

National Model License League
INCORPORATED
LOUISVILLE, KY.

OFFICE OF
THE PRESIDENT

April 12, 1917.

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
132 E. Nineteenth Street,
New York City.

My dear Miss Tarbell:-

Very careful reading of your letter encourages me to write you again and to make a suggestion that I trust may receive your careful consideration.

I am further encouraged to address you once more by your frank admission that you do not wholly approve of prohibition or the methods by which prohibition is being advanced; moreover, I wish to take issue with you - temperately and philosophically, I hope - in relation to your assertion that we are fifty years too late with our attempt to improve the conditions under which liquors are sold.

Strange as it may seem to you the actual fact is that we are so far in advance of general thought on the subject that we are handicapped in our fight for the realization of our ideals.

The general public, we think, is striking out blindly for something better than present conditions. In striking out thus blindly the people go to extremes undesirable to themselves; they do not want bone-dry laws; they do not want union of church and state; they do not approve of confiscation of property without compensation - and yet they go on voting for prohibition in order to get rid of certain phases of the liquor business that are not in accord with the evolution of our civilization.

We are not seeking to perpetuate any particular phase or phase of the liquor business.

All we ask is that the liquor business shall not be outlawed so

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long as the vast majority or even a considerable minority of the people intend to continue to use wine, beer, whisky and alcoholic medicinal beverages. For a long time the liquor trade resisted every attempt that was made to change conditions under which the business was conducted. But this is characteristic of business generally. The railroad business; the packing business; the oil business, and in fact any business fights change in methods until the conservative element is forced to give place to the more resilient and progressive element in the control of trade policies.

To this extent, I grant you the prohibition movement has been useful. It has undoubtedly made the liquor trade realize that its methods were out of line with the march of progress and the result has been that the "stand-patters" in the trade have either been forced out of business or have been removed from leadership.

This League represents the forward-looking men in the trade today. It has had its fight with obstructionists but its battle is won and it is now in a position to go forward very rapidly in the matter of meeting the wishes of the people who in the main do not like the saloon system but who do not wish to forfeit their own individual freedom in the effort to remove the standing bar; the screen; the treating habit and its train of evils and abuses.

We know that the people want and demand radical changes but we are not undertaking to say arbitrarily just what these changes are.

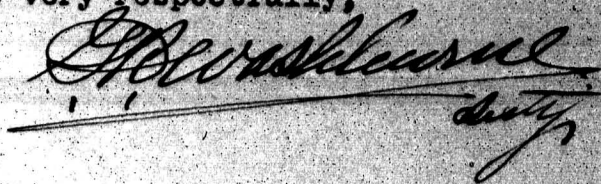
To answer comprehensively and correctly the question - What do the people want - will require painstaking, intelligent and absolutely unprejudiced investigation.

Personally I do not know of any one better qualified than Miss Ida M. Tarbell to make such an investigation. If you would be willing

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to consider taking up the work I would be very glad indeed to discuss the subject with you. I can assure you of one thing and that is that if you could arrive at approximately the solution of the liquor problem you would have back of your recommendations in the matter not only the progressive element in the liquor trade but also the great conservative press of the country and the majority of the voters in the United States.

Yours very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John D. Rockefeller", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small flourish at the end.