

signatories on the wrong side of the division list, with a dozen plausible excuses for their having played him false. Indeed within a couple of hours after the deputation had left my presence, I was assured on trustworthy authority that some of these very persons had openly stated that in signing the memorial they by no means intended to signify that they withdrew their support from Government.

It is further to be remembered that, although I was in Ottawa at six in the morning, I heard nothing of this memorial until 1 o'clock, that three was the hour at which Parliament met, that the gentlemen bringing it must have known that its presentation and perusal must have occupied some time, and that I was bound to communicate it to my Ministers,—yet it was upon the strength of a document of this nature, presented in this fashion, when my speech from the Throne was in the hands of the printers, and the guard of honour under arms, that I was expected to take a step which under such circumstances must have inevitably led to a change of Government, and possibly a general election.

I have one further point to mention, and I have done. It is a favourite theory at this moment with many persons, that when once grave charges of this nature have been preferred against the Ministry they become *ipso facto* unfit to counsel the crown. The practical application of this principle would prove very inconvenient, and would leave not only the Governor General, but every Lieutenant-Governor in the Dominion, very thinly provided with responsible advisers, for as far as I have been able to seize the spirit of political controversy in Canada, there is scarcely an eminent man in the country on either side whose character or integrity has not been, at one time or another, the subject of reckless attack by his opponents in the press. Even Your Lordship and Mr. Gladstone have not escaped, for it has been more than insinuated that the Imperial Government have been 'got at' by Sir John Macdonald, and that the law officers of Her Majesty were instructed to condemn the Oaths Bill contrary to their legal convictions.

In conclusion, I desire to call Your Lordship's attention to the fact, that in this despatch I have made no allusion to the Royal Commission, which I have just issued under the advice of my Ministers.

My desire is to keep the transactions relating to the prorogation of Parliament, and to the issue of the Commission, entirely distinct. These two events are quite disconnected and independent. The reasons which induced me to agree to the prorogation of Parliament had to be considered without reference to the effect of prorogation on the Committee, or, at least, they appeared sufficiently cogent to overpower any countervailing arguments founded on the necessity of keeping the Committee alive. However much I might have desired to do so, I could not have treated Parliament as a pregnant woman, and prolonged its existence for the sake of the lesser life attached to it. If I have satisfied Your Lordship that prorogation under the circumstances was the proper course, the extinction of the Committee was an ill effect with which I had no concern. It is necessary to keep this consideration very clearly before our eyes, otherwise a confusion of ideas will ensue, prejudicial to a correct judgment of the case. The extinction of the Committee is being denounced as the worst feature in the transaction by persons who are ready to admit that prorogation was perhaps a necessity, and they insensibly transfer their dissatisfaction with the result to the circumstance which occasioned it. The same class of minds probably conjecture that the destruction of the Committee was the main inducement with my Government for insisting on prorogation, but with speculations of this kind I have nothing to do. I prorogued Parliament for what I considered not only full and sufficient, but imperative reasons. The subordinate consequences incident to the transaction do not, therefore, come under review.

There is one further point it may be well to remember. I see it is asserted that the Government purposely kept its sixty Members away. Of course I have no means of knowing how far this may have been the case. It is probable that having concluded that the Session could not be prolonged, my Ministers may have notified their followers to that effect, but it is an indisputable fact, that the absence of a considerable proportion was unavoidable.