

and myself who signed that representation to his Excellency, and announced our view that intense dissatisfaction would be created if Parliament were prorogued without allowing it to provide machinery for the prosecution of the enquiry, must stand by each other in defence of the Constitution. (Cheers.) We must take the judgment of Parliament and the country upon the question, and therefore we must bide our time until Parliament meets. An early meeting, you are aware, is promised. For that early meeting the faith of the Crown is pledged, and at that meeting we shall assert the principles which I have been endeavouring feebly to expound this night. (Applause.) We shall say what we should have said earlier had the opportunity been given us to criticise the proposal before the act was committed, and we shall look to the people to sustain us in fighting the people's battle. (Loud and long-continued cheering.) Am I heard, or shall my utterances be read by any man who calls himself Conservative? Let me ask him to step to the front with me to conserve the Constitution, to conserve those ancient principles of British liberty which he can agree with me are not newfangled, but are as venerable as they are just. Is it for anyone who calls himself Conservative to sanction, or to do ought but condemn this new and dangerous course, sweeping away every well settled principle upon which the Constitution rests? I want to know what is his function in this country, if it be not to stand up for those good things which are established. (Applause.) Sometimes, I regret to say, it is deemed cause enough to stand up for an evil thing because it is established; and assuredly I hope to have the support of many Conservatives in the maintenance of the established good. (Cheers.) You may be told we are trifling; that although these principles are undeniable and these privileges unquestionable, we are not to scrutinize the means, because the end is good. (Laughter.) You may be asked to adopt the degrading doctrine that "the end justifies the means." You may be asked to say that because the object is investigation, which all desire, therefore you should entirely overlook the means. And yet these gentlemen who tell you that, with the same breath are prepared to denounce my friend (Mr. Huntington) because they suspect that in the attainment of that good end, the truth, he has used some unjustifiable means in getting evidence! (Laughter.) But it is said the matter is a trifling one. Was the few shillings of ship-money levied on John Hampden a trifle? It would have been better these time servers and followers of expediency will tell you, for him to have paid the twenty shillings than to be vexed and harassed with suits, and yet upon that trifling issue were staked the liberties of England. (Applause.) And his name is held in everlasting remembrance by all worthy sons of England, because he refused to pay that trifling sum, and put fortune, fame, life itself to the issue rather than desert what was his country's cause. (Loud applause.) Was it a trifling matter to Sir John Eliot that he should write a humble letter to the King, saying, "I submit myself." Seeing that

Parliament had been dissolved, that the evil had been done, that whatever was wrong and tyrannical had been accomplished, was it a very important matter that he should say, "I regret my error," and so escape for a season, biding the good time when Parliament should be called again? Time servers would tell you Sir John Eliot ought to have so acted. They would belittle the martyr's fame; they would say his sufferings should fall upon his own stubborn head, that sympathy for him was entirely misplaced, that there was something utterly absurd in the man not yielding for the time and waiting until Parliament should redress his wrong. No, Sir; no, Sir; these are doctrines we cannot afford to hear broached without denouncing them. We cannot permit the most trifling encroachment upon principles, the inviolable preservation of which is our only security for liberty. Let us agree that no object can justify our parting with the least of the securities of liberty. (Cheers.) Let us agree that there is, as all history teaches, danger, the greatest danger, in an evil precedent. I have seen it in my own brief experience. I never saw a bad Act of Parliament passed but that it was urged, and often successfully, as a precedent for a very much worse act next session. Such is the invariable result. Give the precedent, and it is always stretched and stretched in the wrong direction. The trifle of to-day becomes the monster of to-morrow. The cloud no bigger than a man's hand in the morning may become by night a deluge sweeping away the very landmarks of freedom. And let me say that you but ill repay the sufferings which that noble man, a part of whose story I have told, endured for you and your children, as he tells in the letter which I could not read, nor you hear without emotion, when you permit one jot or one little of the sacred principles which his blood has sanctified, which his martyrdom has enshrined, and which form to-day the corner stone of British liberty, to be impugned or infringed by even the highest and mightiest with the best and purest intentions, far, far less by incriminated Ministers, seeking through stratagem to escape from justice! No situation is so secure but that the people's negligence may make it dangerous. No situation is so desperate but that the people's vigilance may work out their salvation. Upon that vigilance depends the preservation of your liberties to-day. That vigilance I expect you to exercise. Awake, then, to the magnitude of the issue. The feeling of the people will be the feeling of Parliament next session. What you, what the intelligent people of Canada shall have determined in the meetings out of Parliament, is what Parliament itself will shortly do in Parliament. Awake, I say again, to the issue! Let your voice and weight be felt. By one stern lesson teach a corrupt and audacious Ministry that they may not, unpunished, trifle with your dearest rights; and plant once more on foundations broad and deep, on the foundations of public virtue and constitutional liberty, the fair fabric which your rulers are now shaking to its base. (The honourable gentleman resumed his seat amidst thunders of applause, which were repeated several times.)