

received a communication from His Excellency that it was his intention to prorogue the House that day. I want to know, if a formal message had been understood by the Government to be communicated before, why there was a second intimation to the House through you to that effect?

No, Sir, the whole idea of prorogation on the 13th of August was based of necessity upon the one theory of the result of the members of the Committee, namely, that their labours would be effectually prosecuted, and that they would result in a verdict of acquittal. I do not believe that the hon. gentleman would seriously argue that he intended that this House, provided the evidence before the Committee established the charges, was to wait till next spring before it pronounced judgment upon the case; that this House would allow Ministers to maintain the control of the Government of this country after they had been clearly proved to have been unworthy of the trust committed to them. I believe that a proposal like that would not have been assented to by the House, and whatever was said, must from the necessity of the case be taken to have been said under the conditions I have named.

He himself would not have dared to say to this House "though the evidence taken before the Committee proves my guilt, I will still have Parliament not meet for business on the 13th; I will still retain power till February or March next." He would not have dared to say that; but in the ostentatious assumption of innocence that he put forward, he chose to affirm that nothing whatever could be proved, and that the result of the Committee would be to establish his innocence, and therefore there would be nothing for the House to do.

Now, Sir, that it was thought impossible that that state of things which the hon. gentleman was finally and definitely agreed upon, the adjournment should, under all circumstances, and under all contingencies, remain as the settled state of things, is shown by our being here this night, discussing this question, because the contingency did arise, which rendered it quite impossible to adhere to this programme of the hon. gentleman, which he declared to be settled and final. His programme was that Parliament should not meet till February.

What do we hear now of a breach of faith on the part of the Crown? The idea was that we were not to meet till next spring. There was no idea of a fall sitting, and is it not just as much a breach of faith for every member to have been summoned here on the 23rd of October, as it would have been to have been summoned for business on the 13th of August? We are here at a time when it was not expected, according to the programme, so the hon. gentleman's fixtures were all conceived on this one contingency, and that contingency not having happened, the Committee not having been able to do anything, we are here today, which, according to the hon. gentleman's view, is a breach of faith.

It seems to me that under these circumstances we have to consider this prorogation not by itself alone, but as a means to an end. (*Hear, hear.*) It did obviously accomplish one thing. On the 21st of July, the authorized announcement was made to members

that at the earliest moment this matter would be submitted to a tribunal competent to take evidence under oath. It also appears that while the Committee was in existence, and its existence was contemporaneous with the existence of that session of Parliament. Ministers themselves thought it not fit to interfere with the Committee, although it could do nothing by issuing a Commission the Commission being, as we may fairly assume, the tribunal which was in contemplation by them upon the 21st July, when the authorized announcement was made. You find so far back as this the design to withdraw from Parliament, and to bring before another tribunal this investigation. Now, it was perfectly obvious that the effect of prorogation would be to destroy the enquiry, to destroy the powers of the Committee, and that whatever had to be done would have to be recommenced. Under our Constitution, owing to a difference in its forms, similar results would not be arrived at in England, as has been frequently said on both sides. This charge was in substance an impeachment.

At this stage of the hon. gentleman's speech,

Hon. Mr. HOLTON suggested the adjournment it being half past two o'clock.

The House accordingly adjourned.