

FIELDING'S CALL TO OTTAWA

D. C. HARVEY

NO incident in the career of the Rt. Hon. W. S. Fielding is both so well and so little known as his translation from Halifax to Ottawa in 1896. All who have written on the general political history of the period, or on the formation of Laurier's first cabinet, have recorded the fact more or less casually but without further comment than to explain why Fielding rather than Sir Richard Cartwright was chosen as Minister of Finance; and, seeing that Mowat of Ontario and Blair of New Brunswick also were taken into the cabinet, all seem to have regarded it as but part of Laurier's shrewd plan to insure the support of the three original English-speaking provinces of Confederation through their Premiers, or as a promotion which a provincial premier would not be reluctant to accept.

None of these writers seems to have been aware of the fact that for eighteen months prior to the election of 1896 Laurier had been pressing Fielding directly and indirectly to promise to join his cabinet in the event of a Liberal victory in the Federal election, which had been regarded as a probability as early as 1894; that early in November, 1895, Fielding had given conditional assent to the proposal; and that early in June, 1896, he had practically agreed not only to join the Federal cabinet in the event of a Liberal victory but also to resign his position as Premier of Nova Scotia and contest one of the constituencies of the province in that campaign.

It is true that both the invitation of Laurier and the response of Fielding were known to only a few of their intimate friends at the time; and as circumstances arose which prevented Fielding from open candidature, though he did consider seriously contesting a seat in at least two constituencies, it appeared to the public in general that he had been asked to accept and had accepted a seat in Laurier's cabinet only after the Liberal victory; and, as neither Fielding nor his friends took the public into their confidence during his lifetime and those friends also had died in the interval, that view has prevailed generally ever since. Even the late Judge Russell, who had been a successful candidate in the election of 1896, did not seem to know the whole story; for in his "Recollections of W. S. Fielding," he wrote, "When the Dominion election was approaching . . . it was well understood that in the event of Mr. Laurier being called upon to form a government, Mr. Fielding would be his Finance Minister; but he could not, in justice to his family

and his creditors, accept a nomination for the House of Commons in the absence of certainty as to the fate of the Conservative Government at Ottawa." Fortunately, much of Fielding's extensive correspondence in this period has been preserved, though not in good condition, and it is only after a careful examination of this correspondence that I attempt to dissipate the mist, which has surrounded this transition period in his career, and to show that, despite Fielding's well known secretiveness, or tendency to keep his own counsel until the time for action had arrived, and his extreme caution about commitments, his response to Laurier's overtures was always frank and straightforward, and his attitude towards his colleagues and supporters always honorable; and that only those who are unable "to drink tea without a stratagem" need be disappointed with the story, which though lacking in intrigue is full of suspense.

It was not unnatural to expect that Laurier should wish to keep in touch with the Liberal provincial leaders as well as with the Federal representatives of the provinces as soon as he had become Leader of the Liberal party; but some other explanation has to be found for the profound respect which he gradually came to entertain for Fielding's ability and judgment and for his choice of him over any of the able Federal representatives of Nova Scotia, long before the time had actually come to form his cabinet.

It should be remembered that although Fielding did not enter the political field until 1882, his name had been familiar to many people throughout Canada, first as local correspondent of the *Toronto Globe*, and later as editor-in-chief of the *Morning Chronicle*; that his editorials in the *Chronicle* had been given chief credit by the Liberals for the overthrow of the Holmes-Thompson government in the election of 1882; and that within two years of his election to the local assembly in that campaign he had been called upon to form a new government, and to assume the leadership of his party in name as well as in fact. From July 28, 1884, when he was sworn in as Premier and Provincial Secretary of Nova Scotia, until his translation to Ottawa in 1896, his political activity and influence were watched with increasing interest in both the other provincial capitals and Ottawa.

Even before that date Blake had entered into intimate correspondence with him and had done all he could to assist him and Premier Pipes in their difficult negotiations with Sir

John A. Macdonald on railway matters; but had expressed anxiety over the proposed revision of Dominion subsidies as "a rock on which the country may be wrecked." He congratulated Fielding warmly on his accession to the premiership—"the opportunity to still further increase your strength and reputation in Nova Scotia and Canada," and for the remaining years of his leadership of the Liberal party looked to him almost exclusively for information and advice as to the attitude he should take on matters of special interest to Nova Scotia and the Maritime Provinces in general. Though too good a Unionist to support Fielding in the secession movement he inquired carefully into Nova Scotia's grievances and criticized vigorously the coercive policy of Macdonald and Tupper. In fact, Blake continued to correspond with Fielding after he had resigned the Leadership of the Liberal party. In January, 1889, he sent him his argument on the Ontario lands case; and in July, 1892, he wrote rather intimately from London, explaining why he had entered British politics.

Premier Mowat of Ontario, the great champion of provincial rights against the centralizing policy of Sir John A. Macdonald, also paid tribute to Fielding's ability and sound judgment, by consulting him on combining their forces in opposition to a Dominion franchise act and by urging him to attend the interprovincial conference, called by Premier Mercier at Quebec in 1887, to revise the B.N.A. act in the interest of the provinces. As the conference was being summoned after the Repeal election in Nova Scotia, Mowat had some reason for fearing that Fielding would not attend: for, in replying to Mowat's congratulations on his victory for the Liberal party in that election, he had written, "Our victory was of course a victory for the Liberal party. But it is useless to conceal the fact that it was much more . . . the repeal issue goes beyond the question of better terms . . . On the repeal issue we can expect no aid or cooperation from your Province." In order, therefore, to overcome some of Fielding's objections and to reach agreement on some points of common interest, he arranged for his colleague, Hon. A. S. Hardy, who was on vacation in the Maritime Provinces, to visit him in Halifax. Apparently Hardy's mission was successful, for Fielding and two other representatives of Nova Scotia attended the Conference and, having safeguarded their rights to future separatist activities by a minute of conference, took an active part in amending and approving its resolutions.

From time to time during the next two years Mowat kept Fielding informed of his futile efforts to get Sir John A. Macdonald to meet the Provincial premiers, or to take any notice of the Resolutions, but finally concluded that nothing could be done directly until the next general election. In the meantime, however, he thought something might be done indirectly to secure a revision of the B.N.A. act. When the newspapers of the day had intimated that Newfoundland was considering entering the Union, he wrote to Premier Thorburn enclosing the Quebec Resolutions and urging him to insist upon some or all of these "ameliorations": so that his province "would then come into the union with the halo of having accomplished an important good for all the provinces as well as an improved constitution for itself." He suggested that Fielding also should write Thorburn in the same vein and proposed to ask Mercier and Blair to do likewise.

It was while these two strong-minded premiers, with a strong following in their respective provinces, seemed to be giving a lead to the opposition in the House of Commons that Laurier, who had assumed the leadership of the Liberal party with reluctance, was feeling his way gradually to mastery of new problems and surveying the field for new talent. At first, as was to be expected, he consulted most frequently the Federal representatives of the different provinces with whom he was in daily contact; but he also corresponded with the Liberal Premiers and, in time, came to rely more and more upon their judgment and advice. Certainly this is true in regard to his relations with Fielding.

In the great election of 1891 he was kept informed of general conditions in Nova Scotia by Fielding; and he warmly approved the latter's suggestion of a pamphlet, to be prepared in a non-partisan way on the recent disclosures at the "scandal session" in Ottawa, in the hope of winning the suffrages of fair minded conservatives in the impending by-elections; but had no thought at this time of asking Fielding to contest one of the constituencies. His thoughts were rather with Hon. A. G. Jones who, like himself, had for a short time been a member of Mackenzie's cabinet—"Nothing at this moment," he wrote on November 24, 1891, "could cheer me so much as the reappearance of Jones in Parliament. Apart from his buoyancy of spirits, his courage and skill in debate, he has special information of purely Maritime matters which no one now with us has to the same degree."

Three months later, in reply to a telegram from Fielding in regard to by-elections in Nova Scotia, he wrote, "I am aware of the very active part which you have taken in the late contests and I have no word to convey to you the deep sense of my gratitude."

Throughout the next year, as Fielding grappled successfully with provincial problems, Laurier's admiration for his ability continued to increase; and, when plans were completed for the National Liberal Convention of June, 1893, in Ottawa, he sent him a special invitation to join him and "a few friends . . . for consultation," on the afternoon before the convention opened. When the convention opened, Fielding was elected first vice-chairman, and later as chairman of the resolutions committee made a marked impression upon not only Laurier but the entire party. At the conclusion of the convention, though Laurier tactfully thanked all of the delegates for its success, he placed at the head of his list for special mention "our old friend, Sir Oliver Mowat" and "our young, active and able friend, Mr. Fielding of Nova Scotia." More than two years later, in urging Fielding to speak at Lachine, he wrote: "Let me say with perfect truth that the influence which you gained at the Ottawa convention is wider and deeper than you know of, I am sure."

During the interval between June, 1893, and November, 1895, when Laurier gave his first direct invitation to Fielding to join a prospective cabinet, he kept in touch with him directly by correspondence and indirectly through L. H. Davies, M.P., President of the Maritime Liberal Association, to whom he had referred at the conclusion of the Convention as "a brave of the brave, a man who is ready whenever the call of duty comes." In this triangular correspondence the prospects of a federal election, the stand that should be taken on the tariff, prohibition, and the Manitoba school question were discussed with complete frankness; and as Fielding always expressed such clear-cut, well reasoned views thoroughly consistent with the Liberal platform Laurier gradually became convinced that he must have him at his right hand, whenever he should be called upon to form a government. But with characteristic caution he broached the subject indirectly first through Davies and later through C. S. Hyman of London.

In the late summer of 1894, while Laurier was on his western tour, Davies was busy organizing the Liberals of the Maritime Provinces in expectation of an early federal election;

and, in planning a series of meetings in both Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to be addressed by them both, he suggested that Fielding himself should become a candidate. To this Fielding replied, also in characteristic fashion, "If things were as I could desire them I should like nothing better than to plunge into the fight and take my chance. But things are not just as I could wish them and for the present I must be left out of consideration."

This casual reply to a serious proposal came at the end of a long letter in which he had outlined plans to plunge into the fight on behalf of the Liberal party as a whole, including the suggestion that Laurier be asked to visit the Maritime Provinces and, in the event of an election, to run in Antigonish against Sir John Thompson.

On Laurier's return from the West the three-cornered correspondence continued; and though Laurier deferred his decision about visiting the Maritime Provinces, he consulted Fielding on the probable effect in Nova Scotia of an attack upon the coal duty in Montreal.

Fielding's reply to this query and his later criticism of Laurier's speech, when taken with his letter to the *Globe* in the same vein, go far to explain both his immediate influence on the fiscal policy of the Liberal party and his attitude later as Minister of Finance.

In his letter of December 27, 1894, he enclosed a clipping of his speech at Sydney on the coal question and wrote: "You will see that I was careful to take a ground which our party can afford to stand on in all sections of the Dominion" . . . "I think it would not be good policy to single out the coal duty for attack. If the item is to be discussed, it seems to me that the policy of reciprocity in coal . . . ought to be satisfactory to our western friends. If, however, in order to have a thorough tariff reform, free coal is necessary, I think the Maritime Liberals would submit to it. But in doing so they would have to ask for a pretty radical reform in some directions in which perhaps some of our Quebec and Ontario friends would not be willing to apply free trade principles."

In writing to Davies on February 27, 1895, he criticized Laurier's Montreal speech for "its gentleness and tenderness towards other protected interests" and continued, "The one point I wish to make just now is that there is no more reason why we should commit ourselves absolutely to immediate free coal than to immediate free anything else. We may save our-

selves considerable trouble if we leave room for the same measure of elasticity on that point as seems to be found necessary in some other directions." To Laurier himself in a letter of March 25th, he was equally emphatic: "If reductions in other lines are to be gradual, it would not be unreasonable to have the same principle apply to coal. In conveying this thought to you my only desire is that our leaders may not needlessly commit themselves to details of a policy on the coal question, but that the article should be left to take its chances under the general principle of tariff reform . . . I should think that in the present state of Dominion affairs a Finance Minister would have to retain a good many duties that he might under other conditions be willing to dispense with. For this as well as for other reasons, it seems to me expedient that our friends should not too hastily commit themselves to the policy of the sudden abolition of the coal duty, but that they should be free to determine the question as seems best when the moment for action arrives."

In two long letters to Mr. Willison of the *Globe*, December 13, 1895, and January 25, 1896, he criticized a recent article on the tariff question for departing from general principles in mentioning two particular items, which should be placed on the free list; and reiterated his plea for caution as follows: "My desire is that we shall confine ourselves to the declaration of principles set forth in the Ottawa platform and avoid details in which we are certain to be misunderstood and misrepresented."

The tariff was only one of the many problems referred to in this correspondence. The death of Sir John Thompson, the divisions in Sir Mackenzie Bowell's cabinet, the prospects of a general election, the Manitoba School question and local problems of general interest all received attention. To meet the need of a strong Liberal candidate in the Antigonish by-election Fielding gave up a member of his own cabinet, Hon. C. F. McIsaac; and, in anticipation of an early election, he exerted himself strenuously in behalf of preparedness in all the federal constituencies, including Halifax which was particularly slow in nominating its candidates, owing to the reluctance of Hon. A. G. Jones to assent or decline to become a candidate. At the same time he rushed through the business of the Local session in order to be free to take part in the prospective campaign wherever his assistance might be needed.

It was in the midst of these strenuous activities, which finally put him on the sick list and sent him off on a cruise to

the West Indies when the election had been deferred, that Fielding received his second invitation to enter Dominion politics. This second invitation again came through Davies, who informed him that Attorney General Longley was pressing him for the promise of a seat in Laurier's future cabinet as a condition of his running in Annapolis; and that it was therefore imperative for him to reach a decision to do so. He asked Fielding first for his decision and next for his opinion, if, "which Heaven forbid," he should decide not to run.

To both these questions Fielding replied in the negative. On one, he wrote, "I have a clear and decided opinion. It is that no man in the Dominion is big enough to demand a place in the cabinet as a condition of his running." On the other, "Assuming there is to be an early election, I have no thought whatever of becoming a candidate for the Dominion. My present duty, as I view it, is to stand by the Local . . . If another session of the Dominion Government is held, and the elections deferred for some months, the situation may possibly be changed. It might then be possible to reconstruct the local government in a way which would be satisfactory to the party, and I might see my way clearer than I now do to become a Dominion candidate . . . Dealing with the matter, however, as one of the present I have no hesitation in saying that I am not to be considered in Dominion politics, except that I shall give whatever energy I may have to the support of the party when the fight comes on."

On March 23, 1895, just before he left on his cruise to the West Indies, Fielding gave Davies a full account of what had been done in the Nova Scotian constituencies in anticipation of an early election; and also his view of the proper course for Laurier to adopt on the Manitoba school question. He thought that a good case could be made from the standpoint of the Roman Catholics for non-interference; that they had more to hope from the goodwill of the majority in Manitoba than from coercion by the Dominion parliament, which would be resisted by all advocates of provincial rights; and that once that issue had been raised Roman Catholics, who were in a minority everywhere except in Quebec, would profit least of all. It will be seen later that this was the policy which Laurier outlined in his first direct invitation to Fielding to join his prospective cabinet.

This direct invitation was preceded by another indirect approach through C. S. Hyman in the winter of 1895; but according to Davies only these three knew as late as May 31st

that Fielding was being pressed to enter the wider field; and the same secrecy was maintained locally after Laurier's direct invitation had been accepted conditionally, although the pressing invitation, which he received from Tarte to assist in a federal by-election in Jacques Cartier and Montreal Centre would indicate that Tarte also was in the secret and that sooner or later it would be "in the air."

However, on November 5, 1895, Laurier made his proposal to Fielding at some length. Beginning with a reference to Hyman's previous approach, he continued in part as follows:

I understood from Hyman at the time, that without committing yourself definitely, there was hope that you would consent to join our administration. I now write to know from yourself, whether such hope can still be entertained. From one point of view my inquiry might be considered premature. I would like to know your intentions, because from your answer may depend the chance of some candidature in your province. You are probably aware of the contingency to which I now allude, but it is unimportant to refer to it just now, though this correspondence cannot close without my putting it all before you . . .

It is now evident that the government are going to make a strong bid to capture the Roman Catholic vote, by introducing remedial legislation, that is to say setting aside the school law of Manitoba, and substituting a law of their own. That they will capture the Roman Catholic vote is not at all certain, for I know for a certainty that the most intelligent and far seeing among the Roman Catholics both clergy and laity dread the action of the government, as likely to conduce not to the re-establishment of separate schools in Manitoba, but to an agitation for the abolition of separate schools in all the provinces. The position which I have assumed from the start, maintained ever since, and lately more prominently outlined, seems to me the most reasonable . . .

With regard to the portfolio that I would place at your disposal, I could almost leave that to your choice. The only thing as to which I am anxious, is to be sure that you would come with us. I need not tell you that, personally I attach the greatest importance to your entry into any liberal administration that may be formed at Ottawa. Hyman, I am sure, must have given you my views on this subject.

I suppose it could not be arranged that you should come into the federal arena at the general elections, though this would be a tower of strength to us everywhere. I will be content to know that in the event of our carrying the day, we can count upon you to come and help us.

On receipt of this letter Fielding wired (November 11th), "May I consult a trustworthy friend in the matter of which

on the contest in general but also on the decision of Premier Blair of New Brunswick, whom Laurier wanted to run also.

On January 8th, Davies wrote, "You and Blair must be ready to give a positive answer at once. The circumstances wont brook of any delay. If you can meet Blair for a few moments, it will be a great thing." From January 16th until the end of the month the correspondence was all about the by-election in Cape Breton, in which Fielding gave another member of his government to the Liberal cause and exerted himself to the utmost to defeat Sir Charles Tupper. This, too, though the local House was in session and the resignation of G. H. Murray would make it more difficult to reorganize the local government if both Longley and he should accept nomination in a federal constituency.

However, on February 1st Davies returned to the charge, with the prophecy that there would be a general election within a month, and the hope that Fielding would have all his arrangements made by that time to take the field; and a week later a demand for decision came from another quarter, in the offer of a nomination from Annapolis County to be made at the Liberal convention on the 11th. To Mr. Owen, who had asked him to accept the nomination and assured him of election, he replied that he was not in a position at the moment to decide upon entering Dominion politics; and, as the Annapolis friends wished a candidate who was prepared to give an immediate acceptance, his name had better be dropped. But to Hon. J. W. Longley, who was going to the convention and apparently had urged him to accept the nomination, he gave a full statement of his position and left it to him to make such use of it as he pleased. The chief difference in this letter was his statement that he might later yield to the persuasion of his friends and accept a Dominion nomination if one were then available and the disguised plea for delay in the promise that, if no nomination were made and the matter remained open for future action, he would be prepared to give it all due consideration. But the effect of both letters was the same in that the nomination went to Longley to the great disappointment of Davies, who wrote: "What's the meaning of Longley's nomination? Does this mean that you are going back on me and not going to run? If so, I look upon it as a most serious matter. We are trying to arrange with Mowat to run in Ontario and, if we have you in Nova Scotia and Blair in New Brunswick, we will sweep the country in our programme. But if you are not going to

run, then Blair will finally retire or determine not to run, and we will be at a great disadvantage in the Maritime section . . . Your place my dear Fielding is at the front."

Though Fielding's hesitation in deciding to run in the impending election led him to decline the offer of another nomination, this time in Hants, he did not relax his efforts to assist the Liberal cause by widespread campaigning in Nova Scotia and timely advice to the Liberal opposition in Ottawa. When Father Lacombe's minatory letter to Laurier was published, he immediately advised Davies how it should be answered; and, when Laurier made his famous speech on March 3rd, he congratulated him warmly in the words: "It was all that any patriotic citizen could desire and it will live in Canadian history." But his full reports to Davies on the number of meetings he had addressed in various parts of the Province in behalf of other candidates only led to further demands that he should hesitate no longer.

The importunity of Davies and the repeated offers of a nomination apparently forced Fielding to consider the matter seriously. Accordingly, on April 2nd he addressed a guarded letter to members of the local legislature asking them to suggest a possible successor to him, if he should become a candidate for the House of Commons. In this letter he pointed out that Longley should not be left out of consideration, as he would probably be willing to accept the Premiership if offered to him, in spite of the fact that he had been nominated for Annapolis County. But the replies to this letter were more of a hindrance than a help: for all of them regretted the thought of his leaving the government, some going so far as to say that it would mean its complete ruin; and there was far from unanimity as to the choice of Premier. The largest number suggested Longley, the next Murray, but at least half a dozen other names were listed.

While digesting these replies, Fielding had to pour oil on the troubled waters of the Halifax constituency, where two new candidates, Russell and Keefe, had been chosen; and to answer S.O.S. calls from end to end of the Province. On April 29th, he discussed the whole situation with Davies, who had come to Halifax for the purpose, but, although he wrote Murray to find out definitely what his intentions were, he was apparently still undecided as to his own course: for on the following day he replied to an inquiry from Shelburne: "I have not yet determined to enter the Dominion fight as a candidate. Possibly

I may yet change my mind. But at this moment the probability is that I shall remain where I am."

On May 6th Davies wrote that Laurier had informed him of Mowat's decision and was very anxious to hear of Fielding's; and added, "I do hope my dear Fielding you will be able to rejoice my heart by a telegram saying, 'You may wire the Chief that I have determined to run'." On May 18th, on learning of Murray's decision not to run in Cape Breton, he again wrote, "Has Murray's not running any other significance? Does it mean that you are making arrangements to enter the field yourself? If this is so, you know how my heart will rejoice."

As all these indirect appeals and pressures had failed to make Fielding commit himself, Laurier decided to issue the Macedonian call himself. On May 29th he wrote as follows:

I once more revert to the subject which of late months has more than once been discussed by us. In the name of all sections of the Liberal party I would beg you to enter the field in our behalf and to give to the party and to the whole country the benefit of your abilities and experience.

Undoubtedly the present contest is one of the most important through which the country ever passed. There are some questions to be settled which require the efforts of Canada's ablest sons. The reform of the tariff and the Manitoba school difficulties are perhaps the two most prominent of these questions.

The success with which you have carried on the government of your native Province has led the people all over the country to desire that you should, and to hope that you will, devote the talents which have achieved that success to the broader field of Dominion politics.

I know that what I now ask would involve a great sacrifice on your part. It is that very sacrifice which I most earnestly demand.

Already Sir Oliver Mowat has agreed to give us his help and to represent us in the Senate, where on account of his age, he will have a more suitable place. We want you on the floor of the Senate [House].

The mere fact of your acceptance will inspire the whole people with increased confidence and will add another to the many already existing tokens of victory.

On receipt of this appeal from Laurier, Fielding immediately took the necessary steps to obtain a nomination in Annapolis County. On June 1st, he wrote to Longley, who was already in the constituency, reminding him of his earlier advice to accept the nomination and his later offer to retire for him, and asking him to consult with some of the leading friends

as to the advisability of his candidature at this late date. In his usual guarded way, he said that he was not pressing for a nomination in Annapolis but that in view of the pressing advice of some friends, he had "under consideration the question of running somewhere;" and he pointed out that, even if he were accepted, he could not have much time for a personal canvass as he had to spend much time in other counties. Moreover, he had "neither the disposition nor the means to make a large expenditure of money" though he was prepared "to pay liberally all lawful expenditures."

On that evening L. H. Davies arrived in Halifax, on another mission but at an opportune moment to egg Fielding on, and on the following day J. M. Owen arrived from Annapolis Royal with a favorable report as to the feeling in that constituency, which report was strengthened by telegrams from other centres during the day. Apparently it was in this conference that a reply to Laurier's appeal was prepared for publication at a psychological moment; for, on June 3rd, Owen wired from Annapolis: "I have interviewed quite a number in train, Bridgetown and here, including Davidsons of Bridgewater. All favorable. Publish your letter tomorrow and come here Friday's express."

Though written as if a reply to Laurier, this letter was really a political manifesto of over a thousand words, dealing with the tariff and Manitoba school question mentioned by Laurier, but adding a blast at the scandalous conduct of the late government, and concluding with the announcement that he would resign his position as a member of the House of Assembly and as Premier of Nova Scotia and present himself as a candidate for the House of Commons in one of the constituencies of the Province.

But, on the same day, other telegrams were coming in from Bridgewater and elsewhere, which led Fielding to withhold this letter from publication for the time being; and, as will be seen later, forever. All these telegrams were extremely favorable to Fielding's nomination; but some of them reported that he would have to take the following temperance pledge: "I pledge myself to work and vote for the immediate prohibition of the liquor traffic, *regardless of the attitude of my party and no matter what may be the consequences to my party*; and I will so declare my principles and purpose in this respect publicly, when addressing the people and also in the newspapers published in the county."

On receipt of a copy of this pledge, Fielding asked Longley to withdraw his name, as he could not go beyond the Liberal platform as explained by Laurier. At the same time he wired to Owen and to Davies, who was at Kentville, that the matter was off.

On the next day Fielding had another interview with Davies; and, on June 5th, he received an urgent telegram from Laurier at Chatham, Ontario: "Did you receive my letter? Come out at once if possible. Answer care of William Macgregor, Windsor." To this he replied, "Will wire you later about private matter;" and then asked if Laurier could visit Halifax the following week.

During the next few days he remained in Halifax. On the 8th, he wired Laurier's partner in Arthabaskaville as to where he could get a message to him that day, apparently without success; and on the following day he accepted an invitation to speak in Liverpool and Shelburne on the 11th and 12th; and wired Davies, who was then in Charlottetown, that although he would be unable to speak in New Brunswick, "It is barely possible that something may yet happen in relation to the matter of which we talked when I last met you. But the probability is that time is now against us."

There is little doubt that he is referring to the possibility of another nomination; for on June 11th, Longley, who had already written him that he hoped he would not run elsewhere, hearing that "a deal" was being negotiated in Queen's-Shelburne, wired Fielding at Liverpool, imploring him not to take any step now as the result would be disastrous to him and still more for Annapolis. Whether Longley's appeal had any effect, or had been unnecessary, cannot be determined now; but the fact is clear that Fielding made no further attempt to secure a nomination in that election campaign. After his speech in Shelburne he returned to Halifax; and on June 15th he wrote to Laurier, regretting that he had been unable to send a favorable answer to his urgent telegram, informing him that two counties had been offered to him by the candidates who had been nominated, that he had declined the one, because of the temperance pledge, and the other because he thought the time was too short to make a change without danger. But he thought that his failure to get a nomination was not without its compensation, as instead of having to confine himself largely to one constituency he had been free to help friends throughout the province generally.

While it is doubtful whether Fielding's candidature would have added one more seat to the Liberal total in Nova Scotia, there is no doubt that he helped more than one weak candidate to victory, both by his speeches in their constituencies and by his expositions of the Liberal platform which were widely quoted in the press throughout Canada. Hence his friends outside Nova Scotia congratulated him as warmly, on the Liberal victory as if he had been a candidate. Hardy, who in February had written that his name was generally connected in Ontario "with the portfolio of Finance Minister", still hoped to see him "go to Ottawa", as "Laurier wants all his big men"; Hyman, who had been defeated, wrote: "Remembering the negotiations between Laurier and yourself, I must express the strongest hope that you can be persuaded to join the new ministry . . . The difficulties of the new government will be many and I know of no one whose presence therein will give to the general public greater security that care and and prudence will be exercised than your own." Apparently Laurier too recognized that Fielding had done all and more than he had ever promised to do, and still had undiminished confidence in him: for at the end of June he called him to Montreal to consult about his prospective cabinet; and on July 9th telegraphed him as follows: "I have been summoned by His Excellency. Please meet me at once in Ottawa."

As Fielding had still to resign from the local government and see to its reorganization, he asked that his name be put in the list of Laurier's cabinet but that he be sworn in later. The details of his activities between his acceptance of office and his assumption of its duties after his election by acclamation in Queen's-Shelburne are extremely interesting; but both the space at my disposal and the unity of my subject demand that I stop with his "call to Ottawa."