

“ beyond the competence of the Canadian Parliament, I desire to renew to you as Chairman
 “ of the Committee the offer made by me on the part of the Government on the floor of the
 “ House of Commons, to issue a Royal Commission addressed to the gentlemen forming the
 “ Committee which would confer upon them all the powers given to the Committee by the
 “ House of Commons, including the examination of witnesses under oath, and the power to
 “ send for persons, papers and records, and containing the same provisions as to the votes
 “ of the Members of the Committee and yourself as Chairman, as was ordered by the House.
 “ The acceptance of this Commission will enable this Committee to proceed with the enquiry,
 “ and the examination of witnesses on oath without any important delay. I shall cause a
 “ copy of this letter to be sent to each Member of your Committee.

“ I have the honor to be,

“ Your obdt. servant,

“ J. A. MACDONALD.

“ To Hon. J. H. Cameron, &c., &c.

“ P.S.—The Commission will contain a clause enjoining the Commissioners to report
 “ to the Speaker of the House of Commons.

“ (Signed) J. A. MACDONALD.”

The majority of the Committee are understood to have been willing to return a favorable reply to this proposal had their colleagues assented, but neither Mr. *Dorion* nor Mr. *Blake* considered themselves at liberty to accept the arrangement, and stated their reasons in the following terms :—

“ To the Right Honourable Sir John A. Macdonald.

“ SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 2nd inst.,
 “ received this morning, enclosing a copy of a letter addressed by you to the Hon. J. H.
 “ Cameron, Chairman of the Special Committee of the House of Commons, now sitting in
 “ Montreal, in which you state that, as the Act which would have enabled the Committee
 “ to examine witnesses under oath had been disallowed, as being beyond the competence of
 “ the Canadian Parliament, you desire to renew to him, as Chairman of the Committee,
 “ the offer made by you on the part of the Government to issue a Royal Commission, ad-
 “ dressed to the gentlemen forming the Committee, which would confer upon them all the
 “ power given to the Committee by the House of Commons, including the examination of
 “ the witnesses by the Committee; but, as I understand your proposal, it is that the Gov-
 “ ernment should give to the several Members of the Committee named by the House of
 “ Commons to enquire into the charge made against it, a Commission to enquire into the
 “ same charges, with power to examine witnesses under oath, and this with a view to
 “ carry out the intention of the House, to have this enquiry made under oath. Now I
 “ would beg to call to your attention that the Committee was originally named on your
 “ own motion, as an ordinary Parliamentary Committee, without reference to any au-
 “ thority to examine witnesses under oath, and that it was only on the suggestion of the
 “ Committee subsequently made, that the House and Senate unanimously passed the Oaths
 “ Bill, although on more than one occasion you yourself made the suggestion, unheeded by
 “ the House, that a Commission might be issued instead of passing an Act to authorize the
 “ administering of oaths to the witnesses. This alone seems to me to be conclusive that the
 “ House of Commons, whose nominee I am on the Committee, did not intend that the en-
 “ quiry should be carried on by a Commission appointed by the Executive, and responsible
 “ as such only to that Executive. It seems to me, moreover, that the authority which is
 “ sought to be conferred on the Committee to examine witnesses under oath cannot be
 “ attained by the issue of a Royal Commission, for, although the Commissioners appointed
 “ might examine witnesses under oath, it would not be as Members of the Committee ap-
 “ pointed by the House that they would do so, but as Commissioners, whose decisions and
 “ proceedings would be subject to the supervision and control of the Executive, under
 “ whom they would hold their appointment, and not of the House. I have always been