

May 19, 1921

My dear Mrs. Clarke:

I have only time to dictate a word in reply to your letter of this morning, and shall not be here to sign it.

I am sorry. If I were not going away I should be glad to have a talk with you about the proposed Women's Year Book. I shall be back in ten days, and if you wish, we will then talk it over.

Now, about your suggestion that I serve as one of your Board of Directors or Consulting Editors. As I told Mr. Bray, I am quite clear as to what my own position should be in all these matters, that is, that I should not allow my name to be used in any capacity unless I actually work, know what is being done and why, in an enterprise. One cannot allow one's name to be used without taking a certain responsibility, and whatever faith one has in the active heads - and I am frank to say that I have all faith in both you and Mr. Bray's ability to put this thing through in a dignified and useful fashion - I am 'agin' all kinds of dummy directors and dummy consulting editors the whole dummy business. I have done too much of it in my time and have been heartily ashamed of myself more than once because of my complaisance.

I could not do any real work on your undertaking, and therefore I do not want my name used, my dear Mrs. Clarke. It will be a great deal better for you, I am convinced, to have nothing but real workers connected with it, people who do the job. That is not saying that I shall not be glad and willing to talk to you about the book at any time, to suggest anything that occurs to me, and to help you in any way that is possible within the limitations of my time and strength.

There is another thing that you should remember: I have never connected myself with organizations. This has been so, largely because, as a publicist, I have felt that it was better to have no entangling alliances. Possibly I have been wrong, but that is the way I have looked at it. I have had a leaning towards the National League of Women Voters, which has seemed to me to have possibilities. I have liked the way Mrs. Catt has gone at it, but I don't like at all Miss Thomas' suggestion of yesterday - if she is reported correctly - that it be made a women's political party. I cannot help feeling that nothing would be more foolish and disastrous for women than to try to impose upon people that amazing fiction that votes can be made feminine or masculine.

But I am getting off the subject. I will be better just as an outside sympathetic friend, dear Mrs. Clarke, than I would be on your Board, where I really should feel hampered.

Yours sincerely yours