

speak from my personal experience. When I was Secretary of the Treasury, ten or twelve years ago, it constantly happened that, in cases of intestary escheats and other forfeitures to the Crown, the moral claim of other persons was admitted and remissions were made, not as a matter of legal right, for the right of the Crown was undisputed, but as a matter of grace. There are also many Parliamentary precedents to the same effect. Such cases must in each instance, it seems to me, be decided on their own merits. As to paragraphs 5 and 6, also mentioned in your petition, you will pardon my saying that I am not concerned either to admit or deny your statement. But, as a matter of fact, I do not find any evidence that in this Dominion and in this nineteenth century the Society of Jesus have been less law-abiding or less loyal citizens than any others. As to the paragraph 6, it appears to me that the legal status of the society was settled by the Act of 1887 (to which little or no objection was taken). I cannot see anything unconstitutional in that respect in the payment of the money in question to a society duly incorporated by law. The Governor-General, both by the written law and by the spirit of the constitution, is to be guided by the advice of his responsible ministers. If he disagrees with them on questions of high policy as being contrary to the interests of Her Majesty's Empire, or if he believes that they do not represent the feelings of Parliament, it is constitutionally his duty to summon other advisers, if he is satisfied that those so summoned can carry on the Queen's Government and the affairs of the Dominion. As to the first, I cannot say that I disagree with the course which, under the circumstances, the ministers have recommended, believing it, from the best authorities to which I have had access, to be constitutional. The Parliament of the Dominion, by 188 to 13, has expressed the same view. I decline to go behind recorded votes.

"Members of Parliament are elected not as the delegates but as the representatives of the people, and it is their duty to guide themselves according to that which they believe to be in the best interests of the high function which they have to discharge. Again,

I would ask, do the dissentients represent the majority? I find that 188 represented 916,717 voters, whereas the thirteen members represent 77,297, and moreover the body of the constitutional Opposition appears to have voted for the approval of the allowance of the bill. I have been asked (though not by you) to disallow the Act, though otherwise advised by ministers, and though contrary to the sense of Parliament. Would it be constitutional for a moment that I should do so? If it were a question of commerce, or of finance, or of reform, or of constitution, there could be no doubt, and I cannot conceal for a moment the doubt which I feel, however careful the Governor-General may be in receiving such a deputation, there may be some risk of his being held up as a court of appeal on the question of constitutional Government, and against the Parliament with which it is his duty to work in concert. Then it has been said, why not facilitate a reference to the Privy Council? I believe that my advisers have a perfectly good answer, that, having no doubt of the correctness of their view, they have a good reason for not so doing.

"I have been asked to dissolve the House of Commons, in one of the petitions to which I am replying. A dissolution of Parliament, in the first instance, except under the gravest circumstances, and perhaps with great reservation even then, should not be pronounced except on the advice of responsible ministers. It causes a disturbance of the various businesses of the country. The expense both to the country and to all concerned is considerable, and it is a remedy that should be exercised only in the last resort, and, though I say it, I do so with great deference to those present, that, excepting in the province of Ontario and this province of Quebec, there does not appear to have been any general feeling in this matter such as would warrant the Governor-General to use this remedy. I recognize the influence of the two provinces, but I cannot leave the rest of the Dominion out of sight, and I may express the personal hope that this Parliament may exercise for some time to come a wise, constitutional influence over the affairs of this country.