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COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

WASHINGTON

WOMAN'S COMMITTEE

1814 N Street.

January 17, 1918

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
132 East 19th St.,
New York City.

My dear Miss Tarbell;-

I am enclosing a letter which I have not even copied, because the hand-writing seems to add to its quality. As we do not own a "Who's Who" in this office, and upon examination I find my own knowledge of you is entirely inadequate to satisfy so grasping a lady as this one, I really think you had better indicate to me where the best bunch of information about your Highness is to be secured; then I will try to satisfy the lady.

Nothing would give me more pleasure than to fall in with her suggestion and write "The Life of Ida Minerva Tarbell". My hands are too full just now, but you better look out, I may do it sometime!

I interviewed Mrs. Wilkes on Monday. Unfortunately she cannot afford to come for the money we can pay. While in Boston I arranged for an interview with Esther Harney, a feature writer for the Boston Traveler. She has been doing signed stuff for them for over a year, one story a day, and is possible material for us.

She is a young collage graduate with no experience in handling news, and no magazine experience; but she is tremendously enthusiastic and ambitious and if some one else does not turn up immediately, I think we could get her for the money we offer. If some one of greater experience presents herself, I would be inclined not to take Miss Harney, merely because I would rather have an experienced person, more thoroughly seasoned, on the job. She is a good girl, and will greatly appreciate the privilege of working in your department. You wrote her a letter once, in answer to one that her college Professor wrote you about her; and she has cherished it as one of the treasures that has come her way. I was rather impressed with her. The Boston Traveler has thought well enough of her stuff to advertise her considerably, and Clara Savage, of Good Housekeeping, thinks she could do it, but she is of course without a knowledge of the requirements of the job.

I did not succeed in seeing Katherine Leckie. Am writing her today.

My lectures went quite successfully, particularly the address I made before the New England Women Press Association. I would like to align all the press women, see that they understand the Woman's Committee and impress upon them that now is their opportunity to use their own skill and weapons to advance the war policy. The number of active workers in that press association was obviously not tremendous, and yet all of them responded in a very satisfactory way. They confessed that they had not understood the Woman's Committee, but were ready to use any energy they could spare to help interpret it to the public.

I got through this most difficult stunt without exhaustion, and am back on the job this morning, only three-quarters of an hour late.

Can you send me an itinerary so that in case some matter arose about which I felt I needed to wire, I could reach you? For instance, if I wanted your help in securing from Mr. Gifford or Mr. Clarkson, an enlarged edition, I might ask you to wire them with regard to it.

Mr. Clarkson came to the office Saturday afternoon in hopes of catching you. He wanted to talk over the publicity of this section. He explained to me carefully that they would prefer at this period that we did not put out much stuff on account of congressional investigations. He said that he understood he personally was to be attacked!

He also said he wished we would steer clear of the word "publicity" here. He spoke of it in relation to the little O.K. cards and asked that we put on "Secretary of Council" or "News Dept. of the Council" rather than "Council Publicity Department." Of course I am having this change made. It seemed to me that it might be advantageous to put up to the Committee the advisability of changing the name of the Publicity Committee to the Information Committee. This is merely a tentative suggestion, but I assume that we would want to please Mr. Clarkson any way we could.

Mrs. Clarkson came in with Mr. Clarkson, and proved to be a rather delightful person. He had several times tendered her services as a volunteer worker, to me, but for several reasons I was not entirely sure that it would be advantageous to have her here in the office, and upon Miss Patterson's advice, took no particular notice of it. She had not come up and offered her own services and he had only a vague idea as to whether she would be willing to work

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and we thought it might be better to wait until she made the advances personally. When she came in it turned out that she is already doing translating work for the Commercial Economy Board. I put our Foreign News stuff at her disposal.

Mr. Clarkson said there was nothing in the material that we were using at present to which he objected excepting the Woman in Industry stuff. He was curious to know about Mrs. Richards and what our impression of her was. He did not talk very much about publicity, except to say that he was sending you a letter to use in regard to Mrs. Taylor; and that he did not think it was advisable to have her printing interviews which were not submitted to the Council for vise, and that it was not his judgment that so large a volume of news matter as she was releasing, would bring the best results.

I did not take up the matter of enlarged edition of the News Letter, nor the question about interviews which members of committees gave out in distant cities.

To turn to other matters, more personal, I am afraid dear Clara has been having a tempestuous time this week. I shall see her tonight if there is anything I can do for her. I do hope in some way she can settle things. She deserves so richly to be happy.

The News Letter finally was delayed. Mr. Crowley lays it to freight conditions and lack of paper at the Government Print. It may be so! I do not like to be suspicious but it is very difficult to credit some of the things one is told by the leisurely gentleman of that office. I am very glad you understand about these exasperations with printers. I won't visit them on you very often, I promise you.

Please keep well and please come back to us. It made me feel much lighter hearted to have you here even for one week, and I view your serenity with much admiration, and your renewed energy with some little concern. I am afraid we will tire you out. Please forgive me for pressing you sometimes with work.

We will do our best to carry out your ideas without bothering you about it. I am perhaps a little unwise, because the whole job was so new to me. Imagine my having to be desk broken and everything else all at once! It is to laugh!

With love,

Gertrude Mathews Shelby

PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT.

(MRS. EDMUND P. SHELBY.)
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