

made public. In the present instance, no such case exists. Even if Col. Dennis should request it, they had no right to make the evidence public. They would be laying down a wrong precedent. Let honourable gentlemen make the case their own—would they like, after having done their best on the field of battle, to have all their mistakes held up to public criticism, if they did not manage to exhibit the ability of a Wellington, or a Napoleon?

Mr. Johnson thought that it would be a dangerous precedent to withhold this information when it was asked for. There was discontent among the volunteers in consequence of the decision of the Court of Enquiry. This decision the Minister of Militia was willing to give, but he was not willing to give the discussion upon which it was founded. They could not judge whether the decision was right or wrong without having the papers, but if they were produced, we would let the Court of Enquiry know that the people's representatives would investigate their conduct. The rights of the people were involved in this case. They were here to protect their rights. If the evidence proved that the Court of Enquiry were right in their decision, then the people would be informed that their representatives, having the papers before them, concurred in that decision, and the country would be satisfied. What conclusion would they come to if that evidence was withheld? If the matter was properly investigated, Col. Dennis would perhaps come out better than he otherwise would, and the court itself would stand in a better position before the country.

Hon. Mr. Howe said it was evident that the House of Commons should not be the tribunal to judge in questions of that kind, as they might be influenced in their decision by party politics. Nevertheless, there should be some stringent enquiry made in regard to incompetent officers. He (**Mr. Howe**), believed Col. Dennis acted like a brave man, and tried to do what he thought to be his duty; but there were many officers who have no military capacity or spirit, who have obtained commissions from Government, because they have friends in authority. Against those incompetent officers they were bound to protect the young men of the country. He would suggest to the Minister of Militia to allow the gentleman who made this motion to look at the papers in his office to see whether there was any reason for interfering with the deci-

sion of the Court of Enquiry. This, he thought, would have a salutary effect upon the public mind.

Mr. Masson (Terrebonne) said if they admitted the principle by bringing the case of Col. Dennis before Parliament, they might bring before the House every case which came before a Court of Enquiry, and these cases would have to be decided by men who knew nothing about the matter. If the public were not satisfied with the decision of the Court of Enquiry, the House was omnipotent, and could make it a subject of enquiry themselves; but they should not force the military to give up evidence taken before their courts. His honourable friend from Hants (**Mr. Howe**) said the men in ranks, the volunteers, must be protected as well as the officers. In this case, the result showed that the men have not been much dissatisfied with the decision of the Court of Enquiry, as many have enlisted within a short time.

Mr. Benson said there was much interest felt in his county regarding this matter, and a great deal of dissatisfaction was felt in regard to the result of the Court of Enquiry. The Minister of Militia should know best whether the public interest would be served by the production of these papers; but he (**Mr. Benson**) did not think he had given good reasons for withholding them.

Hon. Mr. Chauveau said that in European countries all questions relating to military matters were left to the discretion of Governments. The present proceeding would discourage the militia and volunteers, without any good practical result.

Mr. Ferguson desired to say a few words on the subject under discussion, and first, as regards the statement made that the whole Militia force felt dissatisfied with Col. Dennis and the decision arrived at by the Court of Enquiry referred to, he could bear testimony of the very reverse being the fact, that he (**Mr. F.**) had knowledge of the opinions of very many officers and men of the Volunteer force between Lakes Ontario and Huron, and that instead of dissatisfaction prevailing amongst them, it was and is a cause of gratification that Col. Dennis was so honourably acquitted by the Court of Enquiry, and that he is still continued an officer in the force, and that if he had been removed as at one time was—and previous to the investigation—intimated through the medium of the press, it would have caused universal dissatisfaction wherever that worthy and respected officer

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