

leading articles are written—I am afraid I must admit to Your Lordship that its subsequent allusions to my procedure have not been eulogistic.

But if a short prorogation was wrong, what were the alternatives? An adjournment. But an adjournment is an act of the House, and cannot be compelled by the Executive. The leader of the House had already rejected the suggestion, and not the slightest intimation had ever reached me that such an expedient would be agreeable to the Opposition. On the contrary, their last word within an hour of the time the House was to meet, as conveyed to me by the ninety-two Members, amongst whom were Mr. Mackenzie and Mr. Blake, was—"Let us meet and proceed to business as though we were a fully constituted assembly, representing the collective will of the people."

But it has been suggested that I should, on the one hand, have compelled the acquiescence of Sir John Macdonald in an adjournment by refusing to prorogue, while on the other, Mr. Mackenzie ought to have been driven into the arrangement under a threat of prorogation.

Now I am quite ready to admit, that one of the functions of a Governor General is to moderate the animosities of party warfare, to hold the balance even between the contending parties, to see that the machinery of the Constitution is not unfairly strained for party purposes, to intervene with his Counsels at opportune moments, and when desired by his Ministers to become the channel of communication with their opponents, or even though uninvited, to offer himself as negotiator in a difficulty. But the rôle marked out for me above is very different from this. I certainly should not have considered it consistent with my personal honor to have approached my Prime Minister with a threat I had no intention of executing, even had I seen less clearly than I did the objections to the course proposed, while, except at his instance, I should have been still less justified in opening communications with the Opposition. But as I have already explained the mere negotiation of an adjournment would not have advanced matters in any degree, unless the issues relative to the future proceedings of the Committee could have been settled at the same time; but the divergencies of opinion upon these points were irreconcilable and could never have been satisfactorily dealt with except by the House in full Session.

If then my choice lay—which seems to be admitted—between a short prorogation and a barren adjournment for a similar period, I do not think it can be disputed that the former was the preferable of the two.

Of course it was always open to me to have dismissed my Ministers, and have taken my chance of Parliament approving my conduct, but I did not feel myself warranted in hazarding such a step on the data before me. Indeed, the rashness and injustice of the proceeding would probably have roused such a feeling of dissatisfaction in the minds of what I have no reason to know may not prove the majority of the constituencies that there would have been a great chance—if Sir John and his friends came at all decently out of the affair—of their being borne back into office on the shoulders of the people. If wholly exculpated, Your Lordship can imagine what my position would become in presence of the reaction that would have ensued. At all events as I told the remonstrant Members in my reply, I was not prepared by publicly withdrawing my confidence from my Ministers, to proclaim to Canada, to America, and to Europe that I believed untried men guilty of such atrocious crimes as those imputed to them. It is however not necessary to debate this line of conduct, as no responsible person in this country has ventured to recommend it.

But though not directly suggesting the dismissal of my Ministers, it has been very generally contended that I should have considered them under a ban, and should have ceased to act on their advice, though still retaining them in office. The establishment of a relationship of this kind between the Crown and its Ministers would be a novel fact in Constitutional history, and might have proved difficult of execution. I was to go to my Council and say to them "Gentlemen, you state that in your opinion the Crown has pledged itself to Parliament to prorogue on a certain day: you assert as a matter of fact that relying on this pledge sixty or seventy Members are not in their places,