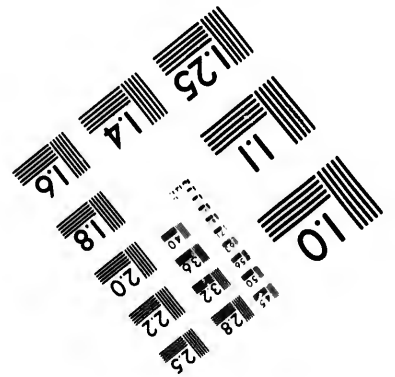
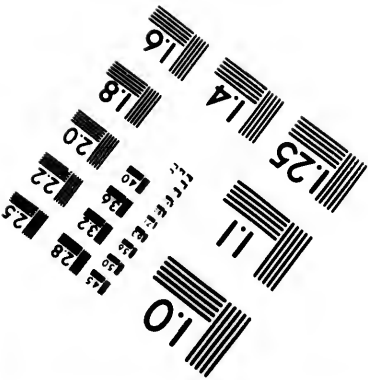
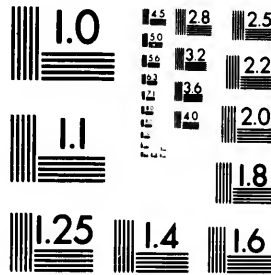


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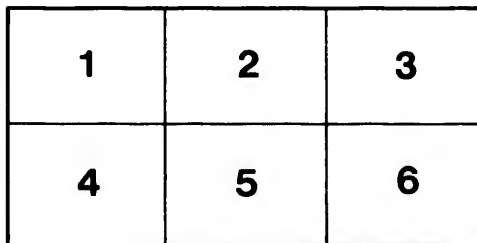
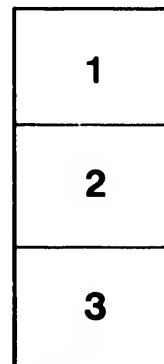
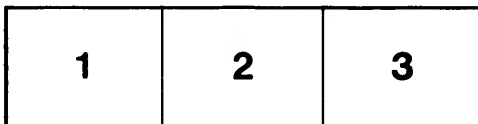
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THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Four Years of Liberal Rule.

LETTER FROM HON. W. S. FIELDING

TO THE ELECTORS OF NOVA SCOTIA :

GENTLEMEN,—Four years ago you entrusted the control of provincial affairs to the representatives of the Liberal party. The time has arrived when those to whom you gave your confidence should render an account of their stewardship. If they have proved themselves incompetent, negligent or corrupt they deserve your condemnation. If they have been faithful to the trust placed in them, if they have honestly, vigorously and efficiently managed the important affairs committed to their care, they may fairly ask on the 15th of June, 1886, a renewal of the confidence you gave them on the 20th of June, 1882.

A STRONG GOVERNMENT.

The local government appeal to the public records in the fullest confidence that intelligent and impartial readers will find in them conclusive evidence that the four years of Liberal government in Nova Scotia have been marked by upright and economical administration, and by wise and progressive legislation, adapted to the requirements of the country. Governments, as a rule, grow weaker as they grow older. The government of Nova Scotia have grown stronger. They closed the fourth session of the legislature

with a larger majority than they had in the first session, and with every reason to believe that they had the confidence and support of a very large majority of the people of the province.

FINANCIAL MATTERS.

The financial difficulties of the government have been by no means small. To carry on the public business with anything like efficiency with the limited means at the disposal of the government, to so manage as to give even a moderate measure of satisfaction, was a very difficult task. Nevertheless, fair satisfaction has been given. The public business has been transacted in the most economical manner. The various services have been as liberally sustained as was possible in the circumstances in which the government were placed. In two of the three full years in which the finances were under the control of the Liberal party surpluses were shown. In the third year there was a small deficiency. The revenues of the province have been vigorously collected and the services of the country have received the benefit of them. In former years the arrears of mines royalties were steadily increasing. The sum due the province on that account at the end of 1879 was

\$56,575.59. At the end of 1882 it had increased to \$111,405.43. Under the management of the present government this rapid increase has been stopped, and progress has been made in the collection of the back dues. The arrears at the end of last year were \$97,092.15—nearly fifteen thousand dollars less than at the close of 1882.

The credit of Nova Scotia has been fully established at home and abroad. The sums required for the public works of the province are obtained under favorable conditions from our own people, among whom the provincial debentures are favorite securities. The government's business with the banks has been placed on a better footing. Moneys required for current accounts are borrowed on the best terms.

"TRAVELLING FEES," ETC.

The arrangements respecting travelling allowances to executive councillors have been readjusted and placed on a sound basis, members receiving their actual expenses. The same policy has been followed in relation to "contingencies" in the departments, the fixed grants to the departmental heads being abolished and the province paying for actual services and supplies. These are among the minor matters of administration, and yet when we remember that much prominence was given to them in the election campaigns of the past, and that much was spoken and written of them that was calculated to derogate from the dignity of provincial politics, we may with propriety note the fact that they have been placed by the present government on a sound and unassailable basis.

REFORMS.

Many reforms have been effected. The administration of justice has been improved and simplified by the passage of the judicature act. The married women's property act has been passed, under which a married woman may hold and enjoy as her own the fruits of her industry. The anomalous state of affairs that prevailed for many years in relation to the office of sheriff has been brought to an end, and an act passed which guarantees sheriffs permanency of office, except where charges of misconduct are made. Measures have been passed to require registration of co-partnerships, to protect the forests from the ravages of fire, to improve the methods of expending and accounting for the road moneys, to amend the election laws, and for other useful purposes. The

st toll bridge in the province has been made free. The assessment law, which has been complained of, has been made the subject of careful enquiry, and much valuable information obtained, which will enable the new parliament to deal with this very important matter.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The question of abolition of the legislative council has often been discussed. Opinion has been divided on both sides of the house. The government have deemed it their duty to make new appointments to that body only upon such conditions as will leave the way open for abolition at a future day if such be the wish of the country.

EXTENSION OF THE FRANCHISE.

The franchise has been broadened. Thousands of young men who have hitherto had no voice in the management of the public affairs of the province will cast their first votes at the approaching election. Unless I am misinformed, the great majority of them will deposit their ballots in support of the Liberal party, which has given them the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship. It is to be regretted that there is not a uniform franchise for the Dominion and local elections. One of the Dominion revising barristers, in a public letter, says: "My observation shows me that much confusion will result from having a franchise and procedure for the local lists different from those of the Dominion." This is unquestionably true. But whose fault is it that there is not uniformity? Not the local government's. The public records show that over a year ago, before the introduction of the Dominion franchise bill, I addressed a communication to the Dominion premier, Sir John A. Macdonald, suggesting that with a view to avoiding such confusion, a conference between the Dominion and provincial governments be held, and an effort made to secure a uniform franchise. The proposal was not accepted. If there is now confusion arising out of the lack of uniformity in the franchise laws, the people will remember that the local government anticipated that confusion, and would have prevented it if their efforts had been seconded at Ottawa.

EDUCATION.

Common school education has been more liberally supported than ever before, and the

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highest results in attendance and efficiency have been reached. The records show that last year nearly one fourth of the population was at school. The county academy system, which had long been admitted to be very inefficient, was grappled with and placed on a basis which affords encouragement to the best teachers and gives an impetus to advanced education. Special recognition has been given to the needs of the French speaking portion of the population. An important step has been taken in the direction of technical education in the department of agriculture, with results which will probably warrant an extension of the principle to other departments of industry. The education of the blind and the deaf and dumb has received special consideration and been well sustained.

The humane institutions have been liberally supported and are now to be brought more directly under the control of the government. Valuable improvements have been made in the hospital for the insane. Legislation has been enacted for the removal of the harmless insane to local institutions, which will have the effect of relieving the hospital from its crowded state, and affording room for the treatment of patients who in recent years have sometimes been excluded for want of room.

THE ROAD AND BRIDGE SERVICE.

Roads and bridges have received the utmost attention. Unfortunately we have not had so much money for this important service as in the good old days when Nova Scotia was an independent province, and the moneys now available are insufficient for the service, but every effort has been made to give the most liberal grants that the finances of the province would warrant. The road and bridge grants voted for the four years 1879 to 1882 amounted to \$420,300, an average of \$105,000 per annum, and this included a large increase in the election year (1882) which was not warranted in the circumstances, and which led to a serious deficit at the end of the year. During the four years of the present government, without yielding to the temptation to make an unjustifiable increase on the eve of the election, the grants voted have amounted to \$500,000, an average of \$125,000 per annum. By applying small portions of the grants to the payment of interest on capital we have been able to span the larger rivers of the province with bridges of the more substantial character, most of them of stone and iron.

Over half a million dollars have been expended by the government on the construction of bridges throughout the province. Hundreds of contracts have been awarded. It is a fact of the highest importance to the people that, while all these contracts have been awarded, and the large sum of money I have mentioned has been expended on these public works, no man in parliament has been able to bring against the government a charge of corruption or jobbery. While in other political centres the air is filled with charges of corruption and with the revelations of investigating committees, the opponents of the government of Nova Scotia have had to acknowledge that no charge of corruption can be sustained against them.

All the services having claims upon the provincial treasury have been carefully regarded and aided as far as possible. The volunteers have received recognition. Scientific men have been induced to visit our province and make known its mineral and other resources. The claims of mining districts for special aid to roads have been recognized and aid given in a number of cases.

STEAMBOATS, PACKETS AND FERRIES.

Steamboats, packets and ferries in all sections of the province have been more liberally sustained than before, and the benefits of this important service widely extended. New lines have been established and old ones made more efficient. At the recent session an act was passed under which the south-western shore is receiving the benefit of a new and much improved steam service, which was long sought by the people of that section.

AGRICULTURE.

Agriculture, the occupation of the largest class of our population, has been diligently fostered. The old agricultural system, which was found to be unsatisfactory, has been abolished, and this department brought directly under the control of the people's representatives. The district exhibitions, which were not productive of the good results looked for when they were established, have been abolished, and county exhibitions substituted, which are more likely to meet the wants of the people. A school of agriculture has been established in connection with the Normal School at Truro, which, under the direction of a competent professor who is both a scientific and practical farmer, is doing a very valuable work among

the teachers and the farmers' sons. Besides conducting his classes at Truro the professor devotes a portion of his time to lecturing in such parts of the province as desire his services. The school, although in its infancy, is already a success and is doing much to stimulate and elevate the pursuit of agriculture. We look forward to an early expansion of this important work. The industry of our orchardists has been fostered, and the excellence of our fruit brought to the notice of the purchasing public of the old world. Liberal bonuses have been given for the importation of improved stock. The services of a competent veterinary surgeon were secured. In these and other matters the government have given the best evidence of their desire to encourage the great industry of agriculture.

RAILWAYS.

The railways of the province have necessarily occupied much of the attention of the government. The late government entered into a contract, which was ratified by the legislature, for the consolidation of most of the railways and the construction of certain new lines. The Liberal government, recognizing the contract as one of the obligations of the province, were ready to carry it out. But the other parties to the contract were unable to perform their part, and consequently the scheme failed. The government purchased the Eastern Extension and Pictou Branch, and, despite the obstruction and unfairness experienced in dealing with the government at Ottawa, succeeded in turning the purchase to good account by securing the consolidation of the line to the Strait of Canso with the Intercolonial railway. In introducing the subject to the legislature in the session of 1884, his honor the lieutenant-governor was advised in the speech from the throne to say that "the amalgamation of the line to the Strait of Canso with the Intercolonial railway materially strengthens the position and claims of those who desired to secure an extension of the railway system into the island of Cape Breton." History has already justified the statement and vindicated the policy of the local government in that important transaction.

The Nictaux and Atlantic railway has been liberally dealt with by the government and every encouragement given to the company to complete its undertaking. Work was resumed, the debts of former contractor paid, and considerable progress made. Of

late but little has been done by the company, but I am assured that under the extension of time provided for at the recent session, vigorous work will be resumed at an early day. Aid was given to the Western Counties road, which but for this would have been closed, and the money granted was most carefully expended, resulting in substantial improvement in the condition of the line.

THE RAILWAY ACT OF 1886.

After many months of negotiations with railway companies and other capitalists the government were able to present to the legislature a comprehensive scheme for the completion of the Western Counties railway and the consolidation of the lines between Halifax and Yarmouth. If the Dominion government perform their part of the arrangement in relation to the Windsor branch, the running powers from Windsor junction into Halifax, &c., we believe this scheme will at an early day be carried out. The government have to assume certain obligations to accomplish their purpose, but the interests of the province are so well guarded and protected by cash deposits, by the earnings of the road and by general control of the undertaking, that there is practically little or no risk, and it is confidently believed that the arrangement can be carried out without costing the province anything.

A general provision has been made whereby the government may in their discretion grant aid to the extent of \$3,200 per mile and 2,000 acres of crown land per mile to any company building a new railway. This provision is well guarded, so that while it will be a valuable and to any *bona fide* company, having a Dominion subsidy and other resources, it cannot be touched by speculative companies, with no substantial means.

CAPE BRETON.

In addition to these measures the government recognized the claims of Cape Breton by granting \$256,000 for railways in that island, either as a subsidy to a company for a through line from the Strait of Canso to Sydney or Louisburg, or for such sections of the line as by connection with the waters of the Bras d'Or Lake would afford improved means of communication between the mainland and the principal places in the island. These proposals were so manifestly fair to Cape Breton that they were received with

much favor by the representatives of the island. The cry of "Justice to Cape Breton" in the matter of railways was stilled by the measure. No Cape Breton man has attempted to show that any more liberal railway policy could in justice be asked from the local government. I am satisfied that the intelligent and thoughtful people of the island will see in these liberal grants, which can be used to aid branch lines if the Dominion government construct the main line, the most ample guarantee of the desire of the local government to deal fairly with the claims of Cape Breton.

It is one of the most remarkable facts in the history of railway legislation in our provinces that the act making the provisions in relation to railways east and west, to which I have just referred—a measure of the largest character and utmost importance—after a thorough discussion in the house of assembly, after the most searching examination that could be given to it, was carried unanimously. Only one or two opposition members spoke against it, and before the discussion closed they evidently changed their views and concluded that they could not afford to record their votes against a measure so wisely devised and so well guarded. The result of the railway debate was a crowning triumph of the Liberal party's four years of valuable legislation.

AN UNASSAILABLE RECORD.

The closing session of our parliamentary term is always the crucial one. On the eve of the appeal to the people, the opposition call the government to account for their errors, and place before the country the grounds on which the government are to be assailed. What is the record in this respect of the session just closed? Our opponents made the most searching enquiry into the government's acts. Information was asked and given on every point in which the opposition saw the faintest hope of finding a ground of attack. And what was the result? The government were found to occupy an unassailable position. Not a charge was brought against them for enquiry. Not a motion was tabled challenging the uprightness or the wisdom of their course. A partisan press may sling charges broadcast and persuade the ignorant that there is something in them. But the intelligent and right-thinking elector looks to parliament for the enquiry into matters of this kind. If charges can be made with truth they will have ad-

ditional force, because they are made in the presence of the government, with all the public documents at hand and all the facts available. When the constituted and well organized opposition fail to bring in the proper way any charge against the government, when in the most trying session, on the eve of the appeal to the people, not a resolution is tabled assailing the conduct of the administration, it is impossible to resist the conclusion that the government's record is a good one, that the attacks of irresponsible writers are unfounded in fact, and could not safely be made in the legislative halls.

The government might with the utmost confidence have appealed to the country on the record which I have thus hastily reviewed. But another issue of paramount importance has forced itself upon the attention of the country.

REPEAL

In the opinion of the government the time has come when the people of Nova Scotia should once more make an effort to obtain a release from a union into which they were forced, and which has been productive of little good and much evil. There was once a party in Nova Scotia which was satisfied with confederation. To-day no disinterested man can be found to say that he is satisfied. Dissatisfaction is so wide and deep that many are heard to say that no change could be for the worse. Some of those who were the warmest advocates of confederation in 1867 are now the most outspoken in their expressions of hostility to it. After the failure of the repeal agitation of 1867-9 to accomplish its main purpose, the people settled down, not very cheerfully it must be admitted, to make the best of the situation. "Give the union a fair trial," said some. It has had a long and more than fair trial, and the verdict against it is more emphatic than before.

We were assured by the fathers of confederation that the affairs of the Dominion could be carried on for twenty years or more at an annual cost of eleven or twelve million dollars, equal to \$3. or less per head of the population. The expenditure in the first year was nearly thirteen and a half millions, and it has been increasing by leaps and bounds until it now exceeds the enormous sum of thirty-five million dollars. The interest and charges in connection with the public debt alone absorb nearly as much as we were told would pay the total expense

of government. Who is there in Nova Scotia that will say that this vast increase of the public expenditure, of which our people bear their full share, has brought corresponding benefit to our province?

The population of Nova Scotia is a little more than one-tenth of the population of the Dominion. If our people contribute only the average share of the revenue they contribute more than three and a half million dollars per annum to the Dominion treasury. No man in Nova Scotia will say that for this sum the province receives a fair return. But it is probable that we pay more than an average share of customs duties, because our people are large consumers of dutiable goods. The trade being largely in the hands of the upper provinces merchants, the duties are in the first instance paid in Ontario and Quebec and swell the returns of those provinces, although the Nova Scotia consumers pay in the end. Our venerable friend, Hon. T. F. Morrison, who has devoted so much time and ability to the study of these questions, has made a calculation which appears to be well founded, and which shows that, if we had not entered the union, if we had kept up our ordinary rate of increase of population and imports, and had imposed the present Dominion tariff on these imports, we would raise a revenue which, supplemented by the present excise duties, would amount to more than four million dollars, a sum large enough to enable the province to extend its railways and carry on all its public services on the most liberal scale.

OUR SHARE OF THE PUBLIC DEBT.

A glance at the public debt brings before our minds in even a more striking manner the great burden the province is bearing for the advantage of others. Nova Scotia entered the union with a debt allowance of eight million dollars. The better terms act increased this allowance to something over nine million dollars. Our actual debt was below these figures. But as the province received allowances on the basis of something over nine million dollars we may treat that as the debt of the province. The public debt of the Dominion on the 30th of June, 1884, was \$242,482,000. On the 30th of June, 1885, the latest date for which we have the official returns, the debt had increased to \$264,703,000. I am justified in assuming that the debt at this moment is not far short of two hundred and eighty million dollars. If Nova

Scotians bear only an average share of this they are, as more than one tenth of the Dominion, carrying on their shoulders more than twenty-eight million dollars of the public debt. Nine million dollars of this represents the debt due by or credited to the province on entering the union. The remaining nineteen millions represents—what? What has Nova Scotia received in the way of public works chargeable to capital to represent this nineteen millions of new debt which the province is shouldering? All she has to show is for it a few miles of the Intercolonial railway? The simple explanation is that the greater part of this debt was not imposed on Nova Scotia for Nova Scotian improvements, but for works in which Nova Scotia has only the most remote interest. Our own public works have been neglected while oppressive taxation has been imposed on us for works in the Western provinces. Is it not then time for our people to raise their voices against the system which produces such results? The local government have not acted rashly in this repeal movement. They have moved with the utmost deliberation and after the most ample notice to all concerned. In the session of 1884 they set aside a repeal resolution introduced by one of their friends, and substituted a motion to place some of their grievances before the government at Ottawa. In 1885, when the failure of the Ottawa authorities to deal with the application strengthened the hands of the advocates of repeal, the government again refused to assent to a repeal resolution, and asked that a further opportunity be given to the government at Ottawa to consider the matter. At that time the opposition taunted the local government with a fear to face the issue of repeal, and moved a resolution requiring an immediate dissolution and appeal to the people on that issue. We still decided to await the action of the Dominion government. It was nearly two years from the passing of the address of the Nova Scotia legislature until the government at Ottawa replied to it. The reply was entirely unsatisfactory. What remained then but to submit to the electorate, with due deliberation and in the light of the Ottawa decision, the issue which the opposition had wished to submit prematurely a year before?

THE FRUITS OF THE REPEAL MOVEMENT.

We are asked, will we get repeal? We answer that if we secure the co-operation of the

other British Provinces we will get repeal very quickly; and that even if we fail to secure that co-operation, the occurrences in the mother country to-day should encourage us to believe that a people resolved to be free will accomplish their purpose. But if there were smaller hopes of repeal than there are it would nevertheless be the duty of the people of Nova Scotia to declare their wishes. It was only the improvement on the original confederation scheme secured by the anti-confederate and repeal parties that enabled the provincial movement to exist in the union. Already the repeal movement has accomplished enough to justify it and to show the people that it is a power for good. The public records show that up to a very recent date the government at Ottawa refused to do anything for a railway in Cape Breton beyond the granting of certain subsidies which proved so insufficient that the local government found it necessary to offer additional subsidies. The local government had urged that the Dominion government should build a railway through Cape Breton or assume the responsibility of securing its construction by a company. The Dominion government refused to do more than they had done and sent the railway promoters to the local government. The minister of railways said that the local government should contribute a portion of the subsidies. The premier, Sir John Macdonald, expressed regret that the Dominion government had granted any subsidy. This was the position down to the time of the passage of the repeal resolutions. The action of our assembly brought the Ottawa government to a sense of the situation. They suddenly abandoned their policy of subsidies and came down to the house of commons with a notice of motion to provide for the construction of a railway through Cape Breton as an extension of the Intercolonial railway. With this direct result of the repeal movement before them, the people of Nova Scotia will find every reason to assert their rights firmly in the contest that is about to take place.

MORE DISCONTENTED THAN EVER.

The two branches of the legislature in 1884 unanimously placed on record the following

statement, in an address to his excellency the governor-general:

"We, the members of the legislative council and house of assembly of Nova Scotia, convened, beg leave to approach your excellency for the purpose of representing that the financial condition of the province of Nova Scotia is so unsatisfactory that we must call your excellency's attention to the urgent necessity for the readjustment of the financial terms of the union.

"That previous to the union of the provinces the province of Nova Scotia was in a most healthy financial condition.

"That by the terms of the union the chief sources of revenue were transferred to the Dominion.

"That strong objections were taken at the time of the union to the financial terms thereof relating to the province of Nova Scotia, as being wholly inadequate to meet the requirements of the various services left under the management of the provincial parliament.

* * * * *

"That after sixteen years under the union successive governments have found that the objections which were urged against the terms of union at first apply with still greater force now than in the first year of the union, and the feeling of discontent with regard to the financial arrangement is now more general and more deeply fixed than ever before."

In the presence of this statement, supported by the unanimous vote of both houses, what is to be done? Submit in silence? Some would do so. If the people of Nova Scotia are satisfied with the fruits of confederation, they will have the opportunity of recording the fact by depositing their ballots on the 15th of June. But if, as we believe, they are deeply dissatisfied with their position in the union and determined to bring about a better state of affairs, they will doubtless feel that they can best advance the true interests of this province by sustaining the repeal policy which the local government submit for their approval.

I have the honor to be,

Gentlemen,

Your most obedient servant,

W. S. FIELDING.

Halifax, May 25, 1886.

HALIFAX ELECTION.

LIBERAL CANDIDATES:

HON. W. S. FIELDING,
PROVINCIAL SECRETARY,

M. J. POWER,

WILLIAM ROCHE, JR.

Election, Tuesday, June 15, 1886.



