ABERTHAW CONSTRUCTION COMPANY
BOSTON MASSACHUSETTS

M. C. TUTTLE
General Manager

October 23, 1919.

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
Hotel Powhatan,
Eighteenth and H Streets,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Miss Tarbell:

It was good to get your letter of October 21. I was sent down to the Conference as an advisor of the National Industrial Conference group. They kept me a week and then let me go home, apparently having had enough of my wares.

My chief effort was devoted to an attempt to change the wording of the clause in the open shop paragraph of the labor group's confession of faith which paragraph relates to the representation of the men. I tried to have it worded to the effect that a third person, not primarily representing either party in the dispute should not by right enter any dispute between an employer and a group of his employees. I think that the employer's clause, with proper explanation, ia a defensible one, but I do believe that the public at large is likely to fail to understand why the proposition is not simply that of a group of clients and their attorney.

I very much wish that the Conference could develop the beginnings of an industrial constitution and that it could start toward the establishment of some standards which would serve as benchmarks from which to figure departures.

I hope that someone in the Conference will make clear the fear of the employer that the unionizing of his plant may preclude the possibility of any bargaining and make clear his belief that a complete unionization leaves him dealing with a monopoly. I think it is commonly understood that the taking of the first simple steps of dealing with an agent, primarily representing the union, leaves the situation not at all as it was before this, but produces a new situation in which there

Digital Image, 2009. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

is much less hope of freedom in bargaining and much greater chance of being told what requirements are to be imposed.

I was in Washington for part of day before yesterday, being examined for graft by the House Committee which is looking into the expenditures of the War Department. I was conscious of an atmosphere of suspicion regarding myself, but I was certain of the eager stoking of the fire under the pan in which Colonel Starrett is later to be well done. The Committee reasons as follows:

1. Colonel Starrett recommended the contractors.

2. In several cases he recommended the George A. Fuller Company.

3. His brother was president of that company.

4. Hence, clear as the light of day there is graft, and lastly if it is not found it is because of neglect of House Committee No. 2.

When House Committee No. 2 finally learns the fact that Colonel Starrett has just been made Vice President of the George A. Fuller Company, I am sure that the Committee will throw fits, then do hand springs through them.

Over the heads of the Committee there hung two big pictures showing herds of shorthorn cattle. These cattle look out over the heads of the Committee with a pained, anxious surprise. I reckon they don't understand the matter any better than the Committee does. A generous effort at general public service is very confusing to a great many of our statesmen.

Yours sincerely,

M. C. Fuller

MCT/HFB

Digital Image, 2009. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library