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THE CASE OF LIEUTENANT TRIBE.

In the debate, in the House of Commons, on Lieut. Tribe, on Saturday last, Lord Lich spoke as follows :

Sir.—At length after many months of weary waiting, I have an opportunity of calling attention to the case of Sub-Lieutenant Tribe, which in spite of the appeal of the Secretary of State, I feel it my duty to bring forward. I can assure the House that it is with extreme reluctance that at this late period, on the 3rd of August, I stand between them and the Committee of Supply. The fault, however does not rest with me, but with Her Majesty's Government, who arbitrarily, and by a small majority of 27, in the early part of the session, took away from us the constitutional, time honored privilege which members of Parliament had heretofore enjoyed of bringing forward any grievance, on going into Supply, under which any individual or any portion of the people might happen to labour; and in so doing, I am inclined to think that the Government have done much to injure the popularity of the House of Commons, for it is not as a mere legislative machine—as such, it is of a very second rate quality—but as the free exponent of grievances and of public opinion, that the House of Commons has obtained that popularity and that position which it holds in the estimation of the people of this country and of the civilized world. So strongly, indeed, do I feel this, that if the Government should in the next session of Parliament, again attempt to curtail our privileges in regard to motions on supply, I shall myself resist such an attempt by all the means which the forms of the House admit of; and I shall be greatly disappointed if, even in the teeth of a conjunction of the Treasury and front Opposition benches, there is not found a sufficient number of independent non-official members to defeat it. I was anxious and determined to bring this case of sub-Lieutenant Tribe before the House—first, because of its important bearing upon the character and future position of officers in the British army; secondly, because the motion is a sacred trust—a legacy bequeathed to me by my hon. and gallant relative, the member for Bewdley, who only consented to take that care of his health, by absenting himself from the House, which was enjoined by his medical advisers, on the express promise and understanding that I would undertake his motion, and I am sure there is not a member of this house who does not sincerely regret the cause of his enforced absence, and that this motion, to which he would have done so much justice, is not in his hands. His ob-

ject in the notice which he originally gave has been greatly misunderstood. It has been supposed that his intention was, and that mine now is, to question the decision of the Field Marshal Commander-in-Chief upon this case, and to reverse it so far as it is in the power of this House to do so. My hon. and gallant relative, I need not say, is too good a soldier, he knows too well the value of discipline, to have entertained such an idea. Such was not, and is not the intention of this motion. It is a protest against *ex parte* statements in the Ministerial press, commenting untruthfully upon the case of sub Lieutenant Tribe; it is a protest against the Secretary of State answering questions in the House of Commons on a grave matter of discipline, and in a way which, though no doubt unintentional on his part, is calculated to leave a wrong impression and misrepresent facts, to the injury of the character of the officers of the 9th Lancers; and lastly it is an endeavor, by publication of the facts of the case, to do justice to a gallant regiment injured by the misrepresentations of the press and by the answer of the Secretary of State. Sir, the current misrepresentations of which I complain may be best found in an article in the *Daily Telegraph*, which appeared on the morning of the day on which the hon. member for Hackney put his question to the Secretary of State. It may perhaps be said, Why quote from a newspaper? But we must not forget that in the early part of the Session information as to the intentions of the Government on Irish Education—although not what the French call *communiqué*—found its way into a Government paper; and information somehow does get into the Ministerial prints and articles are written in a sense agreeable to the authorities. Besides, I cannot give the current misrepresentation in relation to the Tribe case in a more complete or succinct form than by quoting from the article in the *Daily Telegraph*, which is known to be the most devoted and affectionate of Government organs. I find it there stated that "Mr. Tribe was the first to receive a commission under the new system," that he had passed with distinction at Sandhurst, but did not join at once, and obtained leave of absence in order to undergo the ordeal of another examination—"a proceeding," the *Daily Telegraph* remarks, "which in the opinion of his future comrades, may have induced them to agree that he was too studious for the cavalry" that the subalterns requested him to exchange into another corps. "Perhaps" says the *Daily Telegraph*, "because they had antipathy to an individual who could pass severe examinations; perhaps because he was one of Cardwell's men." For declining he was bullied

and sent to Coventry. The Major accuses him of falsehood, and says he will never make a cavalry officer. He is placed under arrest; a Court of Inquiry reported on the facts, and "the Field Marshal, after considering the report, has ordered Mr. Tribe to resume his duty. He has done more than this; he has felt it necessary, through the Adjutant General, to give the officers a piece of his mind, and we are credibly informed that the morsel they have to read and inwardly digest is not likely to afford them acute pleasure." The article winds up with these general remarks: "The Duke of Cambridge has set an example of loyalty to the national will, and his reward is in the approbation of his countrymen." "The youthful and middle aged gentlemen engaged in this painful incident are properly objects of pity since they have only acted in accordance with the errors sucked in through their mess-room education." I beg the attention of the House to what follows: "As the victims of circumstances over which they have no control—the bad customs of the Army—we feel no anger against them," Sir, I know not which to admire in this passage—the good taste which speaks of the bad customs of our gallant Army, or the logic which, having begun the article by attributing the treatment of Mr. Tribe to his having been the first of the new system, and to his being one of "Cardwell's men," ends by excusing it on the score of the "bad customs of the Army." This, we all know, is a sensational age. We have sensation on the stage, in literature, in legislation, and in the press; and we are all well aware that the *Daily Telegraph* has the largest circulation in the world. This those who run may read in letters of the largest type, and on boards of the largest description. I make, therefore, all due allowance for the need of sensational writing to keep up such a circulation; still, I hope and believe that highly seasoned stuff such as this, is too much for ordinary stomachs. Why, even ostriches cannot sometimes digest it. Let me explain. Soon after Easter Monday I read in the *Daily Telegraph* that the public in the Zoo, had amused themselves by feeding the ostriches with half pence; that they were in consequence all made ill, but with the exception of one, they all recovered, and on opening this bird, they found in its stomach a complete copy of the *Daily Telegraph*; thus proving that the ostrich, which can digest the copper coinage of the realm, is wholly unable to digest the sounding brass of the *Daily Telegraph*. But I pass from the misrepresentations of a misinformed journalist, and I come to the facts of this case. Let me, however, first remind the House of