

In the meantime the Committee had met, and on the 5th of May had resolved amongst other things "That in view of the absence of Sir *George Cartier* and the Hon. "*J. J. C. Abbott*, and the impossibility of the investigation with which the Committee "is charged being carried on in a proper manner without an opportunity being afforded "these gentlemen of being present and hearing the testimony adduced, it was advisable "the Committee should adjourn until Wednesday, the 2nd day of July, if Parliament "should be then in Session,"—a conclusion which appears to have been arrived at in the Committee by a majority of three to two. On the following day these recommendations were adopted by the House of Commons, on a vote of 107 to 76.

The ordinary business of the Session being now nearly concluded, and it having been admitted, I understand, by all parties, that the Committee could not sit after prorogation, it was arranged that the House should adjourn to such a day beyond the 2nd July, as would enable the Committee to complete the investigation and to frame their report. The date eventually determined on was the 13th of August, which was also settled as the day on which Parliament was to be prorogued.

As the nature of the understanding at the time in respect of this latter event has been warmly controverted, it is necessary that I should here acquaint Your Lordship with the facts of the case so far as I am cognizant of them. Early in May,—I forget the exact date,—Sir *John Macdonald* waited upon me in my office, and having communicated to me the arrangements contemplated for the convenience of the Committee informed me that he wished to take my pleasure as to the date of prorogation, mentioning the 13th of August as the one he desired to suggest. Having received my assent to this proposal, he repaired to the House of Commons, and announced from his place as Leader of the House and the person responsible for the conduct of public business, that Parliament would be prorogued on the 13th August, stating—as he affirms—in the most distinct terms, that the "re-assembly of Parliament on that day would be *pro forma*,—that no business would be done beyond the reception of the Report of the "Committee, which could then be printed with the evidences, and go before the country,— "that the Members would not be required to return, and that only the Speakers of the "two Houses need be in their places"—The only observation elicited by this announcement proceeded from Mr. *Holton*, an Opposition Member, who remarked "that to do "any business there must be a quorum, and that he and a quorum would be there,"—to which Sir *John* informs me he replied, that "if a quorum was necessary a sufficient number of Members would be found in the neighbourhood of Ottawa,"—a quorum consisting of the Speaker and nineteen others. It was upon this understanding, Sir *John* assures me, that the House consented to adjourn, and in confirmation of his assertion he has communicated to me the subjoined letter from Mr. *Palmer*, the Member for St. John

"St. JOHN, August 11, 1873.

"Sir *John Macdonald*, Minister of Justice, Ottawa.

"SIR,—In consequence of statements that I understand have come from some Members of the Commons to the effect that there might be an actual Session of Parliament at the adjournment on the 13th, to you, as the leader of the Government, I beg to make the following statement by way of protest.

"I have to remind you that the House of Commons only consented to adjourn to that time on your pledge openly given in the House that no business should be transacted, nor would the attendance of Members be required, as there would be enough around Ottawa to make a quorum; that Mr. Speaker would receive the Report of the Committee on the *Huntington* charges, so that it might be published, and that then Parliament would be at once prorogued.

"If this promise had not been made, I do not believe the House would have consented to any such adjournment. I certainly would not have given my consent to any adjournment that would have put the country to an expense of a quarter of a million dollars by bringing the Legislature together again.