

**MINNESOTA'S FIRST CONGRESSWOMAN**

**Oklee Teacher Can't Believe It's True**

By MIRIAM ALBURN  
Minneapolis Tribune Staff Writer

OKLEE, MINN.—Mrs. Coya Knutson, the first woman Minnesota voters ever have elected to congress, leaned her elbows on the kitchen shelf by the telephone and laughed with excitement.

It was 1 p.m. Wednesday, and until 15 minutes before, when Rep. Harold Hagen (R., Minn.), conceded defeat after 12 years in Washington for the ninth district, Mrs. Knutson had hardly let herself believe she was winning.

**THAT PHONE** kept clanging in the light, roomy kitchen of Andy's hotel, a 50-year-old boxy white frame building on Main street in Oklee (population 494). Oklee is 25 miles east of Red Lake Falls in northwestern Minnesota.

Andy—Mrs. Knutson's husband, Andrew—kept walking back and forth across the living room looking pleased. He's the person who first got her interested in politics, she said.

Terry, 14, the Knutsons' son, who'd been up all night with everybody else, kept running in from the radio with more figures on returns. Friends and other relatives milled around

Oklee, which is mostly Main street plus the railroad depot and grain elevators seen out the hotel's kitchen windows, turned out a 100 per cent vote Tuesday, for the first time in history. The judges counted all night in the village hall and came up with 169 votes for Knutson and 72 for Hagen.

**"THEY SAID** I got every county in the district but Otter Tail (the Fergus Falls area)," Coya said, still sounding a little incredulous.

"I did a lot of campaigning down there. They never even heard the Democratic side of the story before."

Coya is 42, has blue eyes, short blondish hair, a hearty voice and an endless supply of energy. She likes to be called "Coya," which is a childhood nickname for her real name, Cornelia.

She did a lot of campaigning everywhere in her 15-county territory. It runs from the northwestern corner of the state south about 200 miles.

Since the consolidated school in Oklee let out last June and

the candidate gave up teaching for the first time in 14 years, she has whipped up and down those counties.

**SHE MADE** every fair, every pickle festival, every corn festival, every market day that came along.

"Out of thousands I met this summer, only about a dozen didn't want to stop and talk," she said.

She greeted farmers in their dairy barns at 5 a.m. She walked across fields to talk politics to men on combines. She knocked on kitchen doors and talked to their wives.

"They liked it," she said. "They thought, 'If you're going to work that hard here, you'll work in Washington.'"

Coya Knutson never was very active in politics till she decided to run for the state legislature four years ago.

**TWO YEARS AGO** she got the highest vote ever given a legislative candidate in her three-county district.

And this time she unseated the Crookston congressman who went in as the last Farmer-Labor candidate in the state

Mrs. Knutson

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sary to control the house, which numbers 131.

State Rep. D. D. Wozniak, St. Paul attorney who has been secretary of the Liberal Legislators' Campaign committee that did a great deal toward winning more seats in rural districts, said yesterday that 64 members already are lined up to caucus with the liberals.



"We arrived at this total without having heard from at least eight 'good' districts which should produce more liberals," Wozniak said.

It was likely that Wozniak, who was slated to be liberal leader two years ago and then stepped aside for Rep. Fred A. Cina, Aurora, will become majority leader if the liberals take control.

Wozniak yesterday called a liberal caucus to meet in St. Paul Nov. 13.

According to results tabulated on unofficial returns from around the state, liberals picked up 20 seats which were

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**COYA KNUTSON, NINTH DISTRICT WINNER**  
The phone kept ringing in her Oklee home

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