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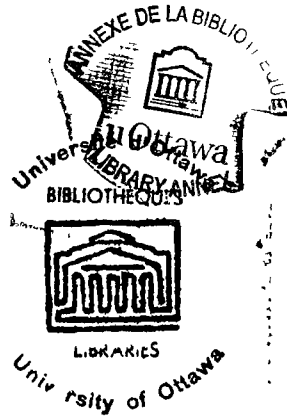
UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA - ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

FEDERAL POLITICS IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
1873 - 1878

by Frederick L. Driscoll

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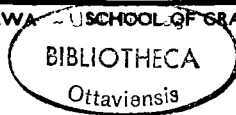
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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

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INTRODUCTION

On July 1, 1873, Prince Edward Island joined the Dominion of Canada. The terms of union obtained by the local Conservative government were for the first time considered satisfactory by all parties, and Sir John A. MacDonald's government was looked upon with favour by both Liberals and Conservatives on the Island. This warm feeling for the federal Conservatives was in direct contrast to the image projected by Alexander MacKenzie's Liberals. The policy of the federal Liberals on dominion-provincial affairs had made MacKenzie's party quite unpopular on the Island. Yet, in the first federal election the Islanders sent four Liberals and only two Conservatives to the House of Commons. In the Pacific Scandal election of 1874 the Island did not elect a single Conservative.

In the federal election of 1878 the National Policy of the Conservatives was the most important issue. Island policy had always favoured free trade, and the fear of higher tariffs had always been one of the Island's chief objections to Confederation. Yet, in 1878, the Islanders confidently sent five supporters of Sir John to Ottawa.

It seemed that on each occasion the Islanders voted against their own best interests. This thesis proposes to

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examine the issues in Island politics from the time the province joined the Dominion in 1873 until Sir John A. MacDonald was returned to power in 1878. An explanation for the electoral verdicts of the Island voters will be sought. This involves an examination of Island politics before 1873 in order to provide the necessary background to the period studied. The second chapter examines the issues of the federal elections of 1873 and 1874, and is followed by a study of the local and federal issues which weakened the position of MacKenzie's government in the province. Finally, the election of 1878, which returned the Conservatives to power, is examined in considerable detail.

The evidence reveals that local issues dominated federal politics in Prince Edward Island during the period under review. Before 1873, and indeed ever since, politics on the Island was of a particularly bitter and partisan character. The smallness of the province tended to increase personal rivalries and to make every issue of immediate concern to every individual. Party rivalry had become particularly bitter by 1873 over the railway, union, and Separate School issues. After 1873 the Islanders could not lay aside these local concerns, and consequently federal elections tended to be dominated by provincial questions. Of these, the School Question assumed major importance.

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No previous research has been conducted in this field. Several articles on the Island's entry into union have been written, and the final word on this problem appears to have been said by Dr. Bolger's recent work. But little is known of Island affairs after Confederation. In one sense, the federal government was more concerned with Prince Edward Island before 1873 than after the province joined the Dominion. The insignificance of the Island's economic and cultural life has been reflected, quite naturally, in the minor place the province has been given in Canadian history. No one has attempted to examine the issues. Yet this type of preliminary research is indispensable to a satisfactory writing of Canadian history.

Lack of private papers was a considerable problem in the preparation of this thesis. Private papers of Island public men are practically non-existent. There are several small collections which were not available, but they apparently concern the pre-Confederation period. The local newspapers and the legislative debates have provided the bulk of the evidence. An adequate reconstruction of the main issues can be made from these sources, although there are areas where they cannot provide satisfactory answers.

CHAPTER I

PRE-CONFEDERATION POLITICS

By 1851 the issues of land and responsible government had led to a clear distinction between the traditional Liberal and Conservative political groups. The struggle for responsible government was intensified, and its outcome delayed, by the land system. The struggle to make the executive branch of government responsible to the Assembly was rendered more difficult because of the influence of landed proprietors at the Colonial Office. For over eighty years the twin issues of land tenure and responsible government were the major issues in Island politics, before the questions of union and religion became disruptive forces.

In 1767 Prince Edward Island was divided into sixty-seven townships, which were granted by the British government to persons "deserving the patronage of the Crown".¹ The proprietors rented the land to their tenants, and for the next 107 years the Island was saddled with a system of landlordism which retarded its development and made its politics a particularly bitter experience. Many of the proprietors made no attempt to fulfill the conditions

¹ Frank MacKinnon, The Government of Prince Edward Island, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1951, p. 4.

attached to their grants,² and the tenants were kept in an impoverished condition.³

Despite the non-fulfillment of terms by the landlords, the British government refused to consider the question of escheat. The London authorities continually refused to interfere with the rights of property,⁴ and "Successive Secretaries of State and Lieutenant-Governors stressed the legal rights of the proprietors."⁵ Lord Durham spoke very plainly of the whole unfortunate problem. In a despatch written from the Castle of St. Lewis, Quebec, Durham said:

The absent proprietors neither improve the land themselves, nor will let others improve it. They retain the land and keep it in a state of wilderness. Your lordship can scarcely conceive the degree of injury inflicted on a new settlement hemmed in by wilderness land, which has been placed out of the control of government, and is entirely neglected by its absent proprietors. The people, their representative assembly, the legislative council and the governor have cordially concurred in devising a remedy for it. All their efforts have proved in vain. Some influence - it cannot be that of equity or reason - has steadily counteracted the measures of the colonial legislature. I cannot imagine it is any other influence than that of the absentee proprietors resident in England.⁶

2 Adam Shortt and Arthur G. Doughty, ed., Canada and Its Provinces, Vol. 13, Toronto, Glasgow Brook, 1914, p. 363.

3 MacKinnon, Op. Cit., p. 106-107.

4 Ibid., p. 116.

5 Ibid., p. 108.

6 Lord Durham to Lord Glenelg, 8 October, 1836(sic), quoted in Shortt and Doughty, Op. Cit., p. 365-366. (This date cannot be correct. It probably should be 1838.)

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Durham's report was ignored, and British policy showed no signs of change.

After responsible government was granted in 1851 the land problem ceased to be a party issue. Each political party made promises, but "(...) could do little against the combined forces of the Governor, the Colonial Office, and the proprietors."⁷ One Colonial Secretary even claimed that responsible government did not apply to the land question.⁸ The British government finally ignored its responsibility and used the distress of an oppressed tenantry in an effort to force the Island into union with Canada.⁹

The land question combined with the issue of responsible government to encourage the early growth of political parties. The party divisions reflected the tenant-landlord division within society. "As the colony developed, the Assembly came more and more to represent the interests of the tenantry as opposed to those of the great proprietors, (...)"¹⁰ But the efforts of the Reformers in the Assembly met with little success:

7 MacKinnon, Op. Cit., p. 113.

8 Ibid., p. 113.

9 Ibid., p. 119.

10 W. Ross Livingston, Responsible Government in Prince Edward Island, University of Iowa Studies in the Social Sciences, Vol. 9, No. 4, 1931, p. 13.

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The representatives of the tenant farmers fought always for a fair adjustment in the matter of land holding and land settlement and were opposed by the Lieutenant-Governor and the Legislative Council, who were appointed by the authorities of the London government, and who were consistently the servants and spokesmen of the proprietary interests.¹¹

As efforts to remedy the land problem proved fruitless, the Reformers turned their attention to responsible government as the only means of effecting change.¹² The struggle for executive responsibility led to the development of the traditional Liberal and Conservative political groups. The Liberals were distinguished by their support of the principle of responsible government, while the Conservatives resisted efforts to diminish the power of the Queen's representative.¹³ After spending ten years passing resolutions of non-confidence in the Executive and Legislative Councils, the Liberals were finally asked in 1851 to form a government which would be responsible to the majority in the Assembly, and George Coles, the Liberal leader, became the first premier under responsible government.¹⁴

The struggle for responsible government was over, and within a few years the disruptive issues of union and

11 Livingston, Op. Cit., p. 11.

12 Ibid., p. 13.

13 Ibid., p. 26, and p. 48-53. Also MacKinnon, Op. Cit., p. 93.

14 MacKinnon, Op. Cit., p. 85 and 243.

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religion attracted the attention of Island politicians. The questions of Confederation and denominational schools are particularly important to a study of federal politics after 1873. The School Question influenced the outcome of federal elections from 1873 to 1878, and the union issue left its mark on both parties.

1. The Union Issue.

The attitude of Prince Edward Island to Confederation was one "(...) of consistent opposition and obstruction until economic and political necessity finally forced her into union with Canada."¹⁵ This stubborn and independent attitude of Canada's smallest province is a well-known story, and it is not intended to re-tell it in the pages that follow. But out of the violent controversy over the question of union, which engaged the attention of the entire population, there emerged several significant facts which influenced the Island's conduct after 1873. A knowledge of the policies of the two parties and of the actions of the leading men in each is necessary for a full appreciation of some of the issues which arose after union. A knowledge of the causes of the Island's opposition to union also

¹⁵ Rev. Francis W.P. Bolger, Prince Edward Island and Confederation, 1863-1873, St. Dunstan's University Press, 1964, p. 15.

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provides a necessary background for Island conduct between 1873 and 1878.

The Island objections to union were both political and economic, and an examination of these reveals two issues which were significant after 1873. Politically, the Island feared for the minor role it was likely to play in national affairs. This concern was clearly and forcibly demonstrated during the discussion of the Quebec Terms in 1865 and 1866. After the return of the delegates from Quebec, the Terms immediately became the subject of discussion within and without the legislature. During the winter of 1864-65 public meetings were held throughout the province at which the Quebec scheme was unanimously rejected.¹⁶ A meeting at Cross Roads passed a resolution in which the small number of representatives allotted to the Island in the House of Commons was specifically mentioned.¹⁷ At a mammoth rally in Charlottetown, which lasted for three evenings, a resolution was passed which declared the terms relating to "(...) finance and representation, as most injurious, unjust, and illiberal (...) "¹⁸ to the Island. In the Assembly, the argument was fully developed. James College Pope, the

16 Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 101.

17 Ibid., p. 101.

18 Ibid., p. 102.

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Premier, said that

(...) statistics warranted the belief that in a few years the population (Canadian) will be so increased by the influx of the tide of immigration that the Island would lose in the halls of legislation even the small voice which she might raise at her entrance into the Union.¹⁹

George W. Howlan claimed that readjustment of representation every ten years could lead to a situation in which the Island would not have a representative at all.²⁰ Nicholas Conroy said that "having but five representatives in a Parliament composed of one hundred and ninety-four members, we might as well have none at all."²¹ James Warburton referred to Confederation as the "union of the Lion with the Lamb," because "we would be devoured by the Canadians."²² Such an attitude fore-shadowed the sensitivity of the Island about Cabinet representation, an issue which very early became a problem for Alexander MacKenzie.

Union with Canada was opposed for economic as well as political reasons. Great concern was expressed for the Island's trade position within a Canadian tariff wall. The

¹⁹ Debates and Proceedings of the House of Assembly of Prince Edward Island for the Year 1865, p. 45, quoted in Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 117.

²⁰ Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 117.

²¹ Assembly Debates, 1865, p. 63, quoted in Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 117.

²² Assembly Debates, 1865, p. 50, quoted in Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 118.

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chief industries of the Island were agriculture and fishing, which were competitive with, and not complementary to those of the other provinces. Consequently, Island products were sold in the United States, the West Indies, and Europe, in exchange for manufactured articles. Canada provided no market for Island products, and inclusion in a Canadian tariff structure was always opposed by Island public men. The deterioration of trade after the expiration of the Reciprocity Treaty with the United States confirmed the Islanders' fears of economic ruin if the Island joined the Dominion.²³

The Island had very early expressed its refusal to negotiate a common tariff with the other provinces. When discussion of the proposal was first suggested by Governor-General Edmund Head in 1859 and by Lord Monck in 1862, the Island government refused to negotiate, and declared its decided preference for free trade principles.²⁴ The arguments were repeated by many speakers in the Assembly in 1865 and 1866.²⁵ John Longworth pointed out that Island

²³ Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 175. Also MacKinnon, Op. Cit., p. 126, and D.C. Harvey, "Confederation in Prince Edward Island", in Canadian Historical Review, Vol. 14, No. 2, June 1933, p. 151.

²⁴ Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 19-22. Also MacKinnon, Op. Cit., p. 121-122.

²⁵ Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 119 and 144.

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exports

(...) would not be to Canada, because she does not want our agricultural produce, still we would be compelled to purchase many manufactured articles there, for if we shut out the Americans by hostile tariffs they will not trade with us, and British goods will be excluded in the same way.²⁶

James Duncan put the argument very plainly:

We could not be benefitted even by free and unrestricted commercial intercourse with Canada. Everything which could be exported from this Island, Canada produces; and, therefore no trade of any importance can spring up between that Province and this Colony. If we were to send up oats to Canada, they would have to send them down again to Halifax for a market. As for fish, they can export enough to supply all North America.²⁷

The importance attached to American trade was clearly shown in 1868. In that year the Island welcomed overtures from the United States to negotiate a free trade treaty. General Benjamin Butler headed an American delegation which arrived in Charlottetown in August, 1868, to explore the possibilities of an agreement. The Island Chamber of Commerce expressed its desire for such a treaty, and the Executive Council appealed to the Lieutenant-Governor for permission to negotiate with the Americans.²⁸ The Lieutenant-Governor could not permit such negotiations by a

²⁶ Assembly Debates, 1865, p. 61, quoted in Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 119.

²⁷ Assembly Debates, 1866, p. 102, quoted in Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 144.

²⁸ Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 175-176.

Colonial government.²⁹ Nevertheless, the Canadian government, which had been kept informed of the negotiations by the Colonial Office, was sufficiently alarmed by the affair to make an offer of better terms to the Island in 1869.³⁰ Although the negotiations with the Americans came to naught, the Island's attitude was significant after 1873. The cry of tariff protection was being raised by the central Canada manufacturing interests in 1874, and Sir John A. MacDonald responded with the National Policy. Island reaction should have been easily predicted.

The negotiations about union also significantly influenced the relationship of the Island politicians with the two federal parties. By 1873 Islanders had developed a decided preference for Sir John A. MacDonald's Conservative party over the Liberals of Alexander MacKenzie. So strong was this feeling that the local Liberals who were candidates in the first federal election refrained from pledging support for their federal namesakes. An examination of the role played by Sir John A. MacDonald's government during the union negotiations, as well as the positions of the Island's public men on the union issue, reveals the reason for this feeling.

29 Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 176 and p. 182.

30 Ibid., p. 191-192.

Amidst the almost universal chorus of opposition to union there were a few dissentient voices. The most important of these, with one notable exception, were leading Conservatives.³¹ The earliest confederates were John Hamilton Gray and William Henry Pope. J.H. Gray was Premier of the Island from 1863-65, and a widely respected and influential politician. W.H. Pope was a staunch Conservative who held many administrative positions during his career. He was owner and editor of the Islander, a leading newspaper, which was dedicated to the union cause. Both Gray and Pope represented the Island at the Charlottetown and Quebec Conferences.³²

When maritime union was discussed in 1863, both Gray and Pope ignored the smaller scheme and spoke in favor of federal union of all British North America.³³ The two Conservatives were warm supporters of the Quebec Terms,³⁴ and both resigned from office when their policies were not adopted.³⁵ But the two confederates continued their efforts

³¹ Edward Whelan, a brilliant and prominent Liberal, differed from his party on the question of union. He died in 1867, so his conduct need not be considered.

³² Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 39-40.

³³ Ibid., p. 24-25.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 115-116.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 92-93, and p. 113. Personal issues were also involved in Gray's resignation.

to encourage union. They were even prepared to have the Canadian and British governments force the Island to join. In 1866 Gray informed Sir John A. MacDonalld that he should advise the Colonial Office to apply pressure to the Island.³⁶ In 1870 Pope advised Sir John to place a duty on Island goods entering the Dominion, and asked Sir John to "put on the screws from Downing Street".³⁷ This was the kind of politics the Canadian Prime Minister could appreciate and the three became good friends.

Thomas Heath Haviland Jr. and James College Pope were later converts to the union cause, but both played important roles in its final adoption. These two politicians dominated the Conservative party from 1873-1878, and their careers are therefore of particular importance to the present study.

T.H. Haviland was a prominent member of the Conservative party and filled many important offices before 1873,³⁸ and after union he was both Dominion Senator and Colonial Secretary. Haviland was converted to the union camp after the Quebec Conference, and joined with W.H. Pope and J.H.

³⁶ J.H. Gray to MacDonalld, June 27, 1866, quoted in Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 147-148.

³⁷ W.H. Pope to John A. MacDonalld, September 18, 1870, quoted in Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 108. Also p. 150.

³⁸ Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 65.

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Gray in the campaign for the adoption of the Quebec Terms. The trio gave the only pro-union speeches in the Assembly in 1865.³⁹ In 1870 Haviland joined with the Popes to form a society whose main objective was the promotion of the union cause,⁴⁰ and in 1873 he was one of the three delegates sent to Ottawa to negotiate the final terms of the union.⁴¹

After 1864 Haviland was a consistent supporter of Confederation. James College Pope followed a more devious course. This member of the famous family was three times premier of the province,⁴² and for many years dominated the Island political scene. Until 1866 J.C. Pope was one of the most outspoken critics of the Quebec Terms, and he introduced in the Assembly in 1865 the resolutions which officially rejected the whole proposal. J.C. Pope's tactics led to a heated dispute with his confederate brother, and eventually W.H. Pope resigned from the government.⁴³

In response to Colonial Office pressure to force the Island into the union, J.C. Pope introduced in the Assembly in 1866 resolutions which stated that union could not be

39 Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 115-116.

40 Ibid., p. 204-205.

41 Ibid., p. 275.

42 MacKinnon, Op. Cit., Appendix G.

43 Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 113-114.

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accomplished on any terms which would be fair to the Island.⁴⁴ Despite the note of finality, these "no terms" resolutions passed the Assembly by a large majority.⁴⁵ By 1866 Premier J.C. Pope was probably the leading exponent of anti-union sentiment, and his policy was overwhelmingly endorsed by both Liberals and Conservatives. Yet within a few weeks the Conservative leader was manouvering to obtain approval of the Quebec Terms.

In the autumn of 1866 the delegates from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were in London awaiting the arrival of their fellow delegates from Canada. The representatives of the four provinces were meeting in London to conclude plans for the federal union. J.C. Pope, who happened to be in London at the same time, suggested to the Maritime delegates that if they made an offer of \$800,000 for the purchase of the proprietors' lands, the Island might agree to join the union.⁴⁶ The offer was rejected, but it had other unexpected results. The apparent duplicity of J.C. Pope was exposed. The Premier's manouever provoked the resentment of his anti-confederate Cabinet,⁴⁷ disorganized the party, and

⁴⁴ Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 138-139.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 144.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 155.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 160-161.

contributed to its defeat in 1867.⁴⁸ Pope did not seek re-election, and temporarily retired from public life.⁴⁹ The Liberals, under Robert Poore Haythorne, formed a government, adopted the anti-union policy, and rejected the offer of better terms in 1869.⁵⁰ In 1871 Pope returned as Premier and almost immediately introduced the controversial Railway Bill which settled the Island's future.

The railway scheme was strongly opposed, chiefly on the grounds that it would lead to Confederation by involving the Island in financial burdens beyond its abilities.⁵¹ But despite the objections of anti-confederates, the Bill passed the legislature. There is no evidence that J.C.Pope was contriving to bring about union by introducing the Bill, but the Lieutenant-Governor was pleased to assent to the measure for that very reason.⁵² In any case, the prophecies of financial difficulties were soon fulfilled. Debentures for the road could not be sold, the banks were in difficulties, and the whole economy was in danger of collapse.⁵³

⁴⁸ Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 166.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 165.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 201.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 218. Also MacKinnon, Op. Cit., p. 133, and Harvey, Op. Cit., p. 158.

⁵² Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 220. Also MacKinnon, Op. Cit., p. 133, and Harvey, Op. Cit., p. 158.

⁵³ Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 233-234. Also MacKinnon, Op. Cit., p. 133-134.

Pope's government lost its majority, and amid charges of bribery and corruption the House was dissolved and an election called for April, 1872.

The Liberals were returned to power, but no change occurred in railway policy. R.P. Haythorne was able to form a government only by promising to continue construction of the road.⁵⁴ As a result, other solutions had to be found for the financial difficulties, and the anti-confederate Liberals began to look to Ottawa. In February, 1873, R.P. Haythorne and David Laird journeyed to Ottawa to negotiate terms of union. They were highly pleased with their success and immediately submitted the terms of union to the people.⁵⁵

J.C. Pope and the Conservatives were no doubt annoyed that Confederation was about to be carried by their opponents. Considerable patronage would be at the disposal of the government in power when Dominion civil service appointments were made in the province. If Pope could capture the government he could be sure that his friend MacDonald in Ottawa would be attentive to his wishes. It is not unreasonable to assume that this was a matter for consideration by both parties in 1873.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 226-227. Also MacKinnon, Op. Cit., p. 133.

⁵⁵ MacKinnon, Op. Cit., p. 135. Also Harvey, Op. Cit., p. 159.

⁵⁶ This became an issue in 1874. See below, p. 147-158.

Pope and the Conservatives were equal to the occasion. The Conservatives claimed that if they were allowed to negotiate with their friends in Ottawa "still better terms" could be obtained. While dangling this alluring prospect before the voters, Pope also secured Catholic support by a clever manouever on the School Question, and the Conservatives secured a comfortable majority.⁵⁷ J.C. Pope, T.H. Haviland, and George Howlan, a prominent Catholic Liberal, left for Ottawa, secured better terms, and the Island joined the Dominion on July 1, 1873. "No terms" Pope had moved away from his anti-union policy of 1866, and he was the dominant figure in the confusing events of 1872-73. He took his place beside his brother, W.H. Pope, J.H. Gray, and T.H. Haviland, as one of the chief supporters of a union policy.

Not only did the Conservatives provide the leading advocates of union, but the most violent opponents were usually to be found in the Liberal ranks. One of the most prominent of the anti-confederates was David Laird, who became the Island's first Cabinet Minister in the Dominion government, and who was a central figure in Island politics from 1873 to 1876.

⁵⁷ Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 255-257, and p. 261. Also Harvey, Op. Cit., p. 160. The influence of the School Question in this election is discussed below, p. 34-41.

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David Laird had a distinguished career as an opponent of union. In 1865-66, he was the most outspoken critic of the Quebec Terms, and his newspaper, an influential Liberal organ, "(...) never wearied of denouncing the scheme".⁵⁸ He took part in the public meetings in 1865-66,⁵⁹ and in 1867 the "rabid anti-confederate" nominated in the Fourth District of Queen's County in an unsuccessful effort to defeat J.H. Gray, the ardent supporter of the union cause.⁶⁰ In 1871-72 Laird led the crusade against Pope's railway policy, and in a by-election in 1871 he defeated the Chairman of the Railway Commission.⁶¹ Laird was rewarded with appointment to the Executive Council in Haythorne's government, where the editor turned politician continued to oppose union. As late as December, 1872, Premier Haythorne reported to Lieutenant-Governor Robinson that "Mr. Laird is the strongest objector (...)" to Confederation.⁶² Two months later Laird accompanied Haythorne to Ottawa to negotiate union terms.

58 Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 103.

59 Ibid., p. 152.

60 Ibid., p. 165.

61 Ibid., p. 222.

62 Haythorne to Robinson, December 20, 1872, quoted in Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 244.

No less significant, and ironic, was the case of Edward Palmer. Palmer was a staunch Conservative and represented the Island at the Charlottetown and Quebec Conferences. On his return from Quebec, Palmer was a strong opponent of the Quebec Terms, and as a result he became embroiled in a bitter feud with W.H. Pope and J.H. Gray which eventually led to the resignations of both Palmer and Gray in 1865.⁶³ But so great was Palmer's influence that he was held largely responsible for the Island's rejection of union in 1867.⁶⁴ He continued to lead the anti-union forces and eventually found refuge as Attorney-General in Haythorne's Liberal government in 1872.⁶⁵ It was highly significant that the Liberal party could welcome both Laird and Palmer into its ranks.

As the result of ten years of negotiations the local Conservatives entered the new field of federal politics with the distinct reputation of having been most consistent in the promotion of Confederation. At the same time the Conservative leaders had developed friendly relations with their counterparts in Ottawa. The Popes and Colonel Gray in particular had corresponded frequently with Sir John A.

63 Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 90-96.

64 Ibid., p. 106.

65 Ibid., p. 228.

MacDonald, and the Conservative chieftain had developed a decided preference for the Island supporters of union. When the Haythorne government was making careful advances towards union in 1872, MacDonald wrote to Sir John Rose, the Dominion agent in London, expressing his feelings about Island politicians. MacDonald advised Rose that he was moving very carefully with the Haythorne government:

You may remember how shamefully old Palmer behaved in '65. Haythorne behaved just as badly to us on the 'better terms' matter in '69. He, then, under pretence of union, humbugged Tilley and our government into making an offer. It proved afterwards, that he never had any intention of supporting union, and that his object was by getting a better offer than the terms of the Quebec Conference, to kill our friends Haviland, Col. Gray, W.H. Pope, and others who had agreed to the original arrangement. This treacherous policy was successful, and our friends were for the time being politically snuffed out. Now Haythorne and Palmer are the ruling spirits of the present government, hence our caution.⁶⁶

MacDonald's comments are indicative of the relationship which had developed between Island politicians and the Ottawa Conservatives. MacKinnon has suggested the importance of this development:

⁶⁶ MacDonald to Rose, December 13, 1872, quoted in Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 238-239.

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The Conservatives had a head start on their opponents in the formation of federal alliances. Prior to union Sir John Macdonald had made a number of close friends among Island Conservatives, the Popes and Colonel Gray in particular, and when the Dominion Government was negotiating with the Province between 1867 and 1873 he turned these friendships to political advantage. The Liberals under Haythorne and Laird had little or no contact with their namesakes at Ottawa.⁶⁷

Sir John was not the only one who could turn these friendships to political advantage. J.C. Pope and T.H. Haviland had demonstrated in the local election of 1873 that Sir John's friendship was a useful political commodity. As the federal election approached, the importance of sending MacDonald's friends to Ottawa was not likely to be overlooked by the voters.

Although Sir John A. MacDonald was not favourably disposed to the Island Liberals, the feeling was not mutual, and the Island Liberals were quite satisfied with the Ottawa government. Haythorne and Laird were well pleased with the terms they obtained in 1872, and wrote a letter of appreciation to MacDonald before they left Ottawa.⁶⁸ During the election campaign which followed the Liberals defended the terms of union against the charges of Pope and the Conservatives. David Laird, the last minute convert to union,

67 MacKinnon, Op. Cit., p. 244.

68 Haythorne to MacDonald, March 10, 1873, quoted in Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 251.

stressed that the terms offered were for the first time liberal and just to the Island. At a meeting in Charlottetown⁶⁹ Laird said that he was "(...) proud to say that we obtained terms from Canada which I am ready to accept." He claimed that the Canadian government met the Island delegation "(...) in the most friendly manner, and our proposals were discussed in the same spirit." He added that he believed the Canadians "(...) gave us as good terms as they can reasonably hope to carry through their own Parliament," and that if Sir John's government "(...) could have given more they would have done so."

MacDonald's policy was in sharp contrast to that of the Dominion Liberals. Alexander MacKenzie objected to the offer of better terms in 1869, and at his insistence, the offer to help the Island toward a settlement of the land question was considerably modified.⁷⁰ The Island Liberals "(...) did not react kindly to the criticism of the federal Liberals that the 'better terms' to the Island were too favourable."⁷¹ The federal election of 1872 did not improve the Islanders' opinion of the Liberal leader. During the campaign MacKenzie made an issue of the "better terms"

69 Charlottetown Patriot, March 20, 1873, quoted in Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 255.

70 Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 196-197.

71 MacKinnon, Op. Cit., p. 244.

to British Columbia, and warned of the "dangerous effect" of the government's policy of offering better terms to Nova Scotia.⁷² This policy was represented as one of hostility to the Maritimes⁷³ and did not improve MacKenzie's image on the Island.

As the Island prepared to elect its first federal representatives the Liberal prospects appeared dim. Ten years of negotiations about union had left the Liberals in an unenviable position, and the Conservatives appeared to have reaped all the benefits. Conservative public men had confidently supported and predicted union, and the Liberals were confederates only when economic necessity forced them to change their position. And Sir John A. MacDonald, the man without a challenger for first place in the Dominion, had shown his magnanimity to the small little Island. But events were to prove that another issue was to be more important in federal politics. The School Question, as well as union, was a divisive issue in these years, and its influence was less predictable.

72 William Buckingham and Hon. Geo. W. Ross, The Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, His Life and Times, fifth edition, Toronto, Rose, 1892, p. 324.

73 Ibid., p. 328.

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2. The School Question.

The School Question was one of the most divisive and bitter issues in Prince Edward Island politics. No sooner had responsible government been achieved and party lines clearly drawn, than religion became a disruptive force and beclouded the political issues. For upwards of twenty-five years it became the proverbial political "football", and by 1873 had split the political parties along religious lines. In contrast to the union issue, which left only memories after 1873, the religious issue remained very much alive.

The first serious effort to establish a provincial system of education was made by the Liberal party. The Free Education Act passed in 1852 was an attempt to make the benefits of an education available to all by abolishing tuition fees and authorizing the use of public money for the support of education. A Board of seven members was to control the system, grant licenses to teach, and establish school districts. The local schools were to be controlled by a Board of Trustees of five members, which had authority to assess householders for school expenses.⁷⁴ The problem of religious instruction was disposed of by a clause which

⁷⁴ Hon. D.A. MacKinnon and Hon. A.B. Warburton, eds., Past and Present of Prince Edward Island, Charlottetown, Bowen, [1905], p. 370a-371a.

permitted the reading of the Bible if requested by parents, but no comment or interpretation was permitted.⁷⁵ This Act marked the failure of the non-Catholics to introduce the Bible into the public schools. The question had been agitated seriously since 1845,⁷⁶ and the Act of 1852 appeared to be a satisfactory settlement. For a short time both Protestants and Catholics appeared satisfied, but the interlude was soon interrupted.

In 1856 the government opened a Normal School in Charlottetown which was intended to fill the need for qualified teachers. At the ceremonies marking the official opening, the Principal explained the religious policy of the institution in the following words:

The moral department will be carried on by the opening and closing of the institution with prayer, according to the regulation of the Board of Education, by a daily Bible lesson (the first exercise of the day after opening) in which the truths and facts of scripture will be brought before the children's minds by illustrations and picturing out in words, in language simple and easy to be understood, from which everything sectarian and controversial shall be carefully excluded.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Rev. John C. MacMillan, The History of the Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island from 1835 till 1891, Quebec, L'Evenement, 1913, p. 121.

⁷⁶ Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 9.

⁷⁷ Quoted in MacMillan, Op. Cit., p. 122.

This policy was unsatisfactory to the Catholics, and the Bishop wrote to the Board of Education complaining of the policy about to be adopted.

The Bishop expressed regret that religious prayers and exercises should be introduced into mixed schools, and suggested that if such a policy was to continue it would plunge the Island into bitter religious conflict. He concluded his letter as follows:

Prayers and all religious exercises, as well as the reading of Scripture from any version not approved by all, must be discontinued. Nothing favorable or unfavorable to any religious denomination must be inculcated. If the friends of education wish our mixed schools to prosper, their wish can only be realized by allowing those schools to be godless, under the present circumstances of the country. The Catholics, I am bound to say, will be satisfied with nothing else; and I most ardently pray that the Board will deem it expedient to reassume the consideration of the vexed question, and inspire confidence to all in mixed schools, by proclaiming that in all mixed schools, whether conducted by Catholic or Protestant masters, no religious test shall be required, or the scholars forced to do or assist at any religious act, which their conscience (no odds whether right or wrong) may check them for.⁷⁸

The Board of Education informed the Bishop that the problem was being investigated, and the Premier, George Coles, assured his Excellency that all necessary steps had been taken to remove the cause of complaint.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Bishop MacDonald to Board of Education, quoted in MacMillan, Op. Cit., p. 125.

⁷⁹ MacMillan, Op. Cit., p. 126-127.

The incident appeared closed, but unfortunately the Bishop's letter became public. The unfortunate phrase referring to "godless" schools was seized upon, and the Protestants initiated a campaign to preserve moral values in public education. Resolutions were passed at public meetings requesting the government to authorize the use of the Bible in the schools,⁸⁰ and as the months progressed the dispute became extremely bitter. Newspapers were established by both sides, open meetings were held, and public opinion was thoroughly aroused.⁸¹ Very soon a crack appeared in the ranks of the political parties.

The Liberal party had always drawn the support of the Catholics. The Catholics were mostly tenants, and they naturally aligned themselves with the party which opposed the influence of the landlords and the office-holders.⁸² When a resolution authorizing the use of the Bible in the public schools was introduced in the legislature in 1857, Protestant and Catholic Liberals united in voting against it.⁸³ But when similar petitions were introduced in 1858, the Liberal ranks weakened, and the Speaker, a Catholic and

80 MacMillan, Op. Cit., p. 130-137.

81 Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 11.

82 Ibid., p. 11.

83 MacMillan, Op. Cit., p. 144-146.

a Liberal, was required to break a deadlock.⁸⁴ In the election which followed in 1859, George Coles' Liberal majority was reduced to two, and when one member was disqualified, and another elected speaker, the government was forced to resign.⁸⁵ A new election completed the break-up of the traditional party lines, and the Liberal party, deserted by its Protestant supporters, went down to defeat. The Islander, a supporter of the Protestant cause, edited by W.H. Pope, commented as follows:

At the election of 1859 the contest for the first time was a religious one. The Liberals received the support of the Roman Catholic party, who determined to carry out the Godless system demanded by their Bishop. A majority of the Protestants rallied round the Conservatives. They came into power and the Bible question was settled by law. Roman Catholics who had previously been Conservatives abandoned their party and joined the Liberals.⁸⁶

Contrary to what might have been expected, the Bible controversy was settled quite amicably. In 1860 the education law was amended by a clause declaring "the introduction of the Bible in all schools to be legally authorized."⁸⁷

In effect, both Protestants and Catholics were content: the principle of the use of the Bible as a textbook in the schools satisfied the Protestants, while the absence of a clause authorizing its interpretation satisfied the Catholics.⁸⁸

84 MacMillan, Op. Cit., p. 147.

85 Ibid., p. 149.

86 Islander, February 6, 1863, quoted in Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 11.

87 Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 11.

88 Ibid., p. 11.

Although this disposed of the celebrated Bible Question, it was soon replaced by a more serious religious issue. The question of financial assistance to denominational schools soon plunged the Colony into another religious controversy.

Despite the Act of 1852, and the efforts of the Board of Education, the school system remained in a languishing condition. The School Visitor's Report for 1873 left no doubt about the inadequacy of the system.

The decrease, the past two years, in the number enrolled at the 'City Schools' is 42. Instead of progressing, they are retrograding, with a few honorable exceptions. The schoolroom accommodation is no better than it was years ago. Were details to be given, they would be a mere repetition of my Report, presented to your Board in April, 1871, without any improvement to note, except in the rooms in King's Square (...).

.....
 The very low ebb to which the common schools of Charlottetown have fallen, ought to be cause of alarm to all who take any interest whatever in the future welfare of this the capital of one of the Provinces of the great Dominion of Canada. The alarm must surely be increased to every considerate mind, when it is known that an army of about 800 children, of school age, within the limits of the city, or about one in three, never enter a schoolroom at all. The twelve or thirteen poor schoolrooms, now in use, with difficulty, accommodate the 630 children enrolled; but if the 800 children who don't go to school at all, could be induced to make their appearance, about sixteen additional schoolrooms will be required. These facts speak for themselves.⁸⁹

In an effort to meet the educational needs of his own parishioners, the Catholic Bishop built four schools, and

⁸⁹ School Visitors Report, 1873, quoted in Assembly Debates, 1874, p. 456.

by 1873 the Church operated St. Dunstan's College and two Convents in Charlottetown, and a third Convent at Miscouche. The four institutions had a total enrolment of about five hundred pupils, three-fourths of whom, said Bishop MacIntyre, were poor and paid no tuition.⁹⁰

The question of government assistance for these schools was first raised in 1859, but the Bible controversy prevented all possibility of a settlement. After 1860, however, the question became a major political issue. In 1863 the Conservative government was sustained in an election which was fought on this issue and decided on religious rather than political grounds. The height of feeling was demonstrated by the Islander's comment on the results.

The Government has been nobly sustained by the Country. In the Assembly they will have 18 supporters, 'The utmost exertions' of Bishop McIntyre certainly united the Roman Catholics throughout the Island, and prevented the return of Mr. Yeo; but they fell short of overthrowing the Government. No one of the eighteen Conservative members is indebted to Roman Catholic voters for his return. (...) This is proof positive that the people of Prince Edward Island appreciate the great principles of the Reformation and are prepared to maintain them. If they require Separate Schools and a Grant to St. Dunstan's College, their demands will never be satisfied, so long as the Protestants can maintain a majority, it matter not how great may be the excitement throughout the Island among the Roman Catholics.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Memorial of Bishop MacIntyre to Prince Edward Island Legislature, 1868, quoted in MacMillan, Op. Cit., p. 331-332.

⁹¹ Islander, February 6, 1863, quoted in Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 12.

For the next several years the issues of land and Confederation absorbed the attention of the Islanders. But after declaring, in no uncertain terms, against union, the Islanders returned to their domestic issues in 1868.

When the Conservative party became seriously divided over Confederation in 1867, the Liberals were returned to power. At the opening of the legislature in 1868, the government indicated their intention to consolidate the School Act. The Bishop, expecting some amendment to the Act, took the opportunity to memorialize the government in favor of financial assistance to his schools. The Bishop's petition reviewed the efforts he had made to improve education in the province, and expressed his opinion that it was unfair

(...) that he gets no aid from the public fund of the Colony, not even as much for the number of children taught free, as should be paid for them if they attended the district schools.

That in seeking a redress of this grievance, Memorialist disclaims all idea of any exclusive privilege. Nothing more than even-handed justice is desired, and that he has for some years, with no little sacrifice and inconvenience endeavored to establish and maintain these institutions which he considered essential to a sound Catholic education, in the earnest hope that one day simple justice would be received at the hands of the Gentlemen composing the Legislature.⁹²

⁹² Memorial of Bishop McIntyre to Prince Edward Island Legislature, 1868, quoted in MacMillan, Op. Cit., p. 332-333.

The hopes of the Bishop were no doubt strengthened because the Liberal party was again in power. The Liberals had espoused the Catholic cause during the Bible crisis and went down to defeat as a result. Apparently they had no desire to embrace a losing cause again, for the Executive Council replied that "(...) they regret that they do not feel themselves in a position to submit the proposed grant to the consideration of the Legislature."⁹³

The rejection of the Bishop's petition by the Liberals opened the door for the entrance of J.C. Pope. Pope's implication in the \$800,000 offer had aroused violent resentment, and he had not offered for re-election in 1867. But a by-election in Summerside in 1869 presented the resourceful Pope with an opportunity to re-enter political life. The campaign became a testing ground for opinion on the School Question, and the former premier espoused the Catholic cause by advocating a "pay for results" scheme. Pope made it clear that he did not propose a system of Separate Schools throughout the country, but he did suggest that any school in which the teachers were licensed by the Board of Education, and which was open to government inspection, should receive payment for the numbers of students receiving instruction. His position was stated publicly in his election card.

93 MacMillan, Op. Cit., p. 334.

I am opposed to the endowment of any sectarian institution. I, nevertheless, consider it just, that so long as it shall remain the policy of this Island to defray the cost of educating the youth of the Colony from funds raised by common taxation, the sum annually voted by the Legislature for Education shall be apportioned among the schools, in which education is imparted and, if elected, I shall advocate such amendments to the Laws relating to Public Education as will entitle efficient schools - if open to the inspection of the Executive Government - to a share of the grant for Education, whether such schools shall be established and maintained by religious denominations or by private individuals.⁹⁴

Despite his espousal of the Catholic cause, Pope probably hoped that his prestige would maintain the support of his Conservative and Protestant friends, while his school policy would win Catholic support. He failed to achieve either however. J.C. Pope was a brother of the editor of the Islander, which was the leading exponent of the Protestant party on the Bible Question, and consequently Catholic suspicions of the Pope name were not easily removed. On the other hand, Pope failed to hold his Conservative followers, and he went down to defeat.⁹⁵ But his policy eventually produced one of the strangest episodes in the history of the School Question.

An election in 1870 was ostensibly fought over the "Better Terms" offered by the Dominion in 1869, but since

⁹⁴ Quoted in MacMillan, Op. Cit., p. 336.

⁹⁵ MacMillan, Op. Cit., p. 337-338. Pope said later that he received seven out of eighty-seven Catholic votes. Assembly Debates, 1875, p. 201.

both parties had to pledge themselves not to accept the terms of the union, the School Question became a major issue.⁹⁶ The Liberal government under Robert Poore Haythorne was returned with seventeen out of the thirty seats in the Assembly. But at a caucus shortly after the election the Catholic Liberals refused to support the government unless the request of the Bishop's Memorial of 1868 was granted. Although the Premier was personally favourable to some concession, his Protestant supporters refused to follow his suggestions, and the government was forced to resign.⁹⁷ Pope was asked to form a government and was able to do so by obtaining a pledge from the Catholic Liberals not to agitate the School Question during the life of the Administration.⁹⁸ The reversal of positions which began with Pope's defeat in the Summerside by-election was thus completed. The Catholics left the Liberal party (one member, James R. MacLean, refused to do so) and threw their support to the Conservatives. Although nothing was done to amend the School Act, the government was not inactive, and it introduced the controversial Railway Bill in 1871. In the election of 1872 the railway issue cut across political

⁹⁶ Island opinion was almost unanimous in rejecting the "Better Terms" of 1869. Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 204-213.

⁹⁷ MacMillan, Op. Cit., p. 345.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 345-346.

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and religious lines, and several Catholics were supporters of Haythorne's government in 1872-73.⁹⁹ The stage was thus set for the Confederation election of 1873.

The railroad controversy had temporarily overshadowed the School Question, but the election of 1873 presented a unique opportunity for exploiting the religious issue. The Conservatives were no doubt irritated that their Liberal and anti-confederate opponents were about to carry Confederation, and the Conservatives, led by J.C. Pope and T.H. Haviland, waged a clever campaign to regain political ascendancy. Relying on the friendship of several prominent Conservatives with Sir John A. MacDonald, Pope decided to run the election on a demand for "still better terms". But to insure success it was necessary to secure Catholic support.¹⁰⁰

In the early months of 1873 it was rumoured that the Catholics were prepared to join with any party that would grant their demands on the School Question.¹⁰¹ This discontent may have prompted Pope's strategy, for the Conservatives called a meeting at which the following resolution was passed:

99 Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 259.

100 The Catholic vote was extremely significant. The census of 1871 showed that 40,442 of the 94,021 population were Catholics. Appendix 1.

101 MacMillan, Op. Cit., p. 349.

That the Opposition, as a party, are prepared to go for such a modification of the School Law as will entitle any school open to Government inspection, to its equitable proportion of the school-tax according to the number of scholars receiving instruction therein, whether such school is established by the Government or by any individual or association. Provided a sufficient number of the supporters of the present Government, being dissatisfied with the policy of the Government, are prepared to join us in carrying such a measure.¹⁰²

A draft bill embodying the provisions of this resolution was accordingly drawn up. However, the resolution specifically stated that the Catholic Liberals must be prepared to join the Conservatives in carrying the measure. The accomplishment of this defection from the Liberal ranks proved a too delicate operation.

The unwritten rules of politics precluded any direct approach to the Catholic Liberals, so Andrew A. MacDonald and George Howlan, both former Liberals,¹⁰³ conceived the idea of using the Bishop's good offices as a means of effecting the new coalition. They met with Bishop McIntyre, but he was unresponsive. The Bishop was apparently turning to Separate Schools as the only satisfactory solution to

102 Quoted in MacMillan, Op. Cit., p. 349.

103 Andrew A. MacDonald was a prominent Liberal who represented the Island at the Quebec and Charlottetown Conferences. He was for some years the Liberal leader in the Legislative Council, but both he and Howlan left the party in 1870 because of the School Question.

the problem, and the negotiations were dropped.¹⁰⁴ But the Conservative manouver had other results.

Within a few days the draft bill became public, and opposition quickly developed against any tampering with the School Act. A deputation of Protestant clergy, representing all denominations on the Island, warned Governor Robinson they would support Confederation, but only if the School Act remained unchanged.¹⁰⁵ Shortly afterwards, the following letter, signed by the same body, appeared in Island papers:

We, the undersigned, while we disclaim all idea of interfering with the political opinions of any men, allowing to all, those rights, both civil and religious, which we claim for ourselves; and while we admit that it is not our province to say who shall, or who shall not, carry on for the time being, the affairs of the Government of the country; nevertheless, seeing that an important crisis has arrived in the history of our adopted country, and that there are grave apprehensions that the Free and Unsectarian System of Education, which now happily prevails in this Colony (and which in our opinion is best adapted for a mixed community like ours) may be materially altered this coming Parliament; feel that we would not be doing our duty as Christian men and ministers, who should be imbued with a desire to do good to all, did we not earnestly recommend our Protestant brethren, and our fellow-colonists in general, to preserve in its integrity the present system, and to give their support to those only who, in seeking their suffrages, shall satisfy them that such system shall not be interfered with.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ MacMillan, Op. Cit., p. 352-353. Separate Schools had never been demanded by the Catholics.

¹⁰⁵ Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 260-261.

¹⁰⁶ Patriot, March 15, 1873, quoted in Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 261.

The issue was thus clearly drawn. The Protestant electors exacted pledges from their candidates, even J.C. Pope, not to amend the School Act.¹⁰⁷ In this highly excitable atmosphere the Islanders went to the polls to decide on the important issue of Confederation.

The people of Prince Edward Island, confronted with the confusing issues of "just terms" versus "proper terms", "grants" versus "no grants", went to the polls on April 2, 1873. They approved the principle of Confederation and gave a majority to J.C. Pope.¹⁰⁸

By July 1, 1873, the new government had secured better terms and brought the Island into the Dominion.

The positions of the parties and the bitter feeling and tactics displayed in this election are so important to the understanding of federal politics in the next several years that a closer examination of it seems in order.

R.P. Haythorne wrote a long letter to the Lieutenant-Governor explaining the causes of his defeat. He made it quite clear that the verdict was a religious one, and all evidence points to the accuracy of his analysis:

107 MacMillan, Op. Cit., p. 353.

108 Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 261.

In the last Parliament and before the Union Question was brought prominently forward by the departure of the Deputation to Ottawa, the present government had three Catholic supporters, the Honorable Messrs. McLean and Hogan, and Mr. John Angus Macdonald; there were besides several Protestants who were returned to a greater or lesser extent by Catholic votes. As instances of this I may mention Mr. Hooper in whose electoral district the Catholics number 3383 to 1860 Protestants; and Mr. Scrimgeour in the third District where the Catholic population exceeds the Protestant by over 200. Bearing these facts in mind, also that no sooner was the Union policy of the Government developed, than the Catholic Queen's Printer resigned, and (with the Press he commands went into active opposition) - that the Hon. James R. MacLean a Catholic member of the Executive also tendered his resignation, although he had identified himself with the Union policy by signing the Minute of Council of January 2nd, also that another executive Counsellor, the Hon. James Hogan, who remained true to the policy of Union, was practically excluded from his late Electoral District by the influence of the Priests, the inference cannot be avoided, that the power and influence of the Catholic Church dignitaries has been freely and successfully used to defeat the present Government.¹⁰⁹

The reason for this interference, said Haythorne, was an effort by the Bishop to prevent Confederation because the terms of union did not provide for Separate Schools.

¹⁰⁹ Haythorne to Robinson, April 9, 1873, quoted in Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 263-264.

I will now proceed to explain the cause of this action of theirs. The same anxiety which has been displayed by the Catholic Church elsewhere for the establishment of separate schools has been apparent here, nor is the present Government the first that has been overthrown in consequence of a failure to satisfy its demands on this head; but the Church's vigorous, prompt, and I may add unscrupulous actions at the recent elections have evidently been caused by its fear lest the adoption of the Union should at once, and for ever, bar its claims to Legislative grants in favor of the existing Educational establishments, the property of the Catholic body. Thus it happens that in a House of 30 members, there is a compact minority of 12 Catholics opposed to the present Government.¹¹⁰

The Bishop's action a few weeks later seemed to support Haythorne's conclusion. After Pope's government had succeeded in obtaining better terms from their Conservative allies at Ottawa, Bishop McIntyre called a meeting of the Catholic members and urged them to vote against Confederation, apparently because the union terms did not grant Separate Schools. The members refused to follow the Bishop's suggestion and Confederation was carried with Catholic support.¹¹¹

Haythorne made it clear, however, that the Protestants had united no less solidly in giving their votes upon the School Question, and that many of his supporters were elected by Protestant votes.

110 Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 264.

111 MacMillan, Op. Cit., p. 355.

Seven out of the eight seats for Queen's County have been stoutly contested and won by Protestant supporters of Your Honor's present Government, and your Honor will bear in mind that amongst the defeated candidates is the Honorable Colonel Gray who has been signally defeated by Messrs. Laird and Davies in the Belfast district, also Dr. Jenkins and Henry Longworth Esq. men of high intelligence and deservedly popular on other than political questions. ... I think I can fairly assume from these data ... that the intelligence and numerical majority of Protestants is with us.¹¹²

Haythorne's analysis of the situation was generally accepted at the time. The matter was fully aired in the Assembly when it met shortly afterwards, and the only disagreement was over which party had gained the greater benefit from the issue. J.C. Pope claimed:

There would not have been three men of the late Government returned to this House on the terms before us, or the policy of the late Government if the School Question had not been dragged to their assistance, and made to do them service.¹¹³

To prove his claim Pope said that David Laird had circulated a speech of John Hamilton Gray and placed a copy in every Protestant household in his constituency. The speech was given by Colonel Gray at Saint Dunstan's College, and it indicated his approval of aid for the Bishop's schools. Laird was so far from denying the charge that he claimed

¹¹² Haythorne to Robinson, April 9, 1873, quoted in Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 264.

¹¹³ Assembly Debates, 1873, p. 126, quoted in Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 265.

instead he had acted quite properly in exposing the position of Colonel Gray on the issue.¹¹⁴

An examination of the election results reveals that the Conservatives benefitted more than the Liberals from the School Question.¹¹⁵ Pope's draft bill won the support of the Catholics. In addition, J.C. Pope was able to elect five other Protestant Conservatives, among whom were T.H. Haviland, a recognized leader in the party, and Frederick de St. Croix Brecken, a devoted follower of Pope and a talented and respected politician. Consequently, the Protestants were divided, while the Catholics were united. It seems safe to conclude that Pope had been returned by Catholic votes.

When Prince Edward Island became the seventh province of the Dominion of Canada it possessed a long political tradition marked by bitter rivalry over the issues of union and religion. The union issue was settled when the local Conservatives obtained generous terms from their friends in Ottawa. During the negotiations the Island Conservatives had won the friendship of Sir John A. MacDonald, and Pope and his allies confidently expected to join the Prime Minister in Ottawa.

¹¹⁴ Bolger, Op. Cit., p. 265.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 266.

The School Question had proven no less advantageous to the Conservatives. The Catholics had been alienated from their Liberal friends and brought into the Conservative party. Thus, the Conservatives had reaped all the benefits from both issues, and J.C. Pope confidently awaited the first federal election.

CHAPTER II

RELIGION AND POLITICS - 1873-74

After many years of bitter partizan politics, of accusations of bribery and deceit over the railway, confederation, and school issues, the Islanders prepared to elect their first federal representatives. The Island members took their seats in the Dominion Parliament when accusations of bribery and corruption in connection with the Pacific Railway dominated federal politics and eventually toppled the MacDonald regime. The decision of four of the Island members to support MacKenzie's Liberals on the Scandal Issue precipitated the birth of federal parties on the Island. Three months later a second federal election resulted in the defeat of all the Island Conservatives and the election of six Liberals, one of whom became the Island's first Cabinet representative. Although the Pacific Scandal gave rise to federal parties, the election contests were dominated by local issues, and particularly by the School Question.

1. The First Federal Election.

The first federal election held in September, 1873, resulted in the return of four supporters of the local Liberals. Thus, despite the favourable disposition of both

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Liberals and Conservatives toward Sir John A. MacDonald's government, Sir John's Island friends suffered defeat in their first venture in the federal field. The unexpected result was brought about by the School Question, which proved disastrous to the party of J.C. Pope.

Before election day new developments in the school issue served to confuse further the Island political scene. In the provincial election in April the Island electorate had endorsed Pope's position on Confederation. The Conservative leader had promised to make an effort to secure "Better Terms" from his friends in Ottawa and, accordingly, Pope, T.H. Haviland, and George W. Howlan journeyed to Ottawa to negotiate a more favourable financial agreement. When the Island delegates obtained some small improvements on the Laird-Haythorne agreement,¹ J.C. Pope returned home with conclusive proof of the expediency of sending Sir John's friends to Ottawa. But other aspects of the negotiations proved less favourable to the Conservatives.

During the negotiations with the Dominion the question of Separate Schools in the Island was not

¹ Reverend Francis W.P. Bolger, Prince Edward Island and Confederation, 1863-1873, St. Dunstan's University Press, 1964, p. 279. The Island debt allowance was increased from \$45 to \$50 per capita, and the Dominion agreed to maintain telegraphic communications between the Island and the mainland.

discussed. In an effort to forestall the Bishop's opposition to union, Pope decided to make some concessions to the Catholic demands. Before he left Ottawa Pope confided to Howlan that he felt disposed to reward the Bishop in some way for the Catholic support which had enabled him to form a government and carry Confederation. Pope explained in the Assembly in 1875:

When the delegates had about completed their negotiations for better terms, he said to Mr. HOWLAN that he looked upon the Education Question in this way: 'The Protestants of the Island were opposed to denominational Schools, and it would now be impossible to establish them in the country. We were about to enter Confederation, and would receive \$30,000 more than was secured by Messrs. HAYTHORNE and LAIRD, from the Dominion; but had it not been for the Catholic members of the House, this Island would annually receive that much less revenue.'²

In return for this support, Pope thought it proper to place in the estimates \$5000 of the increased revenue for the support of the Bishop's schools. Pope explained that he intended to place \$2000 at the disposal of the Methodist Academy as well, but that he would not consent to recognize the principle of denominational schools.³

Howlan telegraphed the good news to Andrew A. MacDonald, and Pope's offer was soon public knowledge.

² Debates and Proceedings of the House of Assembly of Prince Edward Island, 1875, p. 350. (Cited hereafter as Assembly Debates)

³ Ibid., p. 350.

But Pope's plan was not welcomed by the Bishop. The grant of \$5000 bore little resemblance to the promises held forth in the draft bill, and the Bishop had been advised by some federal members from Quebec that the Island delegates had failed even to raise the School Question during their negotiations in Ottawa.⁴ Gradually, the Bishop was being driven to the conclusion that Separate Schools, guaranteed by law, was the only satisfactory solution to the vexing problem. Consequently, he rejected Pope's offer, and sent for the Catholic members of the Legislature and urged them to vote against Confederation if Separate Schools were not granted. But the Catholic politicians were solidly committed to union, and they did not wish to oppose a measure which everyone agreed was now in the best interests of the Colony. The members refused to follow the Bishop's advice and Confederation was carried with Catholic support.⁵

Although the Bishop failed to prevent Confederation, his manouver was productive of other far-reaching results; Pope withdrew the offer he himself had proposed. He alleged as his reasons the Bishop's demand for Separate

⁴ John C. MacMillan, The History of the Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island from 1835 till 1891, Quebec, L'Evenement, 1913, p. 354.

⁵ Ibid., p. 355. By securing Separate Schools before union, the Bishop could invoke Section 93 of the B.N.A. Act.

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Schools and his attempt to prevent Confederation. Pope explained his action in the Assembly in 1875:

After the return of the delegates he (Mr. P.) consulted the Protestant friends of the Government about placing the \$5000 in the estimates, for the BISHOP'S services in the education of the youth of the City; and also \$2000 for the Methodist Academy. But there was not an hour at their disposal for the consideration of the matter, as His Lordship sent a message for all the Catholic members to appear at his Palace, and demanded that they should oppose Confederation, altogether, unless an Act were passed by the Local Legislature, providing for separate schools for Roman Catholics. (...) When the Legislature again met after the return of the delegates from Ottawa, in May 1873, he was asked to place \$5000 in the estimates, as a grant to Catholic schools. He replied that he could not do so as His LORDSHIP had urged the Catholic members to go into Opposition unless denominational schools were established by law.⁶

Pope's explanation was plausible, and it must be remarked that Pope had made it very clear to the Catholics when he formed his Coalition government in April that he would not agree to the principle of denominational schools. Pope called a caucus at that time and informed the Catholics that he could not agree to any alteration in the school law, "(...) because the majority of the people of this Island were opposed to it; (...)",⁷ and that the Catholics were free to join the Liberals if they would concede the Catholic demands. The Catholics accepted

6 Assembly Debates, 1875, p. 350-351.

7 Ibid., p. 349.

Pope's terms and "The School Question was then dropped for the time, and a government was formed with the consent of the BISHOP."⁸ The Catholics accepted Pope's statement, for not one Catholic member of the legislature denied or challenged Pope's defense of his conduct.

There can be little doubt, however, that Pope expected considerable opposition to his proposal in the legislature. The Conservative leader did not advise Haviland, the third delegate to Ottawa and the recognized leader of the Protestant wing of the party, of his plans. Haviland asserted in the Assembly in 1875, "(...) as a man and a Christian, that I never heard a single word about [the \$5000 telegram] till on my way home in the steamer from Shediac."⁹ Haviland's innocence was corroborated by Brecken, who said:

(...) when I met the hon. COLONIAL SECRETARY, I asked him if the statement contained in the telegram was correct. He (Mr. H.) answered that it was the first time he had heard of it. I would stake my reputation that this was the first time his honor had ever heard of that telegram, and do not hesitate to say that the man who accuses him of having something to do with it, lies most basely.¹⁰

Haviland's protestations of innocence went undenied by Pope, and Brecken was universally respected for his

8 Assembly Debates, 1875, p. 349.

9 Ibid., p. 311.

10 Ibid., p. 312.

integrity. It was highly unlikely that Pope could have been very confident about carrying a measure he would not confide to his closest and most influential adviser.

Although Pope's conduct appeared to satisfy the Catholic members, there was one influential Catholic who remained unconvinced that he had not been deceived. The federal election in September gave Bishop McIntyre an opportunity to express his displeasure.

After July, 1873, public discussion turned to the coming election. There were no federal parties in the province, no federal issues to be decided, and both parties indicated their preference for Sir John A. MacDonald's Conservatives. Consequently, it soon became evident that the federal election would be contested on local issues. When the election date was announced the Patriot commented as follows:

On the 17th of the next month the people of this Island will be called upon to make their first choice for the Ottawa House of Commons. Owing to the present complicated state of Dominion politics, it will be difficult for the electors to decide which of the two great parties in Canada is the more deserving of support. Unquestionably Sir John A's Government has been disposed to do justice to the Lower Provinces, and many on that account cannot avoid wishing them stability and success. The Ontario grits, at least some of them, have denounced the concessions to the Maritime Provinces with such great vehemence, that it is almost impossible to resist the impression that if they obtained power, supplies for our public service will be dealt out with a niggardly hand. But with all honest men purity of legislation will be looked upon as of the first importance. The Lower Provinces, if they stand by each other, can obtain a recognition of their rights from any party in power; and as the great Commission of enquiry into the Pacific Scandal business cannot report before our elections come off, candidates must be left, to a considerable extent, we imagine, to their own discretion as to how they shall act when Parliament meets. The chief guide, then, which the people of this Island will have in making their selection for Ottawa, will be the past history of the men who seek their suffrages.¹¹

The editorial concluded with a condemnation of Pope's party for its school and railway policies. The Liberal organ considered Pope's school policy one of trickery and deceit, while the Railway Bill was a dishonest scheme to force the Island into union.¹²

The Patriot's editorial was a revealing commentary on Island political opinion, and an accurate forecast of

¹¹ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XV, No. 59, August 21, 1873.

¹² Ibid.

the election campaign which was already underway. On the one hand, the chief Liberal spokesman, edited by David Laird, was openly critical of its namesakes at Ottawa. MacDonald, on the other hand, was quite favourably thought of, and Laird could not avoid wishing him "stability and success". The Liberals could only recommend their own candidates because a shadow had been cast over the MacDonald government. Although the Patriot expressed suspicions of the federal government, it was careful to reserve judgment and to avoid open opposition to Sir John. When taunted by its opponents, the Liberal organ replied very clearly that "(...) whatever may be their faults (...)", the Dominion government treated the Island generously, "(...) and we are not going to be the first to cry out against them."¹³ With the Pacific Scandal ruled out as an election issue, only local questions remained to be discussed, and to these the Liberals turned their attention with enthusiasm.

Pope's opponents realized that the draft bill could be used to their advantage. Pope's secret meetings and negotiations with the Catholics were used to frighten his Protestant supporters, while his refusal to carry out his promises was termed an insult to the Bishop. It was a vulnerable point in the Conservative record and the Liberals determined to exploit it.

¹³ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XV, No. 57, August 14, 1873.

The Patriot ran editorials on Pope's school policy in almost every issue. An editorial which appeared on August 2 became the Liberal policy throughout the campaign.¹⁴ The paper of David Laird, who was himself a candidate in Queen's County, explained that Pope had deceived either the Catholics or the Protestants in April. The Conservatives betrayed the Protestants by promising in secret caucus to support the draft bill, while they deceived the Bishop by pledging on the hustings not to tamper with the School Act. The Patriot made its point by quoting from the Summerside Journal:

The friends of secular education ardently desire to know the names of the men who promised Bishop McIntyre to make that draft bill the law of the land. The advocates of denominational education are not less anxious to find out who are the men who abused the confidence of the Bishop, who attempted to trade on his honest enthusiasm in favor of religious education, and who tried to use him as a ladder by which to climb to place and power.¹⁵

The Patriot wondered if those who could play such a "deceptive game" were worthy of support by any denomination.¹⁶ The Liberals, said the Patriot,

¹⁴ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XV, No. 54, August 2, 1873.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., No. 56, August 9, 1873.

(...) had not one set of professions in the secret caucus and another for the hustings, (...) The politician who betrayed one class of friends today, may play the same prank with another class tomorrow. The man of principle alone can be trusted.¹⁷

A few days before the election the Patriot reviewed again the deceit practised by Pope on the School Question, and reminded its readers that the Conservatives had dishonestly forced the Island into union by passing the Railway Bill. The Patriot admonished "(...) all who are in favor of pure government, and who prefer honesty and straightforwardness to duplicity and deceit (...)" to vote for the Liberal candidates.¹⁸

The opposition of the Liberal press was not unexpected by the Conservatives, nor was it a new opponent with which they were forced to contend. But the Conservative forces were dealt a serious blow when the Catholic press joined forces with the Liberals. The Herald, the faithful supporter of the Bishop's cause, expressed the bitter disappointment of many Catholics. The Herald supported Pope in April, but when the draft bill was "hushed to sleep" the Catholic organ reverted to its traditional position. On July 16 the Herald commented

¹⁷ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XV, No. 59, August 21, 1873.

¹⁸ Ibid., No. 64, September 6, 1873.

as follows on the actions of Pope's government:

The draft bill we published last week shows the extent to which the Catholics of this Island were betrayed by Mr. Pope and his colleagues. That bill was the platform of the Ministry to Catholics before the elections. The Catholic vote was acquired in support of Mr. Pope purely on the understanding that their grievances on the school question should be redressed. Mr. Pope came into power with a triumphant majority, and the very pith of that majority was Catholic representatives. How fared it then with the school question? It was quietly hushed to sleep, and some of our zealous Catholic members were the most assiduous in rocking the cradle. Have not the Catholic electors then a grave cause for displeasure in all this? They have been played with, as a conjuror plays with balls - flattered with splendid prospects, and entrapped into supporting men who have grossly betrayed them. The Catholic people of this Island have, we imagine, as just cause for displeasure as ever animated a people.¹⁹

The Herald's policy during the campaign was an ominous sign for Pope's party, and when the Bishop actively campaigned for the Liberal candidates the defeat of the Conservatives was practically assured.

Having decided that nothing could be hoped for from the Island Conservatives, the Bishop entered into communications with the federal Liberals. His Lordship visited Alexander MacKenzie in Ottawa during the campaign, and when he returned he entered the contest on behalf of the Liberals. MacMillan says:

¹⁹ Quoted in Patriot, editorial, Vol. XV, No. 50, July 19, 1873. The Herald for 1873 is not available.

(...) MacKenzie (...) held out some hopes to His Lordship that something might yet be done for the cause which he had so much at heart. The Bishop returned home and threw in the weight of his influence in favor of the Liberal candidates, particularly in King's and Prince County.²⁰

During the summer of 1873 the Bishop denounced the Catholics who continued to support Pope. The Bishop's Pastoral Visitations became a triumphant campaign tour. He thought it was "(...) a time for plain speaking, and he therefore spoke so plainly as to leave no doubt with regard to his true sentiments."²¹ George Howlan, who ran with Pope in Prince County, was the special object of the Bishop's wrath. The Catholic leader in Pope's government was "(...) denounced by His Lordship in almost every pulpit from Tignish to Summerside."²² Howlan wrote the Bishop demanding an explanation of his statements, and the Bishop's reply was indicative of his bitter disappointment. Part of Bishop McIntyre's reply was as follows:

20 MacMillan, Op. Cit., p. 359.

21 Ibid., p. 356.

22 Ibid., p. 479.

I have nothing to do with what you may have been informed of, with what may have been stated to you, or even with what you may feel convinced of (...)

(...) so far from being satisfied with the course pursued by the Government and the Catholic members, I considered that they had basely betrayed me and the sacred cause which I entrusted to their hands. Even when the delegates were setting off for Ottawa on the most important mission, socially and politically, ever undertaken by a P.E. Island delegation, they did not even condescend to exchange a word with me, on that question which they knew, I had so much at heart.

Regarding the refusal of the Catholic members to vote against Confederation, the Bishop said:

The Catholic members, who had such an opportunity of settling the important question of Education and placing it on a permanent and independent footing, allowed the opportunity to fall through their hands, and they now, naturally enough do not wish to be told that they have betrayed the cause entrusted to them. For my own part, I can assure you that I feel no pleasure in reminding them of the weak part played by them in this chapter of our Island history (...)

In the Education question I did not consider myself as playing the part of a politician, although I knew I was dealing with politicians. The promises made me and the prospects held forth originated with yourselves. As a Bishop I had the interest of Catholic Education at heart. I had a solemn and conscientious duty to perform, and how far you, Catholic Members, have assisted me in the discharge of this solemn duty let your own consciences tell.²³

The bitter disappointment of the spiritual leader of nearly one half of the Island's population made Bishop McIntyre a dangerous opponent.

²³ Quoted in MacMillan, *Op. Cit.*, p. 356-358. MacMillan does not state to whom this was written. Bolger, says that it was written to Howlan, but gives his reference as MacMillan. See Bolger, *Op. Cit.*, p. 285.

The Conservative strategy, particularly in Queen's County, reflected the dim prospects of the party. The Island Argus, a chief spokesman for the Conservatives, appealed for unity among the Island representatives. It argued that because both Liberals and Conservatives would support Sir John A. MacDonald's government, both local parties should be represented. On July 8 the Conservative organ suggested that David Laird and Frederick Brecken should be elected by acclamation for Queen's County:

We are of the opinion that in sending representatives to the Dominion Parliament, our ablest men should be chosen, irrespective of local political opinions. Our representatives should go to Ottawa as a unit. We are too small a force to allow ourselves to be divided. Our only chance of success is in being united.²⁴

A few weeks later the Conservatives repeated their call for a "fusion" of parties, and the election of Laird and Brecken:

In order to ensure the return of good candidates it will be essentially necessary that old party lines should be effaced, local jealousies forgotten, and petty political feuds and internecine strife hushed (...)

Now, it is more than probable that the Island Representatives will support Sir John A's government, and in order that both political parties should be fairly represented, it is absolutely necessary that some such compromise should be effected.²⁵

²⁴ Island Argus, editorial, Vol. IV, No. 192, July 8, 1873.

²⁵ Ibid., No. 195, July 29, 1873.

The policy advocated by the Argus was an admission of weakness. The party of Pope and Haviland was not in the habit of avoiding a contest or of accepting its political enemies as partners. Pope in particular, whatever his other qualities, was renowned by friend and foe as a man of courage and determination, with an indomitable will to win, whatever the cost. He was a partizan politician who wielded power with authority, and who, once determined on a course of action, was not to be deterred. Hence, the Conservative strategy in the early stages of the campaign was an acknowledgement of the weak position in which the party had been placed by Pope's school policy.

The choice of candidates reflected the state of opinion over the religious issue. In Queen's County, which had a majority of Protestants, both parties nominated Protestant candidates. David Laird and Peter Sinclair were chosen as the Liberal standard bearers. Laird had emerged as the leader of his party in 1873, and his paper, the Patriot, was the chief spokesman for Liberal policy. Sinclair, a bachelor farmer from Summerfield, was an experienced politician. He was first elected to the local legislature in 1867, and was a member of the Executive Council from 1869 to 1871. During Haythorne's administration of 1872-73, Sinclair was government leader in the Assembly as well as a member of the Executive Council.

The Conservatives had difficulties choosing candidates in Queen's County. In the provincial election in April Brecken was successful in Charlottetown, but the Conservatives carried only one of the eight rural seats. As a result, Brecken refused to nominate until Dr. John T. Jenkins agreed to enter the contest.²⁶ Jenkins, a supporter of Pope's school policy, was defeated in the local election of 1873. The hesitancy of the Conservative nominees was not a sign of enthusiasm.

King's County was predominantly Catholic, and in Prince County the Catholics accounted for almost one-half the population, so both parties nominated a Catholic and a Protestant. In Prince County John A. MacDonald and James Yeo were in the field early for the Liberals. The former, a Catholic, was dismissed by Pope's government as Postmaster at Charlottetown, one of the top positions in the Island civil service.²⁷ Later, however, MacDonald withdrew in favour of Stanislaus F. Perry, an Acadian from Tignish, who, according to the Argus, was the Bishop's personal nominee.²⁸ Perry represented his native district in the local legislature almost continuously from 1854 to

²⁶ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XV, No. 64, September 6, 1873.

²⁷ See below, p. 148-149.

²⁸ Argus, editorial, Vol. IV, No. 202, September 16, 1873.

1873, and Pope's government appointed him speaker of the Assembly in 1873. His desertion of the Conservative party at this time revealed the disillusionment of many Catholics with Pope's government, and was evidence of the split which was developing in the Catholic ranks. James Yeo, a successful merchant from Port Hill, represented his native district in the legislature.

It appeared at first that the Conservatives intended to nominate two Protestants in Prince County. There was never any doubt that Pope was to run, and John Yeo, a brother of the Liberal candidate, was to be his partner. Late in the campaign, however, Yeo was replaced by George W. Howlan.²⁹ Howlan was a native of Tignish, one of the largest Catholic polls in the county, and his candidacy was apparently an effort to salvage the Catholic vote.

In King's County the Liberals nominated Daniel Davies, a Protestant, and James R. MacLean. Davies was a prominent merchant and veteran politician who left the Conservative party in 1871 to oppose Pope's railway scheme. James R. MacLean was the only Catholic Liberal who refused to follow Pope in 1871. The Conservatives fielded only one candidate, Augustine C. MacDonald, a brother of the prominent Andrew A. MacDonald, and a successful merchant from Georgetown.

²⁹ Argus, editorial, Vol. IV, no. 201, September 9, 1873.

The campaign reflected the concern for local issues, and each candidate defended his past conduct on the railway and Confederation issues. At a meeting at Wheatley River Laird defended his policy of opposition to Confederation, and explained that he changed his mind only when circumstances made union necessary. He spoke of the Pacific Scandal, but "(...) he could not yet say what party he would support if returned; (...)", but "(...) he would carefully watch P.E. Island's interest."³⁰ Sinclair said that Pope's Railway Bill made Confederation necessary³¹ - an obvious attempt to lay the blame for union at Pope's doorstep.

In King's County both Davies and MacLean boasted of their opposition to the railway and Confederation. At Murray Harbour Davies explained that he left the Conservative party because of Pope's dishonest railway policy and promised to "(...) exercise his best abilities in advancing the interests of the Island generally, (...)".³² MacLean explained that he opposed the railroad because it meant higher taxes and Confederation.³³

30 Patriot, Vol. XV, No. 61, August 28, 1873.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid., No. 66, September 13, 1873.

33 Ibid.

MacDonald tried to ignore local issues. He "(...) thought that old party lines should be obliterated; (...) he intended, he said, to run the election clear of party politics; (...) "³⁴ MacDonald's attempt to divorce the election from local issues was an impressive tribute to the unpopularity of the local Conservatives.

The tense situation at Ottawa brought Alexander MacKenzie and Dr. Charles Tupper into the campaign. MacKenzie was engaged in an urgent campaign to win supporters for the approaching Parliamentary session, and he was particularly anxious to improve his image in the Maritimes. MacKenzie met with the Liberal leaders on the Island, and explained the views of his party on interprovincial questions, particularly those effecting the Maritime Provinces.³⁵ He also took the opportunity to urge the Island Liberals to settle the School Question by some compromise with the Catholics,³⁶ and he had an interview with a "ponderous political personage called Bishop McIntyre (...) "³⁷

³⁴ Patriot, Vol. XV, No. 66, September 13, 1873.

³⁵ MacKenzie Letterbooks, Vol. I, p. 89, MacKenzie to David Laird, 20 September, 1873.

³⁶ Ibid., Vol. 7, p. 535, MacKenzie to L.H. Davies, June 12, 1877. Louis Henry Davies was the leader of the Island Liberals. Laird was a federal candidate and R.P. Haythorne was appointed to the Senate.

³⁷ MacKenzie to Richard Cartwright, 4 September, 1873, quoted in Dale C. Thomson, Alexander MacKenzie, Clear Grit, Toronto, MacMillan, 1960, p. 160.

The School Question undoubtedly came in for further discussion.

Charles Tupper followed MacKenzie across the straits, but returned home without entering the contest when he was assured by Laird that the Liberals would give solid support to the Conservatives at Ottawa.³⁸

When the votes were counted J.C. Pope and A.C. MacDonald were the only Conservatives elected. In Prince County James Yeo defeated Howlan. Both Laird and Sinclair were successful in Queen's, and in King's County A.C. MacDonald defeated MacLean by a narrow margin. It was an embarrassing beginning for the party which boasted of its influence at Ottawa. An examination of contemporary opinion and a study of the poll results reveal that the School Question was largely responsible for the verdict.

The Patriot attributed the Conservative defeat to Pope's duplicity on the draft bill, and was so sure that the election was fought on local issues that it thought the local government "should immediately resign".³⁹ The Argus claimed that the tardiness of Howlan and Brecken in entering the contest contributed to their defeat, but added:

³⁸ Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Tupper, Recollections of Sixty Years in Canada, London, Cassell, 1914, p. 163.

³⁹ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XV, No. 68, September 20, 1873.

In the second place, the Bishop's influence did more to secure majorities for these Liberal candidates, than all the editorials that ever appeared in the Opposition journals, than all the harangues that ever came from the Opposition leaders, or than all the righteous acts that ever came from the Opposition party.⁴⁰

Two years later when J.C. Pope was back in the local legislature, he explained his view of the election. Pope said that the Bishop supported the Liberals because MacKenzie voted for the Costigan resolutions in the House of Commons.⁴¹ As a result of the Liberal vote on that occasion, said Pope, Bishop MacIntyre "(...) hurried up to Ottawa to meet Mr. MacKenzie."⁴² Pope continued:

The result of that interview was, that Mr. MCKENZIE held out promises and inducements to the BISHOP, that he would do what he could for him; and he (Mr. Pope) believed that the former also promised that he would use his influence with Mr. LAIRD to induce him to do the same thing. He spoke advisedly when he made this statement. His LORDSHIP then returned to the Island, and owing to his interview with Mr. MCKENZIE, and the promises, whether direct or indirect, which he had received, used his influence and secured the return of a majority of our Island Representatives to support that gentleman as Premier. The result of all this was, that SIR JOHN McDONALD'S Government was defeated, and a new one formed under the leadership of Hon. Mr. MCKENZIE.⁴³

⁴⁰ Argus, editorial, Vol. IV, No. 203, September 23, 1873.

⁴¹ The New Brunswick Government had passed a Bill depriving Catholics of Separate Schools. MacKenzie suggested that the London Government be consulted about the validity of the Act, and his resolution carried. Thomson, Op. Cit., p. 136.

⁴² Assembly Debates, 1875, p. 202.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 202.

It was significant that no one in the legislature denied the Bishop's contribution to the Liberal victory.

W.H. Pope, who although a partizan Conservative, was nevertheless an astute political observer, wrote Sir John A. MacDonald a long letter about the elections. The veteran politician commented as follows:

When we left Ottawa we had every reason to expect that my Brother's party would have returned five out of the six representatives. But the R.C. Bishop turned against them, and they had a hard time of it. The Bishop acted unjustly and very injudiciously. A large part of the Catholics of the Island are very indignant. Had he not interfered with the elections three Catholics would have been returned with my brother. The alliance between the Bishop and Laird and Sinclair will not last - ultra free church Presbyterians opposed to any recognition of Catholic rights in the matter of Education. They were only used by the Bishop as instruments of punishment. The crime to be punished is this - Confederation was carried, and the school question not settled to the satisfaction of the Catholic Ecclesiastics. (...) Poor Howlan was infamously treated by his Bishop.⁴⁴

The election of James Yeo was cited by Pope as an example of the party feeling displayed during the election. Pope described Yeo as an

(...) illiterate, suspicious, narrow-minded cantankerous little wretch possessed of much shrewdness and low cunning, and an inordinate love of money. He has no political principles, and is regarded as an unprincipled little imp.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Sir John MacDonald Papers, Vol. 119, p. 48250, W.H. Pope to Sir John A. MacDonald, 23 September, 1873.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Pope's opinion was seconded by Sir Robert Hodgson, who was awaiting appointment as Lieutenant-Governor.

Hodgson wrote about Yeo as follows:

Mr. James Yeo is a native of this Island, uneducated, of no force of character, vain and ambitious, dwarfish in intellect as well as in person, and his return to the Dominion Commons is one of those instances we often see, of the lengths to which party feelings and animosities hurry men, as he is entirely unsuited for his present position.⁴⁶

The election returns indicate that the opinions expressed at the time were correct.⁴⁷ Pope and the Conservatives were dependent upon the Catholic vote which they had received in the local election in April. The results indicate that the Catholic vote was divided in September, owing no doubt to Pope's failure to introduce the draft bill and the Bishop's vigorous politicking. In many cases the Protestant vote also was divided, since by voting for the Liberal candidates Protestants were in effect voting for the party supported by the Bishop and the Catholic clergy. The result was that Protestants too crossed party lines and voted for the candidates of their own religious affiliation.

⁴⁶ Sir John MacDonal Papers, Vol. 119, p. 48275, Sir Robert Hodgson to MacDonal, 26 September, 1873.

⁴⁷ Poll results are shown in Appendix 2, Religious denominations by lots and electoral districts are shown in Appendix 1.

The results must be examined separately for each County because different trends are evident in each. Prince County presents the most confused pattern. The Catholic First District elected Pope and Howlan, but their religious compatriots in the Third District voted for the Liberals. It is apparent also that the Catholic Howlan polled a larger vote than Pope in the First District, while the Catholic Liberal, Perry, led his partner, Yeo, by a comfortable margin in the Third District. Thus in both Districts some Catholics split their votes. This is particularly evident in the almost totally Catholic areas of Lots 14 and 15, where the Catholics voted strongly for Perry, but were less enthusiastic for his Protestant partner.⁴⁸ But despite the variations in each area it becomes quite clear that Pope and Howlan failed to receive undivided Catholic support.

The Protestant vote reveals a similar pattern. Pope was unbeatable in his native Fifth District, and he and Howlan received solid support in that area. In the Protestant Second District the Protestants crossed party lines; Yeo received strong support, but the Protestants preferred Pope to Yeo's Catholic partner, Perry. Although Pope led all candidates in the Protestant Fourth District,

⁴⁸ Lots 14 and 15 had a large Acadian population, which may account for the large majority given to Perry.

the Catholic Howlan received 160 votes less. In Lots 28 and 8 the large Protestant majority crossed party lines and voted for the Protestant candidates. Thus, it becomes quite clear that in Prince County the Catholic votes were divided, and that many Protestants gave their votes to the Protestant candidates. Religious considerations were most important. Pope, the former champion of the Bishop's cause, no longer commanded the allegiance of all Catholics.

In Queen's County the results show a more pronounced division along party lines. Brecken and Jenkins were successful in Charlottetown. Brecken had represented Charlottetown in the Island legislature for many years, and the voters who elected him in April had no reason to reject him for the federal House in September. However, Brecken carried only one rural district, and Jenkins was defeated in all four. The Catholic Third District gave Brecken a small majority over his Liberal opponents, but rejected Jenkins for Laird. In the remaining districts, which were all predominantly Protestant, the Conservatives were defeated. Poll results reveal clearly the prominence of the School Question. The Protestant areas of Lots 20, 21, 67, 30, 65, 33 and Belle Creek (Lot 62), all elected the Liberal candidates by large majorities. The Catholic districts voted for Brecken and Jenkins. The French area of Lot 24, as well as the districts of Scotchfort and Fort

Augustus (Lot 36), gave majorities to Pope's supporters. The Bishop did not campaign in Queen's County, which may account for the greater unity apparent in the Catholic ranks.

The presence of three candidates in King's County makes an analysis of results more difficult, but significant facts are apparent. MacDonald defeated MacLean by polling large votes in the areas near his home. The Conservative candidate was a native of Georgetown, and he received majorities from the Catholics of his own town as well as near-by Cardigan and Montague. MacLean, a native of Souris, received a majority in his own area, the First Electoral District. The significant results were those of the Second and First Electoral Districts. The highly Catholic Second District gave huge majorities to MacLean and Davies. The large vote for Davies is clear evidence that the Catholics chose the Protestant Davies over the Catholic MacDonald. The same result was evident in the First District, where MacDonald received the smallest vote in a predominantly Catholic community.

The evidence appears to warrant the conclusion that the School Question played a dominant role in the Island's first federal election. Protestant communities chose the Liberal candidates, although a few in Prince County voted for the Protestant candidates irrespective

of party affiliations. The Catholics did not vote as a unit. The Bishop's influence caused a serious division in the Catholic ranks, and helped the Liberals to gain Catholic votes in many areas. Pope's party had forfeited many Protestant votes because of its school policy. When the Catholics, led by their Bishop, failed to give united support, the defeat of the Conservatives was practically assured.

It was an inauspicious beginning for the party which boasted of its influence at Ottawa, and confidently expected to return a majority of federal members. But the party of J.C. Pope still had reason for hope. It was quite possible that the provincial Liberals would become federal Conservatives. For the next few weeks Islanders' attention was focused on the strange and unknown city of Ottawa.

2. The Birth of Federal Parties.

The six Island members took their seats in the House of Commons when the excitement of the Pacific Scandal was at its height. The majority of Sir John A. MacDonald's government was dwindling daily, and six votes became a matter of extreme importance. The uncertainty over the votes of Laird and his three Liberal colleagues added to the drama. Although Island opinion clearly

favoured the government, the scandal issue presented the Island Liberals with an excellent opportunity to forsake their political enemies and join forces with their federal namesakes. When Laird finally decided to oppose the government, federal parties were born on the Island.

The long series of revelations in connection with bribery in the awarding of a contract for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway was first brought formally to the attention of the House of Commons on April 2, 1873. Lucius Huntington, member for Montreal West, moved a resolution stating that he could prove money had been contributed to the government campaign fund by Sir Hugh Allan and his associates in return for the contract for the railroad. Without debate the resolution was defeated by a straight party vote. But the rumours and suspicions of wrongdoing persisted, and to avoid the appearance of preventing an enquiry into its own conduct, the government appointed a Committee to investigate the charges.⁴⁹

From this point on both parties began an urgent campaign to secure supporters. The Liberals were particularly active now that they sensed an opportunity to end the mastery of MacDonalld over the political fortunes of Canada. Thomson catches the fervor of the Liberals when he says:

⁴⁹ Thomson, Op. Cit., p. 150-151.

While Blake and Dorion concentrated on the investigation, Brown scribbled outraged denunciations of the Tories in his King Street editorial office, and MacKenzie raced from meeting to meeting condemning their 'heinous' crime.⁵⁰

Defections from the Conservative ranks began to occur. Richard Cartwright and Joseph Cauchon were prepared to desert the government. The members from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick began to waver.⁵¹ "I saw many of the public men in the Maritime Provinces and can safely say that there is a very healthy feeling prevailing there,"⁵² MacKenzie reported from the East Coast. Elsewhere the campaign for supporters was no less intense. The federal members from British Columbia were besieged by envoys of both parties,⁵³ and the Liberals were so hopeful that they began to discuss the formation of a Cabinet.⁵⁴

In the midst of this political battle the Opposition press published the correspondence between the Prime

⁵⁰ Thomson, Op. Cit., p. 154. Edward Blake, Antoine Dorion, and George Brown were prominent Liberals. Brown was editor of the Toronto Globe.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 156-157.

⁵² MacKenzie to Cartwright, September 4, 1873, quoted in Thomson, Op. Cit., p. 160.

⁵³ Thomson, Op. Cit., p. 160.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 161.

Minister, George Etienne Cartier, Sir Hugh Allan, and George McMullen, the American financier backing Allan. The correspondence confirmed that the relations between the government and Allan's group were highly questionable. The campaign became more intense.⁵⁵

The battle was really joined on August 13, 1873. Parliament had been called to meet at that time in a purely pro forma session to hear the report of the Investigating Committee.⁵⁶ But during the summer a Bill to empower the Committee to take evidence on oath had been disallowed, and it was rumoured that the government intended taking the investigation out of the hands of Parliament by appointing a Royal Commission. To prevent the government's scheme, the Liberal leader decided that the meeting of Parliament should not be a mere matter of form, and he tried to turn it into a working session. But the wily Sir John succeeded in thwarting MacKenzie's strategy and having a Royal Commission appointed.⁵⁷

MacDonald's manouver only confirmed the suspicions of many of his supporters, and when Parliament re-assembled

55 Thomson, Op. Cit., p. 154-155.

56 Ibid., p. 154.

57 Ibid., p. 156-159.

on October 23, the government's position was precarious. Almost daily new defections occurred in the government ranks, and Sir John's majority dropped steadily. "It sank to eight, then to six, and finally, on Friday, the last day of October, to two."⁵⁸ And David Laird had not yet declared himself.

In the hectic days of October the Island votes were extremely important. If Sir John had been able to obtain any kind of favourable verdict, said Richard Cartwright later, he might have been allowed to retire and choose his own successor.

This, Sir John was naturally most anxious to bring about, and there were just enough uncertain votes, especially in the case of the new members from Prince Edward Island, to have made this possible. Their delegation numbered six members, all elected since July, and quite unpledged to either side. In fact for some weeks they held the balance of power, and the situation was really very dramatic.⁵⁹

Finally, on November 4, Laird announced his intention to vote with the Opposition.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Donald Creighton, John A. MacDonald: The Old Chieftain, Toronto, MacMillan, 1955, p. 175.

⁵⁹ Sir Richard Cartwright, Reminiscences, Briggs, Toronto, 1912, p. 117-118.

⁶⁰ House of Commons Debates, 2nd Session, 1873, p. 52.

Laird's decision took the Island by surprise,⁶¹ and Sir John was equally astounded. MacDonald had written his friend W.H. Pope asking for a report on the Island members,⁶² and Pope responded with a long memorandum on the positions, characters, and political opinions of the Island members.⁶³ Pope informed MacDonald that he could expect the support of four of the Islanders. Only Laird and Sinclair were doubtful. Laird was a "(...) leveller, and all his sympathies are with the Grits," and it would not be safe for Sir John to depend upon him. Pope thought that Sinclair also would join the Opposition, but the other four would support Sir John. Daniel Davies was "at heart Conservative," said Pope. The "little imp" from Prince County "(...) may be had, and if had, he could be kept." A.C. MacDonald was a solid Conservative, and, of course, J.C. Pope's vote was never in doubt.

The Prime Minister also received a lengthy report from Sir Robert Hodgson,⁶⁴ which gave Sir John even more

61 Patriot, editorial, Vol. XV, No. 82, November 8, 1873.

62 MacDonald Letter Books, Vol. 20, p. 654, MacDonald to W.H. Pope, 13 September, 1873.

63 Sir John MacDonald Papers, Vol. 119, p. 48250, W.H. Pope to MacDonald, 23 September, 1873.

64 Ibid., p. 48270, Sir Robert Hodgson to Sir John MacDonald, 26 September, 1873.

cause for assurance. Hodgson advised that all six members would support the government. Only Sinclair, reported Hodgson, was "biased" against Sir John, but Hodgson added that Sinclair would follow the policy adopted by Laird.

During the months of September and October, when the government was counting its supporters almost daily, MacDonald was depending upon the support of at least four of the Island members. On September 22 Colonel Henry Charles Fletcher, secretary to the Governor-General, reported to Dufferin that the government did not know which way the Maritimers would go, but he was told "(...) that two of the P.E.I.'s would be on the opposition side."⁶⁵ The next day Fletcher spoke to Sir John, who "(...) expects a majority of twenty five so he tells me, five out of the six from P.E.I."⁶⁶

If MacDonald was uncertain of the Islanders' intentions, MacKenzie was even less hopeful of receiving their support. He realized his weak position in the Maritimes, and on the Island in particular, and had tried during his visit to Charlottetown in September to assure

⁶⁵ Dufferin and Ava Papers, Miscellaneous Correspondence, Inward, General, (April, 1872 - December, 1873), p. 126, Fletcher to Dufferin, 22 September, 1873.

⁶⁶ Ibid., (September, 1873 - December, 1875), p. 1, Fletcher to Dufferin, 23 September, 1873.

the Island politicians that the Liberals could tend to their interests. But as late as October 10 he received a disturbing letter from Laird. The Opposition leader reported to Issac Burpee what Laird had said:

I had a letter from Laird this week thoroughly non-committal but jeering at the Commission's work as not worth [anything?] I infer from his letter that he has not made any promise to Gov't. Will feel disposed to judge them fairly. Must go for indicating Parliamentary independence or cast aside his principles & feels some gratitude for the good terms offered to Island by Gov't. I would not be surprised if they made some such promise as this: We cannot vote with Gov. in sustaining the prorogation, but if Gov. survive that we will give our support on general matters.⁶⁷

MacKenzie was not destined to receive any commitment from Laird until November 4. On that day David Laird rose from his seat to deliver the first speech ever given in the House of Commons by a member from Prince Edward Island.

The House was debating the report of the Royal Commission on the Pacific Scandal. All eyes were on the tall Islander as he got to his feet amid the cheers of the Opposition; his decision would determine the vote of his three Liberal colleagues. Laird probably spoke the truth when he said in the opening paragraphs of his speech:

⁶⁷ MacKenzie Letterbooks, Vol. I, p. 97, MacKenzie to Issac Burpee, 10 October, 1873.

(...) he would have much preferred had their elections been delayed by some possibility, and they should still have been outside of this House when this question came up for consideration. He would have been pleased indeed if, when the House met on the 13th of August, this matter had been finally disposed of. However, being there, they must endeavour to take a proper view of the question before them, (...)68

Laird proceeded to review the evidence before the House, which he did much in the fashion of a lawyer, concerned only with determining the facts. He was convinced that the evidence proved that "corrupt bargains" had been entered into by the government. He declared that he could not agree with the appointment of a Royal Commission, because he believed that Parliament had a right to continue and conclude its own investigation. He believed that when charges were brought against Ministers, the proper body to investigate was the "High Court of Parliament. (Loud and prolonged cheers)"

He contended that the carrying of the elections by the influence of money was a subversion of the rights of the people. (Cheers) (...) He considered that the practice of spending money at elections ought to be put down with a high hand, and if the charges of expenditure which had been thrown broadcast against gentlemen on the Opposition benches, were proved to be true, he was ready to vote for their expulsion.69

68 House of Commons Debates, 2nd Session, 1873, p. 52.

69 Ibid., p. 52.

Laird announced his intention to vote against the government, and then concluded:

He had studied the history of the transactions as well as he could, he had heard the discussions; he had made up his mind, and he was ready to vote according to his conscience. Upon the decision that was given on this question would depend the future of the country, its intellectual progress, its political morality, and more than all, the integrity of its statesmen. (Loud cheers.)⁷⁰

Laird was followed by J.C. Pope,⁷¹ who regretted that there should be division among the Island members, because he felt that they could have accomplished much more if they remained united. He did not think that the evidence was sufficient to substantiate the charge against the government, and he intended to support the Ministry.

The long awaited decision was finally announced, and four of the Island members became federal Liberals. On the next day Sir John A. MacDonald submitted the resignation of his government. "I conjecture", wrote Roseberry to Dufferin, "that it was the long deferred announcement made by the members from 'the gallant Island of Prince Edward which induced Sir John to give in."⁷² Two days later

⁷⁰ House of Commons Debates, 2nd Session, 1873, p. 52.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 55.

⁷² Dufferin and Ava Papers, Miscellaneous Correspondence, Inward, General, (April, 1872 - December, 1873), p. 160, Roseberry to Dufferin, 7 November, 1873.

Alexander MacKenzie announced the members of his government. The portfolio of Minister of the Interior had been given to David Laird.

Laird's decision to oppose the government and his subsequent appointment to the Cabinet brought charges of bribery and deceit from his opponents. Dr. Tupper accused Laird of breaking his promise to support the government,⁷³ and implied that he sold out for a Cabinet post. The bribery of Laird was a constant theme of J.C. Pope for the next three years, and Thomson writes that the Islanders "received their reward" with Laird's appointment, but presents no evidence to support the implied accusation.⁷⁴ On the surface, the incident lends itself to such interpretations, but there is no evidence that any bargain was made.

The available evidence indicates that both parties were assiduous in wooing the Islanders. The sources of information on the incident are newspaper comment and debates in the Island legislature and the House of Commons, all of which must be treated circumspectly on such a delicate point. But an examination of these

⁷³ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XV, No. 85, November 20, 1873.

⁷⁴ Thomson, Op. Cit., p. 171.

sources establishes several points beyond any reasonable doubt.⁷⁵

The negotiations with the Island members began when Leonard Tilley and Dr. Tupper, two of Sir John's Maritime Lieutenants, visited the Island in July. When interviewed by about twelve Island Liberals, Tilley and Tupper indicated that it was the intention of the government to grant the Island Cabinet representation. When the members reached Ottawa, the government offered Pope a place in the Cabinet, which he immediately proffered to Laird on condition that he support the government. Laird confirmed this in his Charlottetown speech when he said that Tupper had offered him a Cabinet post if he would join the Conservatives. Several days before Sir John's resignation MacKenzie, Edward Blake, and Antoine-Aime Dorion also interviewed the Island members, and although MacKenzie denied in the House that a Cabinet seat had been promised, Daniel Davies claimed that the Opposition

⁷⁵ The discussion which follows is based upon an examination of the speeches of the Island members in the House of Commons on March 5, 1877. The debate, which the Speaker had difficulty controlling, was occasioned by Laird's removal from the Cabinet and replacement by an Ontario member. Commons Debates, 1877, p. 482-487. Information has also been obtained from a speech delivered by Laird in Charlottetown on November 18, 1873. Laird called the meeting to explain his conduct. Patriot, Vol. XV, No. 86, November 22, 1873.

had at least indicated their intention to grant the Island Cabinet representation.

Discussion in the local press and legislature indicated that it was no secret that a place in the Cabinet was expected. Louis Henry Davies, who had become the Liberal leader, was obviously referring to a Cabinet seat when he said in the Assembly in 1874 that "He knew it had been in [Laird's] power to attain to honor by supporting Sir John. But he preferred his true honor to all such considerations."⁷⁶ The Islander, a Conservative journal, said in January, 1874, that J.C. Pope had begged Laird to support the government, and had offered him the best office that would be given to Prince Edward Island. Laird's paper did not deny the statement, but merely commented that "Our independent 'four' were not influenced by such considerations."⁷⁷

There can be little doubt that the Island members were tempted with promises of a Cabinet seat. The Conservatives were more assiduous in their efforts, but the Liberals were hardly less diligent. It certainly is incorrect to say that Laird was "purchased" by a place in

⁷⁶ Assembly Debates, 1874, p. 82.

⁷⁷ Patriot, editorial, Supplement, January 15, 1874.

the Cabinet because he could have attained the same position in a Conservative government. Laird's more immediate problem was to convince the Island Liberals that he had acted wisely in opposing Sir John A. MacDonald.

Discussion in the legislature in 1874 revealed that the local parties split along party lines. The Liberals defended Laird's conduct, while most of the Conservatives maintained a discreet silence. "At first the men from this Island were disposed to support Sir John A. MacDonald," said Louis H. Davies, but "as honest men" they were forced to join the Liberals.⁷⁸ William Campbell, a Liberal, said:

He would justify Mr. Laird in the course he had taken. In voting as he did at Ottawa, he did right. (...) Who would say that he did not do right in condemning men who had used Sir Hugh Allan's money to secure their elections?⁷⁹

Perhaps the feeling of Islanders was best expressed by William MacNeill, a Liberal supporter, who said:

(...) it was rather unfortunate that a great statesman like Sir John A. MacDonald should have fallen from his high position in the manner he had. There was no doubt that hon. gentleman deserved the thanks of the people for the able manner in which he carried out the Union of the Provinces, and he could well understand why that statesman had so many friends throughout the Dominion.⁸⁰

78 Assembly Debates, 1874, p. 81.

79 Ibid., p. 85.

80 Ibid., p. 42.

There could be little doubt that the Island Liberals were prepared to follow Laird's leadership, even if they did so regretfully.

The Conservatives were generally more silent on the question. There was little for them to say. They did not wish to give the appearance of defending what was by then a well documented case of 'indiscretion', but neither did they have any desire to change their political allegiance. Frederick Brecken admitted that the Scandal was a serious matter, but expressed the belief that John A. would soon be returned to power.⁸¹ In a later speech Brecken was more explicit. He said that "No person had ever heard him say to which party in the Dominion he belonged," but was quick to add that "(...) he had not joined in the cry against Sir John MacDonalld. He felt that it would be unjust to do so, as had been done by some."⁸² Brecken's speech was typical of the Conservative position. Sir John's supporters were temporarily silenced, but they had no intention of joining their Liberal opponents.

It can hardly be doubted that the Pacific Scandal gave birth to federal parties on the Island. Without the

81 Assembly Debates, 1874, p. 39-40.

82 Ibid., p. 81.

proven corruption and bribery of the MacDonald regime, Laird's Liberals could not have justified their vote against the Prime Minister, and they never advanced any other reason for their decision. That the Liberals felt it necessary to defend their action was indicative of what was expected of them.

Yet it should have been no surprise that the Liberals seized the first opportunity to desert their Conservative friends. The bitter, personal nature of Island politics had made J.C. Pope and David Laird bitter enemies. Pope's school policy, his Railway Bill, and his union policy had brought charges of corruption and deceit from David Laird. The bitter contests of 1872 and 1873 were vivid memories to both of them, and were not likely to be quickly forgotten. An alliance between the rabid anti-confederate and secular school man on the one hand, and the red-hot confederate and \$5000 grant man on the other, would have been a strange sight indeed. Such a union would not have surmounted the first hurdle.

Although they suffered a severe shock in the first election, the rout of the Conservatives was not yet complete. The federal election which was held three months later was even more disastrous to the Island Conservatives, and resulted in the temporary retirement of J.C. Pope.

3. The Election of 1874.

In January, 1874, the Liberal government dissolved the House of Commons and issued writs for a new election. The Liberals did not wish to miss such an opportune moment to seek a majority from the Canadian people. The political situation on the Island had changed considerably since September. The Liberals were now pledged to the Liberal government, and the Island was assured of a Cabinet representative. In addition, the misdeeds of the Conservative government were clearly established. The prospects of the Conservatives were not bright, and any hopes of a Conservative victory were extinguished when the School Question continued to dominate the Island political scene.

From the moment the campaign opened the Liberals proposed only one issue. The corruptionists, they said, must be hurled from power, and the honesty and integrity of the young country's politicians vindicated. In its first editorial on the coming election, the Patriot commented as follows:

The country at large will, no doubt, regret the trouble and turmoil a new election will cause; but we believe, when they understand the reasons which induced the Ministry to go to the country, they will be satisfied that the course taken is the right and proper one. The reasons for the dissolution are not far to seek. It is true that Parliament has condemned, in the strongest terms, the corruption of the late Ministers, more particularly in reference to the Pacific Scandal; but the gravity of the charges brought against Sir John were such that both accusers and accused had a right to have them submitted to the people at the polls. It behoves every man to be at his post, and to do his duty. The question has again to be answered, by the people of this Island, whether they prefer honesty to corruption?⁸³

The Liberals emphasized that the Pacific Scandal was not a party issue. They made fervent pleas for the voters to throw off party feelings, and vote conscientiously on the issues. After explaining that voters in other provinces were hampered by party affiliations, the Patriot said:

But the people of this Island (...) are, so far as Dominion politics are concerned, bound by no party ties; they have no party prejudices to overcome; they are perfectly free to follow the dictates of their judgement.⁸⁴

Of course, the editorial left no doubt as to whom the intelligent elector should support. The Patriot warned Islanders that their decision would "(...) for years to

⁸³ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XVI, No. 1, January 3, 1874.

⁸⁴ Ibid., No. 2, January 10, 1874.

come influence their political action,"⁸⁵ and after vigorously condemning the MacDonald government, it finally concluded:

It is, of course, impossible to state, with any degree of accuracy, how many members of the House of Commons owed their seats to Sir Hugh Allan's money; but enough is known to justify any reasonable man in coming to the conclusion that the late Parliament did not fairly represent the people of the Dominion of Canada, and that it contained a corrupt element sufficiently strong to obstruct honest legislation.⁸⁶

The appeal to the better judgment of "intelligent" electors was not an uncommon political tactic. Laird himself was generally considered a man of high character, but the plea for a non-party vote may have been prompted by other motives. Laird's vote on the Pacific Scandal and his presence in the Cabinet had linked the federal and Island Liberals. Laird's party was committed to MacKenzie's Liberals, and it was therefore convenient for the Liberals to call for a non-party vote at a time when they could not but gain by it. The Liberal plea was really an attempt to strengthen the Liberal party.

The Liberal policy was reflected in the platform of each candidate. The election card of Peter Sinclair reflected the policy of himself and his colleagues. Sinclair's card stated:

⁸⁵ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XVI, No. 2, January 10, 1874.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

The freedom, character, and prosperity of any nation, and more especially of a young country like the Dominion, depend greatly on maintaining intact the independence of their representative institutions. The late Government, having failed in this duty, proved themselves unworthy of public confidence; and if the present Ministry, according to their promise, honestly pursue a progressive policy equally just to all parts of the Dominion, should I have the honor of again representing you, I will be prepared to give them a liberal and cordial support.⁸⁷

The card of Peter Sinclair, the Grit sympathizer, was a carefully worded appeal designed to catch any waverers in the Conservative ranks. There was no mention of either party, and only a promise to support good government.

While the Liberals were issuing their denunciations of government corruption, the Conservatives were making frantic efforts to raise other issues. Somehow attention had to be diverted from the Scandal. At first, the Examiner, J.C. Pope's official spokesman, questioned the ability of the new Ministers and accused Laird of selfish motives. Early in January the following appeared in the Examiner:

⁸⁷ Patriot, Vol. XVI, No. 4, January 24, 1874.

(...) the questions which the electors of this Province should carefully weigh during the coming month, are: whether Sir John A. Macdonald and the men who helped him to build up this Great Dominion, or George Brown, Blake, McKenzie, McMullen, and their followers, are the best men to rule the country? and whether James C. Pope, whose first work was to obtain an order for the erection of eleven Lighthouses on our coast, or David Laird, whose first work was to obtain an office for himself, worth seven thousand dollars a year by overthrowing a friendly administration, are the best men to represent the interests of this Island in Parliament? These questions we commend to the careful consideration of every elector.⁸⁸

It was soon evident that such appeals met with little response.

At a meeting held in Charlottetown on January 12 the talented and popular Brecken informed his Conservative friends that he was reluctant to enter the contest. Brecken was one of the few Protestant Conservatives elected in the local election of 1873, and he faithfully supported Pope in the federal contest in September. But, according to the Patriot's report, he indicated that it "(...) was hardly fair to expect him to be continually sacrificing himself for the sake of others."⁸⁹ Brecken's problem was simple: Queen's was the only predominantly Protestant

⁸⁸ Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXV, No. 1, January 5, 1874.

⁸⁹ Patriot, supplement, January 15, 1874. The Examiner did not comment on the meeting and it never challenged the Patriot's report.

County; hence, any follower of Pope was likely to be defeated. Twice Brecken had campaigned as a follower of Pope, but he felt that he was "sacrificing himself" and endangering his political career every time he did so. After his defeat in the first federal election Brecken refused appointment to the Senate,⁹⁰ and was returned by acclamation to the local House. But there was no guarantee that he could continue to defy successfully the school policy of his own constituents.⁹¹

Confronted with such a lack of enthusiasm, the Conservatives continued to ignore the chief issue. On January 12 the Examiner presented its readers with a confusing mixture of local and federal politics:

To agitate for redress of grievances; to agitate for the introduction of reforms, - this is the constitutional privilege of a free people. The month of January will be 'a time for agitation.' It will be well if the discussions at public meetings and in the press are about subjects which concern the electors of this Province; well if the 'Pacific Railway Slander,' and the 'letter-stealing scandals,' - the 'defection of Laird,' and 'corruption of Pope' - are not the all-absorbing topics; well if the particular reforms required by the people receive the consideration they deserve.⁹²

⁹⁰ Sir John MacDonald Papers, Vol. 119, p. 48283, telegram, Brecken to John A. MacDonald, October 7, 1873.

⁹¹ Brecken was required to resign from the local House to contest the federal election in September. He was re-elected by acclamation for Charlottetown, notwithstanding that the capital was predominantly Protestant.

⁹² Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXV, No. 2, January 12, 1874.

Pope's supporter thought that the people should discuss the following: ferry service with the mainland, the land question, the School Question, exploration for coal and iron, building of lighthouses and dredging of harbours, and the building of branch lines of the railroad. The Examiner then blandly stated:

Some of these wants it is the duty of the Dominion Government to allay; some, the local authorities should settle. But the people should agitate for all. And now is the time. Each party is now eager to receive power from the people; and each party is in a position to carry the measures, whether Dominion or Local, required by the people. Therefore, let the people agitate, organize, combine; let them ascertain which party will most readily introduce the reforms they need; and, to that party give their support.⁹³

The rather desperate attempt to confuse the issues was hardly necessary. After the above editorial appeared, the Examiner maintained a discreet silence, and the Argus was content to attack the Bishop. The reason for the Conservatives' surrender was not far to seek. The School Question continued to thwart their best efforts.

The Bishop did not rest on his laurels after his success in the September elections. He continued his correspondence with the federal Liberals and openly pledged Catholic support for the Island Liberals if they

⁹³ Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXV, No. 2, January 12, 1874.

would compromise on the School Question. A letter of Bishop McIntyre to D. Bergin reveals the extent of the Bishop's political manouvers:

Since my last letter to you, no overtures have been made to me by the opposition. The circumstance is the more to be regretted since it prevents our Catholic population in a great measure from espousing the cause of the opposition. Without any overtures or promises from that party, our people do not see any object to be gained by deserting the Government.

I am truly thankful to you for the interest manifested in our cause, and I would ask you to add another favour to those already conferred by using your influence with your friends at Ottawa, to induce them to urge the Island Opposition to make us a fair offer, or to give us the Quebec School Bill.

You will please convey to Mr. McKenzie my sincere thanks for his kindness in attending to my request. The numerous changes in our Government during the last few years fully justify him in saying that no strong Government can be formed until this question has been satisfactorily settled.

If our Island Legislature refuse to settle the matter, satisfactorily, it must eventually come up before the Dominion Parliament, for the General Government will be expected to take such measures as will ensure peace throughout all its Provinces. A few concessions on the part of our Island Opposition would settle the question here. Will you, dear Sir, and Mr. McKenzie reason with Messrs. Laird, Sinclair, Yeo, Montgomery & Hathorne (our Island representatives) about this matter, without compromising in any way my name.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ MacKenzie Papers, p. 280, Bishop McIntyre to D. Bergin, 22 October, 1873. (Montgomery and Haythorne were the Liberal Senators) D. Bergin has not been definitely identified. The Parliamentary Guide for 1873 lists Darby Bergin, M.D., as the reform member for Cornwall, but he is not listed as a member between 1874 and 1878. The letter suggests that he was one of MacKenzie's assistants. In any case the letter was passed on to the Prime Minister.

This letter has been reproduced in full because it proves several significant points. It shows beyond any doubt that the Bishop was prepared to overthrow the local Conservative government in return for a settlement of the School Question. The letter also indicates that it was one of several written by the Bishop, and that he was receiving assurances from the federal Liberals that something might be done for the Catholic cause. There is also in the Bishop's remarks a hint of his future policy; he was prepared to take his case to his friends in the Dominion government if he met with failure on the Island.

During the winter of 1873-74, the School Question and the Bishop's negotiations kept the local political scene in a state of uncertainty. Francis Kelly, a prominent Catholic member of the legislature for Summerside, said in the Assembly in 1874 that he had been reliably informed by members of high authority in the Liberal party that the Liberals were prepared to grant the Bishop's demands if the Catholics would leave the government.⁹⁵ Kelly explained that his "high authority" was a member of Parliament, which would seem to indicate Laird. Acting on this information, Kelly met with the Liberals to inquire if they were prepared to grant the Catholic demands.⁹⁶

95 Assembly Debates, 1874, p. 133.

96 Ibid., p. 133.

Although Kelly received a definite refusal, the rumours and negotiations reflected the uncertainty of the public mind about the local political situation when the people went to the polls in January.

In the meantime a development of much greater significance occurred in the School Question. Confronted with similar problems in both New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, the Maritime Bishops issued a joint Pastoral Letter in November, 1873. The Pastoral was a clear call for Catholics to unite in a demand for Separate Schools.⁹⁷ The Bishops argued that education of children was a parental right, and that any interference with such rights would be a violation of all law, "human and divine." Double taxation for support of their own schools would be "tyrannical", and any interference of the State with the natural right of Catholic citizens would be a "galling tyranny." Finally, their Excellencies made their objective very clear:

⁹⁷ Patriot, Vol. XVI, No. 11, February 18, 1874, Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of the Arch-Diocese of Halifax, 25 November, 1873.

As Catholics we form nearly one half of the population of the Dominion of Canada, and have, therefore, an undoubted right to obtain in the Maritime Provinces, what the Catholic majority accorded long ago to the Protestant minority of the Province of Quebec, and what the Protestant majority, after many years of agitation, finally conceded to the Catholic minority in the Province of Ontario.⁹⁸

This was a clear statement about which there could be no uncertainty. The Maritime Bishops were demanding Separate Schools recognized by law. "We ask no more than this tardy act of justice (...) and we shall not be satisfied with less."⁹⁹

Before publishing the Pastoral in the Charlottetown Diocese, Bishop McIntyre issued his own Pastoral Letter to accompany that of his brother Bishops. The Charlottetown Bishop spoke in no uncertain terms of the Island political situation, and issued a thinly veiled threat to both political parties to expect no Catholic support unless Separate Schools were established. Part of the Pastoral was as follows:

⁹⁸ Patriot, Vol. XVI, no. 11, February 28, 1874, Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of the Arch-Diocese of Halifax, 25 November, 1873.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

This question of education is a principle; - unhappily it has been of late converted into a political hobby for the use of political aspirants. From the accompanying Pastoral it will be seen that it is a question on which all who pretend to be Catholics must be united. A matter of conscience should triumph over every party and mercenary consideration. We cannot serve God and Mammon. If you believe Mammon to be the true God, say so, and withdraw your names from the list of Catholics. If not, let God and conscience be your motto. On purely civil questions there may be diversity of opinion - on questions of faith - none. The principle for which we contend is one of conscience, hence it is a platform on which all can, and ought to be united. No matter what ties may bind us to a man, or a party, they ought to be broken, if necessary, to obtain the right we seek. The duty of Catholic electors is plain; support, neither directly nor indirectly, any man or party that will not modify the education law, so as to enable Catholics to enjoy the freedom of education enjoyed by the Catholics of Ontario, Manitoba, Vancouver Island and Quebec.

We care not what may be the name of any particular party; we must rise above party distinctions and unite on a principle of conscience. No middle course is possible. 'Who is not with me', says Christ, 'is against me.'¹⁰⁰

The Catholics could hardly misunderstand the Bishop's message. The Catholics were at the time supporting the local Conservatives, and Pope's party had retained a measure of Catholic support in September. The Bishop's public denunciations of Howlan and A.C. MacDonald were public knowledge, and his negotiations with the federal Liberals were no secret. It was not difficult for

¹⁰⁰ MacMillan, Op. Cit., p. 365, Pastoral Letter of Bishop McIntyre, 22 December, 1873.

Catholics to conclude that they were being asked to choose between their Church and J.C. Pope.¹⁰¹

The clear call of the Bishop for the formation of religious parties brought a reply from the Protestant ministers. Fifty-five ministers representing all denominations in the province issued a letter entitled "Appeal to the Protestants of Prince Edward Island."¹⁰² The ministers reviewed the arguments and demands of the Bishops, and warned Protestants to beware of the attempt of the Catholic Church to impose its own system of education on the colony. Part of the ministers' letter was as follows:

101 The Pastoral was read in the churches in January. The newspapers did not publish the Pastorals until after the election.

102 Quoted in MacMillan, Op. Cit., p. 369.

We would therefore call the attention of all Protestants to this grave and perilous crisis, and urgently remind them that, if they value their principles - the sacred principles secured by the fidelity of their fathers - they must now be thoroughly roused to meet the coming struggle, determined that whatever may happen in other portions of the Dominion, this Island shall never bow to the dictates of Rome, nor be ruled by Romish Bishops, nor by politicians, who for place and power can sacrifice their Protestantism: and that thus determined they must, when called to exercise their franchise, sink all past and party feelings, and recognize but two parties viz. the true Protestant, who values and will maintain Protestant rights on the one side, and on the other the real Roman Catholic and the venal time-server forming a party ever ready to sacrifice our interests, and subject ourselves and our children to such tribute as the dictates of Romish Bishops may impose.

Let every true Protestant bear in mind that these are the two parties that will now contend for victory. Let no, (sic) man be deceived by any attempts which may be made to introduce other questions into the conflict, and thereby divert attention from the real issue.¹⁰³

Thus, while the Bishop commanded his flock to vote on principle, the Protestant ministers exhorted their followers to do likewise. The Bishop had commanded Catholics to oppose Pope, and the ministers warned their congregations to beware of "politicians, who for place and power can sacrifice their Protestantism." The position of J.C. Pope and his colleagues was most distressing. They were now opposed by friend and foe.

¹⁰³ Quoted in MacMillan, Op. Cit., p. 369.

The campaign reflected the difficulties of the Conservatives. In Prince County S.F. Perry was again a candidate for the Liberals, and James Yeo sought re-election. But J.C. Pope declined to enter the contest and the Conservatives nominated two lesser figures, John Ramsay and Finlay MacNeill. MacNeill, a Catholic, was a native of Summerside, and Ramsay resided in Alberton. The Argus commented as follows:

The Bishop has brought out Mr. S.F. Perry to contest the election in Prince County, and all his followers are commanded to vote for him. This being the case, no other Catholic need attempt to oppose him. We believe that Mr. Pope will not be fool-hardy enough to contest the County in the face of the 'Pastorals' which have recently been read from the different churches.¹⁰⁴

Pope accepted the advice of the Argus.

In Queen's County no opposition was offered to Laird and Sinclair, who were elected by acclamation. The Argus was pleased, because "The Bishop will not have the satisfaction of seeing a bitter contest in a Protestant County."¹⁰⁵

In King's County Daniel Davies sought re-election, and the Bishop "(...) brought out his pliant and obedient nephew - Horse Doctor McIntyre - and has gone down to his assistance."¹⁰⁶ Peter A. McIntyre, a doctor from Souris,

1874. 104 Argus, editorial, Vol. V, No. 221, January 27,

105 Ibid.

106 Ibid.

replaced James R. MacLean as the Catholic Liberal. A.C. MacDonald braved the Bishop's wrath and sought re-election for the Conservatives. The Argus asked sarcastically if it was not "(...) ridiculous that the whims of the Bishop must rule the people of this free Colony?", and wondered how long political parties would "(...) allow themselves to be kicked about by the will of one man."¹⁰⁷

During the campaign the Patriot, which had been so concerned in September about the draft bill, was understandably silent. The Liberal spokesman did not mention the School Question, and not only refrained from commenting on the demand for Separate Schools, but did not even publish the Pastoral Letters until after the election.¹⁰⁸ The Liberals were quite prepared to accept the Bishop's assistance, and had no desire to drive the Catholics into the arms of J.C. Pope by denouncing the Bishop's demands. Neither did the Liberals wish to jeopardize MacKenzie's flirtation with His Excellency.

The Pastorals placed the Examiner and Pope's supporters in a no less difficult position. To publish the Letters would only give publicity to the Bishop's

¹⁰⁷ Argus, editorial, Vol. V, No. 222, February 3, 1874.

¹⁰⁸ Pastorals were published in Patriot, Vol. XVI, No. 11, February 28, 1874, and Patriot, supplement, March 14, 1874.

denunciations of its party, and would help to consolidate the Protestant vote against the Conservatives. Pope's spokesman contented itself with a comment opposing any radical change in the School Act, but calling upon the local government to introduce a measure providing for payment for secular instruction in any school.¹⁰⁹ Thus, Pope continued to maintain the position he had adopted in 1869.

The election resulted in the complete rout of the Conservatives. Yeo was re-elected in Prince County, and Perry avenged his defeat of 1873. Daniel Davies retained his seat in King's, and A.C. MacDonald was defeated by the Bishop's nephew.

A comparison of the results of 1874 and those of 1873 reveals an almost astonishing revulsion of feeling, especially in Prince County.¹¹⁰ Yeo and Perry were elected by huge majorities. The Conservative candidates received a total of 1008 votes compared to 4052 for the Liberals. Since Yeo and Perry increased their vote only slightly, it is immediately apparent that those who supported Pope and Howlan in September did not vote in February. In Tignish Ramsay and MacNeill received a total

¹⁰⁹ Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXV, No. 2, January 12, 1874.

¹¹⁰ Poll results are shown in Appendix 3.

of twelve votes; in Lot 15, they received five votes; in Lot 18, seventeen; and in Richmond(Lot 14) a total of nine, of which MacNeill received none. The Liberal totals in these areas increased only slightly. Conservative supporters, confronted with the Pastorals, had simply stayed home.

In King's County the Conservative candidate also lost ground. In the Catholic district of St. Peters, MacDonald's vote was smaller in 1874 than in 1873, but Davies increased his vote by a small margin. The most striking result was in the Catholic areas of Souris Line Road and Bear River Line Road. The majorities given to MacIntyre and Davies in those areas indicate that the Catholics voted the straight Liberal ticket. "Look at St. Peters, Souris Line Road, and Bear River Line Road where Bishop McIntyre's influence was all-powerful," exclaimed the Argus.¹¹¹ The Argus was not far off the mark. In the entire First District MacDonald was a close third in 1873, but in 1874 he polled only one-half as many votes as the Bishop's relative, and trailed Davies by 150 votes.

¹¹¹ Argus, editorial, Vol. V, No. 223, February 10, 1874.

At Georgetown there was considerable evidence that the Conservatives "plumped" for MacDonald, whereas at Murray Harbor South the Protestants voted for Davies and the Bishop's candidate. The Patriot commented as follows on the tactics of the Protestants of Georgetown:

The Argus, and the party to which the Argus belongs, very cunningly, and very dishonestly, made a false issue, and raised a cry that the schools were in danger. The part which they played at the elections shows very clearly that the howl was got up by them merely to scare the Protestants from voting for Dr. McIntyre, for, wherever they could do it with safety, the Protestants of the Opposition plumped the Catholic candidate. The Argus feigns to be very indignant at the electors of Murray Harbour South, who manfully supported the candidates of whose politics they approved, for voting for Davies and MacIntyre, a Protestant and a Catholic; while he has not a word of censure for the Protestants of Georgetown, who plumped for a Catholic, and who, by that Act, showed that they did not care who was returned with Mr. McDonald. They were willing enough to throw Mr. Davies overboard, and to permit the return of two Catholics for the County. This shows the sincerity of the Protestant zeal of the corruptionists of King's County.¹¹²

Apparently, the Conservatives had used the Bishop's Pastoral, and his relations with MacKenzie, to drive the Protestants from the Liberal ranks, but with little success.

The federal elections of 1873 and 1874 were the subject of much discussion in the legislature in 1874.

¹¹² Patriot, editorial, Vol. XVI, No. 9, February 14, 1874.

During the debates not a single member denied the role played by the Bishop. His influence was readily admitted by both parties. The discussion arose over a Catholic petition asking for government assistance to St. Patrick's School. When the Conservative government refused the request Louis H. Davies accused the government of seeking revenge against the Bishop. The government voted against the Bishop's demands "(...) on account of feelings of revenge from their nominees not having been supported by the Bishop at the election,"¹¹³ said Davies. William Campbell was quite frank with his remarks:

It was well known that certain concessions had been promised to the Bishop by certain political parties. These had not been given as promised, and the Bishop having been deceived, withdrew his support, and six members, adverse to those who had thus violated their promise, had been returned to Ottawa.¹¹⁴

Emmanuel McEachen, a Catholic and a member of the government, admitted that the government might have conceded the Bishop's demands "If it had not been for the action of the Bishop in the Dominion elections, (...)"¹¹⁵

Daniel Davies, the uncle of Louis H. Davies, was the object of much criticism by the Conservatives.

113 Assembly Debates, 1874, p. 471.

114 Ibid., p. 491.

115 Ibid., p. 468.

McEachen asked "Where (...) the hon. member's uncle would have been to-day but for the assistance which he had received" from the Bishop?¹¹⁶ The question was never answered. In 1876 Pope charged that Davies had promised during the campaign to concede the Catholic demands. William W. Sullivan, the leading Catholic Conservative, endorsed Pope's charges. Sullivan said:

I am in a position to substantiate the statement made by the hon. J.C. Pope respecting the inducements held out by the hon. D. Davies to the Catholic electors of King's County. In fact, Mr. Davies could not have gained his election had he not led the Catholic electors of King's County to believe that he was in favor of the denominational system of education. I attended meetings held by Mr. Davies at Souris and at the head of St. Peter's Bay. At the latter place Mr. Davies represented that hon. Mr. Pope, myself and others of the same party, had deceived the Catholics of the Island, and so fully was he believed that I could not get a hearing when I attempted an explanation. Mr. Austin McDonald was treated after the same fashion. Mr. Davies told the people of St. Peters that it was desirable something should be done to satisfy the demands of the Catholic electors; and he gave them to understand that, if elected, he would endeavour to satisfy their demands. (...) it was on the strength of these assurances that Mr. Davies gained his election.¹¹⁷

Sullivan's charges were never properly answered, and even if exaggerated, can hardly be entirely false.

116 Assembly Debates, 1874, p. 468.

117 Ibid., 1876, p. 218.

The evidence seems to warrant the conclusion that the local School Question was the dominant issue in the federal election of 1874. The demand for Separate Schools, set forth in the Pastorals, and the reply of the Protestant ministers, were new elements in the bitter controversy, and made the positions of the contending parties more rigid. The Conservatives suffered most. They, and not the Liberals, were tainted with sectarianism in education, and were rejected by the majority of Protestants. The Catholics also wavered, and their defection left the Conservatives with little support. Pope's draft bill of 1873 led to the rejection of his party by all denominations in 1874.

Other issues seem to have played little part in the election results. Some, no doubt, were disturbed by the Pacific Scandal and wished for a higher standard of political morality. But few appeared to be much concerned. Even Cabinet representation, which was so important to the small province, seemed to lose its significance in the excitement caused by the Pastorals.

The election of 1874 completed the rout of the Conservatives. In 1873 Sir John's supporters were confident of carrying five seats. They were successful in two. In 1874 they lost all six. The Island electors had not learned to separate their local politics from federal

issues. National politics found no place in the federal elections of 1873 and 1874. Brecken, who had felt the anger of the Protestants of Queen's County in September, made what must have been the understatement of the session when he said in the Assembly in 1874 that "(...) local politics were too much mixed up with Dominion politics."¹¹⁸ He remarked also that the anti-confederates who were elected to the Dominion Parliament "(...) had reaped where they had never sowed, and gathered where they had never strewed."¹¹⁹ The oratorical wit of Brecken neatly summed up the political events on Prince Edward Island during the hectic winter of 1873-74. It only remained for MacKenzie to consolidate his sweeping victory. It was a task MacKenzie's Liberals failed to accomplish.

118 Assembly Debates, 1874, p. 40.

119 Ibid., p. 39.

CHAPTER III

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL PROBLEMS

The Dominion's newest province soon proved difficult to handle. The electoral victory of 1874 presented a marvellous opportunity for the provincial and federal Liberals to build an effective political machine and to establish the mutual friendships which were so lacking before 1873. It was an opportunity for MacKenzie to bring the Island Liberals squarely into the Liberal party. Yet, within two years, MacKenzie's Island supporters were seriously disillusioned, and the Island members of Parliament were openly critical of the Dominion government. The mismanagement of the Island railroad and the failure to provide satisfactory steam communications with the mainland greatly embarrassed MacKenzie's government. J.C. Pope took advantage of the discontent and emerged as the guardian of and spokesman for Island needs. By 1876 it appeared that the Island was being neglected and that only J.C. Pope could protect the Island's interests at Ottawa.

The local political scene had changed considerably as a result of Confederation. The Conservative government elected in 1873 remained in power, but its ranks, as well as those of the Opposition, had undergone significant changes. The Liberals had lost James Yeo and Peter

Sinclair. David Laird had entered the federal Cabinet, and R.P. Haythorne had accepted the comforts of the Senate. After the departure of Laird and Haythorne, Louis Henry Davies, who was destined for a distinguished career, assumed the leadership of the Liberal party.

The most significant changes occurred on the government front benches. T.H. Haviland retained his position in the provincial government despite his appointment to the Senate, and Frederick Brecken continued as Attorney General. But S.F. Perry, A.C. MacDonald, George Howlan, and J.C. Pope had departed the local scene. A.C. MacDonald did not return to the local House after his defeat in 1874, and George Howlan had consoled himself for his defeat by accepting appointment to the Senate. The Bishop's Pastoral had forced J.C. Pope into temporary retirement, and Lemuel C. Owen became Premier. Owen was a prominent and successful merchant, but he never became a dominant figure in the party and retired before the next election. Thus, when Pope re-entered the legislature in 1875 he quickly regained the ascendancy and worked continually to avenge the defeat of his party in 1874. To this end he exploited the growing disenchantment with the MacKenzie government.

1. An Inefficient Railway.

The Island railroad became Dominion property on July 1, 1873, but its completion remained the responsibility of the local government because the term of the contract did not expire until September 7, 1874. The road was not accepted by the Dominion officials until December 16, 1874, and it was not put into operation until May, 1875. The long delay in opening the road became the subject of much complaint, and did little to enhance the stature of the federal government.

In May, 1874, Thomas Swinyard, the agent for the federal Department of Public Works, arrived in Charlottetown to supervise the opening of the Island road, and almost immediately relations between the provincial government and the Dominion agent were strained. Swinyard was instructed to make preparations for the opening of the road, and "to make [himself] generally acquainted for the information of the Dominion government, with the present condition of the entire Railway and its appurtenances."¹ It was arranged for Swinyard to make a preliminary survey of the road in company with the contractors and James

¹ Journal of the House of Assembly of Prince Edward Island, 1875, Appendix H., Thom. Swinyard to Lemuel Owen, May 16, 1874. (Cited hereafter as Assembly Journal.)

Edward Boyd, the engineer for the local government. On June 2 Swinyard reported to the Premier, Lemuel C. Owen, on the results of his inspection, and it was evident that friction was almost unavoidable. Swinyard offered several "suggestions" to the local government as to how they should proceed. "I beg very respectfully to suggest," said Swinyard, "that your Chief Engineer, Mr. J.E. Boyd, should be directed to proceed, with all speed, to make a special and thoroughly-detailed inspection(...)" of the main line.² "The engineer should likewise be directed to make enquiries into the condition of the rolling stock, (...)" and other details of construction.³

The contractors immediately showed resentment toward the "interference" of a "third party". On June 8 Charles Gregory, the engineer for the contractors, wrote Owen and said that since several things remained to be adjusted between the two parties to the contract, the contractors

² Assembly Journal, 1875, Appendix H, Thom. Swinyard to Lemuel C. Owen, June 1, 1874.

³ Ibid.

(...) would most respectfully deprecate any action on the part of the Government which would tend to complicate matters, or which would seem to invite interference or dictation, or even the appearance of such from any third party.⁴

Gregory added that the contractors would welcome the fullest investigation by the proper authorities, but "(...) they hold that they would be treated with doubtful courtesy, were the Government, in dealing with any third party, (...)" to allow the road to be made the subject of any "(...) official report to any other body, or of newspaper remark."⁵ This ended the matter for a time, and Swinyard, having been officially informed by the government that no part of the road could be opened before September 14,⁶ returned to Ottawa.

The negotiations dragged on throughout the summer and autumn of 1874.⁷ Swinyard repeatedly sought information from the Premier regarding the completion of the work, and insisted that he be allowed to inspect the road. The Premier refused to interfere further with the contractors, and it was not until December 14 that Owen advised

⁴ Assembly Journal, 1875, Appendix H, Chas. C. Gregory to Lemuel C. Owen, June 8, 1874.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., L.C. Owen to Thom. Swinyard, June 12, 1874.

⁷ The complete correspondence is published in Assembly Journals, 1875, Appendix H.

the Dominion Agent that Boyd had accepted the road on behalf of the local government, who were prepared to hand it over to Swinyard.⁸

The question of Swinyard's authority now became critical and delayed the transfer of the road. Swinyard insisted that the road was not properly constructed, refused to accept it, and insisted on having a meeting with Boyd and Owen.⁹ Swinyard was sure that he could have convinced the Premier that the contractors had not properly completed their work.¹⁰ Swinyard's refusal to accept the road brought a sharp rebuke from the Premier. Owen advised Swinyard that he had been in his office for the preceding six weeks and that Swinyard could have visited him at any time.¹¹

The next day Swinyard agreed to accept the road on one of three conditions: 1) that the Island government agree to repair deficiencies; 2) that the Island government authorize the Dominion government to make repairs at the expense of the Island; or 3) that all matters of

⁸ Assembly Journal, 1875, Appendix H, L.C. Owen to Thom. Swinyard, second letter of December 14, 1874.

⁹ Ibid., Thom. Swinyard to Lemuel C. Owen, second letter of December 16, 1874.

¹⁰ Ibid., Thom. Swinyard to Lemuel C. Owen, December 17, 1874.

¹¹ Ibid., L.C. Owen to Thom. Swinyard, December 17, 1874.

dispute be left open.¹² The Island government refused to accept any conditions to the transfer,¹³ and Swinyard finally agreed to accept the road under "protest", but informed Owen that such acceptance "(...) must not be construed, in any way, as an acknowledgement that the contracts have been properly and lawfully fulfilled."¹⁴ The road was finally transferred to the Dominion and preparations were begun for its operation. But in the meantime another problem had developed.

During the summer of 1874 Island merchants and farmers had stockpiled lumber and produce at the railway stations in anticipation of the autumn opening of the road. When it became obvious that the road might not be opened at all, the contractors were urged by the local merchants to allow the operation of freight trains under company control. The contractors demanded that the local government put the request in writing.¹⁵ The government refused, and maintained they should not "interfere in the matter",

¹² Assembly Journal, 1875, Appendix H, Thom. Swinyard to Lemuel C. Owen, December 17, 1874.

¹³ Ibid., L.C. Owen to Thom. Swinyard, December 21, 1874.

¹⁴ Ibid., Thom. Swinyard to Lemuel C. Owen, December 22, 1874.

¹⁵ Ibid., Chas. C. Gregory to Lemuel C. Owen, June 22, 1874.

but they would have no objection if the contractors arranged privately with the merchants to move the produce.¹⁶

After much negotiation the contractors and the local government agreed upon an arrangement for the temporary operation, by the contractors, of both freight and passenger trains. The proposal was submitted to Swinyard for his approval. Swinyard expressed reluctance for the whole idea. He would agree if the advertisement were changed to emphasize the "(...) special character of the arrangement."¹⁷ He insisted that the road was not safe for operation, and he would not permit the carrying of passengers. With this significant change the plan went into operation, and for several weeks in November and December the contractors operated freight trains. But when the Dominion took over the road in December all operations ceased.

The Conservative government tried to embarrass the federal Liberals by blaming the federal government for the delay. In the Speech from the Throne opening the legislature in 1875 the Lieutenant-Governor remarked that the railway was opened for a short time in 1874 "(...) through

¹⁶ Assembly Journal, 1875. Appendix H. L.C. Owen to Chas. C. Boyd, June 23, 1874.

¹⁷ Ibid.. Thom Swinyard to Lemuel C. Owen, November 24, 1874.

the efforts of my Government,"¹⁸ and this short sentence sparked a lively debate. The Liberal Opposition hurled charges of corruption and unfulfilled contracts at the Conservative government, and the Conservatives replied by accusing Swinyard and the Liberals of "obstruction".¹⁹ The significance of the affair was best stated by L.H. Davies. The Liberal leader claimed that Swinyard was trying to prevent the contractors from handing over the road in an unfinished condition. Davies continued:

If an unfinished Road was thrown upon their hands, then, forsooth, the Dominion Government would come down and say, you will have to finish it yourselves, and through those means Mr. LAIRD would become unpopular. There was an indecent haste displayed, in accepting the road from Mr. BOYD - an indecent haste which argurs (sic) ill for the tax-payers of this Island.²⁰

The Liberals were trying to revive the charges of bribery and corruption which contributed to Pope's defeat in 1872, but the Liberal strategy was dealt a severe blow when it was revealed that Davies had acted as legal adviser to Swinyard.

During the course of the debate Senator Haviland, who was still Provincial Secretary, accused Davies of

¹⁸ Assembly Debates, 1875, p. 4. This was a reference to the operation of freight trains.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 23-29.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 27.

filling the dual role of legal adviser to Swinyard and leader of the Opposition.²¹ This presented the opportunity for accusations of political partisanship which Haviland and the Conservatives did not overlook. During the debate Haviland said:

Mr. SWINYARD, instead of showing himself a gentleman capable of holding the scales of justice fairly, proved himself one of the greatest partisans ever sent to do a job. He (Mr. H.) was not going to bow down to every official who might come down here from Ottawa. When he came he should not have known any party. Such was not the course he took, for he did not perform an act without holding a council with the Opposition.²²

Frederick Brecken, in referring to the charges of corruption and unfulfilled contracts, said:

Mr. SWINYARD is not an Engineer, yet this hole in the corner got up information was to condemn the Government. From whom, he would enquire again, did Mr. SWINYARD receive his information? - From the political enemies and persecutors of the local Government.²³

Davies did not deny the charge. He replied:

He did press upon Mr. SWINYARD, to see to it, that the Contractors should fulfil their Contract to the letter. He felt that if this was not insisted upon it would have to be done at the expense of the taxpayers of this Province. When the Government took the Road off the Contractors' hands, they did so with the full knowledge that the contract was not fulfilled. And with the Report of an Engineer to that effect before them.²⁴

21 Assembly Debates, 1875, p. 13.

22 Ibid., p. 24.

23 Ibid., p. 26.

24 Ibid., p. 27.

Davies, no doubt, was convinced that the Conservative government was shielding the contractors and allowing them to perform indifferent work, but when it became known that Swinyard was advised by the Opposition leader it gave Pope and his colleagues an opportunity to press the issue.

As early as April, 1874, the Conservative papers began to complain of the mismanagement of the MacKenzie government. The Examiner observed that no railway officials had been appointed and no preparations were being made to operate the road. "Everything is just as it was last fall. Yet we are within three weeks of the time when the road should be opened!!"²⁵ The Examiner blamed Swinyard and Laird. "We have a representative at Ottawa," complained the Examiner, and "That representative is a Cabinet Minister. It might, therefore, be imagined that our interests receive special attention."²⁶ The neglect shows that Laird either "(...) has no influence with the Government of which he is nominally a member; or he supinely enjoys his \$7000 a year and neglects to exert his influence."²⁷ As the delay was prolonged into the autumn and it became apparent that the road would not be

²⁵ Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXV, No. 15, April 13, 1874.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

opened until spring, the Examiner continued its attack. "It appears to be the settled policy of the MacKenzie Administration" said the Conservative organ, "to harass and insult the people represented at Ottawa by Mr. David Laird."²⁸ The paper also blamed Swinyard, who threw "(...) every obstacle which could be raised (...)" to prevent the opening of the road.²⁹

It was soon apparent that the Liberals were alarmed by Pope's agitation and about the opinion which prevailed throughout the Island. David Laird arrived in the province about November 6, 1874, and on November 9, Swinyard wrote Owen and informed him that the Dominion agent had been instructed to publish their correspondence.³⁰ This course was rendered necessary, said Swinyard, because "(...) an impression prevails amongst the people of the Island (...)" that the Dominion government had retarded and delayed the opening of the road.³¹ It was highly significant that the Liberals admitted that prevailing opinion was unfriendly to the federal Liberals. J.C. Pope, however, was not to be pushed backstage so easily.

²⁸ Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXV, No. 43, October 26, 1874.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Assembly Journal, 1875, Appendix H., Thom. Swinyard to Lemuel C. Owen, November 9, 1874.

³¹ Ibid.

In an effort to dramatize the situation Pope telegraphed the Dominion government on December 7, 1874, that he was prepared to take over the road "immediately" and run it as a private enterprise so that the Island might profit from its benefits "without delay."³² The telegram was published in the Examiner, and in an accompanying editorial, the Examiner said that Laird and the Dominion government were trying to prevent the running of passenger cars. The editor pointed out that the contractors were running freight trains for the convenience of the farmers, "But the Dominion Government have issued the most positive instructions that no passengers shall be allowed to travel by train."³³ The government refused the offer.³⁴ The Patriot called the move a "sham" and a "humbug",³⁵ which it probably was. But it was an excellent stunt, and Pope's influence could never be ignored by his political opponents.

After the delay in taking possession of the road, the failure to operate it until April, 1875, increased the

³² Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXV, No. 49, December 7, 1874.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XVII, No. 45, December 10, 1874.

annoyance of many influential business people. In March a petition signed by twenty-three persons was published in the newspapers calling upon the Mayor of Charlottetown to convene a public meeting to discuss the conduct of the Dominion officials.³⁶ It would seem that J.C. Pope was the author of the scheme. He was the principal speaker and moved a resolution which strongly condemned the Dominion government and the Island members of Parliament.³⁷ The resolution stated that when the Dominion government assumed control of the railway, the Island "(...) had a right to expect that such road would, without delay, be used for the purposes for which it was constructed." The resolution accused the MacKenzie government of neglecting the Island, and said that:

(...) by withholding from the people of the Island the advantages which would have been conferred upon them by the running of the Railroad, constructed at their proper cost, has acted with great injustice towards them, and in violation of the terms of the contract upon which this Island entered the Dominion.³⁸

³⁶ Examiner, advertisement, Vol. XXVI, No. 9, March 1, 1875.

³⁷ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XVII, No. 67, March 4, 1875.

³⁸ Ibid.

The resolution demanded that a petition be forwarded to the Minister of Public Works praying that he might order the immediate opening of the railroad.

Pope delivered a long speech in support of the resolution.³⁹ Pope referred to the losses sustained by the "(...) hundreds of men who depended upon lumbering for the support of their families during the winter." If they had been able to use the railway their profits would have increased. No other province had its railway closed and Pope asked "Why should this Island be treated differently from any other portion of the Dominion?" Pope added that it was the Islanders' "(...) right to have the road opened, and if we surrendered our rights we might as well be nobodies." Finally, Pope placed the responsibility directly on the shoulders of the federal government.

Those who were to blame for the railroad's not having been opened were our representatives at Ottawa. They were supporters of the administration, and it was their duty to see justice done or withdraw their support.⁴⁰

The speech was a masterful effort by the Conservative leader. Pope's arguments were addressed to the Island's independent spirit which for six years had kept the province out of Confederation. Even the Patriot admitted that

³⁹ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XVII, No. 68, March 6, 1875.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

the speech was "(...) very cunningly addressed to the interests of the laboring men," and that Pope "(...) can calculate to a nicety upon the strength of political antipathies and on the force of personal rivalries and party jealousies."⁴¹

Pope's tactics placed him in a politically impregnable position and made rebuttal by his opponents an extremely delicate task. But Louis H. Davies, who attended the meeting, came to the rescue of Laird and his friends.⁴² Davies admitted that "(...) a large number of persons had come to this meeting with the feeling that the Dominion Government had not acted rightly in allowing the railroad to remain closed." Davies appealed to reason and common sense, a tactic not always politically useful and indicative of the difficulty of his position. "This matter", he said, "should be looked at from a common sense standpoint." He believed that a large financial expenditure by the federal government was not justified, because only a few, "such as Mr. Pope and some others", needed the road. Davies concluded by moving an amendment which did little more than express regret for the heavy snowfall which

⁴¹ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XVII, No. 67, March 4, 1875.

⁴² Ibid., No. 68, March 6, 1875.

prevented the road being opened. The amendment was easily defeated and Pope's motion passed with a large majority.⁴³

The Patriot was forced into a similarly defensive position when defending the government's policy. The paper asked its "intelligent readers" if it was "good policy" for this Island to ask the Dominion government to spend "an unreasonable sum" of money to run the road in a "slack time".⁴⁴ The Patriot viewed the question as follows:

The people of this Island take, we are satisfied, a reasonable view of this railway question. They feel that it is unreasonable to expect the General Government to incur a very large expenditure to open the railroad (...) for the sake of the little business it would do during the months of storms and isolation.⁴⁵

It was far from certain that the Islanders were as thrifty as the Patriot with the Dominion's money. It appeared that Island opinion was following Pope, and he continued to press his advantage.

Pope continued the agitation from the floor of the legislature. He had been returned by acclamation in 1875 as the member for Summerside, an indication of his political influence, and early in the session he introduced a motion condemning the neglect of the federal government.

1875. ⁴³ Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXVI, No. 10, March 8,

1875. ⁴⁴ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XVII, No. 67, March 4,

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Pope's motion repeated the charges of neglect and inefficiency against the MacKenzie government and asked that an address be forwarded to the Governor General asking "(...) that the terms of the compact entered into between the Dominion and the Island of Prince Edward, (...)" may be fulfilled.⁴⁶

The debate produced the usual charges and counter-charges. An unexpected development occurred, however, when the government failed to support the resolution.⁴⁷ Pope had submitted the resolution to Haviland and Owen, and although Owen told Pope he would vote against it, Haviland had given Pope no indication that he would not support it.⁴⁸ Pope was undeterred, and the government's decision gave the Examiner an opportunity to enhance Pope's image as the spokesman for Island interests.

The Examiner was highly critical of the "ignominious" and "perfidious" desertion of Pope by his friends, and pointed out that everything which the Conservative party had achieved in the past few years was achieved under his leadership.⁴⁹ It added that Pope was the only man who

⁴⁶ Assembly Debates, 1875, p. 244.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 282-283.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 276-279.

⁴⁹ Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXVI, No. 16, April 19, 1875.

spoke for Island rights, and the people expected he would receive the support of their representatives. "(...) to Mr. Pope and Dr. Jenkins the thanks of the people are due,"⁵⁰ said the Examiner. The editorial continued:

They [Pope and Jenkins] did not neglect their duty or connive at the gross violation of Canada's pledged word and promises. And although they two stood alone, they occupied a prouder position than those who have deserted and betrayed us.⁵¹

Although the legislature did not support Pope's motion, its significance cannot be overlooked. It appeared that Pope's action was more representative of local feeling than was the legislature's refusal to support it, and the incident enhanced Pope's image as the spokesman for Island interests.⁵²

If, after its belated opening, the operation of the road had been successful, the much publicized delay might have been forgotten. But the road failed to give satisfaction, and within a few months both Liberals and

⁵⁰ Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXVI, No. 17, April 26, 1875. Jenkins seconded Pope's resolution.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² The government's action may be explained by a feud between Haviland and Pope. Haviland, the real leader of the government, was publicly criticized by the Examiner for remaining in the local government after his appointment to the Senate. Also, the government may have resented Pope's actions, which were making him once again the dominant political figure after his brief eclipse. Pope himself accused the government of personal motives: Laird was married to Owen's sister; and John Yeo, a member of the Cabinet, was a brother of the federal member.

Conservatives were critical of its management. Engines broke down at the rate of several in one week, trains were regularly late, and schedules were changed regularly and not followed.⁵³ One editorial correspondent informed the Patriot's readers that the mails got "mouldy" from Charlottetown to Murray Harbour.⁵⁴ J.C. Pope and the Conservatives did not fail to complain of the Island's continued mistreatment.

By July, 1875, the Examiner was complaining loudly. "The way in which our railway is misconducted is becoming simply unbearable,"⁵⁵ exclaimed Pope's mouthpiece. The editorial continued:

Now, an occasional accident is excusable; but we imagine it has become a delightful surprise to both officials and passengers, when a train arrives on time with an uncrippled engine. This is rather too much. The gentlemen who have control of our railway are mostly strangers to the place, and we have hitherto credited them with both the desire and the ability to perform their work properly. We would, however, remind them that the public holds them responsible for the working of the Railway, and that so far it has been very little to their credit.⁵⁶

It was significant that the Patriot remained silent.

1875. 53 Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXVI, No. 29, July 19,

54 Patriot, Vol. XVIII, No. 52, January 8, 1876.

1875. 55 Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXVI, No. 29, July 19,

56 Ibid.

Most members of the legislature in 1876 agreed that the road was useless. L.H. Davies said that "No man who has any regard for his time would risk himself upon it during the winter season, (...)"⁵⁷ Davies, of course, blamed the road's construction. Nicholas Conroy said that the greatest benefit from the road was "(...) that many had received employment in clearing the snow from the track during the winter season."⁵⁸ William Campbell, a Liberal, said that at present "(...) the railway did not benefit the country in any way whatever," because "The cars had, all winter, been stopped, from time to time, by the most trifling storms which scarcely affected the common roads at all."⁵⁹

The complaints reached the House of Commons and the Senate, where similar opinion prevailed. Peter Sinclair complained of the high freight rates,⁶⁰ and in the Senate Howlan

57 Assembly Debates, 1876, p. 10.

58 Ibid., p. 19.

59 Ibid., p. 28.

60 House of Commons Debates, 1875, p. 768.

(...) complained bitterly of the manner in which the Government were managing the road, of the absence of second class carriages, and of the fact that the tariff was just as high as if the railway were a broad, instead of a narrow gauge. The effect of this was simply to drive traffic away, at an immense inconvenience to the public, at whose cost and for whose use the work was constructed.⁶¹

Howlan was an outspoken critic of the Liberal government, but his testimony was confirmed by Senator Haythorne, the former Liberal Premier. Haythorne blamed the road's construction, but was forced to admit

(...) that the income of the road would be greatly enhanced by better management, the improvement and increase of the rolling stock, and the working of trains to suit the convenience of the inhabitants.⁶²

There can be little doubt that the road left much to be desired.

Against the Conservative charges of Dominion neglect the supporters of the federal government had always maintained the road was improperly constructed. But the report of a third engineer in 1876 seemed to explode the Liberal claims. Because of the conflicting reports of Boyd and Swinyard, the Island government had agreed with the Prime Minister to have an independent engineer report upon the road.⁶³ Boyd had estimated deficiencies at a mere \$1,150.

61 Senate Debates, 1876, p. 285.

62 Ibid., p. 285.

63 Ibid., p. 50.

while Swinyard placed them at \$100,000. Frank Shanley, who made his report in 1876, was "(...) obliged to disagree with Mr. Swinyard (...)" regarding the completion of the contract.⁶⁴ Shanley estimated deficiencies at \$5,700. He reported that on the whole the railway had been built "(...) in accordance with the contract in force at the time when Prince Edward Island became a province of the Dominion."⁶⁵ Shanley admitted that the contract was poorly written, and that some of the work was poorly done, but he graciously attributed the errors to "inexperience".⁶⁶ Thus, by the summer of 1876, the Liberals seemed to have lost their argument, and Conservative charges of inefficiency and mismanagement seemed to be confirmed by an independent engineer.⁶⁷

The political significance of the dispute over the railway must not be underestimated. Bolger maintains that "There cannot be the slightest doubt that in the early months of 1871 a mild railway mania captivated the

⁶⁴ Parliament of Canada, Sessional Papers, 1876, Vol. IX, No. 8, Paper No. 66, Report on the Prince Edward Island Railway, p. 7.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Shanley's report appeared in both the Examiner and Patriot in April, 1876. It was therefore public knowledge.

people of the Island."⁶⁸ There is every indication that the "mania" reappeared in 1875-76. In the autumn of 1875 resolutions demanding branch lines were passed at public meetings in several sections of the province. In October, 1875, a meeting was held at Murray Harbour at which it was decided to petition the government for assistance to build a line from Southport to Murray Harbour.⁶⁹ Meetings were held for the same purpose at Murray River⁷⁰ and Peter's Road.⁷¹ A similar resolution was passed at Centreville, an entirely different area of the province, asking for a branch line to Cape Traverse,⁷² and in 1876 petitions were presented to the legislature asking for financial assistance.⁷³ It was apparent that the railway remained a major concern of Islanders, and J.C. Pope was undoubtedly the outstanding spokesman on its behalf. Unfortunately for Laird and his followers, the railway was not the only grievance which Pope could exploit. The

⁶⁸ Reverend Francis W.P. Bolger, Prince Edward Island and Confederation, 1863-1873, St. Dunstan's University Press, 1964, p. 216.

⁶⁹ Examiner, editorial, Vol. LXVI, No. 42, October 18, 1875.

⁷⁰ Ibid., No. 43, October 25, 1875.

⁷¹ Ibid., No. 47, November 22, 1875.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Assembly Debates, 1876, p. 137-138.

provision of winter communications with the mainland was an issue which proved no less embarrassing to the Liberals, and Pope was no less ready to exploit it.

2. Winter Ferry Service.

On Thursday, December 7, 1876, a new steamboat, the Northern Light, left Charlottetown for Pictou, Nova Scotia. It was the maiden voyage of the vessel which had been built by the Dominion government to provide winter communications with the mainland. After three years of waiting, the Northern Light was to be the answer to a problem which had concerned the federal government since the Island joined Confederation. The new craft promptly went aground in Pictou Harbour and was completely unable to cope with the ice in the Straits. The Examiner, which had been complaining of the lack of the service for three years, became violent:

Three years of patient waiting! We have not yet seen the Penitentiary. But we have seen the Northern Light. We have seen this costly vessel laboriously cutting her way through four inches of ice at the rate of a mile in about ten hours!!⁷⁴

The Examiner laid the blame directly on the federal government:

⁷⁴ Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXVIII, No. 4, December 25, 1876. By the terms of union the Dominion agreed to build a penitentiary on the Island.

(...) we do condemn, blame, censure, and denounce the incapable, embecile, and dishonest combination which has for three years cheated us out of our rights.⁷⁵

The Patriot, the staunch supporter of the Liberal party, relegated the event to its "Notes and Comments" column.⁷⁶

The incident is illustrative of the results of three years of effort to provide the service, and the embarrassment which it caused the Liberal administration.

The provision, by the federal government, of winter communication between the Island and the mainland was promised by the terms of union. No effort was made by Sir John A. MacDonald's government, before it resigned, to procure a vessel. The Liberals advertised in December, 1873, for a new vessel for 1874-75, but no company was able to build a suitable boat in that time. Consequently, a contract was entered into with a Mr. King of Halifax, by which he engaged to provide an old boat, the Albert, for the winter of 1874-75, while he was constructing a new steamer which was to be ready for the following year.⁷⁷ The Albert was totally inadequate for the service

⁷⁵ Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXVIII, No. 4, December 25, 1876.

⁷⁶ Patriot, Vol. XIX, No. 47, December 21, 1876.

⁷⁷ House of Commons Debates, 1876, p. 302. Laird reviewed in the Commons the efforts of the government to provide the service.

and made only one trip.⁷⁸ When King failed to build a new boat, his contract was cancelled in the spring of 1875, and a new contract negotiated with Sewell of Quebec.

Sewell was enthusiastic about the idea and offered to have a boat ready for the autumn of 1875. In the summer of 1875 Sewell demanded that the government provide breakwaters at Cape Tormentine and Cape Traverse, and the government, on finding that the cost would be \$50,000, declined to sign the contract.⁷⁹ Thus, by the winter of 1875-76, the federal government did not have a suitable boat to put on the service, and the complaints of the Island grew louder.

Complaints about the absence of the service were first expressed in the legislature in 1874. Dr. John T. Jenkins moved a resolution asking that an Address be forwarded to the Governor-General demanding that "(...) in the future, efficient winter steam communication, as agreed upon by the terms of union, will be provided for."⁸⁰ L.H. Davies came to the rescue of the federal government

⁷⁸ House of Commons Debates, 1876, p. 300.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 300.

⁸⁰ Assembly Debates, 1874, p. 344. It is not unlikely that Jenkins was acting for J.C. Pope. Jenkins was a consistent supporter of Pope. Jenkins contested the federal election of 1873 and seconded Pope's motion on the railway in 1875. Pope was not in the legislature in 1874.

and replied to Jenkins' motion.⁸¹ Davies condemned the "extraordinary" resolution. He thought it was too soon to forward such a complaint and that the resolution amounted to a vote of want of confidence in the Dominion government. He thought the resolution "betrayed a spirit of indecent haste", because the government had not had time to procure a suitable boat. Apparently both parties agreed it was too soon to forward such a complaint because Jenkins was allowed to withdraw his motion.⁸²

When the service was not provided for the second winter, J.C. Pope moved to the attack. In the course of his speech delivered at the railway meeting in March, 1875, Pope said that the provision of the service was required by the terms of union, yet the government provided only an old boat which "(...) was a perfect farce and an insult to the intelligence of the people of this Island."⁸³ The Examiner, which continually attacked the neglect of the federal government, echoed Pope's remarks. In January Pope's organ said:

81 Assembly Debates, 1874, p. 344-345.

82 Ibid., p. 345.

83 Patriot, Vol. XVII, No. 68, March 6, 1875.

The matter is a serious one. This is the second winter since we entered Confederation. Winter mail communication was promised us; and that promise is still unfulfilled. Last winter we did not expect it, as we knew there would be required some little time to procure a suitable boat. Since then, there has been ample time to do so; but such a boat has not been provided.⁸⁴

In the House of Commons, the Liberal members were not in the habit of criticizing the government, but in 1875 a weak effort was made to express dissatisfaction. On February 18, 1875, MacIntyre moved for a copy of the contract entered into with King of Halifax.⁸⁵ He said that the carrying out of the contract had met with the most indifferent success and that the Albert was unfit for the service. He admitted the winter was severe, but added that that was no reason why a proper boat should not be placed on the route. Peter Sinclair, the staunch Grit, supported MacIntyre, and "(...) hoped Prince Edward Island would be given this convenience as promised when the Province entered the Union."⁸⁶ Thus, the "Leveller" and the "Bishop's nominee" were both moved to criticize the government.

⁸⁴ Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXVI, No. 2, January 11, 1875.

⁸⁵ House of Commons Debates, 1875, p. 219-220.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 221.

Laird's unenviable position was never better illustrated. As the Island's Cabinet representative he had to speak for the government in the face of what was obviously widespread dissatisfaction. The Minister of the Interior reviewed the government's efforts to provide the service and he felt that the Dominion had taken adequate measures to fulfill the terms of union.⁸⁷ He explained that it had been found impossible to construct a boat between November, 1873, and November, 1874. As a result the government were obliged to accept the best boat they could get for the first winter, but he explained that the vessel was only to be retained for one winter, and the contractors must furnish a suitable one for the remainder of the term of their contract. This was the only complaint made by the Island members in 1875, and their mild protest was not overlooked by their confreres in the Senate.

On March 1, 1875, Senator Howlan moved for a copy of King's contract, and while speaking to the motion commented on the silence of the Commons' members. He explained that the winter service was promised by the terms of union, and said:

87 House of Commons Debates, 1875, p. 221.

Prince Edward Island would not have entered Confederation had she expected such neglect as this, and he questioned very much if the Maritime Provinces would either. (...) It was to the Senate that these smaller provinces looked for protection. It would appear that the representatives of Prince Edward Island in the other House were quite satisfied with this candle-box of a steamer at Prince Edward Island, and if there were no other branch of the legislature to which they might appeal, he for one did not know what the people of that island would do.⁸⁸

Howlan concluded that his motion only asked what the people of Prince Edward Island "(...) were entitled to obtain, and he would not rest satisfied till a proper boat were put upon the line."⁸⁹ Howlan was supported by Haviland:

One thing was evident, that the people of that Island were neither satisfied nor content with the manner in which the Confederation article had been carried out for obtaining suitable winter communication, and for carrying mail. The present boat was about equal to an old washing tub with a couple of side wheels, for all the advantage they had received from it.⁹⁰

The government's efforts in 1874-75 could be reasonably defended. But when it became known that King's contract had been cancelled, and Sewell's rejected because the government refused to spend \$50,000 for piers, the sincerity of the government's efforts became suspect. The dissatisfaction of the supporters of the government, as

88 Senate Debates, 1875, p. 211-212.

89 Ibid., p. 214.

90 Ibid., p. 216.

well as its opponents, increased, and throughout the winter of 1875-76 and the summer of 1876 the government was subjected to strong criticism.

In December, 1875, the Examiner, in an editorial devoted to the railway and the ferry service, refused to accept Sewell's failure to fulfill his contract as a valid reason for not providing the service. The newspaper maintained that if sufficient effort had been shown a boat could have been obtained, and then added:

But the steamer has not been secured; and the Dominion Government has been guilty of a flagrant and inexcusable violation of the terms under which the people of this Island were induced to join the confederated provinces.⁹¹

The Examiner followed with an editorial dealing with "Breaches of Public Faith".⁹² It pointed out that communication, "winter and summer", was promised if the Island joined the Dominion. "The Public faith of the Dominion was solemnly pledged to carry out the agreement, and the Union was consummated," said the Examiner, and now all that can be said is that "Mr. Sewell has failed." Pope's mouthpiece exclaimed that "The people of this Island have been wronged and cheated. It is their duty to protest - in forcible, but dignified language - against the

⁹¹ Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXVI, No. 50, December 13, 1875.

⁹² Ibid., No. 52, December 27, 1875.

treatment they have received." The editorial concluded by warning its readers that "(...) if the Dominion Government be now permitted to shirk the performance of one, or two, or three of its duties to this Island, it may in time shirk all of them."

The Patriot argued feebly that the Dominion government was sincere in its efforts to provide communications, and that the government could not be held responsible for the failure of Sewell to fulfill his contract. In an editorial on December 9, 1875, the paper claimed that the charges against the government were "not well grounded."⁹³ It pointed out that the government had negotiated with Sewell in good faith. "What more could the Government do than this?" asked the Patriot. Sewell's failure was "(...) unfortunate, but no person of common sense will hold the Government responsible for Mr. Sewell's breach of faith."

Despite the Patriot's defense of the government it was soon evident that the government's supporters were alarmed, and they began to press for action. In February, 1876, seven of the ten Island representatives sent a memorandum to the Prime Minister suggesting that since private contracts had failed, the government should

⁹³ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XVIII, No. 45, December 9, 1875.

operate a boat as a public service.⁹⁴ Daniel Davies also wrote the Prime Minister,⁹⁵ and L.C. Owen, the Premier, complained to Laird that there had been a "bungle" about the winter steamers.⁹⁶ Laird himself was understandably annoyed and wished to have the matter settled, because "(...) the confounded thing (...) has given me more anxiety than all other Island offices put together, (...)"⁹⁷

When Parliament met in 1876 it was noticeable that the Island members were much more critical than a year earlier. It was impossible to ignore the attacks of Pope and the Examiner, and the Island members became more vocal. The political implications of the issue were manifest when Charles Tupper intervened in the debate.

The debate was introduced by S.F. Perry on February 28, when he moved for a statement of the steps taken by the government to provide the service.⁹⁸ Perry reviewed

⁹⁴ MacKenzie Letterbooks, Vol. 5, p. 481, MacKenzie to D. Montgomery, R.P. Haythorne and others, 25 February, 1876. Also Senate Debates, 1876, p. 88.

⁹⁵ MacKenzie Letterbooks, Vol. 5, p. 328, MacKenzie to Daniel Davies, 19 January, 1876.

⁹⁶ David Laird Letterbook, p. 195, David Laird to Hon. L.C. Owen, 15 January, 1876.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ House of Commons Debates, 1876, p. 299-300.

the efforts of the government and repeated the suggestion that the government should undertake the work as a public service. He then concluded:

I trust that the Province, although the smallest in the Dominion, will not be overlooked so far as the observance of terms is concerned, so many parties having already failed, and the time passing when the people of Prince Edward Island should derive the benefit to which they are entitled.⁹⁹

Perry was supported by Yeo, Sinclair, and Davies. Yeo agreed that the government should operate the boat and objected to the breach of faith by the Dominion. "At the time of Confederation this steam communication was held out as one of the greatest inducements to our province," said Yeo, "and it is not right that it should now be neglected."¹⁰⁰ Davies made it clear that "A great deal of dissatisfaction exists in the Province owing to the non-fulfillment of the pledge given before Confederation with reference to this work."¹⁰¹ But it was Peter Sinclair who delivered the sharpest criticism of the government. In the course of his speech Sinclair said:

99 House of Commons Debates, 1876, p. 300.

100 Ibid., p. 300.

101 Ibid., p. 301.

If the Ministry want to do justice to the province they will undertake the work themselves. As far as the cost is concerned it would not be much, and any Government who think themselves competent to carry through the Pacific Railway need not shrink from crossing the Straits of Northumberland. The interest of this Province is evidently neglected because it is small as compared with the other Provinces. Many complaints have been uttered, and it is time an adequate attempt was made to carry through this work in a proper manner. The Government should take into consideration that Prince Edward Island looks for it to be completely carried out next winter, and I trust they will make preparations accordingly. This is a question of great importance to Prince Edward Island and the mainland, and it is to be hoped that we shall not have to repeat this complaint.¹⁰²

Sinclair's reference to the Pacific Railway was a caustic remark which made the failure to cross the Straits appear rather ridiculous.

Once again the difficulty of Laird's position was revealed. Despite the widespread dissatisfaction he was forced to defend the government. He merely reviewed the efforts the government had made to provide a boat, but he did admit that if private enterprise could not perform the service the government was "bound" to undertake it.¹⁰³

The indomitable Tupper was not satisfied with Laird's explanation. He accused the Island members of negligence, and the government of inefficiency:

102 House of Commons Debates, 1876. p. 301-302.

103 Ibid... p. 302-303.

I have listened with a good deal of attention to the explanation made by the Minister of the Interior, and I cannot but come to the conclusion that the people of Prince Edward Island have been very badly treated. (...) He tells us that he, a representative of the Island holding a seat in the Cabinet, allowed a year to pass, the estimates to be voted, and Parliament to close without having raised a finger or taken the slightest step to carry out the terms. I listened very carefully to the gentleman's statements and I find that no effort was made during the first winter. During that Session the hon. gentleman representing the Island in this House stood still, without making an effort to have the terms of Union adhered to. I have no sympathy with the hon. gentleman himself, or the others who have been so loud in their complaints to-day, because they have had meted out to them the same sort of good faith they meted out to others; but I have sympathy with the people of Prince Edward Island, who I consider have been badly treated, for they have good ground for complaint because the Government has not kept its compact with them. This Administration has not accomplished anything in that direction nor made an effort to do what the Dominion Government and Parliament pledged themselves to do for the Island.¹⁰⁴

Tupper's speech was no doubt directed to the voters of the Island rather than to the members of the House, and the Examiner did not fail to comment on Tupper's efforts. The Examiner reported the speeches in full and pointed out that while the Island members cleverly "(...) trimmed and balanced between their duty to the Island and the party,"¹⁰⁵ Dr. Tupper "(...) was the only man who espoused our cause, and denounced the conduct of the government with becoming

¹⁰⁴ House of Commons Debates, 1876, p. 303.

¹⁰⁵ Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXVII, No. 13, March 27, 1876.

spirit; and to him the thanks of the province are due."¹⁰⁶

In the Senate the Island members were even more critical, and Haythorne, Montgomery, and Haviland all attacked the government. The usual arguments were repeated but with greater frankness. Haythorne thought it his duty "(...) to ask the Government whether they intend to trifle any longer with the people of Prince Edward Island on this question or not."¹⁰⁷ Haviland said "(...) our interests are neglected and overlooked,"¹⁰⁸ and Montgomery hoped that the government "(...) will take action immediately and not allow another winter to pass without securing this accommodation to the people of Prince Edward Island."¹⁰⁹ It was Haythorne who sounded the clearest warning of all. In a second speech Haythorne said that the government "(...) have disappointed the public three times - a fact which if again repeated will not be forgotten at the next general election."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXVII, No. 13, March 27, 1876.

¹⁰⁷ Senate Debates, 1876, p. 88.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 89.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 90.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 91.

It was after the Commons prorogued in 1876 that the government contracted with Sewell to build the Northern Light. Thus, during the summer of 1876 a vessel was on the stocks, and the criticism was temporarily silenced. Nevertheless, the government had twice promised a boat and each time they had failed. When the Islanders went to the polls in 1876 they had no guarantee there would not be a third failure. A mismanaged railway and three winters of isolation was not an enviable record, and the Liberal difficulties were compounded by difficulties over civil service appointments.

3. Civil Service Appointments.

MacKinnon has clearly stated the importance of political patronage in Island politics:

The characteristics of party politics on the Island are partially explained by the dominance of political patronage in such a small province. The same factors which bring the Cabinet, the Legislature, and the party so close to the people encourage the relentless pressure of influential individuals and powerful groups. In many ways this pressure facilitates the democratic process, but in others it results in unwise decisions, political appointments, and patronage of the worst type. The 'pork barrel' is, of course, an institution of some importance in most governments, but in Prince Edward Island, ministers and other party leaders require more than the usual amount of political courage to keep it in its place.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Frank MacKinnon, The Government of Prince Edward Island, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1951, p. 249.

The importance of the "pork barrel" was clearly evident on the Island between the years 1873 and 1876. It cost the MacKenzie administration endless difficulty, and the Prime Minister's policy of keeping politics out of civil service appointments was completely foreign to Island politics. "It seems", MacKenzie wrote to Lord Dufferin in 1874, "that the smaller the province, the more troublesome it will be. Columbia, Manitoba, and Prince Edward Island each give me much more trouble than all Ontario and Quebec."¹¹² He told A.G. Jones of Halifax that "Half my time is taken up with this question of patronage in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. My life has become a torment to me about it."¹¹³

MacKenzie's problems on the Island arose from the fact that the Conservative government resigned shortly after the Island joined the Dominion. The "Jacksonian Principle" of wholesale changes in civil servants with each change of government was the established practice in Prince Edward Island. When the Conservatives won the local election of 1873, Pope's government made wholesale changes

¹¹² Dufferin and Ava Papers, Prime Minister to Dufferin, Letters from MacKenzie, January, 1874 - December, 1876, p. 27, MacKenzie to Dufferin, 27 July, 1874.

¹¹³ Frank H. Underhill, "The Development of National Political Parties in Canada", in Canadian Historical Review, Vol. 16, No. 4, December, 1935, p. 383-384.

in the civil service of the province before July 1. It was the intention to have these appointments made permanent by federal Order-in-Council after the province joined the Dominion. Owing to MacDonald's resignation only thirty of the appointments were confirmed before the Liberals took office. Of these, twenty-eight were confirmed by Orders-in-Council dated November 3 and 4, only two days before the resignation took place. Because of this unusual procedure, the twenty-eight appointments were subsequently cancelled, but one-half of them were later re-appointed.¹¹⁴ The result was that the Liberals received only one-half of the offices confirmed by federal Order-in-Council, but the vast majority of the appointments made by Pope's local government before July 1 remained undisturbed.¹¹⁵

This arrangement appeared satisfactory for a time, but after the Liberal victory in February, 1874, the Island Liberal supporters demanded that the principle of one-half should be applied to all appointments which had

¹¹⁴ Returns to the Several Addresses of the House of Commons for all Appointments and Dismissals in the Public Service During a Portion of the Years 1873-74, by Order of Parliament, Ottawa, 1874, p. 17-18.

¹¹⁵ The thirty appointments represented much less than fifty per cent. of the federal offices in the province. A report made in 1877 shows a total of 230 federal employees in Prince Edward Island. Parliament of Canada, Sessional Papers, 1877, Vol. X, No. 9, Paper No. 146.

been made by Pope's government and which had not been confirmed by Order-in-Council. So great was the pressure that Laird forwarded to Lord Dufferin in July, 1874, a memorandum proposing the dismissal of one-half of the office-holders on the Island, but Dufferin refused to agree.

The Governor-General forwarded a long report to MacKenzie in which he very definitely rejected Laird's proposals.¹¹⁶ Dufferin advised the Prime Minister that "(...) any such re-arrangement of the Prince Edward Island appointments as is proposed would be most objectionable." He insisted that permanency in the Civil Service is "most vital", and that he had agreed to the dismissal of some officers appointed by Sir John with reluctance and with the clear understanding that such a policy would not be carried any further. Lord Dufferin argued that if incompetence or misconduct could be alleged against the officers they might be dismissed,

(...) but the plea for the course now proposed is not founded upon any supposition of this nature, but upon the fact that up to the time of the Confederation of the Island the Local Civil Service was regulated upon the American as distinguished from the Canadian System - (...) ¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ MacKenzie Papers, p. 606N, Dufferin to MacKenzie, 24 July, 1874.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

With rather frank realism Dufferin said that Laird's party, having been defeated before Union, must accept the "fortune of war", and that time would gradually adjust the matter. He concluded by suggesting that he would not appreciate being pressed further on the matter:

Under these circumstances and taking into account the understanding at which we arrived on the subject shortly after you entered office, I hope you will not think me unreasonable if I venture to convey to you my earnest hope that I may not be pressed to sanction arrangements which I am convinced are contrary to the best interests of the Dominion at large.¹¹⁸

Laird followed up his memorandum with a personal interview with Dufferin on July 29, but he met with no better success. Laird wrote a long letter to the Prime Minister in which he recounted his conversation with the Governor-General.¹¹⁹ Laird told Dufferin that since the changes proposed had never been confirmed by Order-in-Council, dismissals would not be a violation of the principle of permanency, but Dufferin "(...) took the position that Local appointments had no less permanent a character than those which he approved." Laird pointed out without avail that his party had not made Confederation a party measure and were therefore entitled to "fair play", and

¹¹⁸ MacKenzie Papers, p. 606N, Dufferin to MacKenzie, 24 July, 1874.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 607, Laird to MacKenzie, 30 July, 1874.

he pointedly told MacKenzie that had Laird and his friends "(...) supported Sir John, they would cheerfully have given us all we asked." Laird was visibly annoyed with the Governor-General, and accused him of conspiring with Sir John's friends to deprive the Island of justice.

I feel in my heart that I am balked by some promise made to a set of corruptionists whom the country thought it had long ago driven from the Councils of the country. From the counsels of these men we evidently are not free.¹²⁰

Referring to his decision to support the Liberals in 1873, Laird said:

The Island did its duty in the day of the countrys trial, and the Island is singled out by some men as the special object of their persecution. To these men, I fear, His Excellency has lent a too willing ear.¹²¹

Despite Laird's chagrin over his failure he was able to subordinate the whole problem to larger considerations. He told MacKenzie that he did not wish to draw his colleagues into any trouble over the matter because "(...) a few offices in the Island are of too paltry a character to risk a collision with his Excellency of a serious character."¹²² He advised the Prime Minister

¹²⁰ MacKenzie Papers, p. 607, Laird to MacKenzie, 30 July, 1874.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

to forget the whole proposal and hoped that instead a few changes might be made later.¹²³

It was far from certain that the Island Liberals dismissed the problem as lightly as Laird, and there is ample evidence of strong discontent. Laird told MacKenzie that "(...) my supporters from the Island think I am too easy, (...)", and he added that MacKenzie had heard only "(...) about a tenth part of the [abuse?] which I have patiently to bear from my correspondents on the Island."¹²⁴ MacKenzie told Dufferin that Laird was a "(...) good deal disappointed about these Island offices," and added:

I am not surprised at his annoyance. The most bitter and insolent letters that can be written come to him & others in the Government from his Co. Members while the papers of the opposition crow lustily.¹²⁵

Even the Patriot admitted that the "(...) supporters of the government on the Island are greatly displeased to see the public offices crammed with the enemies of that Government."¹²⁶

¹²³ MacKenzie Papers, p. 607, Laird to MacKenzie, 30 July, 1874.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Dufferin and Ava Papers, Prime Minister to Dufferin, Letters from MacKenzie, January, 1874 - December, 1876, p. 27, MacKenzie to Dufferin, 27 July, 1874.

¹²⁶ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XVI, No. 62, May 30, 1874.

The Liberal office-seekers had no better success with railway appointments. Few railway appointments were made in 1873 because the road was not ready for operation, and the Liberals confidently expected to fill the positions with their own nominees. But this time the Prime Minister stood in their way, and MacKenzie began to receive the same treatment as Laird. Yeo, Sinclair, and Daniel Davies all complained to the Prime Minister, and L.H. Davies also informed MacKenzie of his dissatisfaction. Daniel Davies was annoyed that Swinyard did not accept Liberal nominees for railway positions, but MacKenzie made it clear he was responsible. He told Davies that only qualified men would be appointed and suggested that Davies was asking for too much. He wrote Davies as follows:

Some principle must be applied over the whole country. With very great difficulty we did take half the offices for your friends, dismissing those who were appointed to that extent, and to that extent we violated the established principle upon which [our?] office holders are dealt with. This, it appears to me, should have been quite satisfactory to yourself and your colleagues and to the people especially as - as already remarked - it caused us very serious difficulty to accomplish even this much.¹²⁷

On at least one occasion one of Laird's own nominees was refused a position, and when Sinclair complained

¹²⁷ MacKenzie Letterbooks, Vol. 3, p. 468, MacKenzie to Daniel Davies, [?] June, 1874.

MacKenzie replied that Swinyard had interviewed Laird's nominee and "(...) formed a poor opinion of his capacity for the duties of the office."¹²⁸ The complaints of L.H. Davies received a similar reply,¹²⁹ but it was to James Yeo that MacKenzie expressed most clearly his policy. Yeo complained that in Prince County his nominees were not being accepted, and MacKenzie replied as follows:

It [is?] quite a mistake to suppose that any person for whom an office maybe wanted will necessarily be gratified to act as an [operator?] or a conductor. We must have the road properly managed, (...) Efficiency must be secured.¹³⁰

There can be little doubt that MacKenzie's policy was quite unpopular with the Islanders. Although some changes were subsequently made in civil service offices, there were no wholesale dismissals. Howlan questioned a number of dismissals which were made in 1875,¹³¹ but only a few appointments were involved. The customs service on the Island was considerably enlarged in 1875 and this provided an opportunity to place Liberals in government positions,

¹²⁸ MacKenzie Letterbooks, Vol. 1, p. 198, MacKenzie to Hon. P. Sinclair, 24 August, 1874.

¹²⁹ Ibid., Vol. 4, p. 197, MacKenzie to L.H. Davies, 17 February, 1875.

¹³⁰ Ibid., Vol. 3, p. 612, MacKenzie to Yeo, 28 August, 1874.

¹³¹ Senate Debates, 1875, p. 294-298.

but these were new appointments and did not involve dismissals.¹³²

No doubt, similar dissatisfaction about patronage can always be found in any government. But its significance in Prince Edward Island at this time was unique. The discontent was widespread and extremely bitter, and the Islanders at this time were accustomed to enjoying to the full the benefits of a political victory. Pope has amply rewarded his followers in 1873, and the failure to dismiss his appointments in 1874 was a novel experience in Island politics. The failure seemed to show once again that the Liberals had no influence at Ottawa. Daniel Davies thought the matter was so serious that he told the Prime Minister that the Liberal members could not be re-elected because of the "(...) failure to dismiss some office holders who were simply obnoxious (...)" to the Liberals.¹³³

Laird's decision to support the Liberals in 1873 was an unexpected move. The decision was possible only because of the Pacific Scandal, and the Liberals were returned in 1874 largely because of the School Question.

¹³² House of Commons Debates, 1876, p. 825-826.

¹³³ MacKenzie Letterbooks, Vol. 3, p. 468, MacKenzie to D. Davies, [?] June, 1874.

Thus, the Liberal party was little more than a protest movement which had been carried to victory by the religious issue. Solid achievements and strong leadership were required to turn the Liberal voters of 1874 into a political party. The Liberals produced neither. Laird never became the effective leader of his party. The railway and ferry issues revealed the inability of the Liberals to tend to the needs of the Island, and now it appeared that they could not provide for their own followers. By contrast, the Conservatives offered both a record of achievement and effective leadership. The Conservatives had promised better terms in 1873, and they had obtained them. Pope and his colleagues had initiated the railway policy and they had rewarded their followers with federal offices. Thus, Pope out of office appeared to wield more influence than Laird in the Cabinet. By 1876 many Islanders were convinced that Laird's decision in 1873 had been a blunder.

In October, 1876, Prime Minister MacKenzie chose to precipitate a by-election in Queen's County by removing Laird from the Cabinet. For his Island supporters, MacKenzie's decision could not have come at a more inappropriate moment. Not only did federal issues continue to frustrate the Island Liberals, but local issues also continued to plague Island politics. The Islanders were still embroiled in religious controversies, and by

1876 the Liberals were no longer in a position to profit from the School Question.

CHAPTER IV

THE LIBERAL DECLINE

In October, 1876, David Laird left the Cabinet and was appointed Governor of the North-West Territories. In the by-election which followed J.C. Pope was victorious. It was the first tangible evidence that the Liberal fortunes had declined. The railway, ferry, and patronage issues played their part in elevating Pope to power, and Laird's removal from office was a staggering blow to the Liberal party. But in 1876, as in 1874, religious issues dominated political contests. In 1876 Islanders became embroiled again in religious controversies, both on the local and national levels. In 1876 the Island elected a Protestant government and became involved in a controversy over Section Eleven of the North West Act. In 1874 religious issues favoured the Liberals. In 1876 the situation was reversed and J.C. Pope rode to power. The federal by-election in Queen's County can be understood only by first detailing the bitterness which was engendered by the local contest which preceded it, and by examining the disruptive effect of the North West Act on the Liberal party.

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1. The Provincial Election of 1876.

On April 1, 1874, Nicholas Conroy, the representative from the First District of Prince County, and a vocal supporter of the demands for financial assistance to Catholic schools, said in the legislature:

What have Catholics to fear from a purely Protestant Government? Nothing whatever. Our common rights would be all respected. But how long would such a Government stand? How long would men, expressing such opinions of each other as we hear here, hold together? Why Sir, not twelve months. Would it not be better, therefore, for Catholics to stand aloof from both parties? The sooner they do, the sooner will justice be done to them?

Two years later Conroy saw the fulfilment of his desire. The electors of Prince Edward Island elected in 1876 a Protestant government pledged to renounce sectarian education and to consolidate the school system on the secular principle. The government had an uneasy existence of three years during which time it amended the School Act as promised, and while doing so paved the road to Ottawa for J.C. Pope. It was another curious episode in the tortured history of the School Question on the Island.

The federal election of 1874 left the political situation in an uneasy state. The Bishop had openly embraced the federal Liberals and had done much to secure

1 Assembly Debates, 1874, p. 296.

their election, yet the Catholics in the local legislature continued to support the Conservative government. The odd situation continued for over two years, during which time the Catholics hoped for some concessions from either party.

The Catholics continued to base their demands on the Bishop's Memorial of 1868, and no effort was made to demand Separate Schools, which the Pastorals had called for. The subject was formally introduced into the legislature in 1874 by John A. MacDonald. The Catholic member from Prince County moved that a Bill be introduced to amend, in some respects, the Education Act,

(...) and in particular to provide in certain cases for the employment, as teachers, of such persons as shall produce to the Board of Education satisfactory certificate, as to their character and attainments from some College or other institution of learning in Europe or America; and also to render permissive the imparting of religious instruction in schools in which the pupils are all of the same denomination, such religious instruction to be subject to the approval of the parents or guardians of the children.²

Part of this resolution was intended to make possible the certification of the Christian Brothers at St. Patrick's School in Charlottetown, who were not granted licenses because they refused to submit to examination by the Board of Education. The second demand was directed to the

² Assembly Debates, 1874, p. 441.

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towns, particularly Charlottetown, where denominational schools were already in operation.

In speaking to the resolution the Catholic members emphasized the right to exercise the beliefs of their religion, and the great service the Bishop had rendered by maintaining what everyone conceded to be the best schools in the province. They based their arguments on a demand for justice. Archibald J. MacDonald asked:

Was it just that because there were more Protestants than Roman Catholics in the Island, that the latter should be compelled to submit to a system of education that their Church disapproved of?³

Conroy said:

Could Catholics be satisfied with the present state of matters in reference to education in Charlottetown? One day there was a Bazaar, on another a Concert; and sometimes a silver collection on Sunday for the support of their schools. And all this was done in a country where education was said to be free!⁴

William W. Sullivan, a member of the Cabinet and a future premier, delivered a long speech for the Catholic cause. He reviewed the School Visitor's Report to show the deplorable condition of the public schools in Charlottetown and contrasted their shortcomings to the excellent schools maintained by the Bishop. The Church schools were

³ Assembly Debates, 1874, p. 444.

⁴ Ibid., p. 447.

educating 500 pupils, and Sullivan asked if it was not but just that the Bishop should receive some assistance:

These children had been, by the Bishop and the Roman Catholic population, taken off the streets, and placed in these schools, which were finished and provided with everything requisite for first class educational institutions, at no expense to the State. The demand now made was that these schools should receive the same allowance from the State that other schools received. No grant was asked on account of the religious instruction - only for the secular education. There was nothing unfair in this.⁵

To disprove the objections raised by the Protestants, Sullivan quoted at length from Protestant authorities who supported denominational schools, and taunted his opponents for their inconsistency.⁶ The Solicitor-General's speech was the best effort by the Catholic side, but it failed to move their opponents.

The opposition to the petition demonstrated clearly that the Protestants of both parties were united in their opposition to the Catholic demands. The chief objections of the Protestants were based on the secular nature of the State and on the extreme demands of the Bishop's Pastoral. William Stewart, a Liberal, expressed the former argument quite clearly. He believed

⁵ Assembly Debates, 1874, p. 457.

⁶ Ibid., p. 458-459.

(...) that the State had nothing to do with religious teachings, and that when it stepped aside and appropriated public money in support of the teaching of the doctrines of any sect, it did an injustice to the public.⁷

He admitted that Catholics had a right to Separate Schools if they were supported exclusively by the Catholics, but

(...) when they came to the Treasury, - practically to each individual who paid taxes - and asked that money should be granted to these schools, they asked for something which was antagonistic to true political doctrines.⁸

He also believed that sectarian education was unsound. He said:

The granting of the demand would destroy the free school system, would narrow it down to a sectarian system, and educate men as narrow minded bigots, who could not see except through the spectacles of the Church; (...)⁹

William MacNeill, a Liberal, agreed that the "Government had no right to interfere with religious education, which was entirely an individual matter."¹⁰

Conservatives, as well as Liberals, objected to the principle of Separate Schools. The influential Haviland spoke for the Protestant members of the government, and said:

7 Assembly Debates, 1874, p. 451.

8 Ibid., p. 451.

9 Ibid., p. 452.

10 Ibid., p. 464.

(...) it was his opinion that it was impossible to carry out the denominational system in the district schools of this Island. (...) Nothing but secular teaching should be imparted in the schools - religion should be left for the Church and the fireside.¹¹

Thus, although the debates revealed a fundamental difference of opinion, there were more practical and immediate objections to the Catholic request.

Despite the opposition to the principle involved, a number of Protestants were clearly opposed because the Bishop's Pastoral had demanded Separate Schools, and they believed that MacDonald's resolution was only the first step toward that objective. Brecken, the devoted follower of Pope and Attorney-General of the province, said he would vote for the petition "(...) as a simple act of justice," but "If the resolution meant only the first instalments of the larger demand made by the Bishop when he had issued his Pastoral, he would not support it."¹² William Macneill agreed with Brecken. Macneill spoke as follows:

11 Assembly Debates, 1874, p. 492.

12 Ibid., p. 463.

The Attorney General had said that he would support this resolution if it was to be the only demand, but it was easily seen by the Pastoral that it was not the length to which a certain denomination wished to go in this matter. The resolution seemed reasonable, but if the principle was admitted, it was hard to tell where it would stop; the free education system would be in danger.¹³

Dr. Jenkins, the unsuccessful candidate in the federal election of 1873, said he was previously favourable to the Catholic demands, but then added:

But unfortunately the aspect of affairs had changed very much during the last few months. What he had then been perfectly willing to go for, and what he was in favor of on principle, it was impossible to grant. From the stand taken by the Bishop, it was impossible to make any change in the present system without doing a vast amount of mischief.¹⁴

Campbell, a Liberal, was quite explicit on the same point:

The resolution must not be taken simply as it stood, but in connection with the Pastorals, and thus taken, it meant nothing less than the complete overthrow of the secular system. It was the entering of the wedge. There was no doubt that the party which granted its demands would obtain favor for the time being, but more concessions would be demanded from one party or another, until the free school system was overthrown, and the sectarian plan introduced generally.¹⁵

It was quite clear that the Bishop's Pastoral and his interference in the federal election had damaged his cause. But it was the Leader of the Opposition, L.H.

¹³ Assembly Debates, 1874, p. 465.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 467.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 490.

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Davies, who made perhaps the most succinct comment on the whole performance. He said the debate was a huge farce, that the petition was a dodge by the Catholic Conservatives who had to make some show of energy, although they knew the government which they supported would never grant their demands. He also pointedly asked who demanded the change.

Part of his speech was as follows:

He had looked upon the debate as a huge farce, and known to be such from the beginning. A pantomime had been played in which the clown and harlaquin (sic) had been conspicuous. And suppose it were asked who had made the demand for the change agitated? Were the tables flooded with petitions, was there in fact one petition from the people represented here? Had any member tabled a petition crying out against this monstrous evil, and demanding that it be immediately removed? If any such petition was sent in, it had never been heard of. Had the head of the Roman Catholics made a demand? He understood that he had not. The Roman Catholics then did not demand a change, their head did not, the people at large did not. The whole affair was a mere political dodge. It lacked sincerity.¹⁶

Davies' charges of "politicking" may have been valid, but his charge that the Catholics did not demand a change was unfounded, and the petitions presented in the following session were a ringing denial of his accusations. The resolution was defeated by a purely denominational vote,¹⁷ and the matter rested until the next session.

16 Assembly Debates, 1874, p. 522.

17 Ibid., p. 536.

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To convince the legislature that the Catholic population supported their demands the Catholic members presented petitions in 1875 signed by a total of 9000 Catholics. On April 7 Conroy presented a petition on behalf of all the Catholics of the Island. The petition said that Catholics believed that the Church entrusted them with the education of their children, and that this right was denied them in Prince Edward Island. The petition maintained

(...) that the Catholics of Charlottetown are unjustly taxed in a special manner to support the Public Schools of the City, to which they do not send their children, and praying that the present School Act be so amended as to enable them to participate in the benefits to be derived from the expenditure of the taxes for educational purposes, to which they contribute.¹⁸

The petition was directed to the situation in Charlottetown, and Conroy in his remarks made it clear that the petition did not ask for Separate Schools throughout the province.¹⁹

On the same day Jenkins presented a petition on behalf of the Catholics of Charlottetown. The petition repeated the demand that members of the religious orders be allowed to teach, and asked that Catholic schools be granted "(...) a per capita allowance for the children

¹⁸ Assembly Journal, 1875, p. 36.

¹⁹ Assembly Debates, 1875, p. 170.

attending such schools equal to that paid in the Public Schools," provided such schools were open to government inspection.²⁰

The issue was clearly drawn on the following day when James Richards presented three petitions from

(...) Clergymen of the different Protestant Churches in this Island, and others, praying that no change be made in the present school law of this Province, which may effect its undenominational character, without an appeal to the people at the Polls.²¹

The three petitions were discussed together in a Committee of the Whole House. The debate revealed no new arguments and the speeches were a repetition of those of the previous year. The only exception was J.C. Pope. Pope had re-entered the legislature in 1875 and he reiterated the policy he had adopted in 1860 and defended in 1873.²² When the legislature prorogued in 1875 the situation remained what it had been for two years.

Opinion outside the legislature showed no signs of change. The Patriot, which had maintained silence on the issue since the Bishop's efforts on behalf of the Liberals in 1874, was sparing with its comments, but its position remained the same. When the petitions were

²⁰ Assembly Journal, 1875, p. 36.

²¹ Assembly Debates, 1875, p. 184-185.

²² Ibid., p. 201-204.

presented in the legislature in 1875 the Liberal organ approved of the temperate manner in which the speeches were delivered, but said:

(...) we are as far as ever from being convinced that the change Catholics seek to effect in our educational system is either beneficial or practicable. We must not shut our eyes to the fact that Roman Catholics really require, in their petitions, nothing more nor less than the establishment of separate schools in the province.²³

The Patriot explained that it was not possible to grant the request to one denomination only. "There can on this subject be no piece-meal legislation. - What is conceded to any body of religionists in one locality, must be conceded to all bodies of religionists in all localities."²⁴

The Examiner continued to support Pope's policy and urged some concession to the Catholics.²⁵ Thus as the session and the election of 1876 approached the situation remained explosive. The Bishop continued to court the Liberals, and the Catholic members continued to support the Conservative government.

The uneasy alliances were suddenly shattered by L.H. Davies and the election of 1876. The School Visitor's

²³ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XVII, no. 70, April 10, 1875.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Examiner, editorial, Vol. XVI, no. 15, April 12, 1875.

Report for Queen's County for 1875 revealed that both denominations were violating the secular character of the School Act. The Report stated that of the forty-seven Roman Catholic teachers engaged, thirty-eight taught the Catechism and generally used their own forms of prayer. The Report stated also that eighteen of the ninety-six Protestant teachers taught religion, and in one mixed school a Catholic teacher obliged by teaching both Catechisms. The Report revealed that the Christian Brothers in St. Patrick's School had been licensed by the Board of Education.²⁶ L.H. Davies, the Liberal leader, decided the time had come for action.

In the legislature in 1876 the Liberal leader moved that a

(...) Committee of Five Members be appointed to investigate and report upon the manner in which the Education Law has been, and is now being carried out in Charlottetown; with power to send for persons, papers and records.²⁷

There was much that a Committee could have investigated. The School Visitors' Reports were replete with examples of the complete inadequacy of the system, but Davies made it clear that he was concerned only with the religious question. He explained his purpose in asking for an

²⁶ Assembly Debates, 1876, p. 184. (Speech of L.H. Davies)

²⁷ Ibid., p. 182.

investigation as follows:

My object in submitting this resolution is to see whether or not the Educational Laws of the Province have been, and are being, carried out in this city. I have no intention to make an attack upon any particular school. If it is the desire of the majority of the people of this Island that our public schools shall be sectarian, I, for one, will submit. But if, on the other hand, the people are firmly determined - as I believe they are - to have the secular system of education, I will certainly do all in my power to carry that system out in its integrity.²⁸

Davies delivered a long speech in support of his motion. He referred particularly to the need for a Minister of Education who could answer in the legislature for the policy of the government. Referring to the "startling development" which had taken place in St. Patrick's school, Davies said:

If the Board of Education and the Government permit religious instruction to be imparted in our public schools in the face of the wishes of the people, and the law of the land, it is high time they were stripped of power. If we had a Minister of Education he would not dare to act directly in opposition to the will of the people of the Island, as this contemptible Board of Education as done.²⁹

The issue was clearly drawn by Davies' resolution, and the government ranks became clearly divided. The first sign of dissension in the government ranks was the

²⁸ Assembly Debates, 1876, p. 182.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 184-185. The school Act was administered by a Board of Education appointed by the government, but its responsibility to the legislature was never clearly determined.

strong speech given by Haviland in support of the resolution. Haviland said he was "much surprised" when he heard that the salaries of the Christian Brothers were being paid out of the public Treasury.³⁰ The Provincial Secretary and Dominion Senator said that if the Board of Education allowed violations of the School Act,

(...) then, Sir, the handwriting is on the wall - that the Board must go. (...) all I have to say is that it remains for the Government to make their election, either to sanction the action of the Board of Education with respect to denominational teaching in our schools, or to remodel it.³¹

The cleavage developed in the government ranks when Brecken defended the government by placing responsibility for educational policy on the Board of Education, but he too professed ignorance of the licensing of the Christian Brothers "(...) until he heard of it on the street."³² Sullivan too defended the government by placing "The whole management of the public education of the Province (...) under the Board of Education."³³ It was quite clear that the government would not survive an election fought on the School Question.

30 Assembly Debates, 1876, p. 185.

31 Ibid., p. 186.

32 Ibid., p. 191. The ignorance of both Haviland and Brecken suggests the manouevring taking place between the Board and the Catholic members of the government.

33 Ibid., p. 187-188.

No one opposed the appointment of a Committee, provided, however, that the investigation was extended to the whole province. Consequently, an amendment was moved to extend the investigation to all educational establishments in the province,³⁴ and the motion carried as amended.³⁵ The motives of L.H. Davies became quite clear when he objected to the amendment. He said the investigation must be limited to Charlottetown, "(...) in order that the people might go to the polls with a full knowledge of the present state of Public Education in this Province."³⁶ But Davies was not disappointed, because the report of the Committee was presented to the legislature on the last day of the session. The uncompromising Liberal leader was thus assured of an election issue.

The report of the Investigating Committee made many sound suggestions. It deplored particularly the confusion of responsibility between the Board of Education and the government.³⁷ But it was the findings of the Committee regarding religious teaching which drew the most attention in the following months.

³⁴ Assembly Debates, 1876, p. 212.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 222.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 210.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 271. The Report of the Committee appears on p. 271-275.

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In a section devoted to religious teaching the Committee reported as follows:

As a general rule, the Education imparted in our schools is secular; but, in some few schools throughout Queen's County, sectarian books have for many years back been used with the knowledge of at least some members of the Board of Education. (...) They do not appear to be confined to the Roman Catholic schools.³⁸

The Committee also pointed out that the teachers in St. Patrick's School were licensed by the Board of Education in October, 1875, and "(...) no change appears to have been made either in the manner or matter of education imparted there."³⁹ The suspicion and rumours which had been prevalent were thus confirmed. It was clearly shown that many schools of all denominations were sectarian to some extent, although the majority of the offenders were the Catholic districts. The Committee's Report became the platform of the Liberals in the election which followed in August.

The legislative debates and the Committee's Report sparked public discussion of the issue. For three years little had been said by the Patriot or the Examiner, and the Herald, the mouthpiece of the Catholic cause, accepted the Bishop's lead and gave a lukewarm support to the

³⁸ Assembly Debates, 1876, p. 274.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 275.

provincial Liberals.⁴⁰ But as the election campaign got under way the strange alliances were quickly shattered.

During May and June of 1876 the battle lines were clearly drawn. During these months the Patriot resumed its adamant opposition to sectarian schools. On May 10 the Patriot pronounced sectarian education unworkable in Prince Edward Island,⁴¹ and a few days later pointed out that electors must vote for the principle and not the man in the coming contest.⁴² By June 3 the Liberal organ was quite explicit on the issues to be decided at the polls, and made a clear appeal for the formation of religious parties.

The people have made up their minds that the school question is to be made the main, and almost the only issue at the polls. The sins and shortcomings of the Government, though they are neither few nor unimportant, appear to be wholly lost sight of by those who view the political situation; and the action taken by public men, with regard to the School Question is, in discussing their merits and demerits, the only matter now deemed worthy of consideration. By running the election squarely upon the School Question, party distinctions must, in a great measure be disregarded, and personal predilections must lose their influence. (...) Those who are in favor of free secular schools will, without regard to party ties, range themselves on the one side, and those who wish to establish the sectarian system in the Province will take their position on the other side. This necessitates a complete break up of the old party organizations and a reconstruction on the new basis.⁴³

⁴⁰ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XIX, no. 9, August 3, 1876.

⁴¹ Ibid., Vol. XVIII, no. 09, May 18, 1876.

⁴² Ibid., no. 92, May 27, 1876.

⁴³ Ibid., no. 94, June 3, 1876.

The Examiner objected to this appeal for the formation of religious parties. "(...) if we mistake not," said the Examiner, the people will "(...) endeavour to select as their representatives, men who will administer the public affairs of the Province economically and efficiently."⁴⁴ The Examiner thought that the people would not vote for "nincompoops" merely because they supported the Patriot on the School Question.⁴⁵ And recognizing the danger to J.C. Pope which was inherent in the Patriot's policy, the Examiner added that unless a better man could be found, let "(...) Mr. Pope's adherents (...) stick to their old leader."⁴⁶

When the party positions became so clearly defined the Herald beat a hasty retreat. It could no longer observe the truce with the Patriot and the Liberals, and it reverted to the side of J.C. Pope. The Herald's reversal led the Patriot to comment as follows:

The suddenness of the Herald's enmity to that gentleman [L.H. Davies] is as remarkable as its bitterness. Until very lately Mr. Davies' name was never mentioned by our contemporary except with approbation, and frequently with high praise.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXVII, no. 23, June 5, 1876.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XIX, no. 9, August 3, 1876.

The Patriot should not have been surprised for this was precisely what it had called for. It remained to be seen if the politicians were prepared to leave their parties and follow the Patriot's advice.

The contest was by no means an unequal one. There were fifteen constituencies on the Island, and in the rural districts there was no doubt of the outcome. The distribution of the population assured the Catholics of a majority in six of the thirteen rural constituencies, and the Protestant supporters were assured of the remainder. Charlottetown and Summerside therefore became the centre of interest, and the decision in these contests would in all probability determine the result.

Pope opened the campaign in Summerside on June 20. This was Pope's home territory, he had been elected by acclamation there in 1875, and he hoped to be able to hold its support. He was soon disappointed. David Rogers, one of Pope's strongest supporters, moved a resolution condemning "(...) any change in the present Free School Law, (...)"⁴⁸ The motion was supported by John Calhoun, another of Pope's followers. Referring to Rogers' action, the Patriot commented:

⁴⁸ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XVIII, No. 100, June 24, 1876. Report of Summerside meeting.

It, no doubt, cost him and Mr. Calhoun, and others holding the same views, much pain to break as decidedly as they did with Mr. Pope. Mr. Pope could not but have felt, when he saw men who used to follow him through thick and thin, who had shared in his victories and suffered in his defeats that his power in Summerside was broken - (...) ⁴⁹

Pope's loss of power was clearly evident, for his amendment to the resolution was lost, ⁵⁰ and Summerside declared its support for secular schools. A few days later Angus MacMillan, a Liberal, and John Lefurgey, a Conservative Cabinet Minister, were nominated to contest the Summerside constituency for the Protestant party, and both declared their opposition to Pope's policy. ⁵¹

The rout of the Conservative party was shortly completed. On July 6 a public meeting of secular school supporters was held in Charlottetown. The presence of Senator Haviland and J.H. Fletcher, along with L.H. Davies, was an ominous sign for Pope and the Catholics. A resolution was proposed stating that "(...) the free and unsectarian character of our public schools must be maintained in its purity and integrity." ⁵² In 1868

⁴⁹ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XVIII, No.100, June 24, 1876.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., Vol. XIX, No. 4, July 15, 1876.

⁵² Ibid., No. 2, July 8, 1876. Report of Charlottetown meeting.

Haviland had gone to Summerside to vote for Pope and in 1873 his support had assured Pope and the Conservatives of victory in the contest over Confederation. But the influential Senator now broke decidedly with his former ally. Haviland warned his listeners not to "(...) be led away by the scheme of what was called 'paying for results'."⁵³ He explained that he himself had once favoured it, because he thought it would work well, "(...) but when he afterwards came to reflect upon it, he found that it was only a delusion and a sham, (...)" He now believed that such a scheme would result in the State paying for sectarian as well as secular instruction which the state "had no right" to do. Finally, Haviland surrendered the Conservative party to Pope. He said:

He was a party man, and would like to see his party maintain the free, unsectarian, school system; but if it did not do so, and the question were submitted to the people at the polls, he would vote for the candidates who would uphold that system in its integrity.⁵⁴

The party was thus thrown to J.C. Pope. Haviland and Pope had no challengers for the party leadership. Owen, the Premier, who was never a major figure, did not contest the election, and although Haviland was also resigning

⁵³ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XIX, no. 2, July 6, 1876.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

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from the legislature to devote full time to his Senatorial duties, he was still the most influential Protestant in the party.

The loss of J.H. Fletcher's support was no less significant. Fletcher was the editor of the Argus, the official Conservative newspaper, and the loss of its support was a serious blow to Pope's group. The reluctance with which Fletcher left the Conservative party indicated how deeply many felt about the religious issue. Fletcher said:

He has supported Mr. Pope while that gentleman led the Government of the Province, during the Railway agitation, &., and would be with him to-night, were it not for the course which he (Mr. P.) was now pursuing with reference to the public schools.⁵⁵

The Conservative party thus lay in ruins. The meeting nominated L.H. Davies to contest the Charlottetown district, and George W. DeBlois, a "staunch and consistent Conservative", was later named as his running mate.⁵⁶

It was, as the Patriot said, "A Glorious Triumph for the Non-Sectarian School Party," and "Old Party Lines" were "rubbed out".⁵⁷

55 Patriot, editorial, Vol. XIX, No. 2, July 8, 1876.

56 Ibid., No. 5, July 20, 1876.

57 Ibid., No. 2, July 8, 1876.

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The events in Summerside and Charlottetown left the Conservative party in ruins. Only Brecken and Dr. Jenkins adhered to Pope. Jenkins withdrew from the contest, and Pope and Brecken determined to contest the Charlottetown district against Davies and DeBlois. The Conservative leaders were nominated at a meeting in Charlottetown on July 19, and both declared their adherence to the policy previously laid down by Pope. In his acceptance speech Brecken said:

For many years my opinion has been that something should be done for the schools in town. I am not an advocate for sectarian schools throughout the country, because I believe that in a mixed and sparsely settled community they are unsuitable. But in towns my opinion is that schools established by denominations might be utilized under certain regulations - to carry out the object of the State - to impart secular instruction to the youth of the Province.⁵⁸

Pope adopted the same policy, and took DeBlois and Haviland to task for their inconsistency because both had gone to Summerside and voted for him in 1868, when Pope first proclaimed his school policy.⁵⁹

Summerside was no longer a question mark, as Pope's absence assured his opponents of victory. But a victory for Pope's party in Charlottetown could have

⁵⁸ Examiner, Vol. XXVII, No. 30, July 24, 1876.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

brought about a deadlock in the legislature and some compromise might have been necessary. The city was therefore closely contested. Public meetings were held at which all the candidates spoke, and which nearly ended in riots. One party usually walked out when they were not allowed to speak.⁶⁰ The result was a victory for DeBlois and Davies by 112 and 109 votes respectively out of a total vote of 3726.⁶¹ This assured the Free School party of victory, and they won eighteen seats in a House of thirty members.⁶²

An examination of the results confirms that the School Question was the major, if not the only issue. In the predominantly Catholic districts there was no contest, and the Free School party also won several districts by acclamation. In other areas there was a contest within the party only. For example, in the Second District of King's County, John Caven and William Hooper opposed William Sullivan, the Solicitor-General, and Hilary MacIssac, but all four were Catholics and opposed to secular schools. Likewise, in the Fourth District of

⁶⁰ Examiner, Vol. XXVII, No. 31, July 31, 1876.

⁶¹ Patriot, Vol. XIX, No. 17, August 31, 1876.

⁶² Results are shown in Appendix 4. The Coalition government was composed of five Conservatives and four Liberals. The Conservatives were Daniel Gordon, John Lefurgy, John Yeo, Samuel Prowse, and George DeBlois. The Liberals were John F. Robertson, Alexander Laird, and William Stewart. The Liberal leader, Louis H. Davies, became Premier.

Prince and the First District of Queen's Counties all four candidates were supporters of the Protestant party. Thus, the legislature was divided into Sectarians and non-Sectarians. "The people have elected a Free School House of Assembly," remarked the Patriot, "and they expect to have, for the next four years at any rate, a Free School Government."⁶³

The winners celebrated with a parade through the streets of Charlottetown with a troop of horse and a band in attendance. Davies, DeBlois, and Haviland were drawn in open carriages, and congratulatory speeches were deliberated. Angus MacMillan, John Lefurgey, and John Calhoun, the victorious candidates from Prince County, were in attendance.⁶⁴ The affair did little to ease the bitter feelings. But within three months J.C. Pope turned his defeat in Charlottetown into a victory in the federal by-election. Oddly enough, it was Pope's policy in the provincial election which assured him of a federal seat.

2. Laird Goes to the North-West.

Less than two months after the contest over denominational schools, and before the bruised sympathies

⁶³ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XIX, No. 15, August 24, 1876.

⁶⁴ Ibid., No. 17, August 31, 1876.

of the losers had time to mend, David Laird was appointed Governor of the North West Territories. On October 6 Laird's appointment was announced, and Queen's County prepared for another election to fill the vacant seat.

Laird's career as Cabinet Minister was in many ways an unhappy one. His position was typical of the public man who is confronted with local issues which cannot always be reconciled with the national interest. The problem of patronage is a prime example. But before the Island's first Cabinet Minister left Ottawa he became involved in a far more serious issue which was to cause a split in the newly formed Secular School party. The dispute over the North West Act divided the Island Liberal supporters and practically assured J.C. Pope's election to the vacant seat.

In 1875 the MacKenzie government passed a Bill providing for the government of the North West Territories. Section Eleven of that Act provided that Separate Schools must always be permitted, regardless of the form of government which might eventually be established in the area. The Act also protected any group from double taxation in the event they wished to establish their own schools. Much discussion of the Act ensued in the Maritimes, and several large Protestant denominations forwarded protests. In the Island it was the only weakness in the otherwise

solid front presented by the supporters of secular schools.

The Act was passed in the session of 1875. In the Commons and Senate the Island members raised no objection to the Act,⁶⁵ and there was no indication of the storm it was soon to create. There was no discussion of the Act on the Island until the sudden appearance in the Island papers of a violent protest by the Evangelical Alliance of Prince Edward Island.⁶⁶ The Alliance represented six Protestant denominations and expressed alarm that such a "startling" measure was passed to "(...) gratify the Romanists of the Dominion," and feared that since the Dominion representatives had declared the "Sectarian System" of education to be the best for the North West Territories, Prince Edward Island "(...) may expect to be similarly dealt with." The Alliance appealed for action:

Protestants of Prince Edward Island, if you allow this action to pass without complaint or remonstrance, you become partakers of the sin and the guilt of it, and as certainly as your representatives will you reap your full share of its consequences.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ The vote in the Senate was not recorded, but Montgomery said in 1876 that he voted against the Act. Senate Debates, 1876, p. 209.

⁶⁶ Examiner, Vol. XXVII, No. 1, January 3, 1876. Also Patriot, Vol. XVIII, No. 52, January 8, 1876.

⁶⁷ Patriot, Vol. XVIII, No. 52, January 8, 1876.

The Alliance pointed out that sectarian education in the hands of "Popery" means "(...) what will dwarf the intellect, and render men and women the weak and credulous victims of priestly superstition and tyranny." Sectarian education is a system "(...) fraught with evils which have blighted, cursed, and all but desolated the fairest countries on earth." The Alliance concluded with an appeal for public support:

Petitions are being prepared. Let every Protestant Minister call upon his people; and every Protestant worthy of the name will respond by promptly and heartily appending his signature to that petition, which prays the Dominion Legislature to repeal the iniquitous Act of its last Session.⁶⁸

The reason for this sudden and violent statement against the North West Act is not readily apparent. The statement was made nearly one year after the Act was passed, and no explanation for the delay was ever made. The Patriot suspected political motives.

The opposition to the Act by an influential part of the Protestant community placed the Patriot and the Island Liberals in an embarrassing position. The paper gave its support to secular schools and the Liberal party, and it could not support the denominational system in one part of the country and oppose it in another. The difficulty was increased because Laird, a member of the government

⁶⁸ Patriot, Vol. XVIII, No. 52, January 8, 1876.

which passed the Act, was the proprietor and former editor of the Patriot. At first the distressed editor attacked the motives of those who framed the protest.⁶⁹ The paper criticized the abusive language of the protest and wondered why the clergymen had been silent so long, and why no effort had been made at their previous meetings to condemn the Act. It made a telling point when it pointed out that some of the same clergymen who sat silently on the Board of Education while the Christian Brothers were licensed and paid with government funds had appended their names to the petition. The Patriot concluded that the Appeal was "(...) primarily intended to damage our political friends, (...)"

But the Patriot was finally forced to take a stand. After a few days of soul-searching the Liberal organ finally decided that it disliked the Act, and preferred that it had not been passed, but it defended Laird and the federal government by explaining that although Separate Schools were permissible under the Act, no public funds could be granted for their support.⁷⁰

The Argus soon dislodged the Patriot from its equivocal defense. The Argus wondered if the Patriot

⁶⁹ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XVIII, No. 52, January 8, 1876.

⁷⁰ Ibid., No. 53, January 13, 1876.

had changed its opinion of denominational schools since it did not object to Separate Schools in the North West. The Patriot replied:

Our reply to this is a simple and a decided negative. We do not believe in sectarian education, in the first place; and in the second, we do not consider the separate school system applicable to this province.⁷¹

The Island Liberals were obviously in a distressed position. By refusing to make a clean break with Laird and the federal government, the Patriot appeared to be supporting two policies which were contradictory, and the Pope party spring to the attack.

The Examiner asked the Patriot to explain "(...) why a thing that is right in the North-West, would be wrong in the South-East."⁷² Pope's spokesman took Laird to task for his "double personality." He is a Cabinet Minister," said the Examiner, but "He is also proprietor of the Patriot (...)"⁷³ The Examiner said that Laird had managed to separate these two positions "in his own mind", so that while he was convinced that religious instruction was an "absolute necessity" in the North West his paper believed religious instruction was "hurtful"

⁷¹ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XVIII, No. 60, February 5, 1876.

⁷² Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXVII, No. 24, June 12, 1876.

⁷³ Ibid., No. 21, May 22, 1876.

rather than "beneficial" on the Island. The editorial continued:

To speak seriously of the pitiable exhibition which one of our public men is thus making of himself, we protest against it as an insult to the intelligence of the people.⁷⁴

Pope had found a serious breach in the defenses of his opponents, and he found an ally in the enemy's camp.

The division within the secularist ranks was brought into the open by the Presbyterian. The paper had been founded to promote the Protestant cause, but its extreme views did not find favor with the Patriot. When the Patriot opposed the Protest of the Evangelical Alliance, the Presbyterian accused it of joining the Catholics, and charged that the Liberal organ "(...) had gone over to the enemy and become the second hand organ of the Bishop."⁷⁵ That such a charge could be made revealed the difficulty of Laird's position. There could be no doubt that he was in serious difficulty with his previously solid Protestant support. The matter became more serious when Laird himself became directly involved.

The Alliance decided to forward its objections to Parliament and one of the ministers wrote to Laird

⁷⁴ Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXVII, No. 21, May 22, 1876. Laird was Minister of the Department responsible for the administration of the North West Territories.

⁷⁵ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XVIII, No. 58, January 29, 1876.

inquiring if he would present and support petitions from his seat in Parliament. Laird side-stepped neatly. He replied that "(...) I consider it my duty to present any Petition from my constituents, which in matter and form is consistent with the rules of the House."⁷⁶ The remainder of Laird's reply indicated the different perspective from which he viewed the question:

As to your second question whether I will plead the cause of the Committee in my place in the House, my reply is that I can hardly be expected to take up a question that will meet with strong opposition in the House, if I am supported by the people of one Province only. On your Committee I see the names of clergymen of the Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, Bible Christian and Baptist Churches. All these Churches have a lay membership throughout the Dominion. The House of Commons has representatives from all parts of the Dominion; it is therefore a doubtful task for any member of the House to advocate a cause taken up chiefly in two or three of the smaller Provinces, unless the clergy of the same churches take it up strongly in the other Provinces also.⁷⁷

Laird explained that his views on the "(...) superiority of non-sectarian Education for a mixed people are unchanged, (...)" and were any attempt made to impose such a system in his own province, he "(...) would resist it even at a great sacrifice." But he made it quite clear that he had no intention of pressing the issue, and

⁷⁶ David Laird Letterbook, p. 273, Laird to Rev. Mr. Duncan, 22 February, 1876.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

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proceeded to administer a mild scolding to his co-religionists:

But to take up the question as to another Province or Territory (unless the people there complain, when it might be a duty to help them) requires that it should be made a Dominion question; and it would be in vain for P.E. Island, or its representatives, to force their views on the House, unless backed up by the representatives of the same churches throughout the Dominion, as those who joined in the appeal in P.E. Island. Your work, I take it, for the present, lies more in waking up your brethren to join you in your petition than launching the question in an unprepared state in a House where religious questions are exceedingly irritating. If my Church moves as a whole, however, I will not be found even near the rear.⁷⁸

Laird seemed to be telling his friends in no uncertain terms that they were the only ones in the Dominion opposing the Act, and that they were too insignificant to be taken seriously.

A few days later Laird received the petition which he presented to the House. But he still had a card to play. He explained to Reverend Mr. Duncan that presenting a petition really did not mean very much:

⁷⁸ David Laird Letterbook, p. 273, Laird to Rev. Mr. Duncan, 22 February, 1876.

Now the presenting of petitions is different from the practice in the Local House. No motion is made, and no speech is allowed. The petition is presented, and two days after, it is read by the clerk, again without remark being permitted. Action can be taken only by bringing in a Bill, or something of that kind. If I were to do so, that would make it a Government measure, and my colleagues would have to consent. I suppose you scarcely expect me to resign my seat in the Government to introduce a Bill which I believe not twenty men in the House would support. Only the one petition on the subject has yet been presented; if a number more come in from all the Provinces, numerously signed, I will consider on the subject, and if I see it to be my duty to leave the Government, I would not hesitate long if I thought it was the wish of my constituents.⁷⁹

The opponents of the Bill found a more willing supporter in Senator Haviland. On March 9, 1876, Haviland presented a petition signed by upwards of four thousand Islanders asking for the repeal of the Act. Haviland managed to state his opinion that Section Eleven of the North West Act was opposed to "(...) the spirit and the letter of the British North America Act," before he was ruled out of order.⁸⁰ Later in the session similar petitions were presented from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.⁸¹ The government leader in the Senate stated that the government had no intention of repealing the Act, at which Haviland expressed his "deep disappointment", as he

⁷⁹ David Laird Letterbook, p. 310, Laird to Rev. Mr. Duncan, ? March, 1876.

⁸⁰ Senate Debates, 1876, p. 93.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 206-207.

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thought the petitions would have "(...) induced the Government to introduce a measure for the repeal of the obnoxious clause."⁸²

The alienation of a large body of Protestant support was not to be overlooked by the Island Liberals. They were no doubt aware that Pope had secured the unwavering support of the Catholics, and if their own forces became divided Pope might be swept into power in any subsequent election. Under the circumstances it might be suspected that Laird would have welcomed escape from his difficult position, but such was not the case. He accepted removal from the Cabinet with reluctance.

Cabinet solidarity was difficult to achieve in the Liberal party, and MacKenzie was constantly handicapped by party intrigue. Edward Blake was the accepted leader of a dissident wing of the party and gave MacKenzie constant trouble.⁸³ Blake had been coaxed into the Cabinet with difficulty, and in September, 1876, threatened to resign. The Quebec Liberals were disaffected. The Prime Minister was oppressed with the work of his own Department, and he "(...) was the first to admit that some changes were necessary."⁸⁴

⁸² Senate Debates, 1876, p. 207.

⁸³ Dale C. Thomson, Alexander MacKenzie, Clear Grit, Toronto, MacMillan, 1960, p. 213-216 and p. 233-236.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 275-279.

Under such circumstances Laird's position was bound to be insecure. He took little part in debate and was considered an adequate, but not indispensable Minister. But despite his difficulties with his Island supporters Laird was not enthusiastic about a change. In 1878 he told MacKenzie that he did not wish to leave the government when he did, and added that his Island supporters were also opposed to his removal. He said he was sorry to desert those with whom he had fought "(...) so many hard battles against as an unscrupulous set of politicians as are to be found anywhere."⁸⁵ Late in September, 1876, Richard Cartwright suggested to MacKenzie that perhaps "Laird's objections to the Nor. West might be much lessened if you could promise him Manitoba as soon as Morris leaves which will be somewhere in 1877."⁸⁶ Laird finally yielded, and on October 7, 1876, he was appointed Governor of the North West. Two weeks later the Cabinet vacancy was given to David Mills of Ontario.

The loss of Cabinet representation produced a violent reaction from the Islanders, and MacKenzie received considerable abuse from the Island politicians. Peter

⁸⁵ MacKenzie Papers, p. 2282, Laird to MacKenzie, 1 July, 1879.

⁸⁶ Cartwright Papers, Calendar, p. 109, Cartwright to Alexander MacKenzie, 27 September, 1876.

Sinclair accused the Prime Minister of yielding to the pressure of Ontario interests, and L.H. Davies maintained that the Island had a right to a Cabinet post. MacKenzie explained to both Davies and Sinclair that he was interested only in obtaining good men, regardless of where they came from, and that the Island could not claim a Cabinet seat "(...) as a matter of local right."⁸⁷ He wrote to Sinclair as follows:

As to filling the vacant place in the Cabinet from Ontario that is not done by me for Ontario interests, but simply because the business required I should have a legal gentleman to aid me with the work. Most will think that we have treated the Island pretty well in selecting the N. West Governor from its Citizens, a far more important office than that of Minister although Mr. Laird would rather have staid(sic) here as Minister.

You could hardly expect a Minister as a matter of local right. Ontario has Seventeen times your population. Quebec twelve times [1] N. Scotia four times and New Brunswick three times your population. It is impossible to lay down a rule that all the Provinces shall be represented in the Cabinet. Indeed I think the first Minister should be at liberty to take two from the Island if the men who are most wanted should be there. (...)

If you are under the impression that any demand came from Ontario for this Seat let me disabuse your mind. There was no small feeling of that kind.⁸⁸

MacKenzie repeated the same arguments to L.H. Davies, but he was more explicit regarding the regional

⁸⁷ MacKenzie Letterbooks, Vol. 1, p. 760, MacKenzie to P. Sinclair, 26 October, 1876.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

principle. MacKenzie told Davies that he could not adopt as a "final policy" a promise to give the Island a Cabinet Minister under all circumstances, and that Cabinet representation would depend upon the abilities of the men elected because he wished to "(...) relax rather than tighten the bonds of sectional representation (...)"⁸⁹

MacKenzie was adamant about his decision to deprive the Island of its seat in the Cabinet, and his insistence produced a crisis in Island politics. A federal by-election under such unfavourable circumstances so soon after the formation of the Secular School party was a serious threat to its existence. Davies expressed his concern to MacKenzie:

We have had so many elections on the Island the last few years that many of our friends have become tired and apathetic. The late Local elections which were fought out fiercely on what we call the Free Non-Sectarian School ticket precipitated to a considerable extent the amalgamation of portions of the old Liberal and Conservative parties. The Roman Catholic Liberals all joined the Conservative wing led by J.C. Pope and a very great many of the old Conservatives led by T.H. Haviland joined hands with us. The new Govt of which I am the Leader consists of representative men from both the old Camps and as we have only been a month or so in office you will at once understand how anxious I was to avoid a Dominion Election which might result in driving our new friends into their old ranks. I am sure you will comprehend the situation at a glance.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ MacKenzie Letterbooks, Vol. 1, p. 755, Mackenzie to L.H. Davies, 25 October, 1876.

⁹⁰ MacKenzie Papers, p. 1386, L.H. Davies to MacKenzie, 13 October, 1876.

Davies tried to avoid the crisis by asking MacKenzie to postpone the appointment of Mills until after the election, but Mills' appointment was announced before Davies' letter reached the Prime Minister.⁹¹

In an effort to salvage something from the unfortunate turn of events the Island Liberals decided to offer the nomination to Senator Haviland. Such a plan would have removed the threat to the Coalition government and dashed Pope's chances of winning the seat. It would have been a major coup for the Liberals, and owing to Sir John A. MacDonald's protectionist "leanings" there was a good possibility of its success. Davies explained the plan to the Prime Minister:

The situation stands in this way. I cannot run myself or the Local Combination would split to atoms. The Conservative party are at 6's & 7's on the local issues and the portion who have joined us (by far the largest & most influential wing of the party) are very disaffected towards Sir John's position and policy. His evident leanings towards the Protectionists & his too palpable bids for their support frighten these men. A little skilful engineering ought to bring them solidly into our ranks and once there I don't think there will be any fear of them afterwards. Under these circumstances we had a caucus and determined to offer the nomination to Senator Haviland if he will come boldly out and announce himself as a supporter of yours. Haviland is a true honest fellow and if he consents to accept on those conditions you may rely on him. He will I have not the slightest doubt running as a Reformer carry the County and the chances are by acclamation.⁹²

⁹¹ MacKenzie Letterbooks, Vol. 1, p. 755, MacKenzie to L.H. Davies, 25 October, 1876.

⁹² MacKenzie Papers, p. 1386, L.H. Davies to MacKenzie, 13 October, 1876.

Unfortunately for the Liberal supporters, Haviland, who wanted a few days to consult with his friends, refused to "come boldly out" as a Grit. As a result J.C. Pope contested the county against William Welsh, a Liberal member of the local legislature.

If the MacKenzie government had deliberately attempted to alienate the Island electorate they could not have been more successful. After nearly three years of power the Liberals could not claim one significant achievement in Prince Edward Island. The railway gave only dissatisfaction, and the Island was still isolated during the winter months. The Liberal office seekers were disgruntled. Although the Protestants united under the Liberal banner in the provincial election, the North West Act caused dissension in their own ranks. Finally, by removing Laird, the Liberals presented positive proof that Island interests were neglected and that the Island representatives were incapable of protecting the Island's interests. It was a disillusioned and divided party which faced the indestructible J.C. Pope in November, 1876.

3. Pope Goes to Ottawa.

The by-election for Laird's vacant seat had a national flavour. MacKenzie's difficulties with his Cabinet were well known. Previous by-elections in the

autumn of 1875 and the summer of 1876 had given the Conservatives renewed hope.⁹³ During the summer of 1876 Sir John discovered the "political picnics", and his success put new life into the Conservatives throughout the Dominion.⁹⁴ Thus the loss of a seat formerly held by a Cabinet Minister, even if from Prince Edward Island, was not to be ignored. Sir John showed his interest in the Island contest by writing J.C. Pope and encouraging him to work hard to gain the seat,⁹⁵ and MacKenzie wanted Davies to contest the election.⁹⁶ Davies could not resign as Premier, but J.C. Pope, who had so recently been rejected by the voters of Queen's County, entered the contest with high hopes.

There was no lack of issues from which Pope could choose, but he concentrated on the loss of Cabinet representation, for this was the most vivid reminder of the Island's neglect and discontent. Early in the campaign the Examiner declared that the issue before the people was "exceedingly simple." The electors had first

⁹³ Donald Creighton, The Old Chieftain, Toronto, MacMillan, 1955, p. 204, and p. 223.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 223-224.

⁹⁵ Tupper Papers, Vol. 4, p. 157, J.C. Pope to John A. MacDonald, 22 October, 1876.

⁹⁶ MacKenzie Papers, p. 1386, L.H. Davies to MacKenzie, 13 October, 1876. Also Thomson, Op. Cit., p. 294.

to decide who was the better man to represent them, and secondly,

(...) whether or not they will approve or disapprove of the action of the Dominion Government in depriving this Province of representation in the Dominion Cabinet. (...) If they elect an opponent of McKenzie, they express their disapproval of McKenzie's action, and their intention to take a dignified stand in defence of their rights. The issue, though simple, is important to this province.⁹⁷

During a campaign speech in Charlottetown Pope declared that the loss of a Cabinet seat "(...) was an insult to the people of this province, who were treated as non-entities."⁹⁸ He claimed that the Island had a right to a place in the Cabinet, and said:

It was now the duty of our representatives in the Dominion to stand up and give no party their support who refused to appoint one of their number to a seat in the Cabinet. He would support no party that would not do us justice in that matter as well as every other. By a studied persistence and determination on the part of our Representatives to procure their rights, full justice would be done this Province.⁹⁹

Pope's election card stated that he would not "(...) support any administration which will refuse to Prince Edward Island, a voice in the Councils of the Country."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXVII, No. 44, October 30, 1876.

⁹⁸ Ibid., No. 45, November 6, 1876.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Patriot, Vol. XIX, No. 31, October 26, 1876.

While concentrating on the issue of Cabinet representation, Pope did not allow the Islanders to forget the blunders in the operation of the railway. His election card stated that the railway was not as great a benefit to the Island as it should be, "(...) entirely owing to its present management," and if elected Pope would "(...) endeavour so to lessen its necessary expenditure and reduce the Tariff as would make it of more extended advantage to all classes."¹⁰¹

Despite the numerous complaints which the Island had about the MacKenzie administration and the Island representatives, the religious question remained the most significant issue. Pope had secured solid Catholic support by his course in the local election. But the Catholics were a minority in Queen's County, and to be successful Pope needed some Protestant support. The reconciliation of Pope with the Protestant Conservatives depended on the course pursued by Haviland, who led the defection of the Protestant Conservatives during the provincial election. When Pope succeeded in regaining the support of his veteran political ally, the chances of a Liberal victory practically vanished. The North West Act made it possible to reconstruct the divided Conservative party.

101 Patriot, Vol. XIX, No. 31, October 26, 1876.

Only a few weeks previously the two Conservative leaders had denounced each other's sincerity and consistency on the School Question, but on November 3, at a major campaign rally in Charlottetown, Haviland appeared on the same platform as Pope and spoke in his support. The Senator said "(...) he was now, as ever, a Liberal-Conservative," and claimed that he was supporting Mr. Pope "(...) with the full consent and approval of Messrs. Yeo, Prowse, and other leading Conservatives (...)"¹⁰² Against charges of inconsistency he defended himself by reference to the Liberal government's policy in the North West. Haviland said:

If any one was inconsistent, it was Mr. Welsh. A short time ago he was one of the loudest opponents of separate schools. Now he was a candidate in behalf of a Government which - in the face of the Constitution - had persistently endeavored to fasten separate schools upon New Brunswick and which had actually fastened them upon the North-West Territories.¹⁰³

At the same meeting Pope declared:

Protestants would be much more inconsistent in supporting Mr. MacKenzie's Government than in supporting the scheme proposed by him (Mr. P.) at the late local election, as the former went much further than he ever did.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Examiner, Vol. XXVII, No. 45, November 6, 1876. Yeo and Prowse were Conservative Cabinet Ministers in the Coalition government.

¹⁰³ Examiner, Vol. XXVII, No. 45, November 6, 1876.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

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The arguments of Pope and Haviland were quite plausible, and were evidently sufficient to win the support of the Presbyterian, and that paper, supposedly devoted to the Protestant cause, campaigned for Pope.¹⁰⁶

The Liberals could only profess amazement at the turn events had taken. Referring to the Presbyterian's support of Pope, the Patriot made a revealing comment:

Everybody believes that Mr. Pope's object in agitating the school question was to pave the way to Ottawa, and to strengthen the MacDonalld party in the province. [Pope's policy] has placed the denominationalists under a debt of gratitude to him which they, no doubt, will hasten to pay, and wonderful to witness, we find the editor of the Presbyterian [assisting him].¹⁰⁷

Haviland's action was a particularly bitter blow to the Liberals. Only a few weeks before, the Liberals had offered Haviland the Liberal nomination, and now he was found in Pope's camp once more. The Patriot termed Haviland's action a "foul blow", and made this revealing comment:

Mr. Haviland well knows that Mr. Welsh, or any other member of the Secular School Party, who contests Queen's County against Mr. J.C. Pope, is embarrassed by a weight which Mr. Haviland himself, more than any other man on this Island, has helped to place on his shoulders. He is well convinced that Mr. J.C. Pope's efforts in the cause of denominational schools have gained for him the Catholic vote of the County. This vote he expects to receive independently of party considerations.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XIX, No. 32, October 28, 1876.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., editorial, Vol. XIX, No. 33, November 2, 1876.

The denunciations of the Patriot did not deter Haviland. He accompanied Pope in the Protestant districts, and he stumped the Belfast area, a Liberal and Protestant stronghold, accompanied by the Conservative candidate. The Patriot asked sarcastically if Haviland would accompany Pope to Fort Augustus and St. Anns, two predominantly Catholic areas.¹⁰⁹

The religious issue was freely used by both parties. Pope usually reviewed his school policy when speaking in Catholic areas, and L.H. Davies, who took a prominent part in the campaign, frequently warned the Protestants that if Pope was consistent he would use his influence in the Dominion legislature to impose Separate Schools on the Island.¹¹⁰ The Examiner advised the Protestants to vote for Pope, for by electing him to the Dominion legislature he would be powerless to interfere in the local School Question.¹¹¹

There can be no doubt that the North West Act embarrassed the Liberals, for Welsh and Davies publicly

¹⁰⁹ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XIX, No. 33, November 2, 1876.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., No. 36, November 11, 1876, and Examiner, Vol. XXVII, No. 45, November 6, 1876. (Accounts of public meetings)

¹¹¹ Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXVII, No. 43, October 23, 1876.

dissociated themselves from Section Eleven. During a meeting in Pownal Hall L.H. Davies was forced to admit that "Laird must shoulder his own share of the responsibility of section eleven."¹¹² Davies "(...) did not approve of that section," and he believed that "Mr. Laird abhorred that section in his heart."¹¹³ In his election card Welsh also took exception to the troublesome clause.¹¹⁴

There can be no doubt that the School Question placed the Liberals in an unenviable position. The situation had reversed itself since 1874. At that time Pope had alienated his Protestant support, and the Bishop had practically forbidden Catholics to vote for him. In 1876 Pope was not only supported publicly by the Catholics, but he had partially mended the breaches in his own party as well. The only vulnerable point in Conservative policy was the protectionist pronouncements of Sir John A. MacDonald. Free trade was a policy dear to the hearts of Islanders, and the Liberals clamoured loudly that they were the protectors of the Island's economic interests. It was the only useful argument the Island Liberals could find, and they determined to turn it to their advantage.

112 Patriot, Vol. XIX, No. 34, November 4, 1876.

113 Ibid.

114 Ibid., No. 31, October 26, 1876.

Early in the campaign the Patriot maintained that there were only two issues to be considered. "They are the Pacific Railway and Free Trade."¹¹⁵ A few days later the Patriot warned the electors not to be deceived:

They will be told that the Question of Free Trade and Protection is not before the country, and some will very likely go so far as to endeavour to convince them Sir John A. MacDonald is a Free Trader. The people ought to be on their guard. It is the interest of Prince Edward Islanders, no matter what political party they may belong to, to support the Government which is opposed to taxing one class of the community for the benefit of another class.¹¹⁶

The issue of free trade was one which should have done good service for the Liberals. After Confederation it was the first and practically only national issue to receive attention on the Island. The efforts of the manufacturing interests to obtain protection were followed closely by the Island merchant community, and delegates were sent to the Dominion Board of Trade meeting in March, 1874.

Senator Howlan and Fenton T. Newbury attended the Dominion meeting and on their return expressed alarm at the efforts of the Canadian manufacturers to obtain protection. They suggested that "(...) measures ought to be taken immediately to strengthen the hands of the representatives

¹¹⁵ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XIX, No. 27, October 14, 1876.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., No. 30, October 21, 1876, The C.P.R. never became a real issue.

of the Island in the Dominion Parliament in opposing the imposition of protective duties."¹¹⁷

A public meeting was called which was attended by members of both political parties. The meeting was almost unanimous in support of free trade and a petition was circulated and signed for forwarding to the Dominion representatives.¹¹⁸ The Examiner, which was responsible for re-activating the Chamber of Commerce in February, 1874, argued that the Chamber was required so that it could help in procuring free trade, which would open up great markets for Island produce.¹¹⁹ At the same time the Patriot tried to impress its readers with the impending disaster:

We wish to impress upon our readers the importance of heartily and promptly co-operating with the Chamber of Commerce in their endeavors to frustrate the selfish designs of the manufacturers of the West. Protection in the Dominion is a live movement and the Protectionists are thoroughly in earnest.¹²⁰

It was quite evident that the Island had not abandoned its preference for free trade, and in the months that followed

¹¹⁷ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XVI, No. 14, March 14, 1874.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., No. 15, March 21, 1874.

¹¹⁹ Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXV, No. 7, February 16, 1874.

¹²⁰ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XVI, No. 14, March 14, 1874.

the Patriot regularly warned its readers of the movement afoot in the Dominion. It was not until 1876, however, that it became a serious political issue.

The issue was clearly drawn when Sir John A. MacDonald moved his amendment during the discussion of Cartwright's budget in 1876. Sir John's carefully worded resolution asked for a "readjustment of the tariff" to aid in alleviating the stagnation of business, and also to "(...) afford fitting encouragement and protection to the struggling manufactures and industries, as well as to the agricultural products of the Country."¹²¹ To the Patriot the meaning was clear:

Sir John A. MacDonald's party has become the Protectionist Party of the Dominion, and should hereafter be known by that name. Sir John condemned the Government because they would not tax the bread we eat, and add to the cost of the clothes we wear. He and his party would materially increase the cost of living in the country.¹²²

The Liberal spokesman also wondered at the Examiner's silence. The organ of Pope maintained a discreet silence for many weeks, but finally replied feebly that Sir John was a "free trader in principle", to which the Patriot retorted:

¹²¹ Quoted in Patriot, editorial, Vol. XVIII, No. 79, April 13, 1876.

¹²² Patriot, editorial, Vol. XVIII, No. 75, March 30, 1876.

The plain English of the matter is, that the man who voted for that resolution, and still persists in calling himself a free-trader is either an unblushing hypocrite or an arrant fool.¹²³

As the election campaign got underway free trade and protection appeared to be a winning card for the Liberals. The Patriot published daily the speeches delivered by Sir John at the Ontario picnics, and grasped with obvious delight Sir John's statement at Simcoe. Sir John, who was moving cautiously toward a protectionist policy, said:

So you MUST NOT SUPPORT A MAN UNLESS HE PLEDGES HIMSELF TO VOTE, NOT ONLY FOR PROTECTION, BUT AGAINST ANY GOVERNMENT WHICH WILL NOT BRING DOWN A MEASURE FOR THE PURPOSE.¹²⁴

The Patriot published regularly Sir John's most emphatic statements of protectionist doctrine, and insisted that Sir John was a protectionist. Anyone who denied this was "deceiving the people."¹²⁵

During the campaign William Welsh emphasized the same issue. In his election card Welsh expressed pleasure that free trade was a plank in MacKenzie's platform, and stated that he would give his support to such a policy.¹²⁶

¹²³ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XVIII, No. 79, April 13, 1876.

¹²⁴ Quoted in Patriot, editorial, Vol. XIX, No. 30, October 21, 1876.

¹²⁵ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XIX, No. 33, November 2, 1876.

¹²⁶ Ibid., No. 31, October 31, 1876.

In his speeches Welsh constantly referred to the "ridiculous" position adopted by Pope. At Strathalbyn Welsh denied that Pope could be a free trader if he supported the leader of a protectionist party. "If Mr. Pope was a Free Trader at heart, he was bound to support the Free Trade party," said Welsh.¹²⁷

Despite the Liberal efforts to tarnish Pope with the protectionist brush, the free trade record of the MacKenzie government was not without blemish. MacKenzie was in difficulty with his own party on trade policy. The members from the manufacturing centres led a movement within the Liberal ranks for tariff protection,¹²⁸ and MacKenzie himself had campaigned for Thoman Workman, an outspoken protectionist from Montreal.¹²⁹ But worst of all, the Liberal government had raised the general duties from 15 to 17½ per cent, and had attempted in 1874 to impose a crippling five per cent. on the Island's ship-builders. "We must conclude", said the Examiner, "that whatever Mr. MacKenzie may be in theory, he is not a free trader in practice."¹³⁰ The organ of Pope said they might

¹²⁷ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XIX, No. 36, November 11, 1876.

¹²⁸ Creighton, Op. Cit., p. 213-216.

¹²⁹ Thomson, Op. Cit., p. 254.

¹³⁰ Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXVII, No. 44, October 30, 1876.

therefore "be excused for doubting Mr. Welsh's reliability" on the protection issue.¹³¹

While casting doubt on the sincerity of Liberal free trade principles, Pope, in the early stages of the campaign, maintained that he was a free trader. His election card merely stated that he was a "Free Trader on the broad principle."¹³² But as the campaign progressed Pope was forced to dissociate himself from any party, even his own, if it did not adhere to free trade principles. At a meeting in Charlottetown he adopted a carefully worded and vague position:

The next change made against him was, that he was a supporter of Sir John A. Macdonald, and therefore, a protectionist. In answer to this charge, he would say that he was not a supporter of MacKenzie, MacDonalld, or anyone else when they did not serve the best interests of the country. He believed in free trade, and not in protection. It was well known that all the members for Montreal and several other large cities of the Dominion were Protectionists, although many of them supported the MacKenzie Government. It was, therefore, a great mistake to suppose that all the supporters of the present Dominion Government were Free Traders. On the other hand, many of Sir John Macdonald's supporters were Free Traders. Even Sir John himself was not as great a Protectionist as his political opponents declared him to be. That gentleman went for Protection only to a moderate extent.¹³³

131 Examiner, editorial, Vol. XXVII, No. 44, October 30, 1876.

132 Patriot, Vol. XIX, No. 31, October 26, 1876.

133 Examiner, Vol. XXVII, No. 45, November 6, 1876.

Pope then declared he would "do all in his power" to secure "Reciprocal" free trade.

Pope's declaration of independence was a tribute to the success of the Liberal campaign, and was also indicative of the political dangers of being a protectionist in Prince Edward Island. Yet the Conservatives were probably successful in dulling the effectiveness of the Liberal attack. It was not difficult to cast doubt on the free trade principles of a party which was seriously divided on the trade issue, and had raised the general tariff rates, while Pope could still maintain his adherence to "Reciprocal" free trade. Pope had neatly summed up the issue when he advised Sir John early in the campaign that "The great cry against us will be your Protective Policy, but as we are all Free Traders on the broad principle they wont gain much by that."¹³⁴ Sir John may have smiled, but Pope's forecast was correct.

The final returns showed that Pope had won by less than 100 votes.¹³⁵ The Patriot commented that the Catholics had elected Pope,¹³⁶ and Laird wrote bitterly

¹³⁴ Tupper Papers, Vol. 4, p. 157, J.C. Pope to John A. MacDonald, 22 October, 1876.

¹³⁵ Results are shown in Appendix 5.

¹³⁶ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XIX, No. 40, November 25, 1876.

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from the North West that the Catholics would "(...) support Pope though he were to side with all the scandal-mongers in creation."¹³⁷

The poll results indicate that the explanations of Laird and the Patriot were correct. Of the four rural districts Pope carried only the third, the only one in which the Catholics were a majority and the only one which returned a Catholic in the provincial contest two months earlier. The individual polls show the same result. In Lot 22 Pope received a huge majority, while in Murray Harbor North and Belle Creek Welsh won with comfortable margins.

Charlottetown was the only Protestant area to give Pope a majority. Several factors may offer an explanation for this unusual result. Pope was extremely popular in the capital, as the close result in the provincial election demonstrated. Despite a large majority of Protestants Charlottetown had given Davies and DeBlois relatively small majorities of 112 and 109 votes respectively, and Brecken and Pope had been elected there in the provincial election of 1873. In the federal election of 1873 Brecken and Jenkins received large majorities in Charlottetown, although they failed to carry the county. Charlottetown was

¹³⁷ MacKenzie Papers, p. 1486, Laird to McKenzie, 5 January, 1877.

therefore a Conservative stronghold. Neither can Haviland's influence and the divisive effects of the North West Act be overlooked. Besides, William Welsh was not one of the major political figures on the Island. He had not been a prominent figure before 1876, and his influence was limited to his own area. In fact the impression can hardly be avoided that the more astute Liberal politicians refused to enter the contest against Pope. All these factors combined to give Pope a majority in Charlottetown.

The conclusion that the School Question determined the outcome of the election can hardly be avoided. Pope secured the Catholic vote, and when he engineered a reconciliation with Haviland, the Conservative leader assured himself of the few Protestant votes needed for a majority. Those who may not have been influenced by the School Question would hardly be attracted by the dismal record of the federal Liberals. It was a particularly satisfying victory for J.C. Pope, who for two years had attacked Laird and his friends, and who had survived two crushing defeats to regain his position as the dominant figure in Island politics. The stage was set for the federal election of 1878.

CHAPTER V

CONSERVATIVE TRIUMPH - 1876-1878

The election of 1876 was a by-election only. The contest was for one of the six seats on the Island, and it remained to be seen if the result was indicative of Island feeling. The federal election of 1878 supplied the answer. The two years which intervened produced several developments which influenced the political fortunes of both federal parties on the Island. On the national level the Conservative party removed all doubt concerning its commercial policy. John A. MacDonald's National Policy resolution in 1878 committed the party to a retaliatory tariff policy if such a step was necessary to procure reciprocity. It thus appeared impossible for Pope to adhere any longer to free trade principles without repudiating his chosen party. Locally, the Coalition government passed a new School Act which reorganized the school system on the non-sectarian principle. This raised the possibility that local bitterness over the religious issue would dissipate before 1878, or that the incensed Catholics would repudiate the federal Liberals. The election of 1878 answered all the questions.

1. Pope Supports the National Policy.

Pope was elected as a supporter of free trade. Throughout the campaign of 1876 he insisted that he was a "free trader on the broad principle," and had gone so far as to suggest he would support no party which advocated a protectionist policy. When Pope's party leader moved his National Policy resolution in 1878, J.C. Pope was faced with a critical decision. He had to choose either to follow his party on a measure which was decidedly opposed to the Island's interests and to the wishes of his constituents, or to repudiate his leader's policy. It was a difficult decision for the man who was expecting the Cabinet post he had been promised in 1873 if Sir John was returned to power in 1878.

If Pope elected to follow his party there could be no doubt he was opposing the almost unanimous opinion of the entire Maritimes and the Island in particular. In 1876 Alfred Jones of Halifax led the Maritime members in opposition to even the smallest increase in duties.¹ In the session of 1877, the Islanders, and other Maritimers "were most determined of all," MacKenzie wrote Laird.²

¹ Dale C. Thomson, Alexander MacKenzie: Clear Grit, Toronto, MacMillan, 1960, p. 260. Also Donald Creighton, John A. MacDonald: The Old Chieftain, Toronto, MacMillan, 1955, p. 211.

² MacKenzie Letterbooks, Vol. 2, p. 613, MacKenzie to Laird, 29 January, 1879.

"They waited upon me to warn me that an increase would be fatal to them and indeed said that they would not promise to support the Gov't if such an increase should be proposed."³ These manouvers occurred within the Liberal party, and although Pope was not a Liberal, there cannot be the slightest doubt that the actions of the Liberal members were a faithful reflection of Island opinion. As a result, Pope's actions in the Commons were closely watched by his constituents, and by the Patriot in particular.

The first test of Pope's free trade principles came during the Parliamentary session of 1877. During the budget debate Sir John moved a resolution calling for a "readjustment" of the tariff to "benefit and foster the agricultural, mining, and manufacturing interests of the Dominion."⁴ Sir John was still wary of a protectionist policy, and the amendment was carefully worded, but not carefully enough for the Island Conservative. Pope delivered a speech which could be acclaimed by any Islander.⁵ Pope declared himself a "free-trader", and thought that a tariff of seventeen and one-half per cent was sufficient

³ MacKenzie Letterbooks, Vol. 2, p. 613, MacKenzie to Laird, 29 January, 1879.

⁴ Thomson, Op. Cit., p. 299.

⁵ Commons Debates, 1877, p. 972-974.

protection for Canadian manufacturers. He argued that protection would lead to monopolies, vested interests, and higher consumer cost, which would be opposed by most Canadians. It was a fine performance, and even the Patriot was pleased,⁶ but the shrewd Pope was careful to leave his future policy an open question. The conclusion of his speech was suggestive of things to come:

So far as his Province was concerned, they (sic) wanted reciprocity with the United States; and if a hostile tariff, discriminating duties, or a general readjustment, would attain that object, he would willingly go for any or all of them, believing that the interests of the Province and of the Dominion would be best served by so doing; but, at present, he must say he saw no reasonable prospect of obtaining reciprocity.⁷

Pope showed that he was hardly less adept than his leader at facing both ways on the protection issue. The closing statement left open the door for a change of policy. The other Island members did not speak to the resolution, and the matter rested until the following session.

During the session of 1878 all members were conscious of the election which was expected during the summer, and the two parties jockeyed for positions. The Liberals were firmly committed to free trade, and Sir John

6 Patriot, editorial, Vol. XXII, No. 23, March 16, 1878.

7 Commons Debates, 1877, p. 973-974.

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moved his famous National Policy resolution, which became the party platform. The resolution, which provoked a long debate, read as follows:

(...) resolved that this House is of opinion that the welfare of Canada requires the adoption of a National Policy, which by a judicious readjustment of the Tariff will benefit and foster the agricultural, the mining, the manufacturing and other interests of the Dominion; that such a policy will retain in Canada thousands of our fellow countrymen now obliged to expatriate themselves in search of the employment denied them at home; will restore prosperity to our struggling industries, now so sadly depressed; will prevent Canada from being made a sacrifice market; will encourage and develop an active interprovincial trade, and moving (as it ought to do) in the direction of reciprocity of tariffs with our neighbours, so far as the varied interests of Canada may demand, will greatly tend to procure for this country, eventually, a reciprocity of trade.⁸

The resolution was a masterpiece of ambiguity. It looked forward, "as it ought to do," to free trade, but also promised protection if reciprocity could not be achieved. A "judicious readjustment" of the tariff appeared harmless, but the resolution also allowed for the adoption of a prohibitive tariff wall.

The ambiguity served its purpose. It permitted Conservatives like Pope to support the resolution, and at the same time declare themselves free traders. On March 12, 1878, the resolution came to a vote, and J.C. Pope voted with the Opposition, while his five colleagues

⁸ Commons Debates, 1878, p. 1071.

supported the government.⁹ The Island election campaign had begun.

Pope was immediately charged with inconsistency. Daniel Davies wondered how Pope could vote for MacDonald's resolution in 1878, and oppose a similar one in 1877. Pope's reply was a compliment to the skill with which the resolution was framed.¹⁰ The Island Conservative stated that the resolution which he supported "was not a Protection resolution," and that its object was free trade. "They were all in favour of Free trade." The Maritime provinces were prepared to adopt any policy which would lead to free trade, and although a "retaliatory policy" might not force the Americans to grant reciprocity, "it was the only possible means we had of obtaining it." Pope continued:

He was a Free-Trader, but he wanted to obtain reciprocal Free-trade, which would more promote the interests of the people of Prince Edward Island, than anything else that possibly could be done.¹¹

Pope's arguments were plausible, and the Toronto Globe sustained his position. Commenting on MacDonald's resolution, the Liberal paper declared that "Mr. Pope, the

9 Commons Debates, 1878, p. 1071.

10 Ibid., p. 1783-1784.

11 Ibid., p. 1784.

Champion Free Trader, might safely vote for it, and boast himself, with perfect consistency, to be the champion Free Trader still."¹²

It was evident that the Island Liberals did not consider retaliation the best means of obtaining reciprocity. Perry warned the government that his people "(...) would not submit to increased taxation merely to gratify the manufacturers of Montreal or Ontario, who were neither liberal nor generous in their views."¹³ He informed the Commons that he had warned his constituents "(...) to beware of wolves in sheep's clothing; (...) who went about with plausible stories."¹⁴ Davies would not object to incidental protection, but if protection "(...) meant a large increase of Customs duties, and increased prices for their consumers, (...)" he feared the people of Prince Edward Island would not "relish this sort of thing."¹⁵ Sinclair declared that Sir John's policy, which meant prohibitive duties on all goods, was "(...) the most destructive and injurious policy a new country could engage in, making the necessaries of life dear to the working classes; and,

12 Quoted in Examiner, Vol. 2, No. 262, March 20, 1878.

13 Commons Debates, 1878, p. 1063.

14 Ibid., p. 1063.

15 Ibid., p. 1724.

consequently, he would vote against it."¹⁶ MacIntyre said that the people of the Island "(...) were not inclined to be taxed in order that a few manufacturers might be benefited by it."¹⁷ Not only was he opposed to any increase of duties, but "(...) a reduction should take place on the whole list," as soon as the finances of the country permitted.¹⁸ There could be no doubt that Pope stood alone.

On the Island the Liberals were jubilant. The Patriot had always maintained that Pope must be a protectionist because he was a Conservative. It now had the proof. On March 16 the Liberal spokesman carried two long articles showing Pope's inconsistency.¹⁹ It scoffed at the argument of retaliation:

Canada with its 4,000,000 inhabitants is to force the American 40,000,000 to come to terms. How is this to be done? By forcing Prince Edward Island to pay a protective duty on all American products which we use.²⁰

It referred to Pope's speech of 1877, which, said the Patriot, expressed sound doctrines, and declared:

16 Commons Debates, 1878, p. 1789.

17 Ibid., p. 1793.

18 Ibid., p. 1793.

19 Patriot, Vol. XXII, No. 23, March 16, 1878.

20 Ibid.

This is Mr. Pope's answer to Mr. Pope's vote. (...) He has allowed himself to be made the tool of the Ontario Protectionists. And he will find it difficult to make the people of the Island believe that he has acted the part of an honest man or a faithful political guide.²¹

The exposed position in which Pope had placed himself cannot be overestimated. His position was in direct conflict with Island policy, and explanation might not be easy. Pope himself told Sir John that "I was considered by my Political opponents as dead when I voted for your resolution."²² Early in May, 1878, Pope arrived in Charlottetown and immediately called a public meeting to repair his political fences.

Pope delivered a long speech in which he made his first cautious advances toward the adoption of higher tariffs and a retaliatory policy.²³ He advocated a duty on grains, pointing out that in 1877 the United States shipped into Canada more grains than Prince Edward Island exported. He said if a duty was imposed on these articles, other goods might be relieved of duty, and the Americans would lose a large and lucrative trade, "(...) and, by

21 Patriot, Vol. XXII, No. 23, March 16, 1878.

22 Sir John MacDonald, Papers, Vol. 255, J.C. Pope to Sir John MacDonald, September 23, 1878.

23 Examiner, Vol. 2, No. 288, May 4, 1878.

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losing it, would be practically taught that it is their interest to unite with us in pressing for a treaty of Reciprocal Free Trade." Pope declared that a uniform tariff was not a sensible policy, and that it should be adjusted to the circumstances of the country. Materials which were used by manufacturers, among which he did not fail to include ship-building materials, should be admitted free. For those who might not be convinced of the wisdom of higher tariffs, Pope reminded his audiences of the attempt by the MacKenzie administration to impose a ten per cent duty on ship-building materials, which, he said, would have meant a loss of \$500,000 a year to the laboring men, who would be forced to leave the country. "By carrying out the policy of the Government, the ship building industry will be destroyed, and this great field of industry and source of profit will be taken away." And for greater certainty, Pope emphasized that his policy had only one objective:

I am what is called a "Free Trader," - I am a Reciprocal Free Trader. Our great object is to get back Reciprocal Free Trade with the United States: and I think we should use every possible means in our power - we should make it our main object to OBTAIN RECIPROCAL FREE TRADE.²⁴

Finally, Pope declared that the resolution for which he voted "looks forward to Reciprocity." The resolution was

²⁴ Examiner, Vol. 2, No. 288, May 4, 1878.

made a motion of want of confidence, and Pope had "no confidence in the MacKenzie Administration." I believe said Pope "(...) that I acted more consistently and more in accordance with the wishes of my constituents by voting for it, than I would if I had voted against it."²⁵ It was an able defense of a dangerous position, and the meeting approved by passing a resolution favoring a "readjustment" of the tariff.²⁶

A few days later Pope convened a similar meeting at Summerside, where he repeated his arguments, and a similar "readjustment" resolution was adopted.²⁷

The Patriot was not convinced. It repeated its arguments about the futility of retaliation, and declared that a "(...) proud and powerful people cannot be coerced into reciprocity."²⁸ If it were possible, it would not be wise to make the attempt, for the Island might lose its second best customer. If "(...) we try a dangerous experiment, who will be to blame if it prove a failure?"²⁹ Anyone who

25 Examiner, Vol. 2, No. 288, May 4, 1878.

26 Ibid.

27 Patriot, Vol. XXII, No. 40, May 16, 1878.

28 Ibid., No. 41, May 18, 1878.

29 Ibid.

proposed such a scheme said the Patriot was a "TRAITOR" and "DECEIVER".

Pope's meeting was the first shot in the election campaign, and his policy made the lines of battle quite clear. It was a dangerous political gamble by the Conservative leader, but he had considerable insurance. Local issues continued to embarrass the Island Liberals.

2. The School Bill of 1877.

The local election of 1876 had given the Secular School party a clear mandate to reorganize the school system on the non-sectarian principle; and the Coalition went quickly to work. The Speech from the Throne in 1877 declared that education was a matter requiring "more than ordinary consideration", and that the training, qualifications, and salaries of teachers needed improvement.³⁰ "A Bill embodying these several objects will be laid before you, to which I invite your earnest attention."³¹ The Bill did receive much attention, some of it entirely unexpected by the Bill's promoters.

30 Assembly Debates, 1877, p. 4.

31 Ibid., p. 4.

The Bill brought down by Premier L.H. Davies was in many ways an excellent one.³² It completely revamped the school system by vesting in the Board of Education all necessary authority for enforcing the Act. Text books were prescribed, inspectors appointed, salaries raised, and teacher certification regularized. Trustee Boards were provided for, with power to assess for school expenses, and school attendance was enforced. Finally, a chief superintendent was to be appointed and given wide powers for the enforcement of the Act. These reforms were commendable, and were opposed by no one. But other provisions of the Bill were not so well received.

Two of the key provisions of the Act were those dealing with the Board of Education and the principle of secularism. The most important body in the whole scheme, the Board of Education, was to be composed of the Executive Council, the Principal of Prince of Wales College, and the chief superintendent of education. As a result complete control was placed in a Board which was at that time a completely Protestant body. Section 92 made all schools non-sectarian. The section read as follows:

³² The Public Schools' Act, 1877, and Amendments of 1878, 1879, and 1882, Charlottetown, Gardiner, 1891.

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All schools conducted under the provisions of this Act shall be non-sectarian, and the Bible may be read in all such schools, and is hereby authorized, and the teachers are hereby required to open the School on each school day with the reading of the Sacred Scriptures by those children whose parents or guardians desire it, without comment, explanation or remark thereupon by the teachers; but no children shall be required to attend during such reading as aforesaid, unless desired by their parents or guardians.³³

The clause left no ambiguity. Religious instruction was prohibited, and the Bible was "required" to be read by the teacher for those children whose parents required it.

The only concession which was made to the Catholic demands was the much discussed section 88(m). The section read as follows:

The Board of Trustees is hereby authorized to co-operate with the governing body of any school existent, on the day of the passing of this Act, on such terms as the Board shall seem right; but any such arrangement shall be annual in its nature, and shall be determinable by effluxion of time, or on breach of conditions, and shall not include the building or furnishing of schoolhouses; and in such cases the Board may make allowance to such schools out of the funds under its control; but no such funds shall be granted in support of any school unless the same be a Free School, and conducted in every respect in conformity with this Act, and the regulations of the Board of Education.³⁴

This section provided for the rental of denominational schools provided no religious instruction was permitted

³³ The Public Schools' Act, 1877, and Amendments of 1878, 1879, and 1882, p. 43-44.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 49.

during school hours. The clause applied only to the towns of Charlottetown and Summerside, and no such arrangements could be made in any other district.

In introducing the measure L.H. Davies made a forceful appeal for the passage of the Bill.³⁵ The government's arguments were the same as they had been for years. Denominational schools produced "narrow-minded and bigoted" citizens, who did not make as good members of society as those of "broader views." The government leader emphasized the conciliatory gesture made by the government by the adoption of the section providing for rental of denominational classrooms. "The government had put forth an honest effort to bridge over the difficulty," he said, and they "had gone as far as they could without sacrificing principle." The Premier made a strong plea for an amicable settlement of the problem:

The olive branch of peace was held out to the Roman Catholics, and they could now accept it if they chose. (...) If the Roman Catholics were willing to give up their school during school hours, they could be put upon the same footing as any other school; but if they refused they would be throwing down the gauntlet of defiance, and declaring that there was no peaceable solution of this question.³⁶

The Catholics threw "down the gauntlet of defiance."

35 Assembly Debates, 1877, p. 44-50.

36 Ibid., p. 49.

The Catholics took exception to the manner in which the Board of Education was constituted. Nicholas Conroy said the government, "as it was at present constituted," should not have control of the educational system.³⁷

Laughlin MacDonald said the Executive Council was to be the Board of Education because the government "(...) knew very well, that for many years, no Catholic would have a seat at that Board, and they would be in a position to retain the power which they now held."³⁸ Sullivan pointed out that "The Education Act was to give a free, liberal education to all denominations, and yet that Board was to be composed wholly of Protestants."³⁹ Edward Hackett reminded the government that a Protestant Board should be very careful in the selection of text books, "(...) as there was nothing a man objected to more than books which reflected upon his religion, and to force children to read such books was tyranny."⁴⁰

Constituting themselves as a Board of Education may not have been a wise move by the government, although it was difficult to make any other arrangement. It was

37 Assembly Debates, 1877, p. 61.

38 Ibid., p. 88.

39 Ibid., p. 51.

40 Ibid., p. 98.

unlikely that any Catholic member would have served on a Board appointed to enforce the Act, and the Catholic members on the previous Board had already resigned after the election of 1876.⁴¹ Although the Liberals had demanded the appointment of a Minister of Education in 1876, it was not a position any Protestant would have relished in 1877, so the demand of the previous year was quietly abandoned. The alternative arrived at may have been necessary but it did nothing to allay the prevailing bitterness.

The key provision of the Act was contained in the clause declaring that all schools must be non-sectarian. Davies' "olive branch of peace" was limited in its application to Charlottetown and Summerside, and consequently many predominantly Catholic districts could make no provision for religious instruction.⁴² Although the Catholic members made no demand for Separate Schools, they insisted that religious instruction be permitted in schools of one denomination before or after school hours. Hilary MacIssac thought that such a demand was very inoffensive, since it only asked permission for religious instruction in schools

⁴¹ Executive Council Minutes, 24 August, 1876, 4 September, 1876, and 18 October, 1876.

⁴² There were 31 French schools in the province which chose their own text books and gave religious instruction. See Assembly Journal, 1878, Appendix A, Memorial of the Acadians of Prince Edward Island to Earl of Dufferin, and Extract of Minutes of Executive Council of P.E.I., June 30, 1877.

of one denomination.⁴³ Kelly maintained that a clause permitting such instruction "(...) could not possibly work injuriously, and he hoped that the Bill would be amended in that respect."⁴⁴ Conroy compared the Bill to a punch without whiskey, because it "(...) had all that was required except the essential element, it had not provision for teaching religion."⁴⁵ Sullivan pointed out that if the Catholics accepted the "olive branch of peace" they would really be giving up the principle for which they contended since the teaching must be non-sectarian. He concluded that "This Bill was a mean, tyrannical measure which would cause widespread dissatisfaction, and would not be well received even by Protestants."⁴⁶

Some Catholics pointed out that by introducing the Bible the government was really introducing Protestant dogma. MacLean remarked that by permitting Bible reading the Act did not give equal rights to all because "(...) Protestants took all their religion from the Bible. Catholics did not do this: "(...)"⁴⁷ MacLean, however,

⁴³ Assembly Debates, 1877, p. 74.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 73.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 61.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 53.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 71.

would support the Bill if religious instruction was permitted after school hours. Conroy maintained that by allowing Bible reading and yet insisting on non-sectarianism, the Bill was really expressive of Protestant dogma, and he believed "(...) it was an insidious attempt to undermine the Catholic religion."⁴⁸ The Protestants, he said, "(...) made a law in conformity with their own opinions, and then told Catholics to take hold of their Protestant Education Act, and to go to school with them."⁴⁹

Although there was almost no hope of a compromise, Sullivan, late in the debate, moved an amendment which embodied the minimum the Catholics were prepared to accept. The Catholics agreed to the use of the Bible if in return religious instruction was permitted in schools of one denomination. But the amendment provided that in mixed schools "(...) no such religious instruction shall be given during the regular school hours, nor unless required by a majority of the Trustees, (...)"⁵⁰ The reaction of the government indicated the impossibility of any compromise solution.

⁴⁸ Assembly Debates, 1877, p. 62.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 63.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 126.

Davies, in what Sullivan termed "one of his most extraordinary harangues," categorically rejected the proposals, and his argument was a perfect reflection of previous Protestant objections. Davies thought the resolution "contained the worst features of sectarianism." He said it was intended for Catholic districts only, and,

If it were to become law, he would undertake to say that if any exclusively Catholic District could be found, the foot of no heretic would ever, hereafter, enter it for the purpose of purchasing any real estate. It would introduce a curse into this Province that would blight its fair fame, and set Catholic against Protestant and Protestant against Catholic. It was an insidious attempt to thrust upon the people of this community a thralldom to which they would never submit. (...) The supporters of the resolution would, if the resolution were passed, require for the Catholic population of this Province, a separate Asylum, separate Jails, separate poorhouses, &c., because it would never do for them to come into contact with those educated in secular schools.⁵¹

Such opinion showed the unlikelihood of any compromise and the Bill passed without amendment.

Although the School Act had passed the legislature, the Bishop was not prepared to submit, and he took his complaints to the federal government. The Bishop expected to be paid for his vigorous campaigning of 1873 and 1874. His Excellency submitted a petition to the Lieutenant-Governor asking Hodgson to reserve the Bill, and forwarded two memorials to the Governor-General. In addition, two

⁵¹ Assembly Debates, 1877, p. 127-128.

petitions from the laity, one of which claimed to bear 18,000 signatures, and the other from the Acadians, were sent to Dufferin, to which Bishop McIntyre appended a memorandum of his own. The petitions repeated the arguments of the Catholics that the Bill was oppressive and sought to perpetrate an injustice. But the petitions brought forward a new argument which became the central issue.⁵²

The Bishop, who hired legal counsel, realized that the federal government could not intervene unless section 93 of the British North America Act was violated. Consequently, he sought to establish that the French districts had Separate Schools at the time of union and therefore the School Act was invalid. The petition submitted by the Acadians claimed that thirty-one schools in the French districts had for many years operated as Separate Schools.⁵³ The petitioners pointed out that French text books were used, and religious instruction was given by the parish priests, with the full knowledge of the government and legalized by the previous School Act. The Bishop appended

⁵² The petitions are reproduced in the Assembly Journal, 1878, Appendix A.

⁵³ Assembly Journal, 1878, Appendix A, Memorial of Acadians of Prince Edward Island to Earl of Dufferin.

a memorandum in which he affirmed the validity of the Acadian claims.⁵⁴

The petitions were forwarded to the local government for comment, and on June 30 the Executive Council adopted a long memorandum rejecting the Bishop's claims.⁵⁵ The Council argued that the legal construction put upon the previous School Acts was invalid. They admitted that in the French schools books which were not authorized by the Board of Education had been used, but they "affirm and submit" that there was no legal authority for the use of such books, and that their use was "improper and illegal."

Although the Executive Council was chiefly concerned with the legal aspects of the matter, they also introduced arguments of another nature which threw suspicion on the Bishop's claims. In reference to the claim that Separate Schools existed by law in 1873, the Executive Council said:

At the outset they cannot refrain from expressing their surprise and astonishment that such a state of facts should have existed in this Province, and that neither during the late election, when the question of denominational Education was fairly placed before the people, nor since then in the discussion in the Press and in the Legislature has ever such a claim, to their knowledge, been advanced.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Assembly Journal, 1878, Appendix A, Memorandum of Peter McIntyre and Dr. C.C. O'Brien, June 6, 1877.

⁵⁵ Ibid., Extract from Minutes of Executive Council of P.E.I., June 30, 1877.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

The Council added that if such was the case, the Catholics had been agitating for several years for "(...) the very privilege they now boldly assert, they, at the time, and for years before, had legally possessed."⁵⁷

The Council's arguments were convincing, and the Minister of Justice agreed. On November 8 he drafted a memorandum on the Island School Bill in which he said that it was "impossible to arrive at the conclusion" that the Acadian schools were "(...) denominational by law, whatever may have been the course of instruction carried on in them," and he recommended that the Act itself be left to its operation.⁵⁸

Davies' School Bill was an embarrassing blow to Alexander MacKenzie and the federal Liberals. The Act threatened to destroy with one blow the good understanding between the Bishop and MacKenzie. The Prime Minister was visibly vexed with his Island friends, and continued to urge upon L.H. Davies the desirability of some compromise. Nevertheless, in characteristic fashion, he insisted to both the supporters and the opponents of the Bill that it must be judged solely by its legality.

⁵⁷ Assembly Journal, 1878, Appendix A, Extract from Minutes of Executive Council of P.E.I., June 30, 1877.

⁵⁸ Ibid., Memorandum of R.L. Laflamme, November 8, 1877.

While the Bishop was resorting to legal courses of action open to him, L.H. Davies was appealing to MacKenzie to allow the Act for political reasons. The Prime Minister did not conceal his annoyance from Davies. In his reply MacKenzie made it quite clear that political considerations would not influence his decision:

I observe that considerable portions of these letters are taken up with varying political reasons for the support of your School Bill as it stands, rather than dealing with legal reasons. It is not necessary for me to point out to you that it is with the latter we have to do & that however desirable it may be to maintain your position, its maintenance must depend wholly upon the legal construction put upon the Bill by the Minister of Justice. In other words, if it contravenes the Constitutional Act in any of its provisions, these provisions must be changed. If it does not contravene the Constitutional Act, of course no agitation can prevail against it.

.....
I need not point out to you that Bishop McIntyre and his friends have succeeded in creating a very widespread impression that your action has been oppressive, and that it might have been so modified by giving some slight concessions as to have disarmed their opposition. Of course, I pass no opinion upon this and have not yet studied the Act or your former legislation. But, as I indicated you when on the Island some years ago, you may depend upon it that this question has got to be settled by some compromise by one party or the other, and if you could reach that compromise by amending this Bill, it would solve a very disagreeable social & political question.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ MacKenzie Letterbooks, Vol. 7, p. 535, MacKenzie to L.H. Davies, 12 June, 1877.

MacKenzie also pointed out to Davies that some concessions had been made to the Catholics in New Brunswick, and he suggested that Davies might follow New Brunswick's example. "I am as anxious as possible to do everything in my power to sustain your Government," the Prime Minister concluded, "but you will see we must act independently of such sympathies in dealing with a purely legal question."⁶⁰

The petitions of the Catholics, the appeals of the Bishop, and MacKenzie's suggestions for concessions, had no effect, and the Bill became law. The School Question was thus legally settled. Any hope that the Coalition government, once in office and freed from the impassioned oratory of the election campaign, would arrive at an amicable compromise was shattered. The fruits of many years of agitation by the Catholics was a resounding defeat. The School Bill of 1877 ensured the continued alienation of the Catholics from the provincial Liberals, and MacKenzie's failure to set aside the School Bill threatened Catholic support for the federal Liberals as well. The Catholics, with the Bishop leading the way, had placed their fate in MacKenzie's hands in 1874 and had been disappointed. Pope's prospects for 1878 continued to improve.

⁶⁰ MacKenzie Letterbooks, Vol. 7, p. 535, MacKenzie to L.H. Davies, 12 June, 1877.

The School Bill of 1877 eventually proved fatal to the Coalition government, and the Bill's divisive effects became extremely significant in the federal election of 1878. While the Island Conservatives remained in the Coalition government Pope could not expect united party support in any federal campaign. Pope was therefore an interested spectator when the Davies government got into difficulties with a new Revenue Bill.

The only tax levied on the Island in 1876 was an unequal land tax, which assessed all land equally regardless of its value. In 1877, Davies, faced with declining revenues and increased expenditures, proposed to repeal the existing land tax and replace it with a real estate tax and poll tax. In introducing the measure L.H. Davies anticipated the unpopularity of any new tax and tried to soften the blow:

The change contemplated by the Government was not a great one, and the increase of the tax would not be at all large. The public revenue had lately been falling behind, and unless some means were taken to increase it, it would not be sufficient for the requirements of the country. (...) The existing land tax was levied upon land, irrespective of its value, barren land and rich farms being taxed to the same extent. This was a great grievance, as the poor man paid the same tax as the rich man. (...) Provision would be made for the appointment of Assessors, whose duty would be to value the farms and other lands. (...) The only taxes contemplated by the Government were a Real Estate tax and a Poll tax. (...) Every male inhabitant over twenty-one years of age would pay a poll tax. This, he thought, would be a just method of levying a tax, because a large number of persons owned no estate whatever, and thereby escaped taxation.⁶¹

The principle of the Bill was no doubt sound, but two of its provisions met with strong opposition. The Act defined real estate as "(...) land and all buildings or other things erected thereon, or belonging or affixed thereto."⁶² Another clause exempted the incorporated towns of Charlottetown and Summerside from all provisions of the Act.⁶³ The first of these provisions exempted business enterprises from taxation, and the second raised a storm of opposition in the rural areas.

The first signs of danger were raised in the Assembly by William Campbell, a government supporter. The

⁶¹ Assembly Debates, 1877, p. 112.

⁶² The Acts of the General Assembly of Prince Edward Island, 1877, Charlottetown, Queens Printer, p. 48.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 48.

members of the government were particularly vulnerable regarding the two clauses. Many of the Ministers lived in Charlottetown or Summerside, and nearly all were engaged in shipbuilding. Campbell, who represented an exclusively rural district, delivered a stunning attack.

Campbell explained that if only real estate was taxed "(...) one half the wealth of the country would go scot free."⁶⁴ He then came quickly to the point and accused the government members of legislating in their own interests:

The Leader of the Government and the Colonial Secretary [Deblois] sheltered themselves behind the ramparts of the corporation of Charlottetown, and escaped the tax. The hon. member from Port Hill [Yeo], the hon. member from Georgetown [Prowse], and the hon. member from Murray Harbor [Gordon], had a great deal of their property in vessels, and the wind and waves would carry it beyond the reach of the tax collector. The hon. member from Summerside [Lefurgey] and the junior member from Belfast [Robertson] had a double advantage; they had the shelter of corporations and the wind to drive their property to sea, where it could not be taxed. The senior member for Belfast [Welsh] had both wind and steam employed to drag his property from the grasp of the tax gatherer. (...) The City of Charlottetown had at last got a representative who would look after her interests, and no doubt the city would sing his praises. But there was another voice yet to be heard, the voice of the agricultural community, and that voice would give no uncertain sound. If this Bill was passed, it would call forth a burst of indignation from East Point to West Cape that would shake the Government to its foundations.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Assembly Debates, 1877, p. 146.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 146-147. John Lefurgey, William Welsh, John Yeo, Samuel Prowse, John F. Robertson, and Daniel Gordon, were all members of the Cabinet. All were wealthy merchants and shipbuilders. Welsh was a shareholder in the Island Steamship Company. The Premier and George DeBlois lived in Charlottetown.

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The government did not heed the warning of its unhappy supporter, and the Bill passed without amendment. The prophecies of the member of Queen's were soon fulfilled.

Within a short time the Patriot confirmed that dissatisfaction was widespread. On July 4, 1877, the paper ran a long editorial in defense of the Act.⁶⁶ It declared that the "ridiculous stories" and "nonsensical statements" being circulated about the Assessment Act were "most surprising." The editorial pointed out that the men who imposed the Act were the best both parties could produce, and argued that revenue must meet expenditure. It advised that it would not be "(...) for the benefit of the people to take the reins of Government out of the hands of honest, able, and experienced men, and place them in the hands of ignorant, incapable, and inexperienced agitators." The admonition to sustain the government was indicative of the seriousness of the opposition.

In the autumn of 1877 the opposition found expression in public meetings, at which resolutions praying for the repeal or amendment of the Assessment Act were passed. A meeting at Crapaud in September passed a resolution asking the Lieutenant-Governor to call an early session of the legislature to amend the "unjust and unnecessary"

66 Patriot, editorial, Vol. XXI, No. 3, July 4, 1877.

Act.⁶⁷ The residents of Milton objected to the exemption of Charlottetown and Summerside, and also complained that the Act did not embrace "all kinds of property."⁶⁸ In October a similar meeting was held at Fort Augustus,⁶⁹ and the papers of this period report meetings in every section of the Island. When the Assembly met in March, 1878, it was evident that the government was in serious difficulty.

L.H. Davies made a determined and forceful defense of the government's policy. He apparently tried to disarm the opposition to the Assessment Act by arguing that the success of the School Bill depended upon increased revenue. It was generally known that the new School Bill would increase the costs of education, but in 1877 Davies had not endangered the School Bill by emphasizing the increased costs. In 1878, however, he openly identified the two Acts in hopes that it would rally his Conservative colleagues.

To demands that the government amend both Acts the Premier made no uncertain reply. "In order that there might be no mistake as to the policy of the Government during the present Session, (...)" Davies informed the

⁶⁷ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XXI, No. 27, September 27, 1877.

⁶⁸ Ibid., No. 26, September 22, 1877.

⁶⁹ Ibid., No. 35, October 25, 1877.

House that the government "(...) did not intend to deviate from the principles upon which they had acted last year," because "They were determined to give to the people of this Province a good system of Education, based on the non-sectarian principle, (...)"⁷⁰ Davies then made his grand play:

He had stated, last session, that if the people were in favor of the establishment of a good non-sectarian system of education with a well qualified Chief Superintendent and other officials to have its principles thoroughly carried out and enforced, they must pay for it. In other countries the educational machinery could not be worked satisfactorily without a large expenditure of money, and it would be found that this Province was not an exception in that respect. If the standard of Education in this country was to be raised to a higher level than had been the case in years gone by, it could not be done without a larger expenditure than under the old system.⁷¹

The Premier's manouever placed his critics in a difficult position. The opponents of the Assessment Act did not object to increased taxation, but only to the inequalities of the Act. But Davies tried to make it appear that the opponents of the Assessment Act were endangering the school system which they had been elected to establish.

Davies also attempted to belittle the opposition to the Act. He thought the greatest dissatisfaction was

70 Assembly Debates, 1878, p. 24.

71 Ibid., p. 25.

caused by "unequal, and therefore unjust" valuations, and insisted that it took some time for any new machine "to get into good working order."⁷² He accused the opponents of the government of instigating the public meetings, and claimed that very few were opposed to the Bill.

But the pressure on the government members could not be minimized, and even his own supporters were extremely lukewarm in support of the measure. Samuel Prowse admitted "(...) that throughout the country there had been a good deal of dissatisfaction; (...)"⁷³ John Lefurgey could only hope that the people would become accustomed to the tax, because "(...) there was no use in denying that a great deal of dissatisfaction existed throughout the country."⁷⁴ Farquharson said that "errors" in the Act had caused "great dissatisfaction",⁷⁵ and Angus MacMillan stated bluntly that the Act was costing too much to administer.⁷⁶ The greatest blow of all was struck when two members, William Campbell and Donald MacKay, both Liberals, openly opposed the government and sat as Independents.

72 Assembly Debates, 1878, p. 27.

73 Ibid., p. 47-48.

74 Ibid., p. 62.

75 Ibid., p. 68.

76 Ibid., p. 84.

Campbell, in a long speech, issued a clear warning to the government that the Assessment Act was souring the minds of the government's supporters against the School Bill.⁷⁷ When the government passed the Assessment Act of last session, "(...) they did more to sour the minds of the people and to injure our Free School System than all their opponents put together." He said it was "very far from the truth" that the public meetings were got up by the opponents of the government. On the contrary, he told the House that "Some of the meetings were entirely composed of free school men, although they were now opposed to the Government." MacKay told the House that his constituents were opposed to the Act. "The country was asking that the property in towns and income should be taxed, (...)" and he thought the government should "Let every man bear an equal share according to his property and position."⁷⁸

Naturally the Catholic Opposition were delighted at the turn events had taken. The Bill had been passed as a complement to the School Act, and the former helped to bring the latter into disrepute. In addition, L.H. Davies was personally identified with both measures. He had led the Secular School party, and had personally introduced

77 Assembly Debates, 1878, p. 42.

78 Ibid., p. 97-99.

and defended both measures in the legislature. William Sullivan delivered a long speech against the Assessment Act,⁷⁹ and Edward Hackett thought that "(...) the people had expressed so decided an opinion (...)" that further discussion of the question was unnecessary.⁸⁰

When the discontent in the country and in the legislature became so strong, the Examiner, Pope's spokesman, began to demand the resignation of the government. It commenced a shrewd campaign to undermine the position of Davies by separating him from his Conservative colleagues. The newspaper held Davies personally responsible for government policy and was careful to omit any mention of the Conservative members of the government. Pope was anxious to re-unite the Conservative party and he had no wish to antagonize further his former friends. On March 25, the Examiner said the following:

79 Assembly Debates, 1878, p. 12-24.

80 Ibid., p. 54.

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Mr. Davies should not be ashamed to acknowledge his error. To err is human. To forgive the contrite politician is the pleasure of a generous Christian people. Many a better man than Mr. Davies has blundered worse than he; and afterwards retrieved his reputation by prudently 'backing down.' We hope the Premier will not, by persistently refusing to listen to the popular demand for the repeal of the Assessment law, endanger the existence of his Government. There is reason to fear that the Leader of the Opposition may be called upon to form an administration, if the Premier continues to ignore public opinion and the reasonable advice of his friends. The moderate and prudent course Mr. Sullivan has pursued has commended him to the public. There is reason for believing that should Mr. Davies be irreconcilable, the public will sustain Mr. Sullivan. Mr. Davies must no longer trust for strength only in Mr. Sullivan's weakness. We believe it is more certain now than ever that Mr. Davies must either submit or resign.⁸¹

It was unlikely that Davies found comfort in the Examiner's promise of forgiveness.

After the legislative session of 1877 it was apparent that the Coalition government was tottering. The loss of any Protestant support would be fatal, and it could not be denied that the Assessment Act, made necessary by the School Bill, was intensely disliked. The Liberal leader, L.H. Davies, was the man most closely identified with both measures, and there was a distinct possibility that the Conservative members of the Coalition would seek to avoid the condemnation of the voters by withdrawing from

⁸¹ Examiner, editorial, Vol. 2, No. 266, March 25, 1878.

the government. When the federal election campaign commenced the pressures on the Coalition increased.

3. The Federal Election of 1878.

The election of 1878 was bitterly contested. The meetings called by Pope when he returned from Ottawa in May signalled the beginning of hostilities, and before election day meetings had been held in almost every district and village in the province. Alexander MacKenzie and Richard Cartwright crossed the Straits to bolster the Grit cause, and Sir Charles Tupper returned the favour for the Conservatives. Both parties experimented with nominating conventions in an effort to enliven their supporters, and Pope and the Conservatives tried their hand at Sir John's political picnics.

As in 1876, so in 1878 the Islanders went to the polls feeling neglected. Pope and the Examiner did not relent in their attacks on the performance of the ferry service, and the sin was now compounded by the loss of Cabinet representation. The winter communications issue did not play a prominent part in the campaign, but it provided an important background against which the Conservatives uttered their cries of indignation.

During the winter of 1876-77 the Northern Light performed adequately. It did not provide continuous

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service, but all seemed to agree the experiment was a success, and even Pope did not wish to censure the government.⁸² During the winter of 1877-78 however, the boat was less successful. Twice in the early winter the steamer was frozen in mid-strait for over a week and during those weeks there was not even a mail service to the Island. Perry, who had been rather complimentary in 1877, was not so generous with plaudits for the government in 1878. Regardless of cost, said the member from Prince County, the Island "(...) had a right to expect from the Dominion the fulfilment of the terms of union."⁸³ He coupled his complaint with a none too subtle reference to the loss of a seat in the Cabinet:

He regretted being obliged to make so many representations on this subject to the House, but this was the only way in which they could make their wishes known to the Government. Prince Edward Island had no longer a representative in the Cabinet, and, in order that he might be heard regarding this matter, he was obliged to address the House to inform the Cabinet as to the views of the people whom he had the honour to represent.⁸⁴

Sinclair supported Perry and demanded that the ferry be run on a different route, "(...) and whatever expenditure it might entail, he considered that the

⁸² Commons Debates, 1877, p. 84.

⁸³ Commons Debates, 1878, p. 397.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 397.

Government were bound to see that the mails were regularly conveyed between Prince Edward Island and the mainland."⁸⁵ MacIntyre thought a second boat should be put on the route.⁸⁶ In the Senate all the Islanders agreed that some improvement was necessary.⁸⁷

The problem received fuller treatment in the Island press, and the Examiner's criticisms were not so gentle. During the winter of 1877-78 the Examiner gave its readers a daily report on the position of the Northern Light, which was usually to be found stuck in the ice. The following editorial, though amusing, was hardly appreciated by the Liberals:

The citizens of Pictou owe the 'Northern Light' a debt of gratitude. The interesting craft is lying at no great distance from the city, and the fashionable drive is out to where our mail carrier lies embedded in the ice. The times are gay in and around the 'Northern Light.' Pleasure parties are formed, and what with the fine weather and the hospitality of the gallant crew, 'picnics' become pleasant even in the dead of winter. It is thought that only for the meeting of Parliament, Mr. McKenzie would have availed himself of the strong attractions of the 'Northern Light' in order to hold a political picnic round the craft, for the purpose of illustrating the efficiency of the postal service, and expounding the rigid morality to be observed in carrying out contracts.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Commons Debates, 1878, p. 398.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 400.

⁸⁷ Senate Debates, 1878, p. 44-48.

⁸⁸ Examiner, editorial, Vol. 2, No. 227, February 7, 1878.

Liberal embarrassment was hardly lessened when the Patriot could do no better than regret the steamer's failure and conclude that it was impossible to navigate the Straits and carry out the terms of union.⁸⁹

Thus, during the winter preceding the federal election the Islanders were continually reminded of the federal government's failure to carry out the terms of union. Although the issue became submerged in the more promising one of Cabinet representation, it was only because the latter issue spoke most eloquently for the Island's continued mistreatment.

The loss of Cabinet representation was also brought before the public in 1877. The debate in the Commons on March 5, 1877, revealed a very large measure of dissatisfaction among the Island Liberals. Davies asserted that although "there was no bargain made", MacKenzie, Blake, and Dorion had stated in 1873 that "(...) their policy would be to assign a Minister to Prince Edward Island; (...)"⁹⁰ Sinclair agreed that "Both parties had been anxious to give them a seat in the Cabinet, and it was only too true that this seat they had since lost, which he considered they

⁸⁹ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XXII, No. 16, February 21, 1878.

⁹⁰ Commons Debates, 1877, p. 482.

should still have."⁹¹ Sinclair "(...) considered that the Island was entitled to a portfolio from whatever party in power, (...) "⁹² Pope insisted that a promise had been made,⁹³ and the whole episode was an extremely embarrassing one for the federal government and not likely to raise their prestige on the Island. The loss of Cabinet representation threatened to become an election issue for the second time.

The tone of the Liberal campaign was set by the nominating convention for Queen's County. William McGill, a Legislative Councillor, and Peter Sinclair, the sitting member, were nominated to contest Queen's County for the Liberals. Fifty-two delegates representing every polling division within the county unanimously chose the nominees, and approved a resolution which became the party platform. The resolution expressed confidence in the Liberal administration, and the delegates promised to "do all in our power" to elect representatives to support MacKenzie. The only issue proposed was free trade, and the resolution stated:

91 Commons Debates, 1877, p. 486.

92 Ibid., p. 486.

93 Ibid., p. 483.

That any increase in the present Revenue Tariff for the purposes of Protection will materially add to the taxes of the people of this Dominion, and clog and hamper its trade and commerce; and that the introduction of a Retaliatory Tariff against the United States would tend indefinitely to postpone that which we all so much desire - Reciprocal Free Trade with that great country, and consequently should meet with the determined opposition of every lover of his country.⁹⁴

This resolution served notice on Pope and the Conservatives that their policy of retaliation was to be brought under heavy fire. But it was apparent that four years of rule had left the Island Liberals seriously deficient in campaign issues. There was no record to defend and no achievements to boast of, and only a promise to oppose protection.

In Prince County James Yeo and Stanislaus Perry were nominated for re-election, and in King's County Malcolm MacFadyen joined MacIntyre on the Liberal ticket. All the candidates endeavoured to capitalize on the MacKenzie record of honest and efficient administration and the proven corruption of Sir John, - tactics which pointedly emphasized the weakness of the Liberals on the Island. During his speech at the nominating convention Sinclair referred to the Prime Minister as a "prudent" man who had the good of the country at heart, and he dealt at

⁹⁴ Patriot, Vol. XXII, No. 60, July 25, 1878.

considerable length with the mismanagement of the Manitoba rebellion and the reckless scheme adopted for the building of the Pacific Railway.⁹⁵ At the same meeting McGill said that all Islanders "(...) should assist in keeping in power a gentleman who deserves the confidence of the North American Colonies for his integrity, uprightness and ability (...)"⁹⁶ At a major meeting in St. Peters, MacFadyen "(...) pronounced a glowing eulogy upon the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, the man of the people, (...)"⁹⁷ Sir John's administration "was reckless, extravagant, and corrupt," said MacFadyen, while that of MacKenzie "was prudent, economical, and honest."⁹⁸ The Liberals were gambling that the Islanders preferred honest politics to a seat in the Cabinet.

The best efforts of the Liberals however, were directed against Sir John's announced commercial policy, and every effort was made to prove that the real issue in the election was free trade versus protection. Sinclair said that after several years of hesitation MacDonald had

95 Patriot, Vol. XXII, No. 61, July 27, 1878.

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid., No. 62, August 1, 1878.

98 Ibid.

finally "boldly and openly avowed Protection."⁹⁹ For McGill, the issue was a simple one: "It was simply were they to be taxed in order to benefit the manufacturers of the Upper Provinces."¹⁰⁰ L.H. Davies, who actively campaigned for the Liberal candidates, repeated the same arguments.¹⁰¹ At St. Peters MacIntyre spoke of nothing else. He said "(...) the question was between Sir John and McKenzie - between Protection and Free Trade - between a revenue tariff of 17½ per cent. and a prohibitory tariff."¹⁰² He insisted that Sir John's policy was to raise taxes, and that Protection would raise the price of good the Islanders bought. "In fact," said the Bishop's nephew, "the farmers and the fishermen of King's County will be ruined if MacDonald and Muttart be elected."¹⁰³ Yeo and Perry used similar tactics in Prince County. At a large meeting in Alberton they spoke of little but the trade issue,¹⁰⁴ and at Tignish they repeated the same arguments.¹⁰⁵ It was

99 Patriot, Vol. XXII, No. 61, July 27, 1878.

100 Ibid.

101 Ibid.

102 Examiner, Vol. 3, No. 360, July 30, 1878.

103 Ibid., Austin C. MacDonald and Dr. A.C. Muttart were the Conservative candidates in King's County.

104 Patriot, Vol. XXII, No. 73, September 7, 1878.

105 Examiner, Vol. 3, No. 342, July 9, 1878.

obvious that the Liberals were placing their fate in the soundness of free trade doctrine and in the Islanders not so sound penchant for political purity. But except for the question of free trade the Liberals were handicapped by the poor Liberal record on the Island. The revival of the remains of the Pacific Scandal was indicative of the extremity of the Liberal position. With no achievements to boast of the Liberals could only promise a low tariff and preach political purity.

In contrast to the Liberals the Conservatives had no lack of issues. The defense of Sir John's trade policy received the most attention, but the Conservatives had other things to talk about. Their campaign was officially opened by a nominating convention in Charlottetown at which J.C. Pope and Frederick Brecken were nominated to contest Queen's County. The resolutions passed at the meeting became the party platform.¹⁰⁶

The Conservatives returned the charges of recklessness against MacDonald by condemning the MacKenzie administration for increasing the national debt and government expenditure, which "(...) has seriously increased the monetary difficulties arising from the prolonged

106 Examiner, Vol. 3, No. 352, July 20, 1878.

commercial depression."¹⁰⁷ The Conservatives answered charges of corruption by pointing out that many Liberals were unseated for "bribery and corruption", and by reference to the "Steel Rail and Goderich Harbor Jobs," both of which had "(...) greatly lowered the standard of political morality." The Conservatives did not fail to charge the Liberal government with "(...) depriving this Province of representation in the Cabinet and by persistently refusing to restore it, has forfeited the confidence of the people of this Province." The trade policy which Pope had announced at his Charlottetown and Summerside meetings in May was endorsed by the convention. The key resolution stated:

(...) it is in the interest of this Province that Reciprocal Free Trade should be established with the United States of America, and, therefore, we demand that the tariff shall be so readjusted as to effect this desirable object.¹⁰⁸

This was a cautious statement of Sir John's policy. It carefully avoided endorsing protection, while its avowed object was free trade. Conservative trade policy continued to face two ways.

¹⁰⁷ Examiner, Vol. 3, No. 352, July 20, 1878. The Convention resolutions appear in this issue of the Examiner.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

The Convention speakers took advantage of every issue.¹⁰⁹ Pope denied that Sir John's policy meant increased taxation, and Brecken spoke sarcastically of the silence of Island members in the House of Commons. Edward Hodgson, a prominent Charlottetown lawyer, said that for the Island to have its "(...) true interests properly attended to and watched over as they should be, (...)" a Cabinet representative was needed. "We once had a representative there", he said, but "He had deserted his post, and was now to be found in a cocked hat dispensing tin medals to the Indians of the Great North West."

At meetings throughout the county the Conservatives repeated the same arguments. At a political picnic at Tracadie Brecken referred to the government as the "Band of Organized Hypocrisy."¹¹⁰ He referred to the unseating of members and said it was an example "(...) of the manner in which the Grits elevated the standard of political morality." Senator Haviland repeated the same charges, and Brecken reminded his listeners that MacKenzie had taken away the Island's Cabinet representation.

In King's County Austin C. MacDonald tried to avenge his defeat of 1874 and Dr. Ephraim Muttart, a native

109 Examiner, Vol. 3, No. 352, July 20, 1878.

110 Ibid., Vol. 3, No. 376, August 19, 1878.

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of Souris, was his running mate. At a meeting at St. Peters both explained their policies.¹¹¹ MacDonald denied that Sir John intended to raise taxes. "It is not, and never was, the policy of Sir John to add to the volume of taxation," said MacDonald. Sir John's policy is, "(...) in short to judiciously readjust the tariff." Muttart was in favor of free trade, and said "(...) we should endeavor to make it the interest of the United States to give us Reciprocity," but added cautiously, that if elected, "He would consider the Country first, and Party afterwards," - a suggestion that he would not follow his party on a protectionist policy.

In Prince County Cornelius Howatt and Edward Hackett were the Conservative candidates. Hackett, a Catholic, was elected by acclamation for the First District in the provincial election of 1876, and Howatt, a defeated candidate for the Secular School party in 1876, was a former member of the local legislature. Howatt openly identified the local Liberals with the federal government. He pointed out that MacKenzie and Davies had increased taxes, and "(...) that the very men who imposed those taxes are now the very men who back up and support Messrs. Yeo

111 Examiner, Vol. 3, No. 360, July 30, 1878.

and Perry."¹¹² He said he would support a "readjustment" of the tariff, but wanted it clearly understood he was not a Protectionist if "(...) Protection meant additions to the taxes of the people, or an increase in any way of the heavy burdens imposed by the obnoxious Local Government."¹¹³ While Howatt attempted to capitalize on the unpopularity of the Davies government, his colleague attacked the federal government.

Hackett condemned the Liberal administration for failure to provide winter communications, and for "(...) the dastardly manner in which the Island had been deprived of representation in the Cabinet,(...)"¹¹⁴ He attacked the Liberal party for the "(...) proved and undeniable corruption which blackened the Party placed in power to introduce an era of political purity, (...)"¹¹⁵

The Conservative candidates capitalized on the neglect and mistreatment of four years of rule by the MacKenzie government. Their only handicap was the tariff policy of Sir John and their handling of this issue raises an important question.

112 Examiner, Vol. 3, No. 342, July 9, 1878.

113 Ibid.

114 Ibid.

115 Ibid.

On the eve of the election the Patriot ran an editorial which commented on the campaign which had just closed. It said that a battle between free trade and protection must result in a victory for free trade, but added:

But on the Protection side it has not been fairly fought. The Protectionists have assumed any number of disguises, and in order to throw the people off their guard, they have taken up various false cries. (...) There never was a more dishonest canvass than that carried on in this Island during the last three months by the followers of Sir John MacDonald. (...) They have not quoted his speeches, they have suppressed his most emphatic and significant declarations, and they have represented his policy to be the very reverse of that which he himself has time and again declared it to be.¹¹⁶

It was a serious charge and probably correct. Conservative claims that Sir John was not a protectionist, and that he did not intend to raise taxes were highly suspect. The Conservative candidates certainly ignored MacDonald's own statements and carefully concealed the Conservative leader's campaign speeches in Ontario. The Patriot labored daily to correct the error and regularly printed Sir John's most emphatic statements of his policy.¹¹⁷ But the Examiner blandly replied that the Grits were raising "the bugbear of increased taxation" to hide their own emptiness.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XXII, No. 77, September 19, 1878.

¹¹⁷ See Patriots for July and August, 1878.

¹¹⁸ Examiner, editorial, Vol. 3, No. 371, August 12, 1878.

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The major event of the campaign was the visit of Alexander MacKenzie and his Finance Minister in August, which was followed by a visit from Sir Charles Tupper. All three visitors delivered long speeches in Charlottetown and Summerside, but added little to what had already been said.¹¹⁹ The real importance of the visits lay in the pressure they exerted on the local Coalition government.

The Coalition government had survived the federal by-election of 1876 despite Haviland's re-union with Pope. But by 1878 the situation was considerably changed. The School Question was now settled by law and therefore the reason for the Coalition's existence had ceased to exist. In the legislature in 1878 there was ample evidence that the Conservative members of the government were beginning to find their position uncomfortable. The strains of the federal election proved too great for the already shakey partnership.

L.H. Davies either did not realize the danger to his government or he decided to ignore it. Davies, John F. Roberson, a member of the Cabinet, and Thomas Dodd, a prominent Liberal, actively participated in the campaign of 1878. They organized the Liberal meetings,¹²⁰ and

¹¹⁹ Examiner, editorial, Vol. 3, No. 390, September 4, 1878, and Patriot, Vol. XXII, No. 68, August 22, 1878, and Ibid., No. 69, August 24, 1878.

¹²⁰ Examiner, editorial, Vol. 3, No. 338, July 4, 1878.

Davies spoke at length at the Liberal nominating convention. It was not long before the Examiner pointedly reminded the Conservative members of the government that Davies was acting improperly. On July 4 the paper openly attacked Davies' conduct:

It is (...) evident, that Messrs Davies and Robertson care more for the maintenance in power of the gentlemen who raised our taxes by two and a half per cent. who show deficits aggregating \$4,800,000, who purchased steel rails they did not want, who squandered \$109,000 upon the Georgian Bay Branch and \$58,000 upon Fort Francis Lock, and \$30,000 upon Goderich Harbor, and \$20,000 upon Souris Breakwater; (...) it is evident, we say, that Messrs. Davies and Robertson care more for the maintenance in power of the gentlemen who have done and who do these things, than they do for either their principles or the stability of the Local Government of which they are members. How their Conservative colleagues feel, time - a short time - will tell (...)¹²¹

The feeling of the Conservatives in the government was soon revealed. Haviland was actively campaigning for Pope from the start. MacKenzie's visit led to more defections from the Secular School party and resignations from the government.

Most public meetings during the campaign were attended by the candidates of both parties. Consequently, before MacKenzie's arrival Pope and Brecken asked permission to speak alternately with Cartwright and MacKenzie, but

¹²¹ Examiner, editorial, Vol. 3, No. 338, July 4, 1878.

were refused.¹²² As a result the Conservatives called their own meeting in Charlottetown on the evening of the day the Prime Minister spoke. At the meeting Haviland delivered a long speech in which for the first time he openly attacked the local Coalition government. He explained his reasons for doing so:

Gentlemen, -- There is one matter which I wish to speak about in connection with to-day's proceedings, EVERY GRIT MEMBER OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT was upon the platform at Mr. McKenzie's meeting. There was the Speaker of the House of Assembly, Mr. Beer, who, if he properly appreciated his position, would not be found mixing himself in party politics; the Local Premier, Mr. Davies; the Minister of Public Works, Mr. Stewart; Mr. John Robertson and others. On the School Question I voted for these gentlemen, and did my utmost to have them returned; but to-day I find that these men are acting like political demagogues and betraying the trust which myself and other Liberal-Conservatives have placed in them. To-morrow morning I would use my influence to have them driven from office, not only for what they have done to-day, but also because of their incompetency. They unjustly taxed the country. They have disregarded every wish of the electors. They burdened the Island with a huge Lunatic Asylum far too large and costly for this Colony; and have altogether mismanaged the affairs of the country. Never has such an incompetent set of men ruled as those who I have mentioned. The Minister of Public Works was in this meeting to-night and I care not if he is here now. I repeat what I have said, they are totally unfit to represent us.¹²³

The open opposition of Senator Haviland was a serious blow to the government. During Pope's campaign in 1876 Haviland

¹²² Examiner, editorial, Vol. 3, No. 377, August 20, 1878. Brecken attended anyway and nearly caused a riot when he asked to speak.

¹²³ Ibid., No. 381, August 24, 1878.

had limited himself to attacking the federal government. But his violent opposition to the local government could not be ignored by the Protestant Conservatives, and within a few days rumours began to circulate that the Conservatives were preparing to withdraw from the Coalition.

On August 24 the Examiner reported that George DeBlois had submitted his resignation, but had been induced to withdraw it.¹²⁴ Six days later it was reported that Davies had asked the Catholics to join his government and that four of the five Conservatives in the government were about to resign.¹²⁵ Finally, on September 5 the Patriot confirmed that the resignations of DeBlois, Gordon, and Prowse were in the hands of the Premier.¹²⁶

The resignations precipitated a minor political crisis in Island politics. If Davies could induce the Catholics to join his government and re-unite the Liberal party Pope might have lost the Catholic vote in the federal contest. Apparently this was attempted by Davies for on September 5 the editor of the Patriot having "thought the

¹²⁴ Examiner, editorial, Vol. 3, No. 381, August 24, 1878.

¹²⁵ Ibid., No. 386, August 30, 1878.

¹²⁶ Patriot, Vol. XXII, No. 72, September 5, 1878. The resignations appear in Executive Council Minutes, September 12, 1878.

whole position over carefully" and listened to the advice of his friends, concluded that the Premier should ask the Catholics to rejoin the party and give them their fair share of patronage.¹²⁷

Naturally, Pope's party objected to any such scheme. The Examiner expressed amazement that the Catholics might contemplate a reconciliation with Davies. On August 30 the Examiner said:

But, as drowning men catch at straws, as desperate men do desperate deeds, so it is said that Mr. L.H. Davies contemplates asking Catholic members of the Legislature to come to his assistance. No Catholic of honour could, of course, do such a thing. Even if disposed to forgive the Local Premier, they could not be so base as to desert the Leader of the Opposition.¹²⁸

Pope was appealing to the conscience of the Catholic members, and the Herald, the spokesman for the Catholic cause and onetime friend of L.H. Davies, came to the assistance of the embattled Pope. The editor of the Herald opposed any reconciliation with the Davies faction,¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XXII, No. 72, September 5, 1878.

¹²⁸ Examiner, editorial, Vol. 3, No. 386, August 30, 1878.

¹²⁹ Patriot, editorial, Vol. XXII, No. 73, September 7, 1878.

and the crisis passed.¹³⁰ The Catholics refused to support Davies. Pope and his colleagues breathed a sigh of relief and confidently awaited the verdict of the voters. Pope had retained his Catholic followers while he had retrieved the support of the most influential members of the Conservative party.

When the ballots were counted only James Yeo had survived the Liberal rout. His margin of victory was narrow, while in Queen's and King's Counties the Conservative candidates were given comfortable majorities.¹³¹ The verdicts of 1873 and 1874 were thus reversed and the Conservatives were swept to power. The free trade Islanders elected five representatives of a protectionist party, a fact which speaks eloquently for the predominance of local issues in Island federal elections.

Contemporary observers were all agreed that local issues determined the results. The Patriot maintained that "Local causes, (...) and circumstances apart altogether from the domain of Dominion politics, have caused the

¹³⁰ The Coalition government carried on until the following year. Two Conservative ministers, John Yeo and John Lefurgey remained in the government. In the provincial election of 1879 however, the reunited Conservatives were returned to power, and William Sullivan, the leader of the Catholic faction, became Premier, a position he held for many years.

¹³¹ The results are reproduced in Appendix 6.

defeat of the Government candidates."¹³² David Laird and Alexander MacKenzie agreed with the Patriot's analysis. "Our little Island behaved badly," said Laird to his former employer. "I feared you would not be able to retain your own there owing to the unpopularity of the Local Government for imposing a needful tax, (...)" Laird added.¹³³ In his reply MacKenzie was even more specific:

Since the Election I have often thought that perhaps you could hold the Island if you had remained. My mature conviction now is that you could not have done so. It was the all but universal defeat of the Catholic vote which defeated us.

Mr. Davies' legislation reacted upon us, as we came first before the people. The defeat of Dr. McIntyre by such an overwhelming majority showed the determination of the R Catholics more than anything.¹³⁴

An examination of the election returns reveals the accuracy of these analyses.

Two facts emerge clearly from the results. In the first place, there was a noticeable decline in the Liberal majorities in the Catholic areas. Secondly, the Protestant areas gave a greatly increased support to Pope's Conservatives. In the Catholic First District of Prince Perry and

¹³² Patriot, editorial, Vol. XXII, No. 77, September 19, 1878.

¹³³ MacKenzie Papers, p. 2185, Laird to McKenzie, 7 December, 1878.

¹³⁴ McKenzie Letterbooks, Vol. 2, p. 613, McKenzie to Laird, 29 January, 1879.

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Yeo obtained greatly reduced majorities. The Liberal candidates also carried the Third District of Prince but the majorities of 1873 and 1874 were similarly reduced. In Queen's County Pope and Brecken retained or increased their majorities in the Catholic districts. This is particularly evident in the polls at Wheatley River, Scotchfort, and Fort Augustus. In King's County MacIntyre continued to show strength in his own First District, but he lost heavily in the Second and Third Districts. The poll at Red House voted Conservative for the first time, and the entire Second District returned Conservatives for the first time since Confederation.

Not only did the Conservatives retain or increase their Catholic support. The increased strength of the Conservatives in the Protestant districts was even more noticeable. In the Fourth District of Prince the Conservatives increased their majorities of 1873 considerably. In Queen's Pope led every district, while in 1876 he carried only the Catholic Third District. The switch of Protestant votes is strikingly evident in the Fourth District of Queen's which Pope lost to Welsh in 1876 by 348 votes and won in 1878 by 148 votes. In King's County the same result is apparent. In the Protestant Fourth District the Conservatives polled the largest vote, while Daniel Davies

had carried the District for the Liberals in 1873 and 1874 by comfortable majorities.

The conclusion that the School Question continued to dominate federal politics on the Island can hardly be avoided. As a result of the local election of 1876 and the School Bill of 1877 many Catholics switched their allegiance and voted Conservative. When the most influential Protestant Conservatives abandoned the Coalition, Protestant voters were free to return to the party of their choice. Thus Pope and his colleagues received the support of a majority of Catholics as well as many former Conservatives. The combination was sufficient to ensure a Conservative victory.

The Patriot was undoubtedly right when it said that the Island would vote for free trade. That the Island did not do so in 1878 indicates, not only that the Conservatives were something less than candid about their trade policy, but also that Islanders were too imprisoned by the prejudices of many years of bitter partizan politics to become concerned about a national policy which was none too clear.

It was significant that the Protestants seemed more ready than the Catholics to forget the School Question. The Protestants gave a generous support to the man who had endangered their free school system. Of course, forgiveness

is easier for the victor than for the vanquished, but MacKenzie's unimpressive record in Island affairs provides a better explanation for the switch of Protestant votes. When the leading Conservatives left the Coalition, there was nothing to attract them to MacKenzie's government.

The Conservative victory in 1878 was particularly gratifying for J.C. Pope. The Cabinet seat for which he was destined in 1873, and which had been snatched away by David Laird, was again within his grasp.¹³⁵ It may be, as the Patriot said, that Pope fought the local election of 1876 with one eye on the House of Commons. Yet, it must not be forgotten that Pope had first announced his school policy in 1869 when he was campaigning for election in the Protestant town of Summerside. He proclaimed at that time that he would "pay for results" in education, and he never wavered from that policy. Pope was a shrewd politician, but even he could hardly have foreseen in 1869 that paying for results in education would eventually place him in the federal Cabinet.

¹³⁵ Pope became Minister of Marine and Fisheries in MacDonal'd's government.

CONCLUSION

The period from 1873 to 1878 in Prince Edward Island was one of adjustment to Confederation. During these years the heritage of many years of bitter partizan politics continued to dominate Island politics, and federal elections were invariably influenced by local issues. The School Question helped to elect the Liberals in 1873 and 1874, and contributed to their defeat in 1876 and 1878.

The year 1876 was the turning point. Until the local election of that year Bishop McIntyre placed his case in the hands of the Liberals, and hoped to obtain concessions from the local Grits through the influence of Alexander MacKenzie. The election of 1876 and the formation of the Coalition government marked the failure of the Bishop's policy. After the local contest many Catholics returned their political allegiance to Pope. The Bishop ceased to interfere, and the Catholics gave the Conservative candidates a greater measure of support in 1878 than they had in 1873 or 1874.

It is not suggested that the School Question was the only issue. The Pacific Scandal was an issue in 1874, and by 1876 the unimpressive record of MacKenzie's government was a serious handicap to his Island supporters.

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Finally, the loss of Cabinet representation in 1876 confirmed that the Liberals were neglecting the Island. Thus, the Conservatives received increased Protestant, as well as Catholic, support.

Yet, the increased support the Conservatives received from the Protestant areas was not without its religious overtones. The Assessment Act, which was the handmaid of the School Bill, threw dissention into the ranks of the Protestant government and strengthened Pope's party for the federal contest. And the North West Act, to which many influential Protestants objected, helped Pope to re-unite the divided Conservative party. Thus, many Protestants could vote for Pope in the by-election of 1876 and the election of 1878 and still adhere to their religious convictions. Protestants could voice their opposition to MacKenzie's neglect of Island interests and at the same time maintain a consistent school policy. The influence of the School Question was felt at all levels.

There were other reasons for the local character of federal politics during the period. With the exception of a few individuals, such as Pope, Haviland, and Laird, the Island politicians were parochial figures. The influence of most of them was limited to their own districts. Few had a provincial stature. This parochialism accounts for the almost complete dominance exercised by

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Pope and Haviland, both of whom had reputations unmatched by any of their opponents. Pope personified the threat to non-sectarian schools. Before union Laird had become his bitterest opponent on this and other issues. When the two leaders moved into the realm of federal politics both carried with them the memories of past feuds. The Bishop's negotiations with the federal Liberals, Laird's difficulties with the North West Act, and the School Act of 1877, got the federal government directly involved in the local issue. Thus, many circumstances contributed to keeping the School Question at the centre of political controversy.

Despite the efforts of the Liberals the National Policy never became a dominant issue. The Catholics were more united after 1876, and those who were ready to forget the School Question were more influenced by MacKenzie's failures and the taxes imposed by the Davies government than by fear of high tariffs. Nothing, it seemed, could displace local concerns from the centre of the stage.

The year 1878 promised to be a turning point in federal politics on the Island. The railway was disappearing as an issue, and the School Question was legally settled. The public figures who dominated Island politics during the Confederation era were passing from the scene. Laird was far away in the North West, and Haviland was confined to the Senate. J.C. Pope died before the next

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election. Thus, old issues and old personalities were passing from the scene. There was a promise of new issues and new personalities for the future.

APPENDIX 1

RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS OF LOTS AND ELECTORAL DISTRICTS¹

1. Prince County.

	Church of Eng	Presb Ch.of Lower Prov.	Kirk of Scot	Rom Cath	Meth odist	Bap tist	Bible Christ and Other
First District							
Lot 1	40	75	28	2376	22	18	2
Lot 2	91	84	7	1110	26	-	25
Lot 3	139	214	6	614	167	1	8
Lot 4	181	615	-	539	111	7	7
Lot 5	103	192	45	466	69	25	9
Lot 6	114	116	4	397	38	8	92
	<u>668</u>	<u>1296</u>	<u>90</u>	<u>5502</u>	<u>433</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>143</u>
Second District							
Lot 7	91	101	1	241	109	64	260
Lot 8	15	261	-	197	117	1	81
Lot 9	14	163	43	196	15	-	-
Lot 10	19	79	1	104	63	-	110
Lot 11	91	122	6	329	4	3	15
Lot 12	149	149	20	94	16	7	125
Lot 13	210	425	-	202	50	20	196
	<u>589</u>	<u>1300</u>	<u>71</u>	<u>1363</u>	<u>374</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>787</u>
Third District							
Lot 14	32	139	-	1046	16	-	19
Lot 15	24	74	-	1357	75	17	3
Lot 16	71	248	75	450	50	39	1
Lot 18	143	533	20	381	22	32	19
Princetown and Royalty	16	370	-	21	7	-	3
	<u>286</u>	<u>1364</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>3255</u>	<u>170</u>	<u>88</u>	<u>45</u>

¹ Prepared from Abstract of the Census of the Population and Other Statistical Returns of Prince Edward Island, taken in the year 1871, Charlottetown, Reilly, 1871.

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1. Prince County (Cont'd.)

	Church of Eng	Presb Ch.of Lower Prov.	Kirk of Scot	Rom Cath	Meth odist	Bap tist	Bible Christ and Other
Fourth District							
Lot 19	165	356	57	503	202	67	27
Lot 25	37	309	46	176	151	176	30
Lot 26	19	207	72	493	331	162	11
Lot 27	-	70	132	674	350	42	1
Lot 28	11	179	379	161	527	210	103
	<u>232</u>	<u>1121</u>	<u>680</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>1561</u>	<u>657</u>	<u>162</u>
Fifth District							
Lot 17	460	195	28	735	120	28	78
Summerside	307	463	95	605	229	115	103
	<u>767</u>	<u>658</u>	<u>123</u>	<u>1340</u>	<u>349</u>	<u>143</u>	<u>181</u>
Totals	2542	5739	1059	13467	2887	1042	1328

APPENDIX 1

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2. Queens County.

	Church of Eng	Presb Ch.of Lower Prov.	Kirk of Scot	Rom Cath	Meth odist	Bap tist	Bible Christ and Other
First District							
Lot 20	344	569	-	193	134	4	1
Lot 21	247	905	2	170	176	34	35
Lot 22	50	576	18	606	86	64	11
Lot 29	218	247	373	563	408	133	15
Lot 30	39	273	578	472	29	32	7
Lot 67	92	876	89	239	80	46	13
	<u>990</u>	<u>3446</u>	<u>1060</u>	<u>2243</u>	<u>913</u>	<u>313</u>	<u>82</u>
Second District							
Lot 23	79	465	117	670	17	213	243
Lot 24	258	348	237	1300	42	111	60
Lot 31	124	266	194	225	329	135	5
Lot 32	357	115	209	122	262	163	48
Lot 65	52	386	691	403	45	154	15
	<u>870</u>	<u>1580</u>	<u>1448</u>	<u>2720</u>	<u>695</u>	<u>776</u>	<u>371</u>
Third District							
Lot 33	144	158	342	90	160	7	318
Lot 34	44	283	268	342	348	90	12
Lot 35	16	28	80	859	70	27	-
Lot 36	17	21	3	1469	5	1	14
Lot 37	62	219	16	1040	10	3	5
Lot 48	38	47	328	388	318	287	6
	<u>321</u>	<u>756</u>	<u>1037</u>	<u>4188</u>	<u>911</u>	<u>415</u>	<u>355</u>
Fourth District							
Lot 49	47	-	289	831	316	127	51
Lot 50	208	16	429	541	111	44	162
Lot 57	18	322	1010	432	9	101	42
Lot 58	1	209	769	255	-	24	-
Lot 60	-	417	491	39	4	10	-
Lot 62	4	420	403	21	-	25	-
	<u>278</u>	<u>1384</u>	<u>3391</u>	<u>2119</u>	<u>440</u>	<u>331</u>	<u>255</u>
Fifth District Charlottetown and Royalty							
	1507	499	1103	3328	1791	256	323
Totals	3966	7665	8039	14598	4750	2091	1465

APPENDIX 1

282

3. King's County.

	Church of Eng	Presb Ch. of Lower Prov.	Kirk of Scot	Rom Cath	Meth odist	Bap tist	Bible Christ and Other
First District							
Lot 43	16	300	-	594	7	-	-
Lot 44	7	78	18	949	2	-	-
Lot 45	33	40	-	1468	20	49	12
Lot 46	-	7	2	752	-	76	23
Lot 47	-	19	2	739	2	285	10
	<u>56</u>	<u>444</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>4502</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>410</u>	<u>45</u>
Second District							
Lot 38	69	244	-	632	-	-	1
Lot 39	3	134	28	604	4	8	-
Lot 40	46	390	36	372	37	4	2
Lot 41	2	348	9	690	-	18	10
Lot 42	2	10	-	628	-	-	2
Lot 56	70	275	1	457	9	35	9
	<u>192</u>	<u>1401</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>3383</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>24</u>
Third District							
Lot 51	10	127	200	520	64	154	18
Lot 52	17	185	289	349	26	130	48
Lot 53	82	46	224	645	17	106	-
Lot 54	26	38	103	624	28	17	9
Lot 55	26	393	70	724	72	88	31
	<u>161</u>	<u>789</u>	<u>886</u>	<u>2862</u>	<u>207</u>	<u>495</u>	<u>106</u>
Fourth District							
Lot 59	72	835	121	166	163	159	88
Lot 61	11	458	66	496	12	1	254
Lot 63	8	598	221	140	18	27	17
Lot 64	56	541	200	39	233	41	383
Lot 66	-	81	16	242	-	35	1
	<u>147</u>	<u>2513</u>	<u>624</u>	<u>1083</u>	<u>426</u>	<u>263</u>	<u>743</u>
Fifth District Georgetown and Royalty							
	156	52	272	547	10	5	14
Totals	712	5199	1878	12377	724	1238	932
ISLAND TOTALS	7220	18603	10976	40442	8361	4371	3725

APPENDIX 2

RETURNS OF THE FEDERAL ELECTION OF 1873¹

1. Prince County.

	Perry(L)	Yeo(L)	Pope(C)	Howlan(C)
First District				
Alberton and Tignish	404	412	560	712
Second District				
Lot 8	73	207	141	54
Lot 11	76	85	50	46
Lots 12 and 13	<u>126</u>	<u>241</u>	<u>140</u>	<u>48</u>
	275	533	331	148
Third District				
Lot 14	142	13	65	61
Lot 15	209	175	108	112
Lot 16	58	77	30	17
Lot 18	<u>161</u>	<u>178</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>27</u>
	570	443	241	217
Fourth District				
Lot 19	115	135	122	98
Lot 25	40	62	84	70
Lot 26	43	49	128	110
Lot 27	41	44	132	121
Lot 28	<u>58</u>	<u>105</u>	<u>170</u>	<u>77</u>
	297	395	636	476
Fifth District				
St. Eleanors(Lot 17)	38	67	152	139
Summerside	<u>79</u>	<u>111</u>	<u>249</u>	<u>218</u>
	117	178	401	357
Totals	1663	1961	2169	1910
Declaration Day Returns	1755	2181	2179	1958

¹ Patriot, Vol. XV, No. 68, September 20, 1873. The poll results published in the Patriot were unofficial. However, the discrepancies with the official Declaration Day totals are not such as to invalidate the conclusion arrived at. The aid of an Atlas had been used to arrange the polls according to electoral districts, and to insert (in brackets) the Lot number when the name only of a poll appeared in the Patriot.

APPENDIX 2

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2. Queen's County.

	Laird (L)	Sinclair (L)	Brecken (C)	Jenkins (C)
First District				
Lot 20	176	169	24	16
Lot 21	244	248	42	23
Lot 22	57	66	101	88
Lot 67	161	174	93	52
Lot 29	158	131	156	98
Lot 30	<u>135</u>	<u>153</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>39</u>
	931	941	472	316
Second District				
Lot 23	155	131	103	98
Lot 24	139	141	200	205
Lot 31	157	144	67	69
Lot 32	86	81	95	101
Lot 65	<u>163</u>	<u>136</u>	<u>93</u>	<u>67</u>
	700	633	558	540
Third District				
Lot 33	166	144	63	76
Lot 34	97	85	127	122
Scotchfort(Lot 36)	87	97	154	152
Fort Augustus(Lot 36)	78	96	161	138
Lot 48	<u>162</u>	<u>161</u>	<u>113</u>	<u>97</u>
	590	583	618	585
Fourth District				
Lot 49	111	99	107	85
Lot 50	120	117	104	103
Murray Harbor Rd.(Lot 57)	146	132	92	69
Eldon(Lot 57)	118	109	214	194
Belle Creek(Lot 62)	<u>215</u>	<u>207</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>41</u>
	710	664	568	492
Fifth District				
Ch'town East	236	191	465	425
Ch'town West	<u>226</u>	<u>191</u>	<u>374</u>	<u>355</u>
	462	382	839	780
Totals	3393	3203	3055	2713
Declaration Day Returns	3424	3241	3083	2744

APPENDIX 2

285

3. King's County.

	Davies(L)	MacLean(L)	MacDonald(C)
First District			
Totals	502	568	434
Second District			
St. Peter's Bay	193	242	120
Carey's	122	123	51
Morell	97	93	61
Red House	68	79	44
	<u>480</u>	<u>537</u>	<u>276</u>
Third District			
Grand River	184	144	190
Cardigan	147	61	230
18 Mile Brook	65	34	128
	<u>396</u>	<u>239</u>	<u>548</u>
Fourth District			
Edmunds	15	10	62
Montague	230	52	186
Senteners	225	131	190
Murray Harbor South	190	156	51
	<u>660</u>	<u>349</u>	<u>489</u>
Totals	2038	1693	1747
Declaration Day Returns	2146	1776	1963

The returns for the Fifth District(Georgetown) did not appear in the Patriot. Subtracting the totals shown above from the Declaration Day totals gives the following result for Georgetown:

Davies	108
MacDonald	216
MacLean	83

APPENDIX 3

RETURNS OF THE FEDERAL ELECTION OF 1874¹

1. Prince County.

	Perry (L)	Yeo (L)	MacNeill (C)	Ramsay (C)
First District				
Tignish(Lots 1,2, and 3)	388	344	1	11
Alberton(Lot 4)	69	106	14	57
Lot 5	58	78	0	23
	<u>515</u>	<u>528</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>91</u>
Second District				
Lot 8	41	108	1	58
Lot 11	41	103	8	24
Lot 13	92	186	8	99
	<u>174</u>	<u>397</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>181</u>
Third District				
Lot 14	112	120	0	9
Lot 15	242	156	1	4
Lot 16	43	73	8	31
Lot 18	177	209	4	13
	<u>574</u>	<u>558</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>57</u>
Fourth District				
Lot 19	115	128	45	28
Lot 25	29	53	18	36
Lot 26	70	81	18	56
Lot 27	47	58	28	31
Lot 28	65	127	61	91
	<u>326</u>	<u>447</u>	<u>170</u>	<u>242</u>
Fifth District				
St.Eleanor's (Lot 17)	106	153	2	58
Summerside	120	154	116	46
	<u>226</u>	<u>307</u>	<u>118</u>	<u>104</u>
Special Votes	1	2	2	2
Totals	1816	2239	335	675
Official Totals	1804	2188	337	669

¹ Patriot, Vol. XVI, No. 9, February 14, 1874. Also Return of the Third General Election for the House of Commons of Canada. The table shown here has been prepared from both sources, and the polls have been arranged by electoral districts.

APPENDIX 3

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2. King's County.

	Davies (L)	McIntyre (L)	MacDonald (C)
First District			
No. 1 (East Point)	75	74	67
No. 2 (Souris Line Rd.)	141	259	120
No. 3 (Bear River Line Rd.)	<u>192</u>	<u>194</u>	<u>71</u>
	408	527	258
Second District			
No. 1 (Carey, St. Andrews)	102	101	24
No. 2 (Morell)	74	92	110
No. 3 (St. Peters)	211	211	88
No. 4 (Red House)	<u>69</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>55</u>
	456	474	277
Third District			
No. 1 (18 Mile Brook)	83	39	117
No. 2 (Alley's, Cardigan Br.)	98	47	209
No. 3 (Dundas)	<u>149</u>	<u>130</u>	<u>159</u>
	330	216	485
Fourth District			
No. 1 (Montague Bridge)	161	54	122
No. 2 (Murray Harbour North)	121	82	129
No. 3 (Murray Harbour South)	141	123	41
No. 4 (Edmund's, Lot 66)	<u>22</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>39</u>
	445	275	327
Fifth District			
Georgetown	64	33	141
Special Votes	1	1	2
Totals	1704	1526	1490

APPENDIX 4

RESULTS OF PROVINCIAL ELECTION, 1876¹

	ELECTED		CANDIDATES	
	Sectarian	Secular	Sectarian	Secular
PRINCE COUNTY				
First District	2	-	2	-
Second "	-	2	-	2
Third "	2	-	3	-
Fourth "	-	2	-	4
Fifth "(S'Side)	-	2	2	2
QUEEN'S COUNTY				
First District	-	2	-	4
Second "	-	1	-	3*
Third "	1	1	2	1
Fourth "	-	2	1	2
Fifth "(Ch'town)	-	2	2	2
KING'S COUNTY				
First District	2	-	2	-
Second "	2	-	4	-
Third "	2	-	2	1
Fourth "	-	2	-	3
Fifth "	-	2	1	2
	11	18		

* Donald Mackay, who was elected in the Second District, supported neither party. He maintained that the local School Boards should decide on religious instruction.

¹ From the Patriot, Vol. XIX, No. 14, August 19, 1876.

APPENDIX 5

RETURNS OF QUEEN'S COUNTY BY-ELECTION, 1876¹

	Welsh(L)	Pope(C)
First District		
Lot 20	153	43
Lot 21	150	92
Lot 22	30	113
Lot 29	144	132
Bonshaw (Lot 30)	113	64
Strathalbyn	<u>137</u>	<u>134</u>
	727	578
Second District		
New Glasgow (Lot 23)	87	116
Wheatley River (Lot 24)	94	266
South Wiltshire (Lot 31)	168	73
North River (Lot 32)	129	51
Long Creek (Lot 65)	<u>128</u>	<u>72</u>
	606	578
Third District		
Brackley Point (Lot 33)	146	32
Saw Mill Bridge (Lot 34)	86	107
Scotchfort (Lot 36)	71	247
Fort Augustus (Lot 36)	42	182
Lot 48	<u>155</u>	<u>78</u>
	500	646
Fourth District		
Lot 49	120	70
Lot 50	161	82
Murray Harbor Rd. (Lot 57)	111	79
Eldon (Lot 57)	154	103
Belle Creek (Lot 62)	<u>204</u>	<u>68</u>
	750	402
Fifth District		
Charlottetown	<u>537</u>	<u>1001</u>
Totals	3120	3205

¹ Reproduced from Patriot, Vol. XIX, No. 40, November 25, 1876. Where the Patriot does not show Lot numbers, they have been added. However, the Lot boundaries may not have been precisely co-terminous with the polls.

APPENDIX 6

RETURNS FOR THE FEDERAL ELECTIO.. OF 1878¹

1. Prince County.

	Perry (L)	Yeo (L)	Hackett (C)	Howatt (C)
First District				
North Cape and Norway(Lot 1)	22	14	56	36
Tignish(Lot 1)	115	84	116	83
Little Tignish(Lot 2)	108	87	45	30
Kildare(Lot 2)	8	13	26	29
Wells Mills	18	18	24	19
Alberton(Lot 4)	45	53	60	60
Cascumpec Village(Lot 5)	34	36	20	18
Garville or Yeo's Mills	72	76	13	14
	<u>422</u>	<u>381</u>	<u>360</u>	<u>289</u>
Second District				
Lots 7 and 8	60	84	17	25
Brae (Lot 9)	34	53	12	18
Lots 11 and 12	61	91	69	48
Lot 13	108	145	19	18
	<u>263</u>	<u>373</u>	<u>117</u>	<u>109</u>
Third District				
Lot 14	68	93	87	67
Wellington(Lot 16)	5	9	52	45
Lot 16	21	41	25	35
Egmont Bay(Lot 15)	66	67	49	49
Fifteen Point (Lot 15)	98	93	63	59
Lot 18	59	66	52	52
Malpeque(Lot 18)	46	46	11	9
	<u>363</u>	<u>415</u>	<u>339</u>	<u>316</u>
Fourth District				
Travellers Rest(Lot 19)	19	22	36	40
Kensington(Lot 19)	49	67	82	75
Lot 25	34	39	64	62
Centreville(Lot 26)	31	35	30	35
Strong Corner	21	23	76	74
Seven Mile Bay(Lot 27)	13	16	32	35
South West Bedeque	12	16	84	82
Cape Travers(Lot 28)	25	49	63	86
Tryon(Lot 26)	26	42	25	38
	<u>230</u>	<u>309</u>	<u>492</u>	<u>527</u>

¹ Reproduced from the Return of the Fourth General Election for the House of Commons of Canada. The official returns give only poll results. In the above table the polls have been arranged by Electoral Districts where possible, but since boundaries may have overlapped complete accuracy cannot be guaranteed. However, the probably errors cannot be large and would not invalidate the conclusions arrived at.

APPENDIX 6

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1. Prince County (Cont'd.)

	Perry (L)	Yeo (L)	Hackett (C)	Howatt (C)
Fifth District				
Miscouche (Lot 17)	31	33	86	84
St. Eleanors(Lot 17)	40	45	40	48
Summerside West	17	16	45	46
Summerside Central	25	30	50	54
Summerside	40	45	74	77
Summerside West East?	60	69	52	55
	<u>213</u>	<u>238</u>	<u>347</u>	<u>364</u>
Totals for Prince County	1491	1716	1655	1605

APPENDIX 6

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2. Queen's County.

	McGill (L)	Sinclair (L)	Pope (C)	Brecken (C)
First District				
No. 1(Lot 20)	59	87	66	52
No. 2(Lot 21)	94	124	100	77
No. 3(Lot 22)	19	26	98	90
No. 4(Lot 67)	139	158	132	105
No. 5(Lot 29)	101	102	166	155
No. 6(Lot 30)	60	59	75	72
	<u>472</u>	<u>556</u>	<u>637</u>	<u>551</u>
Second District				
No. 1(New Glasgow, Lot 23)	76	84	108	100
No. 2(Wheatley River, Lot 24)	57	62	253	245
No. 3(Fowles Mills)	154	152	84	83
No. 4(North River)	88	96	54	48
No. 5(Nine Mile Creek, Lot 65)	168	167	74	67
	<u>543</u>	<u>561</u>	<u>573</u>	<u>543</u>
Third District				
No. 1(Brackley Pr. Rd.)	130	139	35	27
No. 2(Saw Mill Bridge)	79	81	109	99
No. 3(Scotchfort, Lot 36)	71	64	208	206
No. 4(Fort Augustus, Lot 36)	63	43	149	168
No. 5(Lot 48)	94	95	97	94
	<u>437</u>	<u>422</u>	<u>598</u>	<u>594</u>
Fourth District				
No. 1(Lot 49)	79	85	92	87
No. 2(Lot 50)	107	107	104	104
No. 3(Murray Harbor Rd., Lot 57)	29	29	111	112
No. 4(Eldon, Lot 57)	75	77	135	131
No. 5(Belle Creek)	83	89	93	89
	<u>373</u>	<u>387</u>	<u>535</u>	<u>523</u>
Fifth District				
Charlottetown and Royalty:				
No. 1	46	50	143	137
No. 2	82	88	167	156
No. 3	70	69	196	193
No. 4	107	108	174	165
No. 5	48	51	117	113
No. 6	94	100	135	127
	<u>447</u>	<u>466</u>	<u>932</u>	<u>891</u>
Totals for Queen's County	2272	2392	3275	3102

APPENDIX 6

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3. King's County.

	MacIntyre (L)	McFadyen (L)	Muttart (C)	MacDonald (C)
First District				
East Point(Lot 47)	99	67	121	114
East Baltic(Lot 46)	114	55	68	76
Souris East (Lot 45)	152	82	109	85
Souris Line Rd.(Lot 45)	91	39	32	35
L.Peters,Rollo Bay, (Lot 42 or 43)	71	40	105	93
Leslies(Lot 43)	87	63	17	16
O'Donnells,Rollo Bay, (Lot 42 or 43)	36	26	77	67
Monticello	<u>62</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>27</u>
	712	407	549	513
Second District				
A.Lewis,St.Peters(Lot 41)	58	40	53	58
Keenan's,St.Peters(Lot 41)	66	49	54	59
Websters Mills(Lot 40)	25	20	49	52
J. O'Briens(Lot 39)	43	25	64	77
St. Andrews(Lot 35)	94	83	55	72
Red House	<u>66</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>74</u>
	352	261	354	392
Third District				
Dundas	32	28	115	112
Gaffs Mills-Wood Mills	32	20	127	145
Scrimgeonis	29	20	106	122
Finlay's	38	38	92	110
18 Mile Brook	<u>35</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>144</u>	<u>163</u>
	166	134	584	652
Fourth District				
Edwards	5	3	35	40
Whim Road	17	47	77	95
Montague	34	44	85	96
St. Mary's Road	25	61	67	86
Sentners	55	87	99	130
High Bank	38	67	37	44
Creightons	<u>50</u>	<u>91</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>38</u>
	224	400	427	529
Fifth District				
Georgetown	45	49	163	178
Totals for King's County	1499	1251	2077	2264

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Dufferin and Ava Papers (1870-1884). This collection consists of microfilmed copies of selected letters of Lord Dufferin. The Governor-General's correspondence with the Prime Minister contains a few items of value. Some of the letters provide an insight into the importance of Laird's decision to oppose the government in 1873. The importance of the patronage issue is underlined by the exchange of views which took place between MacKenzie and Dufferin.

David Laird Letterbook (1874-1876). This collection in a single volume contains Laird's letters written while he was a member of MacKenzie's Cabinet. A great many of the letters deal with Island politics. Those dealing with the patronage and school issues are most important.

Sir John MacDonald Papers (1832-1891), 569 vols.

Volumes used:

Vol. 119: This volume contains the letters of William H. Pope and Robert Hodgson regarding the characters and opinions of the Island members elected in 1873 and Pope's comments on the election of 1873. There are a few other letters of Pope dealing with Island affairs.

Vol. 225: This volume contains the letters of J.C. Pope for the years 1877-1881. It includes two letters concerning the election of 1878.

Vol. 523 (Vol. 20 of the Letterbooks): This volume contains MacDonald's letters to Hodgson and W.H. Pope asking for a report on the Island members elected in 1873.

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295

Alexander MacKenzie Letterbooks (1872-1883), 7 vols. These have been very useful. MacKenzie's letters contain useful references to Island affairs. MacKenzie expressed freely his opinions of Island political issues, particularly regarding the School Question, Cabinet representation, and civil service appointments. The Prime Minister also expressed his opinions of the federal elections of 1876 and 1878 in letters to David Laird.

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ABSTRACT OF
FEDERAL POLITICS IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
1873 - 1878¹

Prince Edward Island joined the Dominion of Canada in 1873. The terms of union accepted in 1873 were, for the first time, considered sufficiently generous to merit acceptance. Ten years of negotiation about union had given the local Conservatives a distinct advantage over their Liberal opponents. The final terms were negotiated by the Conservative government of James C. Pope. The liberal terms offered by Sir John A. MacDonald's government had made him popular with Islanders, whether Liberals or Conservatives, and Sir John had cultivated friendships among the Island Conservatives. The close association between the local Conservatives and the Prime Minister was known to have contributed to the generous terms of union.

The position of the Island Liberals was much less favourable. The Liberal party had produced the most outspoken opponents of Confederation. When the party finally supported union and went to Ottawa seeking suitable terms, the delegates were forced to deal with a Conservative

¹ Frederick L. Driscoll, *master's thesis presented to the Department of History, University of Ottawa, Ontario, June, 1965, vii-303 p.*

ABSTRACT

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government. The leader of the federal Liberals, Alexander MacKenzie, was known to be an opponent of "Better Terms". Despite the favourable position of the Conservatives, four Liberals and only two Conservatives were elected to the House of Commons in 1873. In the Pacific Scandal election of 1874 not a single Conservative was elected.

In 1878, in an election fought on the issue of free trade versus protection, the Island elected five Conservatives. Thus, the Island electorate reversed the decision of 1874, despite the fact that the Island unanimously supported free trade.

This thesis is a study of the issues of federal politics on the Island during the period, and seeks to explain the unusual decisions of the Island electorate. The campaigns of 1873 and 1874 are analyzed. The local issues between 1873 and 1878 are examined for their influence on federal contests, and the National Policy election of 1878 is studied.

The thesis concludes that federal politics throughout the period was dominated by local issues. The Island paid little attention to national questions, and instead became embroiled in a bitter controversy over Separate Schools. The School Question was the dominant issue in the federal elections of 1873, 1874, and 1878.