

ROBERT S. TAYLOR

(1869 : 1924)

Within the shorthand court reporters profession in the early 1900s, Robert Stuart Taylor was renowned for his speed, accuracy and stamina. His performance in the Standard Oil antitrust case in 1907-1908 is legendary.¹ He has the distinction of being one of the few court



reporters (if not the only one) to be named in a decision of the United States Supreme Court.²

Born in Quebec, he graduated the University of Minnesota College of Law and was admitted to the bar on June 3, 1897.³ He chose court reporting over lawyering and within a few years became famous for reporting the Paper Trust and Standard Oil antitrust cases.⁴ In 1912 he served as special examiner to take testimony in the government's prosecution of the International Harvester Company for violating the antitrust act.⁵

¹ The U. S. Supreme Court ordered the company split apart in *Standard Oil Company of New Jersey v. United States*, 221 U. S. 1 (1911).

² *Alexander v. United States*, 201 U. S. 117 (1906). It is posted in the Appendix at 5-10. It is an early chapter in the Paper Trust Case that resulted in a decree dissolving the trust. See the Appendix to George F. Longsdorf, "An Appreciative Sketch of Frank B. Kellogg" 11-22 (MLHP, 2015).

³ Roll of Attorneys, Supreme Court, State of Minnesota, 1858-1970, at 46 (Minnesota Digital Library). His middle name is listed on the roll. Graduates of the University Law School were automatically admitted at that time under a so-called "diploma privilege."

⁴ It is not known how he came to be selected to record testimony in these cases but he may have been recommended by Frank Kellogg, who was the government's lead trial lawyer in both.

⁵ *New York Sun*, December 2, 1912, at 2:

HARVESTER TRIAL TO-DAY Prosecutor Says Trust Is Tightening Grip on American Farmer

St Louis, Dec. 1. That the so-called Harvester trust is tightening its grip on the American farmer by spreading out in its operations and attempting to control the manufacture of cream separators, wagons, gasoline engines, tractor engines, threshing machines and other agricultural necessities is the belief of Joseph R. Darling, special

Around 1908 he relocated to Duluth and, except for a leave of absence in the International Harvester case, was District Court Judge William Cant's reporter for almost a decade.⁶ In 1917 he moved to Minneapolis to report for the Hennepin County District Courts. Still later he moved to California.

For much of his career, he was active in the National Shorthand Reporters' Association.⁷ He chaired its committee on standardization. He also was involved in the formation of the Minnesota Shorthand Reporters' Association in 1907.⁸ A goal of these organizations was to improve the caliber of shorthand court reporters by raising educational standards and admission requirements.

He died on March 9, 1924, in Hollywood, California, at age fifty-six. The *Duluth Herald* carried the story:

Robert S. Taylor Dies in West

agent of the Department of Justice. Darling is in St. Louis to participate in a hearing of the Government's suit against the International Harvester Company to begin tomorrow morning before Special Examiner Robert S. Taylor, of Duluth, Minn.

It is the contention of the Government that the Harvester company allows merchants to handle no independent goods if they accept an agency for the alleged trust, thereby restraining trade. . . .

The case resulted a consent decree, which led to years of more litigation. For the convoluted history of the case, see *United States v. International Harvester Co.*, 274 U. S. 693 (1927).

⁶ William A. Cant (1863-1933) served on the Eleventh Judicial District Court, sitting in Duluth, from 1897 to 1923 when he was appointed and later confirmed as U. S. District Court Judge, a post he held until death in 1933.

Taylor is listed in the University's Alumni Directory published in 1916:

Robert S. Taylor,
LL. B., 97; Official Court Reporter. 403 Court
House and 5061 London Rd., Duluth, Minn.

Alumni of the College of Law, 1889-1915, at 257 (online).

⁷ In August 1912, his attendance at the 14th annual convention of the National Shorthand Reporters Association was heralded by the *New York Sun*: "Robert S. Taylor of Minneapolis, who has taken testimony in big cases like the Standard Oil prosecution, and who has the reputation of making more money out of his profession than anybody else, arrived yesterday..." *Sun*, August 20, 1912, at 6.

⁸ See generally, Jackie Young, "A History of Court Reporting in Minnesota." (MLHP, 2014). The photograph of Taylor on the front page is from Young's article.

Local District Court
Reporter Succumbs to a
Nervous Breakdown.

Robert S. Taylor, court reporter in the Duluth district court for 10 years, died Sunday at his home at Hollywood, Cal., according to word received here today. Death was attributed to a nervous breakdown suffered three years ago. Mr. Taylor, who was 56 years old at the time of his death, was born in Sherbrooke, Que., Can.

Leader in Profession.

Mr. Taylor, who served as Judge W. A. Cant's reporter while in the local courts, was considered the leader among the best of the present day shorthand reporters by Fred Ireland (sic), senior reporter of debates in the United States House of Representatives.

He came to Duluth from St. Paul sometime in 1908 and served in the court of Judge Cant until 1917. Later he held a similar position in the Hennepin county court. He was graduated from the college of law at the University of Minnesota.

In the government prosecution of the Standard Oil Company several years ago, Mr. Taylor was appointed to take the testimony in the case, which took two years. The record in this case made about 30,000 typewritten pages, and so far as anyone knows there is not one mistake in the record, Mr. Ireland states. Much of the testimony was extremely technical, and during the course of the examination, Mr. Taylor was requested to take the evidence in all parts of the country.

Praised by John D.

After John D. Rockefeller had read 500 pages of his own testimony in the case he sent for Mr. Taylor and said to him:

“Mr. Taylor, I have heard of you, and I’m very glad to meet so distinguished and valuable a man in his profession as you are.”

“I have repeatedly seen ‘Bob’ Taylor write 270 words or more in a minute in perfectly legible shorthand,” Mr. Ireland declares.

Honored for Eminent Services.

On Christmas day, 1922, the members of the National Shorthand Reporters’ Association of America presented Mr. Taylor with a gold watch and a purse in “recognition of his imminent position in and great services to the shorthand profession of America.” This was inscribed on the watch.

Mr. Taylor survived by a wife, four daughters and three sons in Hollywood; a sister, Mrs. Louise Lockwood of Seattle, and a brother, John H. Taylor of St. Paul. Burial will be in Hollywood cemetery today.

“I consider ‘Bob’ Taylor one of the most widely known and best beloved men in the reporting profession,” J. J. Cameron, veteran district court reporter here, said today.⁹



⁹ *The Duluth Herald*, March 11, 1924, at 3. Fred Ireland’s last name is misspelled throughout this obituary. There likely is a tribute to Taylor in the *National Shorthand Reporter*, the journal of the National Shorthand Reporters’ Association, but it has not been found.

Boxes of Taylor’s stenographic notes are in the records of the National Shorthand Reporters’ Association stored in the archives of the New York Public Library.

APPENDIX

| Item | Pages |
|---|-------|
| 1. Alexander v. United States, 201 U. S. 117 (1906)..... | 5-10 |
| 2. Fred Irland, “A Half Century of Efficiency” (1908)..... | 11-16 |
| 3. Advertisement, National Shorthand Reporter (1913)..... | 17 |



1. Robert S. Taylor is cited by name in the following decision of the United States Supreme Court in 1906. His name has been italicized by the MLHP.

LEWIS M. ALEXANDER, Appt.,
v.
UNITED STATES. (No. 381.)

GEORGE A. WHITING, Appt.,
v.
UNITED STATES. (No. 382.)

WILLIAM Z. STUART, Appt.,
v.
UNITED STATES. (No. 383.)

GENERAL PAPER COMPANY, Appt.,
v.
UNITED STATES. (No. 384.)

E. T. HARMON AND GENERAL PAPER COMPANY, Appts.,
v.
UNITED STATES. (No. 385.)

201 U. S. 117 (1906)

Appeal finality of decree below. Orders of a Federal circuit court directing witnesses to answer the questions put to them, and produce written evidence in their possession, on their examination before a special examiner appointed in a suit brought by the United States to enjoin an alleged violation of the antitrust act of July 2, 1890 (26 Stat. at L. 200, chap. 647, U. S. Comp. Stat . 1901, p. 3200), lack the finality requisite to sustain an appeal to the Supreme Court .

Argued January 5, 8, 1906.

Decided March 12, 1906.

APPEALS from the Circuit Court of the United States for the Eastern District of Wisconsin to review certain orders of that court, directing witnesses to answer questions put to them, and produce written evidence in their possession, on their examination before a special examiner. Dismissed for lack of any final judgment. The facts are stated in the opinion.

Messrs. James G. Flanders, Charles F. Fawsett, and William Brace for appellants.

Messrs. Frank B. Kellogg, James M. Beck, and Attorney General Moody for appellee.

Mr. Justice McKenna delivered the opinion of the court:

At the very beginning we encounter a question of jurisdiction. Are the orders of which the appellants complain appealable? The orders direct the appellants respectively to appear before *Robert S. Taylor*, special examiner in the case, at the time and place to be designated, and direct each of them to "answer each and every question put to them respectively by the counsel for the complainant, the United States of America," and to produce before such commissioner certain books, papers, records, documents, reports, and contracts, "for the purpose of their respective examination in said cause, and for use in evidence of the complaint of the United States of America in said examination." And it is ordered that the complainant's counsel shall have the right to inspect the said books, etc., and to introduce them or any of them in evidence; but, except as necessary for such purposes, the books, etc., to remain in the custody of the appellants.

A brief statement of the proceedings is all that is necessary. The United States, by its proper officers brought suit in the circuit court of the United States for the district of Minnesota against the General Paper Company and twenty-three

other corporations, defendants, under and pursuant to the provisions of the act of Congress of July 2, 1890, entitled "An Act to Protect Trade and Commerce against unlawful Restraints and Monopolies." [26 Stat, at L. 209, chap. 647, U. S. Comp. Stat. 1901, p. 3200.] It is alleged in the bill that the defendants, other than the General Paper Company and the Manufacturers' Paper Company, were engaged in the manufacture of manilla and fibre papers in active competition with one another, and that they entered into an agreement, combination, and conspiracy to control, regulate, and monopolize, not only the manufacture of news print, manilla, fibre, and other papers, but also the distribution and shipment thereof among and throughout the middle, southern, and western states. The General Paper Company was the means employed to execute the combination and conspiracy. That company is a corporation organized, the bill alleges, by the other defendants, under the laws of the state of Wisconsin, with a capital stock of \$100,000, divided into one thousand shares, which were distributed among and owned and held by the other defendants in proportions based upon the average daily output of the mills of each defendant. It is authorized to become at its principal place of business the sales agent of the products of the defendants' mills in the state of Wisconsin and elsewhere. Absolute power is conferred upon it to control and restrict the output of the mills, fix the price of their products, and determine to whom and the terms and conditions upon which such products shall be sold, into what states and places they shall be shipped, and what publishers and customers each mill shall supply.

The Manufacturers' Paper Company, it is alleged, is a New York corporation, with its principal place of business in Chicago, and, from about the year 1897 to 1902, acted as the sales agent of various manufacturers of paper for the sale of news print and other papers; that in 1902 it became a party to the combination and conspiracy alleged in the bill, and agreed with the General Paper Company not to compete with it in certain territories.

It is admitted that, prior to the formation of the General Paper Company, the other defendants, except the Manufacturers' Paper Company, were in active competition. The formation of the General Paper Company is also admitted, and that it became, by contract with the defendants who manufacture paper, their selling agent. The defendants deny, however, a purpose to violate the act of July 2, 1890. The violation of that law is the issue in the case, and the bill prays an

injunction against the defendants and their officers from doing the acts or executing the purpose charged against them.

In trial of the issue thus made the circuit court appointed *Robert S. Taylor* special examiner, with authority to hear and take testimony within and without the district of Minnesota, and made an order fixing the time to take the testimony for the United States the 16th of May, 1905, at the city of Milwaukee, state of Wisconsin. The order was duly served on the counsel of the respective parties. Thereupon the United States petitioned the circuit court for an order directing the clerk of the circuit court to issue a *subpoena duces tecum*. The subpoena was duly issued and served on the appellants as individuals and as officers of certain of the defendant companies. They appeared before the examiner in obedience to the subpoena, but, under the advice of counsel, they refused to permit the use of books or certain parts of them, and refused to answer certain questions put to them, the ground of this action being the immateriality and irrelevancy of the evidence sought to be adduced. The United States then presented a petition to the United States circuit court for the district of Wisconsin, which recited the issues in the case, and the statement of the questions asked, and the parts of the books and documents sought to be used. To this petition the appellants filed separate answers.

The answers may be regarded for our present purpose as identical. They allege the immateriality of the evidence and that its materiality should be established as a condition precedent to its production; that they are officers of the companies, and as such officers, the custodians of the books, papers, and documents, and that the same are of interest and value to the company in its business, and the company forbids their production; that the United States seeks evidence to convict the company and the individual appellants of violations of the act of July 2, 1890, to annul the contracts and agreements of the company, and subject it and the other appellants to the penalties prescribed in that act, and to compel the company and the other appellants to furnish evidence against themselves, contrary to the provisions of the 5th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which provides that no person shall be a witness against himself; also contrary to the 4th Amendment of the Constitution of the United States, which provides that the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures shall not be violated. It is also said that the alleged acts of the paper company complained of

in the original petition of the United States, and which the United States is endeavoring to establish, would, if committed by the company, be violations of the laws of Wisconsin, and would subject the company to forfeiture of its charter and other penalties under said laws, and to compel it, through its officers, to produce the books and documents sought would be to compel it to furnish evidence tending to establish that it has violated the law of the state, and such purpose is contrary to the provisions of the 4th and 5th Amendments of the Constitution of the United States.

As we have said, the court entered orders requiring the appellants to answer the questions put to them and to produce the books, papers, and documents requested. Appeals were allowed to this court. To justify the appeals, appellants contend that the orders of the circuit court constitute practically independent proceedings and amount to final judgments. To sustain the contention, *Interstate Commerce Commission v. Brimson*, 154 U. S. 447, 38 L. ed. 1047, 4 Inters. Com. Rep. 545, 14 Sup. Ct. Rep. 1125, and *Interstate Commerce Commission v. Baird*, 194 U. S. 25, 48 L. ed. 860, 24 Sup. Ct. Rep. 563, are cited.

Those cases rested on statutory provisions which do not apply to the proceedings at bar, and, while there may be resemblances to the latter, there are also differences. In a certain sense finality can be asserted of the orders under review; so, in a certain sense, finality can be asserted of any order of a court. And such an order may coerce a witness, leaving him no alternative but to obey or be punished. It may have the effect and the same characteristic of finality as the orders under review, but from such a ruling it will not be contended there is an appeal. Let the court go farther, and punish the witness for contempt of its order,—then arrives a right of review; and this is adequate for his protection without unduly impeding the progress of the case. Why should greater rights be given a witness to justify his contumacy when summoned before an examiner than when summoned before a court? Testimony, at times, must be taken out of court. In instances like those in the case at bar the officer who takes the testimony, having no power to issue process, is given the aid of the clerk of a court of the United States; having no power to enforce obedience to the process or to command testimony, he is given the aid of the judge of the court whose clerk issued the process, and if there be disobedience of the process, or refusal to testify or to produce documents, such judge may "proceed to enforce obedience . . . or punish the disobedience in like manner as

any court of the United States may proceed in case of disobedience to like process issued by such court." Rev. Stat. §§ 868, 869, U. S. Comp. Stat. 1901, pp. 664, 665. This power to punish being exercised, the matter becomes personal to the witness and a judgment as to him. Prior to that the proceedings are interlocutory in the original suit. This is clearly pointed out by Circuit Judge Van Devanter, disallowing an appeal from an order like those under review, in the case of *Nelson v. United States* [201 U. S. 92, 50 L. ed. __, 26 Sup. Ct. Rep. 358], in error to the circuit court of the United States for the district of Minnesota. The learned judge said:

"I am of opinion that the mere direction of the court to the witnesses to answer the questions put to them and to produce the written evidence in their possession is not a final decision; that it more appropriately is an interlocutory ruling or order in the principal suit, and that if the witnesses refuse to comply with it and the court then exercises its authority either to punish them or to coerce them into compliance, that will give rise to another case or cases to which the witnesses will be parties on the one hand, and the government, as a sovereign vindicating the dignity and authority of one of its courts, will be a party on the other hand. I have no doubt that a judgment adverse to the witnesses in that proceeding or case will be a final decision, and will be subject to review by writ of error, but not by appeal. My opinion is also that the parties to the principal suit cannot appeal or obtain a writ of error from that decision."

See also *Logan v. Pennsylvania R. Co.* 132 Pa. 403, 410, 19 Atl. 137.

This court having no jurisdiction, *the appeals must be dismissed*, and it is so ordered.

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2. Fred Irland, who is quoted in the obituary of Robert S. Taylor in the *Duluth Herald* on March 11, 1924, delivered the following address to the thirty-third annual convention of the New York State Stenographers Association in December 1908. He refers to Taylor by name several times in the first paragraph. His entire address is worth reading as he traces important milestones in the history of verbatim reporting, particularly the Lincoln-Douglas debates.

Proceedings
33rd Annual Convention
New York State Stenographers Association
December 28-29, 1908

...

A HALF CENTURY OF EFFICIENCY.

BY

FRED IRLAND,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

FOR nearly a year and a half *Mr. Robert S. Taylor*, a shorthand reporter of St. Paul, Minn., has been taking testimony, much of the time in New York city, in the case of the *United States vs. The Standard Oil Company of New Jersey*, a litigation involving property amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars. More than fourteen thousand typewritten pages of testimony constitute the record up to this time. *Mr. Taylor* has taken the shorthand notes of all of it. Ten lawyers are employed in the case. Some of them are very rapid speakers. A vast army of witnesses, business men, engineers, experts in many sorts of knowledge, have testified. There have been thousands of times when the colloquies between counsel and witnesses have proceeded at the rate of more than two hundred words a minute. Yet so clearly and swiftly have *Mr. Taylor's* mind and hand done their work that not a sentence or word of all that talk is missing, and almost any intelligent phonographer can take up the notes at any page and read them. As a matter of fact, much of the record has been dictated from *Mr. Taylor's* notes by other persons. Every page of the copy has been carefully proof-read by him, and so far as he or anyone else knows there is not in the whole record a single error,

verbal or typographical. Mr. John D. Rockefeller and Mr. John D. Archbold were on the stand continuously for nearly three weeks, and after carefully going over the report of their testimony, they returned it without the correction of one word. I have mentioned this work because it is an ideal specimen of the highest type of American reporting. And American reporting is the best in the world. It has been so for more than fifty years.

The only useful purpose of shorthand is to enable a writer to record perfectly the words of a speaker as rapidly as they are uttered. This has been the goal toward which shorthand inventors have striven for many hundreds of years. A very great many systems of shorthand have been brought forth, any one of which enables nearly any person to write about three times as rapidly as he can write in longhand. For the purpose of selling books a number of these systems are continually being advertised, and because they are utterly incapable of being written at a rapid enough speed for reporting purposes, unscrupulous authors have sought to belittle and besmirch the skill of real reporters. The shorthand magazines of this country are in some degree filled with the vain imaginings of men who, posing as instructors, know nothing of the business they profess to teach.

The Gregg Writer, in a recent issue, contained the following:

"The most difficult work of a court reporter is found in reporting the charge of the judge in important cases. In strictly technical cases but few reporters succeed in making absolutely correct reports; but when it comes to reporting the charges in such cases, nine out of ten stenographers will fail."

That libel was not published to be read in such a presence as this, in the hearing of men every one of whom has a thousand times demonstrated its ridiculous falsity. Whatever may be the shorthand standards with which Mr. Gregg is familiar, they have no relationship whatever to the great business of reporting which for two generations has been one of the most skillful and honorable of professions in this country. Let us briefly retrospect.

The invitation to write this paper reached me on the same day that I received a copy of the Illinois Historical Library semi-centennial edition of the verbatim report of the debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas, at

Ottawa, Freeport, Jonesboro, Charleston, Galesburg, Quincy, and Alton, Illinois, in the fall of 1858. Professor Sparks, editor of this publication, has included a chapter on the reporting of the debates, with biographical sketches of Mr. Hitt, who made the report for the *Chicago Tribune*, and of Messrs. Sheridan and Binmore, who reported the speeches for the *Chicago Times*. It was my privilege to have the acquaintance and friendship of Hon. Robert R. Hitt from 1890 until 1906, the year he died. He was a typical American gentleman, and like a gentleman did all things well. In Herndon's *Life of Lincoln*, Mr. Horace White is quoted as saying: "The publication of Senator Douglas' opening speech in that campaign, delivered on the evening of July 9, by the *Tribune* the next morning, was a feat hitherto unexampled in the west, and most mortifying to the Democratic newspaper, the *Times*, and to Sheridan and Binmore, who, after taking down the speech as carefully as Mr. Hitt had done, had gone to bed intending to write it out the next day, as was then customary."

Mr. Hitt's promptness in getting out his copy is explained by the fact that he wrote with such precision that an assistant, Mr. Laramanie, would take the notes as soon as a few pages had accumulated and begin their transcription. Some of the speeches were thus transcribed and printed without Mr. Hitt seeing the copy before publication. Mr. Lincoln afterward cut out and pasted in a blankbook certain parts of the *Tribune* report, unchanged and unrevised, and indorsed them as stating exactly his views on the negro question. It was charged, in the opening of that campaign, that Lincoln was an uncouth backwoodsman, whose crude utterances had to be rewritten before they were published. As a matter of fact, here were associated all the elements of a perfect report: a speaker whose style was simple and direct; a reporter who was a master of his art, and a transcriber who could read the shorthand notes correctly. Not underestimating the later achievements of Mr. Hitt as secretary of legation at Paris, as assistant secretary of state under Mr. Blaine, or as a member of the house of representatives for nearly a quarter of a century, no work he ever did was more important than his perfect reporting of Abraham Lincoln. Mr. John Hay, in his life of Lincoln, says that one question by Lincoln, and its answer by Douglas, at the Freeport meeting, less than four hundred words in all, made the wedge that rent asunder the democracy of the north and south and made possible Lincoln's election to the presidency two years later. The very craftiness of Douglas, his mastery of the art of saying things with a double meaning, was the cause of his undoing. It was here that verbatim reporting showed its value. No longhand

report, and no incomplete or doubtful short hand report, could possibly have pinned him down. He could have denied and explained, and so gone on interminably. Exact reporting put an end to that.

At the time Mr. Hitt was introducing verbatim efficiency to the west, more than fifteen years had passed since Philander Deming in an eastern court room had shown the value of the exact words. For ten years the boy phonographer, Murphy, in the United States senate, had been first a checknote taker who bridged the yawning chasms in the notes of the less facile stenographers of the older school; and then, as these men dropped out, he had become the chief notetaker, whose beautiful phonography was transcribed wholly by others; and he was destined to remain for more than forty years the undisputed king of all reporters.

It was in the year of the Lincoln-Douglas debate that Andrew J. Graham published his great handbook, which nearly every successful reporter in this country has studied more or less, and which has made verbatim facility possible to many where before it had been limited to few. Ten years later Benjamin F. Butler declared, without contradiction, in the United States senate chamber, during President Johnson's impeachment trial, that "phonography has progressed to a point which makes us rely upon it in all the business of life. There is not a gentleman in this senate who does not rely upon it every day." And in the same impeachment trial Mr. Sheridan, one of the half-dozen shorthand reporters called for the prosecution, testified that some American speakers then talked as rapidly as 230 words a minute.

I have assembled here a few indisputable historical facts for the purpose of emphasizing the statement that for half a century American reporters have been doing practically perfect work. There is nothing more to do except maintain the standard set long ago. Even in the matter of quick transcription there is nothing new under the sun. Mr. Hitt, when in a hurry, would dictate to several longhand copyists in rotation and so get out copy, as he has often told me, nearly as fast as he could read, which is all anyone can do now.

The phonograph and the typewriter have made dictation and manifolding more satisfactory, but there is no improvement possible over fifty years ago in the perfect fidelity and lucidity of the printed report. The difference is that the thing

which was then done occasionally and rarely is now done daily and in many places.

Shorthand schools of low degree teach folly. Probably ours is the only art attempted to be taught by persons who know nothing of its efficient use. Where is the professor of surgery who never conducted a dissection? Where is the teacher of law who never tried a lawsuit? Yet there are in the United States hundreds of shorthand teachers who could not for one-half minute keep pace with the simplest oral statement, unless the speaker paused long after every fourth word.

As a contrast to this gospel of failure it is refreshing to turn to the work done by such men as Mr. Frank R. Hanna, of New York, and by the department of professional shorthand of the Boston School of Commerce and Finance. This department, under the care of Mr. Charles Currier Beale and Dr. Edward H. Eldridge, is doing a great work in training male stenographers who wish to qualify for the highest positions open to the profession. And it is a privilege to tell the plain truth before such an association as this, which, during its long life, has done more than any other one influence to maintain and keep bright the good reputation of American shorthand reporters.*

*A recent letter upon shorthand writing tests, written by Mr. Irland, is considered worthy of quotation in connection with the foregoing.—*Publication Committee.*

"The day will come of necessity when no one can lawfully pretend to be a shorthand reporter until he has proven his adequate skill to the satisfaction of an examining committee composed of well-known and time-tried experts. Only through this means have law, medicine, engineering, pharmacy, all the learned trades which deal in life and happiness, emerged from the" dusk of chalanism.

"Compare Massachusetts and Texas as the homes of shorthand reporting. In the former state the skill and learning of a reporter are assured by an examination (a writing test principally) enforced by law. In Texas the qualifications of a reporter are legally prescribed to be less than those of a fair dictation clerk, and also by recent law a court reporter in Texas is forbidden to earn a decent living for himself and family. If shorthand reporters in Texas had been compelled to pass a high-grade examination, the reporting laws there would not now make the state a starvation refuge for Micawbers. In some parts of the United States a shorthand reporter is a well-paid, respected citizen. In others he is held in no esteem. Massachusetts and New York, by their strict systems of testing, are the horror of the shorthand quack.

"John Robert Gregg not long ago wrote a letter in which he pointed a would-be reporter to the goal of 120 words a minute. Every enlightened reporter knows he may at any moment be called upon for many times the skill involved in that child's task. In states which have no test any poor, untrained clerk may be appointed a court reporter, to deal, not life and liberty and justice, but error, disaster and disgrace to litigants, until he is compelled to relinquish the unhappy struggle.

"The day of the shorthand test has come to stay, and in it lies the hope of underpaid and unrecognized merit. Lawyers are always testing reporters. Sometimes it takes them years to oust an unworthy man from a court where he never could have landed if there had been an examination at

first. An honest test, no matter where, is a great educator of the public concerning the highest realms of shorthand attainment. The greatest danger to the reporting business is the unskillful reporter. The clerk who could not copy a deed correctly in a county record would be thrust out. If he knowingly mutilated the words he would be sent to prison. The same should be true of the reporter. Yet there are shorthand authors in this country who, to advertise their books, pretend that their pupils are court reporters, when they cannot correctly report even a moderately rapid statement for five minutes. The public test shows these people up. The method of the test may surely be improved. The principle is correct."

3. This advertisement appeared in the *National Shorthand Reporter* in January 1913. Curiously Taylor is listed as residing in St. Paul.

Increase Your Speed By Using

Isaac Pitman & Sons' "Fono" Series Flat Opening Note Books

Used by the following well-known Court Reporters:

| | |
|--|---|
| Fred Irland..... Washington, D. C. Theo. F. Shuey..... Washington, D. C. Percy E. Budlong..... Washington, D. C. Nathan Behrin..... New York, N. Y. W. B. Bottome..... New York, N. Y. Peter P. McLaughlin..... New York, N. Y. | Barthol Moynahan New York, N. Y. Harry W. Wood..... New York, N. Y. Horace A. Edgecomb..... Boston, Mass. Thomas Bengough..... Toronto, Canada Robert S. Taylor..... St. Paul, Minn. Court Reporting Co..... Spokane, Wash. Court of Claims..... Washington, D. C. |
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What some well-known Reporters say:

"After using loose sheets for nearly twenty years, I have become completely converted to your flat-opening 'Fono' Note-books, which I find superior to anything else on the market. The advantages of the binding are obvious; and the paper is of such excellent finish that a fine steel pen writes as smoothly on it as a well-worn fountain pen on ordinary glazed paper. You are to be congratulated on producing an article so perfectly adapted to the needs of shorthand reporters."—PRACY E. BUDLONG, *Shorthand Reporter, Washington, D. C.*

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