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My dear Meighen,

Many thanks for your long and most interesting letter. I had just written to Nicholls when it arrived but no reply has yet come. Now I see by today's Gazette that Tom Fraser has been appointed Deputy-Clerk of the House of Commons. He was as you know correspondent for the Vancouver Province and the Calgary Herald and it was his control of these papers which mainly prevented the accomplishment of the project of a syndicate letter by myself for the western papers owned by the Southams. I suggested in my letter to Nicholls that another effort might be made to arrange it and he may try to do something. But perhaps you could write to Woods and the editor of the Province and suggest this. If these four western papers the Tribune, the Province, the Herald and the Edmonton Journal would combine to take a joint service, they could save money on tolls and afford to pay me better remuneration. Of course Fraser did their departmental stuff and this I do not want to handle. The function of a political writer is in my view something quite distinct from that of a collector of departmental information and it is better to concentrate upon the one and leave the other to somebody else. If these western Conservative papers could be induced to do it, it would pay them to keep me as their political correspondent and entrust all their departmental stuff to Charlie Bishop who does it for two or three of them already. Tolmie could probably help with the Vancouver Province and I do not think the Southams in Ottawa would be unfriendly to the idea; at least they professed to be pleased with my work for the Tribune. Perhaps however Mr Fred Southam of Montreal has more say in the destinies of the western papers. Anyhow I know you will do what you can and for anything that results I will be grateful.

If you will look up the Economists of Dec 13-20 -27 you will see three interesting surveys of the Canadian economic and railway situation by "A recent Visitor"; the author is Walter Layton the Editor whom you were good enough to entertain in Ottawa. His conclusions about the railway problem are rather interesting. Undoubtedly there is grave ground for pessimism about the situation but in speeches I would not stress it much. Rather take the line "This country is a good country, it has suffered greatly for it sacrifices during the war, a combination of circumstances of which the most disastrous has been an incompetent and immoral government have combined to give it a setback but it can be extricated from its difficulties, I propose to do so and I ask for all citizens who care for what is the fate of Canada when they themselves may be dead or in their graves to aid and support in me in what at the best must be a very difficult task.

One basic criticism often directed against the Liberal party in Britain was that at heart they were less concerned about the state of the nation than about the further of certain intellectual principles. Devotion to these principles probably quite honest, made them preternaturally concerned about the fate of their party rather than the fate of the nation, and they were very apt in their legislation to cater particularly for the middle classes, the shopkeepers etc who supported them. If our Liberal party had principles the same criticism could be directed with equal force against them. To King and his lieutenants with some rare exceptions the fate of the party is their primary concern; as long as it stays in power the fate of the nation does not very much matter. Is the country to be

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