

**Sunday Times Nov 3, 1997**

**Who is lying now, your Highness?**

It may not be quite correct to assume that somebody amongst us has lied – as hinted at by Prince Phillip – in putting the figure of those killed in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre at 2000 ('Don't lie for your country', October 19). In any case it is not the number of people killed that makes the crime heinous.

No one really knows the exact figure, nor, perhaps, will it ever be known. The official figure of 290 could only have been arbitrary, as investigations into the incident did not start till four months after the tragedy. This is the figure Prince Phillip quotes, courtesy of General Dyer's son who was in the British Navy with him. There is no way General Dyer himself would have known the number of people that he had killed – he is known to have trooped off with his soldiers as soon as their ammunition was exhausted.

The most authentic source of information is the report of the commissioners appointed immediately afterwards by the Punjab Sub Committee of the Indian National congress. This report puts the number of killed at over 1000, based on estimates of eyewitnesses who observed from their houses on the periphery. It should not be surprising if the figure was closer to 2000.

Moreover, if the number of actually killed was much less, it was only because, firstly, Dyer ran out of ammunition and, secondly, his armoured cars could not go any further through the narrow passage.

**Brahma Singh  
Jammu**