

end there, and no other tribunal should deal with it, and no other authority should intervene and prevent the House from concluding its inquiry. But there is no reason in the world why any independent authority should not pursue an independent inquiry, leaving to the House a full, unrestrained and unrestricted right of inquiry.

In the case I have mentioned there had been great abuses in connection with the Navy contracts in England during the Peninsular War and there were allegations of enormous frauds and a pledge was given by Mr. Pitt's Government of which Lord Melville was a member, that so soon as a peace was concluded an inquiry should be entered into as it was thought impossible that in the height of the war a proper inquiry could be made. I grant that it was a different Administration that moved for a Committee in the matter, but the motion was in consequence of the pledge given by Mr. Pitt, but when Lord Sidmouth asked for the Committee it was opposed in the House of Commons, on the ground that the Crown could prosecute the inquiry. The navy board had full authority, and the admiralty had full authority, and it was urged that the Crown as it appointed the judges so it should appoint Commissioners to try the particular case. There was the responsibility, and this view was argued strongly. As anyone will see who reads it, the Commission was only granted after the Government had been asked whether they had got their Commissioners, and after the House had been informed that the Navy board and the Government of the day asked for the Commission, and the Act to authorize the administration of oaths was passed because there was no power in the Navy Board to administer oaths. The commission was similar to this in all respects. On this the Minister was tried, and on this a Minister was acquitted, and the only difference between that case and this was that on that case a Commission was asked for by the Government, and in this the Commission was issued by the Government under the act.

Hon. Mr. WOOD: Whenever there were Commissions, special Acts were passed, authorizing these commissions.

Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD: Would the hon. gentleman tell me of any such commissions?

Hon. Mr. WOOD: Yes, there was the Act of 1843 and the Act of St. Albans, and in 1852 a general Act was passed to such matters. No single case could be found in which a Royal Commission was appointed to try corrupt parties at elections, except under a special Act.

Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD: The hon. gentleman cites certain acts relating to corrupt practices, but the hon. gentlemen must see that his cases had no reference to this one, because those which he cited referred to corruption in boroughs and the charge here is general corruption on the part of the Government. It had been contended by the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills), who spoke at some length, that it was surprising that the witnesses before the Royal Commission did not know anything, that they came up one after another, telegraph operators and others, and all stated that they did not know anything about the matter. Why were they called? The reason was plain, and the reason was known to the hon. member. It was because Hon. Mr. Huntington (Sheffield)

handed in the names of these witnesses to the Committee. He handed in my name among the rest, and it was alleged that there was an arrangement about this as if the Government had any control over that Commission.

The witnesses were called one after another and in the order shown on the list handed in by the hon. member for Shefford. Early in the session he handed in the list of witnesses, and they were all called in their sequence. I could not help it if a railway operator or a telegraph operator was called up and did not know anything about it. His name was there on the list, and in one case it was shown that Mr. Coursol, whose name was put on the list, met Hon. Mr. Huntington, and when he asked him why it had been done, that hon. gentleman said he did not know. It was the duty of the Commissioners to call upon every man that hon. gentleman had placed on the list, whether they knew anything or knew nothing, and therefore the charge of the hon. gentleman that they were called up by arrangement was untrue, and it was altogether unworthy of the hon. gentleman. Witnesses were called up as they came on the list, and as they came on that list they came up to give their evidence.

With respect to the composition of the Commission I have not much to say. It is beneath me to say much. (*Cheers.*) There is no man in Lower Canada who will not say that Judge Day, by his legal acquirements, was well fitted for the position, and when I tell you that the present Chief Justice on the Superior Court, Judge Meredith, has said that the greatest loss that the bench of Lower Canada ever had, was in Judge Day, I have said all that can be said. (*Cheers.*) Judge Day is a man above any charge of political bias. He has shown what he was on the Bench; he has shown that he was a politician; he has shown in the codification of the laws of Lower Canada what he was as a jurist. The hon. member for Shefford (Hon. Mr. Huntington) said that the other two judges were my creatures. He did not venture to attack Justice Day, but he attacked the other two.

Now, with respect to Mr. Justice Polette, I may say that I have not seen him, nor have I had any communication with him for seventeen long years. For seventeen long years he had been obliterated out of memory. I knew him in my early days in Parliament as a supporter of the Lafontaine-Morin Coalition. From that time he departed from my vision until he was appointed on that Commission. And why, Sir, why was he appointed on that Commission? I was resolved in consequences of the insult that had been heaped upon the Committee in Montreal that the Commissioners must sit in Ottawa, where they could be protected from such insults, and, therefore, there was no chance of the charge being tried by a Lower Canada Judge. I was anxious that there should be a Lower Canada Judge on the Commission. It was suggested by the *Globe* the no Superior Court Judge ought to sit on the Commission, as a cause might arise out of it yet which would have to be tried before them. I endeavoured, therefore, to carry out the suggestion. I thought it was a good one, and took Justice Day, who, as a retired Judge, could by no possibility try any case which might arise. He said that he would be only too glad to do so, but as