Governor Arthur Capper's slackers file

Section 2, Pages 31 - 60

During American involvement in World War I, Kansas Governor Arthur Capper kept this file of correspondence on suspected German sympathizers and persons thought to be disloyal to the U.S. government. Such persons were commonly referred to as "slackers." The file includes letters from Kansas residents informing the governor of suspected sympathizers or dissidents, letters from Governor Capper to accused residents, letters from accused residents to the governor denying such charges, and letters between the governor's office and various local and federal agencies. Early and widespread, public opposition to American involvement in WWI gave way to fervent patriotism and intolerance of dissent shortly after America entered the conflict in April of 1917. Several federal initiatives under President Woodrow Wilson (such as the Committee on Public Information, the Espionage Act of 1917, and the Sedition Act of 1918) contributed to the domestic war hysteria and placed severe limits on individual civil liberties.

Creator: Kansas. Governor (1915-1919: Capper)

Date: 1917-1918

Callnumber: Governor's Papers, Governor Arthur Capper, Correspondence Files, Alphabetical File Box 36 Folder 11

KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 212615

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October 29, 1917.

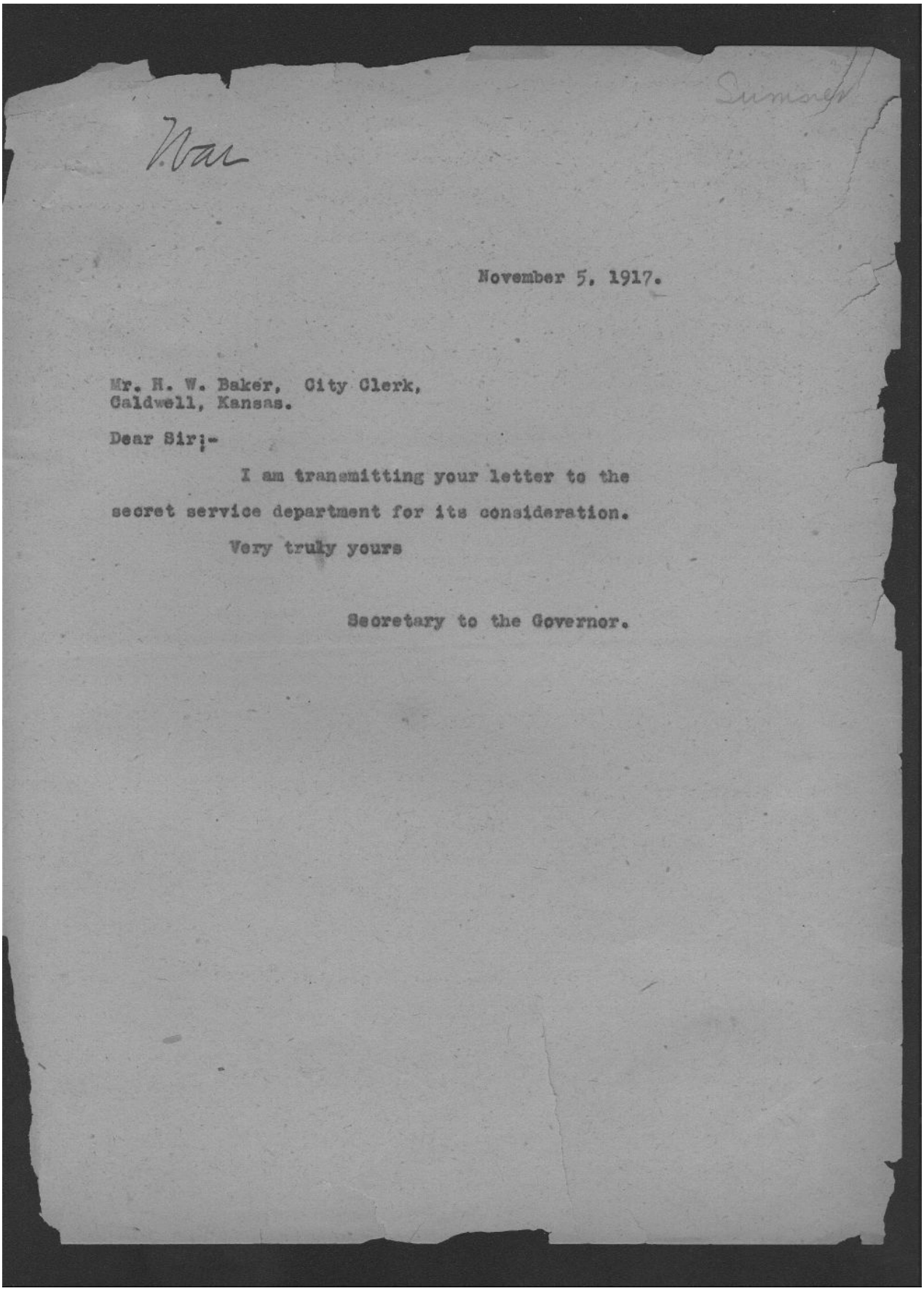
Rev. H. W. Todd,
Altemont, Kansas.

Dear Sir:-

In reply to your letter of October 26, I desire to say that if you will send the name of that farmer to Hon. Fred Robertson, U. S. District Attorney, Kansas City, Kansas. He will look after the matter. Probably the farmer will change his mind and decide that he does care something for the American government.

Very truly yours

Secretary to the Governor.



Nov

Summons

November 5, 1917.

Mr. H. W. Baker, City Clerk,
Caldwell, Kansas.

Dear Sir:-

I am transmitting your letter to the secret service department for its consideration.

Very truly yours

Secretary to the Governor.

FIRST DIVISION.
KANSAS CITY—Second Monday in January and first Monday in October.
TOPEKA—Second Monday in April.
LEAVENWORTH—Second Monday in October.
SALINA—Second Monday in May.
SECOND DIVISION
WICHITA—Second Mondays in March and September.
THIRD DIVISION.
FORT SCOTT—First Monday in May and second Monday in November.

Department of Justice.

United States Attorney's Office,
District of Kansas.

Kansas City, Kans.,

October 30th, 1918.

Hon. Arthur Capper,
Governor,
Topeka, Kansas.

Dear Sir:--

This will acknowledge with thanks receipt of your favor of October 25th, addressed to Mr. Robertson, enclosing letter from Fostoria, Kansas. This matter will receive prompt attention by this Department.

Respectfully yours,

Arthur J. Mellott.

ARTHUR J. MELLOTT,
ASSISTANT U. S. ATTORNEY.

AJM:FH.

November 5, 1917.

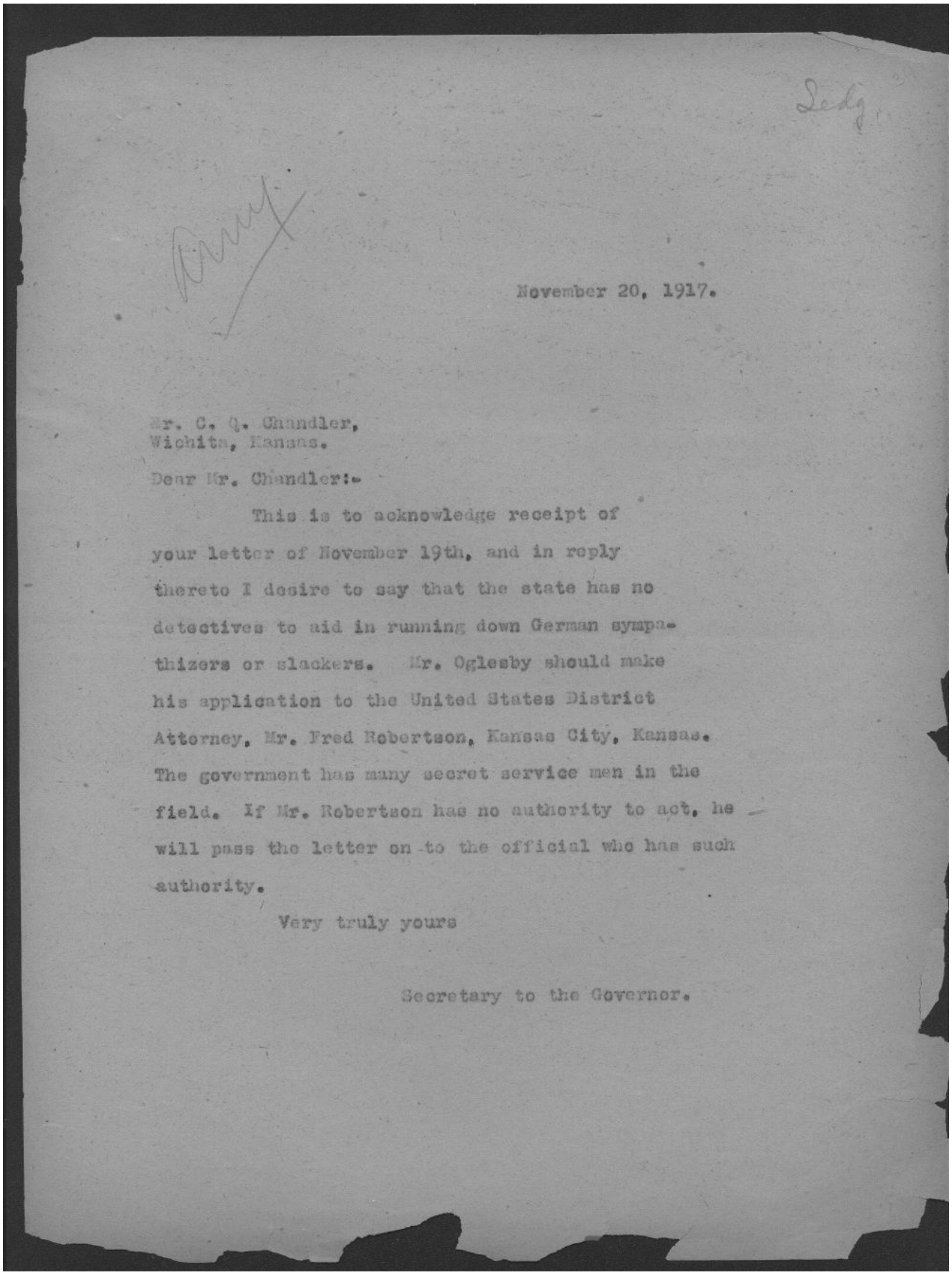
Hon. Fred Robertson, U. S. District Attorney,
Kansas City, Kansas.

Dear Fred:-

Here are some letters you might like to look after right away.

Very truly yours

Secretary to the Governor.



Ledg.

November 20, 1917.

Mr. C. Q. Chandler,
Wichita, Kansas.

Dear Mr. Chandler:-

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of November 19th, and in reply thereto I desire to say that the state has no detectives to aid in running down German sympathizers or slackers. Mr. Oglesby should make his application to the United States District Attorney, Mr. Fred Robertson, Kansas City, Kansas. The government has many secret service men in the field. If Mr. Robertson has no authority to act, he will pass the letter on to the official who has such authority.

Very truly yours

Secretary to the Governor.

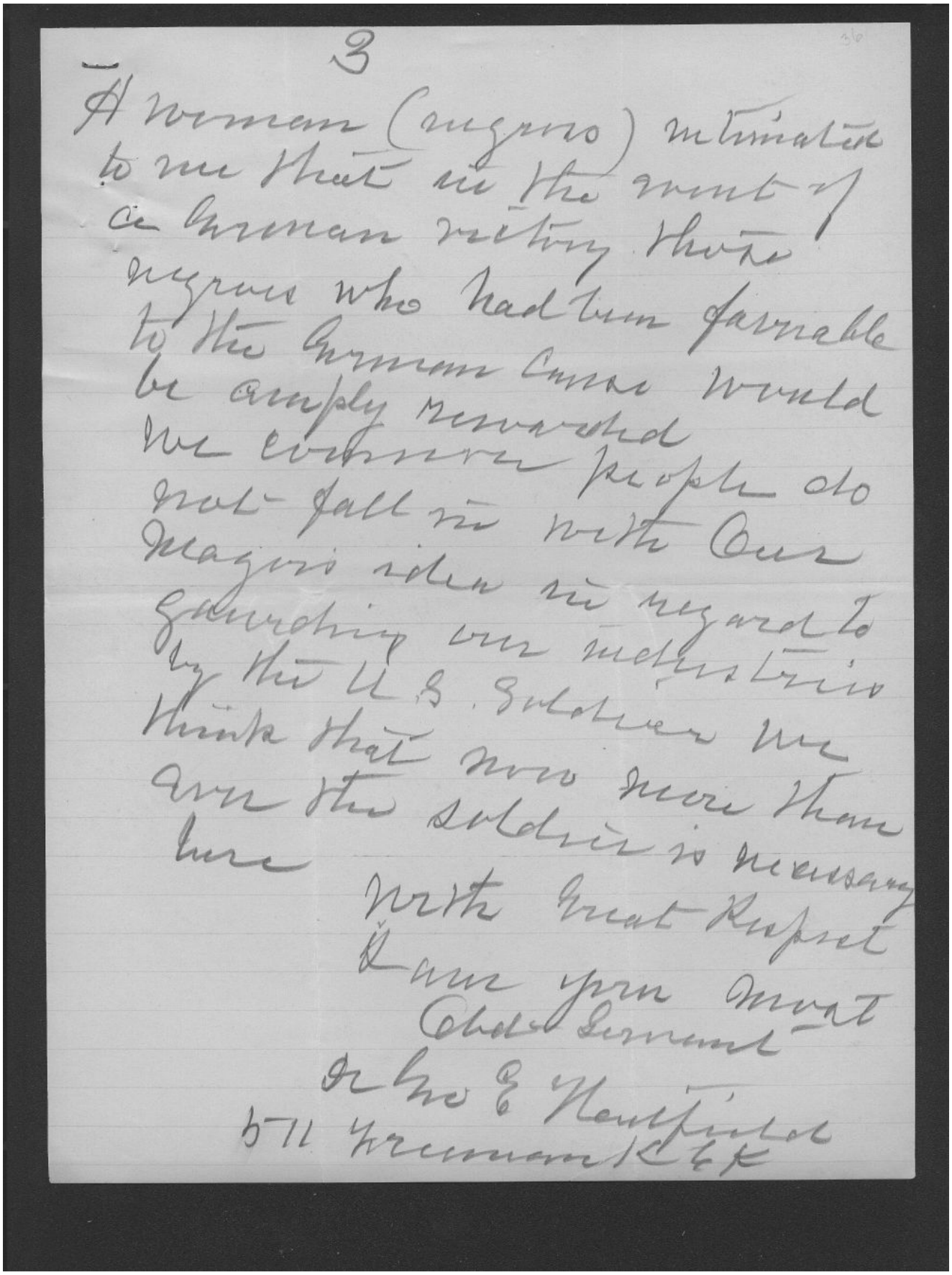
2711 Freeman ave
Kansas City Kansas
DEC 4th 1917

To His Excellency Arthur Capper
Governor State
Topeka Kansas

Dear Sir Wish to Your Duty
I wrote you several letters
which note will recall & by
your excellency Me ill health
brought caused me to remove
to this city & am now engaged
in the manufacture of medicine
under the serial number 57788
pure food & Drug department
Washington D C.
On my visit to remove
to this city I am much

2

that gives me a tolerably clear understanding of war sentiment among the middle & lower classes. The negro element is a tolerably correct barometer of the purposes of the L. P. N. citizen. The negro always alive to self protection has learned that an attempt will be made in the near future to destroy many of our industries which have been influenced by the German to aid & abet the German policy by always speaking in their favor. & reporting in a German victory



3

A woman (negro) intimates to me that in the event of a draft many negroes who had been favorable to the German cause would be amply rewarded for enlisting people do not fall in with our plans in regard to by the U.S. Soldiers We think that now more than ever the soldiers is necessary here

With Great Respect
Yours truly
Chas Lemmon
Dr Chas E Hartsfield
571 Freeman K C Kan

December 4, 1917.

Hon. Fred Robertson, U. S. District Attorney,
Kansas City, Kansas.

Dear Fred:-

I was talking with J. T. Moore of Pittsburg Saturday. He is owner of the Pittsburg Headlight and one of the big men of that town. He said he might see you Monday. If he did not, I want to suggest that you get in touch with him in regard to some secret service work in the coal fields. He seems to think that you should put a secret service man down there who could talk German. The man should be A-1 in every respect. I believe it would be to the interest of the government if you could do what Mr. Moore thinks ought to be done in that section.

I am enclosing you a letter from Gaylord, Kansas. It looks as though a secret servive man was needed doen there.

Very truly yours

Secretary to the Governor.

Crawf 38

FIRST DIVISION
Kansas City—Second Monday in January and first Monday in October.
Topeka—Second Monday in April.
Leavenworth—Second Monday in October.
Salina—Second Monday in May.
SECOND DIVISION
Wichita—Second Mondays in March and September.
THIRD DIVISION
Fort Scott—First Monday in May and second Monday in November.

Department of Justice

United States Attorney's Office

District of Kansas

Kansas City, Kansas,
December 5th, 1917.

Hon. Charles H. Sessions,
Secretary to the Governor,
Topeka, Kansas.

Dear Charley:

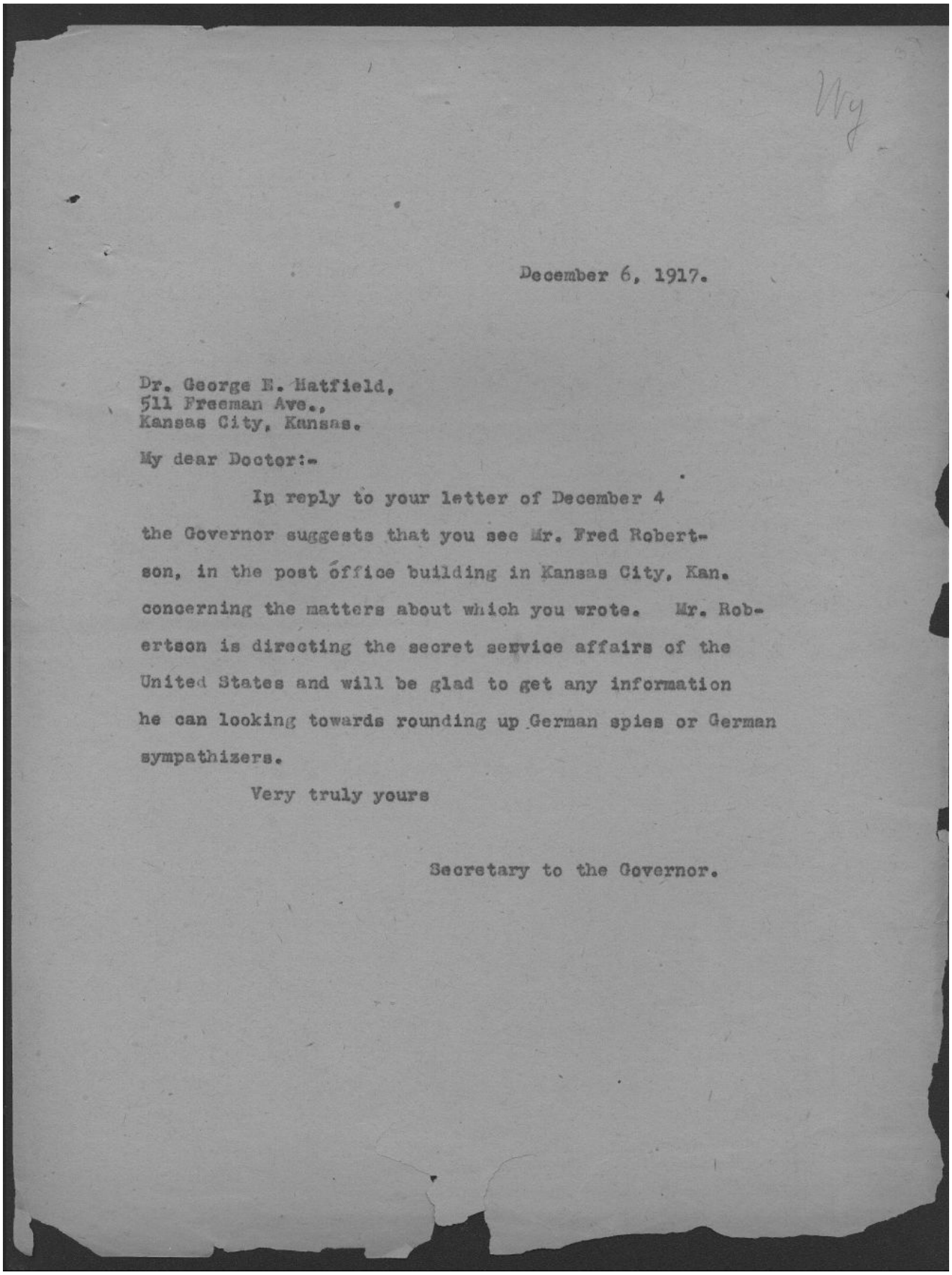
I have yours of the fourth instant, concerning Doc Moore, of Pittsburg. I regret to say he did not call at the office, and therefore I am writing him urging a very full and detailed report upon the condition he refers to. You will understand in these matters we do not feel warranted in sending out Government investigators unless we have in advance sufficient information to warrant us in assuming that they will probably find when they do go that the law has been violated in some way. There are so many demands for this kind of work that we find it is absolutely necessary to limit the sending out of men to these cases where we know or have reason to believe in advance that the case is meritorious. I have no doubt I will soon hear from Mr. Moore.

Respectfully yours,

Fred Robertson

United States Attorney.

FR-WS.



Wy

December 6, 1917.

Dr. George E. Hatfield,
511 Freeman Ave.,
Kansas City, Kansas.

My dear Doctor:-

In reply to your letter of December 4 the Governor suggests that you see Mr. Fred Robertson, in the post office building in Kansas City, Kan. concerning the matters about which you wrote. Mr. Robertson is directing the secret service affairs of the United States and will be glad to get any information he can looking towards rounding up German spies or German sympathizers.

Very truly yours

Secretary to the Governor.

Slackers

April 29, 1918.

Miss Hazel Brightweier,

Clay Center, Kansas.

Dear Miss Brightweier:--

The Governer directs me to acknowledge receipt of your letter of April 22, and to thank you for the information it contained.

These are times when we cannot condone any lack of patriotism or loyalty on the part of any citizen. We want no slackers in Kansas.

It is the duty of every citizen to give his wholehearted support to the Government, and the case you mention will have attention at the hands of the proper authorities.

Yours respectfully,

Secretary to the Governor.

April 30, 1918.

Mrs. Hattie Wootan,
Pittsburg, Kansas.

Dear Mrs. Wootan:-

I have your letter of April 26 and thank you very much for the information it contains. I will see that this information is placed in the hands of the proper authorities and that prompt investigation is made into the case you mention.

I appreciate your patriotic interest, and with kind regards, I am

Very respectfully

Governor.

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April 25, 1918.

Mr. J.F. Feigley,
Enterprise, Kansas.

My dear Mr. Fiegley:-

I have been informed by neighbors of yours that, although you are amply able to do so, you have refused to invest in the ~~Third~~ Fourth Liberty Loan, and I am writing to inquire if my information is correct.

It surely cannot be that your sympathies are not with your Government in our great fight for humanity. It surely cannot be that you are disloyal to the Government which has done so much for you. It surely cannot be that you are a slacker who is willing to let others bear the entire brunt of this fight, - to carry the whole burden under which the world now groans. Surely your sympathies are not with the autocratic tyrants of Prussia. Surely you are not indifferent to the fate of the hundreds of thousands of American boys who are going to the trenches in France and Belgium.

That being the case, you must resolve to make the utmost sacrifice to help your Government in this war. Throughout Kansas and the entire nation men and women of small means, girls working on small salaries, are sacrificing pleasures, comforts and even necessities in order to lend their money to the Government. You cannot be a man and do less.

I am writing you, not in an official capacity, but as a citizen of Kansas who earnestly desires to see not a single slacker within the boundaries of our state. You must do your part. You cannot afford to be known in your community as a disloyal, undesirable citizen.

Please let me hear from you at your earliest convenience.

Respectfully yours,

Governor.

April 25, 1918.

Mr. Gust. Holmdahl,
Enterprise, Kansas.

My dear Mr. Holmdahl:-

I am advised by citizens of Enterprise that you have on hand several thousand bushels of wheat which you have refused to dispose of in accordance with the request of the United States Government. I do not believe that you realize the position this puts you in in your own community, or the light it throws upon you as a citizen of this great republic which has been so good to you. You have made your home here, you have prospered, and it is as little as you can do now to make every effort you can to help this nation in its great struggle.

I am told, too, that while you are a wealthy man, you have refused to buy Liberty Loan Bonds. I hope this report is not true. All over the nation men of small means, girls working on meagre salaries, are sacrificing pleasures, comforts and oftentimes actual necessities in order to help the Government. You certainly do not want to put yourself in the light of being a slacker or a disloyal citizen, and I beg you to reconsider your decision and to make at once a liberal investment for your country's good.

I am writing you, not in an official capacity, and with no intention of threatening you, but I am sure you cannot afford to be known among the good people of your community as a disloyal citizen. And the man who fails in his duty at this time certainly will be remembered for all time as an undesirable citizen.

I shall be glad to hear from you, and I trust that I have been misinformed; or that, before this letter reaches you, you will have experienced a change of heart and are willing to do your part to hasten the triumph of Liberty throughout the world.

Respectfully yours,

Governor.

April 25, 1918.

Mr. Axel Carlson,
Enterprise, Kansas.

My dear Mr. Carlson:-

I am advised by citizens of Enterprise that you have on hand several thousand bushels of wheat which you have refused to dispose of in accordance with the request of the United States Government. I do not believe that you realize the position this puts you in in your own community, or the light it throws upon you as a citizen of this great republic which has been so good to you. You have made your home here, you have prospered, and it is as little as you can do now to make every effort you can to help this nation in its great struggle.

I am told, too, that while you are a wealthy man, you have refused to buy Liberty Loan Bonds. I hope this report is not true. All over the nation men of small means, girls working on meagre salaries, are sacrificing pleasures, comforts and oftentimes actual necessities in order to help the Government. You certainly do not want to put yourself in the light of being a slacker or a disloyal citizen, and I beg you to reconsider your decision and to make at once a liberal investment for your country's good.

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I shall be glad to hear from you, and I trust that I have been misinformed; or that, before this letter reaches you, you will have experienced a change of heart and are willing to do your part to hasten the triumph of Liberty throughout the world.

Respectfully yours,

Governor.

April 25, 1918.

Mr. Arthur B. Howson,
Hoffman Mills,
Enterprise, Kansas.

Dear Sir:-

I thank you for your letter of the 23rd, and will investigate the situation which you report. Undoubtedly Messrs. Carlson and Holmdahl will have to dispose of their wheat at market price, and I think we can induce them to invest in bonds.

Thanking you for the patriotic interest you have shown in the matter I am,

Respectfully yours,

Governor.

Slackers

April 30, 1918.

Mrs I. K. Caughey,
Asherville, Kansas.

Dear Mrs. Caughey:--

I have your letter of April 24, and thank you for the information it contained.

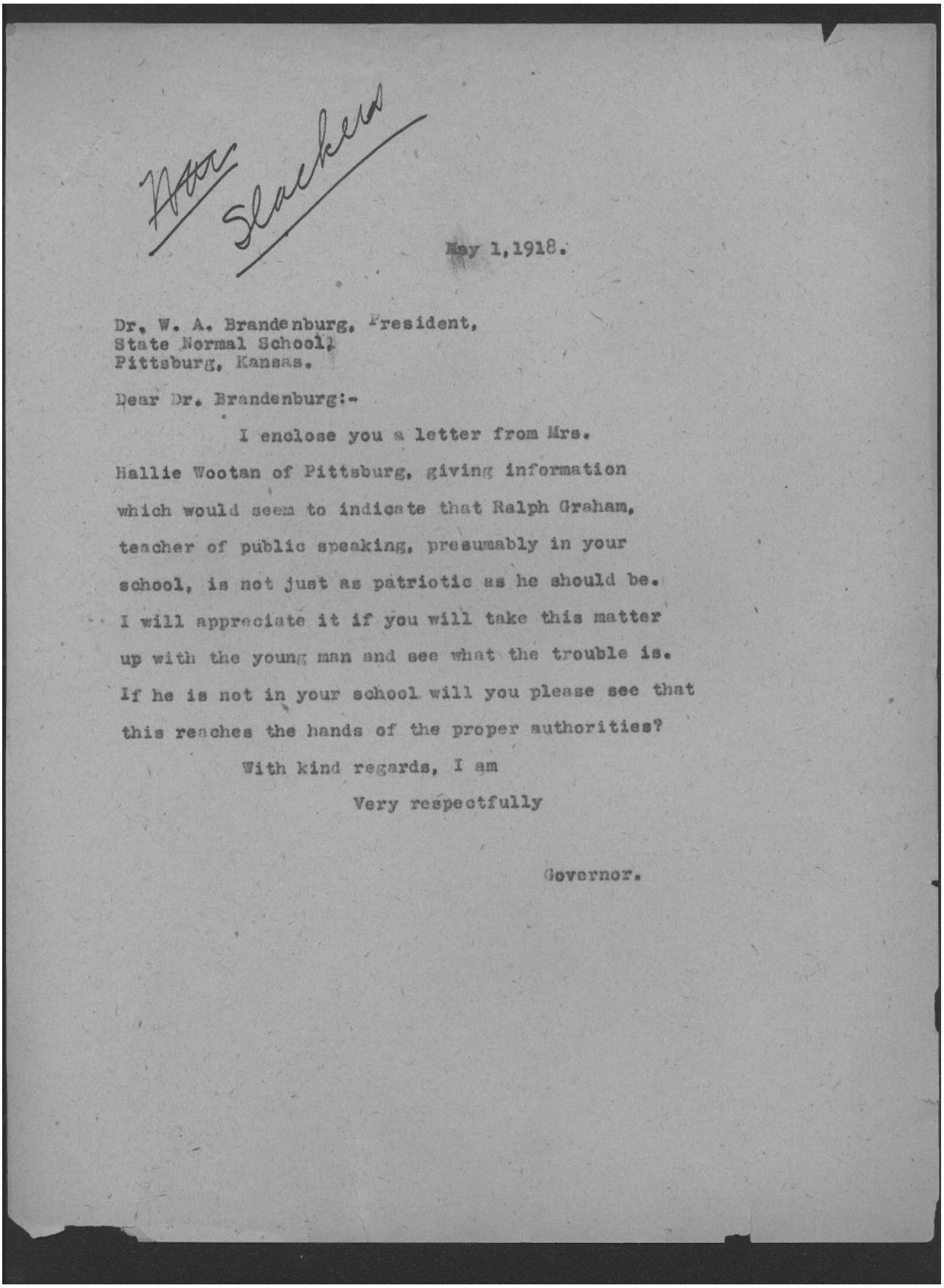
These are times when we can condone no lack of patriotism and loyalty on the part of any citizen.

We want no slackers in Kansas. It is the duty of every citizen to give his wholehearted support to the Government's program in this war, and the instance you mention will have attention at the hands of proper authorities.

Appreciating your patriotic interest, I am

Very respectfully,

Governor.



Hon. Slackers

May 1, 1918.

Dr. W. A. Brandenburg, President,
State Normal School,
Pittsburg, Kansas.

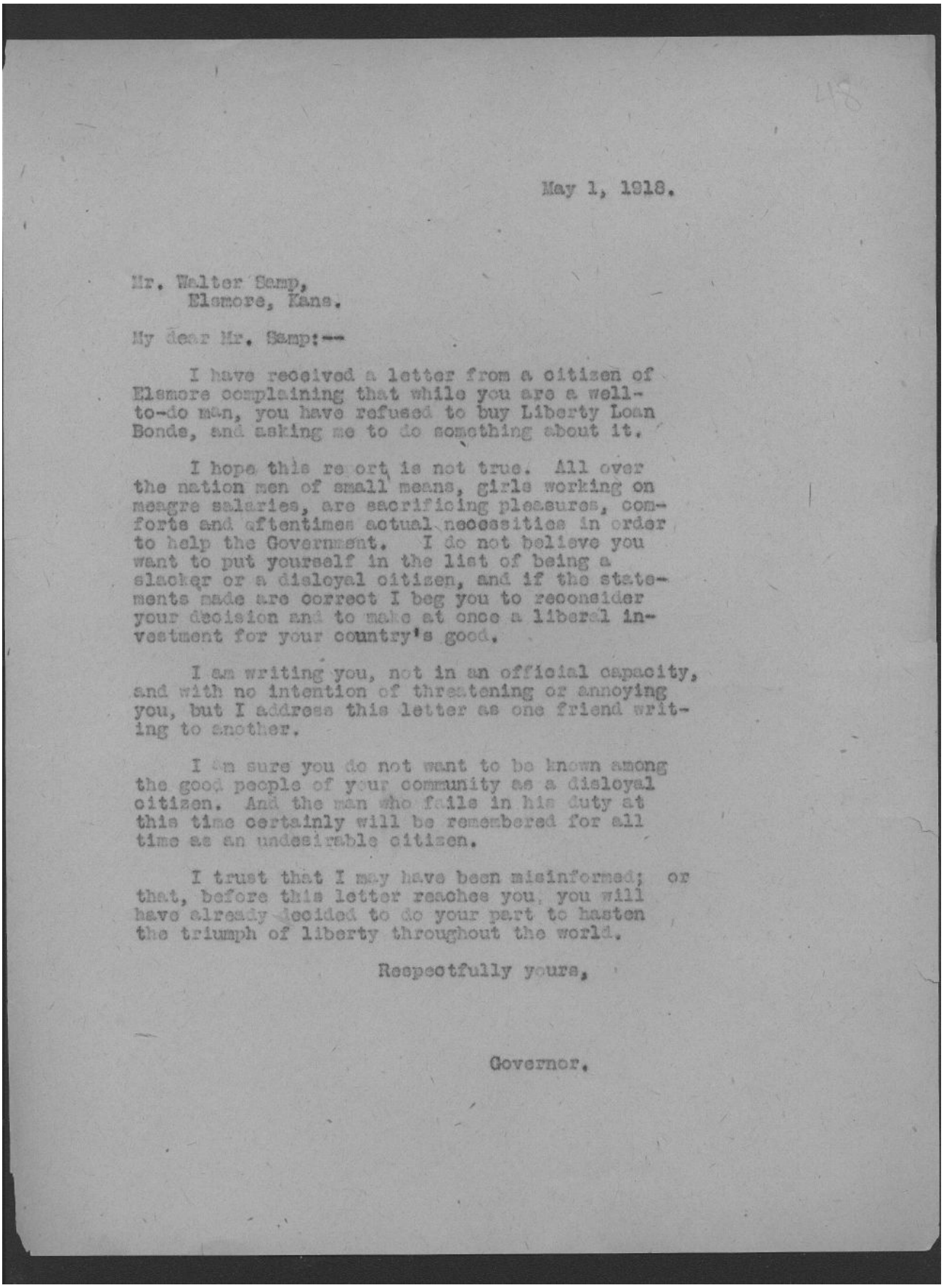
Dear Dr. Brandenburg:-

I enclose you a letter from Mrs. Hallie Wootan of Pittsburg, giving information which would seem to indicate that Ralph Graham, teacher of public speaking, presumably in your school, is not just as patriotic as he should be. I will appreciate it if you will take this matter up with the young man and see what the trouble is. If he is not in your school will you please see that this reaches the hands of the proper authorities?

With kind regards, I am

Very respectfully

Governor.



May 1, 1918.

Mr. Walter Samp,
Elsmore, Kans.

My dear Mr. Samp:--

I have received a letter from a citizen of Elsmore complaining that while you are a well-to-do man, you have refused to buy Liberty Loan Bonds, and asking me to do something about it.

I hope this report is not true. All over the nation men of small means, girls working on meagre salaries, are sacrificing pleasures, comforts and oftentimes actual necessities in order to help the Government. I do not believe you want to put yourself in the list of being a slacker or a disloyal citizen, and if the statements made are correct I beg you to reconsider your decision and to make at once a liberal investment for your country's good.

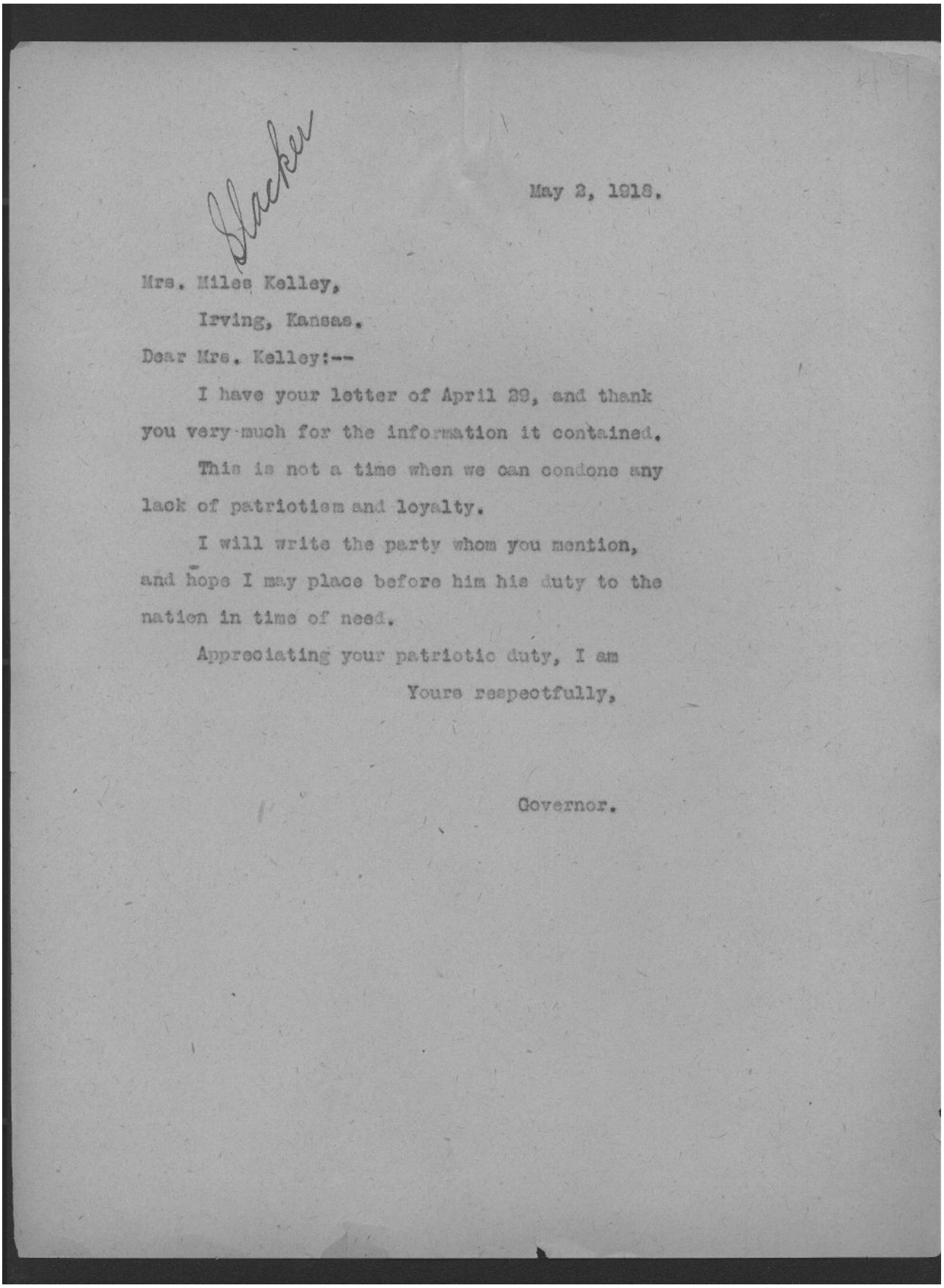
I am writing you, not in an official capacity, and with no intention of threatening or annoying you, but I address this letter as one friend writing to another.

I am sure you do not want to be known among the good people of your community as a disloyal citizen. And the man who fails in his duty at this time certainly will be remembered for all time as an undesirable citizen.

I trust that I may have been misinformed; or that, before this letter reaches you, you will have already decided to do your part to hasten the triumph of liberty throughout the world.

Respectfully yours,

Governor.



Slacker

May 2, 1918.

Mrs. Miles Kelley,

Irving, Kansas.

Dear Mrs. Kelley:--

I have your letter of April 29, and thank you very much for the information it contained.

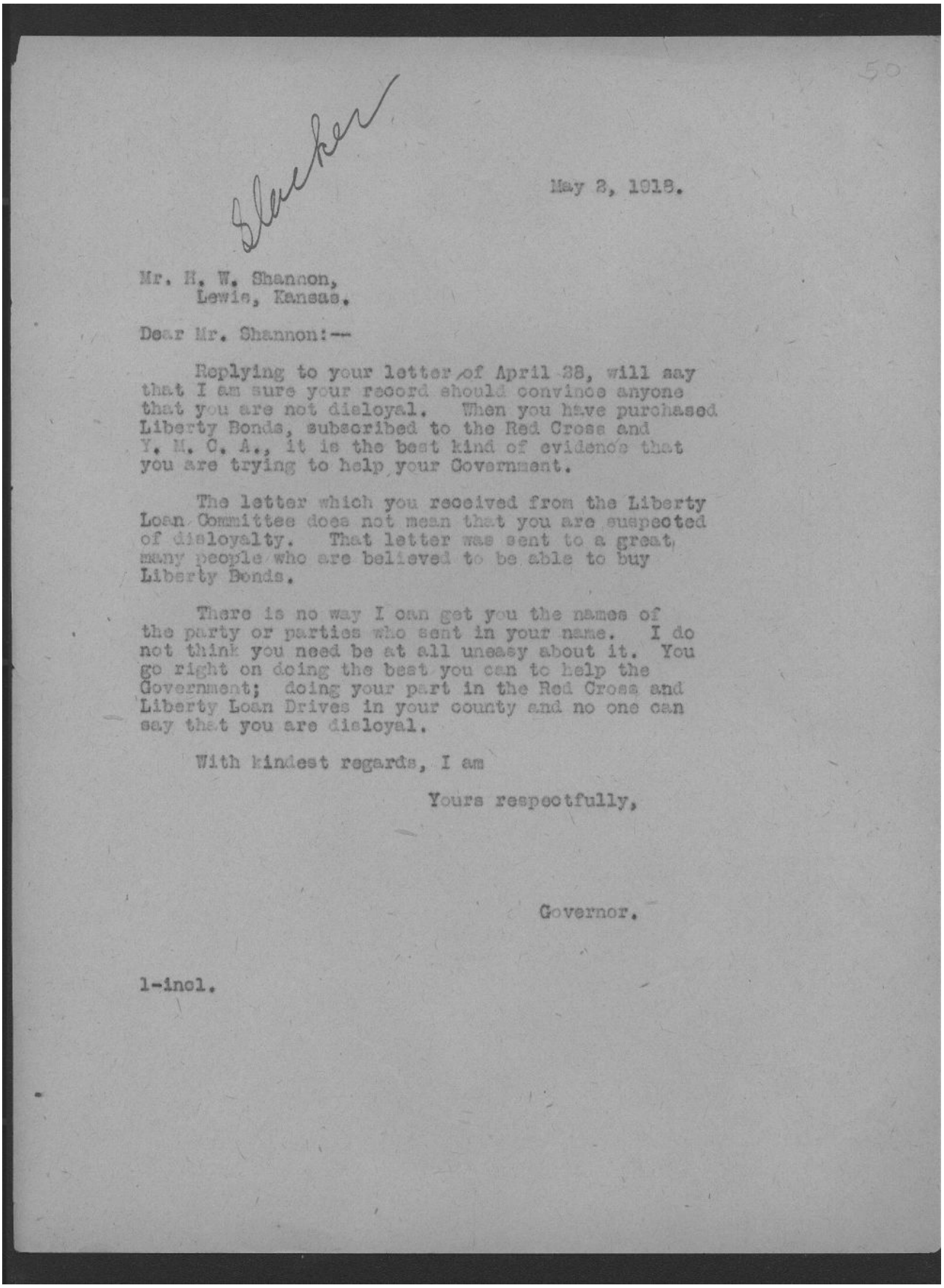
This is not a time when we can condone any lack of patriotism and loyalty.

I will write the party whom you mention, and hope I may place before him his duty to the nation in time of need.

Appreciating your patriotic duty, I am

Youre respectfully,

Governor.



Slacker

May 8, 1918.

Mr. H. W. Shannon,
Lewis, Kansas.

Dear Mr. Shannon:--

Replying to your letter of April 38, will say that I am sure your record should convince anyone that you are not disloyal. When you have purchased Liberty Bonds, subscribed to the Red Cross and Y. M. C. A., it is the best kind of evidence that you are trying to help your Government.

The letter which you received from the Liberty Loan Committee does not mean that you are suspected of disloyalty. That letter was sent to a great many people who are believed to be able to buy Liberty Bonds.

There is no way I can get you the names of the party or parties who sent in your name. I do not think you need be at all uneasy about it. You go right on doing the best you can to help the Government; doing your part in the Red Cross and Liberty Loan Drives in your county and no one can say that you are disloyal.

With kindest regards, I am

Yours respectfully,

Governor.

1-incl.

Slacker

May 8, 1918.

Mr. Will Lilley,
Irving, Kansas.

My dear Mr. Lilley:--

I have received a letter from a citizen of Irving complaining that while you are a well-to-do man, you have refused to buy Liberty Loan Bonds, and asking me to do something about it.

I hope this report is not true. All over the nation men of small means, girls working on meagre salaries, are sacrificing pleasures, comforts and oftentimes actual necessities in order to help the Government. I do not believe you want to put yourself in the list of being a slacker or a disloyal citizen, and if the statements made are correct I beg you to reconsider your decision and to make at once a liberal investment for your country's good.

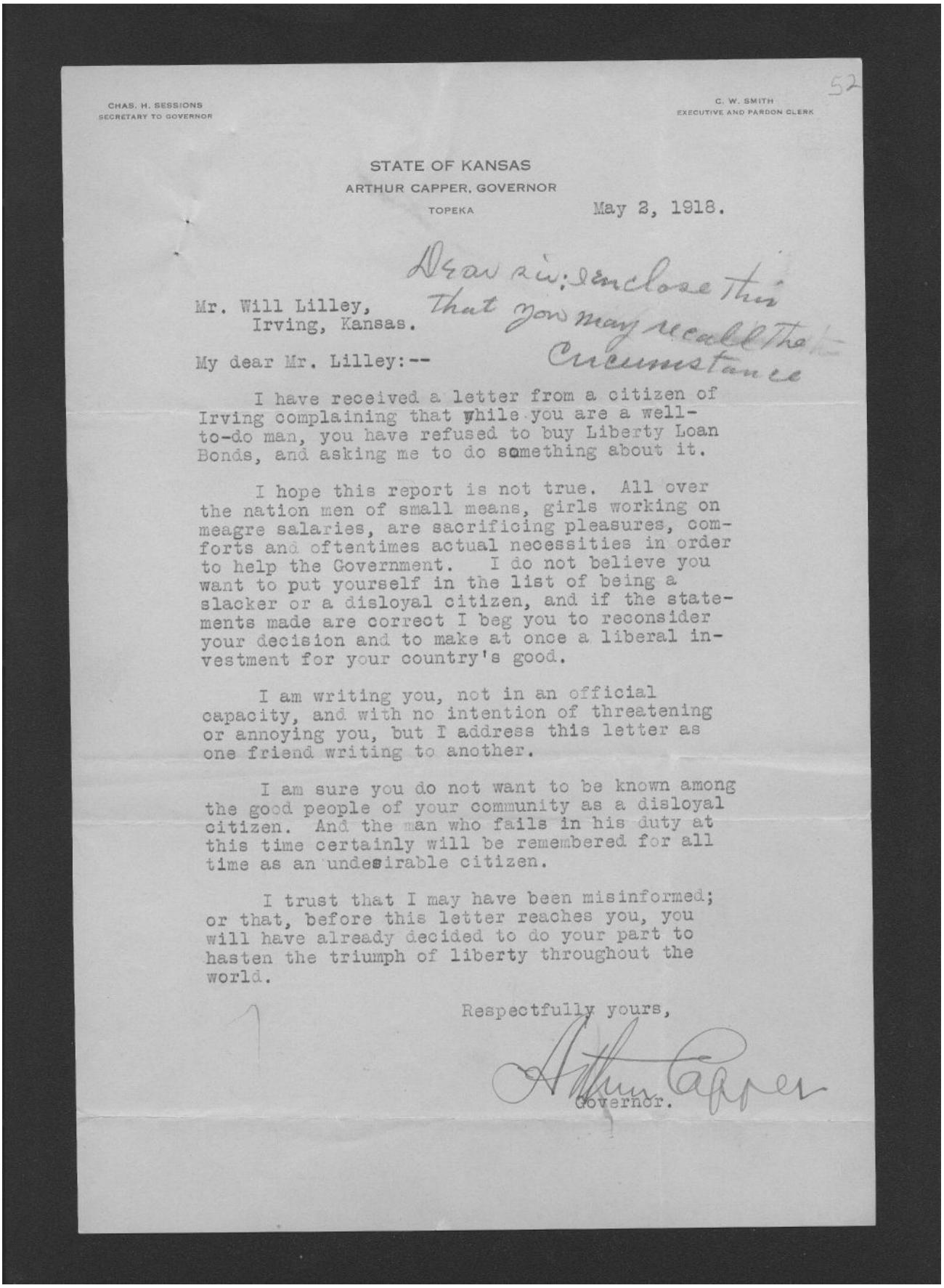
I am writing you, not in an official capacity, and with no intention of threatening or annoying you, but I address this letter as one friend writing to another.

I am sure you do not want to be known among the good people of your community as a disloyal citizen. And the man who fails in his duty at this time certainly will be remembered for all time as an undesirable citizen.

I trust that I may have been misinformed; or that, before this letter reaches you, you will have already decided to do your part to hasten the triumph of liberty throughout the world.

Respectfully yours,

Governor.



52

CHAS. H. SESSIONS
SECRETARY TO GOVERNOR

C. W. SMITH
EXECUTIVE AND PARDON CLERK

STATE OF KANSAS
ARTHUR CAPPER, GOVERNOR
TOPEKA

May 2, 1918.

Dear Sir: I enclose this that you may recall that Circumstance

Mr. Will Lilley,
Irving, Kansas.

My dear Mr. Lilley:--

I have received a letter from a citizen of Irving complaining that while you are a well-to-do man, you have refused to buy Liberty Loan Bonds, and asking me to do something about it.

I hope this report is not true. All over the nation men of small means, girls working on meagre salaries, are sacrificing pleasures, comforts and oftentimes actual necessities in order to help the Government. I do not believe you want to put yourself in the list of being a slacker or a disloyal citizen, and if the statements made are correct I beg you to reconsider your decision and to make at once a liberal investment for your country's good.

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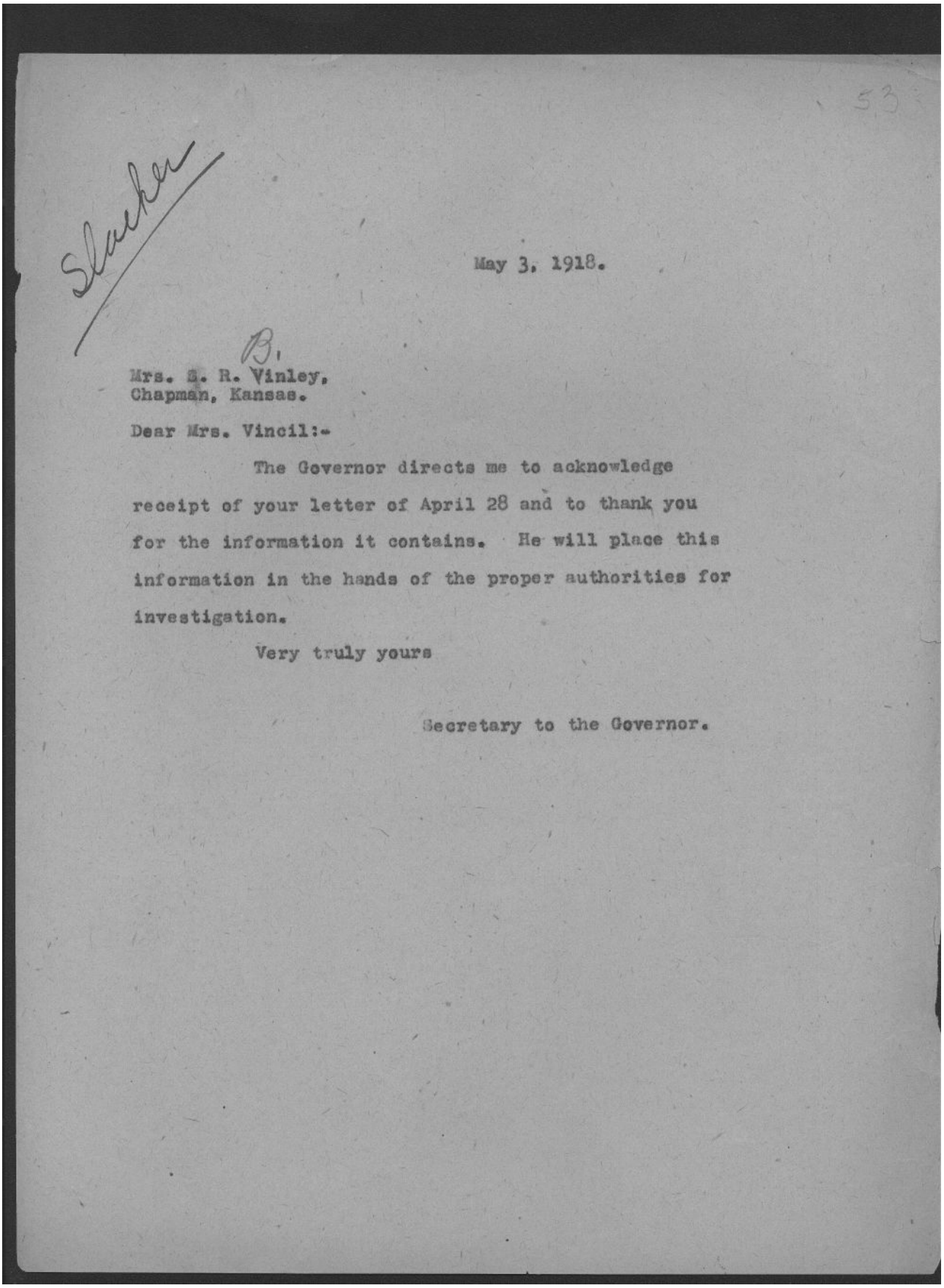
I am sure you do not want to be known among the good people of your community as a disloyal citizen. And the man who fails in his duty at this time certainly will be remembered for all time as an undesirable citizen.

I trust that I may have been misinformed; or that, before this letter reaches you, you will have already decided to do your part to hasten the triumph of liberty throughout the world.

Respectfully yours,

Arthur Capper

Governor.



Slacker

53

May 3, 1918.

B.

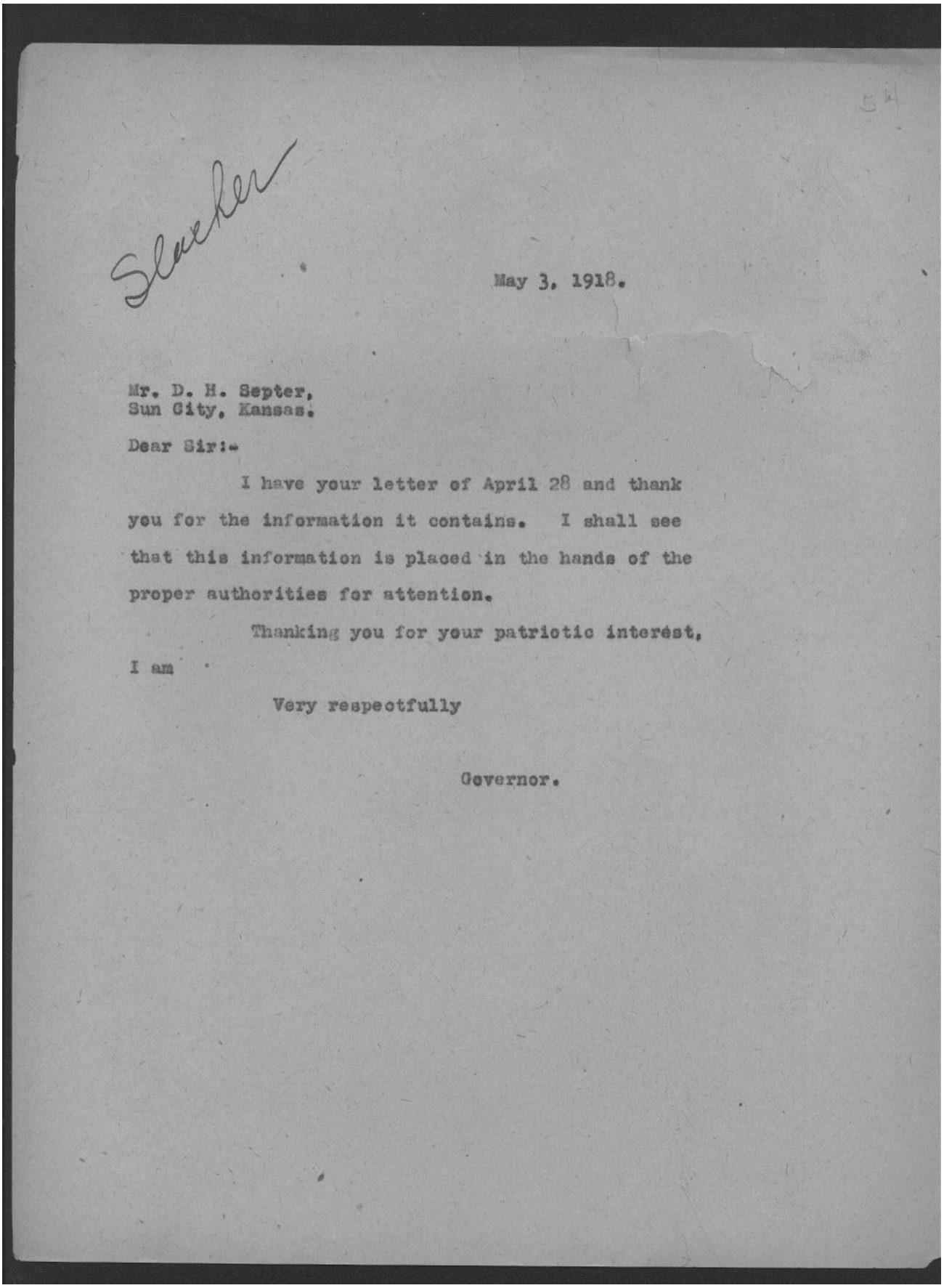
Mrs. E. R. Vinley,
Chapman, Kansas.

Dear Mrs. Vincil:-

The Governor directs me to acknowledge receipt of your letter of April 28 and to thank you for the information it contains. He will place this information in the hands of the proper authorities for investigation.

Very truly yours

Secretary to the Governor.



Slacker

May 3, 1918.

Mr. D. H. Septer,
Sun City, Kansas.

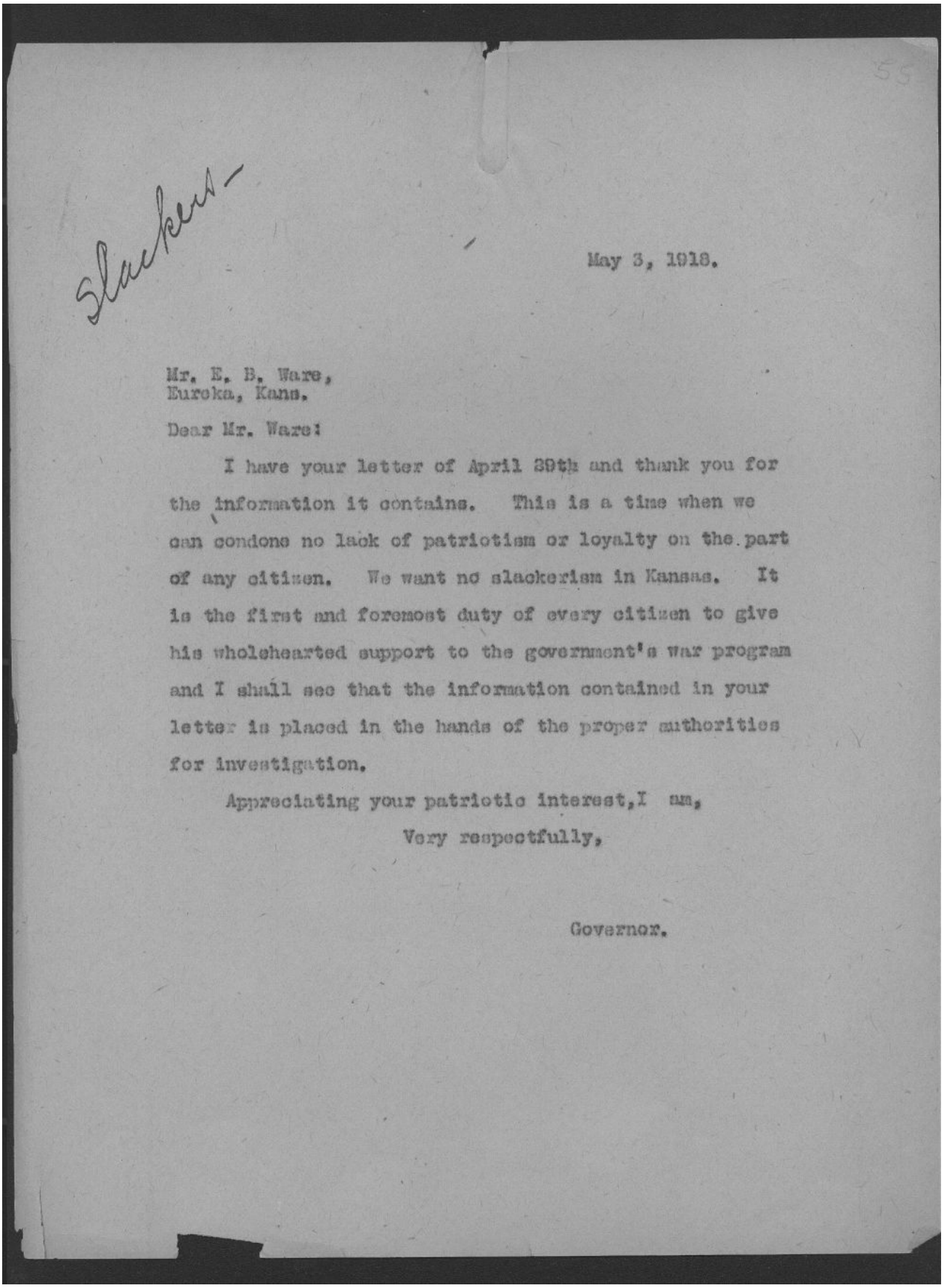
Dear Sir:-

I have your letter of April 28 and thank you for the information it contains. I shall see that this information is placed in the hands of the proper authorities for attention.

Thanking you for your patriotic interest, I am

Very respectfully

Governor.



Slackers -

May 3, 1918.

Mr. E. B. Ware,
Eureka, Kans.

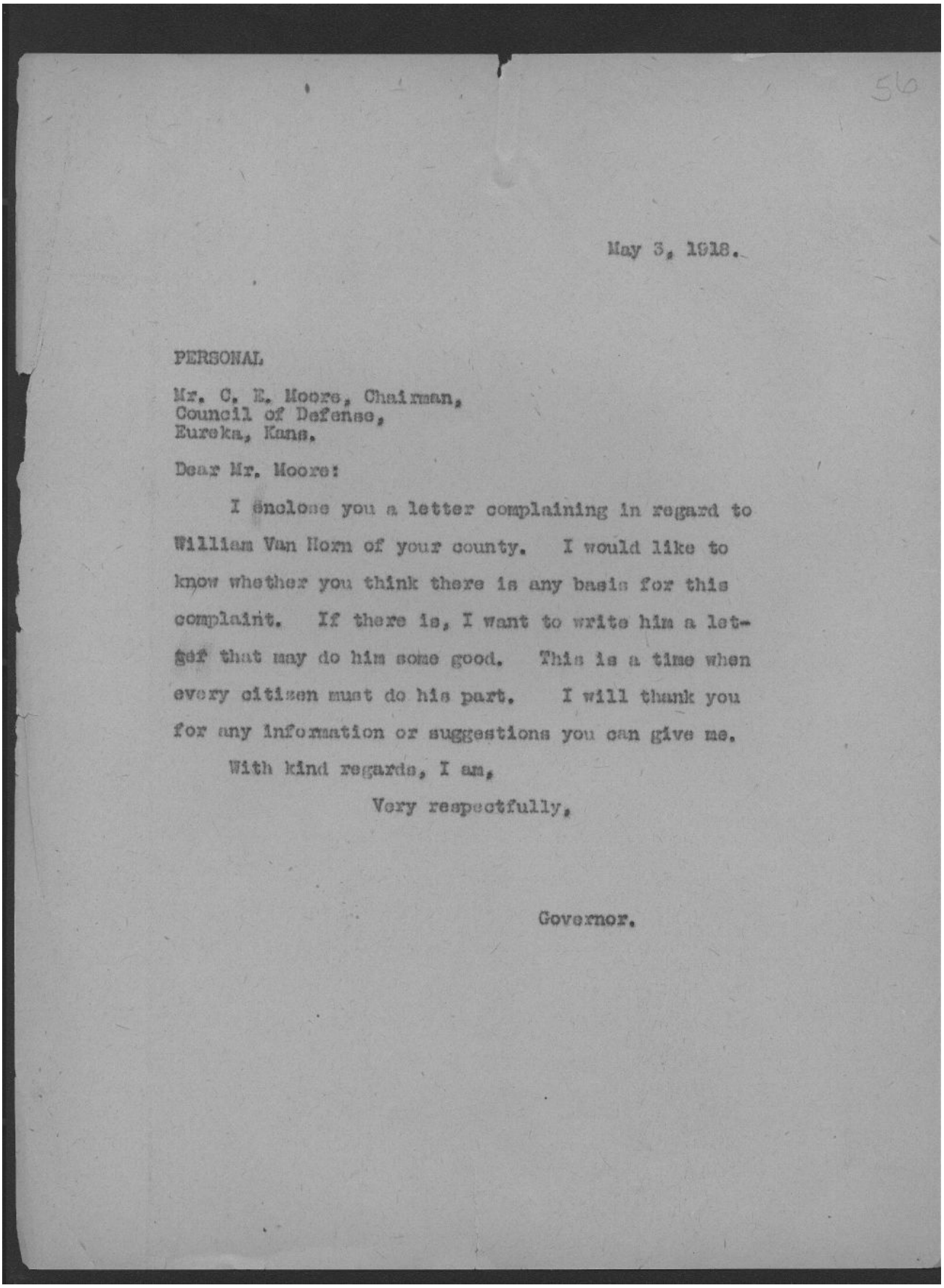
Dear Mr. Ware:

I have your letter of April 30th and thank you for the information it contains. This is a time when we can condone no lack of patriotism or loyalty on the part of any citizen. We want no slackerism in Kansas. It is the first and foremost duty of every citizen to give his wholehearted support to the government's war program and I shall see that the information contained in your letter is placed in the hands of the proper authorities for investigation.

Appreciating your patriotic interest, I am,

Very respectfully,

Governor.



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May 3, 1918.

PERSONAL

Mr. C. E. Moore, Chairman,
Council of Defense,
Eureka, Kans.

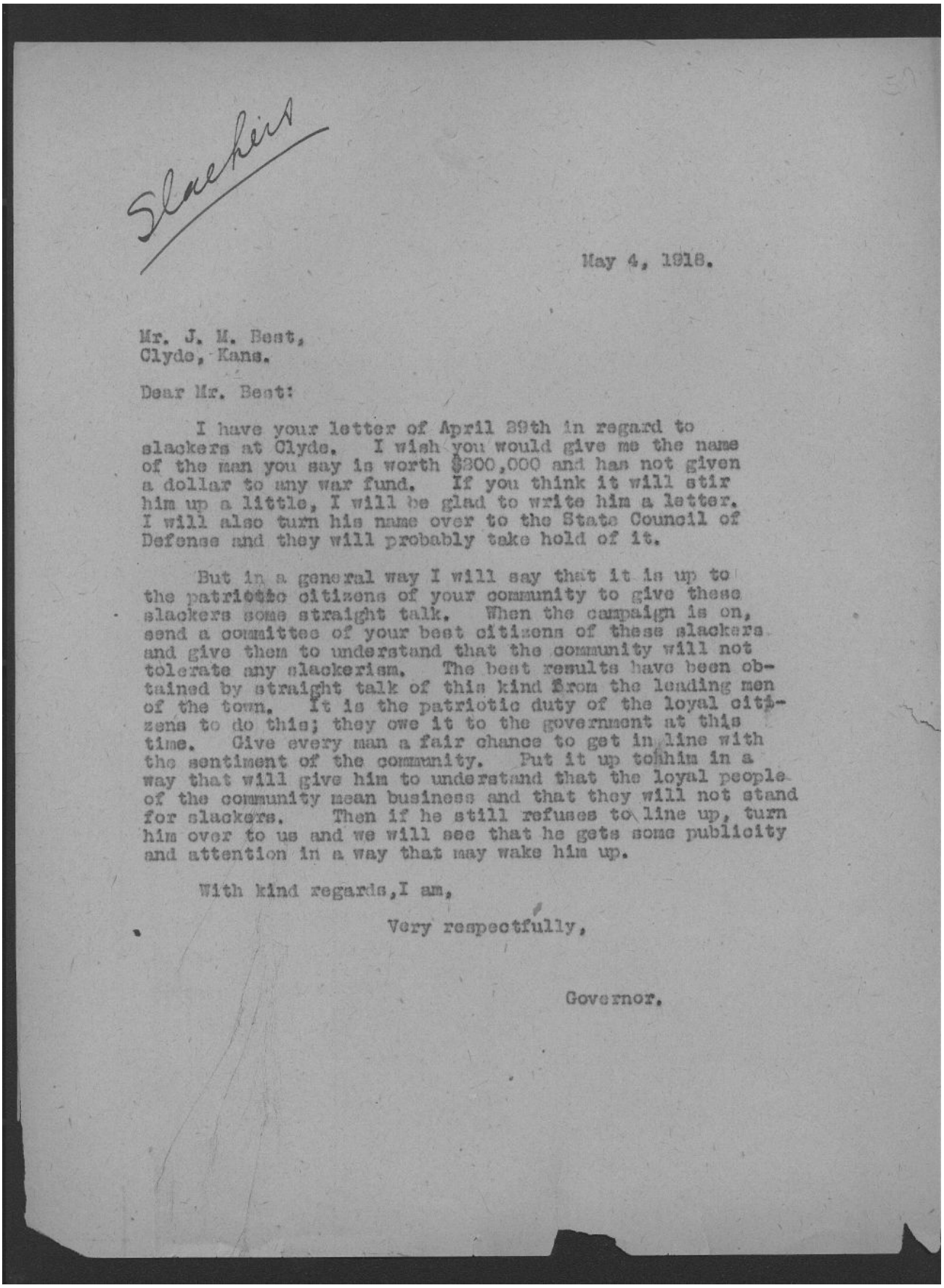
Dear Mr. Moore:

I enclose you a letter complaining in regard to William Van Horn of your county. I would like to know whether you think there is any basis for this complaint. If there is, I want to write him a letter that may do him some good. This is a time when every citizen must do his part. I will thank you for any information or suggestions you can give me.

With kind regards, I am,

Very respectfully,

Governor.



Slackers

May 4, 1918.

Mr. J. M. Best,
Clyde, Kans.

Dear Mr. Best:

I have your letter of April 29th in regard to slackers at Clyde. I wish you would give me the name of the man you say is worth $300,000 and has not given a dollar to any war fund. If you think it will stir him up a little, I will be glad to write him a letter. I will also turn his name over to the State Council of Defense and they will probably take hold of it.

But in a general way I will say that it is up to the patriotic citizens of your community to give these slackers some straight talk. When the campaign is on, send a committee of your best citizens of these slackers and give them to understand that the community will not tolerate any slackerism. The best results have been obtained by straight talk of this kind from the leading men of the town. It is the patriotic duty of the loyal citizens to do this; they owe it to the government at this time. Give every man a fair chance to get in line with the sentiment of the community. Put it up to him in a way that will give him to understand that the loyal people of the community mean business and that they will not stand for slackers. Then if he still refuses to line up, turn him over to us and we will see that he gets some publicity and attention in a way that may wake him up.

With kind regards, I am,

Very respectfully,

Governor.

Slacker.

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May 4, 1918.

Mr. T. W. Stone, Jr.,
R. F. D. No. 1,
Elna, Kansas.

Dear Sir:--

I received your letter of May 1, in regard to certain young men in your County who seem to be in the slacker class.

I thank you for sending me this information, and I will have it investigated by the Government's representatives. I am in favor of an absolutely square deal in the Draft; with no favors to anyone.

With kindest regards, I am

Yours respectfully,

Governor.