

CANADA.

these facts were true—and their accuracy cannot be impugned—whether they told for or against my Ministers, no just man could have wished them to be withheld. As for any incidental remarks or inferences interspersed through the narration, such remarks and inferences referred to the aspect of affairs as they existed on the 13th of August, and not to the totally distinct and altered issues upon which Parliament was proceeding to adjudicate.

7. On Monday, the 27th of October, the House of Commons met at three o'clock in the afternoon, and proceeded at once to the consideration of the Speech from the Throne, the debate commencing with an able and moderate speech from Mr. Mackenzie, in which he moved the subjoined amendment as an addition to the second paragraph:—

“And we have to acquaint His Excellency that by their course in reference to the investigation of the charges preferred by Mr. Huntington, in his place in this House, and under the facts disclosed in the evidence laid before us, His Excellency's Advisers have merited the severe censure of this House.”

8. This amendment raises a perfectly fair and direct issue, it goes to the root of the matter, it finds itself upon the evidence taken by the Commission, and neither directly nor indirectly does it impugn the act of Prorogation. Indeed, on perusing the Report of the discussion which ensued, your Lordship will perceive that the objections which at one time were so vehemently insisted upon in regard to this proceeding have been, so far as my action was concerned, almost entirely pretermitted, that Mr. Blake stated he would not even refer to them, and that most of the speakers, with an instinctive appreciation of what the exigencies of the case demanded, confined themselves to the consideration of what are the main substantive charges against my Ministers.

9. On the second night of the debate Mr. James Macdonald, member for Pictou, an eminent supporter of the Government, moved a second amendment in the following terms:—

“And we desire to assure His Excellency that after consideration of the statements made in the evidence before us, and while we regret the outlay of money by all political parties at Parliamentary elections, and desire the most stringent measures to put an end to the practice, we at the same time beg leave to express our continued confidence in His Excellency's Advisers, and in their administration of public affairs.”

10. The discussion on the two foregoing amendments continued, with the exception of an intervening Saturday and Sunday, for seven successive days, that is to say, from Monday, the 27th of October, to Wednesday, the 5th of November.

11. On the morning of that day Sir John Macdonald asked for an interview, at which he informed me that although he and his friends had had reason to expect a considerable majority when Parliament met, some unexpected defections had since occurred in the ranks of his supporters, and that he had just received an intimation from one or two more, which so compromised his prospects as to render it his duty to tender me his resignation as well as that of his colleagues. He then repaired to the House of Commons, and brought a debate of almost unprecedented length and interest to a close by the announcement of his surrender of the seals of office, and of my having called upon Mr. Mackenzie to form a Government in succession to himself.

12. The discussion not having been brought to the test of a vote, it is impossible to state with certainty what the result of a division might have been. For some time before the meeting of Parliament, and at the outset of the Debate, the Ministerialist side were very confident of a majority of from 16 to 25. I confess I always considered these calculations over sanguine. On the other hand,—even at the last moment, when their chance of success seemed most assured,—the Opposition, I have reason to believe, did not calculate on a vote of more than 8 or 10 in their favour, so that under any circumstances the division would have been a narrow one.

13. It may not, however, be inopportune to remark, that the fact of every single member of the House but two, having been present in Ottawa and prepared to vote on this occasion, exemplifies in the most striking way how mistaken I should have been on the 13th of August, had I taken the ninety-two signatories to remonstrance presented to me, as representing a “majority” of Parliament. If the House had gone to a division on the day on which Sir John Macdonald resigned, it would have become apparent that,—leaving out of account the new members for Prince Edward Island,—ninety-two votes would have represented a “minority” of fourteen on the total number given.

14. Many of the speeches delivered during the course of this remarkable discussion were characterized by great ability and power, several of them having been of three and four hours' duration. Sir John Macdonald did not address the House until Monday evening the sixth day of the debate, when he spoke continuously for five hours. Mr. Blake followed him with a speech of equal ability and importance, and was succeeded by other members of weight and eminence. It is not necessary I should indicate any of these eloquent efforts for