

Unfortunately the royal commission's results were as unsatisfactory as those of the select committee had been. It began taking evidence on 4 September but much of the testimony was evasive and some of the principals in the drama, such as Huntington, refused even to appear before it. The commission's report, delivered on 17 October, recorded the evidence, but without comment. Its duties, the commission concluded, "were rather inquisitorial than judicial", and would be discharged by reproducing the various depositions and documents submitted to it. The Second Session would have to sort out the mess.

**Second Parliament, Second Session
from 23 October 1873 to 7 November 1873**

Before the new session began, there had been some changes in the complexion of the House. On 29 September 1873 six members were elected from the newly admitted province of Prince Edward Island. As a result, the provincial representation in October 1873 at the beginning of the Second Session of the Second Parliament stood as follows:

Quebec	65
Ontario	88
Nova Scotia	21
New Brunswick	16
Manitoba	4
British Columbia	6
Prince Edward Island	6
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There were also by-elections held either shortly before or during the Second Session. In September the New Brunswick seat of St. John (City & County), vacated by a death, was filled. Another Quebec member, J.H. Bellerose, was named to the Senate on 7 October and hastily replaced in a by-election on 28 October. More significant was the election of the Manitoba rebel, Louis Riel, from Provencher on 13 October, to replace the late Sir George-Étienne Cartier. Riel would not have time to take his seat in this Parliament, but his attempts to do so in 1874 would provoke the first major crisis of the Third Parliament.

When the Second Parliament finally met for its Second Session of 1873, the debate began in earnest on the opposition's charges in the Pacific Scandal. But first there had to be a Speech from the Throne, which opened the parliamentary session on Thursday, 23 October. Lord Dufferin's speech to the Senate and House of Commons assembled on this occasion was a tour de force, and procedurally unique. The Governor General charged Parliament to deal with the Pacific Scandal before even mentioning the government's legislative program, reported the surrender of the charter of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, and urged a new course of action to satisfy the requirement of building a transcontinental railway as part of the Confederation promise to British Columbia. But Dufferin also provided a host of relevant documents to be read into the Commons record along with the Throne Speech itself, including his extensive confidential correspondence with the Imperial government in London. As published in the House of Commons Journals for that day, the Throne Speech and its documentation occupied 117 pages. The Throne Speech documents were extensively reported by