

THE CANADIAN GENERAL ELECTION OF 1896  
IN NOVA SCOTIA

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Abstract

The purpose of the thesis is not to explain during the first quarter century after Confederation, Nova Scotians showed a curious ambivalence in their support of federal and provincial political parties. Most outstanding was their support for the Liberal party in the 1886 provincial election and in 1887 their affirmation of the federal Conservative party. The same dichotomy appeared in the 1890 and 1891 elections. The election of 1896, however, was a new development. The province divided evenly; each party returned ten members to the Dominion Parliament.

In the election of 1896 the leaders of both Nova Scotian political parties, W.S. Fielding and Sir Charles Tupper, had been influential in the determination of the policies of their respective national parties. Both sought Nova Scotia's destiny within the framework of the Canadian nation. The general purpose of this dissertation is to examine the stand which both Nova Scotian parties adopted on two particular national issues: the Manitoba School Question and the trade and tariff policies.

Chapter one deals with the alignment of the Nova Scotian press during a period of relative stability. Chapter two analyses the campaign of Sir Charles Tupper in the Cape Breton by-election. Dominion politics were now forcefully brought to the attention of the Nova Scotian electorate. Chapter three shows the adaptation of national issues to Nova Scotian politics before the prorogation of Parliament.

Chapter four outlines the electoral platforms of both parties and Chapter five is a study in greater depth of several selected constituencies. The purpose of the thesis is not to explain who won individual electoral contests. Rather, it is to examine the general Nova Scotian attitude toward national issues. An examination which is long overdue.

PREFACE

PREFACE

During the first quarter of a century after Confederation, Nova Scotia rested uneasily within the Dominion. Although by 1872 the anti-confederation cry was no longer an effective campaign slogan, nevertheless, in the Provincial election of 1886, the Liberal party under W. S. Fielding was elected, nominally at least, on such a program. In the federal elections of the next year, however, Nova Scotia returned a large majority to the Conservative party. This dichotomy in the Nova Scotian attitude toward provincial and federal politics presents a curious anomaly. In part it can be explained by lingering anti-confederation feelings on the provincial level, yet an awareness that to gain concessions on the federal level, support for the Conservative party seemed essential.

Perhaps equally as significant in explaining this electoral relationship in Nova Scotia was the leadership of two very forceful politicians, Sir Charles Tupper at the Federal level, and W. S. Fielding, leader of the Provincial Liberal party. At the Provincial elections of 1890, the Liberals under Fielding were

returned with a majority of eighteen seats. In 1891 Sir John A. Macdonald recalled Tupper from his post as Canadian High Commissioner in London. Under Tupper's tutelage, Nova Scotia returned the largest contingent to the Conservative side of the House since Confederation. In the election of 1896 when Fielding and Tupper met, the result was one of the most closely fought election campaigns in Nova Scotia's history.

The election of 1896, however, was more than a clash between two political leaders. The trade policy and the Manitoba school question were national issues on which both parties had taken a stand. The leaders of both parties had a distinct role to play in the formation of national policies, and, in Nova Scotia, stood committed to the fate of the national interest. Nova Scotians might yet achieve their "higher destiny" within the federation.

Sir Charles Tupper, who had first campaigned on the National Policy on the shores of Cape Breton in 1878, returned in 1896 to vindicate his party's trade policy and their handling of the Manitoba school question. W. S. Fielding, the Premier of Nova Scotia, had gone to Ottawa in 1893 to take a leading part in the National Liberal Convention. As Chairman of the



Resolutions Committee, Fielding had been influential in the formation of the new Liberal trade policy. In 1896 he was prepared to use his powerful provincial organization in support of Laurier and the Dominion Liberal party.

Nova Scotia's isolation from Manitoba and the absence of a tangible separate school issue within the province might suggest that Nova Scotians would be little concerned with the Manitoba school question. It was the Nova Scotian members of the federal cabinet, however, who were most insistent that the Government of Mackenzie Bowell take a stand on Remedial Legislation. The resignation of Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper on March 21, 1895 clearly indicated his personal feeling that the Government should openly declare its support for the case of minority in Manitoba. Similarly one of the most able speeches in support of the Remedial Bill during the session of 1896 was made by A. R. Dickey, the Minister of Justice, representing Cumberland, Nova Scotia. Moreover, the nature of the academic approach of the leading Nova Scotian Conservative Journal, the Halifax Herald presents a marked contrast to contemporary Ontario newspapers.

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An examination of the role of the Manitoba school question during this period also involves a problem of

historiography. Sir Robert Borden who made his first political appearance in this campaign, contesting a seat in the dual constituency of Halifax, recorded in his Memoirs that, "Nova Scotia, and indeed every province was then in a condition of unusual excitement as the Manitoba school question overshadowed every other issue."<sup>1</sup> In explaining the defeat of his colleague, T. E. Kenny, at the same time as he had been at the head of the polls, Borden observed that Kenny was handicapped by his support of the Government's policy on Manitoba schools.<sup>2</sup>

An appealing case can be made by emphasizing that defeat was caused by support for the Manitoba minority. Witness the following:

When the passions raised by this issue are dead,... the writer of Canada's political record ... will give Sir Charles Tupper and those who went down with him, credit, not alone for ideal toleration and courage, but for statesmanship that has established a precedent ... that no persecuted minority will seek redress without someone in the majority standing forth to champion the weaker cause. The Conservative party has reason to be proud of their defeat on such an issue.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Henry Borden (ed.), Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs (Toronto, 1938), p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>C. H. Tupper (ed.), Supplement To The Life And Letters Of The Right Honorable Sir Charles Tupper (Toronto, 1926), pp. 133-134.

Sir Charles Tupper had put the case somewhat differently during the campaign. He asked for support from a Roman Catholic Priest in Cape Breton since, "when we are taking our political lives in our hands, to do justice to the Catholics of Manitoba, we are justified in counting upon the aid and confidence of their co-religionists in all parts of the country."<sup>4</sup>

That the Manitoba school question was a keen issue of political debate might also appear reasonable in light of the public support given to the Conservative party by the Roman Catholic Episcopacy. In Ontario the Roman Catholic Bishops had kept aloof from political alignment. In Nova Scotia, Archbishop O'Brien voiced a definite preference for the Conservative party. Bishop John Cameron of Antigonish issued a pastoral letter, adamantly political in tone, which went far beyond the bounds of the moderate Mandemant in Quebec.

A closer examination of the political platform of the Conservative candidates and the hesitancy of the Liberals to make the school question the dominant political issue, suggests that a re-assessment of the school question be considered. Did the Bishops speak out because

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<sup>4</sup>Tupper to Reverend W. McPherson, April 25, 1896. Tupper Papers, Vol. 19, p. 439.

the school question was a popular issue, or was their plea a result of the impending defeat of the Conservative Government on the trade issue? Too often the tendency among Conservative commentators has been to revert to the defeat of the Liberal party on the trade issue in 1891 and compare the election results in 1896, and attribute any change that has taken place to the presence of a new factor - the Manitoba school question. But by 1896 the Liberal party was no longer on the defensive over its trade policy and marched openly into former Conservative strongholds.

An analysis of the election of 1896 in Nova Scotia provides an opportunity to examine the stand of both political parties on national issues on which Nova Scotians had taken a definite position. Sir Charles Tupper and the Conservative party were now confronted with the powerful party organization of W. S. Fielding who clearly led the Liberal campaign and later accepted office as Minister of Finance in Laurier's cabinet. Laurier's earlier advice to Willison concerning the desirability of "bringing the trade issue to the fore,"<sup>5</sup> seems to merit careful consideration in Nova Scotia, for in this province it seems particularly applicable.

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<sup>5</sup>Laurier to J. S. Willison, March 30, 1895. Willison Papers, 109.

The election of 1896 in Nova Scotia marks the end of an era, not only with the retirement of such long time politicians as A. G. Jones and J. F. Stairs or with the accession of a new figure such as R. L. Borden, but with the legacy of anti-confederation. In 1896 Nova Scotian politicians of both parties, federal and provincial, sought to play an active role in the formation of national policies. After the turn of the century the enigma of Nova Scotian political alignments may again appear, but the earlier era of post-confederation feelings was ended.

This analysis has placed particular stress on an examination of the editorial policies of the daily press. The limitations inherent in this approach are readily apparent. Did the press mould public opinion or express local feelings? So too, the interaction between politicians and the press in Nova Scotia during the 1890's must be critically appraised. Nova Scotian politicians, from the days of Joseph Howe and his Novascotian, to W. S. Fielding who rose to prominence as editor of the Halifax Morning Chronicle, have long had a close relationship with the press.

During the period of this study the editor of the Morning Chronicle, R. S. McConnell, was charged with criminal libel by Sir Charles Tupper; Premier W. S. Fielding initiated an open debate with the Antigonish

Casket over the Liberal party's stand on the Manitoba school question, and the editor of the Casket came forward to vindicate the neutrality of his position as the editor of a "non-partizan" journal. The Conservative Halifax Herald, by contrast, was commended for its "able, fearless, consistent and disinterested defence" of the constitution and the rights of the minority in Manitoba. Clearly, the newspapers of Nova Scotia in this era provide the means to catch a glimpse of the nature and character of Nova Scotian politics.

In the preparation of this study I was accorded courteous treatment by the staff of the Public Archives of Nova Scotia. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Professor Lovell Clark of the University of Manitoba for permitting me to read his manuscript on the Conservative Party In The 1890's, and to Father A. A. Johnston of Antigonish for assistance in his particular area of Nova Scotian history. Also, although it may not be the customary thing to do, I would like to express my particular thanks to Professor P. B. Waite whose ready assistance went beyond the call of duty. None of these people should be held responsible for the judgments of the author.

CHAPTER I

THE NEUTRAL NOVA SCOTIANS

The session of Parliament that came to a close on July 22, 1895, had indeed been turbulent. Tempers had flared, three French-Canadian ministers had resigned from the Cabinet,<sup>1</sup> and traditional party affiliations had been severely strained. In Ontario, several Conservative representatives broke with their party and announced their unequivocal opposition to the Government on a major policy issue.<sup>2</sup> Party press in Ontario and Quebec reflected a similar division and intensity of feeling.<sup>3</sup> The Government of Mackenzie Bowell had at last defined its position on the Manitoba school question. On July 8, it had been announced in the House of Commons that there would be no Remedial Bill that session. Negotiations with the Manitoba Government would be continued, and if no settlement satisfactory to the minority could be reached, a special session

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<sup>1</sup>Angers, Caron and Ouimet resigned on the grounds that they were not convinced of the sincerity of their colleagues. L. C. Clark, "Conservatism in the 1890's" unpublished manuscript, Chapter V, pp. 73, 74.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 77, 78.

<sup>3</sup>Based on a comparison of the editorials of leading Ontario and Quebec newspapers. Clark, op. cit., pp. 83, 84.



of Parliament would be held early in January to introduce remedial legislation. The interim before the convening of the special sixth session of Parliament provides a unique opportunity to examine the position of political parties and the party press in Nova Scotia at a time when the general lines of policy had been established yet free from the disrupting effects of an actual political campaign or the vagaries of debate in Ottawa.

In Nova Scotia the events at Ottawa had been closely followed and keenly debated in the daily press. By the 1890's the distinctive features and political alignment of the Nova Scotian press had been long established.<sup>4</sup> The Halifax Morning Chronicle,<sup>5</sup> edited by Robert McConnell, was a journal with strong Liberal party affiliations whose editorial policies were frequently reiterated in the local weekly papers. The Chronicle was the predominant paper in a province where Sir Charles Tupper and later Sir John Thompson might have been expected to employ federal patronage to sustain a more sympathetic provincial press. This can be explained by several distinctive factors, commencing

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<sup>4</sup>With the development of an efficient system of railway transportation, the two Halifax morning papers had assumed the role of "provincial journals." In many cases they were the only daily papers available in the province.

<sup>5</sup>Hereafter referred to as the Chronicle.

with the Chronicle's leadership of the anti-confederation movement under the tutelage of William Annand. W. S. Fielding, before assuming the leadership of the Provincial Government, had served his political apprenticeship as its editor. In 1896, a close relationship with the smaller weekly papers was continued by Robert McConnell who had earlier been associated with the New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle and the Truro Guardian.<sup>6</sup>

Although the Nova Scotian press generally seemed to favour the Liberal party, there were notable exceptions. The leading Conservative journal in Nova Scotia, the Halifax Herald, expressed the outlook of many leading Nova Scotians.<sup>7</sup> In evaluating the issues involved in the Manitoba school question, the Herald's praise for John S. Ewart and Principal Grant, and its criticism of the Orangemen in Ontario provides a marked contrast to the bitterness and vacillating policies of leading Ontario journals traditionally associated with the Conservative party. This more objective, yet very able support of the Conservative Government became particularly

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<sup>6</sup>H. J. Morgan (ed.), The Canadian Men And Women Of The Time (Toronto, 1898), pp. 723, 724.

<sup>7</sup>The Conservative Members of Parliament voted on strict party lines when the Manitoba school question came before the House.

noticeable concurrent with the Premiership of Sir John Thompson. The closeness of the Herald to official government policy continued to be evident when Sir Charles Tupper directed the fortunes of the party. In 1896 the Herald was edited by J. J. Stewart, a member of the Nova Scotia Historical Society and a President of the North British Society of Canada. Stewart was assisted by William Dennis who acted as news editor and correspondent for several British and American journals.<sup>8</sup>

As well as the Herald, the Antigonish Casket entered the political fray in 1896 in definite opposition to the policies of the Chronicle. Published weekly at Antigonish, the Casket merits particular attention as a Roman Catholic newspaper, nominally non-partisan in politics, yet tending to support the Conservative party's policy of remedial legislation. In light of the outspoken and distinctly partisan pastoral letters of Bishop John Cameron, in whose diocese the Casket was published, its pages assume an added significance in any attempt to discover the attitude of Nova Scotian Catholics to their co-religionists in Manitoba.

The apparent isolation of Nova Scotians both from the heat of the political fray and the strong Protestant

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<sup>8</sup>Morgan, op. cit., p. 970 and p. 263.

reaction to the Manitoba school question so keenly felt in Ontario, was ended when the National Convention of the Loyal Orange Association met at Halifax for their annual meeting. Less than a week after the dissolution of Parliament and the announcement that the Mackenzie Bowell administration would favour some type of remedial action, the Orangemen began converging on Halifax from across the Dominion.<sup>9</sup> The potentially divisive nature of the stand of the Orange Lodge for members of the Conservative party was clearly evident in the opening pronouncements of the Grand Master, Nathaniel Clarke Wallace - himself a former Conservative cabinet minister. After outlining the judicial decision wherein the Privy Council informed the Dominion Government that they had the power to grant remedial legislation, Wallace then declared,

It is the duty of each of us to do all in our power to defeat the measure [the remedial order] by bringing what influence we can to bear on our representatives and by pledging all candidates for parliamentary honors in future to use his [sic] voice and vote for the maintenance of our public schools system.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Parliament was dissolved on July 22 and the convention convened in Halifax on July 29.

<sup>10</sup>Cited in Halifax Morning Chronicle, July 30, 1895.

The speakers who followed Wallace on the rostrum sought to ensure that Nova Scotians would not fail to understand that they were involved in the Manitoba school question.

The role of Orangeism in Canada was further defined by William Galbraith of Quebec, an ex-grandmaster. "What is Orangeism doing in Canada, is a question often asked," suggested Galbraith. Had it not been for the presence of the Hon. N. Clarke Wallace in parliament and in the government, separate schools, or a remedial order might today have been forced upon Manitoba.<sup>11</sup> Orangeism in Canada had a definite political purpose; one that was unalterably opposed to the stand of the Mackenzie Bowell government on the question of remedial legislation.

In their attempts to appeal to a Nova Scotian audience, the speakers at the sessions of the Orange Convention had sought to place prominence on the system of public schools in Nova Scotia in contrast to "the secular system dictated by the Romish hierarchy."

In the Halifax Herald which had earlier supported Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper's demand that the Government take a stand on remedial legislation, the remarks of

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<sup>11</sup>Cited in Halifax Herald, July 31, 1895.

the speakers and the tone of the proceedings at the Orange Convention posed a peculiar problem. Having refrained from editorial comment during the course of the meetings the Herald then stated its position. Taking the cue from the Orangemen, the Herald pointed out that Roman Catholic schools did indeed exist in Nova Scotia:

Within a stone's throw of the Academy of Music, where the Orangemen held a public meeting, are Catholic schools supported by public funds ... yet if that fact - a fact highly satisfactory to all creeds - had not been ignored by the speakers, many of their speeches could not have been made, for they actually appealed to our system to support their contention against the Roman Catholic minority of Winnipeg.<sup>12</sup>

The Herald sought to maintain the national unity of the Conservative party and to reaffirm the objective appraisal of the school issue which Nova Scotian members had taken earlier in the Commons.

The Morning Chronicle showed a similar desire to avoid the racial and religious passions latent in the Manitoba school question. At the same time, the dissension within Conservative party ranks could be turned to political advantage. The anomaly of a party which contained both Thomas E. Kenny, scion of a noted

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<sup>12</sup>Halifax Herald, August 3, 1895.

Halifax Catholic family and Conservative Member of Parliament for Halifax, and Clarke Wallace was eagerly brought to the reader's attention: "doubtless both agreed how to secure the most votes for the party at the next election ... Mr. Wallace controls one wing of the Tory Party, Mr. Kenny is expected to manage another wing."<sup>13</sup> In another instance, the Morning Chronicle, lamenting the absence of the noted leader of the Orange Lodge - Premier Bowell from the meetings of the convention, explained that at this very time Bowell was in Manitoba, "to beg Mr. Greenway to extricate him from the dilemma into which the Government has fallen."<sup>14</sup> Thus, in Nova Scotia the organs of both political parties refrained from polemics and took a position of studied caution on the platform of the Orange Lodge and the remedial question.

After the departure of the Orangemen from Halifax, the press quickly focussed popular attention on the trade issue. The initiative seemed to come from the Liberals, who, enjoying the prosperity and popularity of the Fielding administration within the province and the renewed vigour

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<sup>13</sup>Morning Chronicle, August 3, 1895.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., July 30, 1895.

of the federal party after the convention of 1893, sought to gain the political advantage. By August 8, however, the Herald had mustered its statistics and replied to the Chronicle in an effort to show the rise in population and prosperity in Halifax during the period of the National Policy.<sup>15</sup> The commercial depression of 1874-1878, during which time there had been a serious decline in the ad valorem value of imports, made it easy for the Herald to associate adverse economic effects with "Grit free-trade."<sup>16</sup>

The shibboleth of Liberal disloyalty was resurrected by the Conservative press. Reporting an interview at Boston of Charles Langelier, the former Provincial Secretary of the Mercier administration and an associate of Laurier's, the Herald asserted that, "if Mr. Langelier is not lying, and if these other signs are not deceptive, those Conservatives who, on account

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<sup>15</sup> Halifax Herald, August 8, 1895.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., The Herald provided a table showing the gains in Halifax commerce under the National Policy rated by volume. On August 9, a similar table followed indicating the value of exports from Nova Scotia during the years of 'Grit Free Trade' and comparing this table with one selected for the five year period ending in 1894. The stress of value made particularly good use of the fact that the Liberal years had been those of a commercial depression, 1874-1878 when the value of goods was particularly low. The purpose of this particular editorial had been to rebut the Chronicle's frequent references to the National Policy as a "Prosperity Killer."



of the school case, are playing into Mr. Laurier's hands, should pause and think how their present course tends to defeat and destroy all that was gained by the great British connection victory of 1891."<sup>17</sup> The loyalty issue, although it could not be used as effectively as in 1891 was still considered by the Conservatives as an electoral factor.

The Liberals had shed themselves of the commercial unionist taint and were seeking to justify their position of Canadian independence. In this respect, they called upon the opinion of Sir John A. Macdonald in 1869 favoring the establishment of closer commercial ties with the United States. Macdonald, at least prior to the Customs Act of 1870, had supported a policy not unlike that adopted at the Convention of the Liberal Party in 1893. Fearful of the political advantage which might be gained by invoking the support of the late Prime Minister, the Conservative Halifax Herald indignantly responded to the Chronicle's reference to Macdonald:

It does not seem possible that any Canadian should be so ignorant of the political life and character of Sir John Macdonald as not to know that no such anti-British scheme could ever have emanated from,

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<sup>17</sup> Halifax Herald, August 17, 1895.

or been countenanced by Sir John A. Macdonald or any government led by him.<sup>18</sup>

Even in 1895 the "Old Chieftain" had not been replaced. The fear was that the National Policy, too, had lived beyond its time.

At this same time, the Liberals in Nova Scotia were able to benefit from the prestige of Laurier who was conducting a very successful tour in Western Ontario. The events of Laurier's tour in Ontario where both the school question and the trade issue had aroused great concern, were closely followed in the pages of the Chronicle. The descriptions of Laurier's rousing meetings bring to mind all too clearly the earlier rallies of Sir John A. Macdonald. Such a comparison was not left to chance:

Not even in his palmyest days did the 'old chieftain,' the 'G.O.M.' of the Conservative party receive greater or more spontaneous ovations in any part of Canada than Mr. Laurier is now receiving in Ontario.<sup>19</sup>

On October 28, L. H. Davies returned to the Maritimes buoyed up with enthusiasm at the success of Laurier's tour. He called for a meeting of the Maritime Liberal Association at Halifax to consider final arrangements for the conduct of the coming campaign,<sup>20</sup> - a campaign

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., August 24, 1895.

<sup>19</sup>Morning Chronicle, October 25, 1895.

<sup>20</sup>L.H. Davies was the Chairman of the Maritime Liberal Association.

which would not begin for another six months.

The following Friday, the Chronicle printed the complete Resolutions of the National Convention of the Liberal Party.<sup>21</sup> Here was the platform of the Liberal Party based on a policy which could appeal to every section of the Dominion. To prove that not only the fishermen and farmers of Nova Scotia would benefit from the freer trade policy, the Chronicle cited the examples of Mr. Snider and Mr. Hymen, manufacturers in Waterloo and Kitchener, Ontario who favoured the Liberal policy: "Mr. Snider takes his stand upon the Liberal platform and understands that he is to vote for a reduction of the tariff to a revenue basis, and what is more, he laughs at the simplicity of the Tory organs claiming him as a protectionist."<sup>22</sup>

In Ontario Laurier had established his position not on a radical trade policy, but on the eminently British ideal of free-trade. The Liberal party would attempt to apply the British system to the practical problem of developing the Canadian nation. There was

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<sup>21</sup>The Convention, held in Ottawa in 1893, produced a series of Ten Resolutions as the National Platform of the Liberal Party - see National Liberal Convention of 1893, Official Report, (Ottawa, 1893).

<sup>22</sup>Morning Chronicle, November 1, 1895.

now a clear distinction between the policies of the Liberal and Conservative parties in Canada. According to Laurier,

The Conservative party raised their revenue not for the masses, but for the classes. The Liberals would raise their revenue not for the classes, but for the masses. They wanted to reduce taxation to the lowest point. They laid down the principle that every cent collected from the Canadian tax payer should go into the treasury, and if possible not a cent should go into the pockets of any individual ... Every citizen had a right to his own earnings and the state had no right to take from him.<sup>23</sup>

Laurier's success in Ontario gave a new impetus to the party in Nova Scotia. It gave them a national leader and a national policy on which they could appeal to the Nova Scotian electorate.

Fielding's role as Chairman of the Resolutions Committee at the National Liberal convention of 1893 had brought him to the forefront in the shaping of the new Liberal image on the tariff policy.<sup>24</sup> His determination to make the Liberal platform acceptable to all parts of the Dominion is clearly seen in a letter to Laurier as early as December 27, 1894. Referring

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<sup>23</sup>Cited in the Morning Chronicle, November 1, 1895.

<sup>24</sup>National Liberal Convention of 1893, Official Report (Ottawa, 1893).

to a recent speech on the coal question which he had delivered at Sydney, Cape Breton, Fielding 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 a 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.<sup>25</sup>

If free coal was found to be necessary in order to have a thorough tariff reform, Fielding informed Laurier that he felt that the Maritime Liberals would submit to it, but in return definite measures of free trade would be called for in Ontario.<sup>26</sup>

On March 25, 1895 Fielding was even more explicit in his comments to Laurier about the difficulties which might arise if specific emphasis was placed on a reduction of the coal duties:

If reductions in other lines are to be granted, it would not be unreasonable to have the same principles apply to coal. In conveying this thought to you my only desire is that our leaders may not needlessly commit themselves to details on a policy of the coal question, but that the article should be left to take its chances under the general principle of tariff reform.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup>Cited in D. C. Harvey, "Fielding's Call To Ottawa," Dalhousie Review, 28, (1948-49), p. 374.

<sup>26</sup>W. S. Fielding to Laurier, (Private and Confidential), March 25, 1895. Laurier Papers, Vol. 9, p. 3718.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

Fielding was clearly seeking to establish a policy for the Liberal Party which would draw the various regional interests together on a general principle, rather than to accentuate specific regional differences, in fact, for a means of turning local interests to the national interest.

Fielding's primary concern was that the leaders of the Ontario wing of the party should not commit themselves to details of a policy on the coal question. It should be left to take its chances under a general principle of tariff reform - "if our leading men in Quebec and Ontario can take this view, our party in Nova Scotia will be the better for it."<sup>28</sup> His stand on the coal question was much more subtle than simply a desire to make a good showing in counties where coal mining was a major industry, for as he observed, "perhaps we cannot expect these counties anyhow."<sup>29</sup> More important was the fact that royalties on coal, next to the Dominion subsidy, were the largest item in the provincial revenue. As he explained, "it would not be difficult to foresee that the impression could easily

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

be made, that success of the Liberals in Dominion affairs would mean Provincial bankruptcy in Nova Scotia."<sup>30</sup> Fielding concluded with the very astute observation 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."<sup>31</sup> Consequently, the Liberals should make no hasty commitment to the abolition of any specific duties, but rather, develop the principle of freer trade as the basis of Liberal policy in all sections of the Dominion.

The newspapers of Ontario were followed closely in Nova Scotia and this made Fielding's attempts to develop a unified party platform all the more essential. Fielding did not limit himself to his correspondence with Laurier, but in December 1895 and again in January of 1896, wrote directly to J. S. Willison of the Toronto Globe, criticizing him for departing from general principles in mentioning particular items to be placed on the free list.<sup>32</sup>

The Maritime Liberal Association met in Halifax

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 3719.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Harvey, op. cit., p. 375.

on November 15. The consequent series of rallies throughout the province, led by the triumvirate of Davies, Fielding, and J. W. Longley form a marked contrast to the lack of organization and leadership among the Nova Scotian Conservatives. Typical of the Liberal rallies was a meeting held at Amberst, the centre of a solidly Conservative riding. Davies began the meeting with a discussion of the Manitoba school question. He stressed that the Liberal party sought, "to do full justice in the matter, but that it was in the interests of all that the rights of the minority should be secured by friendly concessions and compromise rather than by the adverse ... methods of coercion."<sup>33</sup> Attorney-General Longley then dealt with the Liberal trade policy, contending that it was not calculated to destroy the manufacturing industries but to encourage them. There was no objection to the certain amount of incidental protection afforded by the revenue tariff and to the extent that such would aid legitimate home industries. "What the Liberals

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<sup>33</sup>Morning Chronicle, November 29, 1895.



waged war against," he declared, "were the monopolies, combines and special privileges."<sup>34</sup>

The concluding address was delivered by Premier Fielding. He reviewed the policy of the government and questioned the glowing prosperity pictured by advocates of the National Policy. While opposing high tariffs as against the consumer, Fielding asserted that he was "not at enmity with the manufacturers, but was prepared to wage war against the combines,"<sup>35</sup> citing the particular examples of cotton, sugar and cordage, each of which would have a decided appeal to a Nova Scotian audience. Fielding handled the Manitoba school question delicately, using the position of Laurier as a Catholic and leader of the Liberal party to full advantage,—"although of a different religion, he was proud to be the follower of so great a man."<sup>36</sup>

During this period, the Nova Scotian Liberals adhered to the general terms of the national party platform. The struggle for freer trade, lighter taxation and economical administration, urged the Chronicle, was what both Fielding and Laurier were fighting for--

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

"it was the duty of people who wanted these reforms to rally to the support of the men who have pledged themselves to carry them out."<sup>37</sup> Here was a fervour for fiscal and tariff reforms quite apart from any pledges on the Manitoba school question. Support of this nature would be difficult for the more staid policy of the Conservative party to counter.

During the period of relative political stability from July 1895 to January 1896, the general orientation of the two political parties in Nova Scotia can be seen. The Halifax Herald had accepted the probable necessity of some form of remedial legislation and it stood firmly in support of the Government's stand on the issue. Indeed, this stand was maintained in firm defiance of the attitude of some Ontario papers.<sup>38</sup> The test of the solidarity of Nova Scotian Conservatives had been brought to the fore with the meeting of the National Convention of the Orange Lodge in Halifax. Because of the association of many of the leading Orange delegates with the Ontario wing of the Conservative party, the Herald

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<sup>37</sup>Morning Chronicle, December 10, 1895.

<sup>38</sup>For particular reference see the editorial of August 16, 1895.

had to choose its ground with the utmost prudence. The final stand wherein the appeals of the Orangemen to the example of Nova Scotia was reversed to justify the existence of separate schools, played to local sentiment which had rejected the excesses of the Orange Lodge.

The Chronicle showed a similar restraint, refraining from any appeal to racial or religious prejudice. It sought to turn the resolutions of the convention to the advantage of the Liberal party by pointing to the dissension within the Conservative ranks and the danger of a policy of coercion. The Chronicle, too, was able to relate its stand on the school question to the Nova Scotian settlement: "if the difficulty is to be settled on the basis existing in Nova Scotia, the remedial order must be withdrawn and a policy of conciliation substituted."<sup>39</sup>

It was not the school question, but rather the trade and fiscal policies of the two parties which dominated political discussion in the press. The Herald sought to reassure Nova Scotians that their future would be protected best by retaining the National

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<sup>39</sup>Morning Chronicle, August 24, 1895.

Policy. Free Trade had had its opportunity under the earlier Liberal administration of Alexander Mackenzie. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that Sir Richard Cartwright, the "Blue Ruin Knight," bane to all Nova Scotians, would be the finance minister if ever a Grit government should obtain office. His policy of free trade and death to protection would strike a deadly blow at the chief Nova Scotian industries. In summing up, the Herald defiantly asserted, "The Chronicle will find that the Liberals need more than candidates. They'll find they need a policy."<sup>40</sup>

It was now 1895, not 1891. The Liberal policy could no longer be dismissed as the first step to annexation. The anti-British charge had been effectively countered by the Resolutions of the Ottawa Convention and the leading roles taken at that time by Mowat and Fielding. Laurier's application of the British ideal of free trade - a policy which had always been accorded a sympathetic hearing in the Maritimes, had an appeal to emotions which could match that of

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<sup>40</sup>Halifax Herald, October 29, 1895.

the National Policy. Freer trade and a promise of more economical government seemed tailored to Nova Scotian susceptibilities.

Premier Fielding's role during this early period was not without significance. His influence was not limited to his organizational skills within the Province, although the contrast to the Conservative party in this respect is most striking, it was also felt on the national level. In December he accompanied Laurier on the platform in a by-election for Montreal Centre, where he spoke both on the trade issue and the tolerant treatment accorded to Roman Catholics in Nova Scotia. The Conservative party in Nova Scotia was constantly on the defensive for the statements of their colleagues in Ontario. The Liberals were able to capitalize on the tour of their leader through Ontario and gained from their association with the national party.

The Liberal party in Nova Scotia during this period possessed a growing sophistication both in their handling of the Manitoba school question and the development of their trade policy. Fielding had carefully assessed both of these issues in his province and felt prepared to do battle on the stand of the Liberal party. In response to Laurier's invitation to

"join the Liberal administration in the event of our carrying the next election,"<sup>41</sup> he had seriously considered contesting a seat in the election. "If I could so manage things," he told Laurier, "my preference would be not to wait until after the general election, but to make an earlier move and become a candidate in the general fight."<sup>42</sup> One of Fielding's major reservations about entering the political fray was that the Liberals in anticipation of an earlier election had virtually chosen their candidates for all of the constituencies.<sup>43</sup> The organization was indeed complete and the Liberals looked with eager anticipation to the forthcoming struggle: they had now both the policies and the men.

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<sup>41</sup>Laurier to Fielding, (Private and Confidential) November 5, 1895. Laurier Papers, Vol. 9, p. 3923.

<sup>42</sup>Fielding to Laurier, (Private and Confidential) November 25, 1895. Laurier Papers, Vol. 9, p. 3919.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

CHAPTER II

TUPPER'S RETURN: THE CAPE BRETON BY-ELECTION

"FEDERAL POLITICS IN NOVA SCOTIA"

The speech from the throne on January 2, 1896 announced that a Remedial Bill would be presented during the session. Two days later, on Saturday, January 4, seven cabinet ministers resigned. That Sir Charles Tupper, who had but recently arrived in Canada, was meeting with Sir Mackenzie Bowell at the very moment when the seven resignations arrived, significantly foreshadowed the future policy of the Conservative Party.<sup>1</sup> The resignation of the ministers, Foster, Haggart, Sir C. H. Tupper, Ives, Dickey, Montague and Wood had been ostensibly caused by Bowell's failure to fill Angers' vacancy in the cabinet. In reality there were probably a variety of motives, but there was a definite "single-ness of purpose" - to force out Mackenzie Bowell as Prime Minister.<sup>2</sup>

Foster and Haggart called upon Lord Aberdeen to inform him that it would be impossible to continue under Bowell and that they wanted Tupper as leader.<sup>3</sup> The nominal reason for Tupper's return from London had

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<sup>1</sup>L. C. Clark, op. cit., pp. 105-108.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



been to discuss the proposed British government subsidy for the establishment of the fast Atlantic steamship service, but he was also closely informed of the dissensions within the Conservative Party and was prepared to offer his assistance. Tupper put his case quite openly. He told Mackenzie Bowell, "nothing would induce him to sacrifice himself except the conviction, held by the party's followers, that his leadership alone would save the situation."<sup>4</sup>

In Nova Scotia, the Halifax Herald was in the peculiar situation of having to explain the resignation of the two leading Nova Scotian Conservative cabinet ministers. The Morning Chronicle, in accordance with other Liberal journals in the Dominion, labelled the resignations as an indication of the Conservative Party's hesitancy to support the school bill. This analysis was particularly forceful in Nova Scotia, for as the Chronicle pointed out,

Outside of the Quebec French members of the cabinet, he [Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper] was the chief champion of remedial legislation. ... and now, in the eleventh hour when he discovers

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<sup>4</sup>Tupper to W. Vanhorne, January 6, 1896. Tupper Papers, Vol. 10, cited in L. C. Clark, op. cit., p. 108.

that the remedial policy is unpopular, he abandons all his courageously declared resolutions, joins in the conspiracy to depose the premier and deserts him at an important and critical moment when his support might have counted for something.<sup>5</sup>

Any apologist for the actions of the seven ministers would be on very tenuous ground, unless they could provide a meaningful alternative to the Chronicle's explanation - an alternative which would not destroy at least the semblance of unity within the Conservative ranks.

Carefully weighing the political forces, the Herald shifted the onus to Sir Mackenzie Bowell whose attitude in attempting to reconstruct the cabinet, "is one that requires explanation if not defence."<sup>6</sup> The Herald's earlier noncommittal policy now appeared as a definite statement of support for Sir Charles Tupper:

We cannot suppose that he (Mackenzie Bowell) will now fail in his obvious duty to the party and to the public. That duty is to take the voice of the Party in caucus and to let that voice prevail. Present indications are that the Liberal-Conservative members, when so consulted will declare strongly in favour of Sir Charles Tupper for premier.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Halifax Morning Chronicle, January 7, 1896.

<sup>6</sup>Halifax Herald, January 8, 1896.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

Such a recommendation would meet the hearty approval of the Liberal-Conservative party throughout the Dominion, and particularly in Nova Scotia.

Throughout this period the Herald continued to maintain that the reason for the resignations was not to be found in a substantial difference on government policy, but was an attempt to secure a new and stronger government. On the "two great matters, the trade policy of the Conservative Party, which is of the greatest importance to every Canadian, and the constitutional policy adopted on the school question which has excited so much popular interest, the Premier and his late colleagues are still in accord."<sup>8</sup> That the Herald did not wish the school question to be treated as the predominant issue is readily apparent in the emphasis which was placed on the trade policy of the Conservative Party:

The all important matter, the one which deeply concerns the whole industrial and commercial life and stability of the country, is of course the National Policy - that trade policy of the Conservative Party which has successfully wrought into the industrial fabric of the country the motto, "Canada for Canadians."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Halifax Herald, January 11, 1896.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

The principle which divided the two parties was still the stand on trade and tariff policy. The Government's policy on the question of restoring separate schools to the minority in Manitoba was simply, "a matter of carrying out the terms of the constitution and should not be an issue for popular discussion."<sup>10</sup>

The Roman Catholic journal, the Antigonish Casket, nevertheless felt compelled to express its opinion on the school question. The stand of the Casket, however, was not antithetical to the Herald's position. While admitting earlier misgivings at the actions of the cabinet ministers in resigning their portfolios "at the remarkable moment when they did," the Casket contended, "it was the very fact that Sir C. H. Tupper was one of them, that made the common report that the object of the move was the abandonment of the promised remedial measures unfounded."<sup>11</sup> The hopes of the leading Nova Scotian Roman Catholic journal on the issue of remedial legislation were solidly behind the Conservative Party. Moreover, they reaffirmed their belief in the integrity of C. H. Tupper as leader of the Nova Scotian Conservatives.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Antigonish Casket, January 30, 1896.

The political force of Sir Charles Tupper when he returned to Canada at the end of 1895 is not easy to evaluate.<sup>12</sup> This is particularly true in Nova Scotia where Tupper's political career had been shrouded in controversy since before confederation. Even as late as 1896, his role in confederation was not wholly dead as a political issue. Tupper's continuing association in federal politics was not without its consequences in stifling new leadership in the Nova Scotian Conservatives on the Provincial level. The Chronicle was quick to take advantage of this sentiment when it labelled Sir Charles, not the saviour of the Conservative Party, but a party wrecker - "he wrecked the Conservative Party of Nova Scotia between 1863 and 1867 so effectively that it has never yet recovered from the blow in provincial politics."<sup>13</sup>

The concern shown by the Liberal press at Tupper's return to Canada is an indication of the very real force that Tupper still represented. There was, moreover, the

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<sup>12</sup>Prof. A. W. MacIntosh, in his dissertation on "The Career of Sir Charles Tupper in Canada, 1864-1900", (University of Toronto, 1960) makes some attempt to weigh this factor, particularly in Chapters 10 and 11.

<sup>13</sup>Halifax Morning Chronicle, January 11, 1896.

influence which a powerful political leader can exert in a province such as Nova Scotia where he can easily tour the whole province. The inner fear represented by Tupper's return can be seen in the following editorial which appeared in the Chronicle on January 7:

The Liberal cause is in the ascendant. Mr. Laurier is soon to be Premier of Canada. He ought to be premier within the next week, but if Sir Charles Tupper throws himself in the breach there may be a troubled interregnum of a few months and then downfall.<sup>14</sup>

Unlike 1891, Sir Charles in 1896 was returning to take control of the fortunes of the Conservative Party into his own hands - not merely to organize an election campaign and return to England. His leadership could do more than stave off the impending crisis within the Government.

On January 16 speculation concerning Tupper's intention to remain in Canada and join the Government was ended when it was officially announced that he would contest the Nova Scotian seat of Cape Breton county.<sup>15</sup> Tupper was to enter the cabinet as Secretary

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., January 7, 1896.

<sup>15</sup> As early as January 8, 1896, D. McKeen had written to Tupper to offer him his seat in the Cape Breton riding. Tupper Papers, p. 680, January 8, 1896.

of State and Mackenzie Bowell would remain as Prime Minister until the end of the session. The selection of the Cape Breton riding, a safe Conservative seat, and Tupper's ultimate election with a majority substantially the same as that by which David McKeen had been returned in 1891,<sup>16</sup> has all too often led to the conclusion that Tupper's victory was foreordained and that the campaign was little more than a formality. But the nature of the Liberal offensive and the influences which came to be exerted on Tupper's behalf marked a distinct turning point in the fortunes of both parties in Nova Scotia.

The announcement that Tupper would contest a seat in Cape Breton was met by a bold declaration of the Halifax Morning Chronicle that Tupper be greeted with forceful opposition: "Every inch of ground will be contested to the bitter end. The base probability of Sir Charles re-entering public life has put the Liberals of Nova Scotia on their mettle."<sup>17</sup> Liberal enthusiasm was further heightened when the Chronicle reprinted Tupper's interview in the Montreal Star

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<sup>16</sup>The majority over Murray in 1891 was 728 votes. In 1896, Tupper's majority was 714.

<sup>17</sup>Morning Chronicle, January 15, 1896.

wherein he had stated that he did not expect any opposition in Cape Breton.<sup>18</sup> A strong candidate, the Hon. George H. Murray, was drawn from Fielding's government to do battle with Tupper.<sup>19</sup>

The Cape Breton campaign received full coverage in the two Halifax dailies, Even more significant was the national affiliation of the national newspapers.<sup>20</sup> J. M. MacConnell, the correspondent for the Halifax Morning Chronicle served also the Montreal Herald and the Toronto Globe. The Halifax Herald, represented on this campaign by William Dennis, appeared without any larger Conservative affiliation. Both the Montreal Star and the Toronto Mail and Empire found it more expedient to provide their own correspondents. Although this circumstance may have been quite independent of the issues involved in the campaign, it does suggest a lack of unity within the Conservative press in Ontario and Quebec, and that each paper was greatly concerned that the "proper" emphasis on the school question be reported to their readers.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., January 17, 1896.

<sup>19</sup> Murray later became Premier of Nova Scotia upon Fielding's entry into Laurier's cabinet.

<sup>20</sup> The names of the journalists were noted in the Morning Chronicle of January 22, 1896.



On January 18, two days after the announcement of Tupper's intention to contest Cape Breton, the Morning Chronicle published a leading editorial that a posteriori proved to be an incisive analysis of the Conservative campaign:

Their weak point is the Manitoba school question. Tupper wants that issue to be kept in the background as much as possible. ... Sir Charles is to solicit the votes of the Catholic electors on the ground that the government is to stand or fall by the policy of remedial legislation. There will be no such declaration of policy on the public platform, but the intimation will be in some other way.<sup>21</sup>

The Chronicle's analysis was predicated on the belief that the Conservative government intended to drop the remedial order and that Tupper was not sincere on the school question. Both of these assumptions proved to be erroneous. Nevertheless, the prediction that Sir Charles would not make remedial legislation a dominant public issue was correct.

From the very beginning, the Halifax Herald placed its editorial emphasis on the role of the National Policy - "which in itself ought to be enough to keep the Conservative party in power."<sup>22</sup> In essence, the Herald's appeal was aimed at the three traditional

<sup>21</sup>Morning Chronicle, January 18, 1896.

<sup>22</sup>Halifax Herald, January 16, 18, 20, (1896).

elements which had been successfully used by the Conservative party in previous Nova Scotian campaigns: the beneficent effects of the National Policy, the closeness of relations between the Conservative Party and the "Mother Country" - particularly in light of Tupper's recent negotiations for the Fast Atlantic service, and finally, the predominance of a native son of Nova Scotia now destined to become Canada's Prime Minister.

In a more expansive mood, the Herald remarked that it was especially significant that Sir Charles should be elected by the most easterly constituency in Canada, "this fact will do more than any other to attract attention to Cape Breton and cannot fail to be a benefactor in still further uniting the national feeling and welding the extremes of the Dominion together."<sup>23</sup> At the same time, the Herald warned, "the defeat of Tupper would be interpreted as evidence that Cape Breton no longer desired the coal duty, which it owes almost solely to Sir Charles Tupper, and which is so vital not only to the continued prosperity of Cape Breton, but to all Nova Scotia."<sup>24</sup> The trade policy,

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., January 23, 1896.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

therefore, was taken to be more than simply a local issue. It was the major question upon which the success of the two political parties should be determined.

The Liberal press, particularly the New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle and the Halifax Morning Chronicle were prepared to meet the Conservative party on the question of the Nova Scotian coal industry. They emphasized the importance of the Whitney syndicate which operated through the Dominion Coal Company. The Fielding administration supported the Whitney interests in an attempt to gain access for Nova Scotian coal in the New England market.<sup>25</sup> A larger market would be very much to the advantage of the Nova Scotian coal miners. The Morning Chronicle launched its debate with the charge that companies owning mines in Nova Scotia had made no attempt to gain the United States' market, and, "for political reasons they were too anxious to defend the National Policy."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Whitney's interests in steamship enterprises provided him with an already existing demand for Nova Scotian coal.

<sup>26</sup> Morning Chronicle, January 21, 1896. See also New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle, January 23, 1896.

The campaign in Cape Breton was opened at Sydney on January 23 when Tupper delivered his first electoral address. The audience was made up of delegations from various parts of the constituency - predominantly dependent on mining and shipping: Glace Bay, Bridgeport, Port Morien and Louisbourg as well as Sydney and North Sydney. Tupper concentrated principally on the condition of the Nova Scotian coal industry, recalling how in 1878, on the shores of Cape Breton, he had announced the principles of the National Policy and that his expectations had been not merely realized, but surpassed.<sup>27</sup> The growth in coal production in Nova Scotia from 688,628 tons in 1879 to 2,600,920 tons in 1895, Sir Charles attributed in a large measure to increased consumption in Canada resulting from the fostering of manufacturers by the National Policy.<sup>28</sup>

On the Manitoba school question, Tupper repeated the statement he gave at Boisdale,<sup>29</sup> that he would stand by the remedial legislation policy of the government. His position was carefully set down within the lines

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<sup>27</sup>Reported in the Morning Chronicle, January 24, 1896.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Tupper's remarks at Boisdale to a predominantly Roman Catholic audience led by Father Alexander Mac-Gillivray were his first comments specifically on this question.

established by the Mackenzie Bowell administration:

Had I been at divergence with my colleagues upon this policy, or this question as defined in the speech from the throne, it would have been impossible for me to have accepted office.<sup>30</sup>

By adopting this stand, Tupper affirmed his support for the policy established by the Government without expressly alienating any of the traditional Protestant voters in his constituency. The presence of "no less than twelve Roman Catholic clergymen seated on the platform or conspicuously near to it," was cited by the Chronicle as an ominous sign of the latent support for Tupper for his position of orthodoxy on the school question.<sup>31</sup>

The mainstay of Conservative party support which in the past had ensured that Cape Breton would return a Conservative representative was evident throughout the campaign. At Glace Bay where Tupper made his second major political address, the meeting was held in the workshop of the Dominion Coal Company. Sir Charles was greeted at Glace Bay by David McKeen - resident manager of the Dominion Coal Company - whose opening remarks were probably as significant as Tupper's own speech. Mr. McKeen told his audience that while the Dominion

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<sup>30</sup> Cited in Halifax Herald, January 20, 1896.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

Coal Company had hoped to capture the United States market, both he and the Company doubted the present feasibility of such a move. Under the present state of American politics, he predicted, it would not be likely for another twenty years.<sup>32</sup> Implicit in this prediction was the assumption that the coal duty guaranteed by the National Policy would have to be retained if the Nova Scotian industry was to prosper.

By January 27, the Halifax Herald reported that the feeling on the coal duty is so strong that Mr. Murray has issued a card in which he stated that while he was in favor of free trade in coal, "if the United States will not give us reciprocity, I will support the maintenance of a duty at least equivalent to any duty that is imposed against ours."<sup>33</sup> Tupper was not long to seize upon this statement for his own political advantage. On the following day he suggested that, "if Mr. Murray takes this stand on the coal duty, he should not oppose me, but support me."<sup>34</sup> The climax to this debate came with the publication of a

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<sup>32</sup>Cited in Morning Chronicle, January 25, 1896.

<sup>33</sup>Halifax Herald, January 27, 1896.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., January 28, 1896.

telegram from Henry M. Whitney, President of Dominion Coal Company, replying to an earlier query from Premier Fielding regarding the attitude of the company during the electoral contest.<sup>35</sup>

Whitney's frankness, which he claimed was necessary because of his very pleasant relations with Fielding, must have taken the Premier somewhat by surprise. Whitney forcefully declared that he considered the maintenance of the present Canadian duty on coal to be of the most vital importance to the welfare and continued prosperity of the coal interests of Nova Scotia.<sup>36</sup> This protection was doubly important, Whitney contended, at a time when the company was making expensive efforts to introduce the coal into the United States - "our only hope of success in this effort is that while we are making it, nothing shall happen to interfere with our Canadian market."<sup>37</sup> Whitney, however, was clearly straddling the political fence and continued to hold out encouragement to the Liberal scheme of advancement into New

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<sup>35</sup>The telegram, dated at Boston, January 25, 1896, was reprinted in both Halifax dailies on January 29, 1896.

<sup>36</sup>Reprint of the telegram cited here is from the Morning Chronicle.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

England - "if no backward step is taken in the protection of the coal industry of Cape Breton and Nova Scotia by Canada, ... your province will start on a career of prosperity which it has never dreamed of."<sup>38</sup>

"I am unwilling to believe," he declared:

that any political party, if charged with the sobering responsibility of power could seriously propose at this time so mad and rash an act as to lessen the protection which Canada now wisely gives to the coal industry.<sup>39</sup>

"Such an act," he said, "would be like turning back in sight of the promised land."<sup>40</sup>

Both political parties responded with the utmost vigour to the conditions set forth in Whitney's statement. On the eve of the election, Fielding's frequently

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid. That Whitney had little hesitation at being seated on both sides of the political fence at the same time is suggested in a letter from Sir Charles Tupper wherein Sir Charles thanked him for the wish which he had expressed that Tupper should continue to represent Cape Breton County and for the kind assurance of his (Whitney's) hearty co-operation in the general election. Tupper to Whitney, April 23, 1896, Tupper Papers, Vol. 19, p. 427.



outspoken Attorney-General, J. W. Longley, appeared at Gardiner Mines. It was probably no accident that it was Longley who sought to interpret Whitney's telegram in the light of Liberal party policy. Longley was well known for his sympathies toward closer Nova Scotia - New England trade relations. After remarking on the state of United States politics and the desire of Nova Scotians for a free market for coal, Longley informed his audience that the policy which the Liberal party intended to pursue was one which, after due investigation, "will seem to be best for the coal industry." In this, he declared, "I have no reason to doubt that ... they will be sustained by the Dominion Coal Company in the strongest manner."<sup>41</sup>

Longley's position, reinforced as it had been by Murray's earlier commitment to maintain a protective duty for Nova Scotian coal, was not without merit as a political plea. The Cape Breton miners were skeptical of the high rates which they had to pay on a majority of their imported goods. Moreover, the New England market was a goal which had been before their eyes for more than two generations. The Liberal platform and

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<sup>41</sup>Morning Chronicle, February 3, 1896.

President Whitney's reference to "the promised land" could accrue to the Liberal advantage at the expense of supporters of the National Policy. Longley now spoke not of free trade but rather free markets for coal; this would be more in accord with the Resolutions of 1893 where the necessities of a revenue tariff had limited the applicability of complete free trade to Canadian conditions.

For the supporters of the Conservative party too, Whitney's telegram had political merit. A simple retention of the duty on coal, that duty which originated with the Conservative party, the Herald urged, would not be enough. Mr. Murray's "duty", even if he could effect it within the ranks of his own party, would be insufficient since "Grit free trade" would be ruinous to the manufacturing industries. "Let no man suppose that a coal duty alone is sufficient," the Halifax Herald solemnly warned, "nothing short of the National Policy ... is sufficient to protect the coal industry, and all those who in any way as merchants, farmers, or otherwise are interested in the prosperity of that industry."<sup>42</sup> On the very eve of the election the trade

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<sup>42</sup>Halifax Herald, February 1, 1896.

issue was still a viable factor, and one upon which neither party had conceded any ground.

On the preceding Sunday, January 26, a new political factor had entered the election campaign. This was the active intervention on the school question by several Roman Catholic priests in Cape Breton. The Eastern Chronicle, published in nearby New Glasgow and one of the most reliable barometers of public opinion on the Cape Breton area, noted this initial reaction:

Speaking to a prominent Liberal today, I find that hope, which ran high before yesterday (Sunday) has been somewhat dashed by the blazing utterances of nearly all the Priests yesterday in favor of Sir Charles Tupper and the denunciation of the Liberals.<sup>43</sup>

The political implications of clerical intervention were forthrightly noted by the Eastern Chronicle's correspondent, "in the country districts largely inhabited by Scotch Catholics, loss is anticipated."<sup>44</sup>

At first, the clerical intervention seemed to be simply the individual actions of the priests. For example, at Sacred Heart Church, Father Quinlan after

<sup>43</sup>New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle, January 30, 1896. Hereafter referred to as the Eastern Chronicle.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

he had removed his vestments was reported, "to have stepped down to the communion rail and addressed the congregation not as a priest, but as their pastor,"<sup>45</sup> a subtle but meaningful distinction. Father Quinlan said that in the present election, the question to his parishioners as Catholics was not simply who was to represent them. There was another issue of immeasurable import, the Manitoba school question, and "Sir Charles Tupper will settle that question, we have his word for it."<sup>46</sup> He concluded his brief remarks with the exhortation that the parishioners' religious interests should be dearer to them than their political interests. Father McPherson at Little Bras d'Or was reported to have spoken to his parishioners in a similar manner and urged them to support the Government on the school question.<sup>47</sup>

The interest in the election was not limited to the Roman Catholic clergy, for the Reverend J. F. Forbes in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church directed his

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<sup>45</sup>Morning Chronicle, February 3, 1896.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

congregation to vote in accordance with the dictates of their conscience.<sup>48</sup> In the Methodist Church, Reverend David Hickey, was reported to have intoned in his prayer, that he hoped his people would put down corruption and unclean government and that the best of feeling would prevail.<sup>49</sup> The event which caused an indignant outburst from the Liberal press was not the individual actions of the priests, but the appearance of an apparent Pastoral Letter from the Bishop of Antigonish, His Excellency Bishop John Cameron, in whose diocese Cape Breton was located.

Bishop Cameron was doubly suspect: characteristically outspoken and closely associated with the late Sir John Thompson and the Conservative Party.<sup>50</sup> After the death of Sir John Thompson, however, Premier Fielding had written to Laurier that he doubted "if His Lordship will care to attempt to use the same

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>For further reference on Bishop Cameron's role in Nova Scotian politics see D. Hugh Gillis, "Sir John Thompson and Bishop Cameron", Canadian Catholic Historical Association, Annual Report (1955), and also "Sir John Thompson's Elections," Canadian Historical Review (March, 1956).

influence ... his course in the past had estranged him from many of his people and some of his clergy."<sup>51</sup> Even if the Bishop should put himself to the front as an advocate of the Conservatives, he could not be expected to exercise as much influence in support of the Bowell Government as he did for Thompson. But then, it was no longer Sir Mackenzie Bowell whom Bishop Cameron would be supporting; now it was another native Nova Scotian, Sir Charles Tupper who had pledged to protect the rights of the Catholic minority in Manitoba. More than this, Tupper was seeking a seat in Bishop Cameron's own diocese. Given the concurrence of these two events, and Bishop Cameron's Highland Scot temperament, it would indeed have been strange had he not joined at least the sidelines of the political fray. And calling the plays from the sidelines seems appropriately to characterize his role.

The Halifax Herald was conspicuous by its silence on the actions of priests in Cape Breton, so much so that one would have been hard pressed to see

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<sup>51</sup>Fielding to Laurier, January 5, 1895, Laurier Papers, Vol. 9, p. 3524.

the school question as an electoral issue at all. By contrast, the Morning Chronicle indignantly rushed into print on February 4 with a very strongly worded letter which Bishop Cameron was reported to have circulated as a Pastoral Letter to all of the Priests of Cape Breton. If the Liberals had been expecting some statement from the Bishop, His Lordship had not disappointed them: "A great wrong has been done for the last five years to the Catholic minority of Manitoba, a wrong ... jeopardizing the salvation of countless souls."<sup>52</sup> Moreover, warned the Bishop, "Men who are loud in their praise of liberty, justice and religion are found arrayed against remedial legislation, the only means under the constitution of addressing the wrong."<sup>53</sup>

What particularly perplexed the Chronicle, was the Bishop's outspoken declaration that,

among those hell-inspired hypocritical Catholics are to be found not a few who will vote against justice being done to their co-religionists and who, to add insult to injury, will move for a commission of investigation instead of remedial legislation - a commission pronounced to be the hollowest sham by the most competent of living judges of the subject.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Cited in the Morning Chronicle, February 4, 1896.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

Without explicitly mentioning either party by name, Bishop Cameron had left little doubt as to his dissatisfaction toward those who would vote down the remedial policy and support Laurier's plea for further investigation. The letter was reported to have been read on Sunday, February 2, immediately preceding the election.

The Morning Chronicle, the only Liberal journal in Nova Scotia able to express an opinion before the election,<sup>55</sup> wrought its initial wrath not upon Bishop Cameron, but on Tupper. They held him responsible for the Bishop's action:

Sir Charles Tupper, in his desperation, has appealed to influences which cannot at any time be used in the political field without danger and which at the present time should be discountenanced by every good citizen.<sup>56</sup>

The Chronicle had no intention of engaging in an open dispute with the Roman Catholic clergy. Tupper was at

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<sup>55</sup>The Eastern Chronicle denounced Bishop Cameron's actions in its weekly edition, but this did not appear until Thursday, February 6, after the election had taken place. The Yarmouth Herald which appeared on Tuesday, February 4, made no mention of any campaign irregularities. The Digby Courier showed little interest in the Cape Breton campaign and made no mention of Bishop Cameron.

<sup>56</sup>Morning Chronicle, February 4, 1896.



least politically, if not morally, liable for Bishop Cameron's actions. Laurier, the Chronicle contended, had long been struggling to avoid this evil [religion in politics] and his policy alone could achieve the triumph of moderation and conciliation.<sup>57</sup>

Although the Morning Chronicle had explicitly charged the Herald with neglecting to mention the "fact" of the week-end activities in Cape Breton,<sup>58</sup> the Herald refrained from any comment. This silence on the school question during the campaign coverage by the Herald may well have been an attempt to avoid the disruptive factions associated with the Conservative party in Ontario. More probably, though, Tupper himself did not intend that the school question be made the focus of political debate. In this sense the Herald's emphasis on the trade issue was quite consistent with the nature of the Cape Breton campaign. Bishop Cameron's pastoral, while it forced the school question into the forefront of political debate, does not seem to have been meant as an open political

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., also Herald's notice of this charge in its edition of February 5, 1896.

statement. Rather it had been intended only for the clergy under his jurisdiction and was not an open Pastoral Letter prepared specifically for publication.

At his first public address after the election, held, perhaps as a quirk of fate, at Antigonish, Tupper made a definite point of referring to the harmony between Catholics and Protestants in Nova Scotia. He was all too well aware of the charges which were being brought against him, and he appeared most anxious to exonerate himself:

He had neither asked support nor assistance from any priest or clergyman of any denomination in Cape Breton; those who scanned the results would find that the verdict of the Protestants of Cape Breton was clear and unmistakable in his favor and in favor of the government's policy.<sup>59</sup>

Tupper's claims were quite probably justified. He had come to Cape Breton confident of victory; McKeen had previously defeated Murray in the 1891 contest. Nevertheless, both he and the leaders of the Liberal party had now seen the impossibility - even in Nova Scotia - of contesting an election without a definite stand on the school question. Perhaps, even more than Tupper, Premier Fielding had been made aware of the possible political force latent in the school question.

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<sup>59</sup>Halifax Herald, February 5, 1896.

Feelings which had been aroused over the recent by-election did not end with Tupper's return to Ottawa. Instead, the focus remained fixed on events in Nova Scotia. Relations between the Antigonish Casket and the Morning Chronicle had been strained for some time over the former's support for remedial legislation.<sup>60</sup> It was not the Chronicle, but rather the Casket which seized the initiative. On February 6 an authorized statement from Bishop Cameron appeared in the Casket denying the allegations of the Morning Chronicle that the Bishop had circulated a Pastoral Letter. "What the Chronicle's correspondent calls a 'Pastoral Letter' is a garbled extract from a private letter marked as such."<sup>61</sup> Bishop Cameron wanted it made quite clear that the actions of the clergy in advising their people from the pulpit to support the candidate who was for granting relief to their oppressed co-religionists in Manitoba, "while meeting with his approval, was not taken at any command or request from him."<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>In an editorial on December 5, 1895 the Casket's editor Mr. J. A. Wall felt compelled to come forward and review the stand of the Casket as a non-partisan journal, yet, as a Catholic paper favoring remedial legislation for the minority in Manitoba.

<sup>61</sup>Antigonish Casket, February 6, 1896.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

Furthermore, no communication - direct or indirect - had passed between the Bishop and Sir Charles, except "the latter's simple request by telegram to meet him as an old and esteemed friend at the railway station on his way ... from the county."<sup>63</sup>

Tupper's actions appeared to be vindicated. His desire to meet Bishop Cameron on his return trip toward Ottawa would provide him with an external sign of the Bishop's support without alienating the Protestant electors of Cape Breton before the vote. That some of the priests in Cape Breton had held political views in favor of remedial legislation apart from the predominating influence of Bishop Cameron was well known. At an earlier date, C. F. McIsaac had written to Laurier about this very problem. One of the most prominent priests in his diocese (Antigonish) and a strong personal friend with Liberal convictions, had threatened to act on the school question if the Liberal party could not go at least as far as the Government.<sup>64</sup> Now it appeared that some of the clergy may have taken

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> McIsaac to Laurier, March 4, 1895. Laurier Papers, Vol. 9, p. 3640.

this action. Liberals in Nova Scotia would be faced with a new and more complex problem if they were to appeal to the whole of the Nova Scotian electorate in the forthcoming general election.

Tupper won the election by a majority very similar to that which McKeen had obtained in 1891. This would suggest that party support had remained relatively stable.<sup>65</sup> There was never any real doubt of Tupper's success and he was still a powerful politician in a campaign. Even a paper of noted Liberal sympathies such as the Eastern Chronicle could not help but admire the "imperial ring" about his speeches:<sup>66</sup>

If not the same fire and force of earlier years, Tupper exhibited a certain mellowness and pathos in his utterances which was both subtle and captivating.<sup>67</sup>

The support of McKeen as resident manager of the Dominion Coal Company and Tupper's own emphasis on what he had done for the coal miners made his election almost certain.

Throughout the campaign Sir Charles had placed his greatest emphasis on the trade issue, local Cape Breton affairs, and refuting personal slanders against

<sup>65</sup> See Appendix II.

<sup>66</sup> Eastern Chronicle, January 31, 1896.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

his character. On the school question he had tactfully maintained that he would uphold the position of the Conservative Government which in the Speech from the Throne had promised a remedial bill. Tupper quite wisely did not elaborate, but stressed that he would protect the "constitutional rights" of the Roman Catholic minority. His campaign suggested that Tupper's return to Canada might yet ruin the rising hopes of the Liberal party.

Victory in Cape Breton was perhaps more than the Liberals could have expected. The constituency, even with a lesser man than Tupper, had been considered a safe Conservative seat. Nevertheless, their candidate, George H. Murray, young, aggressive, and well spoken had formed a definite contrast to the aging Tupper who had hoped to gain a seat in his native Nova Scotia without a struggle. Although Premier Fielding did not intervene in Cape Breton,<sup>68</sup> his Attorney-General J. W. Longley had engaged in an active discussion of the coal trade. Several federal members, however, were on hand

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<sup>68</sup>Fielding was confined to Halifax. He had called an early session of the Nova Scotian House in order to free himself for the general contest.

to render their assistance. The Hon. D. C. Fraser, member for Guysborough, and C. F. McIsaac, who had contested the Antigonish by-election, both actively campaigned for Murray. C. R. Devlin, a Liberal member from Quebec, was also present to address the Acadian electors in French.<sup>69</sup>

Murray, an able orator in his own right, had made a good case for the Liberal party on both the trade policy and the school question. The Cape Breton coal industry, Murray argued, had definite prospects for expansion under a policy of freer trade. Its winter port and transportation facilities were ready to take advantage of fluctuations in the American market. On the school question, he took his stand beside Laurier; his views were identical with those of the Liberal leader. It might have been expected that the presence of C. F. McIsaac in the rural areas of Cape Breton would neutralize the Catholic vote. But then, the stand of the two parties on the school question had been materially altered by the promise of a Remedial Bill by the Conservative Government.

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<sup>69</sup>Halifax Herald, January 31, 1896.

The Cape Breton by-election tested the strength and weaknesses of both political parties. Despite the impression created by the Halifax Herald that the trade issue was the dominant question in the election, the publication of Bishop Cameron's letter in the Morning Chronicle had brought the school question into the open. The Liberal party, now more than ever, would have to take a stand on the school question. So too, Whitney's telegram to Fielding had forced both parties to define and defend their trade policies in light of this particular Nova Scotian interest. With the imminence of a general election in less than four months, the insights gained in this early foray would prove crucial.



### CHAPTER III

#### OUTSIDE THE LINES OF TORRES VEDRAS

"But like Hamlet's ghost, this school question will not down ... the question is now in all the provinces. Sides are taken on it and it has become the dominant political issue."

Yarmouth Herald  
February 4, 1896

February 11, 1896 should have been a signal day for the Conservative party in Canada; it should have been a time when a new feeling of unity and a forcefulness of spirit could be seen in party ranks. It was on this day that the Minister of Justice, the Hon. A. R. Dickey, introduced the long awaited Remedial Bill to the House, and on the same day, Sir Charles Tupper, the newly elected member for Cape Breton took his seat in Parliament. The tone of the new caucus with Tupper as leader in the House, however, was anything but unanimous.<sup>1</sup> In Toronto, a mass meeting was held in Massey Hall on February 22 to protest against Remedial Legislation and a number of prominent conservatives inveighed violently against the Bill.<sup>2</sup> In Nova Scotia, however, there were no such radical outbursts of Protestant indignation within the Conservative party.

While the attention and actions of the leading Nova Scotian Conservatives were now centred on Ottawa

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<sup>1</sup>L. C. Clark, op. cit., pp. 125-130.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 130-131.

where the specific terms of the Remedial Bill would be brought before the House, the Liberal party in Nova Scotia was able to take full advantage of the absence of opposition to organize the Province for the general election for which they had so long been waiting.<sup>3</sup> The interrelationship between the provincial Liberal party and the federal campaign was clearly apparent in this election. A victory of the Liberal party at this time would have been unlikely had it not been for the support of the provincial Liberal parties. The Yarmouth Herald had very early sensed the relevance of this relationship as the crucial stepping stone to an eventual Liberal victory:

It must be remembered that though the Liberal party has been out of power at Ottawa, and consequently has had no chance to control legislation or policy, it has had power in most of the provinces during the greater part of that period. In Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island the public confidence in the ability, capacity and energy of the Liberal leaders has been time and again expressed.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>The advanced state of Liberal organization in the Province was suggested in Chapter I. But it was not merely mechanical organization, the Liberal party members were in fact anxious to engage the Conservative party in an electoral contest. See Fielding to Laurier, March 25, 1895. Laurier Papers, Vol. 9, p. 3717 and also L. G. Power to Laurier, March 4, 1895, Vol. 9, p. 3643.

<sup>4</sup>Yarmouth Herald, February 4, 1896.

In Nova Scotia, the Provincial Government was not content to rest upon its laurels in provincial politics, but its leading members actively engaged in the federal contest.

Little more than a week after the conclusion of the Cape Breton by-election and long before the feelings which it had aroused could be abated, Fielding's Attorney-General, J. W. Longley was unanimously nominated by the Annapolis Liberal Association.<sup>5</sup> Two days later, the Liberal party of Nova Scotia presented a banquet in Halifax for the Hon. G. H. Murray. Although organized by the Provincial Association, the close alignment with the federal party was obvious. The main speaker of the evening was William Paterson, Member of Parliament for Brant, Ontario, and a noted manufacturer.<sup>6</sup>

Murray's remarks at this banquet provide a critical analysis of the position of the Liberal party in Nova Scotia. "You might reasonably ask", Murray asserted,

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<sup>5</sup> Bridgetown, February 11. Reported in the Morning Chronicle, February 12, 1896.

<sup>6</sup> The interest engendered in the recent by-election is evident in the ample press coverage given particularly to Mr. Murray's analysis of the Cape Breton campaign. Reports were carried in Morning Chronicle on February 13 and 14, Antigonish Casket, February 20, and the Yarmouth Herald, February 18.

that being defeated in the great commercial centres of the country, how it came that Sir Charles was elected with such a majority. I think I must have satisfied you that the discussion of ordinary public policy did not tell in his favor. To what then was it owing? I say it was by means of a distinct and special issue. I refer to the Manitoba school question and the presentment of this question by a private and aggressive canvass conducted by clergymen had a most surprising and telling effect. It was practically impossible to meet this issue in large and scattered country districts.<sup>7</sup>

From Murray's point of view and attested to by the presence of Mr. Paterson the Liberals believed that they had a definite chance for success if the forthcoming contest in Nova Scotia could be fought on the trade policies of the two parties.

The dilemma which confronted the Liberals therefore, was to seek a way to effectively define their stand on the school question without alienating the Catholic vote. This was not an easy task when dealing with scattered settlements of Roman Catholic Highland Scots, as well as French Acadians, and pockets of Irish Catholics.<sup>8</sup> The Antigonish Casket forcefully pointed to the crisis which confronted the Liberal party. While regretting, along with Mr. Murray, that the school question had been made a political issue,

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<sup>7</sup>Cited in Antigonish Casket, February 20, 1896.

<sup>8</sup>The one pervading factor which could unite each of these groups would be an appeal to their own position in, and loyalty to, the Province of Nova Scotia.

nevertheless, the Casket demanded:

Will Mr. Murray or any other person explain to us how such a question can possibly be prevented from playing a part in a contest where each party presents a candidate in full accord with their respective policies ... We hold that even one of such candidates pledging himself to support the policy of the opposite party could not effectually remove the question from the issue.<sup>9</sup>

The Casket's editorial made it even more imperative that the Liberal party in Nova Scotia articulate a stand on this potentially divisive issue. With the fear of further actions by Bishop Cameron in support of the Conservative Government's Remedial Bill, it would no longer be enough to remain behind the lines of Torres Vedras.

Throughout the latter part of February the Liberal party continued to marshall its forces. On February 17 the Liberal Association of Pictou county inaugurated its campaign with a rally in New Glasgow. The Hon. George H. Murray appeared along with the candidates J. W. Carmichael and E. M. McDonald.<sup>10</sup> In Annapolis, Attorney-General Longley spoke at Middleton

<sup>9</sup>Antigonish Casket, February 20, 1896.

<sup>10</sup>Pictou County was the seat held by Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper.

on February 25, at Bridgetown on February 26, Annapolis on February 27 and concluded his tour at Bear River on February 28. In Hants county too, the Liberals were preparing their forces for the approaching general election. A convention at Windsor was planned for March 5.

Events in Ottawa were keeping pace with the political activity in Nova Scotia. On March 3 the Remedial Bill came up for its second reading before the Commons with the motion in favor of the Bill being introduced by Sir Charles Tupper. The following day, along with the Report of happenings at Ottawa, came the Morning Chronicle's apparently innocuous announcement of a proposed address by Premier Fielding to the Hants county Liberal Association at Windsor. This speech which came to be referred to as Fielding's "Windsor Speech" completely shifted the emphasis of the Nova Scotian press from a full consideration of Tupper's speech, and the contents of the Remedial Bill, to a debate on the attitude of Nova Scotians toward the school question. Both the Halifax Herald and the Antigonish Casket quoted the "Windsor speech" at length, the Casket branding it "one

of the most mischievously misleading documents on this question."<sup>11</sup>

Premier Fielding opened his address by remarking on the special sense of regret felt by Nova Scotians that the question of religious schools had been made a political issue. Fielding's terms of reference became immediately apparent - it was the question of separate schools for a sister province. Earlier too, he had advised Laurier that he felt it "a pity that the question could not be recognized on both sides as a religious one rather than as a political one and dealt with in a non-partisan manner on which men were at liberty to differ."<sup>12</sup> At Windsor, Fielding contended that the policy of the Liberal party had been to keep the Manitoba school dispute from becoming a political question; the Liberal party was prepared to stand on the legitimate issues of the day.

Failure to achieve an amicable settlement to a problem which has confronted the Dominion Government since 1890, Fielding charged, lay in the attitude of the Conservative party. In support of this stand, he quoted the response of the Legislature of Manitoba

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<sup>11</sup>Halifax Herald, March 9, 1896, and Antigonish Casket, March 12, 1896.

<sup>12</sup>Fielding to Laurier, January 5, 1895, Laurier Papers, Vol. 9, p. 3526.



rejecting the Federal Government's proposals for a settlement:

I think it must be admitted that the ground taken by Manitoba was reasonable. Mr. Laurier thinks it is, and is willing to have a commission of inquiry appointed.<sup>13</sup>

Support for the province of Manitoba was prominent in his appeal:

During the past five years she had to engage in continuous litigation for the defence of what she believed to be her rights. During the past year she had to fight a still harder battle against the threat of coercion from the Dominion Government. Could anyone expect a happy settlement of the question in the midst of all this strife?<sup>14</sup>

The general orientation was toward Laurier's "sunnier ways analogy", but the unmistakable emphasis was on provincial rights in a provincial matter.

Fielding's stand was an appeal to two particular attributes of the Nova Scotian electorate: their strong feelings of provincial rights and the assumption that a settlement similar to that accepted in Nova Scotia would be attained in Manitoba. He did not advocate a policy of investigation with the expectation that coercion or Dominion interference would be necessary. "I believe," Fielding declared, "that the

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<sup>13</sup>W. S. Fielding, "Windsor Speech," as printed in the Morning Chronicle, March 7, 1896. This speech was undoubtedly meant to be a major policy declaration of the Nova Scotian Liberal point of view.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

people of Manitoba, if left alone, will settle the question for themselves:

The Manitobans are not African savages... Many of them are our own people who have left the Maritime provinces to make new homes in the West... once these efforts at coercion cease, a solution will be found in the western province, just as it has been found in the Maritime provinces.<sup>15</sup>

There is no awareness in these remarks that the Manitoba school question involved more than separate schools for Roman Catholics. That the French Canadians saw the loss of separate schools in Manitoba as also destroying the use of French language in the schools, does not appear to be an issue in Nova Scotia. Moreover, the declaration that many of the settlers in Manitoba were fellow Maritimers further suggests that Fielding saw the expansion of settlement in Manitoba - not as English Canadian - French Canadian, but simply as the multi-racial nature of settlement that he knew in the Maritimes.

Fielding himself was not unmindful of the views of Roman Catholics on educational matters, nor did he discuss the question with any hostility toward the

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

Roman Catholic minority. Again his comparison of the situation in the West to that in the East made no distinction of the special role of the French in Manitoba - the issue was strictly defined as being one of Roman Catholic schools.<sup>16</sup>

In summing up his remarks, the Premier stated that gratitude to the Roman Catholics of his own constituency, no less than his own sense of justice, prompted him to desire a settlement of this question as the Roman Catholics might honorably accept - but, "if ever such a solution is to be had it must be through the good will of the majority of the people of the province to which they belong."<sup>17</sup> These final words very appropriately sum up Fielding's grasp of the political realities of the Manitoba situation. By choosing this ground he effectively combined an appeal to the independent feelings of Nova Scotians, while affirming his support for Laurier and the policy of the federal Liberal party. In stressing the compatibility of these two elements, Fielding was at the crux of the paradox of Nova Scotia's post-confederation political alignment.

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., See Fielding's particular reference to the Roman Catholic supporters in his own constituency.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

Laurier's position as a Roman Catholic and leader of a national party were effectively combined to appeal to Nova Scotian Protestants as well as the independent minded Highland Scot Catholics:

It requires strength, courage and determination of the highest character for a Roman Catholic citizen to oppose the line of action recommended by Bishops and clergy.<sup>18</sup>

Fielding cited Laurier's example almost as a direct reference to the Catholic electors of Nova Scotia as a result of the recent struggle in Cape Breton where the electors had been subjected to influences not unlike those exerted upon Laurier.

We know from the public press the efforts that have been made to induce Mr. Laurier to support the policy of coercion.<sup>19</sup>

Do you Roman Catholic electors in Nova Scotia, Fielding might well have asked, wish to support a policy of coercion on the Province of Manitoba, that Laurier, a Roman Catholic has rejected?

The attempt to define the position of the Liberal party in Nova Scotia on the school question was further strengthened by the publication of a twenty-four page

<sup>18</sup>Windsor Speech (Part II) Morning Chronicle,  
March 9, 1896.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

pamphlet by Senator L. G. Power, discussing the Remedial Bill from the point of view of a Catholic member.<sup>20</sup> Senator Power's support, as a leading Irish Catholic from Halifax, would be essential if Fielding were to consolidate Roman Catholic opinion: The Irish Catholics, particularly in the Halifax area, did not necessarily follow the lead of their fellow Roman Catholics in Antigonish.<sup>21</sup> Senator Power contended that the Remedial Bill was not such a measure as Catholic members of either house should vote for. In his concluding paragraph he unequivocally declared his opposition to the Government's Remedial Bill.

While I do not question the right of any Catholic member, who can satisfy himself that the Bill is likely to improve the condition of his co-religionists in the matter of education - to vote for it, I shall feel it my duty as a Catholic and as a citizen to vote against it should it come before the Senate in anything like its present condition.<sup>22</sup>

Senator Power's pamphlet weighed directly on the side of the political balance which Fielding was attempting to maintain. The stand of the Liberal party in Nova Scotia was not diametrically opposed to the idea of Catholic schools, but it was opposed to the principle

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<sup>20</sup> A large section of this pamphlet was reprinted in the Morning Chronicle, March 12, 1896.

<sup>21</sup> The census of 1891 shows the number of Roman Catholics in Halifax (city and county) to be 23,593.

<sup>22</sup> Morning Chronicle, March 12, 1896.

of coercion inherent in the Conservative Government's Remedial Bill. In this stand, adopted from the particular point of view of a Nova Scotian political party, Fielding found himself firmly allied with Laurier's national stand on the school question. Indeed, Laurier's position seemed almost directly applicable to the Nova Scotian interests.

Laurier, for his part, had been compelled by the exigencies of debate in the House of Commons upon the motion for the second reading of the Remedial Bill to come out from behind the lines of Torres Vedras and take a stand on the Government's actions. His speech in reply to Tupper's motion for a second reading,<sup>23</sup> created an immediate impact in Nova Scotia. The Yarmouth Herald ecstatically announced that it, "marks an epoch in our political history."<sup>24</sup> Even the Digby Courier, a decidedly non-partisan, and even non-political journal, thought it fitting to note that, "the speeches of Messrs. Laurier and Foster on the school question are having an enormous circulation to meet demand. They were masterpieces of political oratory."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Canada, House of Commons Debates, Session 1896, I, March 3, pp. 2736, 2759.

<sup>24</sup>Yarmouth Herald, March 10, 1896.

<sup>25</sup>Digby Courier, March 20, 1896.

The concurrence of Laurier's famous declaration with Premier Fielding's opening foray on the school issue must have had a profound impact on the Nova Scotian public. On March 10, the Yarmouth Herald produced a definite campaign document in the form of a special supplement to the weekly Herald containing Laurier's Speech on the Manitoba School Question on one side and Premier Fielding's "Windsor Speech" on the reverse side. The political force of the two speeches was not to be left to chance, but was pointed up most carefully.

In his speech in the House, Laurier had based his stand on opposition to the Remedial Bill, by pointing to the unfortunate results of Tupper's earlier attempt at coercion - Nova Scotia at Confederation. In 1896 as in the Confederation settlement, Laurier contended, a proper solution could not be achieved through coercion, but demanded statesmanship:

It is the part of statesmanship not to force upon the people the views of any section, but to endeavor to bring them to a uniform standard and a uniform conception of what is right.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Debates, loc. cit., p. 2738.

The Nova Scotians, Laurier asserted, had been justified in their earlier hesitancy to accept Confederation. His appeal to the patriotism of Nova Scotians is an example of unparalleled oratory:

Since the days of Athens of old there never was, perhaps, a corner of the earth of so few acres and having so few people produced such a galaxy of men of the first class as Nova Scotia. The names of Huntingdon, Uniacke, Young and Howe ... are names of men who were the peers of the most famous men of their generation.<sup>27</sup>

It is not to be wondered at that in the light of such a civilization that Nova Scotians when asked to join the Canadian confederation had some misgivings.

Rather than coercion, the course that Tupper should have followed, was statesmanship: "to try to persuade the people of the grandeur of the idea (a Canadian Nation) because they were a people eminently fitted to see the grandeur of such an idea."<sup>28</sup> By this stand, Laurier was doing more than establishing his reputation as a 'statesman'. He scored a tactical advantage over Tupper and prepared the way for greater Nova Scotian as well as Manitoban participation in the national Liberal party.

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.



The bitterness of the initiation of Confederation, Laurier declared, "will never entirely disappear until it is buried in the grave of the last man of that generation whose manhood was outraged by the arbitrary proceedings which trampled under the foot the dignity and manhood of a proud people."<sup>29</sup> Spoken by a French Canadian and leader of a national party, these words urging a policy of conciliation in Manitoba, at a time when Premier Fielding had come out in favour of a similar course, had a profound effect on the enthusiasm of Liberal forces in Nova Scotia. Laurier's deference to past Nova Scotian history would counter some of the prestige of Tupper as a native son.

The Liberal press initiated an aggressive campaign. Laurier's speech on the school question was circulated along with the resolutions of the 1893 convention.<sup>30</sup> On March 17th, the Yarmouth Herald made an open bid for support for the Liberal policies: Nova Scotians need not mind how they voted in the past:

You are not the chattel of any party leader or the serf of any political organization. Never mind if you were a Government supporter in other days. It is your business to consider the facts

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Yarmouth Herald, March 17, 1896.

as demonstrated in your own experience.<sup>31</sup>

The man who cannot vote against his party for his country, the Herald charged, "is unworthy of the franchise and unfit for citizenship in a free country."<sup>32</sup>

Unlike the Liberals, the Conservative party members in Nova Scotia remained aloof from any engagement in active provincial political organization. Events in Ottawa, too, had compelled the adoption of an ever more fixed position both on the trade policy and the school question. In Ontario many Conservative candidates were unwilling to commit their political careers to the Government's Manitoba school policy and were stridently declaring their opposition. From the speeches on the Remedial Bill it soon became clear that much of the debate "took the character of a 'family fight' with Conservatives hitting out at each other more than they did at the Liberal opposition."<sup>33</sup> At the same time, many of the most able speeches in support of the bill came from Nova Scotian members: Sir C. H. Tupper, A. R. Dickey, J. A. Gillies and Sir Charles Tupper. Thus, while many Conservatives in Ontario

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., Editorials of a similar nature were also appearing in the New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Clark, op. cit., pp. 150-155.

sought to dissociate themselves from a complete commitment to the Government's policy on the Remedial Bill, the leading Nova Scotian members stood forth in its support. When the final vote on the bill was taken, the Nova Scotian members split evenly on party lines.<sup>34</sup>

The terms of the Remedial Bill introduced into the House by A. R. Dickey were carefully noted in the Halifax Herald.<sup>35</sup> The editorial policy, however, avoided the political implications surrounding the use of remedial legislation and dealt rather with the technical aspects of the bill and the efficiency of the school system which it would establish. It was becoming readily apparent that the Herald, while prepared to offer its support for the Government's measure, was doing its utmost to avoid the racial and religious divisions created by several of the Ontario Conservative journals.

On February 25 excitement within the political ranks in Nova Scotia and the Dominion was aroused by

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<sup>34</sup>The vote was 16 - 5. In all, however, 18 Conservatives did vote against the Bill.

<sup>35</sup>Halifax Herald, February 12, 1896.

the Chronicle's publication of an open letter by the editor, Robert McConnell, addressed to R. C. Weldon, M.P. for Albert County, New Brunswick, and Charles H. Cahan, ex. M.P.P. for <sup>Shelburne</sup> Halifax and the leading Nova Scotian Provincial Conservative.<sup>36</sup> McConnell accused both Weldon and Cahan of having informed a number of people that, "Sir Charles Tupper had been guilty of a gross malversation of office on a former occasion and that as a consequence he had not been entrusted with any important financial transactions in London."<sup>37</sup> The object of the attack appeared to be twofold: to promote dissent within the Conservative ranks and to belittle the significance of Tupper as the party leader.

In Ottawa, W. H. Pope recorded that McConnell's letter was "the sensation of the hour."<sup>38</sup> More significant for Nova Scotian Conservatives was McConnell's suggestion of dissatisfaction with Tupper's leadership among leading Maritime Conservatives. Tupper's return to Canada, it was assumed, meant the leadership of the Nova Scotian wing of the Conservative party. Men such

<sup>36</sup>Morning Chronicle, February 25, 1896.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Pope Papers, Vol. 43, February 25, 1896.

as Cahan and Weldon would once again play only secondary roles within the party. Sir Charles immediately entered suit for "criminal libel" against McConnell. R. L. Borden was engaged to represent Tupper. McConnell remained defiant, perhaps with good reason, and challenged Cahan to deny that he had made the statement.<sup>39</sup> In the end, an apology was accepted by Tupper, but McConnell had created an impression which would be difficult to remove.

At a time when Conservatives in Nova Scotia might have gained prestige from the predominant position of Tupper and A. R. Dickey in the Dominion Parliament, Premier Fielding again seized the initiative in Nova Scotia. His speech at Windsor was followed by a further statement in a letter to the editor of the Antigonish Casket in reply to that journal's comments on his Windsor speech. The Casket captioned his letter as being a statement from Premier Fielding, effectively conveying the impression that his stand was the official position of the Nova Scotian Liberal party.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Halifax Herald, February 27, 1896.

<sup>40</sup>Antigonish Casket, March 19, 1896.

Fielding began his case by pointing out that John S. Ewart's actions - as counsel for the defence - in withdrawing the affidavits to support the minority's case, and the Conservative' Government's willingness to proceed without adequate investigation, reaffirmed the justness of Laurier's demands for a commission for further inquiry. On this same point, he sought specifically to repudiate the Casket's apparent belief that it was not possible to have a settlement of the question without the passing of a separate school law either by Manitoba or the Parliament of Canada: "You must permit me if I refuse to admit the correctness of this view. The experience of my own Province of Nova Scotia justifies me in such a view."<sup>41</sup>

Fielding proceeded to deal with the accusation that it was Laurier's tactics that had made the school question an issue of party politics. In this instance, Fielding made a definite attempt to deal with the school question in the context of practical politics in Nova Scotia. The first time that the school question had been made an issue in party politics, Fielding contended, was at the Antigonish by-election in 1895:

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<sup>41</sup>W. S. Fielding, Letter to the Editor, Antigonish Casket, March 19, 1896.

The Government had passed their Remedial Order, the then Minister of Justice, Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper, took part in the Antigonish campaign and urged that the Remedial Order be made the chief issue.<sup>42</sup>

Fielding's sally at Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper's actions in the Antigonish campaign, was, in a sense, a sign of the sophistication with which both parties had come to treat the school issue by this time. In the Antigonish by-election, Sir Hibbert had been indeed concerned that the school question be considered as a factor in the Government's favor. C. F. McIsaac, the Liberal candidate had carefully side stepped the issue by pledging his support for remedial legislation - regardless of party.<sup>43</sup> This stand, which had been successful in Antigonish was countered in Cape Breton by the insistence that it was not enough to pledge individual support, but that the party's stand as a whole must be considered. Through Fielding's actions the Liberal party was now making a definite appeal to the Roman Catholic voters in Nova Scotia.

The scope and the intensity of the argument were

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>The Antigonish by-election had been the first occasion for the Liberals in Nova Scotia to have to come to terms with the school question. The spate of letters to Laurier on this problem, Laurier Papers, Vol. 9, attests to the very great concern of the Nova Scotian Liberals on this question.

increased when Fielding published his "letter to the Casket" in the Halifax Morning Chronicle. He charged that the editor of the Casket had discriminated against him by printing a rebuttal to his letter before it appeared and that the letter had been edited.<sup>44</sup>

The Premier began by denying the charge of collusion between himself and Israel Tarte, to rebut the allegation that they had agreed to make the school question the issue in this election.<sup>45</sup> Fielding, however, did support the attitude of the Greenway Government of Manitoba and he argued that Greenway's administration had acted in a much better spirit than the Ottawa government. Had they been approached in a reasonable spirit a settlement might well have been reached. Fielding's view was in direct opposition to

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<sup>44</sup>In the Casket of March 19, page 1 mentions the presence of a letter from the Premier in the issue and then proceeds to give a rebuttal of the points in Fielding's letter. The letter itself did not appear until page 4 and then the final section of the letter was not printed until the following edition on March 26. Therefore, a certain justification for Fielding's actions might seem to exist, but, a more realistic explanation seems to lie in the greater audience available in the Morning Chronicle, and Fielding would now be in a position to gain support from both Catholic and Protestant electors for his position of "new found innocence."

<sup>45</sup>W. S. Fielding, letter to the editor, printed in the Halifax Morning Chronicle, April 30, 1896.



the editorial line of the Casket which had maintained that, "Mr. Greenway has been acting throughout in an unreasonable spirit with a desire to oppress the minority."<sup>46</sup>

In the concluding section of his letter, Premier Fielding directly referred to the Nova Scotian attitude toward Roman Catholic schools. He cited an earlier quotation of Archbishop O'Brien of Halifax, that, "the Nova Scotian school system was perfectly satisfactory to his people, and if a similar arrangement could be made in Manitoba, ... it would be a satisfactory solution to the difficulty."<sup>47</sup> To this archepiscopal declaration, Fielding saw fit to add simply that if such could be done in Nova Scotia, he could see no reason why, "if the matter is approached in the spirit that has characterized Mr. Laurier's treatment of it, the same good results cannot be brought about in the Province of Manitoba."<sup>48</sup> The intermingling of federal

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Morning Chronicle, April 30, 1896.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

and provincial politics seemed completed. The Manitoba school question was treated without raising religious prejudice. The issue was not Catholic schools but the nature of the policies proposed by the two parties.

In the press, the Manitoba school question became the object of a new type of debate: Relations between the editors of the Antigonish Casket and the Morning Chronicle, strained at the best of times, now developed into personal polemics. On March 28, the Chronicle informed its readers that,

He Bro. Wall editor of the Casket takes a copy of the Remedial Bill to bed with him every night and sleeps with the tin-type of Sir Charles Tupper under his pillow. He is troubled with the suspicion that the Hon. Wilfrid Laurier is really anti-Christ and that his satanic majesty has a firm grip on Senator Power....<sup>(49)</sup>

The tenor of this debate continued. On April 4, the Chronicle struck out at the authoritarian stand which the Casket had come to adopt on the school question. Once again the editor, J. A. Wall, was the subject of their criticism:

The most amusing feature of his article, and indeed of all his articles, is the ex cathedra tone ... the editor of the Casket's - "I, the Church."<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup>Morning Chronicle, March 28, 1896.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., April 4, 1896.

The Chronicle was striking at a crucial weakness in the position which the Casket seemed to occupy as the leading Roman Catholic journal in the province.

The Casket's opposition to the Liberal party was now forced into the open. In its issue of April 2, after condemning the stand of Laurier and the national party on the school question, the Casket turned to the political situation in Nova Scotia. If Catholics in this province wish to do their party a service for which it would bless them for all time to come, it advised, "let them prevent its leaders from carrying out their determination to ride the Protestant Horse."<sup>51</sup> Laurier, the Casket charged, "has been so rash as to alienate the confidence of the Catholic Church in the Dominion,"<sup>52</sup> was this to be the case in Nova Scotia too?

The Morning Chronicle printed a firm rejoinder to the Casket's allegations regarding the Nova Scotian Liberal party. The reply took the form of a letter from an Antigonish correspondent. The author commended Laurier's stand on the Manitoba school question as

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<sup>51</sup> Antigonish Casket, April 2, 1896.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

the only one that was truly in the interests of all Catholics:

Is it the Holy Ghost of which Mr. Wall pretends to have a monopoly that moves him to make such a ridiculous remark or is it the demon of discord and intolerance?<sup>53</sup>

The stand of this author suggests the beginning of a division among Catholics in Nova Scotia, for the approach of the writer was not that of an anti-Catholic, but that of a Catholic Liberal. That the Liberals were receiving such support was an indication of the success of both Laurier and Fielding in defending the Liberal position on the school question.

In contrast, the Conservative party was at a definite disadvantage. None of its main federal leaders were in the province, and on the provincial level, C. H. Cahan had already been involved in a controversy over support for Tupper's leadership. The plight of the Conservatives was succinctly expressed by A. R. Dickey following the introduction of the Remedial Bill in the Commons:

I can assure Hon. gentlemen that it is for no love of the question that the government is dealing with it. Everyone must know how invidious it is to take up such a question as this

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<sup>53</sup> Morning Chronicle, April 14, 1896.

and how little power it can have in controlling votes. There cannot possibly be any political capital made out of it.<sup>54</sup>

Dickey himself was only too keenly aware of the truth of his statement.

Not only did the party organization in Nova Scotia suffer because the leading members were in Ottawa, but even the Members of Parliament themselves were subjected to pressures with which they could not properly contend. Sir Hibbert Tupper was informed by a telegram from the Acadia Loyal Orange Lodge, number 45, that their support for him in the next election was dependent upon his voting against the Remedial Bill.<sup>55</sup> Sir Charles Hibbert, told them that their telegram had not arrived until after the division on the bill, and that he regretted that he did not find it right to act as they had demanded; he hoped, however, that they would be prepared to discuss the subject with him.<sup>56</sup> He concluded with an outburst of indignation reminiscent of the elder Sir Charles: "if my actions are not

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<sup>54</sup>A. R. Dickey, Debates, 1896, 1, 2788.

<sup>55</sup>C. H. Tupper, Papers, April 6, 1896, p. 1683.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 1685.

satisfactory, I am willing to take the consequences."<sup>57</sup> Sir Hibbert was an able politician who would not normally be forced into such an uncompromising stand, but his presence in Ottawa and his belief in the justness of the cause of remedial legislation were both considerations which weighed upon his attitude. He was also a Tupper, and when convinced of the validity of a cause, he was little concerned whether all others agreed with him.

Sir Hibbert and the elder Sir Charles were not unmindful of the turn of events which the Liberal party's stand on the Remedial Bill had been having both on the federal and provincial levels. The failure to pass a Remedial Bill - Tupper was forced to end the debate on April 16 - before the dissolution of Parliament, had weakened their appeal for the Catholic vote. At the same time, the commitment to a Remedial Bill would not endear them to strong Protestant constituencies if this were to be made a central election issue. Clearly, some means would be necessary to reassure the Roman Catholic hierarchy, and presumably the Catholic vote, without stressing those implications of the school question which might adversely affect the Protestant support.

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

On April 25, just two days after the prorogation of Parliament, Sir Charles wrote to two Roman Catholic priests in Cape Breton asking for support.<sup>58</sup> In his letter to Father McPherson Sir Charles specifically asked for support of the local candidate, Dr. John L. Bethune, and for the party as a whole which, said Sir Charles,

has not hesitated to take its life into its hands to do justice to the Catholic minority of Manitoba. I think under the circumstances, you will agree with me, that we are justified in looking for the support of their co-religionists throughout the country.<sup>59</sup>

In his letter to Father McNeil, Sir Charles made a similar plea for the assistance of Roman Catholics in Cape Breton since the members of the Conservative party were taking "their" political lives into their hands to do justice to the Catholics of Manitoba."<sup>60</sup>

If Sir Charles felt that his actions in Cape Breton would ensure the support of the Catholic electors for the Conservative party, Sir Charles Hibbert

<sup>58</sup>The letters were addressed to Father J. McNeil and Father W. McPherson, see Tupper Papers, P.A.C. Vol. 19, pp. 438, 439.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., Tupper to Reverend W. McPherson, P.P. April 25, 1896, Vol. 19, p. 439.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., Tupper to Reverend J. McNeil, P.P. April 25, 1896, Vol. 19, p. 438.

was not unmindful of the other Roman Catholic sections in Nova Scotia. On April 30, at the Canadian College in Rome, Archbishop O'Brien of Halifax replied to an earlier letter from Sir Charles Hibbert. From the tone of Archbishop O'Brien's letter, it seems clear that Sir Hibbert had feared a distinct loss of support on the school question unless the Bishop could do something to restore the balance. Although His Excellency was unable to return to Canada until mid-June, nevertheless, he firmly hoped that the Government would be sustained in the election. He further assured Sir Hibbert: "I shall not confine my actions to merely hoping, but I shall endeavour to help what I believe to be the right cause."<sup>61</sup> Thus, the support of the Roman Catholic clergy of Nova Scotia had been clearly sought by the leaders of the Conservative party. Whether this course would result in their favor during the actual political campaign, however, remained to be seen.

The Herald was also groping for a means to counteract the effectiveness of the Liberal policy:

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<sup>61</sup> Archbishop O'Brien to Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper, April 30, 1896. C. H. Tupper papers, p. 1738.



The great issue in the approaching general election must, of course, be that same great issue which has divided the two political parties in Canada for twenty years and more, namely the trade issue.<sup>62</sup>

The Herald's analysis of the Grit fiscal policy, compared to the National Policy, was aimed at illustrating the adverse effects which would develop in Nova Scotia if the Liberal party were elected:

The only thing upon which the Grit leaders seem to be agreed is that the duties on coal and pig iron must be abolished - a policy dictated by special enemies of Nova Scotia and general enemies of all Canada.<sup>63</sup>

The editorial policy of the Herald, contrasted to the private actions of the Tupper, sought to establish that there was only one outstanding issue upon which the two parties in Nova Scotia were to be judged - the trade policy.

The question of separate schools, the Herald maintained, had been decided in Canada before Confederation was consummated, and hence, "finds a fixed and definite place in the constitution of the country."<sup>64</sup> In applying this to practical politics, the Herald

<sup>62</sup>Halifax Herald, April 9, 1896.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

contended:

How can separate schools be an issue between the two political parties? The Government are not opposing separate schools. Mr. Laurier is not an opponent of separate schools. How then can separate schools be an issue between the Government and Mr. Laurier?<sup>65</sup>

This was a strange statement for the leading journal of the Conservative party to make; particularly so when in little more than a fortnight the leaders of this same party were appealing for assistance on the grounds that they had "staked their political lives" in order to do justice to the Roman Catholic minority in Manitoba.

The Herald, in this case, was seeking to establish an editorial policy which would avoid the divisive forces latent in the school issue. The question was not separate schools, but the maintenance of the constitution. But again, the Herald's priority of values is evident:

The school question involves directly the interests of some 20,000 people, but as it also involves a question of justice to a minority under the constitution it can never be considered unimportant ... The maintenance of the National Policy tariff vitally concerns the interests of over 5,000,000 people, and the greatest good of the greatest number is always

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

the subject of legitimate consideration in practical politics.<sup>66</sup>

Having clearly set this contrast before its readers, it was then incumbent upon the Herald to show how the interests of the minority could best be reconciled with the interests of the majority:

The duty of every man in Canada to consider the interests of the 5,000,000 is undoubted, and those who wish to support the 20,000 may feel glad that there is no conflict between the two. No one, surely, will be so unreasonable as to jeopardize what he considers for the best interests of the 5,000,000 merely because his religious training has happened to differ from that of the 20,000.<sup>67</sup>

The priority of interests established in this editorial provides an incisive summary of the attitude of many leading Nova Scotian Conservatives as they approached the general election.

As if to emphasize the shift in editorial policy from the school question to the trade policy and its corollary, the loyalty issue, the Herald less than a week after the conclusion of debate on the Remedial Bill - and even before Parliament had been prorogued, began to fly on the head of its editorial column a replica of the Ensign as if to symbolize

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

their adherence to the tried and true policies for Canada. Moreover, they immediately launched into critical analysis of the Resolutions of the Liberal Convention of 1893. The Liberals, it was asserted, "had nothing new of practical value to offer the country. Every good thing in it we already have in the National Policy."<sup>68</sup>

The three major policy statements of the Liberal party convention: that the tariff should be reduced to the needs of honest, economic and efficient government, that the tariff should make free or bear as lightly as necessary upon the necessities of life, and that the tariff should be arranged so as to promote trade, were all singled off as being accomplished already through the terms of the National Policy. "The people of Canada," the Herald concluded, "have no notion of allowing a Grit victory to ruin the trade and industry of this country."<sup>69</sup>

Thus, by the end of the session, both political parties in Nova Scotia had adapted their interpretation of the national issues to meet the exigencies of

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

Nova Scotian politics. Although Tupper had successfully contested the Cape Breton by-election, the Liberal party had gained much from its defeat. The realization that the school question would have to be met and mastered, if the Liberals were to gain from the effectiveness of the new trade policy, was brought home most clearly to Premier Fielding. Fielding's "Windsor Speech," his letters to the Antigonish Casket and Halifax Morning Chronicle combined with Laurier's oft quoted "six month's hoist" speech in a very precise statement of the Nova Scotian Liberal view of the Manitoba school question.

The Conservative party's position in Nova Scotia was not amenable to popular support. A. R. Dickey, the Minister of Justice from Cumberland County stated what was probably the attitude of many Nova Scotian Conservatives toward the school question when he remarked that, "everyone must know how invidious it is to take up such a question ... and how little power it can have in controlling votes." Nevertheless, Dickey and all of the other Nova Scotian Conservatives voted in support of the Remedial Bill. Sir Charles Tupper's appeal to

some particular Roman Catholic clergymen went beyond the bounds of Dickey's statement. But Tupper's plea was rather a rearguard action. The Bill had failed to pass in the House and the Liberals had justified their opposition to the Bill in a direct appeal to the people.

It was the Halifax Herald which best summed up the priority of issues facing the Nova Scotian electorate. The school question was undoubtedly a part of the Government's platform, but the overriding issue for Nova Scotians was still the trade issue and the two need not conflict.

The appearance of the Ensign at the head of the Herald's editorial page reasserted the loyalty issue as a natural corollary of the Conservative trade platform. But it was now 1896, not 1891. The Liberals had effectively shed the "commercial unionist" taint of the previous election. The National Convention in 1893 had provided them with a new trade and tariff policy with an appeal equally as all embracing as the National Policy. Moreover, the Liberal organization in Nova Scotia had been eager for an election struggle for well

over a year. The intervention of the Manitoba school question retarded, but in no way dulled their enthusiasm to contest an election on the trade issue. Premier Fielding had taken a hand in the framing of the trade resolutions in 1893 and during the interim had tentatively agreed to accept a seat in Laurier's cabinet should the Liberals be successful. This too, was a far cry from the provincial election of 1886. Thus, when the two parties prepared for the final battle on the hustings, both sought an electoral victory on the trade policy. The school question, however, had now come into their midst. But, it would remain to be seen if it could overcome the already tautly drawn battle lines.

CHAPTER IV

THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN NOVA SCOTIA

MAY - JUNE, 1896



In light of the earlier commitment of Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper on the Manitoba school question,<sup>1</sup> A. R. Dickey's able vindication of the Government's policy in Parliament, and the (now) Prime Minister, Sir Charles Tupper's plea to particular members of the Roman Catholic clergy in Cape Breton, the Conservative party seemed fully prepared to treat the school question as a dominant electoral issue. Similarly, Premier Fielding, Senator L. G. Power, and the leading Halifax Liberal candidate, Benjamin Russell, had all made lucid and detailed pronouncements on the Manitoba school question. Indeed, Premier Fielding's comments appeared in the Chronicle as late as May 1. During the course of the campaign, therefore, one might have expected a continuation of this debate. Nevertheless, a further examination of the editorials, campaign statements, and the evolution of the views of each party suggests the need for a revision of this general impression.

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<sup>1</sup>Sir Charles Hibbert's resignation from the cabinet on March 21, 1895, had forced the hesitating Mackenzie Bowell administration to take a stand on the remedial question.

In a study of a campaign of this type, the role of newspapers is essential. During the election period in 1896 the two Halifax morning journals had a unique position. They were the only daily papers available throughout the province. Moreover, the keen rivalry which existed between the two papers meant that their editorial policies were fully scrutinized. It would be difficult to conceal campaign vagaries in such a situation. Concentration on the Halifax press, however, does not preclude the ~~use~~ use of the various weekly journals in the province. It is in these local journals that the most effective expressions of regional views are to be found.

The New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle, although adamantly Liberal in its political affiliation, differed from the Morning Chronicle in the degree of emphasis which it gave to the Manitoba school question. Its issue of June 11 provides the best example of the method of journalism in the smaller papers in Nova Scotia during the campaign. The main editorial on the Liberal platform and the tariff issue was taken directly from the Morning Chronicle. On the school

question, however, the New Glasgow paper launched into a tirade against Roman Catholic schools such as had never been seen in the pages of the Halifax paper. The Stellarton, Pictou, New Glasgow areas had a large Protestant majority where this particular emphasis might be expected to gain support for the Liberal party.

By contrast, the Yarmouth Herald took quite a different approach to the election campaign. Perhaps most conspicuous was its concern over the role of the party leader. Both Sir Charles Tupper and Wilfrid Laurier were given much more extensive treatment than in any of the other papers. In this paper, too, the economic problems of the south shore stand in the foreground, especially in the latter part of the campaign when there appeared to be some difficulty in finding a Conservative candidate for the riding of Queens-Shelburne. In the general scope of editorial policy, the standard party phrases which first appeared in the Halifax Morning Chronicle were conspicuous in the pages of both the Yarmouth Herald and the Eastern Chronicle.

The Digby Courier is particularly useful since it was devoid of any political affiliation and unanxious to issue editorial diatribes. Published weekly by R. S. McCormick, the Courier provides an insight into the conditions of rural Nova Scotia in the 1890's. Predominant among these feelings is a disappointment in Nova Scotia's progress and the exodus of her youth to the New England states.<sup>2</sup> The Courier, however, was hopeful of a brighter future within Canada since the "annual migration" in 1896 seemed much less than in former years.<sup>3</sup>

The Courier's neutrality is expressed by its editorial of May 8:

The approaching Dominion election promises to be in all respects one of the warmest in our history. The champions of the two parties must each be recognized as men of capability and eminently fitted for the honors of such a position as that of premier ... The fact is, this next affray is between two giants and each is an able representative of his party.<sup>4</sup>

From our contemporary vantage point, the objectivity of the Courier's observations of the Nova Scotian political scene are particularly valuable. They form

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<sup>2</sup>Digby Courier, see particularly April 3, 1896.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., May 1, 1896.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., May 8, 1896.

a basic touchstone by which to judge the nature of the campaign. On May 29th, the Courier observed that "there were no small issues to be fought out this year. The most marked change seemed to be in the popularity of the party - committee room idea, combined with the prevalence of campaign literature."<sup>5</sup> This was an election based on national issues in which both parties in Nova Scotia had played an active role in the formation of the policies. It was indeed to be an election quite unlike many in the past.

The Liberal campaign in Nova Scotia was inaugurated in Halifax on Friday, April 10. The organization of the Liberal party had been in readiness for quite some time; candidates had been selected and political meetings held. The Maritime Liberal Association had been established in 1893 shortly after the National Convention. It was under the regional presidency of L. H. Davies with Dr. F. W. Borden and W. S. Fielding as the Nova Scotian vice-presidents.<sup>6</sup> Now, in 1896, the

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., May 29, 1896.

<sup>6</sup>C. Millar, "The Political Life of Sir Frederick Borden," M.A. Thesis, (Dalhousie University, 1964) p.46. Regarding the advanced state of Liberal organization, one might well read the report of the speeches given by B. Russell, M. Keefe and W. S. Fielding on the occasion

provincial organization which Fielding had established within the province was united in a federal campaign.

M. E. Keefe, one of the Liberal candidates, for the dual constituency of Halifax sounded the opening note of the campaign in Nova Scotia. In his opening remarks he referred to the National Convention of 1893 in which he personally had participated.<sup>7</sup> If the platform of this convention could be brought before the Nova Scotian electorate, Keefe contended, "the interests of the Dominion could well be served by entrusting the Liberal party with the reins of power."<sup>8</sup> Keefe, although himself the Roman Catholic representative on the Liberal side, spent little time on the Manitoba school question. His emphasis was rather on the adverse effects of the National Policy on the Halifax working man - a problem of which he, as a local industrialist, was especially cognizant. Keefe's address and the priority of emphasis which he gave to the trade policy, even to the point of relating his own personal participation in the 1893 Convention, was a particularly apt introduction to the Liberal campaign.

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of the nomination of the former two as candidates for Halifax as early as March 21, 1896. Even more to the point was the Chronicle's editorial of April 7 discussing this aspect of the campaign.

<sup>7</sup>Morning Chronicle, April 11, 1896.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

The sophistication of the Liberals on the trade issue was readily apparent in the address of Benjamin Russell, Keefe's colleague in the Halifax riding: "The broad question at issue before the people today," Russell asserted, "and the question on which the issue to be determined at the coming election should be made ... was undoubtedly the question as to the fiscal policies of the respective parties."<sup>9</sup> Russell could perceive no reason why the majority of the people in Canada, farmers, and fishermen, mechanics and artisans, day labourers and employers of labour should all be penalized for the "exceedingly limited class" that stood to gain by a system of protection. At the same time, however, he advised his Halifax audience,

we are bound to recognize that the system of the past eighteen years could not simply be abolished without inflicting a severe distress on the whole community, and such was not the policy of the Liberal party: moreover, the Liberal ideal of free-trade, translated into Canadian politics was another name for a revenue tariff which would offer sufficient practical protection for a long time to come."<sup>10</sup>

The question would be treated in a safe and practical way.

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

The continuing debate in the Commons on the Remedial Bill, and the necessity of ending Government business, meant that the leading Nova Scotian Conservatives could not turn to the task of organizing their campaign before the end of April. Indeed, it was not until May 1 that Sir Charles Hibbert finally launched the Conservative campaign. Speaking at Kentville, Sir Charles Hibbert began his speech with the declaration that, "contrary to the impression existing in Nova Scotia, in Ontario the most important question is the trade question - not the school question."<sup>11</sup> The Remedial Bill, he argued, had not changed the position of the Orangemen to the Government. The great question in Ontario as in all Canada was the trade question. Moreover, "the government was not, as reported, in favor of separate schools. The government fought the battle of no creed or race, but would keep the pledge made by Parliament to the minority, and would stake its life on carrying out the compact."<sup>12</sup> Justice to the minority and the necessity of maintaining the constitution were at the essence of Sir Hibbert's

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<sup>11</sup> Halifax Herald, May 2, 1896.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.



stand. There could be no doubt that the Government would uphold its commitment to remedial legislation.

As a major policy statement Sir Hibbert's speech merits particular consideration. In the absence of the elder Sir Charles, he had assumed the leadership of the campaign in Nova Scotia. The primacy of the trade question as a national concern both for Ontario and Nova Scotia was put forward as the foremost issue in the campaign. The school question, which had been the occasion for the calling of the special sixth session of Parliament, was now to be relegated to a position of secondary importance. Thus, the major inaugural addresses of both Nova Scotian parties placed the Manitoba school question second; their major emphasis was on trade policy. Both parties, in this opening foray, sought to establish the unity of the national party which they represented.

Although the Conservative party in Nova Scotia had earlier seemed at a disadvantage because of the presence of its leading members at Ottawa, at the same time it was able to reap the advantages of having

a native Nova Scotian as the new Prime Minister.<sup>13</sup> The Halifax Herald approved of Tupper's new cabinet as a definite attempt to break with the temporizing of his predecessors. The leadership of Tupper, however, was given particular emphasis. His prominence as a statesman and leader in the public life of Canada was duly noted: "the prestige and popularity which he won and holds throughout the whole country all marked him out as the man to take the premiership at this time."<sup>14</sup>

Tupper's Electoral Manifesto, published on May 5, was received in Nova Scotia with definite approval by the Conservative candidates. The first three topics, the National Policy, Preferential Trade within the Empire, and a Fast Atlantic Service, had a decided appeal for Nova Scotian interests. The Manitoba School question was placed in the list between the Pacific Cable and Agricultural Interests. The Halifax Herald gave its full support to the "grand old policy" of the Liberal-Conservative party.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Bowell tendered his resignation on April 27, "hinting very evidently that he hoped the Governor-General would not ask for advice as to his successor." Lady Aberdeen's Diary, April 27, 1896. Cited in Clark, op. cit., p. 168.

<sup>14</sup> Halifax Herald, May 2, 1896.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., May 6, 1896.

The early announcement on May 1 that R. L. Borden would be a candidate in Halifax suggests that the Conservative leaders were aware of the need for a strong candidate in this crucial riding. The initiative had come from Ottawa; Borden had not sought the nomination for he was quite occupied in his extensive legal practice. The Halifax Morning Chronicle was taken by surprise at the announcement and on May 4 attempted to offset the prestige which Borden's nomination had already given to the Conservative party:

However friendly people may feel toward Mr. Borden personally, they have now to regard him as a Conservative politician ... The issue before the county is the past political policy and record and the present character of the Ottawa government ... The attitude of the electors of Halifax County towards Messrs. Kenny and Borden must be governed by that record.<sup>16</sup>

This immediate concern in the Chronicle made Borden appear as a leading Nova Scotian spokesman for the Conservative party.

Borden's nomination, in place of the veteran candidate, J. F. Stairs,<sup>17</sup> caused considerable speculation. It was fairly well understood that Borden himself had not sought the nomination and many

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<sup>16</sup> Morning Chronicle, May 4, 1896.

<sup>17</sup> Stairs had first entered Parliament in 1879.

Conservatives had presumed that the well-established electoral ticket of Stairs and Kenny would be returned. The Chronicle went so far as to assert that, "the most astonished man in Canada on the night of the Convention was J. F. Stairs at Montreal when he learned that he was not nominated, but that Mr. Borden had supplanted him."<sup>18</sup> It was suggested, however, that in justice to Borden, he did not seek the nomination and only accepted it upon the urgent solicitations of Sir Hibbert Tupper.<sup>19</sup>

On May 13, the solidarity of the Conservative party seemed assured when a special banquet was held to honor J. F. Stairs who had come in from Montreal. Stairs began his remarks with a repudiation of the rumours respecting Borden's nomination. He asserted that the uncertainty of his residence and his business engagements made it impossible for him to accede to the request of both Mr. Kenny and Sir Charles Tupper to continue to represent Halifax.<sup>20</sup> Following Stairs, speeches were made by C. S. Harrington, T. E. Kenny,

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<sup>18</sup>Morning Chronicle, May 5, 1896.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Halifax Herald, May 13, 1896.

J. C. O'Mullin. The concluding address was delivered by R. L. Borden. He took this opportunity to re-affirm that he had in no way sought to supplant Stairs as a candidate and felt rather at a distinct disadvantage in following a man of his great ability and capacity.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, Borden contended that his participation in this election was not a result of personal inclination, but rather was occasioned by a sense of duty. He concluded by expressing his own sense of inferiority to both Kenny and Stairs on the great trade questions of the day, but that, as he understood it, "the National Policy was only a continuation of that great policy which bound then scattered colonies into one great Dominion, from the wheat fields of Manitoba to the coal mines and fisheries of Nova Scotia."<sup>22</sup>

Two days later, the triumvirate of Stairs, Borden and Kenny appeared together at a campaign meeting in Dartmouth. Stairs, in his opening remarks, reaffirmed his personal support for Borden. He then dealt with the local issues for which he had worked during his time in Parliament.<sup>23</sup> He emphasized also that within

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Halifax Herald, May 15, 1896. Stair's chief concern for local patronage had been the Dartmouth

the Conservative party, Nova Scotia had twice given a Premier to Canada.

Borden's address, his first major political speech,<sup>24</sup> was masterly, showing his awareness of the susceptibilities of his audience and his power as a political speaker.<sup>25</sup> He proceeded to portray the very influential role which Sir Charles Tupper had played in previous Nova Scotian elections: 1887, 1891, and now, 1896. Contrasted to this was Laurier's ephemeral role in the Liberal party. The real power in party councils, Borden alleged, was still in the hands of Sir Richard Cartwright. The anti-Cartwright aspects of Borden's speech had particular appeal to those Nova Scotians who had been particularly incensed by Cartwright's "shreds and patches" speech in the House. Cartwright's remarks, he contended, might well be passed over with the contempt which they observe, "were it not for the fact that we know too well what Sir Richard Cartwright's position would be if the Liberals

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connection with the inter-colonial railway which was a popular local issue for both parties.

<sup>24</sup>Unless one chooses to count Borden's earlier speech in 1882 on the Liberal platform in support of his cousin, Dr. F. W. Borden. Borden dates his own active interest in politics from 1886 in opposition to the Provincial Liberal's plea for repeal of Confederation. See Borden's speech at the Stairs Banquet, cited in Halifax Herald, May 13, 1896.

<sup>25</sup>This speech referred to as the Dartmouth Address, was printed in the Halifax Herald, May 15, 1896.

were called into power - finance minister." Borden saw fit to add simply that, "there was no need to speak to Nova Scotians of Cartwright's hostility to their province."<sup>26</sup>

The attention of the audience was drawn to their own particular interests on the trade question. In the past, appeals to the National Policy had been notoriously successful over the apparent vagaries of the Liberal trade policy. Borden continued to exploit this advantage by emphasizing that the National Policy was necessary for the continued development of Canada.

Borden had not yet commented on the Manitoba question. But, as a highly respected member at the Nova Scotian bar, his opinion would be influential. His feelings were obvious in his opening remarks:

The time which has been devoted to it (the school question) both in Parliament and in the press is out of all proportion to its importance.<sup>27</sup>

"It is not a question of separate schools," he declared, "it is one of good faith, of performing a bargain, of carrying out a compact which was entered into at the time Manitoba became a province." As if to allay the charges of coercion against Manitoba, Borden, firmly

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

stated that he would yield to no man in jealously safeguarding the rights of the provinces of Canada, as well as the rights of the federal government:

It is not a question on which any conflict ought to arise between the government of Manitoba and the government of Canada. It is a question which should be settled by mutual forbearance and mutual efforts for conciliation ... any question of coercion is foreign to the subject.<sup>28</sup>

Borden's conclusion sums up very appropriately his own position and that which the Conservative party sought to establish for the Nova Scotian electorate:

I do not speak to you as an advocate of separate schools; I do not speak to you merely as a candidate of the Liberal-Conservative party; I do not speak to you as Liberal-Conservatives on the one hand or as Liberals on the other. I speak to you only as a reasonable man to reasonable men who desire to do what is right to those with whom a compact has been made.<sup>29</sup>

Borden's reasonableness avoided favoring Roman Catholic schools on the one hand or coercing the Province of Manitoba on the other.

T. E. Kenny, who followed Borden on the platform, continued to stress the importance of the National Policy. Indeed, he apparently did not even mention the school question.<sup>30</sup> Yet Kenny was the Roman Catholic member of the dual constituency and had also been a

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>The report of Kenny's speech made no mention of the Manitoba school question. Halifax Herald, May 15, 1896.



member of Parliament during debate on the Remedial Bill. That both he and Borden should adopt this emphasis on the major political issues so early in the campaign is indeed significant.

At Amherst, A. R. Dickey, the Minister of Justice in Tupper's cabinet, was nominated at the Conservative convention. On this occasion both Dickey and Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper delivered speeches in which the trade policy of the Conservative party was stressed as the all important issue for Cumberland. Dickey's address is not without significance since it was he who had introduced the Remedial Bill in the last session. During the course of the debate he had been called upon to act as the apologist of particular aspects of the Bill. How then would Dickey represent these actions at the opening of his campaign?

Early in his speech, Dickey clearly established what he considered to be the priority of issues confronting the electors of Cumberland: "The trade policy was vital to Cumberland. There were other

issues, but none in comparison with the trade issue."<sup>31</sup> In establishing his case, Dickey made particular reference to Laurier's weakness on the trade issue: "One thing Laurier is definite about, that is he has pledged himself to take the duty off coal and iron."<sup>32</sup> These were the two particular features of the National Policy with which Nova Scotia was particularly concerned. In reply to the "whispers that Laurier had given private promises to disregard his public statements," Dickey warned his audience, "Cartwright is a strong man in the Liberal party and will dominate the Liberal tariff policy if that party wins."<sup>33</sup> The bogey of Sir Richard Cartwright was capably employed to belittle Laurier's leadership of the Liberal party. This approach also emphasized the trade question at the expense of the Manitoba school issue where Laurier's eloquence and leadership, stressing a policy of conciliation and investigation, had been used to particular advantage by Fielding and the Nova Scotian Liberals.

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<sup>31</sup>Amherst, May 5. Reported in the Halifax Herald, May 6, 1896.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

On turning to the Manitoba school question, Dickey vindicated his support for remedial legislation. His own position might well have been that of many Nova Scotians; personally he was in favour of a free school system. But that was not the issue; rather, it was whether there had been a pledge made at the time of union - "if so, was there a man in Nova Scotia who would stand up and say that that pledge should now be broken?"<sup>34</sup> Dickey remarked that he had started out with the idea, "that it was preposterous to give separate schools to Manitoba, but after ascertaining all of the facts and studying the constitution ... he was now convinced that, notwithstanding his personal views and feelings, the provisions of the constitution should be carried out in their entirety and good faith kept with the minority."<sup>35</sup> Such a position would minimize the controversial nature of the Manitoba School issue and was aimed more at retarding alienation from the Conservative party rather than an aggressive appeal for support.

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

The federal nature of Canadian politics and the numerous regional diversities within Canada meant that both parties in Nova Scotia were vulnerable to statements made in other parts of Canada. A prime example of this phenomenon is the reaction of both major party journals to the publication of the Quebec Bishop's Episcopal Mandement.<sup>36</sup> On May 18, the Chronicle disclosed that in Ontario many Conservatives had announced their refusal and inability to abide by the Government's school policy,<sup>37</sup> particularly in light of the statements of the Quebec Bishops. This predicted division in Conservative ranks had been strenuously avoided by the Herald through its own policy of moderation on the school issue.<sup>38</sup> Once again, however, the Conservative party in Nova Scotia was threatened with being pulled into the fray on the school question.

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<sup>36</sup>The Mandement designed as a guide for Roman Catholic electors in Quebec was issued on May 17. The Mandement, as Prof. Clark first pointed out, was rather moderate in tone and urged support for no particular party although, not unnaturally, it did look upon remedial legislation as the sole means of restoring the rights of the aggrieved minority. Outside of Quebec, the Liberal papers sought to raise the sceptre of clerical domination. Clark, op. cit., Ch. VI, p.31.

<sup>37</sup>Morning Chronicle, May 18, 1896.

<sup>38</sup>See the Herald's reaction to the instigations of the Orange Lodge when it met in Halifax at the end of July, 1895. supra, Chapter I.

The Herald's reaction is indeed noteworthy. Rather than do battle on what was happening in the Conservative ranks in Ontario, the Herald shifted its emphasis back to Nova Scotia and back to the trade policy:

But what has the Chronicle to say about Mr. Laurier expressly endorsing candidate Snider, though candidate Snider had declared himself in favor of protection ... Will it tell us how many grit candidates in Nova Scotia will dare to declare themselves in favor of Laurier's policy of "free coal and free iron?" ... What is the value of the promise of a grit candidate in Nova Scotia that these great Nova Scotian interests would not be sacrificed if the grits were returned to power?<sup>39</sup>

The Herald pointedly admonished that "it is time for our contemporary to address itself to practical questions like these, and talk about something that the people are talking about."<sup>40</sup> The Herald's studied moderation on the school question was not to be upset by actions of the Conservative party members in Ontario, and, as usual, the trade policy was called upon to right the balance.

The Herald, however, had not avoided the Manitoba school question. Recognition of its stand on this

<sup>39</sup>Halifax Herald, May 19, 1896.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid. (Italics added.)

question was given on May 14 in a letter from Reverend James M. Quinan, Vicar-General, printed in the Casket. He publicly thanked the Herald for its "able, fearless, consistent and disinterested defence of the constitution and of the rights of the minority in Manitoba. No religious or secular journal in Canada had done better service to this cause than the Herald."<sup>41</sup> The contrast to the Morning Chronicle and the official opposition of the Roman Catholic clergy to the stand of the Liberal party was not left to chance. "How different has been the attitude of the Chronicle and of the party, of whose policy that journal claims to be, in this province at least, the exponent."<sup>42</sup>

The hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church were now coming out solidly behind the Conservative party on the Manitoba school question: On May 21, a week after Father Quinan's remarks, the Herald announced that the next edition of the Casket would contain a statement by Archbishop O'Brien to the Halifax voters in "an eloquent appeal for Canadians to stand by the constitution and safeguard the rights of all."<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup>Letter of Rev. J. M. Quinan, published in the Antigonish Casket, May 14, 1896.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Halifax Herald, May 21, 1896.

His Lordship's letter, published in the Casket on May 21, left little doubt as to which party Catholic electors in Nova Scotia should cast their vote:

Some ... indeed may dislike the present government, and might on a question of trade or other policy bitterly oppose it; but in common with their non-Catholic fellow-citizens who are not blinded by fanaticism, they will surely be on the side of justice even should they doubt the motive of the government in acting justly. We are to look at acts, not motives. The former fall under our cognizance; the latter are seen and judged by God alone.<sup>44</sup>

The archbishop had certainly answered Sir C. H. Tupper's request. For Nova Scotian Catholics, the Archbishop had urged, there could be little real alternative to voting for the Conservative party solely on the grounds of the school question. The reaction of the Morning Chronicle on this question is particularly informative. Archbishop O'Brien's letter was printed on May 26, without any editorial comment.<sup>45</sup> No attempt was made to arouse religious prejudice, for this was not the way of life in Nova Scotia.

One of the most difficult factors to judge in any political campaign, yet one which is always conspicuous

<sup>44</sup>Antigonish Casket, May 21, 1896.

<sup>45</sup>Morning Chronicle, May 26, 1896.

is the role of the party leader. In the election of 1896 in Nova Scotia this element was of particular importance since one of the leaders to be judged was Sir Charles Tupper. Even at the best of times Tupper was controversial. Now, the implications of coercion in the Remedial Bill resurrected the feelings of discontent over Tupper's role in Nova Scotia's entry into Confederation. Yet Tupper's political ability should not be underestimated, nor were the Liberals likely to do so.

In Halifax, the Morning Chronicle published a "Tupper Issue", critically reviewing Tupper's political career and the financial gains which he had made since leaving his medical practice to enter politics.<sup>46</sup> One of the most telling criticisms against Tupper's continuation in office was the Chronicle's contention that there was a lack of enthusiasm for Tupper; "a new generation had stepped on the stage that knew not Sir Charles".<sup>47</sup> The exigencies of the time and of the political situation, it was contended, required a new type of politician. This was not without

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<sup>46</sup>Morning Chronicle, June 3, 1896.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., May 18, 1896.



meaning for many in Nova Scotia. In Halifax both J. F. Stairs and A. G. Jones had stepped down in 1896. The Liberal press thus defined Tupperism:

'Tupperism' - (French, "tu perds," you lose). Derived from the name of a notorious political adventurer who flourished in Canadian political life during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The word is synonymous of egotism, equivocation, bluster and bombast... The expression is generally applied to all acts of low cunning and malevolence... The term is now happily almost obsolete in Nova Scotia, though of frequent use among older inhabitants.<sup>48</sup>

This "ignominious term" must not be associated with Nova Scotia in the new era.

The internal dissension and weakness within the Conservative party which had been a major factor in Tupper's return from England and assumption of the party leadership at the eleventh hour, also meant that he would have to give special emphasis to these areas during the election campaign.<sup>49</sup> As a result, therefore, Tupper could not readily exert direct control in Nova Scotia; at the same time, his presence in Canada meant that many Conservatives in Nova Scotia who might have engaged in a more vigorous campaign, hesitated to do so, waiting for Sir Charles to return to their

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., June 12, 1896.

<sup>49</sup>Particularly Manitoba and Ontario.

province. The exigencies of Tupper's campaign schedule on the national scene, however, permitted him only nine days in Nova Scotia.<sup>50</sup>

Because of his limited time in Nova Scotia, and his exhausting schedule, Sir Charles concentrated on the Cape Breton area where he was himself standing for re-election. In Cape Breton, Tupper's campaign adopted a two-fold approach. Sir Charles led off by a masterly examination of the trade policy of his government and the necessity of protection for the Cape Breton coal industry.<sup>51</sup> In this respect, Tupper's position was not without force, for he had earlier won the approval of Henry M. Whitney, President

<sup>50</sup> Nova Scotia schedule. Sir Charles arrived in Cape Breton on May 21 and concluded his tour at a large meeting in Halifax on June 2. His actual schedule was as follows:

Friday	May 22	North Sydney
Saturday	May 23	Baddeck
Monday	May 25	St. Peters
Tuesday	May 26	Port Hood
Wednesday	May 27	Canso
Thursday	May 28	Antigonish
Friday	May 29	Pictou
Saturday	May 30	Charlottetown
Tuesday	June 2	Halifax

<sup>51</sup> Report from Hawkesbury, Cape Breton, printed in the Halifax Herald, May 26, 1896.

of Dominion Coal Company.<sup>52</sup> Supporting Sir Charles on the stand, was his son, Sir Charles Hibbert, who arraigned the policies of Laurier and the Liberal party and vindicated the party's Remedial Bill.

The Chronicle pointedly observed the lack of outward publicity on the school question: "it is suspected that Sir Hibbert accompanies his father, to prevent his putting his foot in it as he did at Winnipeg."<sup>53</sup> At Hawkesbury, several clergymen, although not participating, were present on the platform, inferring official recognition of and tacit support for Tupper's candidacy and that of his party.<sup>54</sup> For Nova Scotia as a whole, however, it was not until the banquet in Halifax that Tupper's tour can be considered as even a general attempt at uniting the province. But, such a feat could not be adequately accomplished merely by a show of enthusiasm emanating

<sup>52</sup>Tupper had earlier replied to Whitney, stating that he was "very gratified at the wish which you express that I should continue to represent Cape Breton county, and for the kind assurance you gave me of hearty co-operation." Tupper Papers, Vol. 19, Letterbook, p. 427.

<sup>53</sup>Sydney, special dispatch, in the Halifax Morning Chronicle, May 23, 1896.

<sup>54</sup>Hawkesbury, special dispatch, in the Halifax Morning Chronicle, May 26, 1896.

from the capital.

"A Royal Welcome to the Great Chieftain", declared the Halifax Herald as it described the Nova Scotian reaction to the meeting in honor of Sir Charles Tupper.<sup>55</sup> "Thousands of people," it continued, "greet Sir Charles Tupper, Baronet, at North Street Depot, and line the streets on the Route of Procession." Banners had been hung bearing the slogan, "Nova Scotia's Most Distinguished Son" and a band struck up, "See The Conquering Hero Comes." Sir Charles came in from Truro, where he had been joined by a committee of eminent Halifax Conservatives: T. E. Kenny, R. L. Borden, J. F. Stairs, J. J. Stewart and W. A. Black, M.P.P.<sup>56</sup>

As Tupper's most important "policy speech" in Nova Scotia, and his only major address to the Nova Scotian electorate before the June 23 election, the speech at Halifax provides the only detailed analysis

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<sup>55</sup>Halifax Herald, June 4, 1896.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

of his general appeal to the voters of his native province.<sup>57</sup> Tupper's effectiveness and force as a public speaker were clearly evident in his Halifax address. The tone of his speech and the factors which he emphasized left little doubt as to the appeal which he presented in Nova Scotia, or to the priority of importance which they occupied.

He reviewed the development of Canada under the Conservative party and compared this record to the one example of "Grit misrule". Did the Nova Scotians want a man such as Sir Richard Cartwright back - "a man who had spoken so disparagingly of Nova Scotia and Nova Scotians?" Thunderous cries of No, No, filled the audience. Tupper's method was that of an old and wise politician. But, would it be enough in 1896?

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<sup>57</sup>Unfortunately this aspect has been given only cursory treatment in past studies of Tupper and the Conservative party in Nova Scotia in this period. For instance, A. W. MacIntosh deals with Tupper's return to Nova Scotia in 1896 in the following manner: "Tupper spent the latter part of May touring Nova Scotia. His visit there was a great success: at Halifax he received a rousing welcome such as would make any man feel proud..." A. W. MacIntosh, "The Career of Sir Charles Tupper in Canada," Ph.D. thesis (Univ. of Toronto, 1960) p. 454. As his schedule shows, however, Tupper did not even tour the province, and the number of meetings which he addressed make it quite obvious that Tupper was in Nova Scotia to rest for his much more rigorous schedule in Ontario.

The trade issue was stressed as the foremost question facing the electorate:

There is no question so vitally important to the country as what the trade policy of the government is to be. I say that it is the trade policy of the country that settles its destiny.<sup>58</sup>

For good measure, Tupper went so far as to include Blake's West Durham Letter from the 1891 election.<sup>59</sup>

Tupper's speech was a recapitulation of the points in his published electoral manifesto. Accordingly, he dealt with the Conservative party's policy of creating closer ties within the Empire through a system of Preferential Trade. The future greatness, progress and independence of the Mother Country was thus linked to the development of Canada. The Fast Atlantic Service was a continuation of this basic theme which would provide very definite advantages to Halifax.<sup>60</sup> Even public works in Western Canada, Tupper predicted, "would be of greater advantage to the province of Nova Scotia than to almost any other part of the Dominion."<sup>61</sup> Once again reasserting the beneficent

<sup>58</sup>Halifax Herald, June 4, 1896.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid. The question of the Winter Port for the Fast Atlantic Service had not yet been settled and therefore, by implication Halifax would stand a much better chance if Tupper were to be elected. At this meeting, Tupper held out further hope to his audience by telling them that the tenders for the Fast Atlantic Service were to be called on June 10.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

effects of the National Policy with the extension of the canal system and the Canadian Pacific Railway, he declared, "I expect to see the coal of Nova Scotia, when that fourteen feet of navigation is obtained, delivered at Port Arthur, away into the very heart of the continent."<sup>62</sup> Both Tupper's speech and his published Electoral Manifesto built upon the foundations established in the National Policy. He provided no radically new alternatives for Nova Scotian economic development, but rather a further commitment to the traditional stand of the Conservative party. Nevertheless, as presented by Tupper at Halifax, this stand was not without a certain force, but at the same time, emphasis on the trade policy was one upon which the Liberals in Nova Scotia were particularly ready to do battle.

Finally, Tupper turned his attention to the Manitoba school question - a question respecting which there has never before been "such gross misrepresentation and such misapprehension of the facts."<sup>63</sup> "A hue and cry has been raised", he declared, "and advantage has been taken of the fact that a great many

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

people in this country are conscientiously opposed to separate schools."<sup>64</sup> He carefully refrained from dealing with the implications of applying his Government's Remedial Bill against the determined opposition of the provincial government in Manitoba. Instead, he sought to relate the issue of separate schools to the perspective of the initial Confederation settlement:

When you look on Canada and see what Confederation has done for us, and see that it has lifted us out of the position of helplessness and inferiority into a status of national life and with aspirations which anyone who loves his country must be delighted to indulge, you should reflect on the fact that there would have been no confederation to-day if separate schools had not been one of the planks in that platform.<sup>65</sup>

By adopting this tack, Tupper was adjusting his course to the winds of opposition. The situation in Manitoba, he suggested, was a direct result of the earlier safeguards which Alexander Galt had insisted upon for the English Protestants in Quebec at Confederation. There was also a core of consistency in Tupper's stand. He had earlier rested his fate on the voter's acceptance

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.



of the National Policy and the course which Canadian development had taken. In this speech he directly linked the two issues before the electorate. A vote against the government on the school question implied a vote against the National Policy. If Tupper failed to correctly judge the contentment of Nova Scotians with their share in the national development of Canada, nevertheless, he was clearly stating his own feelings as a leading Canadian statesman.

Sir Charles concluded his address with an appeal to all fair minded Protestants, whether Liberal or Conservative, to sustain the Government in maintaining the cardinal principle of equal justice and equal rights to all. This question would then be disposed of just as it had been done in Nova Scotia forty years earlier, "which has left Nova Scotia ... the province above and beyond all in this wide Dominion where it is impossible to array Catholics against Protestants."<sup>66</sup> Tupper's stand in Nova Scotia was a frank and straightforward appeal for support so that the Conservative party might continue to guide the destinies of the nation.

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

The "Halifax Address" ranks as one of the most appealing speeches of Tupper's long political career. It is clear that he gauged the temper of his Nova Scotian audience with considerable accuracy. The objective attitude with which many Nova Scotians viewed the Manitoba school question meant that his appeal to fair play had more than political significance.

Throughout this time, the Liberals under Premier Fielding continued to organize their forces in the province. On May 8, the Premier appeared in Pugwash with the local candidate, H. J. Logan. On May 13, Fielding delivered a major address to a Liberal rally at Kentville where he spoke on the platform with Dr. F. W. Borden, the federal member for Kings. It was remarked that this was Mr. Fielding's first visit to King's county to make a political speech.<sup>67</sup> Fielding in the campaign of 1896 was taking a leading role throughout the whole province. His speech dealt

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<sup>67</sup> The summary of Fielding's political appearances were garnered from the Morning Chronicle; the specific comment noting his first political appearance in King's county was cited in the Report from Kentville in the issue of May 14, 1896.

exhaustively with the 'Nova Scotian' position on the trade question, invoking the authority of both Johnstone and Howe, leaders of two great political parties, who had both repudiated protection.<sup>68</sup> Fielding particularly emphasized that the National Policy had originated as an election dodge, but now, many Conservatives who held the prosperity of their country higher than electoral success, were returning to the faith of their fathers - tariff for revenue purposes.<sup>69</sup> Fielding's concern with the trade question was fully reflected in the editorial pages of the Morning Chronicle where the Manitoba School question had received much less attention since Parliament had been dissolved.

The Liberal press made full use of the slate of Resolutions adopted at the National Liberal Convention in Ottawa in 1893.<sup>70</sup> The reprinting of the Ten Resolutions as the National Liberal Platform was an effective campaign slogan used to forcibly offset Tupper's much

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>For instance see the Morning Chronicle for May 15, 22 and 30.

publicized Electoral Manifesto. Moreover, the smaller journals such as the New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle and the Yarmouth Herald could make full use of it to represent solidarity of Liberal forces in Nova Scotia and throughout the Dominion.<sup>71</sup>

Perhaps one of the most forceful examples of the Liberal party's organization, and of the efficacy of the trade policy upon which they campaigned in 1896, was the increasing number of defections of leading Nova Scotians to support this alternative to the National Policy. This movement was first given public notice in an interview with Benjamin Russell discussing the progress of the campaign in the twenty-three Halifax districts which he had visited.<sup>72</sup> And on May 22 this feeling was given forceful expression at a Ward Six Rally by a local manufacturer, who declared that the protective principle was both misleading

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<sup>71</sup>The edition of the Eastern Chronicle of June 11 contained a full page, including pictures of Laurier, the National Resolutions, etc., identical to an earlier edition of the Morning Chronicle.

<sup>72</sup>The interview was published in the Morning Chronicle on May 22. Other interviews with leading Nova Scotians soon became a dominant feature in the Chronicle. The interviews consisted of a definite format covering all of the electoral issues.

and fallacious.<sup>73</sup> While admitting that the Liberal party could not adopt free trade, "now or for years to come," we can bedd our steps in that direction:

We want the people to study the trade question from its very foundation and I ask every voter here tonight to constitute himself a missionary for the inclucation of the free-trade gospel among the people.<sup>74</sup>

The Digby Courier too spoke quite plainly of the failure of the National Policy to provide Nova Scotians with the promised prosperity.<sup>75</sup> The Chronicle, by mid-May, had begun to print increasingly lengthy lists of prominent Nova Scotians abandoning the Conservative party's trade policy.<sup>76</sup> Their survey was not limited to the

<sup>73</sup>Cited in Halifax Morning Chronicle, May 23, 1896.

<sup>74</sup>The speech was delivered by John T. Forbes, former head of the Starr Manufacturing Company and in 1896 head of the Forbes Manufacturing Company. Forbes is listed in H. J. Morgan, op. cit., as a protectionist who in 1896 supported the Liberal Trade Policy.

<sup>75</sup>The April 3 issue of the Courier presented an editorial on the prosperity of Nova Scotia under the heading - "The Exodus". The significance lies in that the Courier was not favoring either party, but was commenting on the state of Nova Scotian prosperity particularly in the Annapolis Valley area.

<sup>76</sup>See particularly the issues of May 23 and May 26.

Halifax-Dartmouth area, but included the attitudes of representatives from the smaller coastal ports.

Captain Louis Andersen of Port Hawkesbury was quoted as supporting the Liberal party because of "the intense disappointment which he felt at the results of the National Policy so far as it affected the commercial interests of his port."<sup>77</sup>

The school question was still an issue in the campaign, however, and was not neglected in the standard form of interview adopted by the Chronicle. Following Captain Andersen's discussion of the tariff question, the Chronicle printed an interview with a Halifax underwriter who voiced a similar disapproval of the effects of the Protective Tariff on Nova Scotian shipping interests. When asked by the Reporter, "whether he took any interest in the school question," the respondent replied, "that he happened to be a Roman Catholic," and, "followed the question very closely, regretting the prominence it had attained and added that he would deplore the introduction of it into the campaign in Halifax."<sup>78</sup> He added that, "he favoured a fair and honest inquiry for he felt quite certain that if a compact did exist,

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<sup>77</sup>Cited in the Halifax Morning Chronicle, May 26, 1896.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

no party in Canada would wish to violate it."<sup>79</sup> When asked his opinion of the Dominion in general, he contended that he could not speak for the outlook outside of the province, but that he had travelled throughout Nova Scotia and predicted favour for a change in government even within Conservative ranks.<sup>80</sup>

Interviews such as this were an effective form of campaign strategy, particularly if many in Nova Scotia were wavering from their traditional support for the Conservative party. Even the Toronto Globe thought them to be particularly significant and worthy of note.<sup>81</sup> On May 29, the Chronicle published on its front page full interviews with Ex-Mayor Scarfe of Dartmouth and Professor A. S. MacMechan of Dalhousie University. Both of these men were leading Conservatives who had announced that they were withdrawing their support from the Conservative Government in favor of the Liberal Candidates. Their statements serve as a possible indication of the changing image and positive support which had accrued to the Liberal party of Nova

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<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Toronto Globe, May 26, 1896.

Scotia since the preceding federal election of 1891.

Scarfe declared that he was changing his allegiance to the Liberal party because of the "reprehensible neglect shown to the town of Dartmouth and the whole of Halifax county by the Conservative government."<sup>82</sup> It was, indeed, time for a change. Because these interviews followed a fixed format, the Chronicle also printed Mr. Scarfe's declaration that he had no complaint at all about the effects of the Tariff.<sup>83</sup> Even if the trade issue did not alienate Conservative supporters, nevertheless, during the twenty years of Conservative administration many other local sensibilities may have been infringed upon which would now work against the Government.

When asked whether he took any interest in the school question, Scarfe's replied that he followed it, to some extent. This was the occasion for an explicit statement of his position as an apparently free-thinking Nova Scotian. "The greatest delicacy and care," he began, "must be exercised by the federal authorities in dealing with questions which touch the principles

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<sup>82</sup>Cited in the Halifax Morning Chronicle, May 29, 1896.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.



of provincial autonomy... the elements which make up the structure of Confederation."<sup>84</sup> Scarfe further explained the importance of provincial rights:

There is no other feature of the confederacy so sensitive, and when circumstances arise which threaten even the apparent interference with provincial independence, the manifest interests of the whole confederacy imperatively require the federal authorities to handle the particular cause of friction with greatest caution and due recognition of the high position which the particular self-respecting province holds as one of the members of the national partnership.<sup>85</sup>

In Nova Scotia the latent fear of federal coercion in provincial affairs was ably expressed. There was no mention of a compact of races, nor were the religious overtones of the separate school issue raised. It was rather, a question to be settled by a sister province in accordance with the circumstances which existed in that province.

A. S. MacMechan, a leading professor at Dalhousie University and a prominent Haligonian presented an admirable and forceful statement of his support for the Liberal party. Professor MacMechan began with the candid admission that in the election of 1891 he had

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

voted in support of the Conservative party because he believed that their trade policy was the safer one: "I could not endorse the unrestricted reciprocity policy which looked to me like permitting the trade policy of Canada to be shaped by a party outside of Canada."<sup>86</sup> "In 1896", however, Professor MacMechan contended, "Whatever danger may have existed from the radical trade policy ... cannot be alleged against their present position."<sup>87</sup> MacMechan provided an able vindication of the Liberal trade policy. His comments on Laurier's promise to initiate closer trade relations with the United States while pursuing a similar policy with Great Britain were completely in accord with the Nova Scotian concept of a North Atlantic triangular relationship. The Liberal platform was capable of such an interpretation favorable to Nova Scotians without a conflict with the purposes of the Conservative party's National Policy.

The trade question, which had curtailed popular support for the Liberal party in 1891, had now been not merely neutralized, but weighed in the favor of the Liberal party. The National Policy, which in the

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<sup>86</sup>Morning Chronicle, May 29, 1896.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

past had not always been supported on its intrinsic economic merits, but "because it was safer," had been met by the "freer trade" and "lighter taxation" appeal of the Liberal party. On being asked how he, as an independent voter viewed the school question, Professor MacMechan's reply was indeed significant. He saw the school question as a crucial issue in the election because such a problem "blocks and may indeed retard national progress." In this situation, he contended, "one must vote for the man who favors compromise and conciliation", While this solution should not let party interfere, "if party must be the deciding factor," Professor MacMechan concluded, "the Liberal party's stand is best."<sup>88</sup>

The Herald had no rebuttal, nor, although it did make the effort, could it produce prominent Liberals who were abandoning their party. The renewed vigour and enthusiasm of the Liberal party was further enhanced by the entrance of Sir Oliver Mowat into the campaign in Ontario. Sir Oliver's well known advocacy of freer trade, yet his unquestionable loyalty to England, as well as his fair play in dealing with separate schools

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<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

in Ontario, gave him a decided appeal in Nova Scotia.<sup>89</sup>

On June 16, when campaign excitement was nearing its peak, a joint political meeting was held in Halifax featuring Messrs. Borden, Kenny and Russell.<sup>90</sup> Russell's address confirmed the priorities which the Liberal party had established. He began with a masterful comparison of the trade policies of the two parties, defining with clarity the position of the Liberal party. He appealed for return to the system under which free enterprise

<sup>89</sup> Mowat's correspondence with Laurier on the trade issue and Manitoba schools, had been reprinted in the Chronicle on May 4. Mowat's role was again stressed by Fielding in an address in Halifax on May 5. Sections on tariff reform were printed in the Chronicle on May 12 wherein the speeches of Sir Oliver Mowat and Mr. Laurier were cited, and in an interview with Colonel McShane, Sir Oliver's conciliatory policy on the school question was given as an affirmation of the Liberal party's platform. (Morning Chronicle, May 26, 1896.)

<sup>90</sup> The report cited is from the Halifax Morning Chronicle, which carried extensive coverage of the meeting. The speeches reported in considerable detail appeared in the issues of June 17, 18, and 19. The protracted length of this report almost until the eve of the election, would suggest that these speeches, particularly Mr. Russell's, were intended as definite campaign documents.

flourished and prospered as it had under the first administration of Sir John A. Macdonald.<sup>91</sup>

On Saturday June 19, the weekend before the election, the Chronicle printed the final installment of Russell's speech at Dartmouth. His comments were given special prominence on the front page: "Benjamin Russell on The Manitoba School Question." Russell presented a candid assessment both of the judicial background to the school question and the political implications in the Conservative party's Remedial Bill. From Russell's point of view, however, a clear road to the solution had been opened by the Quebec Bishop's Mandement. "If I were a candidate in the province of Quebec," Russell declared, "I would have no hesitation whatever in accepting the pledge proposed. I am certainly in favour of granting to the minority in Manitoba whatever rights they are

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<sup>91</sup>The reference by a Liberal candidate to the system under which free enterprise flourished and prospered as it did under Macdonald must surely be one of the great ironies of the 1896 campaign. One of the major problems for the Liberals throughout the campaign had been to rebut the frequent Conservative references to the depression under Alexander Mackenzie. Russell attempted to deal with these problems in this speech.

entitled to under the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council."<sup>92</sup> Russell's words formed a marked contrast to the very harsh Pastoral Letter recently issued by Bishop Cameron at Antigonish. Bishop Cameron had gone far beyond the bounds of the Quebec mandement and was adamantly Conservative in tone.<sup>93</sup> Russell, however, appealed to a much broader base of support which he hoped the Liberal policy of conciliation could win for him.

On March 30, 1895, Laurier had written to J. S. Willison, editor of the Toronto Globe, to suggest that it would be desirable if the election could be fought on the trade issue.<sup>94</sup> Laurier's advice seemed to have been heeded by the leaders of both parties in Nova Scotia. Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper had opened

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<sup>92</sup>Morning Chronicle, June 19, 1896.

<sup>93</sup>Bishop Cameron's Pastoral letter cited in the New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle, June 18, 1896. Bishop Cameron's role will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter, but the tone of this letter can be readily seen in the following quotation: "To vote for a Liberal in the present crisis is in reality to vote against the justice which must be rendered to the Manitoba minority ... The leader of the Conservative party being the only one who has pledged himself."

<sup>94</sup>Laurier to J. S. Willison, March 30, 1895. Willison Papers, Vol. 109.

the Conservative campaign with the statement that the great question in all of Canada was the trade question.<sup>95</sup> At Halifax, R. L. Borden declared that time devoted to the Manitoba school question, both in Parliament and in the press, was out of all proportion to its true merits. A. R. Dickey, in his evaluation of the issues confronting the electors of his constituency, argued that the vital issue in Cumberland was the trade issue. There were other issues to be sure, but none so important as the trade policy of the government.<sup>96</sup> The Prime Minister, Sir Charles Tupper, speaking at a major political rally in Halifax, clearly stated the position of the Conservative party in Nova Scotia. The trade policy of the two parties and the successful record of the Conservative Government were the predominant issues upon which the electors of Nova Scotia were to judge.

This is not to suggest that the Manitoba school question was not an issue. It was indeed, but it was to be treated as part of the Government's general platform

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<sup>95</sup>Halifax Herald, May 2, 1896.

<sup>96</sup>Halifax Herald, May 6, 1896.

rather than as a distinct question. Tupper himself struck this note most forcibly in his Halifax Address when he summed up his appeal with the declaration that a vote against the Conservative party on Manitoba schools would be a vote against the National Policy, an unalterable setback to Canadian development.<sup>97</sup>

The position of the Liberal party and its general campaign strategy shares many resemblances to that of the Conservatives. Premier Fielding's clear and carefully articulated statement of the Liberal party's stand on the school question did much to allay suspicions of Catholic voters, as well as assuring his party of maintaining its basis of Protestant support. During the course of the campaign, however, Fielding's direct concern with the Liberal trade policy meant that he personally discussed the trade question in the various constituencies which he visited. The Liberal press reflected his stand with constant references to the Resolutions adopted at the National Liberal Convention in 1893. The disaffection from the

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<sup>97</sup>Sir Charles Tupper's "Halifax Address", cited in the Halifax Herald, June 4, 1896.



National Policy, which was becoming evident by 1896, served to strengthen this basic campaign orientation. The success of the Liberal's new trade policy is attested to by the conversion of many erstwhile Conservative supporters when it became apparent that freer trade might be a viable alternative particularly well suited to the needs of Nova Scotia.

This analysis does not imply the neglect of the Manitoba school question as a campaign issue. The school question was never far from the forum of political debate. General party strategy, however, sought to win popular support on the trade policy which need not imply a contradiction with their stand on the Catholic school question. Fielding had frequently stated his position in favor of a compromise solution after all the facts of the case had been brought forward. Benjamin Russell's acceptance of the general terms of the Quebec Bishop's Mandement indicated his awareness and concern for a solution to the Manitoba question.

The school issue was never presented as the sole question before the electorate. Indeed, the general

appeal of both parties assigned a priority of importance to trade and tariff questions. In this way, a direct appeal to specific Nova Scotian interests could be made. Laurier's desire to bring the trade issue to the fore seemed to have been fulfilled in the general campaign in Nova Scotia.

CHAPTER V

AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED CONSTITUENCIES:

"REGIONALISM IN NOVA SCOTIA"

Sir Robert Borden, looking back at his inauguration into federal politics in the election of 1896, remarked that, "Nova Scotia, and indeed every province was then in a condition of unusual excitement as the Manitoba school question overshadowed every other issue."<sup>1</sup> In explaining the defeat of his colleague, at the same time as he had headed the polls, Borden observed that Kenny was handicapped by his support of the Government's policy on the Manitoba school question.<sup>2</sup> During this campaign in Nova Scotia Bishop John Cameron had warned that, "to vote for a Liberal ... is in reality to vote against the justice which must be rendered to the Manitoba minority."<sup>3</sup> This partisan appeal went far beyond the bounds of the Mandement of the Roman Catholic Episcopacy in Quebec. In the report of a Special Committee of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda investigating events in Canada, Bishop Cameron was issued a special

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<sup>1</sup>Henry Borden (ed.), Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs (Toronto, 1938), p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Pastoral Letter of Bishop John Cameron at Antigonish, issued on Corpus Christi, 1896. Cited in the New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle, June 18, 1896. Benjamin Russell had openly stated that he could accept the terms of the Quebec Mandement.

reprimand.<sup>4</sup>

The interpretation of the role of the Manitoba school question in the election of 1896 in Nova Scotia presents a curious anomaly. The Bishop of Antigonish openly stated his support for the Conservative party and his unequivocal opposition to the promise of Laurier for further investigation. In Halifax, Archbishop O'Brien had also declared himself in favor of the Conservative party, and had promised Sir Hibbert Tupper, not to limit his actions to "just hoping" for a Conservative victory.<sup>5</sup> Yet it was the Conservative candidates who charged that the school question worked against them. This question, therefore, appears at least in need of a critical examination, if not a revision of the general interpretation. Did the school question cause the decline of the fortunes of the Conservative party in Nova Scotia at this election, or was it employed, a posteriori, as a much more

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<sup>4</sup>Resolution E of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, (Rome, 1897).

<sup>5</sup>supra, Ch. III.

appealing rationale for the defeat of the general government program?<sup>6</sup> In this final section an examination will be made of selected major constituencies in an attempt to determine the actual priority of the issues as they appeared before the electorate.

In the dual riding constituency of Halifax it had long been the custom that each party have one Protestant and one Catholic representative. Accordingly, in 1896 the Conservative slate consisted of T. E. Kenny, scion of a well-known Roman Catholic family and former member of Parliament, and R. L. Borden, a Protestant and local lawyer closely connected with legal interests of the Conservative party in Nova Scotia. Similarly the Liberal party had paired the Protestant lawyer, Benjamin Russell, with the Roman Catholic, M. E. Keefe, a former mayor of Dartmouth. The maintenance of the religious balance was tacitly understood and agreed upon by both parties.

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<sup>6</sup>In Nova Scotia the popular vote actually favored the Conservative party with 50.4% in support of the Conservative party and only 48.8% in favor of the Liberal party. The one independent candidate polled 0.7% of the popular vote. The number of seats was evenly divided at 10 : 10. Tupper, however, considered this a defeat since in 1891 the Conservative party had won their largest majority since Confederation holding 16 of the 21 seats with 53.1% of the popular vote.

In the actual campaign neither Kenny nor Keefe placed particular emphasis on their position as Roman Catholics. Indeed, both appeared more concerned with their respective positions on the trade issue; their role as Roman Catholics on the school question seems to have been carefully avoided.

An indication that an anti-Catholic reaction might be setting in in Halifax came in Benjamin Russell's speech of June 18 wherein he deprecated any notion of a split vote on religious or denominational lines. Russell contended that the election could only be decided as a party question:

When he (the voter) votes for Mr. Borden or Mr. Kenny, he affirms the principle of coercing the province of Manitoba by the passing of the Remedial Bill. When he votes for Mr. Keefe or Mr. Russell he adopts the better and wiser policy of non-interference and conciliation.<sup>7</sup>

Russell further developed the party division on fiscal policy, concluding with the necessity of maintaining a strict party stand.

What Russell spoke out against was no mere abstract problem. The Antigonish Casket on June 19 denounced the appearance of a "vile No-Popery sheet

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<sup>7</sup>Russell's speech cited in the Halifax Morning Chronicle, June 19, 1896. C. H. Cahan in a Ward 5 rally on May 26 had also mentioned his opposition to this "insidious canvass to split the vote." Halifax Herald, May 27, 1896.

started in Halifax less than two weeks ago."<sup>8</sup> According to the Casket, the main purpose of this paper was "to advocate the election of two Protestant candidates, with the transparent object of returning one opponent of the Government."<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, no extant copies exist to verify the nature of the appeal of this "No-Popery" movement. Nevertheless, Russell's denunciation of the attempt to split the ballot, Cahan's earlier remark on the canvass for a split vote in support of Protestant candidates, and the Casket's objections to this "news sheet" do suggest that in the period immediately preceding the election there was a definite appeal to anti-Catholic feelings.

It must be stressed, however, that the official policy of both parties in Halifax was to down-play the school question, especially since there was no separate school issue in Halifax itself. Emphasis in the campaign had been decidedly upon the trade issue. This was not unusual since Halifax was the commercial centre of Nova Scotia and both Catholic candidates, Kenny and Keefe, represented the commercial community. Borden and Russell, by contrast, were jurists, and might be

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<sup>8</sup>Antigonish Casket, June 11, 1896.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.



expected to be more concerned with the legal implications of the school question. Judging from the nature of the campaign, therefore, it is difficult to verify that the religious affiliation of the Catholic candidates need necessarily have worked against them.

The election results, however, in which Borden and Russell were elected, and the two Catholic candidates defeated, might lead to the all too ready generalization that religious affiliation was the deciding factor. In their post-electoral statements both parties regretted the apparent disruption of the "unwritten compact" that they should be represented by one Catholic and one Protestant. The Chronicle remorsefully contended that it, "would have preferred to have seen Mr. Kenny elected rather than Mr. Borden if one of Halifax's representatives were to be a Conservative."<sup>10</sup> Both parties were seriously concerned with the breakdown of the Protestant-Catholic dyarchy in the Halifax constituency.

Analyzing electoral behaviour in a dual constituency on the criterion of whether the electorate

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<sup>10</sup>Morning Chronicle, June 24, 1896.

voted for party or candidate is no easy matter.<sup>11</sup> Borden, the leading candidate had a margin over Russell, the leading Liberal candidate, of only 173 votes, whereas Russell's majority over T. E. Kenny, the Conservative Catholic candidate was 381 votes.<sup>12</sup> The closeness of the vote between the two leading candidates cannot be explained by any one factor. The popularity of both Borden and Russell and their personal appeal as "vote-getters" merits serious consideration. Russell's position as a leading citizen of the Dartmouth-Halifax area, his frequent letters to the press, and his noted eloquence on the platform, made him a particularly popular candidate. Similarly Robert Borden, an eminent member of the Nova Scotian bar, whose entrance into politics was noted as an example of a man offering to serve his

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<sup>11</sup>See Morris Davis, "Did They Vote For Party Or Candidate In Halifax?" in J. Meisel (ed.), Papers On The 1962 Election (Toronto, 1964), pp. 19-32.

<sup>12</sup>For election statistics reference should be made to Appendix III, based on the Sessional Papers, 1897, Vol. XXXI, No. 13.

country at personal sacrifice, and the Morning Chronicle's deep concern over his possible success, all pointed to his personal prominence in this campaign. Moreover, during the course of the campaign it had been Borden and Russell who made the major policy statements and their Catholic running-mates occupied distinctly secondary positions. As the election statistics not unsurprisingly reveal: the contest appeared very much to have been between Borden and Russell and their return at the head of the polls need not be explained by a religiously motivated choice. Furthermore, if the intention had been to defeat one Conservative candidate, how then could Borden's return at the head of the polls be explained? Clearly, therefore, the school question cannot be claimed as the overriding issue in the Halifax campaign.

In Eastern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton the school question was discussed much more extensively than in Halifax. An early prediction contended that the school question would be prejudicial to the Conservatives in the strong Protestant constituencies of the area, naming

specifically the counties of Colchester and Pictou.<sup>13</sup> In Antigonish and Guysborough, counties heavily populated by Roman Catholics, the same analysis suggested that the Conservative party would gain from the beneficial effects of the school question. The election returns completely upset this well reasoned prediction based on religious prejudice. Two Liberals, D. C. Fraser and Colin F. McIsaac were elected in the "Roman Catholic" constituencies. In the "Protestant" constituencies a straight Conservative ticket was returned: W. O. Dimock in Colchester and C. H. Tupper and A. C. Bell in Pictou. If the Manitoba school question was the dominant factor in these constituencies, no direct conclusion as to its efficacy in electoral success can be made.

The New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle, perhaps as a result of its opposition to the Roman Catholic Antigonish Casket, and certainly because of its political

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<sup>13</sup>This very extensive analysis appeared in a report in the Toronto Globe, May 26, 1896.

opposition to Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper, stressed the Manitoba school question as a crucial issue before the electors.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps most forcibly, its opinion was expressed in the following editorial:

It will no doubt be a great card for the Tupper, especially for C. H., if they can stand in the Parliament of Canada and declare that the Ultra-Protestant county of Pictou is in favor of Separate schools in Manitoba whereby the teaching of the Roman Catholic religion will be established by the Federal Parliament and endowed by state funds.<sup>15</sup>

The issue herein inveighed against was not that of French schools or French language rights, but simply Roman Catholicism being established in a sister province.

The constant emphasis which the Eastern-Chronicle placed on the association of Sir C. H. Tupper and the school question, seemed, however, to be in the nature of a rearguard action in a constituency where protection to the coal industry was of special importance in the late 1890's.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup>Editorials on the Manitoba school question appeared in the Eastern Chronicle in the following issues as the campaign reached its climax: May 28, June 4, June 11, and June 18, 1896.

<sup>15</sup>New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle, May 28, 1896.

<sup>16</sup>The Ford Pit was at this time undergoing particular difficulties.

Moreover, in dealing with Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper, the Eastern Chronicle was confronted with an able and popular politician whose probable position as solicitor-general in the next government would give him an influential voice in party councils.

The success of Sir Hibbert is perhaps most effectively attested to in the Chronicle's own editorial pages:

Just a week ago, Sir Hibbert Tupper, the draughtsman of the Remedial Order, had the audacity to assume a heroic role before a New Glasgow audience, and invoke applause for the noble part which he and his colleagues have played in "standing by the constitution."<sup>17</sup>

Sir Hibbert was not one to shy away from the school question, but at the same time, his handling of the campaign was not such as to openly offend Protestant sensibilities. His campaign program as outlined in the opening of the campaign concentrated on the unity of the Conservative party.<sup>18</sup> He began his speech at New Glasgow by a skillful handling of the trade issue, pointing out "grit uncertainty" on the tariff and specifically relating this to Pictou county where

<sup>17</sup>New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle, June 4, 1896.

<sup>18</sup>See Chapter IV.

McDonald and Carmichael had promised that the duty on coal, if continued at sixty cents on the ton, would only equal a revenue tariff.<sup>19</sup> Sir Hibbert, however, charged that Laurier had a different stand on coal and iron industries for interested parties in Ontario.<sup>20</sup> On turning at last to the school question, Sir Hibbert shielded himself with the cloak of Sir John Thompson. The Government had merely acted on the line laid down by Sir John Thompson when he had decided to refer the matter to the Privy Council for a decision. "If the government be defeated," Sir Charles Hibbert declared that he, "would be pleased to fall in defence of such a measure and in vindication of such a principle as 'equal rights to all men,' irrespective of creed or nationality."<sup>21</sup>

Despite its avowal of the necessity of defeating Tupper on the school question, the Eastern Chronicle still had to meet the Conservative party on the trade question. The necessity of this duality was seen in

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<sup>19</sup>Report from New Glasgow, cited in the Halifax Herald, May 8, 1896.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

its editorial of May 21. After an extensive denunciation of the Conservative party's policy on the school question, the Eastern Chronicle concluded with the assertion that:

Even if the 'N.P.' was a sacred thing indispensable to the well-being of the industries of this country, no damage can overtake its main principle, (high tariffs) under a Liberal administration.<sup>22</sup>

It would be unlikely that the Manitoba school question could overshadow the importance of the trade question for Pictou county. Moreover, the personal prestige of Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper as the de facto leader of the Nova Scotian Conservatives would undoubtedly contribute to his aggregate support.

When the election results were calculated, there appeared little evidence of a split vote as in Halifax. Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper polled 3,577 votes and Bell, 3,503 votes. Carmichael and McDonald ran equally close as a team with 3,337 and 3,349 votes respectively.<sup>23</sup> On a breakdown by individual ridings, the Conservatives obtained their largest majorities

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<sup>22</sup>New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle, May 21, 1896.

<sup>23</sup>Appendix III.



in the mining areas.<sup>24</sup> The results suggest an unquestionable victory for the Conservative party. Both Conservative candidates supported the Government's Remedial Bill and both Liberal candidates had affirmed their unalterable opposition to any remedial bill, whichever party might introduce it.<sup>25</sup> In the light of this very pronounced dichotomy between the two parties in Pictou, the desire for a retention of the National Policy in its integrity must have overshadowed the single issue of Catholic schools in Manitoba. Despite the canvass of the Eastern Chronicle the school question does not appear to have been the deciding electoral factor in Protestant Pictou county.

In nearby Antigonish, the Manitoba school question was put forward both by the press and by the decidedly outspoken attitude of Bishop John Cqmeron, as the dominant issue. Here, however, the school question again played a paradoxical role. The Liberal

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<sup>24</sup>Canada, Sessional Papers, (1897), XXXI, No. 13, pp. 253-254.

<sup>25</sup>In the final issue of the Eastern Chronicle before the election both Garmichael and Macdonald had issued a statement to the Orangemen of Pictou declaring their forthright opposition to any remedial bill - whichever party might introduce it. New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle, June 18, 1896.

candidate, C. F. McIsaac was victorious over the Government's nominee, J. A. Chisholm. McIsaac, a popular barrister, able public speaker, and former member of Fielding's Liberal government, had previously contested the by-election at Antigonish on the death of Sir John Thompson. His success in this by-election returning Antigonish to its traditional place in the Liberal fold, had been made despite the introduction of the school issue into the contest. At this early stage, however, before a remedial bill had been drafted, McIsaac's victory was based upon popular support for a Liberal candidate and his own pledge that he would personally support remedial legislation if it were properly introduced in the House.

In the contest of 1896 Bishop Cameron's active support for the Conservative, J. A. Chisholm, and his outspoken insistence on Catholic voters' acceptance of the Conservative party's Remedial Bill, sufficiently altered the scope of the campaign from that of the earlier 1895 struggle. Why did Bishop Cameron take such an active part in the campaign as that cited by O. D. Skelton, wherein the Bishop had announced that he was,

...officially in a position to declare, and I hereby declare, that it is the plain conscientious duty of every Catholic elector to vote for the Conservative candidate, and this declaration no Catholic in this diocese, be he priest or layman, has a right to dispute.<sup>26</sup>

The answer to this problem is not to be found in the school question per se, but rather in an examination of the personal attitude and outlook of Bishop Cameron and his view of Nova Scotian politics, all of which were involved in the election of 1896.

The Thompson papers very clearly indicate the close relationship between Bishop Cameron and Sir John Thompson and particularly the Bishop's growing sense of association with the Conservative party.<sup>27</sup> In an analysis of Thompson's two federal elections of 1885 and 1887, it has been suggested that "Bishop Cameron had become so deeply embroiled in local politics that his relations with priests and laity of Liberal persuasion had become strained."<sup>28</sup> In a letter to Sir John Thompson as late as April 21, 1894, inquiring as

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<sup>26</sup>O. D. Skelton, Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, (Toronto, 1965), Vol. 1, p. 168, Carleton edition.

<sup>27</sup>I am particularly indebted to Father A. A. Johnston of Antigonish for graciously permitting me to see his copies of the Thompson-Cameron correspondence.

<sup>28</sup>D. H. Gillies, "Sir John Thompson's Elections", Canadian Historical Review, (1956).

to the possibility of a general election being held that year, Bishop Cameron told Sir John:

Why I desire to be thus informed is that I shall begin my pastoral visit through the counties of Antigonish, Pictou and Inverness, and would like to do some effective though quiet work to prepare for the conflict if we are to expect it this coming summer.<sup>29</sup>

Bishop Cameron was an enthusiastic supporter of the Conservative party quite independently of the school question, and he was particularly anxious to have qualified Catholics take their place in the public life of the country. It is with the advantage of this background that an evaluation of the role of the school question and Bishop Cameron's actions in Antigonish must be weighed.

There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of the Bishop's support for the Conservative Government's stand on the Remedial Legislation. He saw it as a measure of political justice to the Catholic minority in Manitoba. McIsaac's success in the earlier by-election, however, necessitated that the statement of his position be more explicitly phrased than ever before.

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<sup>29</sup>Bishop Cameron to Sir John Thompson, April 21, 1894. Thompson Papers, p. 121. The Angus L. Macdonald Library, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, N.S.

Furthermore, the reaction of Liberal candidates in Quebec who had circumvented the Quebec Bishop's Mandemant by pledging themselves to vote for a Remedial Bill meant that his forces in Antigonish could again be divided and conquered.<sup>30</sup> In this situation, Bishop Cameron's avowedly political pastoral can be more readily understood. Because it was a Catholic minority in Manitoba, Catholics in Nova Scotia should consider themselves as "doubly obliged in conscience to uphold the constitution by voting only for candidates determined to support the brave leader [Sir Charles Tupper] who has pledged himself... to a Federal remedial bill..." "To vote for a Liberal," Bishop Cameron warned, "is to vote against the justice which must be rendered to the Manitoba minority."<sup>31</sup>

The victory of the Liberal candidate by a majority of slightly over one hundred votes<sup>32</sup> indicates that the election was indeed very close, and

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<sup>30</sup>The Antigonish Casket on June 11 had criticized the actions of Liberal candidates in Quebec on this matter.

<sup>31</sup>Bishop Cameron's Pastoral, cited in Eastern Chronicle, June 18, 1896.

<sup>32</sup>Appendix;III. Majority was 117 votes. Sessional Papers, loc. cit., p. 237.

a further riding by riding analysis shows the constituency to have been evenly divided in all districts. It is difficult, if not impossible, to designate any one dominant factor. McIsaac's personal sincerity and popularity may have been able to offset clerical interference. Premier Fielding had carefully defined the position of the Liberal party on the school question. The electorate, even in the rural areas of Antigonish, were now acquainted with both sides. This would do much to neutralize the influence of the clergy upon which Tupper had counted.<sup>33</sup>

In Antigonish, the school question was undoubtedly the dominant electoral issue. The return of a Liberal candidate from this riding, however, once again raises the question of whether, even in Catholic counties, the school question would necessarily lead to the return of a Conservative candidate. The answer appears to be no. In each of the three studies thus far presented the regional nature of Nova Scotian politics seems to be the only constant factor: in Halifax the vote was

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<sup>33</sup>The reference here is to Tupper's letters to the local Roman Catholic clergy in the Cape Breton area, cited above, Chapter III.

divided more on personality than on party lines, in the staunch Protestant county of Pictou the two anti-remedialists were defeated, and in Antigonish, a decidedly Roman Catholic constituency where the Bishop spoke in adamantly political tones in support of the Conservative party, a Liberal candidate was returned.

Political debate along Nova Scotia's south shore reveals another distinct attitude toward the dominant political issues. The foremost feature of this area was the concern with the trade policy of the two parties and particularly an approval of the "freer-trade" plank in the Liberal platform. As early as January, 1896, the Yarmouth Herald had hopefully commented on the "rising time of Liberalism" emanating from the recent by-elections in Montreal and Jacques Cartier.<sup>34</sup> The enthusiasm of the Herald was clearly evident in its editorial comments:

In Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, the public confidence in the capacity, ability and energy of the Liberal leaders has been time and time again expressed.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Yarmouth Herald, January 14, 1896.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., February 4, 1896.

This active support for the policies of the Liberal party had been garnered quite apart from the school question; even during Tupper's Cape Breton by-election the Herald had made no mention of the Bishop's intervention on the school issue.<sup>36</sup> When Sir Oliver Mowat announced his entry into the political campaign in support of Laurier, the Yarmouth Herald readily cheered, "for on the vexed question of tariff reform Sir Oliver is in complete harmony with the Liberal chief and the party."<sup>37</sup>

The election in Yarmouth produced an interesting juxtaposition of regional factors: a strong temperance movement combined with the local support of the French Acadians to elect the Liberal candidate, T. B. Flint, with a substantial majority.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., February 4, 1896 and February 11, 1896.

<sup>37</sup>Yarmouth Herald, May 12, 1896.

<sup>38</sup>Flint had a majority of 444 votes out of a total number of 2,836 votes cast. Propprtionally, this was one of the largest majorities in Nova Scotia in this election. In Yarmouth, the Acadians constituted approximately one-third of the electorate.



During the campaign in Yarmouth the editorials in the local press and the letters to the editor had made little attempt to appeal to the racial sympathies of the French Acadians.<sup>39</sup> Debate, however, did centre on the primacy of Laurier as the leader of a national party, and his superiority to Tupper. That this was due in part to Laurier's position as a French-Canadian and leader of a national party merits consideration. To declare, however, that it was the determining factor in the prominence given to the leaders of the two parties would seem to be an unnecessary conjecture and one that is not borne out by the press.<sup>40</sup>

A direct appeal to the racial sentiments of the Acadians was made toward the end of the campaign when a Conservative Senator, the Hon. Pascal Poirier of Shediac, New Brunswick, arrived in Yarmouth. Accompanied by the Conservative candidate, Jacob Bingay, he travelled

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<sup>39</sup>On May 12, the Liberal candidate had translated an important article of Le Cultivateur which had affirmed the support of French Canadians in Quebec for the Liberal party. This was more a statement of fact than a blatant appeal to racialism.

<sup>40</sup>The most striking example of this technique appeared in the Yarmouth Herald of May 26, 1896.

to Pubnico where he addressed a meeting in French, on the Manitoba school question.<sup>41</sup> The Yarmouth Herald's criticism of "this Tory attempt to drag the Manitoba school question any more prominently into the campaign," was echoed in a forceful letter to the Editor dated at West Pubnico. The writer deprecated this disruption of the existing harmony in Nova Scotia, "when this remedial bill was of but little moment."<sup>42</sup> The appeal to the French Acadians in Nova Scotia by Senator Poirier appeared to have had little success.

Early in June the Yarmouth County Temperance Association unanimously agreed to support the Liberal candidate. Their approval of Flint, personally, and their appreciation of the gesture made toward the temperance movement by the National Liberal Convention of 1893, was a substantial factor in the Liberal party's success. Flint's ability to appeal to all sections of

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<sup>41</sup>The Yarmouth Herald indignantly labelled Senator Poirier's appearance in the constituency as "An Extraordinary Occurrence." Nevertheless, Senator Poirier announced that he proposed to address a series of meetings in the French districts of Yarmouth County.- See Herald, June 16, 1896.

<sup>42</sup>The letter appeared in the June 16 issue.

the community on the basis of the platform of the Liberal party was of considerable importance. The policy of freer trade and lighter taxation, Laurier's opposition to the coercive nature of the Remedial Bill, and the favorable stand of the Liberal party on temperance legislation, served the Liberals well in Yarmouth county.

Cumberland county, situated on the Western coast of Nova Scotia, had returned a Conservative candidate in every election since Confederation, even 1867. Previously the seat of Sir Charles Tupper, Cumberland had been represented by A. R. Dickey since 1888. Because of the predominance of coal mining as a major industry in this constituency, Cumberland electors had been traditionally considered as active supporters of the Conservative party's National Policy. In the 1891 election Dickey had been returned with an overwhelming majority of more than 800 votes.<sup>43</sup> In 1896 he was defeated by a majority of 155 votes.<sup>44</sup> What had intervened to cause such a sharp reversal? Could

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<sup>43</sup>Cited in A. M. Mackenzie, unpublished manuscript, "The Election of 1896", (Dalhousie University, 1966) p. 30.

<sup>44</sup>Appendix III.

the National Policy no longer evoke the old enthusiasm or was Dickey forced to campaign on the Remedial Bill, which, as Minister of Justice, he had drawn up and introduced into the House?

In his opening campaign address, Dickey emphasized the vital necessity of the Conservative Government's trade policy for Cumberland county - "there were other issues to be sure but none in comparison with trade."<sup>45</sup> Dickey also announced that he, personally, opposed the idea of separate schools. But that was not the issue in the Government's Remedial Bill. It was the constitution that was at stake; the Government's policy was to uphold the pledge given at the time of union. After studying all of the facts, and in view of his responsibilities as a Member of Parliament, Dickey informed his audience that he was now convinced, and, "notwithstanding his own personal views and feelings, the provisions of the constitution should be carried out in their entirety."<sup>46</sup> This forthright statement of his

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<sup>45</sup>A. R. Dickey at Amherst, May 5. Reported in the Halifax Herald, May 6, 1896. See also supra, IV.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

personal decision to uphold the Remedial Bill, Dickey hoped, would allay the suspicions of many Protestant voters.

After dealing with the Manitoba school question, Dickey shrewdly turned the attention of his audience to a matter of considerable local interest - the Chignecto Ship-Railway scheme. The Government was doing its best against strenuous Grit opposition. The Bill was now on the order paper and, on his return, the Government would redeem its pledge.<sup>47</sup> The Manitoba school question was thus juxtaposed to an issue of more local interest.

Speaking at Springhill Mines, Dickey once again illustrated the primacy of the trade issue in the Cumberland election. Laurier and Cartwright, in their public speeches in other parts of Canada, he argued had shown that they intended to remove the duty on coal - "which would strike a deathblow at the vital interests of this province."<sup>48</sup> Dickey contrasted the leadership of the Liberal party with that of the Conservatives. It was little wonder that the Liberal press

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>A. R. Dickey at Springhill Mines, May 14, reported in the Halifax Herald, May 16, 1896.

called the present administration a "Cumberland Government," when they remember that three of its members represent the three great coal counties of Canada.<sup>49</sup>

On June 7, at Parrsboro, Dickey again resorted to the trade question in an attempt to affirm the importance of the return of a Conservative Government for the coal industry of Nova Scotia and to emphasize his own position within the Ministry in contrast to that of his Liberal opponent:

It was all very well for Mr. Logan, whose voice would scarcely be heard outside the hall he spoke in, to pretend that it was not the Liberal policy to renew the coal and iron duties, but in the face of his leader's direct statement that foreign coal and iron should be admitted free, his remarks were utterly destitute of authority.<sup>50</sup>

In order to offset any adverse reaction to his role in the Government's Remedial Bill, Dickey attempted to also show the advantage to his constituency of being represented in the cabinet.

In estimating the strength of the opposition to the Conservative candidates in the 1896 election,

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>A. R. Dickey at Parrsboro, June 7, reported in the Halifax Herald, June 8, 1896.

too often the tendency has been to revert to the defeat of the Liberal party on the trade issue in 1891 and compare the election results in 1896 and subscribe to the theory that any change which has taken place must be attributed to a new element - the Manitoba school question. This might be all too easy in the case of A. R. Dickey who frequently sought to confine himself to the trade issue.<sup>51</sup> The fallacy of such reasoning neglects the substantial revision of the Liberal trade policy at the Convention of 1893 and the influence of Premier Fielding in actively supporting the federal Liberal party. The Liberal party was no longer on the defensive on the trade policy; but marched openly into former Conservative strongholds. Moreover, economic conditions in Nova Scotia in 1896 were not such as would generate spontaneous enthusiasm for the old pledges of the National Policy.

In Amherst, Logan appeared as "the working man's candidate," opposed to a system which worked

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<sup>51</sup>Dickey's platform emphasizing the trade issue was noted in the Morning Chronicle, (May 27, 1896) as well as in the Herald which would suggest that the emphasis on the trade question was noted by both parties and that the Liberals, therefore, would have to be prepared to meet this issue.

only to the advantage of monopolists, but not for the bread winner.<sup>52</sup> On the assertion that manufacturing industries would be crippled by the Liberal policy, Logan could readily cite the active support of manufacturers in Ontario and business interests in Nova Scotia which now supported the party platform. In short, Dickey's repeated stress on the trade question could no longer evoke the unchallenged support to which he had been accustomed.

On the Manitoba school question, Dickey was at a definite disadvantage. As the Minister of Justice he was forced to take an unequivocal stand in support of the Bill as it stood before the House. His unsuccessful trip to Winnipeg to negotiate with the Greenway Government had done little to endear him to his constituents. Moreover, Laurier's classic "anti-coercion speech" had been reprinted side by side with Dickey's speech on the second reading of the Bill - much to the latter's disadvantage.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>The emphasis given here is what which was reported in the Morning Chronicle, May 27, 1896, describing the nature of Logan's campaign in Cumberland.

<sup>53</sup>This was precisely the point of the special supplement issued by the Yarmouth Herald wherein the contrast between Dickey and Laurier's speeches was pointed out for the reader's edification.



Public opposition to the Remedial Bill became pronounced in the final week before the election. On June 19 the Western Baptist Association stated in convention that they opposed the "so called" remedial bill proposed by Parliament. They placed themselves on record, "with strongest disapproval of any attempt to interfere with the present free school system of our growing country."<sup>54</sup> At the same time, the Methodist district meeting, held in Bridgetown, commented on the school question in a resolution which seemed to place them in support of the stand of the Liberal party. They protested against the coercion of Manitoba by the federal Parliament, and approved of the promise of Manitoba to remedy any well-founded grievance which due investigation may prove to exist.<sup>55</sup>

In the actual confrontation on the platform, Logan's personality and quick wit scored decisively

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<sup>54</sup>Cited in the Morning Chronicle, June 19, 1896.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid. The promulgation by two leading Protestant Church groups; the former decidedly opposing the Conservative policy and this latter statement adopting a stand similar to that of the Liberal candidates in Nova Scotia does suggest some indication of the forces arrayed against Dickey appearing as they did in the final week before the election.

over Dickey's more serious nature. Logan produced a facsimile of the 14 clauses of the Remedial Bill as first presented by Dickey, and then pointed out the 58 amendments to it. "This is the Dickey Bill. The Minister of Justice is the father of it," Logan taunted. "It is a wise father who knows his own child", and turning to Mr. Dickey, he asked, "do you recognize your own offspring?"<sup>56</sup> Dickey was also met on another count when Logan read a telegram from Premier Fielding warning the electors of Cumberland not to be deceived about reported resumption of work on the ship railway.<sup>57</sup> With this last move, Dickey had been countered on each issue in the campaign. In explaining Dickey's defeat, therefore, it is impossible to assign any single factor as the predominant issue. On the trade policy, the Manitoba school question, and now even local politics at the Liberal party in Nova Scotia challenged the long dominance of the Conservative party.

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<sup>56</sup> A report of this joint meeting, at which time both candidates would have a final chance to present their case to the electorate, was presented in the Morning Chronicle, June 19, 1896.

<sup>57</sup> Morning Chronicle, June 19, 1896.

As a whole, the election in Nova Scotia was extremely close. Never since Confederation had the two parties been so nearly equal. Of the fourteen single-member constituencies, twelve were won by a majority of less than two hundred votes. The two exceptions were King's and Yarmouth. In the former, Dr. F. W. Borden was returned with a majority of 471 votes, and in Yarmouth T. B. Flint had 444 votes. But majorities such as these were not the rule.

In Digby, the Liberal candidate, A. J. S. Copp won by 45 votes. In Guysborough, D. C. Fraser led by a mere 78 votes. Hants was even closer. The Liberal candidate won by a margin of 35 votes. The Conservatives too, had several close victories: J. A. Gillies in Richmond had a majority of only 22 votes; C. E. Kaulback carried Lunenburg with 85 votes. Clearly, this had been one of the most closely battled elections in Nova Scotia's history.

Further constituency analysis, employing computer programming techniques to examine political behaviour, correlating religious affiliation, ethnic origin and voting shifts in individual ridings, meritorious as they may be, are beyond the limits of this

study. Its purpose has been to consider the position which the two political parties in Nova Scotia adopted on "national issues" in the election of 1896. In this sense, some general and retrospective conclusions may be drawn.

Since Confederation, Nova Scotians had shown a dual approach to Canadian politics. On the provincial level appeals to anti-Confederation or at least a rejection of "Upper Canadian" economic domination, had frequently been successful. At the same time, in federal politics Nova Scotians maintained consistent support for the Conservative Party and the principle of tariff protection implicit in the National Policy. In 1896 the province divided evenly; each party won ten seats. The Conservative candidates received 50.4 per cent of the popular vote, and the Liberals increased their share to 48.8 per cent. This was a new development in Nova Scotian electoral history. What had caused this change?

In the 1890 elections the Liberals had maintained their majority in the Provincial House. In 1891, Nova Scotia had returned the largest majority ever accorded to the Conservative party in a federal election. Since

then a new issue had come before the electorate. This was the Manitoba school question. But, there was more that separated the two elections. Party policies had been shaped anew. Leading members of both parties in Nova Scotia had taken part in the formation of the national party platforms. Each party claimed to represent the best interests of Nova Scotia within the Dominion. Their fates were committed to the national interest.

W. S. Fielding, as the Liberal Premier of Nova Scotia, had attended the National Liberal Convention in 1893. His importance as a leading Liberal was recognized in his appointment as Chairman of the Resolutions Committee. The resolutions on the trade policy were a significant departure from the stand of the party in 1891. Canadian independence was implicit in the new platform, and lighter taxation, freer-trade and a recognized commitment to interests long established in Canada provided an appeal as all pervasive as the National Policy. But the Convention accomplished more than this. Fielding, along with Sir Oliver Mowat of Ontario, had instilled a new sense

of vitality within Liberal ranks. It was well recognized that the day of Sir Richard Cartwright had ended; a new era stood on the horizon for the Liberal party. The provincial leaders were destined to play a new and active role in future policy formation.

In Nova Scotia Fielding was careful to take a position upon which the party could stand in all parts of the Dominion. He criticized Ontario leaders for departing from the abstract principle of tariff reform and mentioning specific commodities. He was very much aware of the problems inherent in a general tariff reform. But, as he told Laurier, "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."<sup>58</sup> Liberal politicians in Nova Scotia waited restlessly to present their case to the electorate. It would no longer be enough for the conservatives to hoist the Union Jack and decry the "Blue Ruin Knight," Sir Richard Cartwright.

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<sup>58</sup>Supra, Chapter I. W. S. Fielding to Laurier, March 25, 1895. Laurier Papers, 9, p. 3719.

In the campaign Conservative candidates made little attempt to meet the new Liberal trade policy. Statistics from the depression during the Mackenzie regime were once again resurrected and the Union Jack fluttered on the masthead of the Halifax Herald. But things were not as they had been in 1891 and the Conservative party did not effectively rise to meet the challenge. This is not to say that the Conservative policy was without force. The National Policy was now integrated with the promise of a "Fast Atlantic Service," and Tupper's Electoral Manifesto had been given unanimous support by Nova Scotian Conservatives. The question was, however, whether the National Policy could evoke its customary support from the Nova Scotian electorate when it was met by a policy embracing equally as widespread interest groups.

Political debate on the Manitoba school question had added a new dimension to politics in Nova Scotia. Although Nova Scotia had no definite separate school problem, Nova Scotians were very much involved in finding an acceptable solution to the crisis in Manitoba. First it had been Sir John Thompson who had served as the

apologist for the Government's actions in taking the school legislation to the courts. Then it was Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper who had submitted the report as Minister of Justice, and upon whose forthright resignation over the Government's equivocation on a remedial policy, had caused the Mackenzie Bowell government to issue a Remedial Order to Manitoba.

When the special sixth session of Parliament convened on January 2, 1896, the attention of Canadians was again directed to the school question. The speech from the Throne had promised that a remedial bill would be introduced that session. Two days later, seven ministers of the Bowell government resigned. Across the Dominion, rumours linked the resignations with opposition within the Conservative party to the policy of remedial legislation.

In Nova Scotia, the Conservative press interpreted the situation differently. What was needed was a strong leader to unite the party, and by chance, Sir Charles Tupper was again in Canada. The resignations of the ministers were not seen as the defeat of a major government policy. The



Government's policy on the question of restoring separate schools to the minority in Manitoba was a matter of carrying out the terms of the constitution. It need not be an issue for popular discussion. With Tupper as leader, the Conservative party would see that justice was done.

Sir Charles agreed to serve his party and his country, entering the cabinet as Secretary of State and de facto party leader. His by-election in Cape Breton was a testing ground for the political policies of both parties. Premier Fielding, who had called an early session of the Nova Scotian House, did not appear in Cape Breton. A strong Liberal candidate, the Hon. George H. Murray, however, had withdrawn from the cabinet to contest the election.

In Cape Breton, a constituency in which coal mining was a predominant industry, the trade question not unnaturally appeared to be a major issue. The candidates and the party press were circumspect on the school question. Its racial and religious overtones were carefully avoided. The Conservative Halifax Herald was outstanding in this respect. Nevertheless, the school question had to be met. The apparent "Pastoral" letter from Bishop John Cameron, published in the Morning Chronicle, upset

the uneasy balance. One thing was now certain, politicians in Nova Scotia would have to take a stand on the question of separate schools in Manitoba.

Victory in Cape Breton was doubtless more than the Liberals could have expected. But, they were able to learn much from defeat. Indeed, they had the advantage over Tupper who was committed to return to Ottawa and to attempt to push the Remedial Bill through the final session of Parliament. As the leading Nova Scotian Conservatives in Ottawa rallied behind the Remedial Bill introduced by A. R. Dickey, Premier Fielding began to define the position of the Nova Scotian Liberal party. His purpose was to adopt a stand which would appeal to Nova Scotians of either party and of either the Catholic or Protestant religions.

Fielding opposed the Remedial Bill and advocated a policy of investigation with the expectation that Dominion interference would be unnecessary. The people of Manitoba, if left alone, would settle the question for themselves. Fielding declared that he favored a solution that the Roman Catholics might honorably accept, but he was aware that the problem could be effectively settled only with the good will of a majority

of the people of Manitoba. Federal coercion was not the answer. Premier Fielding effectively combined an appeal to the always latent Nova Scotian dislike of federal coercion, with support for the policy of the Liberal party under the leadership of a French Canadian Roman Catholic, Wilfrid Laurier. Justice to the minority would be assured, but the rights of the majority would not be violated. By stressing the compatibility of these two elements, Fielding was near to the crux of Nova Scotia's post-Confederation political alignment.

In Ottawa the Conservative members from Nova Scotia were taking a leading part in the debate, upholding the terms of the Government's Remedial Bill. Both Sir Charles and Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper, were aware of the need to gain the approval of opinion in their home province. Early in the session, Sir Charles Hibbert had sought to confirm the support of Archbishop O'Brien of Halifax. Failure to pass the Remedial Bill before the dissolution, made it all the more requisite that the Conservative party retain the confidence of leading Roman Catholics. In this sense, Sir Charles Tupper's plea to Father McNeil,

that the members of the Conservative party were taking their political lives into their hands to do justice to the Roman Catholics of Manitoba, can be readily explained. It did not mean that the Manitoba school question was to be the only issue in the election, but rather, that the Conservative leaders intended to stand by their policy of remedial legislation. In doing so, they wished to buttress such support as they had.

In general, Nova Scotian politicians of both parties emphasized the importance of the trade question - an issue directly related to Nova Scotian interests. The inaugural addresses of both parties made this priority of emphasis quite evident. For the Liberals, M. E. Keefe emphasized his personal participation in the National Convention of 1893. Conservative candidates in their turn stressed the importance of the National Policy for Canadian development. Nova Scotians need not fear that their interests would be neglected, for the next administration would be a "Cumberland Government."

The Manitoba school question, however, was not avoided. Premier Fielding had carefully defined the

position of the Nova Scotian Liberal party and Laurier's plea for a commission of investigation had been given a cordial hearing in the province. It was becoming increasingly apparent that many Catholics in Nova Scotia supported this stand. In the final days of the campaign, Benjamin Russell made it clear that Catholics need not desert the Liberal party to assure that Roman Catholics in Manitoba would be accorded full justice.

In the final analysis, the general campaign of the Conservative party was surprisingly similar. On the Manitoba school question, the Government's policy was to uphold the constitution. Unlike Ontario, Conservative candidates in Nova Scotia stood firmly in support of their party's policy. Sir Charles Tupper perhaps most effectively presented the Conservative case when he urged that the Manitoba school question was but a part of the general party platform. A vote against the Government on the school question would be a vote against the whole Conservative policy of national progress and development. Nova Scotians knew enough about "Grit misrule" and the policies of their "arch-enemy" Sir Richard Cartwright to realize

the necessity of retaining the National Policy. The school question then, was not an issue which would necessarily divide traditional party support.

The Liberal party, however, was no longer under the sway of Sir Richard Cartwright. Many leading Nova Scotians saw the trade policy of the Liberal party as a preferable alternative to the National Policy. Freer trade and lighter taxation had always been accorded a favorable hearing. Now the active support of this policy by Sir Oliver Mowat and Premier Fielding had effectively allayed the charges of disloyalty resurrected from the 1891 campaign. But, the National Policy had also undergone a revision since the last election. The tariff schedule had been lowered, and new emphasis placed on closer imperial relations. On the trade question, the parties seemed evenly matched. In such circumstances, the forces of regionalism, and the personalities of the individual candidates and party leaders assumed an added significance.

Premier Fielding played a crucial role in the organization and direction of the Liberal campaign. He had called an early session of the Nova Scotian

House to clear the way for the federal campaign. Moreover, he had tentatively, but as yet secretly, accepted a position in Laurier's cabinet if the Liberals should win. During the campaign, Fielding toured the province, visiting some areas such as King's county for the first time on a political platform. Because he was not a candidate, Fielding was able to appear in those areas where Liberal support was weakest. In these constituencies, Fielding not unnaturally stressed the trade question. It was difficult for the Conservatives to match the force and personality of a leader such as Fielding.

The exigencies of overseeing a national campaign had severely taxed the powers of the aging Sir Charles Tupper. When he finally turned to Nova Scotia, Sir Charles spent his time in Cape Breton in his own constituency. What he needed most was rest, in order to prepare for the gruelling task which awaited him in Ontario. He made no attempt to tour the province, and spoke at only one major rally in Halifax. The contrast between the personal and active intervention of Premier Fielding and the wearied, yet complacent Sir Charles Tupper was clearly apparent.

But Sir Charles was still a force to be reckoned with, and the magic of the name and the imperial ring of the personality still excited many Nova Scotians. The campaign in 1896, however, was a far cry from the manner in which Sir Charles had stumped the province in 1891. But then, by 1896, not only the men, but also the issues had changed.

1896 may very well have marked the end of an era in Nova Scotia. Sir Charles Tupper had returned to his native province expecting victory, but the support had not come as unanimously as in 1891. He was met by a new and highly organized Liberal party whose leader was prepared to play his role in the formation of a new Liberal Government. The centralism of the Conservative party was questioned anew and never more clearly than by the Manitoba school question. New politicians too had come to the fore. A. G. Jones and J. F. Stairs had stepped down, but W. S. Fielding and R. L. Borden were prepared to take their place. Nova Scotian politicians would continue to play a leading role in the development and progress of the Canadian nation.



APPENDIX I

## RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS BY COUNTY, 1891

	<u>Roman Catholics</u>	<u>Presbyterians</u>	<u>Baptists</u>	<u>Others</u>
Annapolis	564	495	10,468	7,823
Antigonish	13,859	1,587	247	421
Cape Breton	17,994	10,374	1,532	4,344
Colchester	1,304	16,285	3,944	5,627
Cumberland	3,873	7,903	7,673	15,080
Digby	9,302	165	6,597	3,833
Guysborough	5,386	2,284	3,696	5,829
Halifax City	15,658	4,877	2,854	15,106
Halifax County	7,935	6,627	3,911	14,390
Hants	1,235	6,203	3,881	10,733
Inverness	16,270	7,922	681	906
Kings	1,399	1,708	12,006	7,376
Lunenburg	629	3,535	5,304	21,607
Pictou	4,387	26,067	675	3,452
Queens	763	166	3,615	6,540
Richmond	10,238	3,242	158	761
Shelburne	187	1,013	6,301	7,455
Victoria	3,411	7,839	64	1,028
Yarmouth	8,058	620	9,555	3,983

APPENDIX II

## RESULTS OF CAPE BRETON BY-ELECTION,

FEBRUARY 4, 1896

<u>Subdivisions</u>	<u>Hon. Geo. H. Murray</u>	<u>Sir Chas. Tupper</u>	<u>Murray's Majority</u>	<u>Tupper's Majority</u>
Sydney, Town of No. 1A1-	129	105	24	
1A2-	131	112	19	
North No. 1 (letter B)	164	86	78	
North No. 2 (letter C)	168	64	104	
Mines No. 1 (letter D)	100	64	36	
Mines No. 2 (letter E)	183	111	72	
Hillsdale	3-	35		95
Forks	4-	117	17	
Main-a-dieu	5-	80		12
Louisbourg	6-	100		35
Gabarus	7-	144	1	
East Bay South Side	8-	71		9
Boisdale	9-	47		71
Boulardric	10-	119	2	
Glace Bay	11-	147		249
Cow Bay	12-	208		33
Big Pond	13-	45		25
Grand Narrows	14-	66		147
Catalone	15-	72		40
Trout Brook	16-	35		122
Grand Mira	17-	32		71
Victoria	18-	134	11	
East Bay, North	19-	54		134
Lingan	20-	64	1	
Loch Lomond	21-	51	32	
Leitche's Creek	22-	80		57
Ball's Creek	23-	126	48	
Little Bras d'Or	24-	88	30	
Bridgeport, A	25-	90		98
Reserve, B	25-	92		8
	<u>2,972</u>	<u>3,703</u>	<u>475</u>	<u>1,206</u>
<u>Majority:</u>	731			

APPENDIX III

## 1896 ELECTORAL RESULTS BY CONSTITUENCY

			<u>Total Votes Polled</u>	<u>Total Eligible To Vote</u>
ANNAPOLIS				
J. B. Mills,	C	2,012	3,827	4,725
J. W. Longley,	L	1,815		
Majority		197		
ANTIGONISH				
C. F. McIsaac,	L	1,341	2,565	3,675
J. A. Chisholm,	C	1,224		
		117		
CAPE BRETON				
Sir C. Tupper,	C	3,630	12,201	9,664
H. F. McDougall,	C	3,430		
A. S. Kendall,	L	2,813		
J. McPherson,	L	2,328		
Tupper's majority		817		
McDougall's majori- ty		617		
COLCHESTER				
S. D. Dimock,	C	2,483	4,789	6,254
F. McClure,	L	2,306		
		177		
CUMBERLAND				
H. J. Logan,	L	3,462	6,769	9,624
A. R. Dickey,	C	3,307		
		155		
DIGBY				
A. J. S. Copp,	L	1,636	3,227	4,719
J. E. Jones,	C	1,591		
		45		
GUYSBOROUGH				
D. C. Fraser,	L	1,533	2,988	3,787
E. Gregory,	C	1,455		
		78		

			<u>Total Votes Polled</u>	<u>Total Eligible To Vote</u>
HALIFAX				
R. L. Borden,	C	6,170	17,182	23,255
B. E. Russell,	L	5,997		
T. E. Kenny,	C	5,616		
M. E. Keefe,	L	5,472		
Borden's majority over Russell--173				
Russell's majority over Kenny --381				
HANTS				
A. Haley,	L	1,838	3,641	4,773
A. Putnam,	C	1,803		
		35		
INVERNESS				
A. McLennan,	L	1,676	3,945	5,983
H. Cameron,	C	1,532		
J. McKeen,	I	737		
		144		
KING'S				
F. W. Borden,	L	2,252	4,033	5,187
W. C. Bill,	C	1,781		
		471		
LUNENBURG				
C. E. Kaulback,	C	2,403	4,721	8,559
J. D. Sperry,	L	2,318		
		85		
PICTOU				
Sir C. H. Tupper,	C	3,577	13,766	9,464
A. C. Bell,	C	3,503		
E. M. McDonald,	L	3,349		
J. W. Carmichael,	L	3,337		
Tupper's majority 228				
Bell's majority 154				
RICHMOND				
J. A. Gillies,	C	1,078	2,134	3,692
E. D. Flynn,	L	1,056		
		22		

			<u>Total Votes Polled</u>	<u>Total Eligible To Vote</u>
SHELBURNE-QUEENS				
F. G. Forbes,	L	2,130	4,062	6,078
C. H. Cahan,	C	1,932		
		198		
VICTORIA				
Dr. J. L. Bethune,	C	1,049	1,926	2,820
S. C. Campbell,	L	877		
		177		
YARMOUTH				
T. B. Flint,	L	1,640	2,836	4,934
J. Bingay,	C	1,196		
		444		



APPENDIX IV

RESULTS OF PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS  
SINCE CONFEDERATION

	<u>Party</u>	<u>Percentage of Popular Vote</u>	<u>Seats</u>
<u>1867</u>	L	58.6	36
	C	38.5	2
<u>1871</u>	L	52.2	25
	C	43.7	13
<u>1874</u>	L	54.7	24
	C	43.3	14
<u>1878</u>	L	45.3	8
	C	51.5	30
<u>1882</u>	L	51.8	24
	C	46.9	14
<u>1886</u>	L	54.7	29
	C	43.6	8
<u>1890</u>	L	52.2	28
	C	46.7	10
<u>1894</u>	L	51.9	25
	C	47.3	13
<u>1897</u>	L	55.0	35
	C	44.4	3

Statistics cited in J. M. Beck, The Government of Nova Scotia, (Toronto, 1957 ), p. 351.

APPENDIX V

RESULTS OF CANADIAN GENERAL ELECTIONS  
IN NOVA SCOTIA

<u>ELECTIONS</u>	<u>NUMBER OF SEATS</u>		<u>PERCENTAGE OF POPULAR VOTE</u>	
	<u>LIBERAL</u>	<u>CONSERVATIVE</u>	<u>LIBERAL</u>	<u>CONSERVATIVE</u>
1867	18	1	58.1	40.9
1872	11	10	50.04	49.96
1874	18	3	57.6	42.4
1878	7	14	45.0	51.8
1882	7	14	45.0	51.4
1887	7	14	47.2	49.7
1891	5	16	45.5	53.1
1896	10	10	48.8	50.4

Statistics from J. M. Beck, "The Democratic Process at Work In Canadian General Elections," Voting In Canada, ed. by J. C. Courtney, (Scarborough, 1967), pp. 14, 15.

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