August 26, 1918

Dr. Anna Howard Shaw,
Chairman Women's Committee,
Council of National Defense.

Dear Dr. Shaw:

I have your circular of August 20th to members of the Committee, asking them to hold themselves in readiness to come this week to Washington, if you get any definite word from the Council of National Defense.

I am going to beg off. I have a long delayed book on hand. My publisher is very cross about my delays, and I feel myself that I have not been treating him fairly. However, I should not let that stand in the way if I felt I could be of any use at the meeting.

Believe me, dear Dr. Shaw, I am very sorry not to agree with the majority of the Committee in the insistence on reorganization. I have never believed in any of the plans of reorganization proposed. My idea is that the Committee should go on as organized, with of course a definite understanding about its relation to the States Relation section, also with a definite understanding with the various Departments, that where women's work is concerned we are to be first consulted and also used if it is possible. I believe that both of this things, which seem to be now the greatest weakness in our relations, can be adjusted.

Feeling as I do about this, my dear Dr. Shaw, you will see why I don't have the same feeling of responsibility about going again to Washington. I think I have been at all the meetings--except possibly one--since the first of January, and there has not been one in which the time has not been taken up about this question of our status instead of with questions of important work which needed our attention. I am willing to do any work that I can with the Committee, but I am not willing to spend any more time discussing this thing. I can be of no use to the majority of the Committee, and I don't want to hamper it, so it seems to me that the best thing I can do is to stay away until the whole matter is settled.

Please believe, my dear Dr. Shaw, that I have the deepest

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sympathy with you and with Miss Patterson in this tangle. You stood by the thing in which you believe like soldiers, and the fact that I don't believe with you does not in any way prevent my admiration for your pluck nor dim in any way my affectionate regard.

Faithfully yours,

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