

Parliament the Commissioners. And again, if his Excellency had listened to the prayer of the memorial and adopted the unprecedented and unconstitutional course of proroguing Parliament against the advice of a Ministry enjoying the confidence of the Commons, simply on the representation of a number—a minority—of members of the House, not even assembled in Parliament, further delay must have been the consequence, as neither the Commons nor its Committees could examine witnesses on oath, and consequently could not enter upon the inquiry. But to this we shall refer again. In answer to the memorial, his Excellency stated amongst other things:

"That immediately after I had assented to the Act, I transmitted a certified copy of it to the Secretary of State; that leaning myself to the opinion, that the Act was not *ultra vires*, I accompanied it by a full exposition of the arguments which could be urged in its support, but on the point being referred by the Secretary of State for the professional opinion of the law officers of the Crown, it was pronounced inconsistent with the Act of Confederation, and that, therefore, the postponement of the inquiry, so far as it has arisen out of this circumstance, has resulted wholly by the operation of law, and has been beyond the control of any one concerned. You then proceed to urge me to decline the advice which has been unanimously tendered to me by my responsible Ministers, and to refuse to prorogue Parliament; in other words, you require me to dismiss them, for, gentlemen, you must be aware that this would be the necessary result of my assenting to your recommendation. Upon what ground should I be justified in taking so grave a step? What guarantee can you afford me that Parliament would endorse such an act of personal interference on my part? You, yourselves, gentlemen, do not form an actual moiety of the House of Commons, and I have no means therefore of ascertaining that the majority of that body subscribed to the opinion you have announced. Again, to what should I have to appeal in justification of my conduct? It is true grave charges have been preferred against those gentlemen—but as you, yourselves, remark in your memorandum, the truth of your accusations still remains contested. One of the authors of the correspondence has admitted that many of his statements were hasty and inaccurate, and has denied, on oath, the correctness of the deductions drawn from them. Various assertions contained in the narrative

of the others have been positively contradicted. Is the Governor-General, upon the strength of such evidence as this, to drive from his presence gentlemen, who for years have filled the highest offices of State, and in whom the present Parliament has repeatedly declared its confidence? Under these circumstances, what right has the Governor-General, on his personal responsibility, to proclaim to Canada—nay, not only to Canada, but to America and to Europe—that he believes his Ministers guilty of the crimes alleged against them? I have concluded, on the advice of my Ministers, and even if I differed from them as to the policy of the course, which I do not, it is a point upon which I should be disposed to accept their recommendation, to issue a Royal Commission of Inquiry to three gentlemen. I hope you will come to the conclusion, on a calm retrospect of the various considerations to be kept in view, that—in declining to act as though the charges against my Ministers were already proven, and in adhering to arrangements upon the faith of which many of your colleagues are absent from their places [and some absent from the country and some even in Europe]—I have adopted the course most in accordance with the maxima of constitutional government, and with what is due to those whom the Parliament of Canada has recommended to my confidence."

Upon the prorogation of Parliament and the appointment of a Royal Commission, we may again not inappropriately refer to English opinion, as they are questions with which English writers in the home of Parliamentary government are familiar.

The *London Standard*, a Conservative paper and ready to find fault with Mr. GLADSTONE and his acts—Lord DUFFERIN being a Liberal and appointed by Mr. GLADSTONE—says, on the 27th Aug.:

"Lord Dufferin, in the difficult and onerous position in which he was placed, could have acted no otherwise than he did."

The *Saturday Review*, 23rd Aug., says:

"Lord Dufferin's well deserved reputation for political tact and judgment renders it probable that in a difficult crisis he has been well advised."

And in a long article on the constitutional aspect of the question the *Review* says:

"It is his (the Governor-General's) duty as umpire to see that the rules of the Parliamentary game are strictly observed, instead of becoming a player."

The *London Guardian*, 20th Aug. says: