

## RETURN

(105)

To an ORDER of the HOUSE OF COMMONS, dated 30th May, 1898, for a copy of a letter from Major General Gascoigne, relating to certain statements made in Parliament reflecting upon him as Commanding Officer of the Canadian Militia.

By order.

R. W. SCOTT,  
Secretary of State.

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OTTAWA, 24th May, 1898.

DEAR SIR WILFRID LAURIER,—On 5th May Sir Charles Tupper made some very severe reflections on myself in Parliament. These were reported in the press on the following day, but the reports which I saw, appeared to me, to be only the expressions of Sir Charles' own opinion, and though these were terribly severe, yet undoubtedly he was perfectly within his right to make them, if he saw fit, in the House. I was very grateful to see that neither you, nor my own immediate Minister, endorsed these opinions, but, on the contrary, protested against them, and therefore I saw no reason to complain, as I recognize that a public official is open to any criticism.

But a copy of "Hansard" has now reached me, and in it I see certain statements of facts reported, which, if not contradicted, will stand against me for all time, and which are not only untrue, but are exceedingly damaging to my personal character.

The statements I refer to are on page 5064. Sir Charles is reported to have said, that he had it, "on the authority of the most eminent counsel in Canada, that if the civil action threatened against me had been brought, an adverse verdict would have been obtained, with the result, that I should have been *driven out* of the Imperial service altogether." How far any counsel, however eminent, is justified in deciding an untried action, is open to question, but what I altogether emphatically deny, is that any verdict, even an adverse one, would have caused my expulsion from the Imperial service.

Sir Charles is reported further to have said, that "I was able to avoid this disgrace by getting my resignation accepted." This is altogether untrue, as you yourself are aware. My resignation was sent in after the threatened civil action was unconditionally and unreservedly withdrawn: it had no bearing or reference to that action whatever; indeed, I had spoken to the Horse Guards in England, fully twelve months ago as to the possibility of my applying to resign, and I emphatically repeat that my resignation had no bearing or reference whatever to that civil action. I sent in that resignation on purely personal grounds; I am on the best of terms with my Minister; and both he and you, sir, yourself, were kind enough to express regret at my resigning. If uncontradicted and viewed in the light of the exceedingly severe criticisms, which pre-