

Mr. Holton said he took it that these honours were conferred by the Crown for services to the people of this country represented in this House of Commons, and if he was correct in that postulate, he maintained that the representatives of the people in this House had an interest in a subject which had been made matter of representation and remonstrance by two leading members of the House and in the Government, and they were entitled to the production of these papers. The Minister of Militia had no personal or private relations either with the Governor-General or the Duke of Buckingham, or with Her Majesty the Queen. It was not in their private capacity that Mr. Cartier and the late Minister of Finance addressed these remonstrances, but in their capacity of public men, representatives of the people, and surely for their own vindication as public men, they ought to have this correspondence submitted to Parliament. He would ask the learned Knight to reconsider the question of granting the papers. If he persisted in his refusal he (Mr. Holton) might then have some remarks to make on this subject.

Sir John A. Macdonald said if the member for Chateauguay would examine the question he would find that there was not an English precedent for the production of the papers referred to. There was one case in which an Address was passed, asking Her Majesty to confer certain marks of her favour on two officers who had distinguished themselves in the Crimea. The Government yielded to the motion, but guarded against its being accepted as a precedent. In the last case which came before the English Parliament of this character, there was a complaint that there had been an improper distribution of honours among those who had distinguished themselves during the Indian mutiny. Lord Palmerston then laid down the doctrine that it was a question entirely between the fountain of honour and the recipients. The Commons might fairly ask on whose advice any honours bestowed by Her Majesty were conferred—as, for instance, in the extreme case of Her Majesty being ill, and advised to confer honour on a person altogether unworthy of the distinction, to such an extent that it would operate as a degradation of the honour. But here the case was entirely different, and if the Address were passed the Governor-General, as an Imperial Officer, might refuse to grant it without instructions from England.

Mr. Chauveau said that Hon. Mr. Cartier's conduct in refusing decorations, implying a difference between his services and those of his colleagues, had been approved by all Lower Canada. The circumstances of this offer were an insult for himself and the nationality he represents. More than once Lower Canadians preserved English possessions on that continent, and when they had made ample sacrifice and given the best proofs of patriotism and good-will in Confederation, these services ought not to have been put aside. It was a lesson given, and he hoped it would be useful.

Mr. White said that in view of the principle enunciated by the leader of the Government, he asked leave to withdraw his name as a seconder of the motion.

Mr. Howe said that doctrine was what we had been in the habit of recognizing, but we were now a nation, and it was a matter for consideration whether honours conferred on our public men might not give offence to this House, and therefore it appeared to him that we ought to have the papers. He had always been in favour of having a just field open to our public men; but he would say to the House that we must now deal with this subject as a nation—as an independent Legislature representing four millions of people. In the case of the honourable and learned knight at the head of the Government, he admitted that the honour had been justly conferred; but we ought to know the principles on which these honours were awarded. Men might act unjustly and lose the confidence of this House, and yet be selected as worthy recipients by the Imperial Government. We were in a position to be laughed at every day in the year. The English people are very jealous of every matter of this kind, and he gathered from the remarks of the member for Quebec County (Mr. Chauveau) that he felt this matter of some importance. We knew certain Commissioners to Paris were not allowed to receive from the Emperor on that occasion the honours offered in recognition of universal friendship and of public services rendered on that occasion, without permission from their Sovereigns. Well, if the Sovereign was so jealous of any interference of a foreign nation, why should we not be so?

Mr. Mackenzie heartily sympathized with the Minister of Militia in the position in which he was placed in this matter. He recognized the valuable services of that honourable gentleman in procuring Confed-