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GRAND METIS,

P. Q.

August 9th, 1919

Dear Mr. McKenzie King:

When the news of your election to the leadership of the Liberal Party reached me this morning, it was, believe me, with deep regret that I felt I could not, in any sincerity, send you the congratulations and good wishes I should so much like to offer you, until I had, from you yourself, a reply to a question so serious that it goes to the root of everything else. Moreover, before it is asked in public, it seems only fair that it should be put before you privately. It is a blunt question, and had better be bluntly asked.

Canada, for four years, with the rest of the world, was hard pressed for defenders of civilization - in all the magnitude of the full meaning of that word. So urgent was the work she had in hand, so vital that it should be well done, that she could not afford to spare the least of her sons, and still less could she spare those who, like yourself, were seemingly well qualified to fight for her and work for her - yet, so far as I can learn, you did neither. Is that the case? Your age could not have debarred you from service in the field, and if you were not able to pass the physical tests required for that, there were numerous other ways open to you to serve and help your country through those dark, anxious years. Did you avail yourself of them - ever? Or, as I am told, did you spend the greater part of those four years in the United States - only returning to Canada at the call of party politics, after that other call to the manhood of the country had failed to reach you?

I am,

Yours sincerely,

Elsie Reford.

MRS. ROBERT REFORD.

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