

Stirling Slander Case Before Jury at Assizes

Interest Centred on Sprentall vs. Matthews Action For Damages—Case Resumed Tuesday

(From Daily Ontario of March 11.)
The Stirling slander action of Sprentall vs. Matthews, which opened at the assize on Saturday afternoon, attracted as much attention as any of the criminal cases which took up the court's attention for the entire week. The court-room was crowded with spectators, many being unable to secure seats.

The action, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Sprentall, the plaintiffs, and Mr. and Mrs. John Matthews, the defendants, are all prominent people in Stirling Village and the names of leaders in Stirling social and public life were mentioned in the evidence.

There were two cases slated for trial: Mr. and Mrs. Frank Sprentall against Mrs. Agnes Matthews and against Mr. Thomas Matthews, now known as Stirling Village. The slander suit against Mrs. Matthews was first tried. After the hearing of three witnesses for the plaintiffs, the case was adjourned at five thirty until Monday morning, at nine thirty. This is one of the rare occasions on which a jury has been held over the week-end. The jury was composed of T. H. Monuck, Hungerford; Thos. Hostler, Mayo; John B. Johnston, Hungerford; H. N. Kincaid, Hungerford; John B. Labarge, Hungerford; Alex. Ferguson, Wollaston; John Boness, Tharlow; J. W. Radford, Sidney; Robert N. Irvine, Deseronto; James Fectures, Mayo; Archie Horton, Huntingdon; Laurel Clement, Deseronto.

Mr. E. Guss Porter, K.C., represented the plaintiffs and Mr. J. A. Patterson, K.C. of Toronto, the defendant. Mr. Loftus, of Toronto, is solicitor for Mrs. Matthews.

Outline of Case

Mr. E. Guss Porter, K.C., appearing for the plaintiffs, outlined the case to the jury.

The action, one for damages for slander, was brought by Frank and Elsie Sprentall, man and wife, against Agnes Matthews, wife of Thomas Matthews, all of Stirling Village. In March, 1917, the slander is alleged to have been circulated by Mrs. Matthews to the effect that her daughter and two other young ladies were at Mrs. Sprentall's home on their way to choir practice one evening, when a rap came to the door and Mrs. Sprentall went to the door and went outside, that when she came back she said it was a Mr. Coulter, that the girls must go; that she had a date on and could not delay them any longer. The inference was that a clandestine meeting was to take place. The plaintiffs claim that the slander was uttered by Mrs. Matthews to her husband. The result, it was claimed, was that the Sprentall's relations with the church and the public were affected.

Mr. Porter read from Mrs. Matthews' evidence at the examination for discovery, relating to what she had said had been told her regarding what had taken place at Sprentall's in the evening in question.

Mrs. Sprentall Takes Stand

Mrs. Elsie Sprentall, living at Stirling, said she had been married a little over seven years to Frank Sprentall. She had one child, seventeen months of age, who had been born Sept. 2nd, 1916. She had lived in Stirling all her married life. Mrs. Sprentall knew Mrs. Matthews since about a year after coming to Stirling. She was acquainted with her and had met her on the street and in the church. They had been in one another's homes.

She recalled the scandal she heard in Stirling in the spring of 1917. Mrs. Sprentall remembered the visit of Miss Matthews, Miss Stabbeek and Miss Kennedy at her home, and it was quite a while later she heard of the scandal. They had come early on their way to choir practice, stayed quite a while at her home and did not go to practice that night.

There was no truth in Mrs. Matthews' statement that on that occasion she had told that she had a date with Mr. Coulter.

Mrs. Sprentall knew at that time that Miss Matthews said she hated Mr. Coulter. There was a rap at the door that evening. None of the girls offered to go to the door. Mrs. Sprentall went.

"How long were you at the door?"
"I could not say definitely—perhaps five or ten minutes."
"Who was at the door?"
"Mr. Coulter."
"Sister?"
"Yes."
"He was recede of the village at that time?"
"Yes."

"Was he there by any appointment?"
"Yes. He was going to get me some music."
"He had forgotten the list she wanted. She told him again. He was not present any longer than necessary to get the list. He was going to get the music in Toronto."
Witness declared that she did not close the door that Coulter was at. This door opened into the room where the ladies were.

"When you returned, was anything said?"
"I said it was Roswell."
"Why did you say that?"
"I was afraid Mrs. Matthews might go home with some story."
"I went out into the kitchen and told Miss Kennedy it was Mr. Coulter. I told her why it was; that I was afraid Mrs. Matthews would go home with some story."

"Did you report the rumor to your husband?"
"Yes."
"How soon after?"
"As soon as I heard it."
Mrs. Matthews once came to her house after, but had no talk with witness about it. Mrs. Matthews had an interview with Mr. Sprentall.

Reverting to the story of the scandal, Mrs. Sprentall said: Some time later "I heard that I said I had a date on with Mr. Coulter and for the girls to go."
"I had my little pink house dress on when I went to the door; they said I had my kimono on," she said in answer to Mr. Porter.

"Was that true?"
"No."
"Did you know whether that talk was confined or general around the village?"
"I don't know how far it spread."

One result of the rumor was, she testified: "My husband has not been the same to me." Her home life had not been very pleasant.

At the time, Mrs. Sprentall was in the choir of the Presbyterian church. She was not now in the choir. She did not go when she heard the rumor as she thought she was not wanted. She had noticed coolness. Some of the people did not speak to her. People did not call as often. Among those who were in the habit of visiting, and now do not, are Miss Stabbeek, Mrs. McGee, Mrs. Mather and Mrs. Parker.

Mrs. Sprentall Cross-Examined

Mr. Patterson for the defence cross-examined Mrs. Sprentall about the talk with Mr. R. P. Coulter at the door.
"Mr. Coulter conferred with you about music?"
"Yes."
"Was he musical?"
"No."
"But you were?"
"Yes."
"But I paid for it out of my own money," she added.
"I was not suggesting anything," said Mr. Patterson.

Mr. Sprentall is electrician for the village and had occasion to interview the Reeve, Mr. Coulter. Mr. and Mrs. Coulter would visit at the Sprentall home.
"Where was he to buy that music?"
"In Toronto."
"Did he get it for you?"
"Yes, he got it."
"Who did you say to the girls was there?"
"I said it was Roswell."
"Miss Kennedy and you got together in another room?"
"Yes, in the kitchen."
"Did you ask her to go to the kitchen?"
"I don't remember that."
"Did you beckon her to come, will you swear?"
"I won't swear."
"I want out to get a drink."
"Did you shut the kitchen door?"
"I don't remember."
"Then you told her it was Mr. Coulter?"
"Yes."
"That you had told the girls an untruth, did you tell her that?"
"I told her I had told a falsehood."
"Now, why did you tell a falsehood?"
"Because I was afraid Miss Matthews would go home with a story."
"Did Miss Matthews ever go home with stories?"
"No."
"Why did you tell a falsehood in your own home?"
"I heard her say in Sutcliffe's store that she hated Mr. Coulter."
"What story could she go home and tell?"
"Yes."

"I don't know what story."
"Did the other two girls know it was Mr. Coulter that was at the door?"
"I don't know."
"Don't you think if you had told the truth that night that all this trouble would not have happened?"
"It would have been better."
"You had no trouble with Miss Stabbeek?"
"No."
"Did you tell Miss Stabbeek about it?"
"No."
"Where did you hear that rumor?"
"Miss Kennedy told me."
"What was it she told you?"
"She said she heard it at her place that I had said I had a date on with Mr. Coulter and that the girls could not stay."
"Did you hear Mrs. Matthews tell that?"
"Mrs. Sprentall said she did not, but Miss Kennedy told me Mr. Matthews had told Mr. Hall" (the Presbyterian minister).

"You're accusing Mrs. Matthews of telling Mr. Matthews?"
"Yes."
"Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Matthews come to talk the matter over one evening."
"I remember them coming but I don't remember the conversation."
"You were present all the time?"
"Not all the time. I had called."
"How do you know that Mrs. Matthews told the story before March 4th, 1917?"
"I don't know when she told it."
"When did the incident at the house happen?"
"I think it was in the spring of 1916."
"When did you first observe the coolness?"
"After I heard the rumor."
Mr. Patterson cross-examined the plaintiff on the question of how the coolness was shown by Mrs. Hall, Mrs. McGee and others.

"Mrs. Hall is the minister's wife?"
"Yes."
"She has been at your place since?"
"I don't remember."
"When did you leave the choir?"
"After I heard the rumor."
"When was that?"
"I don't remember when it was."
"What's wrong with that, anyway," asked Mr. Patterson regarding the date.
"It just depends on what kind of a date."
"Did you ever have an appointment with Mr. Coulter?"
Mrs. Sprentall said she had had appointments with Mr. Coulter for motor rides.

"I see up there a motto: 'Evil to him who evil thinks.' Did you think evil? Who put it in your mind—somebody else?"
"No."
"In what way has it done you harm with your husband?"
"We have quarrelled over it."
Frank Sprentall Investigates

Frank Sprentall, husband of the plaintiff, testified that Mrs. Sprentall told him on the afternoon of the 5th of March, 1917, something of what had been rumored. He tried to investigate the rumor. He saw Miss Kennedy's father, got some information, then went to Rev. Mr. Hall's and saw Mr. Matthews in Mr. Coulter's office on the 5th. About a week afterwards, Mr. and Mrs. Matthews and their daughter came to talk to her. Mrs. Matthews said it was strange that Mr. Porter, Mr. Carnew, Mr. Coulter and witness, all Orangemen, should get into a mix-up. Sprentall declared that that made no difference and would not make him uphold anything wrong. Mrs. Matthews denied repeating the scandal, but Mr. Matthews said he thought he heard it in Series' shop. He wanted to know what Sprentall would settle for.

Sprentall thought at least a retraction should be made in the press, but Mrs. Matthews said that that would make it worse. Finally, Sprentall said any settlement would have to be submitted to Messrs. Porter & Carnew. An apology was submitted but never signed.

His Lordship could not see how a statement of Mrs. Matthews to Mr. Matthews made for any effect on the community.
Mr. Porter asked permission to amend the statement of claim by adding the words "and others," namely, that Mrs. Matthews had told Mr. Matthews "and others."
The court ruled that the words could not be added.

To Mr. Patterson—Witness declared that Mr. Matthews did not express regret at the interview, but wanted to know what settlement could be made.

Probably if Mrs. Sprentall had not made the misstatement to the girls the trouble would not have occurred.

The Sprentalls and Coulters never had any trouble.

"I had perfect faith in your wife?"
Witness said he had. She had

driven out in the car with Mr. Coulter. Sprentall never objected.

"Did you assault him (the clergyman) on the street?"
There had been a meeting on the streets of Stirling with the minister, but witness could not say whether he assaulted Mr. Hall or Mr. Hall assaulted him.

Miss Kennedy on the Stand
Miss Elsie Kennedy was the third witness. She was at Sprentall's on that night. Mrs. Sprentall answered the door call and after telling the girls it was young Coulter, called her to the kitchen and said, "Elsie, that was Mr. Coulter."
"I said I saw him; 'Why did you say that?'"
She answered: "I was afraid Miss Matthews might talk."
The girls stayed the evening.

"Was there anything said about Mrs. Sprentall having a date on with Mr. Coulter?"
"No." Nothing was said about the girls having to go.

"We girls knew it was Mr. Coulter." Mrs. Sprentall was never discussed at any time and nothing was said by witness to Mrs. Matthews.

Witness told Mr. Patterson she did not remember whether she told the girls about what Mrs. Sprentall had mentioned in the kitchen. Witness remembered mentioning the occurrence to Mrs. Fox and that must have occurred in the course of a conversation. She did not tell the story to anyone else, even her father. But people asked her what the trouble was and she told the story. But she did not tell it with any idea of wrong.

Court adjourned at five thirty on Saturday evening.

This morning at nine-thirty as all the Jurors had not been able to arrive, owing to delays in arrival of trains, the Sprentall vs. Matthews case was adjourned until Tuesday morning at nine o'clock.

Busy Trenton

(From Daily Ontario of March 11.)
Mr. W. A. Bleeker has purchased the beautiful Hicks residence now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. C. Kells, Rome, N.Y., Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. at the plant. Mr. Bleeker purposes taking possession early in the fall.

The greater residence occupied by the McCauleys took fire Saturday evening at the time a terrific storm was raging. The fire is believed to have originated in the front bed room. It was luck the fire department was successful in having no water damage, as usually is experienced in the winter, consequently the damage was slight and insurance will compensate.

Captain and Mrs. Harrington, of Colborne were in Trenton Saturday. Mrs. Harrington, formerly Miss P. Turney has many friends in Trenton.

Captain W. Kent McNece of the munitions guard was in Belleville on Saturday.

A pig weighing 725 lbs was sold at Brighton for \$112.25, recently by Mr. T. F. Herrington.

At the Canadian Club here Friday evening a glowing tribute was moved by the secretary, Mr. J. C. Young to the late Lt-Col. McRae, of Guelph, who recently paid the supreme sacrifice. As a tribute to his beloved memory Mr. Robert Whyte, principal of the high school, one of his students, Master Granville Riley recited the late Lt-Col's most beautiful poem "In Flanders Field," preceding the address "Social Reconstruction after the War" by Father Minahan, of Toronto.

R. I. M. Webb, late manager of the Molsons bank was in Belleville on Thursday and Friday.

Mr. C. K. Temple Manager of Molson bank was in Belleville on Friday.

Great crowds assembled at Welton's opera house for the musical comedy "Oh Doctor" which proved an excellent success.

Lance Corporal Mark Hoagie, who honours Trenton as her first soldier to enlist on the warpath of his militia is now returned as a most honorable discharged soldier and unfortunately a disabled one. "Congratulations."

Major D. C. Moore, Toronto is to be the guest of the Salvation Army this week-end.

Miss Minnie Palmer, Madoc, of the guest of Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Preston.

Mr. Eben James has purchased the Trenton Coopers' Mills and is selling off all manufactured stock and finishing stock in course of manufacture. It will undoubtedly be a great loss to Trenton if the plant ceases operation as in pre plant days was in course.

Mr. Ernest E. Finsall brother of the late Miss Winnifred Finsall, of the Chemical works passed away on March 31st. Much sympathy is extended to her in her irreparable loss.

The ladies of the Khaki Knitting Club did honors with a luncheon to

Canadian / at a Social evening with Father Minahan, Toronto, as guest who delivered a very stirring address on the "Social Side after the war" to a crowded and appreciative audience.

Mr. L. M. Coleman is in town on a short visit displaying her new millinery for spring wear.

Sutcliffe dry goods company has acquired the vacant spacious store recently vacated by R. Kemp.

Mr. H. Romley-Williams is the guest of Mr. and Mrs. J. Hadley-Holmes, Picton, this week-end.

The Canadian Northern Railway Co. have nearly completed their foot-bridge over the Trent River. This will prove quite a boon to the chemical employees.

Mr. Huffman of Belleville has now three Studebakers running to and from the plant, quite a fleet to be sure.

Obituary

MISS CASSIE COLE

Miss Cassie Cole passed away in Toronto on Saturday at the residence of her nephew, Ernest Davenport. She was 70 years of age and a daughter of the late Simon Cole, and formerly resided on Charles St., Belleville. Mourning her loss are three sisters, Mrs. Davenport, Alifton, Toronto, Mrs. Emily Mordan, Picton, and Mrs. Louise Stafford, Picton, and one brother, Mr. Simon Cole of Greenbush, P. E. Co. The remains will be taken to Northport for interment.

LATE J. L. TERRILL

The funeral of the late J. Leroy Terrill took place from the family residence, Dundas Street, to the Friends' Church in Brighton Township, where the Rev. W. A. Rogers conducted an impressive service in the presence of many sympathizing relatives and friends. Beautiful floral tributes had been received. Interment was in the Friends' Cemetery, the bearers being Messrs. William Hennessy, Ray Gooding, Elwood Fox and Irvine Gainforth.

LOST TEAM OF HORSES

Off Grassy Point, White, Drawing Postboxes
Napanee, March 9.—Joseph Leveck, of Marlbank, who purchased Luke Trumpour's farm at Adolphus town, had the misfortune to lose a valuable span of horses in the bar of Grassy Point on his way to his new farm on Tuesday night last. The night was dark and Mr. Leveck did not know the road very well and drove into the reach, where it solidly freezes over. He had a load of potatoes, but these and the sleigh were grappled for and reeled.

Bank Clerks Must Enlist

Central Appeal Judge Has Rendered Comprehensive Judgment.
CALLING UP 634 MARCH 15.
Remainder of Some 2,000 to Report For Duty in Three Days.

Ottawa, March 11.—The need of men for the army is emphasized by Mr. Justice Duff in his judgment dealing exemption to bank clerks in Category "A" under which 2,020 bank employees will be called up.

"In determining the number of men to be furnished immediately by the banks," the judgment reads "the Central Appeal Judge has reviewed carefully the position of each bank, and has taken into account several considerations, amongst others the number of male employees in the banks, the proportion of these to the total staff of the banks, the extent of which the staff has been depleted in the past by voluntary enlistment and the special situation of each bank in regard to the distribution of its staff amongst its branches."

Contribution Not Unreasonable.
After stating how the first call will be distributed among the various banks, Mr. Justice Duff continues:

"The immediate withdrawal of men from their staffs for the military forces of the nation, which some of the banks are thus called upon to meet, is larger than their officials who appeared before the Central Appeal Judge conceded to be reasonably feasible. As a result of the full investigation of the general situation above referred to, and of a thorough canvass of the special circumstances of each bank, it is considered that the contribution March 15, which sympathy is extended to her in her irreparable loss, is not unreasonable, and that it will neither in the whole prejudice the economic interest of the country nor

McINTOSH BROS.

GOOD NEWS of NEW GOODS

Do your Easter Buying now while the
Alteration Sale Prices Prevail
Last week of the Great Sale many notable bargains will be offered.
Here are Silk Poplins in all the newest shades, reg. \$2.00 yard, sale price \$1.49
Silk Taffetas for Separate Skirts, pretty patterns and colorings in Stripe and Plaid effects, reg. \$3.50 yd sale price \$2.98
Hundreds of yards of new Voiles and Repp materials in all the wanted shades sale prices at 49c and 59c a yard
Great array of new Spring Waists in Voile and Silk many for your choosing at 99c up to \$4.98.

Wanted! 25000 Musk Rats

Highest Prices Guaranteed

We must have the above quantity of Rats before the season closes.
Bring them or ship them in. We will Remit by return mail Cash in full.
We mean Business and our Reliable reputations for Honest Dealing is assured.

JOS. T. DELANEY

17 Campbell St., Phone 797, Belleville

Spring Overcoats

Our New Spring Overcoats
have arrived and prices no
higher than last year.

Don't That Sound Good To You!

NEW SPRING HATS

The same thing about our
New Hats—they are all
here—the latest styles and
colors and at last years
prices.

Oak Hall

seriously effect the strength of any individual bank.
"It is undeniable that for the officials who remain this draft will necessarily mean largely increased inconvenience, as well as exceptional effort. The military need, however, is inexorable. The banks' officials, who will have to meet the strain resulting from this new demand, have, on the whole, already given proof of their patriotism, and the country will look with confidence to them for the ability and resolution that may be required to cope with the situation resulting from the military necessities of the nation."
As a result of the judgment, 2,020 Category A, Class One, bank clerks will be called to the colors. The first draft of 834 is to be furnished by the banks on March 15. The remainder of the 2,020 will be called up in approximately equal drafts on May 15, July 15, September 15 and November 15.
The first draft of 834, to be furnished or March 15, will be distributed as follows:
Bank of British North America, 25; Canadian Bank of Commerce,

112; Dominion Bank of Canada, 28; Bank of Hamilton, 34; Banque d'Hochelaga, 60; Home Bank of Canada, 1; Imperial Bank of Canada, 34; Merchants Bank of Canada, 60; Molsons Bank, 24; Bank of Montreal, 52; Northern Crown Bank, 3; Bank of Nova Scotia, 46; La Banque Nationale, 39; Bank of Ottawa, 13; Provincial Bank of Canada, 40; Royal Bank, 120; Standard Bank, 35; Stirling Bank, 7; Bank of Toronto, 37; Union Bank, 57; Weyburn Security Bank 2.
On January, 25, 1918, the total number of male employees of all the banks was 11,872, while female employees numbered 6,775. Of the former, 4,721 were in Class One, and 2,390 were in medical Category A or not yet examined. Of these 270 have claimed exemption on personal grounds.
From the beginning of the war down to January 15, 1918, bank employees to the number of 7,742 have enlisted.

Mrs. Hillman left a marmot muffed at the police station which she found on the market. It was claimed.

ESTABLISHED
Hunt
No
167 F
U.S.

LONDON state that the
te of hours.
The Ger
miles south
advance in
hours' march

LONDON
attempted by
Fauquier
The artillery

167

LONDON
quarters says
167 enemy pl
light fighting
night flying

LONDON
squadrons
heavily attac
day or so

LONDON
Admiralty is
Commons too
troys by sul

LONDON
announced will
of war prisos

COPRIN
man Chance
in delusion
continued "I
in our just
under secret
method had
gotations, b
minister, his
tion in Germ

NO F

ROME
quarters says
duced consid
is sufficient
is confined c

PETRO
oil has decla
ernigov and
portions of t

OTTAW
Labor on the
Dominion H
and decreas
changed. T
fiftieth of a

BEY

CHICA
announced