

the honourable gentleman made this motion he should have asked for the report of the Court of Enquiry, and the charges made against Lieutenant-Colonel Dennis, and the general order published in relation to the matter for the information of gentlemen from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, who might not be familiar with the case. The evidence taken before that court referred to personal and private matters, which should not be made public without very grave reasons. The honourable gentleman had not made out a case, showing the necessity of publishing those proceedings. They did not effect one officer alone, but the whole force. Every man in the country was obliged to answer the call of the country in case of danger, and it would not be encouraging to them to know that their private affairs would afterwards be made a subject of public criticism. He had been but a short time Minister of Militia, and was only made acquainted with what he knew by the opinion of the court. Colonel Dennis was a volunteer officer of long standing, and had shown constancy and perseverance. When it was announced that the Fenians were on the border, he had at once gone to the spot and had taken about sixty prisoners, some of whom were now in the penitentiary in Kingston. The opinion was that he had acted rashly, and the result was that he had taken the only prisoners captured in Upper Canada at the time. The Government in withholding the evidence thought they were acting in such a manner as to encourage volunteer officers, who could not be expected to act with the deliberation of regulars, to exert themselves to the best of their ability in defence of the country. He thought the House would agree with the Government in this matter. He had not read the evidence as he had desired, and as was his duty, but had been told it would take a week to do so.

Mr. Street said since the Minister of Militia has undertaken to give a history to the House of what took place at the Court of Enquiry, surely there can be no reason why the House should not have the evidence laid before them so that they might judge for themselves upon it—as representative of that portion of the country in which that unfortunate and disgraceful act took place, he could tell the House that his constituents were exceedingly anxious to have the evidence come before the country. There had been no satisfaction whatever expressed by anybody who had seen the unfortunate engagement of that day. It was not for the House to condemn Col. Dennis, nor does the motion ask for that. It

simply asks that the evidence be laid before them so that they might judge of the matter for themselves. All the papers should be sent down, since they had part of the facts they should in justice to Col. Dennis have the whole of them. Nothing could be more reasonable than that people who were ready at all times to encourage and support the volunteers should have the whole evidence before them, that they might judge whether the finding of the Court of Enquiry was right or not. He hoped the Minister of Militia would reconsider the matter and allow the papers to be brought down. He spoke the sentiments of his constituents who lived in the most exposed and dangerous part of the frontier.

Mr. Anglin said that after the speech of the Minister of Militia it was evident that simply as an act of justice to Col. Dennis the papers should be produced. That honourable gentleman had spoken in such a way as to create the impression that there was something in the conduct of that officer that would not bear enquiry. Col. Dennis had appealed to popular opinion and his (Mr. Anglin's) opinion had fully met one of the charges, the charge of cowardice. He had proved himself a brave officer.

Sir John A. Macdonald said that the Minister of Militia could only have one object in view in refusing to bring down the evidence, and that object was the interests of the volunteers of the country. In England, it is held in the highest degree unadvisable for such matters to be made the subject of public discussion, except in extreme and unusual cases. When officers did their best, if they acted with bravery in the field, it was not right that every little mistake they might make should be held up to public criticism. Col. Dennis was tried by a court, consisting of three officers and three gentlemen from Ontario, and they had acquitted him. Bringing down evidence now could do no good. It would but harass the officer's feelings. They could not reverse the decision. It is only as a court of appeal that the House could act upon it, and every gentleman would admit that they were an incapable tribunal. Such action would be injurious to the volunteer forces. Every officer would feel, when he went into the field, that he had to stand two fires—an enemy in front, and those who did not like him as an officer in the rear. Was that going to encourage our volunteers to take commissions as officers? (Hear, hear). Unless a strong case is made out, showing gross misconduct, the evidence should not be