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(Handwritten)

Armitage P.O.  
21 October, 1919

My dear Willie

Your election announced in this mornings Press has given me much satisfaction, but I realize that it increases your responsibilities and I would urge you to go very slowly & cautiously. Hearst was new to the responsibilities of power & readily yielded to freak advisers, doubtless thinking they voiced public opinion. The old veteran leaders like Sir John McDonald & our own beloved Laurier listened but were slow to commit themselves. There are many sides to every public question, and until it has been publicly advocated resisted & debated, it is unsafe to reach a conclusion. Hearst & Rowell were always trimming to what they supposed to be the popular breeze. As a result they, for the time at least, are politically dead. If you are successful in avoiding mistakes you will I think be Premier after the next General Election. The Platform adopted by the Liberal Party at its recent convention is enough. Don't become committed to new questions.

Go carefully, e.g., you could easily make a mistake in connection with the Sessional Indemnity & Salary of the Leader of the Opposition. If you take your seat this session you will be entitled to draw the indemnity - \$2500 less deductions for absent days. Suppose you attended 10 days and the House had, before you took your seat, sat 30 days, you would be entitled to draw some \$2300 for 10 days attendance or \$230 a day. To do so would shock the country & alienate friends. A former member I forget his name, the M.P. for West Northumberland did something like that with the result that he committed political suicide. He was legally entitled to do what he did (so was Fitzpatrick) but public opinion did not sustain his action. You do not want to be attacked on the platform & in the Press for doing something that doesn't seem right, though lawful. A leader must walk more respectfully than his followers.

Then as to the salary of the Leader of the Opposition I don't know what your rights are, but it seems to me that the salary is intended to go to the actual Leader in the House. You might from the time of taking your seat, with propriety, claim a pro rata amount, but would it not be wiser to let McKenzie have the whole of it for this session? Generous treatment in your party will be appreciated by him and his friends. You may be sure that some day some one will charge you with acting unfairly both in respect of the indemnity & the salary & it will be a satisfaction to you to be able to say, that as to the indemnity you drew only the per diem allowance authorized by the statute, and that you took nothing