

gentleman, believe in Parliament, no matter which way it votes—(laughter)—and to those men alone whom the deliberate will of the confederated Parliament of the Dominion may assign to me as my Responsible Advisers can I give my confidence. (Cheers.) Whether they are the heads of this party or of that party must be a matter of indifference to the Governor-General. (Cheers.) So long as they are maintained by Parliament in their position, so long is he bound to give them his unreserved confidence, to defer to their advice, and loyally to assist them with his counsels. (Applause.) Whenever, in the vicissitudes of party warfare, they are replaced by others—(laughter)—he welcomes their successors with an equally open and loyal regard. (Cheers.) Such private friendships as he may have formed he may have a right to retain. (Hear, hear.) As a reasonable being he cannot help having convictions upon the merits of different policies—(hear)—but these considerations are abstract, speculative, and devoid of practical effect on his official relations. (Cheers.) As the head of a constitutional State, as engaged in the administration of Parliamentary Government, he has no political friends; still less need he have political enemies. (Great cheering.) The possession, or even to be suspected of possessing either, destroys his usefulness. (Loud cheers.) Sometimes, of course, no matter how disconnected he personally may be with what is taking place, his name will get dragged into some controversy, and he may suddenly find himself the subject of hostile criticism by the press of whatever party may for the moment be out of humour. (Laughter.) But, under these circumstances, he must console himself with the reflection that these spasmodic castigations—(laughter)—are as transitory and innocuous—(great laughter)—as the discipline applied occasionally to their idols by the unsophisticated worshippers of Mumbo Jumbo—(immense laughter)—when their harvests are short or a murrain visits their flocks. (Cheers.) For, gentlemen, of this I am certain: although he may sometimes err in his judgment, or fail in serving you as effectually as he might desire, a Viceroy who honestly seeks to do his duty—(cheers)—to whom the interests of Canada are as precious and her honour as dear as his own—(immense cheering)—who steers unmoved an even course, indifferent to praise or blame, between the political contentions of the day—(cheers)—can never appeal in vain to the confidence and generosity of the Canadian people. (Immense applause.)”

But though keeping my final decision in suspense, my mind was much occupied, as your Lordship may imagine, with the consideration of the various courses open to me. On one point I was quite clear—namely, that it would not be right for me to countenance the settlement of the serious issues raised between my Ministers and their opponents—involving, as they did, the personal honour of the most eminent men in Canada, the fate of my Ministry, and the public credit of the country—except at the hands of a full Parliament, in which the distant Provinces of the Dominion were as well represented as those of Ontario and Quebec.

As I have already described to your Lordship in the earlier part of this Despatch, before Parliament adjourned on the 23rd of May I had caused it to be announced to both Houses that Prorogation would take place on the 13th of August. This arrangement, I have no hesitation in saying, was agreeable to what were then the views of the majority both in the Senate and in the Houses of Commons. On the faith of this pledge many gentlemen were gone to so great a distance that it was physically impossible for them to be recalled, and it so happened, from causes to which I have already referred, that by far the larger proportion of these absentees were supporters of the Government. All the members from British Columbia, except Sir F. Hincks, were on the wrong side of the Rocky Mountains. Some Ministerialists were in Europe, as I was informed, others in the States, and even to those in the Maritime Provinces, a return to Ottawa, though not physically impossible, as it was to their colleagues, would prove a great inconvenience at such a season. On the other hand, I learnt that the Opposition were mustering their full force, an operation for which they possessed certain geographical facilities. Were therefore the House of Commons to meet for the transaction of public business, it was evident that important votes might be passed, and decisions taken, contrary to the real sense of the country, and that my Ministers might justly complain that they were being unfairly treated, and their fate determined by a packed Parliament.

But apart from these practical considerations, a grave question of principle seemed to me involved. The Imperial Officer representing the Crown in the Dominion is the natural protector of the federal rights of its various Provinces as secured under an Imperial Act. The sanctity of the rights of any one of these Provinces is not affected by the number of its representatives or the amount of its population. In this view it is especially necessary that, in a country of such enormous distances, ample notice should be given of the times and seasons when Parliament is to sit; but if it be once admitted that the official “fixtures” which regulate the opening or closing of a Session and the