

CANADA.

in both Houses previous to its adjournment. After some conversation, in which we went over the whole ground, and again examined the suggestion contained in my letter relative to an adjournment, I finally announced to him, that on a due consideration of all the circumstances of the case, the prorogation of Parliament seemed to me inevitable,—that I did not feel myself justified in withdrawing my confidence from Ministers, or in concluding that Parliament had done so, and that therefore I was prepared to be guided by the counsels of himself and his colleagues,—but that I must formally insist on one condition as the price of my assent to prorogation, viz.:—that Parliament should be again convoked within as short a period as was consistent with the reasonable convenience of members, and that I considered six or eight weeks was as long an interval as should intervene before the House re-assembled. Sir John Macdonald did not offer any objection to this proposition—indeed he had already volunteered a suggestion to a similar effect,—and it was agreed that I should meet my Council at two o'clock, in order that it might be ratified in the presence of all my Ministers.

At one o'clock, however, I was unexpectedly informed that a deputation of members of Parliament was desirous of waiting upon me with a Memorial against prorogation. I had not received the slightest intimation of the intention of these gentlemen, yet, although I felt the propriety of such a step upon their part was very questionable, I concluded to receive them.

In the meantime I had repaired to the Council Chamber, as agreed upon, where my Ministers jointly re-submitted the advice they had commissioned Sir John Macdonald to convey on their behalf in the morning. I made the same reply to them as to my Prime Minister, and the re-assembly of Parliament within the time specified was agreed upon. It was, however, suggested that if ten weeks were named as the limit instead of eight, it would be possible to get the preparation of the Estimates sufficiently advanced to roll two Sessions into one, and dispense with the usual Spring Session. Although I was scarcely in a position to know how far this proposal was practicable or would be acceptable to Parliament, it would evidently prove such a saving of expense to the country and of fatigue and inconvenience to members, many of whom would otherwise scarcely have time to return to their homes at all, between an autumn and the usual Session, that I consented to the additional fortnight upon the specific understanding, however, that if in the interval anything should occur which, in my opinion, required Parliament to meet sooner, an expression of my wishes to that effect would be at once acted upon without comment or discussion.

These matters being settled, I returned to where the deputation of remonstrant members was waiting for me. They were introduced by their Chairman, Mr. Cartwright, a gentleman for whom I have a great esteem. In presenting the Memorial, Mr. Cartwright stated that it had been signed by ninety-two members of Parliament, and that another gentleman had intimated his willingness to have his signature attached to it. I found, however, on examining the document, that three of the ninety-two signatures had been affixed by deputy, though, of course, with the full authority of their owners. I note the circumstance, however, as I shall have occasion to refer to it hereafter.

As my interview with my Council had occupied some little time, it had not been possible for me either to study or to write my reply to the Memorial. I was therefore forced to make Mr. Cartwright and his friends an extempore answer, which was afterwards reduced to writing as nearly as possible in the terms actually used. This document, together with the Members' Remonstrance, I subjoin for your Lordship's information.

MEMORIAL.

"The undersigned members of the House of Commons of Canada desire respectfully to approach your Excellency and humbly to represent that more than four months have already elapsed since the Honourable Mr. Huntington made, from his place in the House, grave charges of corruption against your Excellency's Constitutional Advisers in reference to the Pacific Railway contract; that although the House has appointed a Committee to inquire into the said charges, the proceedings of this Committee have, on various grounds, been postponed, and the inquiry has not yet taken place; that the honour of the country imperatively requires that no further delay should take place in the investigation of charges of so grave a character, and which it is the duty and undoubted right and privilege of the Commons to prosecute.

"The undersigned are deeply impressed with the conviction that any attempt to postpone this inquiry, or to remove it from the jurisdiction of the Commons, would create this most intense dissatisfaction; and they therefore pray your Excellency not to prorogue Parliament until the House of Commons shall have an opportunity of taking