

has been no movement of any consequence since. That is a simple instance which I give you of the effect this isolating-drain would have had at Seacliff if it had been put in as I recommended. The site of the building would gradually have consolidated and hardened, the ground would not have slipped, and there never would have been any great quantity of water flowing to the site itself. It is for the want of this ground-drainage that the water takes a course downhill, sweeping all before it, working day and night, and, accelerated by storms every now and again, caused the slip, and so produced all the damage that has occurred. I put it to you, gentlemen, is it not much more reasonable, is it not more consonant with common-sense, to say that that is the cause than that a man should come here and tell us, as practical men, that the only thing he can find to account for it is a deflection of $\frac{1}{2}$ in. in 72 ft. Now, at these points—pillars 1 to 7—the building is literally level; there was no evidence of sinkage: and it is reasonable to assume that the difference of from $\frac{1}{2}$ in. to $\frac{3}{4}$ in. was due to rough workmanship by the plasterers. Yet this witness told us that the whole of the damage to the building was caused by subsidence, when there is no subsidence at all, when we know that the hill is moving—know it by the testimony of our eyes, as well as by measurement. I do not say that the small local slip which was referred to by Mr. Blair has caused all the damage, but I do say that it is an indication that a power is at work which is out of sight, and that unless some action such as I have suggested is taken to prevent it, by isolating the part which is doing the injury, the consequences will be serious indeed. I might here remind you that from the very commencement of this inquiry I have insisted that, in justice to Mr. Brindley, he should have been here at the beginning of it and throughout the whole inquiry. It was not fair to him to have gone on with it in his absence, because he was equally with myself and the Contractor named in the remit from the Governor appointing you gentlemen to make this inquiry. Mr. Brindley was a party whose name was expressly inserted in the remit.

Mr. Blair : No.

Mr. Lawson : He is not personally named, but he is named therein as the Inspector, and I am glad that even part of the inquiry is going on in his presence. I shall begin with his appointment. Mr. Blair has endeavoured to make it appear that Mr. Brindley was a creature of mine.

Mr. Blair : I deny that.

Mr. Lawson : That is exactly what you made of it.

Mr. Blair : I deny that also.

Mr. Lawson : We all have it down so.

Mr. Blair : Such an inference could never be drawn from any remark that I made.

Mr. Lawson : But that was exactly what you meant.

Mr. Blair : I neither meant nor said it.

Mr. Lawson : You made him out to be my servant, and not the servant of the Government.

Mr. Blair : Oh, yes!

Mr. Lawson : I deny that. I say that Mr. Brindley was the servant of the Government: he was the Government's Inspector of Works. As such I always looked on him; and as such he always behaved in an upright, honourable way. I never found him to be otherwise. He was in my own office, and I had found him to be an efficient assistant. I should be very glad indeed to have retained him were I in a position to do so so; but, knowing him, as I have said, to be thoroughly efficient, I recommended him for this appointment. I should not have recommended him unless I had thought him to be efficient, honourable, and upright; and he has proved himself to be so. As showing the feeling I had towards him when he left my employment I will read a letter, which indicates what I thought of him. It is dated the 17th October 1884. [Exhibit 21.]

Mr. Brindley : It is a private communication, and I would rather you did not read it, Mr. Lawson.

Mr. Lawson : I wish to read it.

Mr. Mountfort : On what occasion was it written?

Mr. Lawson : On his leaving the works, and the day before he left for New South Wales. It shows what I considered was my relationship towards Mr. Brindley; that is all. I wish it read as showing the position I always understood him to be in on the works.

Mr. Skinner : You wish it put in as part of your evidence?

Mr. Lawson : I do. "October 17, 1884.—To Mr. A. T. Brindley.—I have much pleasure in stating that I have known the bearer, Mr. Alfred T. Brindley, for the last ten years, and that he was for a considerable time in my office as chief assistant, and left my office to accept an appointment as Inspector of Works on behalf of the Government of New Zealand, which position he has creditably occupied for a period of five years.—R. A. LAWSON." You will see from that letter that I regarded him as the Government Inspector of Works; and in that position I have always treated him. The matter of the slip at the temporary building has already been referred to; and I need say nothing more about it. As to the change of the site of the building, I will read a letter which I wrote to Mr. Ussher on the 1st March 1880: "March 1, 1880.—*Re* lunatic asylum building, Seacliff.—E. R. Ussher, Esq., Resident Engineer, Public Works Office, Dunedin.—Sir,—After the survey of the proposed site of the new building at Seacliff, since the clearing of ground, and having obtained the additional sectional lines, having also in view the nature and configuration of the ground generally, I would advise that the site be moved southward by 5 chains or so, so that the centre line of the building will fall at sectional line 0, instead of at 10, on the original survey. This alteration will save a considerable amount of cutting, besides placing the building clear of the broken ground towards the northern portion of the site. From the general lie of the ground it has been found impracticable to alter the bearing-line of the buildings as referred to by Dr. Skae.—I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant, R. A. LAWSON." The object of that recommendation was to get rid, if possible, of the bad ground; and I decided to carry the building five or six chains towards the south. We could not go much further on account of the district road there. If I had