign funds. 31


31. Letter, E.H. Gary, President, United States Steel Company, to Alice Robertson, September 5, 1922; letter, Wilbur Wakeman, Secretary American Protective Association, to Alice Robertson, December 7, 1922; Typewritten list of campaign expenses of 1922, with names of those contributing. R.C.T.U. Letter, Alice Robertson to Augusta Moore, June 7, 1922.
Miss Alice was able to carry out her promise to do something about locating a veterans hospital in Oklahoma. The disabled soldiers of Oklahoma had to go to Texas for treatment, and this was deeply resented by Oklahomans.\textsuperscript{32} In March of 1921, the Oklahoma Legislature passed a law deeding forty acres of state-owned land to the Federal Government for the purpose of erecting a veterans hospital thereon, but in event none of the public land was deemed suitable by the United States Government, $100,000 was appropriated with which to buy the land.\textsuperscript{33}

Miss Alice wrote the Congressional Committee on Hospitalization urging the location of a hospital in Oklahoma. She also got Mrs. Thaw to write the Committee, and Mrs. Thaw asked her friend, Andrew Mellon, to use his influence with the Committee, toward the same end. This he did, by writing it a letter, but there were no immediate results.\textsuperscript{34}

The State of Oklahoma, then appropriated the money, located and built a hospital at Muskogee. Miss Alice was asked "to engineer" the leasing of the hospital to the Federal Government. Miss Alice did much to bring about the consummation of the plan, but she had the help of Senator Harreld and the rest of the Oklahoma delegation to the House. Colonel Hugh Scott, prominent in the Oklahoma Legion and an official in the Veterans Bureau, seems to have been the

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\item \textsuperscript{32} Tulsa Daily World, September 6, 1920
\item \textsuperscript{33} Frank O. Eagin, and C.W. Van Eaton (Compilers), Oklahoma Statutes (Oklahoma City, 1932), II, 12015-16.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Letter, William C. White, Secretary to Congressional Committee on Hospitalization, to Alice Robertson, March 22, 1921.
\end{enumerate}
behind-the-scenes manager. When the lease was completed and the hospital was opened for operation in 1923, Colonel Scott was placed in charge of it.\textsuperscript{35}

"The Soldiers Memorial Hospital of Oklahoma" as it was officially called was located, interestingly enough, adjacent to Alice Robertson's own fifty-four acres on the out-skirts of Muskogee. It seems, however, that the members of the American Legion had the determining vote in deciding where the hospital was to be built, and they voted for the Muskogee location in the State Convention held in January of 1922 at Enid, Oklahoma. Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and a number of other cities offered to donate a site for the institution in order to obtain it for themselves, but Muskogee was selected.\textsuperscript{36}

Miss Alice attended the Legion Convention and later wrote one of the delegates thanking him for voting to locate the Veterans Hospital at Muskogee. She said it was what she had prayed for, but had had little hope of having her prayer answered. She deplored the open bartering of delegates, and offered her help to the delegate if he ever had need of her services.\textsuperscript{37}

In her attack on the Towner-Sterling Bill (H.R. 7), a proposal to create a Federal Department of Education and give federal aid to states for educational purposes, Miss Alice pointed out what seemed to her the dangers of federal

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\textsuperscript{35} Frank O. Eagin, (Editor), \textit{Session Laws, 1921} (Oklahoma City, 1921), 250; \textit{Daily Oklahoman}, November 12, 1922; letter, Hughes B. Davis, Adjutant, American Legion, to Alice Robertson, February 12, 1922. Mr. Davis thanked Miss Alice for her services in leasing the hospital to the government.

\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Daily Oklahoman}, November 12, 1922; Alice Robertson's unpublished statement in manuscript folder, no date, R.C.T.U. Miss Robertson said there was a "tacit understanding" when the hospital was located that if more land were needed that her fifty-four acres would be available.

\textsuperscript{37} Letter, Alice Robertson to H. H. Hagan, January 18, 1922, R.C.T.U.
\end{flushleft}
encroachment on "individual rights" and the "sanctity of the home." The
President of the Oklahoma Americanization Society, which favored the bill, wrote
a from letter to all the members of the society telling them that Miss Robertson
opposed the measure, and concluded by suggesting that if she did not change her
viewpoint he felt, "somebody else can better represent us in Congress." 38

Alice Robertson, learning that the Americanization Society was
circulating the letter widely, wrote to the president of the organization setting
forth the reason for her position on the bill. She stated that the school was but a
continuation of the home, and must be adjusted to local needs. Its control, she
argued, was not the proper province of the federal government. She concluded
with:

    I may say that my blood goes directly back through ten generations
    of Presbyterian ministers, to Pilgrim, Puritan, and Scotch Covenanter, an
    American of the sort that has no drop of blood which does not flow
    through the veins of a soldier of the Revolution. Since coming to
    Congress I have aligned myself with those who are stubbornly,
    persistently fighting to prevent further immigration . . . . Atheism, bigotry
    fanaticism, defiance of American ideal -- all are evils attendant upon the
    stream of immigration.

    I am no coward. Through centuries my ancestors suffered exile,
imprisonment, and ostracism in the cause of religious freedom. When a
strong centralized power is to be allowed to control educational affairs it
will not be long until we have a State Church. Changes of dynasty come
to republics as they used to come to monarchies.

    If these ideas do not commend themselves to you and you think
somebody else can better represent you in Congress, I can only say that I
am a Christian, an American, and shall act as my oath of office seems to
demand of me regardless of consequences. 39

38. Letter, Frank Craig to Fellow Worker, April 14, 1922. R.C.T.U.

39. Letter, Alice Robertson to Frank Craig, April 1922, R.C.T.U.
The Towner-Sterling Bill was never reported out of committee, so Miss Robertson was spared the necessity of voting against it, as she had indicated she would do if the issue were forced.40

Alice Robertson did not always oppose the extension of federal power for purposes of general welfare, however, for there were some things she desired strongly enough to override her aversion to "paternalistic" measures. One of these was her desire to have her native state peopled by Republicans, preferably from the North. Consequently when the Resolution for the Eradication of the Pink Cotton Boll Worm (S. J. Res. 72) came up she spoke in favor of it.

The measure proposed that the federal government pay the farmers of the areas infested by the pink cotton boll worm the rental value of their land, if they let it lie idle or else planted some other crop than cotton. The idea was that by starving the worms which could live only on cotton, the infestation would be eliminated.

The reasons Miss Robertson advanced for supporting the measure were in the first place valid, and in the second ingenuous. She declared we dare not risk making a supply of cotton impossible in view of its extreme importance in war. She felt that national safety demanded that the pest be stopped, and that the federal government must take responsibility. Besides, (ingenuously now) Oklahoma was over-blessed with cotton-raising Democrats, and if the government kept them from planting cotton, she reasoned, they might leave the state. Perhaps, she suggested, Texas might like to have them back, since in 1922 one Republican

40. Congressional Record, LXI, Part IX. Index.
had been elected to Congress from that state.\textsuperscript{41}

Alice Robertson opposed radicalism in any form. She warned against letting Bolshevism trickle in through Ellis Island. "Be conservative," she advised, "avoid all fads and fancies."\textsuperscript{42}

When the House of Representatives voted on the question of lending Russia $50,000,000 for rehabilitation purposes after the devastations of war and revolution, Miss Robertson voted against it because she thought the United States should keep its money at home. Concerning this, she said in a speech:

I thought of all those little children back on the farm in Oklahoma who already cannot wear shoes because of the cruel burden of war's taxation, and I thought when those children are clothed and fed and their fathers out of debt, it will be time to send our millions to Russia.

Let Russia learn. It will be a lesson to those who have allowed themselves to become embroiled in the terrors of Bolshevism and Sovietism.\textsuperscript{43}

Representative Meyer London of New York introduced a measure into Congress to grant political amnesty to Eugene V. Debs, the prominent Socialist leader who had been imprisoned because of his open opposition to America's entry into World War I. Again Miss Robertson aligned herself with the forces of conservatism and opposed the action. She spoke against the bill in the House. She said she saw no reason for pardoning a man who had attacked the American government during war. She felt sure Debs had experienced "no change of

\textsuperscript{41} Congressional Record, XLI, 4352.

\textsuperscript{42} Portland (Oregon) Telegram, June 21, 1922.

\textsuperscript{43} Okmulgee Times, July 12, 1922. Campaign speech at Okmulgee.
heart,"; therefore, she favored keeping him where he was.44

Alice Robertson introduced sixteen bills into Congress. Two of them were for the extension of time for building bridges across the Arkansas River at Fort Gibson and Webber Falls, Oklahoma (H. R. 6652) and (H. R. 6653). These were both reported favorably from the Committee on Roads and Bridges, and passed. One bill was for the construction of a military road to the national cemetery at Fort Gibson (H. R. 6741). It died in committee. A like fate befell the proposal to erect a public building at Wagoner, Oklahoma, (H. R. 7396). She had no better success with her bill for the granting of pensions to old deputy marshals of the Federal Court who had served in Oklahoma in territorial days (H. R. 7035).

Another bill introduced by Miss Robertson was a proposal to allow free transmission through the mails of publications for the blind (H. R. 10496). This bill was reported to the Committee of the Whole on the State of the Union, but was not passed. The other bills introduced by Miss Robertson were for the relief of "Certain Eastern Cherokees" (H. R. 8273); J. L. Holmes, relief (H. R. 7450); Daniel Stocton, relief (H. R. 7283); Rebecca Wilson, relief (H. R. 7182); Dick, Jane, to pension (H. R. 14176); American Allied Insurance Company, relief (H. R. 9683); Edith Bonter, to pension (H. R. 12552); Narcissus Butler, to pension (H. R. 11318); Tenny A. Littlejohn, to pension (H. R. 11034); Miranda N. Small, to pension (H. R. 11033). All of these died in committee.45

44. *Congressional Record*, LXI, 8153

45. *Congressional Record*, LXI, (March 4 to November 23, 1921) Part 9, Index, 271; ibid., LXII (December 5, 1921 to September 22, 1922) Part 13, Index, 244.
Alice Robertson was unusually strong physically, but the strain of office was great and at times almost more than she could bear. Writing to her sister, Grace Robertson Merriman, in April of her second year in Congress, Alice said:

I have really had a tremendous physical strain and the fact that everybody working in my office is going to school, makes it rather difficult to get my correspondence attended to. I have turned a new leaf this morning and I am not going to neglect those nearest and dearest to me, whether I come back to Congress or not.

I do without shopping for myself. I wear holes in my stockings. Sometimes I am two or three weeks with a broken shoe string, and I am getting tired of putting myself to the last. 46

Tired or not, Miss Alice decided to run for reelection to Congress. Immediately after returning from Portland, Oregon, where she had acted as President Harding's personal representative at the Portland Rose Festival, she went to her home district to start her campaign. 47

She made her first speech at Coweta, Oklahoma, where her father and mother had first met. She walked on to the platform with bowed head and Bible in hand. She read a few verses from the scriptures, and then announced her candidacy for Congress, with the same platform she had used before, "I am a Christian; I am an American; I am a Republican." 48

The magic formula, however, seemed to have lost some of its hypnotic qualities. One of the first difficulties Miss Robertson had to face was the anger and dissatisfaction of her "boys," the veterans, who felt that she had failed them in

46. April 24, 1922. R.C.T.U.
47. Portland Oregonian, June 21, 1922. Clipping. R.C.T.U.
her opposition to the bonus. The Muskogee American Legion invited her to address the members of the post and discuss her stand on the bill. When Miss Alice had said in the Frank Craig letter, "I am no coward," it was no idle boast. She appeared before the Legion and told why she was against the Adjusted Compensation Act. She argued that the country could not afford it, that the farmers and producers would have to bear the burden, and that it was unfair to the soldiers for it constituted a "quit-claim" to any further help from the government. She told the "boys" that she still loved them, but that she could not vote to put a "dollar mark on patriotism." Miss Robertson left the hall saying, "Now, do what you want to, boys." They stood and gave her an ovation for they admired courage. Nevertheless, the Muskogee post barely voted down a resolution condemning Miss Robertson's stand, and passed a resolution favoring the bonus.49

The Veterans of Foreign Wars were not so gentle in their treatment of the doughty Congresswoman. When she appeared before them, they heckled her by questioning her during her speech. One member asked her if she would be for the bonus if it was proved to her that a majority of the voters were for it. Miss Alice replied that the question was a political trick, and she refused to answer it. She was, she affirmed, doing what she thought was right. The organization voted a resolution condemning her stand.50

In another speech on the bonus question during her campaign for reelection Miss Robertson said:


The soldiers feel that it is wrong for them to have fought and bled for almost nothing in material reward while the big war lords have amassed great fortunes by their war time graft. It is true that the profiteers have taken great toll but the Lord will deal with them in his time and in his way. I understand almost all of those who speculated in sugar are bankrupt . . . . Let the soldiers remember they have gained great things too, knowledge, experience and wisdom.  

Miss Robertson's war with the organized women of the country was bitter and unrelenting on both sides. She first incurred their enmity when she fought the Sheppard-Towner Maternity Bill. She gave out many statements to the press showing her antagonism to them, and many prominent women, both in Oklahoma and out of it openly attacked Alice Robertson even before she started her campaign to return to Congress.

In May of 1922, Lady Astor, only woman member of the British Parliament toured this country. The League of Women Voters invited her to speak at the Pan-American Women's Congress then meeting in Baltimore. Obviously, since Alice Robertson was the only woman Congressman in the United States the courteous thing would have been to invite Miss Alice to meet Lady Astor. This the League did not do, and Miss Robertson resented it so deeply that she gave a public statement to the press, that it was open war between her and the League of Women Voters and all like organizations from then on.  

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom headed by Jane Addams opposed the reelection of Miss Robertson. Spokesmen for the organization stated that they considered Miss Robertson as standing for "special


52. Worcester (Massachusetts) Telegram, May 12, 1922. Clipping. R.C.T.U.
favors to special classes."

An interview in the Knickerbocker Press is typical of the statements which Miss Robertson issued from time to time which so antagonized the club women of the country. The Congresswoman was asked if she thought in one hundred years hence one fourth of the members of Congress would be women. She replied:

I hope not. Women in politics are so likely to be radical. Such unthinkable theories as those of birth control are likely to be found running rampant among those women who are active in politics.

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As they tend to take turns with their husbands in Congress they will probably insist that their husbands take turns with them in the bearing of children. I deplore woman's tendency to drift away from the home.

In a speech before the Pan-American Woman's Congress, Mrs. Chester H. Peoples of Muskogee, an Oklahoma delegate, said of Miss Robertson:

Please do not judge Oklahoma by Miss Robertson . . . . She is entirely out of tune with Oklahoma's ideas and progressiveness . . . . She is a standpatter, pure and simple . . . . She was against suffrage to start with and now after we have won the fight she steps in and walks away with the office.

When the Oklahoma League of Women Voters held its first annual convention, Mrs. Richard Edwards, of Peru, Indiana, Vice-president of the national organization, spoke as follows:

As a Republican woman I regret the newspaper prominence given a woman of Miss Robertson's type. Herself a political accident, in her


54. New York, April 9, 1922. Clipping. R.C.T.U.

55. Wagoner (Oklahoma) Record-Democrat, May 4, 1922, Clipping, R.C.T.U.
contempt of women and their ability, her total ignorance of women and women's affairs, she fortunately in no way represents women, though she sits as the only woman in Congress.

Actually what Miss Robertson says or thinks is negligible. The women in my part of the country know that she never represented the demands of women, nor concerned herself with the things women's organizations were developing throughout the country.\textsuperscript{56}

However, if Miss Robertson made enemies of the women by her derogatory remarks about suffragists and feminists, she gained the friendship and admiration of a great many men by the same sentiments. She seems to have been very well liked by her colleagues in Congress. A political columnist wrote of her:

Partisanship is keen in the House of Representatives, but if the members of that body had the final say, Miss Alice Mary Robertson of Oklahoma would be reelected hands down next November. Miss Alice . . . has the respect of esteem of all the members regardless of their political affiliations. They would like nothing better than to aid her, if that were possible, and insure her a second term.

The writer went on to say that Miss Robertson says more in two minutes than most members say in an hour. He told of her squelching of Representative Tom Blanton of Texas, when he opposed the House Resolution to improve the quality of food in the House Restaurant, "which for all the world reminded one of an old-fashioned schoolmarm dressing down an unruly pupil."\textsuperscript{57}

Alice Robertson made a whirlwind campaign for the primary election which was to be held August 2, 1922. She covered seven counties in seven days and during the last week in July flew to Washington and back on a matter of

\textsuperscript{56} Unidentified newspaper clipping, no date. R.C.T.U.

\textsuperscript{57} Boston Transcript, June 1, 1922. Clipping, R.C.T.U.
This concerned Victor M. Locke who was the Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes. Miss Alice recommended L. G. Disney for the place, but Locke was supported by Senator Harreld and by the Secretary of the Interior, Albert B. Fall, so he was appointed. He refused to appoint Republicans whom Miss Robertson recommended to him. Feeling that this hurt her chances of reelection, she flew to Washington to see if she could do something about the matter. Failing in her mission, she came back and decided that the best policy was to make friends with Locke. She invited him to have dinner with her in her cafeteria where the public could see them eating together. Miss Alice hoped that in this way the newspaper talk of trouble between them over patronage matters would be stopped. The episode created a minor sensation in Muskogee, but solved none of Alice Robertson's patronage difficulties.59

When the returns from the primary election held on July 20 were in, Miss Robertson had won over her opponent, Gus Tinch of Sallisaw, with a majority of four to one. W. W. Hastings was the winner of the Democratic nomination over Oscar Stewart with a two to one majority.60

State Senator E. M. Frye had acted as Miss Robertson's campaign manager, and he at once set to work to raise funds for the strenuous campaign he knew lay ahead if Alice Robertson were to be reelected. He seems to have had some difficulty in arousing financial interest in the Congresswoman's campaign in Oklahoma. He wrote to one contributor, thanking him for a donation of fifty

58. Muskogee Daily Phoenix, July 30, 1922
60. Muskogee Daily Phoenix, August 2, 1922.
dollars, and remarked, "It is surprising how difficult it seems to be to raise even the small amount a candidate for Congress is allowed to spend."  

Miss Robertson made another effort in September to clear up the matter of patronage in the Indian Service. She wrote theHonorable H. P. Snyder, Chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs, and told him that she was in real trouble in her district, for Mr. Hastings was making a determined fight to regain the seat he had formerly held. She said that she was being undermined with the Indian vote by not being able to give appointments to those Indians who had been loyal Republicans in Cherokee County. The men whom Hastings had appointed in the Indian Service had been left in by Commissioner Merritt. By implication she asked for Merritt's dismissal even though she acknowledges that:

Mr. Merritt is a very useful consulting clerk upon whom the Commissioner depends, and whom I have found very pleasant, in all my dealings with him, but this is an occasion not for a soft velvet glove, but for the iron hand, because the state of Oklahoma is in the most critical period in its history. Unless broken now, at a time when a divided Democratic Party is in our favor, the State will in my opinion be irrevocably lost.

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The Indian Office should come across, (sic) the cowardly plea of Civil Service, which is a transparent lie, should be cut out. If I did not know you so well I wouldn't dare write such a strong letter, but this is no time to mince words. If I should be beaten by the cowardice of the Indian Office, I would have a few months to stir things up in the House. I am in to win even though my bitterest opponent seems to be the Indian Office.  

This strongly suggests that Miss Alice could be utterly ruthless on occasion. Congressman Snyder replied that he had personally interviewed both

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62. Letter, Alice Robertson to H. P. Snyder, September 5, 1922. R.C.T.U.
the Commissioner and his assistant, and found them very anxious that Miss Alice return to Congress. They promised to do anything they could to help her in her fight to be reelected. With this Miss Robertson had to be content.63

The Press generally seems to have been favorably inclined toward Miss Robertson's candidacy. This is especially true of newspapers outside the state, but is also true in a lesser degree of Oklahoma newspapers. Friendly publicity was not limited to Republican papers. The Democratic Daily Oklahoman commented:

Miss Alice has not been right in every decision she has made, but she has shown a lot of men what a real woman is. It is good for the soul to see one member of Congress standing up and speaking out for what she thinks is right.

The Tulsa Daily World said of Miss Robertson: "Here at least is one conscientious candidate." The Tulsa Tribune called her platform "magnificent."

Among the out-of-state newspapers making favorable comment was the Birmingham Age Herald which said editorially:

Miss Robertson has been a success. She is the best answer that could be made to the objection that women are temperamentally unsuited to hold public office.

The Washington Evening Star, the New York Star Telegram, the San Francisco Chronicle, and the Philadelphia Inquirer were highly complimentary to Miss Robertson.64 The Chronicle makes this interesting comment:

We do not care if she is a woman, Congresswoman Alice Robertson is a credit to any state . . . Oklahoma has been called a freak state. Congresswoman Robertson is a freak product of which we cannot

63. Letter, H. P. Snyder to Alice Robertson, September 14, 1922, R.C.T.U.

64. Scrap book of clippings, no dates, R.C.T.U.
have too many.\textsuperscript{65}

The Marion, Ohio, \textit{Daily Star}, formerly owned by President Harding gave Miss Alice a verbal "pat on the back" when the editor said that Alice Robertson "had her hat on straight," that she was sensible and knew how to take care of herself as some of her fellow representatives had found out. The editor hoped she would be returned to Congress.\textsuperscript{66}

Wishing to make the Presidential stamp of approval more marked, Mrs. Harding wrote Miss Robertson as follows:

My dear Miss Robertson:

Mr. Wakeman has been good enough to send me a copy of your speech on the tariff and I cannot refrain from writing you a line to congratulate you, not only upon the speech, but upon being a woman who has come out of the West to point the way to the women of the East in matters of politics and statesmanship, and I do not know of anyone who can do it with better understanding than yourself. With kindest personal regards and with best wishes for your continued success as a leader of women in the political field, I am

Sincerely yours,

Florence Kling Harding\textsuperscript{67}

Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., again, as in 1920, made a flying trip to Oklahoma and spoke at Okmulgee in Miss Alice's behalf.\textsuperscript{68} Colonel Hugh Scott, Executive Officer of the U. S. Veteran's Bureau, wrote an almost effusive letter to the people of the Second Oklahoma District voicing his hope that they would

\textsuperscript{65} August 1, 1922. Clipping, R.C.T.U. (The question occurs, by whom had Oklahoma been called a freak state?)

\textsuperscript{66} Clipping, no date, R.C.T.U.

\textsuperscript{67} Muskogee \textit{Daily Phoenix}, July 30, 1922.

\textsuperscript{68} Okmulgee \textit{Times}, October 11, 1922. Clipping, R.C.T.U.
reelect Miss Robertson. He called her "as near a saint as any woman living in
history." 69

Despite all this pressure, local sentiment seemed to be against Miss Alice.
All three of the Muskogee papers opposed her election. A typical "Miss Alice"
incident early in September might throw some light on the reason for this local
opposition to the redoubtable Congresswoman. The Muskogee School Board had
authorized the opening of a night school for adult education, with the
understanding that any classes would be taught for which there was sufficient
demand. A group of women asked for a class in "Prenatal Care of Mothers and
Babies." Miss Robertson protested, declaring it was wrong to attempt to teach the
"mysteries of motherhood" in classes open to everyone in a public school.

A member of the School Board made reply to her through the columns of
a Muskogee paper by stating:

Miss Alice Robertson, our Miss-representative in the last
Congress, Miss-understands the Mission of the night school, as shown by
her recent Miss-statement about teaching the Miss-teries of Motherhood.
It is such Miss-information as this that makes Miss Alice such a
Misserable Miss-fit.

An editorial in the same newspaper said that Miss Robertson was "agin"
everything without offering any constructive program of her own. It continued:

We do not attack Miss Alice personally, because it is our honest
opinion that there is no better woman. Miss Alice Robertson, the
politician, and she is as shrewd as the shrewdest is subject to honest
criticism anytime by anyone of her constituents.

69. October 10, 1922. R.C.T.U. This is interesting in light of the enmity that later
developed between them when they were associated in the Veterans Hospital
at Muskogee.
We further admit that Miss Alice has behaved better in Congress than we had expected and no one will dispute that handicapped by her party affiliation as she is, she has done as much as any other Republican would have done.\(^70\)

Despite the strongly favorable sentiment for her expressed by the big newspapers of the country, Miss Robertson was worried by the lack of local support for her reelection depended upon the votes of the Second Oklahoma District. Her sister Augusta tried to comfort her in a letter written shortly before the election. She commented:

If your Eastern friends could vote you would have no trouble. The best women are for you.

I hope and pray for your success, not simply for your own sake but because you stand for Christian principles as no one else in Congress and because of the sneer that religion cuts no ice in politics . . . your election would be a triumph for religion. If God is for you, Hastings can't defeat you.\(^71\)

A few days before the general election, a popular woman's magazine came out with an editorial attacking Alice Robertson for opposing all the legislation favored by the League of Women Voters, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the National Congress of Mothers, and the Parent Teachers Association, the Your Women's Christian Association, and the American Association of University Women. These associations represented 4,000,000 women. The editorial said in part:

Women who pleaded for suffrage declared that their first service as voters would be the passage of laws in the interest of women and children.


71. Letter, Ann August Robertson Moore, to Alice Robertson, September 14, 1922. R.C.T.U.
They redeemed this promise by faithful untiring work through their organizations for the Sheppard-Towner Act, and when this measure came up for a vote, Alice Robertson, the only woman in Congress voted against it.  

Alice Robertson ascribed her defeat largely to this editorial. It is true the magazine had a wide circulation among rural and small town women in Oklahoma, but the mere restatement of a well-known fact could hardly have caused such a reversal of votes as occurred. W. W. Hastings defeated Miss Alice by a margin of over 8000 votes.  

No doubt Miss Robertson's proclivity for speaking her mind and voting her own convictions rather than trying to find out how her constituents wanted her to vote had much more to do with her defeat than the editorial, but even that is not all the story. General unrest and dissatisfaction with economic conditions in Oklahoma returned the Democrats to power, and Miss Alice was swept out of office with other Republican congressmen. The only Republican representative who retained his seat was M. C. Garber of Enid. The Farmer-Labor Reconstruction League had captured the Democratic Party in the primary. As a result most of the dissatisfied elements as well as the regular Democrats voted the Democratic ticket and swelled the majorities. The Farmer-Labor group elected their candidate for governor, Jack Walton, by a large margin. Even if Alice

72. Woman's Home Companion, November, 1921. Clipping, R.C.T.U.  

73. Letter, Alice Robertson to Elizabeth Lowell Putnam, January 5, 1924. R.C.T.U.  

74. Muskogee Daily Phoenix, November 9, 1922; Congressional Directory, 68th Congress, 2'nd Session, December, 1924, p. 156.
Robertson's record had been of the best she might not have been reelected, so
definite was the trend toward a change in politics. As it was she did not have a
chance.\footnote{Harlow, Oklahoma, 350.}

Immediately after the election, Miss Alice received a letter from her
friend, Elizabeth Putnam, expressing extreme regret that Miss Robertson was not
reelected. She felt that "the bottom had dropped out of everything." She could
not even properly rejoice over the Republican victory in Massachusetts. "What
caused your defeat?" she asked. "Was it the League of Women Voters?"\footnote{November 10, 1922. R.C.T.U.}

A soldier in New York felt called upon to write and express the opposite
sentiment from that of Mrs. Putnam. He gloated over Miss Robertson, and
attributed her defeat to the stand she took on the bonus bill. He continued:

Your seat in Congress was well painted over with dollar signs, but
it was of no use. Believe me the service men all over the country rejoice
over your defeat.\footnote{Letter, John O'Brien, ex-marine, to Alice Robertson, November 8, 1922. R.C.T.U.}

An examination of Miss Robertson's statement of campaign expenses and
contributions reveals that most of her contributors came from out of the state.
Among her Oklahoma financial supporters were W. B. Pine, who sent her $1,000,
Pat Hurley and Eugene Lorton who sent one hundred dollars each, and J. J.
McGraw who contributed fifty dollars. These totaled $1250. From out-of-state
sources Miss Robertson received $3,018.00. Of this amount $1320 was sent by
the Women's National Republican Club; $600 was sent by Mrs. Putnam; $200
was contributed by the American Protective Association; and the remainder came from individual contributors scattered widely over the United States, but with a preponderance from New England. Among the donors were Mrs. Nicholas Murray Butler of New York and Louis A. Coolidge of Massachusetts. Alice Robertson received a total of $4821 and expended $4645 of the amount, chiefly for printing and advertising.\textsuperscript{78}

Miss Alice wrote her contributors and begged them not to feel that their money was wasted. She felt sure that sober thought would bring a reaction in Oklahoma as elsewhere. "The election," she wrote, "was not a Democratic but a Non-partisan League victory, a triumph of that radicalism which is now rampant in the Middle West." She accused her opponent of being a member of the Ku Klux Klan and expressed belief that Victor Berger had helped defeat her.\textsuperscript{79}

Upon her return to Washington Miss Robertson, worn out by the strenuous campaign and the excitement of the election, decided to exercise of her prerogatives as a member of Congress and take a trip to Panama with expenses paid. Accompanied by eight friends and relatives she sailed on the S.S. Gorgas from New York for Cristobal, December 15, 1922, and after a two weeks vacation cruise, returned to her congressional duties.\textsuperscript{80}

The rest seems to have done Miss Alice good, for upon her return to the capital, she began once more accepting requests to speak at banquets, Chamber of

\textsuperscript{78} Typewritten statement of receipts and expenditures for Alice Robertson's 1922 campaign. R.C.T.U.

\textsuperscript{79} Copy of form letter sent contributors. January 23, 1923. R.C.T.U.

\textsuperscript{80} Letter, A. J. Flint to Alice Robertson, November 28, 1922. R.C.T.U.
Commerce and Rotary luncheons, and D. A. R. meetings. She spoke at the Town Hall Meeting for the League of Political Education in New York. The Director professed to be so impressed with her ability as a speaker that he suggested she engage in lecturing as a business.\(^81\)

In February she wrote a friend:

I am going out on the crest of a wave. Was the only outside guest at the only cabinet dinner given this season and lunched with the President and Mrs. Harding last week. I am not sorry to go for the burden of Congress is a heavy one. It will be hard to have no income till I find a way to support myself, but I am not discouraged.\(^82\)

A little later she wrote Mrs. Thaw of her relief at being out of politics:

While I still feel that it was my duty to make the fight for reelection, each day I am less and less sorry to be out of it. God has better work for me I am sure, and so I am trying just to wait patiently for plans to develop.\(^83\)

81. Letter, Robert Ely to Alice Robertson, January 15, 1923. R.C.T.U.

82. Letter, Alice Robertson to Harold Westerburg, February 17, 1923. R.C.T.U.

83. March 5, 1923. R.C.T.U.
CHAPTER V
AFTERMATH

Back in the prosaic, work-a-day world, after her two year stay in "Wonderland," Alice Robertson, stunned and bewildered might wait for "something to develop" and for "God to show her the way" but Mrs. Thaw decided to take a hand in developments herself. She wrote Secretary of the treasury, Andrew W. Mellon, asking him to see that Miss Alice got an appointment "in connection with invalid soldiers in Oklahoma."¹

President Harding issued an executive order waiving civil service requirements in Miss Robertson's case and appointing her Welfare Director at the Muskogee Veterans Hospital. Whether the President did this of his own volition, or as a result of Secretary Mellon's intervention is not clear, but at any rate the position was "in connection with invalid soldiers in Oklahoma," as Mrs. Thaw had stipulated.²

Miss Robertson had been led to believe that the salary would be between $3000 and $3600 a year, but much to her disappointment found that it was only $1800, an amount insufficient for the upkeep of Sawokla. She protested vehemently to Secretary of the Interior Hubert Work, to Veteran Bureau Director, General Frank Hines, and to all her Washington friends she thought might be able to help her. After much correspondence she succeeded in getting the salary raised

1. March 5, 1923. R.C.T.U.

2. Letter, Alice Robertson to Frank Hines, April 21, 1923; letter, Frank Hines to Alice Robertson, April 27, 1923. R.C.T.U.
to $2400, but Miss Alice was still extremely unhappy and dissatisfied in her position. ³

Colonel Hugh Scott was Superintendent of the Veterans Hospital. Relations between him and Miss Alice seem to have been very cordial at first, but gradually became strained, apparently either because of Miss Robertson's inability to work amicably with the Red Cross Director, the American Legion, and the Legion Auxiliary, or because of the general resentment occasioned by her being appointed despite civil service regulations.

Late in July Mrs. Thaw wrote to Miss Alice inquiring as to her welfare and urged:

Let me know if there is anything you wish me to do by way of helping make life easier, now that your friends the Hardings are so far away, and having such jolts--- physical, political and otherwise --- that may tend toward forgetfulness of their responsibilities in securing for you so responsible a position . . . ⁴

The unhappy Miss Robertson replied that she was meeting with unbelievable difficulties in trying to carry on her work, that the Red Cross official at the hospital refused to cooperate with her, and that she met hostility on every hand. The whole situation was so disturbing to her, she said, that she had lost twenty-five pounds in the three months she had worked at the hospital.

Miss Alice also gave Mrs. Thaw her theory as to how the mix-up about her salary occurred. She was sure she was double-crossed by those who had prepared the executive order appointing her. She thought that they had purposely

⁴. July 21, 1923, R.C.T.U. Mrs. Thaw was sending Miss Robertson small sums of money and a great deal of advice from time to time.
omitted mentioning the matter of the salary being raised in her case, that President Harding had not noticed the omission and had signed it as presented to him, probably with a sheaf of other orders so that he would be less likely to discover what had been done.⁵

The death of President Harding, August 2, 1923, came as a great blow to Miss Alice, both because of her personal friendship and esteem for him and because she feared things at the hospital would be made even more difficult for her. She seems to have sincerely mourned the dead President, and with a singular lack of perspicacity compared him to Lincoln. "Never since Lincoln," she wrote Brigadier General Charles E. Shaw, "has there been a man in the White House so of the people and for the people as Warren G. Harding." She felt that "the burdens he bore through the summer of 1922" had saved America from a civil war, but had cost him his life.⁶

Miss Robertson wrote to Congressman Charles Curry of California that she felt sure the Democrats would try to oust her:

The death of President Harding made them feel that now I had no friends they could get rid of me, and through me also discredit Colonel Scott who is, like myself, an arch criminal in being a Republican who presumes to live in Oklahoma.⁷

A little later she wrote William Tyler Page, Clerk of the House of Representatives:

I am still having to meet more than I ever thought it possible should be

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thrust upon me, for my crime of being a Southern White Republican just as you are; sometimes I think it would be easier to be a Democrat in Pennsylvania . . . .8

To strengthen her own position Miss Robertson wrote President Coolidge presenting her side of the conflict within the hospital and requesting him to confirm the Executive Order appointing her. However, Bascomb Slemp, the Presidential Secretary, instead of showing the letter to President Coolidge referred it to Director Frank Hines, who at once sent it to Colonel Scott and wrote Miss Alice a reprimand for not taking the matter up through regular channels, i.e. Colonel Scott and himself.9

After this incident it was only a matter of time until Miss Alice's connections with the Veterans Hospital should be severed. Early in January, she asked for an indefinite leave of absence, intending to look for something more pleasant and remunerative to do; but when the leave was denied her on the grounds that such leaves were granted only to employees who were ill, Miss Robertson asked that her services be discontinued without prejudice. Her decision to do this was occasioned by a letter from Elizabeth Lowell Putnam, National President of the Women's Coolidge for President Club, asking Miss Alice to accept the Oklahoma state presidency and the national vice-presidency of

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8. September 6, 1923. R.C.T.U.

the club.  

Miss Robertson was now adrift so far as a fixed income was concerned, and was dependent upon gifts of friends and relatives, and the money she could borrow on Sawokla. Mrs. Thaw sent her five hundred dollars; she put a mortgage on her home, and plunged once more into the maelstrom of politics.  

In the primary campaign of 1924 Miss Alice supported the candidacy of W. B. Pine for United States Senator on the Republican ticket. His opponent was Colonel Hugh Scott, and when Pine won over Scott, the breach between Colonel Scott and Miss Robertson was complete. In the general election Pine was elected, but Oklahoma did not go for Coolidge. Miss Alice as State President of the Coolidge Club had hoped to swing enough of the women's vote to carry the state, and felt her failure to do so keenly.  

Alice Robertson received no reward for her activity in the 1924 campaign. She ascribed this to influence used against her by her enemies. She felt sure, she wrote Mrs. Putnam, that these enemies had made President Coolidge think that in her support of Pine she had traded votes for the President.  

In August of 1925 Sawokla burned to the ground. The fire was of unknown origin and destroyed many family heirlooms as well as personal

10. Letter, Frank Hines to Alice Robertson, January 20, 1924; letter, Alice Robertson to Bascomb Slemp, January 19, 1924; letter Alice Robertson to Director, United States Veterans Bureau, December 31, 1923.  R.C.T.U.

11. Letter, P. S. Space, attorney for Mrs. Thaw, to Alice Robertson, February 6, 1924; letter to Harry M. Daugherty from Alice Robertson, May 28, 1929.  R.C.T.U.

12. Letter, Elizabeth Putnam to Alice Robertson November 6, 1924.

belongings of Miss Alice. Fortunately Miss Robertson had moved most of the historical documents, letters, and manuscripts to the cottage in which she had lived since leaving the Veterans Hospital. Her adopted daughter and her family were living in Sawokla. Although the loss occasioned by the fire was great, Miss Alice bore up bravely. As much as she had loved Sawokla she was financially unable to keep it up, so in that way the blow was softened.\textsuperscript{14}

Although Miss Robertson was living in poverty, she was always hopeful that she would soon be relieved of her worries by either striking oil on her land or by selling it to the Veterans Hospital for expansion purposes. This last she attempted to achieve by using every bit of political influence which she possessed. At first she tried to negotiate directly with the Head of the Bureau, but becoming convinced that he was prejudiced against her and was letting personal spite and friendship for Colonel Scott stand in the way of the sale, she began writing those in high places to enlist their aid.

Early in July 1928, Miss Robertson wrote Senator Pine of Oklahoma, saying that Dr. Edwin T. Rose, head of the Veterans Hospital was anxious to buy her forty acres and that with the passage of the $15,000,000 Appropriation Bill introduced by Representative Edith Rogers of Massachusetts, this action would be taken. She continued:

So far as I know there is absolutely no reason why this property should not have been taken over long ago by the Government except for Hugh Scott's hatred of me and his, to me, incomprehensible influence over

\textsuperscript{14} Muskogee Daily Phoenix, August 19, 1925. Clipping, R.C.T.U.
Director Hines, who has also shown great unkindness to me.\textsuperscript{15}

Soon after this she wrote to Representative Edith Rogers to get her to push the sale of her land. She said:

The medical officer in charge of the Muskogee Hospital has reported to the Veteran's Bureau the need of this piece of ground by the Hospital and requested its purchase. I think a little encouragement from you would be of greatest possible help to me, so if you will do this you may be the means of giving me a new lease on life, for my financial condition is at its lowest ebb.\textsuperscript{16}

Director Hines, however, remained adamant and declared that the Veterans' Hospital did not need the land, and as no new buildings were contemplated would not need it in the "foreseeable future."\textsuperscript{17}

Miss Alice, once in possession of an idea, did not give it up easily. Early in 1929 she wrote Senator Pine again:

I sent all my papers in the Veterans' Bureau matter to Pat Hurley who has Hines same old evasive answer, that no enlargement of the hospital is contemplated at present. Anybody that knew anything about the facts would understand that needed land is not an additional building.\textsuperscript{18}

Being unable to secure action through these channels, at last in desperation Miss Robertson wrote Mrs. Putnam and asked her to use her influence to get President Coolidge to order Hines of the Veterans' Bureau to buy her land. She


\textsuperscript{16} July 18, 1928. R.C.T.U. Mrs. Rogers was from Massachusetts.

\textsuperscript{17} Letter, Frank Hines to Edith Nourse Rogers, August 11, 1928. R.C.T.U.

\textsuperscript{18} Month and day not given. R.C.T.U.
felt sure that Hines refused to buy it through purely personal spite. She asserted that Colonel Hugh Scott hated her because she had forced the dismissal of a paroled convict from the hospital when she was Welfare Director there. She continued, "I have a large box filled with documentary evidence of the crookedness which I at first reported to Dr. Scott not knowing it was with his connivance." The possibility cannot be dismissed that this is at least a partial explanation of Miss Alice's unpopularity with the hospital administration. Whether her charges were true or not the fact that she made them should account for Colonel Scott's hostility toward her. In either case she might be regarded as a "meddlesome" old woman. Her letter ended pathetically with, "The President could turn the clock back five years if he would tell Hines what he must do."\(^{19}\)

During this time Miss Alice was living largely on gifts from Mrs. Thaw, Mrs. Putnam, and her cousin Georgia Robertson, plus the small amount she was able to earn by writing. The Oklahoma Historical Society had engaged her services as compiler of historical data concerning the Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole Indians. She had begun work on this in July of 1927, but the salary was a mere pittance and the expenses incident to gathering the data and the stenographic help necessary to properly handle the material more than ate up the salary. Consequently, although Miss Robertson was eminently fitted for the task by her writing ability and her extensive personal knowledge of early days among the Indian tribes of Oklahoma, she was not able to compile any great amount of historical data. She was constantly hampered by failing health as well as financial

\(^{19}\) February 5, 1929. Shortly after her seventy-fifth birthday.
difficulties. Friends and strangers alike interrupted her work by asking for information on historical subjects. Her correspondence was heavy and although much of it went unanswered for weeks, it was a drain upon her attention and time.  

When the scandals of the Harding administration came to light, Alice Robertson remained steadfastly loyal to the dead president and also to his cabinet. A letter from Attorney-General Harry M. Daugherty to a Muskogee friend reveals Miss Alice's attitude. He characterized Miss Robertson as a "level headed woman, too smart to be fooled by a lost of gossip, and too honest to be a hypocrite." He knew he could depend upon her to be a friend of his, and he professed himself unworried by the growling and howling of "false and irresponsible" people. He was glad to hear of her loyalty.  

Miss Alice then wrote Harry Daugherty and said:

I have most bitterly resented the ingratitude and cowardice of many people I know who were under deepest obligation to the President and yet trailed after the pack of hyenas who attacked the dead that they fearing living. In my own case I paid dear for my outspoken devotion. Hines of the Veterans' Bureau, the moment of his death, set in motion, revenge for what I do not know, except that I was absolutely honest and they knew I could not be handled.  

There seems to have been no occasion for this letter except the forlorn

20. Letter, Judge R. L. Williams to Alice Robertson, June 6, 1928. R.C.T.U. The salary was one hundred twenty-five dollars per month. The files for 1928 are crowded with letters asking for help in research. Letters 2103, 2113, 2115, 2116, 2121, 2130, 2131, 2138, 2142, 2144 concern such requests.

21. Letter, H. M. Daugherty to A. H. Murcheson, April 23, 1929. R.C.T.U. Daugherty was charged with criminal neglect of duty and asked to resign because he had not filed charges against government official suspected of fraud. Slosson, The Great Crusade, 93.

hope Miss Robertson had of enlisting someone in her cause who had enough influence in political circles to bring about the sale of her land and the lifting of her financial worries. It is easy to imagine a wily politician smiling at such naïveté, but whatever Harry Daugherty's reactions were, they bore no fruit for Miss Alice. The Veterans Hospital did not buy her land.

Despite her age and financial difficulties, Miss Robertson took an active interest in the Presidential campaign of 1928. She went to both the State and National Republican Conventions as a delegate and supported Senator Charles Curtis of Kansas in his bid for nomination. After the State Convention she wrote to Colonel Pat Hurley:

> While I am still hopeful for Curtis, I simply gloried in the way you handled your man Hoover's candidacy. The last few days would seem to indicate that you are going to win hands down, but whether you do win or not for Hoover, you have won for Pat Hurley as usual.\(^{23}\)

Subsequent events proved that Miss Alice was right. Colonel Hurley won both for himself and for Hoover, and his appointment to Hoover's cabinet as Secretary of War advanced him well on his way to the national and international prominence he has since achieved.

Miss Alice was much concerned when the Democrats showed every intention of nominating Alfred E. Smith on a "wet" ticket. She felt that his election would be nothing short of a national catastrophe since he was both Catholic and "wet." Her state of mind is shown by the letter she wrote her sister, Grace Merriman, soon after she returned from a trip to Washington. She told of being on the train with Senator Robert L. Owen who was returning from the

\(^{23}\) April 27, 1928. R.C.T.U.
Democratic State Convention. He predicted the defeat of the Democrats if Smith were nominated, and seemed crushed by the fact that he had been unable to stem the tide of Oklahoma Democracy toward Smith. Miss Alice concluded with, "In these troublous political times one must only pray and trust, knowing that God can make the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder he will restrain."

In the same letter Miss Alice gave an account of her visit to Mrs. Putnam's home while she was in the East. Mrs. Putnam had paid her expenses to the National Daughters of the American Revolution Convention, and had invited her to come on to Boston for the week-end. Here she had an experience interesting because of its connection with one of the most talked-about cases in American judicial history, the Sacco-Vanzetti trial. Miss Robertson wrote:

I could not stay for a dinner party Mrs. Putnam was giving that night in honor of Judge Thayer who handled the Sacco-Vanzetti trial. They came in late in the afternoon for tea before resting until the dinner hour, so that I had a thrilling visit with them. I consider this couple, wife as well as husband to have been among America's heroes. Six years and a half of facing death to spring upon them at any moment and yet to stay true to the trust.24

It will be remembered that Mrs. Putnam's brother, President A. L. Lowell of Harvard was one of the committee appointed by the Governor of Massachusetts to pass upon whether or not executive clemency should be exercised in the case. The committee reported it saw no reason for pardoning the men, and they were executed.25 It might be a trifle difficult for some people to see anything heroic

24. May 2, 1928. R.C.T.U.
25. Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were radicals accused of murdering a shoe factory paymaster and convicted on rather flimsy evidence. The higher courts refused to rehear the case. Liberal elements protested to the Governor and he appointed the committee to investigate. Slosson, *The Great Crusade*, 89-90.
in Judge Thayer's conduct of the trial, but Miss Alice always "thrilled" to reaction, and her sense of justice for people not descended from "nine Presbyterian ministers in a direct line" had atrophied from under-use long before she reached her seventy-fourth birthday.

Miss Alice summed up the political situation in 1928 in Oklahoma rather shrewdly in a letter to Mary Chandler Hale. Speaking of the State Convention she said:

I had to go because it is a very critical time in this state where the invisible empire has controlled politically and that it should have gone into the Al Smith column seems incredible. If they really do, as now seems probable, go that way it will mean Oklahoma going Republican as it did in 1920. Because Oklahoma is a dry state and a Protestant state, and while they may manage to cast the Smith vote in the Convention they can never carry him through any election in this state, because there are not enough wet Republicans to help them out.26

In their National Convention held June 12, 1928 in Kansas City, Missouri, the Republicans nominated Herbert Hoover for President on the first ballot. Senator Curtis won the second place. Miss Alice was writing for a Muskogee newspaper during the campaigns of 1928 under the heading "Miss Alice Says." She devoted a great deal of her space to political subjects, but did most of her active campaigning for the Republican ticket through personal letters and talks. She issued a circular letter to the members of the Presbyterian Church asking them not to let their Democratic Party affiliation betray them into voting for Catholicism. She warned them of the danger to the Church if Smith were elected. She mentioned, as she frequently did, that she was descended from nine Presbyterian ministers in a direct line, and consequently could not bear to think of

Catholicism triumphing in this nation where her forefathers had fought and died for the cause of religious liberty.\(^{27}\)

Herbert Hoover was elected and Miss Robertson's fears for the welfare of the nation subsided, but her own financial situation became increasingly precarious. Her work for the Oklahoma Historical Society was terminated in June of 1929 when the special appropriation which had been made by the Oklahoma legislature to pay her salary ran out and was not renewed.\(^{28}\)

This was quite a blow to Miss Alice, for meager as the salary was it had been something upon which she could depend. Now she had nothing except the occasional gifts of Mrs. Putnam and Georgia Robertson.\(^{29}\)

She had begun selling some of her many Indian curios and relics soon after the end of the 1924 campaign and was forced to part with more of them as the years went by. Some of them she literally "kissed goodbye" so difficult was it for her to part with them.\(^{30}\)

\(^{27}\) There is no date on the circular. It was this letter that prompted Sister Augusta to write the query mentioned in an earlier footnote, as to where she got the nine Presbyterian ministers in a direct line. R.C.T.U.

\(^{28}\) Letter, Judge R. L. Williams to Alice Robertson, November 27, 1929.

\(^{29}\) Letter, Alice Robertson to Georgia Robertson, January 11, 1929; letter, Jessie L. Mayo, Secretary to Mrs. Thaw, to Alice Robertson, December 15, 1928; letter, P. S. Space to Alice Robertson, June 29, 1929. Mrs. Thaw no longer contributed to her support for she had an accidental fall on some icy steps and lay bed-ridden and paralyzed for over a year before she died. Miss Robertson was on the list of beneficiaries of Mrs. Thaw's estate, but a note was found for some money Miss Alice had borrowed from Mrs. Thaw. This was for an amount greater than the benefit, so Miss Alice got nothing.

\(^{30}\) Letter, Alice Robertson to Elizabeth Putnam, March 1, 1928. This is a letter of thanks for a check at a time when Miss Alice said, "My bank balance was $1.14."
Soon after her seventy-fifth birthday anniversary Alice Robertson took another short excursion into the realm of Congressional politics. She wrote a friend:

On the 13'th day of January --- Sunday --- I got a wire from my friend Mrs. Putnam asking me to wire immediately if I would go to Washington to speak on Thursday, the 17'th before the House Committee, before whom the ubiquitous Maternity Bill was to have a hearing in the worst form in which it had ever been presented. I wired acceptance and made hasty preparations and left Monday night, reporting to Mrs. Putnam at the Mayflower Hotel on Wednesday night where I was her guest until after dinner Friday night. She added an extra fifty dollars to have a good time for a few days, so I changed from the Mayflower where fifty dollars looks like fifty cents out here to the comparatively moderate priced George Washington Inn, where I am quite at home . . . .

On the same subject Miss Robertson wrote Judge Williams:

In mid-January I went very unexpectedly to Washington. My friend, Mrs. William Lowell Putnam of Boston wiring me asking me to appear before the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee of the House, to speak against the Sheppard-Towner Bill, which by the action of a rampant minority of women job-holders and their friends seemed in danger of being reported favorably from the Committee in a far more unconstitutional and objectionable form than ever before. My expenses were all generously paid.

31. Letter, Alice Robertson to Coral ______, March 10, 1929. Last name not given, possibly Coral Noble, R.C.T.U. The measure in question was a revision of the Maternity Bill passed in 1921.

32. March 19, 1929, R.C.T.U. Mrs. Putnam's hatred of the "unconstitutional" and "objectionable" was not confined to the Maternity Bill. She wished to destroy the Children's Bureau which administered the provisions of the Sheppard-Towner Bill and did other welfare work for women and children. In 1927 she wrote Miss Robertson, "I was in Washington last week . . and I dined at the White House - at which time I took occasion to tell the President that I have a longing to do one more piece of work for my country before I die, and that is to be the Chief of the Children's Bureau in order that I might secure its abolishment. This I am not spreading, so keep it to yourself --- but if occasion should arise perhaps you will help me get the job." She felt that there would be less opposition if a woman recommended it than if the men arbitrarily abolished it. Again, May 22, 1928, Mrs. Putnam wrote urging (Continued on page 99)
Miss Alice seemed totally unaware of the way she was being used by Mrs. Putnam and what to her was "generosity," would be very niggardly payment indeed to most Washington lobbyists.

Mrs. Putnam's gifts were not sufficient for Miss Alice to live in comfort; since Miss Alice made no secret of her financial circumstances, the matter came to the attention of Mrs. Frank Korn, President of the Oklahoma Historical Society. Feeling the debt Oklahoma owed Miss Robertson historically, Mrs. Korn conceived the idea of raising a memorial fund of $50,000 for Miss Alice, the principal to be invested to yield two hundred dollars a month. Miss Alice was to have the interest on which to live, and upon her death the principal was to be used to construct a home for the aged needy, on her property as a memorial to her. Miss Robertson agreed to the plan and a contract was drawn up between her and the "Oklahoma Memorial Association," as Mrs. Korn called the organization she had effected to achieve her purpose. Under the terms of the contract Miss Alice was to deed her land to the Memorial Association in return for its assuming all her debts and paying her the two hundred dollars for the rest of her life.33

Mrs. Korn had already interested a number of her fellow members in the

32. (continued from page 98) Miss Alice to oppose the application of the General Federation of Women's Clubs for a new charter. She feared it would give them power "to do anything they thought for the public welfare --- and their ideas on that matter are highly objectionable - the Child Labor Amendment, Sheppard-Towner Act, etc." (the underlining is the writer's own). The words underlined probably explain the basis of Mrs. Putnam's opposition to the Children's Bureau. The Lowell wealth was largely founded on the cotton manufacturing mills of Lowell, Massachusetts.

33. Letter, Mrs. Korn to Alice Robertson, December 11, 1929. Copy of the contract between Alice Robertson and Oklahoma Memorial Association, December 13, 1929. R.C.T.U. Mrs. Korn, well known Club woman of El Reno, Oklahoma, was also prominent in the Democratic Party.
Oklahoma Historical Society in the project and now started the campaign to raise the funds. The movement never seemed to "catch on" and died a slow death despite Mrs. Korn's devoted efforts to make it succeed. This failure seems to have been due not so much to lack of appreciation of Oklahoma people for the part Miss Robertson had played in the history of the State, nor to Miss Robertson's lack of popular appeal, but to the general financial uncertainty and depression of the time. The campaign was started soon after the stock market crash in October of 1929, and the wealthy men who normally might have been expected to donate to such an undertaking were having troubles of their own.

Mrs. Korn blamed the failure of the project partly on the "politics" that either Lew H. Wentz or his supporters played with it. Just as the Association was getting started an article by Sigrid Arne appeared in the Oklahoma City Times telling about Miss Alice's financial difficulties. The leaders of the movement felt that this was all to the good, because it would be the means of interesting people in the movement, but much to their dismay the following day an article appeared in the Oklahoma News saying that millionaire oil man Lew Wentz learning of Miss Alice's need was taking care of her financially. Mrs. Korn knew such a story would harm the raising of funds for every one would think, "Let Lew do it," and would not give to the fund.

Mrs. Korn told the story in a letter to Miss Robertson:

34. December 9, 1929. Clipping, R.C.T.U.


36. Letter, Mrs. Frank Korn to Alice Robertson, December 24, 1929 R.C.T.U.
Mr. Herman Dittmer of El Reno is a member of our committee to organize and procure our fund. He is a close friend of Mr. Wentz and is boosting him for Governor. Mr. Dittmer phoned Mr. Wentz to see if the story appearing in the News was true. Mr. Dittmer told him what the Association was going to do, etc. Mr. Wentz said "I did not know of the movement of the Association - but it is good." He said, "I made no attempt to provide for the future of Miss Alice. When I read the story by Sigrid Arne in the Oklahoma City Times . . . I was surprised for I did not know Miss Alice to be so needy, so I told a man to look into the case and if interest or taxes were due on her property to see same was squared --- and to ascertain her direct need. Nothing more."

Again we feel better. We did not believe that if he knew of our organized effort in your behalf he would butt in. He won't either. He leaves for Washington D.C. tomorrow.³⁷

Contrary to his alleged statement, Wentz did know of Miss Alice's need long before, but apparently had chosen not to do anything about it. She had written him in 1926, giving him an itemized account of her assets and liabilities and asking him for help. Lew Wentz did not answer her letter until a year later when she wrote him again asking him to return the first letter as she had considered its contents confidential. Miss Alice apologized for burdening him with her "pressing need" and regretted asking him for the help he did not give. Wentz returned the letter she had written and explained his failure to answer by saying the letter had been overlooked on his desk among a number of others.³⁸

Mrs. Korn soon came to think that Wentz and his supporters were trying to get some free publicity for his candidacy for Governor of Oklahoma by playing up his generosity in providing for Miss Alice. She wrote Miss Robertson that

³⁷. December 12, 1929. R.C.T.U.

³⁸. Letter, Alice Robertson to Lew Wentz, September 28, 1927; letter, Lew Wentz to Alice Robertson, September 20, 1927. R.C.T.U.
Dittmer was a "deceiver and that he was the one who suggested to Wentz that he could get some valuable free publicity by aiding Miss Alice, that he hypocritically pretended to be working for the Association when all the time he was doing his best to defeat their object. "You were used as a football to further the candidacy of Wentz for Governor," she told Miss Alice. "I doubt there would have been the manifestation of generosity had he not been running for Governor."  

Miss Alice refused to accept this interpretation of Wentz's actions and her friendship with Mrs. Korn soon cooled. When Lew Wentz offered to send whatever amount of money he gave to Miss Alice through the Association as Mrs. Korn urged, Miss Robertson objected and asked him to send it direct to her for fear that the Association might use some of the money for expenses. He complied with her wishes and sent her one hundred dollars a month until her death. 

By the middle of March, 1930 Mrs. Korn had become discouraged and felt that there was no need to go on with the campaign. The Committee had received about $925. She asked Miss Robertson what she thought should be done with the money and indicated that because of illness she was ready to give up the struggle.

39. Letters, Mrs. Frank Korn to Alice Robertson, January 15, 1930; February 3, 1930. R.C.T.U.


41. Letter, Mrs. Frank Korn to Alice Robertson, March 12, 1930; letter, Elizabeth Putnam to Alice Robertson, February 10, 1930; letter, Will Rogers to Alice Robertson. R.C.T.U. Mrs. Putnam had contributed $500 of the amount. Will Rogers contributed but the amount is not mentioned.
There followed some disagreement about what should be done with the funds raised. Mrs. Korn thought since the money had been collected for the purpose of a memorial to Miss Alice the Association might be liable to legal action if it was turned over to Miss Robertson for living expenses. Miss Alice was not a little indignant that they proposed to "make a bust of me after I am dead . . . starved to death - I suppose," and wanted the money to pay some of her debts.\textsuperscript{42}

Miss Robertson suffered almost constant pain the last two years of her life with rheumatism in a dislocated cartilage of the knee. Hoping that the baths at Claremore, Oklahoma, might be beneficial to her injured knee, Miss Alice went there to live in the summer of 1930. She took a room in the Will Rogers Hotel and managed to live more comfortably than she could possibly have done in her home alone. Much of the time she was confined to her room unable to walk, but still interested in public affairs she went to Muskogee to be in her voting precinct during the November election.\textsuperscript{43}

Of this trip she wrote her sister Mrs. Moore:

\begin{quote}
I walked so much the four days that I was in Muskogee at election time, that I finished up my knee. When I got back to the Will Rogers that night I had to have two men practically carry me in.\textsuperscript{44}
\end{quote}

However when the new State Historical Building at Oklahoma City was to be dedicated, and Miss Alice was invited to be present and speak, she could not

\textsuperscript{42} Letter, Alice Robertson to John Dill, December 8, 1930. R.C.T.U.

\textsuperscript{43} Letter, Alice Robertson to Mrs. Korn, June 6, 1930.

\textsuperscript{44} December 6, 1930. R.C.T.U.
resist the temptation to go. By sheer will power and courage she went through an ordeal of suffering to make what proved to be her last public appearance. A letter she wrote to a friend upon her return reveals the extremity of pain which the appearance cost:

My stay in Oklahoma City of two days was of intense pain from the dislocated cartilage in my right knee. I had to be almost carried by two men up the side steps of the library auditorium . . . . I have been shut in ever since my return, some days not even leaving my room.

Pain or no pain when it came to politics Miss Alice was the same old "fire-eater." Of her speech she wrote:

My talk was entirely different from what I had intended it to be. After I heard an hour and a quarter of a tirade from Governor-elect Murray, I made mine quite brief, taking occasion to say that because of the generosity of Lew Wentz, I was prevented from financial suffering, as every body else who had proffered help had fallen by the wayside. His name came in for ringing applause. Murray is so deaf I am sure he did not know what it was about.

Apparently Miss Robertson felt no gratitude for Mrs. Korn's efforts on her behalf. She continued:

I had nothing much to say to Mrs. Korn, beyond expressing very emphatically what I thought of T. P. Gore, whose campaign manager she had been in her district. The trouble with her is that unless she sees some glory for herself she is not interested. 45

Alice Robertson's last Christmas was made glad by the bringing in of a gas well on her land. Her royalty check was small but it meant a great deal to Miss Alice in increased comfort and freedom from worry. 46 No amount of money

45. Letter, Alice Robertson to H. W. Gibson, November 28, 1930. R.C.T.U. Governor William H. Murray and Lew Wentz were bitter political enemies.
46. Letter, Alice Robertson to Jack and Jane, December 23, 1930. R.C.T.U. The first check was for one hundred sixty dollars. The succeeding ones around one hundred dollars.
however could purchase her freedom from pain. Her health grew steadily worse and early in 1931 she was granted admittance to the Veterans' Hospital at Muskogee.\footnote{Miss Robertson, because of her work among the Rough Riders had been a member of Milo Hendrix Post, Veterans of Spanish American War, and this entitled her to entrance.} Here it was discovered that she had a cancerous growth on her jaw.

Many friends hastened to show their affection and respect for the gallant old lady, and her last days were made as pleasant as possible by visits, flowers, and remembrances of various kinds. She died July 1, 1931, and was buried in Green Hill Cemetery, Muskogee.\footnote{Muskogee Daily Phoenix, July 2, 1931.} In life, Alice Robertson seemed an alien in the State of her birth, but in Death her ashes were mingled with her native soil and she became at last a part of Oklahoma.

With all due respect and admiration for the many good qualities of Alice M. Robertson, she, nevertheless presents the strange spectacle of the New England Evangelistic Spirit trying to walk the thorny path of Politics. Although she found the going extremely difficult at times, she was always sustained by the fact that her Calvinistic God and the "Best People" walked with her every step of the way. The one gave her strength to endure; the other doled out the means for physical sustenance.

So far as lasting benefits to her state and nation are concerned the political career of Alice M. Robertson seems trivial and empty; but she gained so many distinctions in her long life, and made such valuable contributions to Indian education and missions that, historically, her memory is worth preserving.
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