COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

August 16th, 1917.

Dear Miss Tarbell:-

Herewith is Miss Shea's memorandum of the conference yesterday. Mr. Dennis has gotten up the material which you asked me for and he is sending it along with this.

If I can be of any further assistance to you, you have, of course, only to call on me.

Sincerely,

George Putnam

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
1514 N St., NW.,
Washington.

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Mr. Shaw:

In one of Miss Tarbell's articles, you will remember, she presented in a very graphic way the mechanism that is used in the system of distribution - the men required in the mechanism that has been built up for serving the consumer. These things the women ought to understand. It seems to me that if we could point out to the women that it is possible in the duration of the war, with the consent of the women, to very greatly modify this distributive mechanism to such an extent that the men who report in September for the military service need not be replaced by the merchants by taking men from industries that are vitally concerned with the carrying on of the war; that if the women will accommodate themselves to the changes that the merchants have been called upon to make, will be content with one delivery a day, content with the curtailment of the return goods privilege, and content with the elimination of special deliveries, that by their very acquiescence in this change, they can play a big part in the war.

I think it would be well to touch more incidentally, upon the carrying of small packages. There are many small packages that in the cause of economy, should be carried. Suppose that each one of the 100,000,000 people in the U. S. carried home one package a day. Think of the number of wagons, automobiles and men that are necessary to deliver 100,000,000 packages - the gasoline also that would be used by the automobiles, in making these deliveries.

Miss Tarbell said that she had taken the position all along that we ought to show the women how much they are requiring in the way of equipment and men in the delivery service, and that she has contended all along that the reducing of the delivery service would eventually result in lower prices. She said that the "cash and carry" stores where everything is two and three cents cheaper, now have the greatest amount of business, and she said that the moment the people have only one delivery and there is a slight reduction in price as a result, they will go to the cheaper stores, and the merchant who delivers more frequently will have to cut his price. Mr. Shaw said he thought it best not to

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touch on the price of things at all. When the women understand why the merchant is doing this, they will be content. In Paris they only deliver every other day.

Mr. Shaw said he thought the women could do a great deal toward getting cooperative deliveries in small towns.

He said the merchants are organizing to do this thing, if the women will be content with the change. Everything depends on whether the women will show a willingness to work with them.

Make a special effort to get to the local women's clubs, such publicity as you can. Tie uthis up with the draft. Point out that we must come to one delivery a day, the return goods privilege must be curtailed, and special deliveries must be eliminated. These are the three things.

Dr. Copeland said there are 20,000,000 families in the U. S., and if each family required an extra trip a day, what an amount of gasoline would be used in the automobiles making those 20,000,000 extra trips.

Mr. Shaw suggested that you do not get the new element of price into it.

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