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STATEMENT  
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RICHARD PHŒNIX,

U. S. MARSHAL AT SHANGHAI, CHINA.

TO

G. WILEY WELLS,

*CONSUL GENERAL.*



1877

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RICHARD PHOENIX,

U. S. MARSHAL AT SHANGHAI, CHINA.

TO

G. WILEY WELLS,

*CONSUL GENERAL.*

UNITED STATES CONSULATE GENERAL.

SHANGHAI, *October 15th, 1877.*

R. PHOENIX, Esq.,

*United States Marshal.*

SIR :—I have the honor to request that you will examine the enclosures marked Nos. 1 and 2; No. 1 being a statement written out and forwarded by Mr. O. B. Bradford to the Department of State, signed by you, setting forth certain facts said to be made by you, and upon which Mr. Bradford partly relies for his vindication from certain charges preferred against him by Mr. J. C. Myers, late Consul General.

No. 2 is a protest dated April 25th, 1877, signed by yourself, Mr. Hendrick, Consular Clerk, and Mr. Coffey, Office Clerk, addressed to J. C. Myers, and forwarded to the Department of State, in which you repudiate said statement, and declare "that any report that he, Mr.

Bradford, may make to the Department as to these conversations, we disown as irregular, unfair, and unjust, &c."

I have the honor to request that you will make a full report as to whether the statement forwarded Mr. O. B. Bradford is true or false. If false, state wherein; and state all facts and circumstances connected therewith. Also state all facts within your knowledge relating to the charges preferred by Mr. Myers against Mr. Bradford, herewith enclosed.

Yours, Respectfully,

G. WILEY WELLS,

*Consul General.*

UNITED STATES CONSULATE GENERAL.

SHANGHAI, *October 19, 1877.*

G. WILEY WELLS, Esq.,

*United States Consul General.*

Sir:—I have had the honor of receiving your communication of the 15th instant, wherein you request that I will examine the inclosures marked Nos. 1 and 2; No. 1 being a statement written and forwarded to the State Department, and upon which Mr. Bradford partly relies for his vindication from certain charges preferred against him by John C. Myers, late Consul General; and No. 2 a protest against, and repudiation of, the receipt by the Department of such statement; also your request that I will make a full report of all the facts within my knowledge, relating to the charges preferred by Mr. Myers against Mr. Bradford. I feel grateful for the opportunity thus afforded me, to bring to your notice some facts, which may help you in reforming the abuses and dishonesty practised in this Consulate General.

On the 17th of April last, I was called by Mr. Bradford into his office; he was engaged in writing a statement in answer to charges preferred against him, by Mr. Myers the Consul General, then under suspension. I

was asked several questions in relation to Mr. Myers and himself, in connection with the then existing difficulties. I was well aware, and felt sure, that whatever I might say in the matter, if not favorable to Mr. Bradford, would not be accepted by him. He was in the full swing of his power, and flushed with his success in being the principal cause of Mr. Myers' suspension, and with the entire confidence of the Minister. I considered it unwise to cross him in any of his plans; so I considered the only alternative left me, was to let him make his answer as it suited him to make it, and at the first opportunity protest against the use of my name in connection with any statements in his favor purporting to have come from me. On the 25th of April, a few days after his conversation with me, and after consulting with Mr. Hendrick and Mr. Coffey, I sent a communication to Mr. Myers, signed by the above gentlemen and myself, disavowing Mr. Bradford's action in using our names in his behalf, and complaining of the pressure brought upon us, to force us to endorse and screen him from the charges made, and which we knew were true. As I feel fully competent to make my own statements in this matter, and with my knowledge of the source of the difficulty, I repudiate my so-called statement of the 17th of April, and respectfully submit the following in its place.

I am made to say that I have been Acting Marshal at the Consulate General for several years; I have been Marshal in every sense the word implies, except receiving the fees due by law to the incumbent of that office. As to the letter of Feng Tautai, said to have been written in 1876, I never to my knowledge saw such a letter, or any other letter purporting to have been written by a Chinese official, advocating the Woosung Railway scheme. I know of no personal quarrel between the Chinese officials and Mr. Bradford, but I am well aware that the official relations between them and this office

are not in harmony. I know, and every intelligent person in this community knows that Mr. Bradford is pecuniarily interested in the Woosung Railway, and boasts of his connection with it; I can show that he has land and houses at the Shanghai end of the road, and land at the Woosung end of the line, his speculations in land on the proposed Seward Road, is a fact that cannot be denied. The Chinese officials were led to believe that the Woosung Road was to be an ordinary "Carriage Road," such as others in, and running out of the settlements. Mr. Bradford in his official capacity, kept them under that impression as long as he possibly could; they used their good offices to advance the scheme, and made it easy to purchase the land along the proposed "Road," until they became aware of its real character, then they protested, and have always protested against its being continued without the Imperial Sanction. That the Seward Road was laid out by the Municipal Authorities is false. I know that it never was in the hands of the Municipal Authorities. It was well known as the pet scheme of the U. S. Consulate General, and the Senior Treaty Consul of Shanghai, W. H. Medhurst of H. B. Ms. Consulate, so informed Consul General Myers at a meeting of Treaty Consuls. This Seward Road was fostered and advanced step by step, by pressure brought to bear on the Chinese officials, by the U. S. Vice Consul General O. B. Bradford, he owning land along the proposed road at that time; the only obstacle in his way being the refusal of the Chinese officials to be cajoled or bullied into forcing the natives to remove their family graves, or sell their lands, and the well known animosity of Feng Tautai to this Consular officer; I not only *think* this Road is a private speculation in which Mr. Bradford is largely interested, but I *know* it is. The Municipal Authorities may be ready to light and grade it, when it has become an established thoroughfare.

I am made to say in Mr. Bradford's statement "that I have been in his office daily, for many years; and have heard or know of no discourtesy whatever, to gentlemen doing business there." I repudiate most emphatically the above sentence. I have been in his office many times daily, for many years, and few days have passed that some person was not insulted, who came to do business with him. As a specimen of his manner, one illustration will be sufficient here: A respectable woman, formerly stewardess of an American ship, being out of employment and anxious to return to the United States, came to the Consulate General for assistance or advice. She said, "Mr. Bradford, I have come to see you to get your advice." Mr. Bradford interrupted her, and said, "Well, the best advice I can give you, is that you go to the jetty (pointing out of his office-window to the river), and drown yourself." The woman began to cry, and he said, "Now I don't want you crying around here, get out of this, and don't come bothering me, for I won't have it;" thereupon the woman left his office. I afterwards learned that she was assisted to get to her home by the British Consulate.

It is true that I know nearly every one of this foreign community (about 2,000 persons), and that a large number *believe* Mr. Bradford to be a gentleman. That the community *know* him to be one, is an open question. And as to his having the full respect and confidence of the *whole* community, is as absurd as it is false. That no one can make use of him or his office improperly, are *his words*, and *not mine*. That Mr. Bradford is a dishonest public officer, I assert, and have asserted it in the face of threats of personal harm. I will go farther and say in plain language, he is a *liar* and a *thief*. I use these words, as there are no others which would properly express the exact meaning I wish to convey. I did tell

Mr. Myers not to make charges against Mr. Bradford, and that it would not be the right thing to do; I had the best reasons to know that Mr. Myers would fail, unless he first got rid of Bradford by suspension; how close I came to the truth, subsequent events will show. It is true that the books of account have lain on the desk in Mr. Bradford's office, but he has jealously guarded them so that no person had an opportunity of inspecting them. The self same books are in your possession now, and I respectfully call your attention to the manner in which they have been kept, to show that he *lied* in saying any one could examine his books, as they would be found correct. If these books do not brand him a *thief*, I never was more mistaken. I have been Marshal at this Consulate General since 1871, and have earned by hard work and the faithful performance of my duties, often attended with much danger, quite a small fortune, but I have not received one cent of the fees I earned, for five years, and I have learned that they were paid to Mr. Bradford to make his salary equal to his worth. I have reason to believe that the Marshal's fees amount to \$2,000 yearly. Mr. Bradford has taken from the late Consul General \$100 per month, and placed it to his own credit, in spite of the protest of Mr. Myers, with his salary as Consular Clerk \$1,200, appropriation of \$100 per month from the Consul General's salary, the Marshal's fees \$2,000, show a yearly income of \$4,400, then with his well known *land and railway speculations*, his *misappropriation of Government moneys*, his *fraudulent vouchers*, his *plundering of estates*, and many other ways known and unknown, of wrongfully enriching himself, you will not be surprised to know that he is a wealthy man. As you are in charge of the Consulate General, and can investigate as to the truth or falsity of these charges, I appeal to you for an impartial judgment. When Mr. Myers spoke to me of having me regularly commissioned as Marshal, I told him that I

hoped it would be done, and that I supposed heretofore, that the law had been complied with.

On the 9th of January, last, I was directed by Mr. Myers to write two letters for him to sign, suspending Mr. Bradford from his several officers and duties in the Consulate General, and ordering him to vacate the rooms he occupied in the Consular Buildings. The letters were written, signed by Mr. Myers, and duly delivered to Mr. Bradford.

I suggested to Mr. Myers that the proper course would be to give him a copy of the charges preferred, so that he might have an opportunity of answering, so far as he could, the charges against him. But under the existing state of affairs it would be unwise to adopt this course, as, knowing the charges, it would be a very easy matter for Mr. Bradford, with all the documents and proofs in his control and in his keeping, to destroy any evidence Mr. Myers might have secured. With every part of the office under the exclusive control of Mr. Bradford, every servant a spy, together with his well known influence with the Minister, it may readily be seen how easy it would be for him to make the charges against him appear as frivolous. How well he has done this self same thing events can testify.

Mr. Myers acted discreetly, I honestly believe, in not giving him a copy of the charges made: but he informed Mr. Bradford that the charges would be made at the proper place, and he would be notified of them at the proper time. When I asked Mr. Bradford for the keys of the safe, in obedience to orders from the Consul General, he refused to obey the order, and declined to deliver to me the keys, under pretence of being personally responsible for the contents of the safe; knowing very well that the Consul General was the responsible party, being under heavy bonds to the Government for all moneys and property in the Consulate General, I

anticipated the refusal of Mr. Bradford to obey Mr. Myers' order, and asked for authority to *take possession*. But Mr. Myers did not think he would refuse to obey, and charged me not to go farther than to demand the keys. Many times, in my hearing, has Mr. Bradford spoken in disrespectful language of Mr. Myers; "the old fool" was a common expression of his. I do not go into details in this as others will confirm the same thing. The other clerks in this office have frequently and bitterly complained of the treatment they received at the hands of Mr. Bradford. As for the *general* complaint of his discourtesy you may judge how far I am right by the number of complaints that have reached you in the short time you have been here. Those who have cause of complaint against him in his official capacity as being overbearing and insulting, I assert are in a great majority, and time, I am sure, will bring them to your notice. It is quite true, as he has frequently insinuated, that Mr. Myers was not mentally well. The treatment he received from the first day of his arrival in Shanghai, and while in charge of this Consulate General, was, to say the least, disgraceful and most shameful. But that his reason was impaired in the slightest degree, as Mr. Bradford has insinuated, and labored diligently to make public, is an unqualified lie, and as contemptable as its author. Mr. Myers often conversed with me in relation to Mr. Bradford occupying rooms in the Consulate Buildings, the same amount of room which the Government is charged \$800 per annum for. And he said he thought it a shame that the man had been allowed to quarter himself and servant upon Government space, so much needed for office purposes, while the archives of the Consul General were scattered in confusion and uncared for in the *loft* of the building. He has billitted himself without authority on the premises of the Government, and has done so for years, without paying one cent in return for the privilege,

or paying for the gas used by him in his rooms. These facts are evident to yourself by this time, as the positive proofs are in your hands. Mr. Myers has charged that he has spoken disrespectfully of American Missionaries residing in China. That is true enough. I hold the proof in my hands of his having caused a slanderous article to be published in a newspaper with a very large circulation in China, and I have heard him time and time again speak disrespectfully of them: he seemed to delight in detecting their mistakes or errors in postal matters, and showing their ignorance of postal regulations in a wrong light to whoever would listen to him. His general reputation that he has performed the duties of his office with promptness and ability is the outside gloss of his own manufacture. How far that is true, I most respectfully refer you to the condition of the office since you have taken charge; the condition of the records and archives as well as the want of furniture or supplies found in any of the offices. I have used a desk ever since I came here—my own private property—and have had to supply myself with necessary stationery very many times. I refer you to Mr. Coffey as to the correctness of this assertion as he has done the same.

Mr. Bradford read to me the charges which Mr. Myers had preferred against him; but he was particularly careful not to read to me his answer to them. I am of opinion that Mr. Myers has not done justice to himself in passing so lightly over the evidence which he could bring against Mr. Bradford. In his defense, he has resorted to mental triangulations, which make him appear above even suspicion. He has, by a jesuitical system of arguments with his favorites, brought them to believe that he has not received from the Government the recognition his eminent abilities (?) entitle him to. There is not the slightest indication that he ever considered the friendship of Mr. Myers worth seeking. He did not call

upon Mr. Myers, on the steamer, when he arrived in Shanghai, but when it served his convenience, some time afterward. Unnecessary obstacles were thrown in the way of Mr. Myers taking charge of his office, and during the interval of his waiting—over three weeks—he was comparatively ignored. Mr. Myers does not need to be informed of this fact through me. As for the remarks of Mr. Bradford upon the social position of Mr. Myers, I will pass over, as being as contemptible as the author of them. His standard of social position is that which he has learned from the British snob, and whose airs and manners he apes. He is the fountain-head of all the venomous accusations against John C. Myers. He has been diligent in spreading scandal and rumors prejudicial to him, and he is versatile in methods of injuring the reputation of whoever unfortunately incurs his displeasure. It is to be regretted that gentlemen of standing in this community should have given him their endorsement until they had heard the other side of the story. It would be more to their credit, if the grounds upon which their praise was awarded were a little more obvious. They were called together by Mr. Bradford and the charges of Mr. Myers read to them; they were asked for their endorsement, and they gave it; but did Mr. Bradford *verify* anything of his plausible defence? I think you will find that he *did not*. Did he ask for an investigation? I do not think he did. But I am sure, on the other hand, that Mr. Myers did, and if this Consulate General is ever investigated, it will prove all that Mr. Myers has charged against it and *much more*. It is within my knowledge, and I can produce the proof, that Mr. Bradford caused the jailor at this Consulate General to sign vouchers for \$80 for his month's salary, and he handed the jailor but \$60. It is within my knowledge, and I can prove also, that he ordered the jailor to horse-whip a prisoner, if the jailor was so disposed—that same

jailor that you dismissed a short time since for his abuse of prisoners, sanctioned by O. B. Bradford. As to the justice of suspending Counsel General Myers from the duties of his office through the instrumentality of this man, and I am convinced that it was done through his instrumentality, is in the hands of the highest tribunal of our country—the House of Representatives—and I firmly believe, and sincerely trust, their verdict will be the ample vindication of John C. Myers. The attempts to extort a compromise from him were repeatedly made, and is well known, and he is entitled to public thanks in resisting that movement. Failing in that, every means, legitimate and illegitimate, were resorted to in aid of his removal and overthrow. I have no desire here to eulogize him. He was not perfect, and had his faults, but no man in this community can question his honesty. His refusal to be a tool in the hands of the “land ring” was ample grounds for their dislike. His refusal to bounce and bully the Chinese officials was unpardonable; and to crown all, he unfortunately differed with the Minister on some points as to the workings of his own office. Whatever may be the reputation George F. Seward has acquired, the manner in which the Shanghai Consulate General was conducted during his incumbency is not to his credit. The system which Mr. Bradford adopted of keeping his books, renders it next to impossible for any one to test their accuracy, and from them he could make whatever exhibit he pleased, or as it suited his purpose to make; in this way, nothing was easier than to practice deception as to the true resources of the office; and with his *system* and the opportunities he possessed, the temptations were great. If he withheld from me, with the sanction of his superior, the few dollars in fees which I have often risked my life to earn, did he resist the temptation of withholding from the Government money for himself? At the very best, I

hold that doubt must attach to any plausibly supported explanation, in the absence of verification. He may point with pride to his reputation, and to the gentlemen who have endorsed him. They believed that he deserved their support, in the absence of proof to the contrary, but if they were informed of the jugglery practiced to obtain that support, they would regret that their names ever appeared in connection with his. I have passed over a few of the long confirmed abuses practiced at this Consulate General, and you will agree with me that they are quite sufficient to warrant investigation, to the end that a substantial reform may be obtained, and justice given to all citizens, without regard to their bank account or influence. Whatever wrongs or dishonest practices may have existed in this office heretofore, or whatever fraud and deception may have accomplished in building up a reputation, I am sure that you will not countenance any scheme wherein you may enrich yourself by the impoverishing or suffering of your fellow-man. While all these statements are being made, charges and counter charges are going on regarding your predecessor and his subordinate. It is worthy of remark that no one has ever charged John C. Myers with dishonesty.

While I must regret the disgrace attached to the Consulate General in this unfortunate matter, I feel assured that the reform resulting will be to the credit of yourself and the Government you represent so ably and impartially.

I have the honor to be, sir,

Your most obedient servant,

RICHARD PHOENIX, *Marshal.*

Subscribed and sworn to, before me this 19th day of October, 1877.

G. WILEY WELLS, *U. S. Consul General.*

Since the foregoing statement was written, a thorough investigation of the various offices held by Vice-Consul General Oliver Bradford, has been made by G. Wiley Wells, Esq.

All the allegations contained in the foregoing statement, have been established in the Court of the Consulate General at Shanghai. Bradford was found guilty of robbing the mails; has plead guilty of committing perjury, embezzlement, extortion, and malfeasance in office, and he is now confined in the Consular jail at Shanghai, awaiting the action of the President upon appeal to him by Bradford.

• RICHARD PHOENIX.

SHANGHAI, CHINA, *November, 1877.*

SHANGHAI, CHINA, *November 5, 1877.*

Personally appeared before me, Richard Phoenix, who asserts that all the papers pertaining to, and belonging to the case of *United States vs. Benjamin Pease*, on file in, and part of the archives of the United States Consulate General at Shanghai, were abstracted and taken from their proper place, and removed from the building and premises of the Consulate General, by O. B. Bradford, with intent to tamper with or destroy certain evidence contained in the above named papers, and that he saw the said Oliver B. Bradford with the above named papers in his possession on or about the 1st of April, 1877, outside, and beyond the premises of the Consulate General, and that the above named papers are still missing from the archives of the said Consulate General illegally.

RICHARD PHOENIX.

Subscribed and sworn to, before me this 5th day of November, 1877.

G. WILEY WELLS,  
*United States Consul General.*

## UNITED STATES CONSULATE GENERAL.

SHANGHAI, *November 7th, 1877.*

RICHARD PHENIX, ESQ.,

*United States Marshal.*

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge your letter of the 24th ultimo, wherein you tender your resignation as United States Marshal of this Consulate General. In accepting the same, I feel it my duty to express to you, my thanks for the very efficient and satisfactory manner in which you have discharged your duties as Marshal, since I assumed charge of the Consulate General.

I also take pleasure in stating, that it has been my duty to enquire into the method and manner of your doings, as United States Marshal, since you became connected with the Consulate General, and after a most searching and rigorous investigation, I find, that your conduct as an officer, is beyond reproach, that your official duties have been performed with marked fidelity to the government; that your integrity as a man and an officer cannot be questioned; therefore, it is with regret, that I learn of your determination to sever your connection with this Consulate General, for your resignation will be, indeed, a loss to the government.

Wishing you success in your future undertakings,

I am, very respectfully,

G. WILEY WELLS,  
*U. S. Consul General.*

\*.\*Note.

I wish to revert to the statement of Marshal Phoenix on pages 5 and 6, in which he remarks: "I did tell Mr. Myers not to make charges against Mr. Bradford, and that it would not be the right thing to do; I had the best reasons to know that Mr. Myers would fail unless he first got rid of Bradford by suspension." And on page 7 the Marshal further remarks: "When I asked Mr. Bradford for the keys of the safe in obedience to orders from the Consul General, he refused to obey the order." \* \* \* "But Mr. Myers did not think he would refuse to obey, and charged me not to go farther than to demand the keys." In thus instructing the Marshal I simply desired to test Mr. Bradford's willingness to respect my authority as Consul General. I did not intend to go further at that time. I however, wished to secure possession of the safe, for the purpose of obtaining additional evidence, which I knew the safe contained, to strengthen my request made by me early in January 1876, to the Department of State, for the removal of Bradford, upon charges then preferred. I knew that any action I might take as to suspending Mr. Bradford, would incur the hostility of Mr. Seward, that he would reinstate Bradford himself, and as he was prepared to go to any extremity to save Bradford, he would arrest me, and place Bradford, as he subsequently did, in my place. My only safety from the enmity of the Minister was appeal for protection to the State Department; I had done so, as early as above stated, in view of Mr. Seward's complicity in Bradford's peculations. An honest Minister would have, I am sure, sustained me in my investigations. When I finally *did* suspend Mr. Bradford for robbing the mails, for the reason given to Mr. Seward at the time, "that I had no confidence in Mr. Bradford's honesty," he ordered me to re-instate Bradford, or he would suspend me on the spot." The Department sustained Mr. Seward, and directed Mr. Bradford to assume the duties of my office.

(Signed.)

JOHN C. MYERS,  
*de facto* Consul General,  
Shanghai, China.





