

March 31, 1932

Dear Dr. Tolley:

I trust that you will forgive me for not having answered before this your letter written from Pittsburgh on January 19th - your reply to my letter about Miss Schaffertlin. I feel particularly sorry for the delay since you, yourself, answered my letter so promptly - so promptly that I felt guilty for having troubled you with the case.

I was really hoping that I would hear no more from Miss Schaffertlin, that is, that she had accepted the situation as final and was prepared to make the best of it. She has written me two or three times, however, and yesterday came to see me. I want you to know what I told her. It was that she must understand that I was clearly of the opinion that you and the faculty committee must be the judges as to whether or not a particular teacher could and should be dismissed, that she must understand the economic pressure from which the college is suffering, the necessity of cutting down and that the cutting must be done in the departments which in your judgment were of the least value to the student body.

Miss Schaffertlin agreed to this. Her contention, however, is that she is being dismissed largely, if not wholly, because her teaching is in question. She admits that there may be students dissatisfied but contends that it is because she is too severe in her standards for the indifferent and lazy, that the good students all stand by her. I told her of course that she could not expect me to have an opinion on this matter, that I was not in a place to know, that I considered this a question for you and your advisers to decide. I did not take up the question of her antagonizing her associates, that again was a question on which I felt I had no right to decide. And when she told me of her "enemies" I told her that she could not expect me to know.

After the interview I must say I liked her better than after her letters, even if I don't understand how she might have rubbed certain of her colleagues the wrong way. I told her that I was utterly unwilling to make a case of it, that I should support you in your decision, but that if there was anything I could do to ease

her situation I gladly would do it. She talked of the possibility of the college taking care of her annuity payments for next year, putting her on a leave of absence. I told her that I was willing to agree to that, would do anything that I could to persuade the Board to agree to it.

I have written this long letter, dear Dr. Tolley, because I want you to know just what happened and to know how I feel about it and to emphasize my desire to support your decision in the matter. At the same time I do want to ease Miss Schaffertlin's hard position as much as I can.

I am hoping that we are going to be able to get the Twenty Five Hundred Dollars that the Finance Committee has asked of the New York alumni, though so far the responses to my own efforts have been very meagre. I am thoroughly distressed that you should have fallen into such a difficult situation. I have all confidence that the country will right itself, but I feel sure that it is going to take a long time. I know you have courage and good sense and a saving humour and I hope you are going to find all of those qualities in the Board of Trustees.

Please remind me most kindly to Mrs. Tolley.

Very sincerely yours

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ida M. Tarbell", with a large, stylized flourish underneath.

Dr. William P. Tolley
Allegheny College
Meadville, Pa.