

# WOODBIDGE IN SORRY PLIGHT.

## Superintendent of Deaf and Dumb Institution "Doesn't Know," "Can't Remember," and "Can't Explain" When Cross-Examined About Accounts

### "BOOKS WORTHLESS"—COM. BARRY.

#### Suave and Plausible on Direct Examination Mr. Woodbridge "Gave a Sad Exhibition Under Mr. Phinney's Questions—More Trouble Coming His Way."

Fredericton, Sept. 4.—(Special)—The defence in the Deaf and Dumb Institution today put forward its star witness in Superintendent Woodbridge to explain the many discrepancies in the financial affairs, and he made some very plausible statements on direct examination.

He gave his evidence with a characteristic suavity that would surely have convinced the most hard-headed prosecutor. But that was on direct examination by Mr. Gregory.

**A Change Under Cross-Examination.**  
On cross examination, however, he knew very little, would not explain, and made some very extraordinary statements.

He considered, for example, all the farm implements, horses, harness, wagons, furniture, etc., purchased with money subscribed by the public and also by the government grant as his private and personal property.

He also stated that until three or four years ago he kept his private and the institution accounts together and did not separate them. Mr. Woodbridge stated that he had only given a list of the accounts balance, which would be made up. He had no data to go upon and could not state how to explain them away.

The report of 1898 contained no subscriptions from Summerside and witness could not say whether any money was collected that year in that town. He had certainly credited some in the list of subscriptions.

Mr. Phinney then presented to the witness a list of subscribers for that year, and in Summerside amounting to \$77.25, and in Littleton \$25.

**A Little Horse Trade.**  
The payment of \$25 on a horse trade was for a horse used on the farm, and the same was true in regard to the \$50 paid Mr. Cookson for a horse. Nearly all the farm produce received by the institution was grown on the farm. Sometimes in the spring seeds had to be purchased. He had never put in a claim for any of the farm produce.

**The Merry Yuletide.**  
These were not always purchased during Christmas time. The fancy baskets referred to may have been purchased for the winter day in the garden and fields about the place. The witness was not always systematic in taking vouchers from servants employed by him. He explained that the subscription list shown in the annual report did not in all cases represent money paid the institution. The collectors not infrequently had their expenses donated by hotel and boarding house keepers, and showed the amount as a subscription. Merchants with whom the institution had an account sometimes paid their subscriptions in goods and the amount credited on the bill, so it would be readily seen that the published list was not indicative of the cash received. The actual net receipts were shown in the balance sheets.

**He'd Swear to It.**  
He would swear positively that every dollar received by the institution from all sources was acknowledged in the balance sheet.

Only collectors who came well recommended were appointed, and there was no way of regulating the traveling expenses.

The items of perfume shown in the accounts were not purchased by witness for the institution but may have been bought by Mrs. Woodbridge as a present for the pupils.

Commissioner Barry stated that in some bills there was no distinction between private and institution.

The witness always paid for his own clothing, boots and shoes, etc., out of his private funds, and Mrs. Woodbridge did the same. They had private accounts with the dry goods stores and other business houses, and the witness promised to show samples to the commission. He had no separate accounts with druggists.

**Mistake Not Deliberate.**  
The witness had a list of assembly amended largely to benefit Helen Boland and Geo. Crain who had entered the institution too far advanced in age to receive the advantages of the municipal grant under the act. He had observed in the statement submitted by the educational department that the age of a pupil named Humphrey Lutz had been mis-stated. It was a surprise to him and he was sure that the mistake had not been made deliberately through the office of friends, and the witness had to retire. The Halifax institution was sustained by government grants and private subscriptions.

**Woodbridge Forced to Retire.**  
He did not leave the Halifax institution of his own free will. The man who previously held the position was induced to retire through the office of friends, and the witness had to retire. The Halifax institution was sustained by government grants and private subscriptions.

**Mr. Gregory's Innuendo.**  
Mr. Gregory wanted to know from Mr. Phinney if that was the year that the auditor-general had failed to pass his subscription.

Mr. Barry asked why the auditor-general had been singled out as an example, and Mr. Woodbridge said he was approached by a person in New Brunswick to establish a school here but could not get the names of the people. The educational advantages offered were not as favorable as Halifax as he had better equipped. The New Brunswick government grant was diverted through his assistance.

**The Accounts Unsettled.**  
Commissioner Barry said that the auditor-general did not amount to anything as head nor tail cannot be made out of them or the books.

**The Auditor Took His Word.**  
The auditor never saw the expenses of the collectors and he had to trust to the statement of the witness that the collections were correct. The annual report for 1898 was placed in the hands of the witness and he stated it was a complete list.

**Time Sufficiently Took It Over.**  
He never made claim to the committee for wages of 1883-4.

Mr. Gregory said he was not anxious to take over the institution, but he would say frankly that he thought it was about time somebody took it over.

Continuing, Mr. Woodbridge said he considered the funds contributed by the government and municipalities as school funds. The funds contributed by subscribers were used for the same purpose and treated as school funds. No portion of the money was his own private funds.

**The Last of That Kind.**  
Mr. Phinney called the witness' attention to an item of \$36.61 for taxes entered in the accounts of 1888. The witness admitted the item was correct, but claimed that was the last charge of the kind he had made.

**Jogged His Client's Memory.**  
Mr. Phinney said the records showed that the purchase had been in 1884 and asked the witness if it was not possible that he was mistaken. Mr. Woodbridge contended that he was right, and quitted the witness' stand.

**Headgear for the Girls.**  
Accounts of Fred B. Edgcombe and the Misses Young were next turned up by Mr. Gregory, and he demanded the witness throw some light upon them. Mr. Woodbridge contended that the millinery bill was largely for hats purchased for female pupils, and he had been employed by the institution was not supposed to clothe the pupils, but sometimes found hats for them. He would not say that a hat for a servant girl (Lizzie) was charged up in the bill.

**His Loose Ideas.**  
He had never claimed for Willie Matthews from the county grants as he was from Prince Edward Island. He considered that he was not paid much for his education. He probably collected \$150 a year on the island for the institution which he considered no more than paid for the boy. The collectors used his name to induce people to subscribe.

**More Serious Charges.**  
A responsible person had made statements of a most serious nature than Mr. Boland early this year but Mr. Woodbridge admitted that he had not endeavored to obtain any withdrawal of these statements but preferred to ignore them.

**That Whiskey.**  
The bill which was finally paid by the department was produced and showed charges for two cases of whiskey only one of which the department would allow as it considered the amount concerned excessive.

**Insulted the Witnesses.**  
He went to Long's Hotel where the mute witnesses were staying with the object of taking a snapshot of them on the verandah at the time. The light was so soft only made a buff at it.

**He Thought He Was Clever.**  
Later, on cross-examination, it came out that he had only heard she was more than two weeks in bed as he had not been there when she went to bed nor when she died.

**Not a Philanthropist—Not He!**  
Had had no previous acquaintance with the institution before and after school; never saw any of them scrubbing. The children appeared to have a loving regard for Mr. and Mrs. Woodbridge. Mr. Woodbridge was firm in the school but never harsh. Speaking women did the scrubbing at the institution. Witness had the free run of the house and was paid a salary by the institution.

**His Ideas About Veracity.**  
The names of some girls who had given evidence at the trial, camera proceedings on behalf of the complainants were mentioned and he thought them untruthful. He could not tell why he thought so. He knew that they had given evidence against the officials of the institution. He considered Mr. Prince, a member of the staff, very truthful.

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of Bowland and Crain he knew the provision of the act of 1890. Did not know why the certificates were not sent although stated they had been. No certificates were issued. The matter was evidently not dealt with by the committee as required by law. Knew it has never been before it.

He kept no farm account and could not say how much the farm produced. Collectors have been out gathering money since this inquiry commenced. James Neville has been collecting in the province and Prince Edward Island. He is now collecting in Quebec for the institution. The amount collected this year was about \$1,800. He had entered the salaries in his books but they were not all paid. Cannot say the amount of the indebtedness. He is still collecting. Neville has made no returns of his cash since June. Does not know how much he has collected since June.

**And Isn't It?**  
The commissioner thought it an extraordinary method of bookkeeping. In the ordinary method of bookkeeping, the witness said he made reference of the matter to the committee. Before any action was taken by the committee he obtained a retraction. Mrs. Bol is a widow. He wrote her intimating that her son Fred was liable to an action for making the charges. He went to Sussex and saw Mrs. Bol and told her the consequences if a retraction were not made and if her son did not sign the letter withdrawing the charges which he left her. After his retraction from Sussex as he did not get the retraction he wrote to Mrs. Bol threatening her son with a libel suit for \$1,000. The cutting of cord wood cost \$9 cents a cord. The stampage on Mrs. Woodbridge's for spruce wood would then be \$11.0 a cord. Mary Upham was a servant girl who had been in the household for a considerable period. He did not pay her any wages. The attention of the witness was called to the balance sheet of 1892. Supposed Mary Upham was the domestic paid in 1892. There was nothing due her when she died. Do not know what became of her money after her death. Mary Haley is paid wages. She was a servant a long time before getting any wages.

A large number of extracts were read from the annual reports of the institution showing that the deaf and dumb were morally and in all respects similar to hearing people. The witness admitted these were correct. The pupils were charged against the institution he considered his private property. He would not say that goods purchased with the institution funds were not regarded by him as his private property. It would not make any difference to him showing that the deaf and dumb were morally and in all respects similar to hearing people. The witness admitted these were correct. The pupils were charged against the institution he considered his private property.

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