

# WOODBRIDGE 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.

Swave 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 accounts, and he made some very plausible statements on direct examination.

He gave his evidence with a characteristic evasiveness 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 was only guessing at how the unaccounted balance would be made up. He had no data to go upon and could not state how to explain them away.

The report of 1899 contained no subscriptions from Summerside and witnesses could not say whether any money was collected that year in that town. He had certainly credited none 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 Fredericton, \$10.00.

Mr. Woodbridge, examined by Mr. Gregory, gave the history of the institution and himself. At Halifax his salary was \$1,100 per year, he received an allowance of \$350 for board of family. In addition he was allowed a furnished residence, domestic, laundry, fuel and light. He had no financial assistance in establishing the Fredericton school. He said he had advanced \$600 from his private funds during the first year of the existence of the institution, and drew no salary for himself or wife. Mr. Powers entered the employ of the institution in the autumn of 1880. Witnesses did not receive any salary until the institution had been running three and one-half years. In 1886 he advanced from his private funds the sum of \$120.

"And the Books Were Burned." His ability to collect salary depended wholly upon the state of the finances. The books kept by the institution were burned down in 1897, and witnesses' books and accounts were then destroyed. It had always been his wish that the government should assume the financial responsibility of the institution. The legislature was approached at nearly every session and asked to extend the same support as was given the Halifax School for the Blind. The witness had never received any instruction in book-keeping, and did not seem to be adapted for that kind of work.

For the last 12 years he had only shown the amount of the net collections in the reports. The Sarnell property had been purchased by witness with his private funds, and which was used for the purposes of the institution. No charge was made for rent. The labor for operating the farm was paid for out of the funds of the institution and the produce was handed over without charge.

"He Thought" He had charged the taxes on the prop-

The items of purchase 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 items 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 had the act of assembly amended largely to benefit Helen Botsford and Geo. Conn 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 had been mis-stated. It was a surprise to him and he was sure that the mistake had not been made deliberately. He obtained the retractions of the immoral charges from Fred Boal.

Mr. Powers was employed as a collector and a teacher, and also assisted with the correspondence. To Mr. Phinney the witness said he was connected with the Halifax school for four years. He had previously been employed as a teacher in several of the large schools of Great Britain. Some of the pupils at the Halifax institution entered the Fredericton school on its establishment.

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 do so by the offer of a pension, and the witness had to retire. The Halifax institution was sustained by government grants and private subscriptions.

He undertook the management of the Fredericton school as a personal venture, and had no promise of government assistance at the time. Could not say that he started the school purely as a business venture.

He wanted to make a living, and at the same time establish an institution with which his name would be connected. He was anxious that about three and a half years. He commenced an agitation for government aid in 1883, his object being to try and make the institution a paying one. Could not say positively that there was any money paid when he made his first report in 1884. He could not explain why the deficits in 1886 were \$743.45, in 1884-5 \$156.65 and 1883 \$44.

Mr. Gregory's Innuendo. Mr. Gregory wanted to know from Mr. Phinney if that was the year that the auditor-general had failed to pay his subscription. Mr. Barry asked why the auditor-general had been singled out as an example, to which Mr. Phinney replied that it was because he had given evidence not favorable to Mr. Gregory's side of the case.

Mr. Woodbridge said he was approached by the trustees in New Brunswick to establish a school here but could not give the names of the people. The educational advantages offered were not as favorable as at Halifax as the latter was better equipped. The New Brunswick government grant was diverted through his assistance.

He regarded the school as a private one. For many years he did not differentiate between his private accounts and those of the institution. He ran both together until three or four years ago when he endeavored to separate them. Although he received public funds from the government, and other sources he considered it a private institution.

The witness could not explain what he meant in his direct testimony by saying it was a private venture. There was some friction between him and the committee about the government funds and he was referred to the auditor-general. He did not remember receiving the resolution passed by the committee, refusing to pay him the money as advised by Hon. G. B. Leonard. The bare cases shown in the accounts were probably 23 cent articles purchased by Mrs. Woodbridge for the children's Christmas tree.

The Merry Yuletide. These were not always purchased during Christmas time. The fancy baskets referred to may have been purchased for the painting class. He did not remember receiving the resolution passed by the committee, refusing to pay him the money as advised by Hon. G. B. Leonard. The bare cases shown in the accounts were probably 23 cent articles purchased by Mrs. Woodbridge for the children's Christmas tree.

Not Good Business, This. Commissioner Barry, after some mental arithmetic, remarked that he thought more farm produce could be bought for the money expended on the institution's farm than was derived from it. It was shown that \$32 a month was paid out in wages, then there was the board of the farm hands and other expenses, which made a total of more than \$600 a year.

Mr. Woodbridge explained that the farm hands also worked 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 into 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.

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 fund. He considered that all moneys contributed were intended for the purposes of the school. He received a salary of \$800 fixed by the committee and has since always received it. He held that he had a claim against the institution for what was due him for the three and a half years that he worked without salary. He could not say that the trustees were responsible for his salary for that period. He regarded the institution as public only so far as its object was to educate the deaf and dumb.

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 it was the last charge of the kind he had made. He did not think he had made any charge for taxes after the last auditor had been appointed in 1888.

Commissioner Barry said he found from the evidence that the institution possessed assets to the value of \$3,250. It included in this was the furniture, which was estimated to be worth \$1,000 apart from the land which Mr. Woodbridge claimed to have upon it.

In reply to Mr. Phinney, the witness stated that the Botsford property was purchased by the institution in 1880.

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 quite a lively discussion followed for which the witness was fined \$50.

Continuing, the witness said he gave instructions to merchants about his business with the institution to keep separate accounts of purchases made for the family and the institution. He could not say positively that they followed his instructions in all cases.

He would not say that goods purchased with the institution funds were not regarded by him as his private property. It was not the intention of the institution, he was showing that the deaf and dumb were morally and in all respects similar to the hearing people. The witness admitted these were correct. The pupils were charged against the institution he considered his private property.

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Headgear for the Girls. Accounts of Fred B. Edgecombe and the Misses Young were next turned up. Mr. Phinney asked the witness to show the witness throw some light upon them. Mr. Woodbridge contended that the millinery bill was largely for hats purchased for female pupils. He admitted that the institution was not supposed to clothe the pupils, but sometimes found hats for them. He would not say that a hat for his servant girl, Lizzy, was charged up in the bill.

The Commissioner Amazed. His apparent carelessness in book-keeping, he said, was partly accounted for by the fact that he considered the institution was his own property. Commissioner Barry stated that he could not imagine any man running a public institution keeping his books as these had been kept. He said Mr. Powers did not assist with the book-keeping work, the witness replied that he did not have time, as there was so much correspondence to be attended to.

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. It was pointed out to the witness that the collections last year in Prince Edward Island amounted to \$388.

He applied to the Indian commissioner for clothing for Deaf. Cannot say if the Indian commissioner sent him to Fredericton well supplied with clothing. He got \$12.50 from the commissioner. He made a claim against the Indian department for the maintenance and education of the boy. The bill was for about \$200 originally and included the funeral expenses, etc. He did not remember was told by letter that he had agreed to charge nothing for the education and maintenance of the boy as he received the county grant for that purpose. He was told by letter that the department refused to pay for the maintenance and education of the boy as contrary to agreement. Also that there had been a bill for large sum sent to department and returned.

That Whiskey. The bill which was finally paid by the department was produced and showed charge for two cases of whiskey only one of which the department would allow it to consider the amount concerned excessive. The legislation for the extension of time for pupils was obtained at his instance. When he made the applications in the case

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 sent 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 this 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.

An examination of the books showed that according to the witness, he made entries for large amounts in his books to his own credit before he had paid out the money. The entries had been made some time ago but the accounts charged up had not as yet been paid.

And Isn't It? The commissioner thought it an extraordinary method of book-keeping. In the books of immorality 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. Boal 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. Boal 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 with her. After his return from Sussex as he did not get the retraction he wrote to Mrs. Boal threatening her son with a libel suit for \$1,000. The retraction they witness had written was then sent to him. He then showed it to the committee. That closed the incident.

The cutting of cord wood was 50 cents a cord. The stumpage on Mrs. Woodbridge's for spruce wood would then be \$110 a cord. Mary Upham was a servant 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. Did 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 the hearing people. The witness admitted these were correct. The pupils were charged against the institution he considered his private property.

He returned Lizzy Haley to the educational department for the time in school. She did not receive instruction the full time in school as she was out working about the house.

He had no authority from the committee or any members to issue the circular letter in the name of the management regarding J. Harvey Brown. He had no direct information from Brown about any charges.

He had obtained statements from some of the pupils about the school before the Royal Commission made the charges known. Placed these before the committee. Before writing the circular letter about Brown he did not bring it before the committee. He did not consider it necessary. He did not consult any of the committee. On March 21, 1902 he wrote Brown a letter thanking him for his past services to the institution.

Re-examined by Mr. Gregory—He left the Halifax institution when the former principal returned. No fault was found with him in Halifax.

Fredericton, Sept. 7.—(Special).—The proceedings at the Deaf and Dumb institution on Saturday consisted of the evidence of Sheldon Pride (now a school teacher at Randolph and formerly on the collecting staff of the institution) and G. Ernest Powers.

The former was a great friend of the accused and was prepared to assist him in every way possible. He was called for the purpose of clearing up the muddled finances, but his evidence did not throw any light on the obscure and tangled problem.

The only interesting feature of his testimony was the incident regarding his annoying interference with the deaf mute witnesses of the complainants while they were in Fredericton. Mr. Pride endeavored to obtain a snap shot of the witnesses and having failed to attain his purpose proceeded to blackmail the girls and boys by hinting at them the epithets "traitor and villain." Not satisfied with this he accused a young lady who was giving testimony with being a "perjuror."

His conduct on this occasion was considered very clever and smart, but the general opinion was that it was reprehensible and blackguardly. He corroborated the complainants' witnesses that the pupils were taken out of school to work on Mr. Woodbridge's farm.

G. Ernest Powers, who is a well-known figure in the province, having been the most prominent collector for the institution, also gave evidence.

The Slave Powers. He is one of the accused and if street rumor is to be believed an enormous amount of evidence has been piled up against him on the more serious charges. On the stand he is the same cool collected, suave and plausible gentleman that visits the subscribers in the large cities and finds methods of making them hand over some of their surplus cash. He added nothing to the information already obtained and did not in any way assist in clearing up the financial muddle. He will be cross-examined on Tuesday.

Sheldon Pride, school teacher of Randolph, swore he had been connected with the institution from June, 1894, to October, 1899, and worked chiefly as collector. His territory was in New Brunswick, but did not include the city of St. John and counties of Restigouche and Gloucester. He submitted a detailed list of expenses to the principal, after returning from a collecting trip.

Could not say what proportion of the subscriptions remained unpaid but there was not a large percentage of the whole. As a teacher he would say that the mutes were in some respects in advance of speaking children. Mr. Woodbridge was generally of Restigouche and Gloucester. He had seen the boys called out of school to run errands. The general character of the food given the pupils was good, wholesome and of sufficient quantity. The children appeared to be in good health and spirits.

Their Loving Regard. Had seen the girl pupils working about 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.

Cross-examined by Mr. Phinney the witness said he was connected with the institution almost continuously from June, 1894, to October, 1899. He was employed as collector with the understanding that he was to teach at times. He had no definite time to teach or position as teacher. He had graduated from the Normal School just prior to joining the staff of the institution. His main business was collecting and he was to act as teacher.

Not a Philanthropist—Not He! Had had no previous acquaintance with the habits of deaf and dumb children, but knew something of the double hand alphabet. Did not go into the work from philanthropic motives but as a means of making a living. He did not attempt to teach language but did give lessons to advanced pupils in arithmetic and geography. He usually took Mr. Woodbridge's class. Mr. Powers did some general teaching. He recognized his position as being similar to his own. Had seen him in the school room teaching.

Witness taught in Mr. Woodbridge's place while he was writing his report. This would be during the winter season. Witness was never in the school continuously for more than two weeks any year. St. John city was given to Mr. Powers as part of his collecting territory because of his having more experience in the business. Mr. Woodbridge, Mr. Prince and Miss Woodbridge constituted the teaching staff. He had always thought that Mrs. Woodbridge was very successful as a teacher, and as a rule her pupils made good progress. He had resigned 1896, and Howard Woodbridge was appointed in his place.

Could not swear that young Woodbridge had acted as a teacher, as he did not see him teaching in the school, but knew he did some general teaching. Witness was re-appointed he did not know whether Howard Woodbridge continued as collector or not. He found some of the pupils very bright and some rather stupid. He had seen them in the school room at the institution and suspected the girls who did the work of having been taken there. He had found some of the girls untruthful.

His Ideas About Veracity. The names of some girls who had given evidence at the in 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.

Did not know that Mr. Prince had confessed he was a liar. Commissioner Barry—He not only swore that he told her and was a liar, but that he wrote letters which contained lies. He admitted he was a general all-round hand at the business.

The witness proceeded stated that he did not come to Fredericton at the solicitation of Mr. Woodbridge. He had written him offering to come and assist him and received a letter requesting him to come to Fredericton. He came to Fredericton at the beginning of July. He had no communication with any of the deaf mute witnesses since the proceedings began.

Insulted the Witnesses. He went to Lord's Hotel where the mute witnesses were staying with the object of taking a snap shot of them on the verandah at the time. The light was bad so only made a bluff at it.

After that he stepped out on the street opposite the verandah where the girls in every way possible. He was called for the purpose of clearing up the muddled finances, but his evidence did not throw any light on the obscure and tangled problem.

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His conduct on this occasion was considered very clever and smart, but the general opinion was that it was reprehensible and blackguardly. He corroborated the complainants' witnesses that the pupils were taken out of school to work on Mr. Woodbridge's farm.

G. Ernest Powers, who is a well-known figure in the province, having been the most prominent collector for the institution, also gave evidence.

The Slave Powers. He is one of the accused and if street rumor is to be believed an enormous amount of evidence has been piled up against him on the more serious charges. On the stand he is the same cool collected, suave and plausible gentleman that visits the subscribers in the large cities and finds methods of making them hand over some of their surplus cash. He added nothing to the information already obtained and did not in any way assist in clearing up the financial muddle. He will be cross-examined on Tuesday.

Sheldon Pride, school teacher of Randolph, swore he had been connected with the institution from June, 1894, to October, 1899, and worked chiefly as collector. His territory was in New Brunswick, but did not include the city of St. John and counties of Restigouche and Gloucester. He submitted a detailed list of expenses to the principal, after returning from a collecting trip.

Could not say what proportion of the subscriptions remained unpaid but there was not a large percentage of the whole. As a teacher he would say that the mutes were in some respects in advance of speaking children. Mr. Woodbridge was generally of Restigouche and Gloucester. He had seen the boys called out of school to run errands. The general character of the food given the pupils was good, wholesome and of sufficient quantity. The children appeared to be in good health and spirits.