

COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

WASHINGTON

March 28th, 1918

WOMAN'S COMMITTEE
1814 N STREET NW.

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
General Delivery,
Waxahachie, Texas.

My dear Miss Tarbell:-

I sent you copy of my report this week. It seems scanty, but I can assure you that we have done plenty of work. Our chief difficulty just now is that we cannot get around to all the ~~is~~ is to do. These conferences are very upsetting to any schedule.

The Women in Industry Conference was quite interesting, as much so as the Food Conference and more so than the Child Welfare conference, although we can put out less about it, as some of the delegates were rabid socialists. Miss Dreier and Mrs. Robbins said interesting things which would hardly do to publish. Mrs. Taylor had a representative here and insists upon publishing them! Mrs. Field is much troubled about it, and I am waiting for the release, as Mrs. Field said she should certainly tell her that she could not O. K. it. Mrs. Field was called up on the 'phone, and Mrs. Taylor read her a long screed which Mrs. Field thought was bad policy to have appear. Nothing has come in this morning, but the releases are usually about three days late in reaching us. As several other Newspaper people were present at the time these indiscreet things were said, it is quite possible that something may appear. It will give the Council food for thought, but I am not disturbed. I told everyone to submit their stories, and if they do not do it, my skirts are clear. The Public Ledger, U. P. and A. P. all sent representatives, and several magazine writers showed up.

Miss Nestor ran the meeting exactly as you think all conferences should be run, letting the women themselves do the talking. Dr. Peixotto, Mrs. Richards and Miss Synon made short talks, and Colonel Carr of the Ordnance Department also told about the demand for workers which they could use, mostly clerical.

I have not been able to find a weekly story to mail from here the last week or two. It has been simply the press of other things. With each of these conferences we have tried telephoning correspondents about the people who were here. Except in the case of the larger papers, and the women with the most prominent names, it has not seemed to work particularly well. We notified at least eight papers that Mrs. Raymond Robbins was here at Mrs. Inchot's, but I am not certain that any but the Chicago Tribune even took any interest. Mrs. Thomas Robbins of Philadelphia was interviewed; Miss Eckman of Delaware, and several others about whom we are uncertain.

There are

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I am still baffled by the Child Welfare publicity. We cannot get out of Dr. Peixotto the active news which would take the wire. She is called the "individualist" here in the office, and she seems inclined to depend upon the Children's Bureau for a good deal of her publicity. I am not sure that Dr. Peixotto's scale of doing things - ordering circulars by the hundred thousand, etc., is not a very good one for the Committee to try out, at least once. I do not think that we have been working on a generous enough plan. On the other hand there is no assurance that there will not be a tremendous lot of waste. Her apparently exaggerated orders have played very seriously to the disadvantage of this department. ~~we should not have~~ what was being done in the Council work room. The News Letter lists were not stenciled, with the result that our circulation has been held up. There are about three thousand names in the work room now, and I am trying to persuade Mr. Hall to get these done before anything else. Mr. Hall is a very conscientious and capable little fellow but has not enough help.

Miss Patterson says that when the whole difficulty of getting our organization lists untangled is over, she will send a letter to the Council asking for additional help for Mr. Hall. In the meantime it seems to me that we are losing an opportunity. I ~~have talked with~~ Miss Patterson about this but am afraid that it will not get attended to for a couple of weeks anyhow. This is really detrimental because if we want to prove our worth to the Council we should certainly use up as fast as we legitimately can, the twenty thousand circulation they have allowed us. Some of the states hurried to get in their lists, and are still waiting for the News Letter, Illinois for instance. The ~~state of~~ condition exasperates me, I think with justice.

she didn't see it at first.
complained Dr. Peixotto has changed her mind about the necessity of having all circulars sent direct to the Publicity Chairmen. Mrs. Mumford, in California, that the material Dr. Peixotto sent to the Child Welfare Chairmen was not sent direct to her. Wherever the State Chairman is not on the job, naturally there is a loss of from three or four days to ten days or two weeks before the Publicity Chairmen get the information. I think it is absolutely essential that the letter you drafted while here the last time, be sent out. I am sending you a copy of this so that you may take it up direct with Miss Patterson by letter, if you are not coming down. I have argued the matter with her, but she does not see it. I know that if we are to depend upon the Publicity Chairmen, somehow we must get them their material promptly, making it incumbent upon them ~~perhaps~~ to secure the consent of the State Chairmen before using the material, as you suggest.

With love,

Gertrude Matthews Shelby