COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

WASHINGTON

WOMAN'S COMMITTEE
1814 N STREET NW.

August 13, 1918

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
R.F.D. #25,
Bethel, Connecticut

My dear Miss Tarbell:

The enclosed memorandum has just come from the Secretary of War, and as you will see, outlines the action which the Council took at its meeting yesterday with regard to the suggestions which had been presented to it by the Woman's Committee.

Dr. Shaw is not in Washington today, but will return tonight. I am sending a copy of this statement to you immediately, however, in order that you may have all possible time to consider it and express your opinion on the suggestions which the Council makes to the Woman's Committee.

Will you please give the matter careful consideration and let us have an expression of opinion from you no later than Saturday of this week, since the Council will wish to consider the matter again at its meeting next Monday?

Sincerely yours,

Hannah J. Patterson

Resident Director.

P/D

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The Council of National Defense gave long consideration to the difficulties suggested by the Woman's Committee, and it makes for submission to the Committee the following suggestion as a solution of the problem, upon which suggestion, however, it desires the very frank advice of the Woman's Committee itself.

That the Woman's Committee recommend to the Council of National Defense a woman of executive experience and capacity to be appointed as assistant to the Director of the Council of National Defense; that the Woman's Committee recommend to the Council a committee of women of five, seven, or such other number as the Woman's Committee deems advisable, and to recommend to the Council the names of women, members of the present Woman's Committee or otherwise, to constitute this committee; that the woman assistant to the Director of the Council of National Defense will take over the actual executive operation of the work that the Woman's Committee is now performing, dealing directly with women's organizations in all the States in which complete amalgamation between the Women's Committees and the State Councils of Defense has not taken place, and dealing through the Director of the Council of National Defense and in cooperation with the State Councils Section of the Council of National Defense with those States in which amalgamation has taken place between the State Councils and the Women's Committees; the committee of five or seven women

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to be an advisory committee and to stand in the same relation to the woman "Assistant to the Director of the Council of National Defense in Charge of Women's Work" as the Council of National Defense or the Advisory Commission of the Council stands to the State Councils Section.

This suggestion will be found to be a modification of the plan proposed by Secretary Lane, which was that a joint committee of substantially equal numbers of men and women should be organized here in Washington to take over and direct the work of the State Councils Section of the Council of National Defense and of the Woman's Committee. The difficulty about this plan lies in the fact that the Council of National Defense does not believe it would be possible to find men of suitable preminence throughout the country to compare with the women on the Woman's Committee who would be willing to be members of such a committee acting in a purely advisory relationship, for the reason that the Council of National Defense and the Advisory Commission of the Council of National Defense already fill that need and stand in that relationship to the work of the State Councils, so that the net effect, as the members of the Council of National Defense see the suggestion which they are proposing, is that the Director of the Council of National Defense will be the center of executive authority and action, advised on the one side by the Council of National Defense and the Advisory Commission with regard to men's work, and on the other side by the Woman's Advisory Committee as to women's work. The executive action of the Director would be through the State Councils where men's work is involved,

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through the women's committees and women's organizations where women's work is involved, and other such adapted executive action as might be necessary to accommodate it to situations in States where amalgamation has more or less taken place. Where men's work distinctively was involved the State Councils Section would be the executive arm of the Director, and where women's work distinctively was involved the woman Assistant to the Director in Charge of Women's Work would be the executive arm.

NEWTON D. BAKER
Chairman, Council of National Defense.

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