of Commons, and cries of "Privilege" were uttered, when Black Rod made his appearance; but, as far as I can learn, nothing was done or said incompatible with the dignity and self-respect of that Assembly. Only the Ministerialists present, about thirty-five in number, accompanied the Speaker to the Senate Chamber. The Opposition, amongst whom, on this occasion, I suppose must be included thirteen of the ordinary supporters of my Government who had signed the Memorial, remained behind in their places. Upwards of seventy members in a House of two hundred must have been absent—all of whom, with the exception of three, were claimed by Government as their adherents.

In the evening, what is popularly known as an "indignation" meeting was held, under the presidency of Mr. Mackenzie. I have appended to this Despatch a Report of its proceedings.

I have thus recounted, in as faithful language as I can command, the various circumstances connected with the recent prorogation. In doing so, your Lordship will perceive that I have not attempted to discuss, still less to defend, the action of my Ministers on any of the occasions referred to, except so far as the justification of their conduct follows as a corollary to the vindication of the attitude I myself have assumed. The propriety of their procedure is a matter which they will have to settle with the Canadian Parliament. My contestation would be, that the fact of their being hereafter proved innocent or guilty of the accusations alleged against them, or of having acted judiciously or the reverse, is a result which can have no relation to my share in these transactions, and that, given the circumstances in which I found myself, I have acted in the highest interests of the Parliament and of the people of Canada. In the same way, if from time to time I have argued against any of the views maintained by the Opposition, it has only been as contending against their implied condemnation of what I myself have done or said.

Were I to be put upon my defence, my best justification would be found in a review of whatever other courses may be considered to have been possible, but this inquiry has been pretty well exhausted in the course of the preceding statement. The alternatives I have seen suggested by those who are disposed to criticise my conduct are indeed very few. The morning after the news of the prorogation had reached Toronto, but before my pledge in regard to an autumn Session was known, the 'Globe'—a recognized organ of the Opposition, and one of the ablest conducted papers in Canada—in lamenting the prospect of a recess which was to last till February of next year, observed that "a prorogation for two or three weeks would have been a proper course." As I had actually anticipated the pith of these suggestions (for the question of a few extra weeks, I apprehend, could not have become any grave cause of complaint), I naturally might have expected to have been complimented on my action; but although this paper and all the other Opposition journals in Canada have, with a few exceptions, shown great forbearance to me personally—considering the excitement which prevailed and the forcible language in which leading articles are written—I am afraid I must admit to your Lordship that its subsequent allusions to my procedure have not been eulogistic.

But if a short prorogation was wrong, what were the alternatives? An adjournment. But an adjournment is an act of the House, and cannot be compelled by the Executive. The leader of the House had already rejected the suggestion, and not the slightest intimation had ever reached me that such an expedient would be agreeable to the Opposition. On the contrary, their last word within an hour of the time the House was to meet, as conveyed to me by the ninety-two members, amongst whom were Mr. Mackenzie and Mr. Blake, was—"Let us meet and proceed to business as though we were a fully constituted Assembly representing the collective will of the people."

But it has been suggested that I should, on the one hand, have compelled the acquiescence of Sir John Macdonald in an adjournment by refusing to prorogue, while on the other Mr. Mackenzie ought to have been driven into the arrangement under a threat of prorogation.

Now I am quite ready to admit, that one of the functions of a Governor-General is to moderate the animosities of party warfare, to hold the balance even between the contending parties, to see that the machinery of the Constitution is not unfairly strained for party purposes, to intervene with his counsels at opportune moments, and when desired by his Ministers to become the channel of communication with their opponents, or even, though uninvited, to offer himself as negotiator in a difficulty. But the rôle marked out for me above is very different from this. I certainly should not have considered it consistent with my personal honour to have approached my Prime Minister with a threat I had no intention of executing, even had I seen less clearly than I did the objections to the course proposed, while, except at his instance, I should have been still less justified in opening communications with the Opposition. But as I have already