

" from this date a full Parliament of Canada will take supreme and final cognizance of the case now pending between my Ministers and their accusers.

" Gentlemen, the situation we have been discussing is one of great anxiety and embarrassment, but I cannot but hope that on a calm retrospect of the various considerations to be kept in view, you will come to the conclusion that in determining to be guided by the advice of my Ministers, on the present occasion—in other words, in declining to act as though the charges which have been advanced against them were already proven, and in adhering to arrangements upon the faith of which many of your colleagues are absent from their places, I have adopted the course most in accordance with the maxims of constitutional government, and with what is due to those whom the Parliament of Canada has recommended to my confidence."

After the Members had retired, it had become time for me to proceed to the Senate Chamber, and about half-past three o'clock the Speaker appeared at the Bar, and Parliament was prorogued. Considerable excitement, I am informed, prevailed in the House of Commons, and cries of "Privilege" were uttered, when Black Rod made his appearance; but as far as I can learn, nothing was done or said incompatible with the dignity and self-respect of that assembly. Only the Ministerialists present, about thirty-five in number, accompanied the Speaker to the Senate Chamber. The Opposition, amongst whom, on this occasion, I suppose must be included thirteen of the ordinary supporters of my Government who had signed the Memorial, remained behind in their places. Upwards of seventy Members in a House of two hundred must have been absent—all of whom, with the exception of three, were claimed by Government as their adherents.

In the evening, what is popularly known as an "indignation" meeting was held, No. 6. under the presidency of Mr. Mackenzie. I have appended to this despatch a report of its proceedings.

I have thus recounted, in as faithful language as I can command, the various circumstances connected with the recent Prorogation. In doing so, Your Lordship will perceive that I have not attempted to discuss, still less to defend the action of my Ministers on any of the occasions referred to, except so far as the justification of their conduct follows as a corollary to the vindication of the attitude I myself have assumed. The propriety of their procedure is a matter which they will have to settle with the Canadian Parliament. My contestation would be, that the fact of their being hereafter proved innocent or guilty of the accusations alleged against them, or of having acted judiciously or the reverse, is a result which can have no relation to my share in these transactions, and that, given the circumstances in which I found myself, I have acted in the highest interests of the Parliament and of the people of Canada. In the same way, if from time to time I have argued against any of the views maintained by the Opposition, it has only been as contending against their implied condemnation of what I myself have done or said.

Were I to be put upon my defence, my best justification would be found in a review of whatever other courses may be considered to have been possible, but this enquiry has been pretty well exhausted in the course of the preceding statement. The alternatives I have seen suggested by those who are disposed to criticise my conduct are indeed very few. The morning after the news of the prorogation had reached Toronto, but before my pledge in regard to an Autumn Session was known, the *Globe*—a recognised organ of the Opposition, and one of the ablest conducted papers in Canada—in lamenting the prospect of a recess which was to last to February of next year, observed that "a prorogation for two or three weeks" would have been a proper course. As I had actually anticipated, the pith of these suggestions (for the question of a few extra weeks, I apprehend, could not have become any grave cause of complaint) I naturally might have expected to have been complimented on my action; but although this paper and all the other Opposition journals in Canada have, with a few exceptions, shown great forbearance to me personally—considering the excitement which prevailed and the forcible language in which