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Letter: Ida M. Tarbell to Editor, New York Herald Times, November 17, 1939

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November 17, 1939

Editor
New York Herald Tribune
New York City

Dear Sir:

For the last twenty four hours I have been receiving reproaches and congratulations on coming out for Franklin Roosevelt for a third term. The authority quoted was an interview with me which you printed Thursday, the sixteenth.

Your intelligent and likeable representative did not, I am sure, intend to misquote me. The fault was mine - I did not make my meaning clear. I was trying my tongue at prophecy and fumbled.

What I meant to say was, that if this country went into the European War before the coming nominating conventions I thought it probable that the majority of people would think it a mistake to change Presidents in the confusion which war brings; they would think it better to "bear those ills we have than to fly to others that we know not of," ^{and} decide to go on with Mr. Roosevelt.

As for myself I am opposed to a third term for a President of the United States, whatever the circumstance. I have long believed that we should change our presidential term to one, and one only - of eight years. The retiring President to become automatically a member of Congress, Senate or House as he might choose, to have no vote but the privileges of the floor and the duties of committees and commissions. He would thus be, theoretically at least, a representative, not of a political party but of the people of the United States whose President he had been. The people would thus have the advantage of the education that they have gone to so much risk and pain to give him.

I hope this makes my position clear.

Yours very truly