

Portland Sept. 14. 1864

Hon. Saml. Cony

Dear Sir,

Having been informed that there is an effort making to induce you to supersede Lieut. Col. Thomas St. Talbot of the 1st Me Heavy Artillery, I take the liberty to address you on that subject.

A long and intimate acquaintance with Col. Talbot I think justifies me in saying, a more upright, faithful and patriotic officer cannot be found in the ranks of the whole army. His devotion to duty under all circumstances, is conspicuous. It is easy for those who are acquainted with him to understand, how with his singleness of heart and purpose, and his delicate and high toned sense of right, he may have failed to win that popularity among his

Companions, which careless and loose attachment to principles might win in the Camp, and which many really unworthy officers enjoy. But a careful and frequent inquiry among returned officers and soldiers, particularly the sick and wounded has invariably resulted in replies altogether favorable to the personal and military conduct of Col. T. I know, nothing less than the thorough understanding of his whole duty, and the most exact and generous discharge of it, would satisfy him. All the testimony I have been able to gather concurs in the statement that he has won distinguished honor in battle, and has labored zealously for the good of his regiment and of the Country. Now to supersede such an officer because some one below him has succeeded in gaining greater favor among the subordinate officers and privates, whether by merit or intrigue matters little - would hardly conduce to the good of

the service or Compost with what is
justly due to every man, who forsakes his
home and voluntarily assumes the labor
and peril of a soldier's career. Nothing
can so surely dishearten, and discontent
our armies as the conviction that a regi-
ment is to be controlled by intrigue, and
maneuver, and that anything but courage,
and capacity and devotion to duty are to
be the stepping stones to promotion. Reg-
ular promotion, except in ~~places~~ cases of
manifest and decided unsuitableness, should
be invariably adhered to; Perhaps, if the
policy of Comparing Talent were adopted, and
rigorously carried out, there would be neces-
sary in the army an almost universal trans-
position of officers. For every where would
be found cases where the inferior surpasses
in valuable qualities his superior. This can-
not be avoided, or it would not be so. But
no man will consent to be at the mercy
of any such test, so long as he feels that he

possesses powers adequate to the position he holds, and to the rights incident to that position, - in military affairs the right of regular promotion - though another may be found to whom he would cheerfully yield the palm of a higher order of talent or a loftier genius.

Mr. Talbot has many warm friends in this vicinity, who will feel keenly any injustice done to him, and who will emphatically protest against his being overrun by any action of his associates, in behalf of a greater favorite. We do not believe the vote of officers and privates, a safe rule for the guidance of the executive in cases of this kind. If the superiors of Col. T., who have observed him, pronounced him unqualified and undeserving, and their verdict were free from suspicion of prejudice or passion, we should sorrow at his failure, and sadly acquiesce in his degradation, but as the matter stands, we urge upon you to give him his right, and place him in the position his rank entitles him to. Very Respectfully Yours, Nathan Webb