

**Ellison-White**  
**Banking Special Celebrity Course**

STUDIO BUILDING  
WEST PARK AND TAYLOR STREETS

Portland, Oregon

September 30, 1930

Miss Ida M. Tarbell  
120 E. 19th St.  
New York City, New York

My dear Miss Tarbell:

Knowing your splendid sincerity and believing so thoroughly in you and your work, I was greatly disappointed to read your article in the "Delineator" on the repeal of the 18th Amendment.

The experience of our country in coming to the 18th Amendment is a long and difficult one. Every known method of dealing with alcohol had been tried - even to the Canadian System, which so many people now seem to think is the better one. South Carolina had this Canadian law for fourteen years and I heard Senator Tillman say (he was its author) that it was being largely defeated by the bootleggers. After fourteen years trial South Carolina went dry.

I have often made the statement that I would be willing to favor any law that would regulate alcohol. The battle cry of the wets "Repeal the 18th Amendment but don't bring back the saloon" is an impossible one. Very few wets really favored doing away with the saloon in the first place but conditions got so bad they had to give in.

Alcohol makes its way through, over or under any kind of barrier or regulation placed to govern it and that is why, after a three hundred year fight, we have the 18th Amendment. Laws were broken constantly in the saloon days, I actually believe worse than they are now though this, of course, cannot be proven. To assume that some new law could be so exactly placed that it would not be broken is assuming a great deal.

It seems to me too, Miss Tarbell, that you begged a question when you spoke of the increase in drinking. The secretary of the National Education Association is authority for the statement that there is less drinking now among high school students than there was previous to the 18th Amendment.

To go back to bootlegging - as a young man I worked two years while going to college in a doctor's office where the

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Miss Tarbell

-2-

September 30, 1930

Keeley Cure was administered as a rather large part of the doctor's practice. Every drug store in that town was bootlegging and every doctor, except one, though there were laws against it and, at the time, there were nine open saloons practically without any regulation. Liquor was sold to minors indiscriminately not only from the saloons but, the drug stores. Did the wets cry for law enforcement? The answer is that they did not, Miss Tarbell, and they never will except as it effects their personal desires or liberties.

Turning to the matter of State regulation; do you think it would be easier for each of the forty-eight states to make and enforce its own laws to protect the boundary lines of forty-eight sub-divisions, and above all, to retain amicable relations with each other, than it would be to properly enforce the present laws? If you do, then let me ask you why no regulation in so many states where the State laws are stringent now and, by a majority vote of the people through their initiative as here in Oregon and California. Both states have declared for the "Bone Dry" law by large majorities but wets do not hesitate to break the law. The result is that what the wets ask is practically their own way regardless of majorities.

Now for the final and most important aspect of your article as I see it. Your name has long stood for all of those things that are for the betterment of society. For the first time, you have used it in a magazine of national circulation, going directly into the home, free of access to children and young people - not to turn the minds of these youngsters (of whom I have four of my own) away from drink, but rather, toward it. The result of this article must often be to encourage among young people the breaking of laws which they do not like. There is enough of that now.

You seem to attribute the rise in crime to the 18th Amendment. Do you likewise attribute the increase in smoking to the 18th Amendment - the increase in the use of the automobile - or any other increases of personal habits, either good or bad? To my mind your arguments are not well drawn. After every greatwar, we have had an increase in delinquency and evidence of the baser emotions released because of such conflicts. The 18th Amendment is being made the brunt of every sort of joke and ailment you can find and, with very few defenders. To repeal it would not stop crime for one minute. To my mind, it would increase it.

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-3-

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Riding in from the golf links a few weeks ago, where, of course, there is some drinking - often times too much - a friend of mine remarked that some moderate temperance law should be worked out as a compromise between the wets and the dries. I asked him if he meant a law that would regulate properly the sale and use of alcohol. "Certainly", he replied. Then, I said, it should not be sold to those who habitually get drunk. He agreed to that. I then pointed out that very few of the men in our golf club who drink could buy alcohol under such a law, if properly enforced. My friend admitted that was a new angle he had not thought about and yet, he is an ardent wet. What is the use of having alcohol if you can't use it the way you want it?

Your article, Miss Tarbell, has only served to convince me that alcohol in any form is wrong. You are so thorough in your work that if there were a way, you would discover and point it out; a way, I mean, that would permit regulated drinking. You have not done this and I don't believe it can be done in America.

Assuring you always of my highest respect, even though I do not agree with you, I am,

Yours cordially,



JRE:LH