

It became urgent for the French Canadians to make known what the laws, decisions and sentences had been. Moreover, the decisions rendered by the military tribunals, which had governed the country from 1759 to 1763, were likely to have innovated in certain judicial matters. Irregularities doubtless had occurred, and the new constitution granted by the Quebec Act, in 1774, as well as the other causes, had created uncertainty on some legal points; this made it of paramount importance for all to know how they stood.

Such the origin of the commission or committee named by His Excellency, Lord Dorchester, on the 27th December, 1786, composed of Judge Adam Mabane and Messrs. Dunn and de Léry at Quebec, and of the members of the council at Montreal, with instructions to report to the governor without delay, the actual state and condition of the old registers and records of the province of Quebec; where they were stored, etc. On the 19th June, 1788, the committee was further directed to report as to the contents of every volume, the period it covered, the number of its pages, its contents and markings, its present condition, its authenticity, the public office to which it belonged, where it was deposited, and on every other point which might affect matters previous to the conquest.

The report, seven hundred copies of which