

## MILLS vs. THE WITNESS

\$10,000 Libel Suit Ends in Victory for the Witness.

J. Bidwell Mills, of Hamilton, sued the Montreal Witness for \$10,000 damages on account of articles in the Witness dealing with two concerns engineered by Mr. Mills, called the Business Men's Union and the Merchants' Protective and Collecting Agency. Mr. Mills or his agents collected moneys in the name of one or other of these concerns in ways which the Witness stigmatized as blackmailing and the obtaining of money on false pretences. Hence the suit.

The finding of the Jury is that the Witness is not guilty of libel: that the articles were substantially true, were not libellous, and were in the public interest. Mr. Mills' action is dismissed with costs against him.

The suit will cost the Witness a considerable sum of money. The costs granted against Mr. Mills will defray court expenses, but not the main part of what the Witness will pay its lawyers. In other words, the newspaper did a valuable public service, was put to much annoyance and trouble, and loses money. Therefore, let the public realize that a newspaper which evidently is trying fairly and decently to do public service in such respects should receive a goodly share of the public respect and confidence.

Now, one reason why the Witness, like the Journal, does not lose libel suits is that its intentions are honest and fair; it will neither do nor persist in any conscious or wilful injustice; nor, if accidentally wrong, hesitate to make amends; and if a libel suit gets as far as the courts it is likely to be because the Witness is right—Ottawa "Journal."

The "Shareholder" says: "The result of the suit of Mills against the Witness is a triumph for honest journalism. Actions for libel where there is no malice are simply efforts to gag the press. There are newspapers which suppress the truth in the fear of legal proceedings for libel or else of offending an advertiser. Papers of the stamp of the Witness will not stoop to such considerations, and these should receive the heartiest support from the public."

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