

THE LIBEL SUITS.

Captain Olive Phillips-Wolley Again Gives Evidence in the Province Case.

Mr. Martin, Counsel for the Defence, Makes a Powerful Address to the Court.

Case Continued Until To-Day Owing to Illness of Mr. Cassidy, Prosecuting Attorney.

At the afternoon session of the police court yesterday Captain Olive Phillips-Wolley, provincial sanitary inspector, was recalled by Mr. Cassidy, counsel for the prosecution, and his examination, which occupied two hours and a half, resulted in the evidence given by Mr. Coltart being verified upon all the matters of real importance involved.

Mr. Cassidy commenced by referring the witness to what he had said in his evidence last week in regard to Mr. Coltart having been a director of the Province, Limited Liability, his further statement that Mr. Coltart practically managed both concerns and that they were run as one thing, which Mr. Coltart had said could only have been stated by Mr. Coltart because of malice.

Mr. Cassidy asked the witness to go back to the original statement as to the joint management of both concerns by Mr. Coltart.

Witness—I want to put it in my own words: I believed Mr. Coltart to be practically manager of both concerns, the newspaper company and the publishing company, during the time that I acted as editor of the Province.

Q.—Mr. Coltart says he never had any conversation with you as to the course to be adopted in editing the paper. What do you say to that? A.—I think he is mistaken. I know he did.

Q.—Particularly, he says in regard to attacks on individuals? (Witness looked at the written evidence given by Mr. Coltart.) "He is right," he never did. I merely suggest to me that I should make attacks on individuals."

Q.—Why do you say directly? A.—The fact is that Mr. Coltart and I had many conversations in regard to the policy of the paper, and letters in regard to the policy of the paper were very often talked over, but it would not be right for me to say that he suggested my attacking individuals.

Continuing his evidence Mr. Coltart said it might be true that Mr. Coltart did not write articles for the Province, but he (witness) remembered distinctly one paragraph which he thought Mr. Coltart did write. He could not say that he had seen Mr. Coltart revise any editorial matter, but articles written by him were sent to Mr. Coltart's hands and came back to witness revised or suppressed in accordance with the views on such matters previously expressed orally to him by Mr. Coltart.

Mr. Coltart had used his influence to prevent the publication of an article written by witness upon the subject of the probable successor to Mr. Dewdney. Mr. Cassidy asked the witness what he had written in the article referred to, but Mr. Coltart asked him whether it was necessary for him to specify what he had said, and the court decided that the reference was sufficiently explicit.

Witness said that after the article was written it went into Mr. Coltart's hands, and he (witness) learned from Mr. Coltart in the opinion of the directors, and certainly in his own, the article was contrary to the policy of the paper. He understood it was the directors' wish that it should not be published, and accordingly it did not appear. As to the substitution of the words "British" and "British" for "England" and "English," Mr. Coltart said that the two latter words did not appear several times when Coltart had written them in his articles, the former two being used in their places. He went down to the printing department and was there told something, he was about to repeat, when Mr. Martin objected to it as hearsay evidence.

Mr. Cassidy—Well, as a result of what you heard did you form any opinion about Mr. Coltart?

Mr. Martin again objected, saying that hearsay evidence was not accepted in the Province case, and that the witness was not a party to the case, and that the witness was not a party to the case, and that the witness was not a party to the case.

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was that of the maps which were ordered from the publishing company, and of which Mr. Coltart asked me to make a favorable mention, and another was a porcelain pot thing for holding salmon or cheese; and I was told I should have some of the salmon or cheese if I did so, but I never got any.

Mr. Martin—I suppose that is your grievance? Witness—Yes, that is my grievance. (Laughter.)

His Honor—Mr. Coltart did not get the fruits of his inquiry.

Mr. Martin—Was it not this? Did not Mr. Coltart tell you that these two parties had been in while you had been out, and wished him to submit the articles to your notice? A.—Yes, in regard to the porcelain pot they had been and I was out, that is quite true.

Q.—Do you know anything about the minute books of either of these companies? A.—No, I do not.

Q.—Or of their books of account? A.—No.

Q.—Or of their banking arrangements? A.—No.

Q.—Or of their relations as landlord and tenant? A.—No.

Q.—Or of their financial arrangements? A.—No.

Q.—Or of the contracts between them? A.—No.

Q.—Now, in the face of this, why did you say that you knew Mr. Coltart practically managed both concerns and they were run as one thing? A.—I did not say I knew they were run as one thing, but that Mr. Coltart practically managed both concerns, and they were practically run as one thing. "Practically" governs both statements.

Witness and Mr. Martin differed in their opinion as to whether this was so, and Mr. Coltart said he was quite willing to leave the matter to any judge of English to decide, but finally witness's answer was taken to mean that in his opinion both companies were practically run by Mr. Coltart as one thing.

Mr. Coltart was then asked in regard to the "Dewdney" article, to the insertion of which he said he had objected, because it contained an attack on one who was a personal friend of his, unless an item was also inserted to the effect that the witness had severed his connection with the paper. "I, therefore," said Mr. Coltart, "wrote a letter to the Colonist on the matter."

Witness was then asked to examine a paragraph which he had written, and admitted that it was written by him, and Mr. Coltart was caused by the appearance of that paragraph, as well as by the insertion of the Dewdney article. The paragraph was as follows:

"We regret to state that Mr. Seafie, the editor of this journal, has only come back from California to go to the hospital and that Mr. Phillips-Wolley, his locum tenens, has retired from his chair on the ground that now the celebration is over he has very little in common with the political sympathies of this paper. He has severed his connection, and does not go quietly in harness. We shall have a better man in his place next week."

Witness said he had been for some time previous to his occupancy of the editorial chair of the Province, during that time, and since then until the present time, the Provincial Sanitary Inspector for the province of British Columbia. Mr. Martin then drew witness's attention to the files of the Province newspaper during the time Mr. Coltart was acting as editor, and asked him to count how many times the words "England" or "English" appeared in those issues, and witness found that on page 344 four times, on page 345 twice, page 347 twice, page 348 once, pages 349 and 350 seven times, and on page 351 seven times. Witness then said what he meant was that the words "England" and "English" were frequently altered, but in the issue of June 19th, which was the Jubilee number, he had taken good care to see they were not changed. He also objected to being referred to as a witness for the prosecution, stating that he had no interest either way, drawing from Mr. Martin the remark that he could not be friendly to both sides. Witness continued in reference to the English-British controversy that in the issue of June 19th in which England was used so frequently, his poem on the U. E. Loyalists and the Jubilee Ode were taken from Longman's Magazine and could not be changed.

Mr. Martin—Then I suppose it was for the same reason that they were altered in the issue of June 12th? Witness looked at pages 318, 322, and 325 and then said that many times he found when a proof of an article was sent to him for revision the change had been made and he altered it again, so that although "England" appeared in the paper it was only because he had revised the proofs and insisted upon that expression being retained.

Mr. Coltart would not deny that when he left the editorial chair he offered to send Mr. Coltart a letter for consideration by the directors concerning the use of the word "England" in the paper, but that the paper should be edited, although he could not swear that he did so. To the best of his recollection Mr. Coltart had never declined to discuss the editorial policy of the paper with him, but on the contrary had expressed his mind freely on many occasions. Asked whether he did not recollect that when he approached Mr. Coltart in regard to an honorarium for his Jubilee Ode Mr. Coltart told him it was not in his power to do anything, and that it would have to be referred to the board, witness said he remembered it, but thought it was to Mr. Bostock to whom he was told it must be referred. Several other questions tending to prove that Mr. Coltart consistently declined to interfere in the editorial work of the paper, amongst them being a reference to the publication of Mr. Coltart's poems during his editorship, and the suppression of some articles from the Vancouver correspondent were answered by the witness to the effect that the responsibility was placed entirely upon himself during his connection with the paper. Witness said he had no remembrance of the alleged quarrel between himself and Mr. Coltart, but admitted that as he went to see Mr. Coltart to complain about the Dewdney article he had "an awful temper"; it was possible he had used very strong language on that occasion; strong enough to justify Mr. Coltart in believing that he (witness) entertained bitter feelings against him.

Witness then said Mr. Coltart's examination, and Mr. Martin intimated that unless his honor had conceived the impression that Mr. Seafie had severed his connection with the newspaper for good, he had no intention of calling any other witnesses. His honor said he had formed no such opinion, his questions bearing upon this point having been intended to make clear the dates of Mr. Seafie's former and his present absence.

At Mr. Coltart's request his evidence in regard to the date of the commencement of Mr. Seafie's present absence was changed from October 6th, as Mr. Coltart now knew it must have been much later in the month.

Mr. Martin then proceeded to address the court for the defence, as follows: "May it please your worship, my client is here to answer the charge that on the 12th December instant he did publish a libel in a newspaper entitled 'The Province.' This action is noteworthy by the reason that it is seven years since an action of this kind has occurred in Western Canada, and I believe I am right in saying that it is almost twice that period since an action of this kind has been tried in the west of Toronto. The reason for this is plain. Everyone knows that it is possibly the most difficult thing in legal proof to bring home the publication of a libel to the defendant; and another thing is the fact that libels are almost as these public men are almost invariably left to the civil courts. The only time in Eastern Canada in which the criminal court has been invoked is that one which with most of us are familiar, I mean that of Mr. Threlk, when the charge was the most serious one possible—libelling with an attempt to obtain money. Because, therefore, of the rarity of these cases it devolves upon us to be careful, for actions of this kind are upon, I was going to say, always with suspicion. I am going to say, always with suspicion at least always very narrowly. Especially is this the case, and it is right that it should be so, when a peculiar section of the code is invoked, as in this case, where my client is charged with the only crime under our criminal code against which he is not permitted to justify his action. If it had been alleged that the libels were false this course would have been open to us, and if I refrain from enquiring why the charge of falsity was not made, I shall expect my learned friend on the other side to restrict himself in a similar manner."

When you accuse a man of publishing a libel you charge him with an offence, and I submit that when a man is brought here it is your duty to take up the code and say under what section that offence is committed. I assume that if by any oversight those who compiled this code (and amongst them was so eminent a man as Sir John Thompson) have left out any offence it is not your duty to find it. If a man is brought here on a charge of publishing a libel, and the only question should be under what section it is committed, and if the offence is not found in the code, then there is no section under which this defendant can be said to have offended except in part 23 of the code, where they are stated in sections 235 and 236.

Counsel then proceeded to read the section referred to and continuing, said: "I directed a large portion of my remarks to section 237 thinking that my learned friend must prove that the defendant is a proprietor. I thought then that on joint stock company, in view of it, he could not be brought here; but he was not a proprietor, and therefore section 238 is the only one on which he can rely, and under that one I submit that the only man shown to be guilty of any such offence is this clerk Wheeler, and under that section it is provided that if the defendant is not a proprietor, he must prove that the offence of publishing the paper was not committed by Mr. Coltart, but by another party, but the offence charged is not the selling of the paper but the publication of it in a criminal court. Mr. Coltart is not a proprietor, and I do not wish to dwell upon this portion of the case, although we have seen that in regard to the running of the two companies as one concern and the substitution of the word British for English, Mr. Coltart was open to correction, still what has occurred since the 26th June, when Mr. Seafie returned, can only be shown by Mr. Coltart's evidence. One other thing I might mention in passing, and that is, Mr. Coltart was before and during his connection with the paper, and is now, an employee of the government. My learned friend has intimated that my clients are imbued with malicious feelings against certain parties. The law, however, is a servant of the government, that government to which they are supposed to be hostile, to go into their office and edit their paper. Mr. Coltart says that he came here reluctantly; but his conscience is his only judge. I cannot say, but it may be that his evidence is, perhaps, unconsciously somewhat tainted with the knowledge of the circumstances under which it was given. I do not wish to judge, but it might well be that in such a case one would try to avoid going into the witness box, although I wish to make no insinuations. There may be a conflict or an unimportant point or two between Mr. Coltart and Mr. Coltart's evidence, but only up to the 26th of June. After that there is no conflict because there is no evidence to show that from that date Mr. Coltart did not do what he says he did, attend strictly to his own business."

Mr. Martin—From the London Law Journal of December 4th, 1887, to prove that a director is a paid servant of the company, and referring to the evidence of a newspaper which contained a personal libel was treated as a criminal, though he had not himself committed the criminal act, nor procured or incited another to commit it, nor aided in its commission, nor knew that it was about to be committed. I think it was about to be committed by the tenor of the act itself, apart from its historical origin, that the intention of the legislature was amongst other things to mitigate the rigor of the common law in this particular, and to place the proprietor of a newspaper in the same position as any other employer whose servant had in the course of his employment committed an offence against and to the injury of a third person.

"And in the same case Chief Justice Cockburn, at pages 58 and 59 says: "The state of the law which this enactment (6 and 7 Victoria, c. 93) was intended to reward, was in my opinion inconsistent with the first and common principles of justice, and one which was discreditable to the legislature of this country. I cannot but think of the mental principle that to constitute guilt there must be a mens rea, an intention to violate the law."

Counsel referred his worship to Stone's Justices' Manual, page 548, and quoted as follows from Fraser's on the Law of Libel and Slander at page 304: "The proprietor of a newspaper is not criminally liable for a libel which has been inserted in it without his knowledge or consent merely because he has given the editor a general authority to publish what he thinks proper there. So, too, the director of a printing company is not criminally liable for a libel contained in a paper printed by the servants of the company, unless they knew of, or saw the libel before its publication, or gave express instructions for its appearance."

"What is the position of this defendant? Practically that of secretary to this company, at a remuneration of \$30 per month. It is evident, therefore, that he must have some other means of livelihood, and he has, as we have seen, in the management of the large business of the publishing company here and in Vancouver, but his position in connection with this newspaper company is plainly that of secretary, and to find what the duties of a secretary are I know no better authority than Jordan in his hand-book on joint stock companies, page 131. Counsel read the definition of the duties of a secretary, and, continuing, said: "He has acted as secretary and as secretary only with one exception. He admits freely that when Mr. Seafie, his superior officer, was ill he did all he could in the best interests of his employees to assist in the discharge of the duties which Mr. Seafie was unable to perform because of his illness. His own evidence is that when Mr. Coltart took charge of the editorial chair at Mr. Seafie's request he (Mr. Coltart) did certain things; in fact, tried to show Mr. Coltart 'the ropes.' And there are reasons why he should not do all he could to further the interests of his employees in helping the editor? Even if he did act as an amanuensis to Mr. Seafie, and even if he did a whole lot more than that, I say that was his credit. Let us assume that anything Mr. Coltart did was exactly the case, there is no evidence to show what was done by Mr. Coltart after Mr. Seafie's return, except the statement of Mr. Coltart himself that he returned to and attended strictly to his own secretarial duties. Granting as I have said that everything that Mr. Coltart did was correct, and I do not wish to dwell upon this portion of the case, although we have seen that in regard to the running of the two companies as one concern and the substitution of the word British for English, Mr. Coltart was open to correction, still what has occurred since the 26th June, when Mr. Seafie returned, can only be shown by Mr. Coltart's evidence. One other thing I might mention in passing, and that is, Mr. Coltart was before and during his connection with the paper, and is now, an employee of the government. My learned friend has intimated that my clients are imbued with malicious feelings against certain parties. The law, however, is a servant of the government, that government to which they are supposed to be hostile, to go into their office and edit their paper. Mr. Coltart says that he came here reluctantly; but his conscience is his only judge. I cannot say, but it may be that his evidence is, perhaps, unconsciously somewhat tainted with the knowledge of the circumstances under which it was given. I do not wish to judge, but it might well be that in such a case one would try to avoid going into the witness box, although I wish to make no insinuations. There may be a conflict or an unimportant point or two between Mr. Coltart and Mr. Coltart's evidence, but only up to the 26th of June. After that there is no conflict because there is no evidence to show that from that date Mr. Coltart did not do what he says he did, attend strictly to his own business."

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"What is the position of this defendant? Practically that of secretary to this company, at a remuneration of \$30 per month. It is evident, therefore, that he must have some other means of livelihood, and he has, as we have seen, in the management of the large business of the publishing company here and in Vancouver, but his position in connection with this newspaper company is plainly that of secretary, and to find what the duties of a secretary are I know no better authority than Jordan in his hand-book on joint stock companies, page 131. Counsel read the definition of the duties of a secretary, and, continuing, said: "He has acted as secretary and as secretary only with one exception. He admits freely that when Mr. Seafie, his superior officer, was ill he did all he could in the best interests of his employees to assist in the discharge of the duties which Mr. Seafie was unable to perform because of his illness. His own evidence is that when Mr. Coltart took charge of the editorial chair at Mr. Seafie's request he (Mr. Coltart) did certain things; in fact, tried to show Mr. Coltart 'the ropes.' And there are reasons why he should not do all he could to further the interests of his employees in helping the editor? Even if he did act as an amanuensis to Mr. Seafie, and even if he did a whole lot more than that, I say that was his credit. Let us assume that anything Mr. Coltart did was exactly the case, there is no evidence to show what was done by Mr. Coltart after Mr. Seafie's return, except the statement of Mr. Coltart himself that he returned to and attended strictly to his own secretarial duties. Granting as I have said that everything that Mr. Coltart did was correct, and I do not wish to dwell upon this portion of the case, although we have seen that in regard to the running of the two companies as one concern and the substitution of the word British for English, Mr. Coltart was open to correction, still what has occurred since the 26th June, when Mr. Seafie returned, can only be shown by Mr. Coltart's evidence. One other thing I might mention in passing, and that is, Mr. Coltart was before and during his connection with the paper, and is now, an employee of the government. My learned friend has intimated that my clients are imbued with malicious feelings against certain parties. The law, however, is a servant of the government, that government to which they are supposed to be hostile, to go into their office and edit their paper. Mr. Coltart says that he came here reluctantly; but his conscience is his only judge. I cannot say, but it may be that his evidence is, perhaps, unconsciously somewhat tainted with the knowledge of the circumstances under which it was given. I do not wish to judge, but it might well be that in such a case one would try to avoid going into the witness box, although I wish to make no insinuations. There may be a conflict or an unimportant point or two between Mr. Coltart and Mr. Coltart's evidence, but only up to the 26th of June. After that there is no conflict because there is no evidence to show that from that date Mr. Coltart did not do what he says he did, attend strictly to his own business."

Mr. Martin—From the London Law Journal of December 4th, 1887, to prove that a director is a paid servant of the company, and referring to the evidence of a newspaper which contained a personal libel was treated as a criminal, though he had not himself committed the criminal act, nor procured or incited another to commit it, nor aided in its commission, nor knew that it was about to be committed. I think it was about to be committed by the tenor of the act itself, apart from its historical origin, that the intention of the legislature was amongst other things to mitigate the rigor of the common law in this particular, and to place the proprietor of a newspaper in the same position as any other employer whose servant had in the course of his employment committed an offence against and to the injury of a third person.

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