

such steps as it may deem necessary and expedient with reference to this important matter.

"The number of names signed to this document is ninety, within ten of one-half the House. They are as follows:—

"OPPOSITION.—Anglin, Archibald, Bain, Bechard, Bergin, Blain, Blake, Bodwell, Bourassa, Bowman, Boyer, Brouse, Buell, Burpee (Sanbury), Cameron (Huron), Cartwright, Casey, Casgrain, Cauchon, Charlton,* Church, Cockburn (Muskoka), Cook, Cutler, Delorme, St. George, Dorion, Dorion, Edgar, Ferris, Findlay, Fiset, Fleming, Fournier, Galbraith, Geoffrion, Gibson, Gillies, Goudge, Hagar, Harvey, Higginbotham, Holton, Horton, Huntington, Jetté, Laflamme, Landarkin, McDonald (Glengarry), McKenzie, Mercier, Metcalf, Mills, Oliver, Paquet, Paterson, Pearson, Pelletier, Pickard, Poser, Provost, Richard, Richards,* Ross, Ross, Ross, Rymal, Smith (Peel), Snyder, Stirton, Taschereau, Thompson, Thomson,* Tremblay, Trow, White (Halton), Wilkes, Wood, Young, Young.

"MINISTERIALISTS.—Burpee (St. John), Coffin, Cunningham, Forbes, Glass, Macdonell, (Inverness), Ray, Schultz, Scriver, Shibley, D. A. Smith (Selkirk), A. J. Smith (Westmoreland)."[†]

REPLY.

"GENTLEMEN,—It is quite unnecessary for me to assure you that any representations emanating from persons possessing the right to speak on public affairs with such authority as yourselves, will always be considered by me with the greatest respect, even had not circumstances already compelled me to give my most anxious thought to the matters to which you are now desirous of calling my attention.

"You say, in your Memorandum, that four months have elapsed since the Hon. Mr. Huntington preferred grave charges of corruption against my present Advisers, in reference to the Pacific Railway contract, and that although the House has appointed a Committee to inquire into these charges, the proceedings of this Committee have on various grounds been postponed, and the inquiry has not yet taken place.

"Gentlemen, no person can regret more deeply than I do these unfortunate delays, the more so as they seem to have given rise to the impression that they have been unnecessarily interposed by the action of the Executive.

"It may be premature at this moment to enter into a history of the disallowance of the Oaths Bill, but this much, at all events, it is but fair to everyone that I should state, viz. that immediately after I had assented to that Act, I transmitted a certified copy of it to the Secretary of State, in accordance with the instructions by which I am bound on such occasions. That, leaning myself to the opinion (an opinion founded on the precedent afforded by the Act of the Canadian Parliament, which empowers the Senate to examine witnesses on oath), 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 anyone concerned.

"You then proceed to urge me, on grounds which are very fairly and forcibly stated, 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 from my counsels; for, gentlemen, you must be aware that this would be the necessary result of my assenting to your recommendation.

"Upon what grounds would I be justified in taking so grave a step?

"What guarantee can you afford me that the Parliament of the Dominion 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 subscribe to the opinion you have enounced.

"Again, to what should I have to appeal in justification of my conduct?

"It is true grave charges have been preferred against these gentlemen; charges which

* The names thus noted were signed by proxy.

† The above classification is founded on the votes taken on Mr. Huntington's motion. One or two gentlemen however, classed with the Opposition might be more properly set down as "Independent."