



Legal News

Stone vs Wrigley

Fracas at the Bishopstone School

Swindon Police Court, Thursday

Josiah Wrigley, school master, of Bishopstone, was charged with assaulting **Edwin Stone**, butcher, of the same place, on the 23rd Nov., and a cross summons charged Edwin Stone with assaulting Josiah Wrigley.

The case against Mr. Wrigley was opened first, and from the statement of Stone's solicitor it appeared that he (Stone) was blessed with a family of several girls who attend the National Schools presided over by the defendant. The defendant gave these girls home lessons to do, which Stone objected to, saying he wished his children to be otherwise engaged at home. On the 16th of November it came to Stone's knowledge that one of the little girls had been made to stand up room 9 to 12 o'clock because she had not done her home lessons, and on this he wrote to Mr. Wrigley telling him that he should not allow the home lessons, and if he again heard of his children being punished for obeying his orders he should take other steps to protect them. The home lessons were again sent, on which Stone put his pen through them. In retaliation for this it was alleged that Wrigley reduced one of the girls, aged 11, who was a very forward scholar, and a sample of whose work was presented to the Bench, to the infants dunce's class, and punish her, and again stood her up in the room. Stone, hearing of this, on the day of the alleged assaults took the girl to the school and told her to take her proper place in the class. This she did, on which Wrigley pushed her out of the room. Stone went to protect her, and Wrigley pushed him, on which he pushed Wrigley. This pushing of each other constituted the ground of the present charges.

The schools, it appears, are endowed schools, and are the only ones in the parish to which children can be sent, only parents who are rated at over £12 being charged school fees. Stone, in the course of his examination, said he objected principally to the elder girl having home lessons, as she was very forward and suffered with pains in the head, which he thought was the result of over study. Wrigley had turned the children out of the school in consequence, although he had paid 10s. for quarter's instruction. He was pushed twice by Wrigley before he laid his hand on him. He had no desire to take these proceedings, and had offered to refer the matter in dispute to the Vicar or any other person, but Wrigley came and took out a summons.

Cross examined by Mr. Jones, who appeared for Wrigley, Stone said he had known the home lessons occupy over two hours. On the 15th November his daughter was kept standing all the time, and the next day she was caned for not doing her home lessons, and then she was expelled the school. When he took the girl back Wrigley at once pushed her out of a side door, and he went to protect her. It was then that he was pushed.

Mr. Wykeham-Martin asked if he was to understand that it was the practice at these schools to cane little girls?. Stone said it was; it was carried on scandalously, and there were complaints all over the village about it.

Two little girls, scholars at the school, were called on behalf of Stone to speak as to what took place at the school. Both said they had seen the daughter of Stone caned, and agreed that Wrigley commenced the pushing.

Mr. Jones said he had five or six other witnesses put an exactly opposite complexion on the case, and who would show that when Stone came to the school he became very abusive and refused to be referred to the managers with his complaints. He stopped the proceedings of the school for such a time that a policeman was sent for to eject him.

Mr. Wrigley gave his version of the affair on oath, denying that he touched the little girl when Stone brought her to school, or that he was within yards of her. Stone paid two visits to the school, the first time remaining shouting twenty minutes. When the girl was sent out by the proper girls entrance Stone tried to follow her to get her back again. He went to the door to prevent his going that way, when Stone rushed at him like a horse at a gate. They struggled, and his (Wrigley's) watch chain was broken and scattered over the room. After that Stone rushed at him and placed his fists in his face, threatened to punch him, and also to get him out of his situation.

In cross-examination Wrigley admitted that he caned the little girl for being absent from school without leave, and also that he had stood her away from the glass because she was showing other scholars how her father had struck out her home lessons from her books.

At this point of the case, after the Court had been occupied nearly a couple of hours, the Bench said they had heard enough of it, and had determined to dismiss the charge against Mr. Wrigley. Stone had no right in the school at all, much less to go through the door he was attempting to leave by. The schoolmaster was justified in preventing him. It would have been much better if the parties had not come to the Court at all, and had settled their differences amicably. Stone would be fined 2s. And costs.

A summons was applied for against Wrigley for assaulting Stone's little girl.

Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle, 11 December 1886

Bishopstone School Case

Swindon Police Court, Thursday

Josiah Wrigley, 41, schoolmaster of the parochial schools Bishopstone appeared in answer to a summons issued at the instance of Edwin Stone, butcher, of Bishopstone, charging him with assaulting Emily Ann Stone, a little girl aged 11 years, a pupil at his school, by caning her. It will be remembered that last week Wrigley and Stone appeared at this Court on cross-examination for assault, it being alleged by Stone that when he went to the school to remonstrate with Wrigley for caning his daughter because she had not done her "home lessons" that he (Wrigley) pushed him out of the school. Wrigley, on the other hand, said that Stone forced his way into the school, created a disturbance for 20 minutes, and tried to pass through a private door, when he used violence on being stopped. The only thing admitted by both sides last week that the schoolmaster had struck the child with a cane. The Bench dismissing the cross-summons, Stone applied for a summons against Wrigley for this alleged assault on the child, which was the case now to come before the Court. By consent of all parties the hearing was adjourned for a week.

Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle, 18 December 1886

Swindon Police Court, Thursday

The Bishopstone School Assault Case and several others were further adjourned.

Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle, 25 December 1886

OPC Note:

No further reports have been found at present.