

CANADA.

I admit require the most searching investigation; but as you yourselves remark in your Memorandum, the truth of these accusations still remains untested.

"One of the authors of this correspondence which has made so painful an impression upon the public, 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 other 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, during the recent Session, Parliament has repeatedly declared its continued confidence? It is true certain documents have lately appeared in connection with these matters of grave significance, in regard to which the fullest explanation must be given, but no proof has yet been adduced which necessarily connects them with the culpable transactions of which it is asserted they formed a part, however questionable they may appear, as placed in juxtaposition with the correspondence to which they have been appended by the person who has possessed himself of them.

"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 Europe, as such a proceeding on his part must necessarily do—that he believes his Ministers guilty of the crimes alleged against them? Were it possible at the present time to make a call of the House, and place myself in a direct communication with the Parliament of the Dominion, my present embarrassment would disappear, but this is a physical impossibility. I am assured by my Prime Minister, and the Report of the proceedings at the time bears out his statements, that when Parliament adjourned it was announced by him, as the leader of the House, that the meeting on the 13th of August would be immediately followed by prorogation; that no substantive objection was taken to this announcement; and that, as a consequence, a considerable portion of your fellow-members are dispersed in various directions. I should therefore only deceive myself were I to regard the present Assembly as a full Parliament.

"Since the adjournment, indeed, circumstances have occurred which render your proximate re-assembly highly desirable, but in this country there are physical circumstances which necessarily interpose a considerable lapse of time before the representatives of the various Provinces comprising the confederated Parliament of Canada can assemble, separated as some of them are by thousands of miles from the capital of the Dominion.

"In regulating the times and seasons when Parliament is to be called together, the Executive is bound not only to consider the reasonable convenience of these gentlemen, but also to protect the federal rights of the Provinces which they represent, and under these circumstances I have concluded, on the advice of my Ministers (and even if I differed from them as to the policy of such a course, which I do not, it is a point upon which I should not hesitate to accept their recommendation), to issue a Royal Commission of Inquiry to three gentlemen of such legal standing, character, and authority, as will command the confidence of the public, by virtue of the powers conferred upon me by the Act 31 Vict., cap. 38. On the other hand, I have determined in proroguing Parliament to announce to the members of both Houses my intention of assembling them immediately after the Commission in question shall have concluded its labours. By these means an opportunity will be afforded for the preliminary expurgation of these unhappy matters before a tribunal competent to take evidence on oath; ample opportunities will be given to the members of the more distant Provinces to make their preparations, in view of an autumnal Session; and within two months or ten weeks from this date a full Parliament of Canada will take supreme and final cognizance of the case now pending between my Ministers and their accusers.

"Gentlemen, the situation we have been discussing is one of great anxiety and embarrassment, but I cannot but hope that on a calm retrospect of the various considerations to be kept in view, you will come to the conclusion that in determining to be guided by the advice of my Ministers on the present occasion—in other words, in declining to act as though the charges which have been advanced against them were already proven, and in adhering to arrangements upon the faith of which many of your colleagues are absent from their places—I have adopted the course most in accordance with the maxims of constitutional government, and with what is due to those whom the Parliament of Canada has recommended to my confidence."

After the members had retired, it had become time for me to proceed to the Senate Chamber, and about half-past three o'clock the Speaker appeared at the Bar, and Parliament was prorogued. Considerable excitement, I am informed, prevailed in the House