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ST CATHARINES, ONT. June 8th:17.
CANADA.

The Hon. W. L. MacKenzie King,
Ottawa.

My Dear King,

Coalition & Conscription.

I have been much disturbed, and on the whole unpleasantly impressed by newspaper reports of recent events at Ottawa, and as my own feelings are evidently shared by many Liberals in this section I felt I should write you on the subject.

We all desire most earnestly the thorough prosecution of the War. We are led to believe that were there no conscription issue the struggles of ordinary party politics are a distinct obstacle to the best War effort of the country, and we believe that conscription or the selective draft is the only fair democratic and efficient method of procuring the needed military forces.

I myself was present in England during the long struggle to preserve the voluntary system, and witnessed personally many of its evil results, which, however, need hardly be pointed out to you. I believe, as Sir Wilfrid Laurier promises to advise, that the citizens of Quebec would accept a conscription measure which had behind it the authority of the people of Canada.

If, therefore, such a measure is introduced, with provision for a referendum or general election, I should undoubtedly support it, as would many Liberals with whom I have talked, and, if one may believe them and the newspapers, many thousands of other Liberals throughout Canada.

We do most earnestly desire to see Sir Wilfrid leading the campaign for war efficiency, which in our belief requires coalition and conscription.

You and I and our fathers know full well what the "loyalty" claim has meant for the Conservatives, and what the "disloyalty" charge has cost the Liberal party in times past. The present is a time when we feel that no mistake must be made, and that if Liberals do make the mistake of opposing, or only half-heartedly helping those policies which are almost universally recognised by the modern opinion as leading to military and political effectiveness, the crime will not be forgiven in another generation.

Please use your strongest efforts to induce your colleagues to come out wholeheartedly for the popular policies which are today regarded as a test of loyalty. Perhaps you and Mr. Graham and the others are already doing this, but if so, I beg of you to make it thoroughly

W. L. Mackenzie King Papers

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