

be given or come to by the said Commissioners from evidence taken in his absence; also for the general reason that it is not fair to try any man in his absence.

Signed by us, this 14th day of February, 1888.

R. A. LAWSON.  
JAMES GORE.

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MR. LAWSON'S LETTERS.

GENTLEMEN,—

Dunedin, 1st March, 1888.

Referring to a matter which took place at the last sitting of the Commission, I desire very particularly to bring under your notice that certain important things remain unexplained, and that on this account it is absolutely necessary, in the interests of truth, that there should be a further meeting of the Commissioners so as to arrive at a correct conclusion on the matters under inquiry.

Mr. Blair, in his opening statement on oath, stated that it was in June, 1885, that he first became aware of what he termed defective foundations at Seacliff. On this matter being under discussion before the Commissioners, I called for the correspondence which had passed between Mr. Ussher and Mr. Blair, and between Mr. Blair and Mr. Ussher, in connection therewith at the time, and Mr. Blair passed in certain letters which he said were the correspondence referred to and asked for.

On my asking for the production of this same correspondence at the closing sitting, I was informed after some search that they were not in the possession of the Commissioners. As I consider it absolutely necessary that the correspondence referred to herein, and also linked in with the letters I laid before the Commissioners of date the 26th May and the 11th June, 1885, and addressed to myself from Mr. Ussher, should be in the possession of the Commissioners before they can possibly arrive at a correct judgment in the whole matter of this inquiry, I now respectfully request that a further meeting of the Commissioners be held, in order to obtain the said correspondence, and afford opportunity of obtaining a correct knowledge of their nature and contents.

I further respectfully inform you that, unless this correspondence is produced, and meeting of Commission held, I shall lay the matter before the Colonial Secretary and Minister for Public Works without delay.

To the Hon. the Commissioners.

I have, &c.,  
R. A. LAWSON.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 2nd March, 1888.

In reply to your letter dated the 1st instant, in which you request that a further meeting of the Commissioners may be held in order that certain important matters should be explained, the Commissioners are of opinion that any further evidence of the nature alluded to by you could not influence their report.

The production of letters between Messrs. Ussher and Blair (if such exist) at the date mentioned is quite unnecessary for the purpose of enabling the Commissioners to come to a correct conclusion. Mr. Blair stated on oath that no letters passed between Mr. Ussher and himself between the dates alluded to on the subject of the foundations of Seacliff Asylum.

The Commissioners therefore consider that a reopening of the inquiry would elicit no information that could alter their decision, and would entail unnecessary expense.

Your letter on the subject will, however, be forwarded together with their report.

I have, &c.,

H. P. HIGGINSON,  
Chairman of Commission.

R. A. Lawson, Esq., Architect, Dunedin.

GENTLEMEN,—

Dunedin, 3rd March, 1888.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your favour dated the 2nd March instant, in reply to mine of preceding day, and in which you inform me that "the production of letters between Messrs. Ussher and Blair (if such exist) at the dates mentioned"—26th May, 1885, and 11th June, 1885, or thereabouts—"is quite unnecessary for the purpose of enabling the Commissioners to come to a correct conclusion," &c.; that "the Commissioners therefore consider that a reopening of the inquiry would elicit no information that could alter their decision," &c.

I am, however, still distinctly of opinion that not only does the correspondence between Messrs. Ussher and Blair exist, Mr. Blair himself having passed in certain letters which he said at the time were the correspondence referred to and asked for by me—I am also further of opinion that the correspondence bears on the matters under inquiry very materially indeed.

Under these circumstances I reserve to myself the right of taking what further action may appear to me requisite in order to elicit the truth.

I thank you for your courtesy in forwarding my former letter together with your report, and have further to request you to extend the same courtesy towards this present letter.

I have, &c.,

To the Hon. the Commissioners.

R. A. LAWSON.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 5th March, 1888.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 3rd instant, which will be forwarded (together with your former letter on the same subject) with the Commissioners' report.

I have, &c.,

R. A. Lawson, Esq., Architect, Dunedin.

H. P. HIGGINSON, Chairman.