

thought a little more I should in all probability have decided to go still further south, and it would have been a very good thing for us all if that had been done. By that alteration the foundation sections were of course made useless, and accordingly they are not shown on the contract-drawings as they now are, because the shifting 5 chains south made it a different thing altogether. These drawings having consequently become useless, it became necessary that the whole of the foundation-work should be measured; and that was done. I have a letter which shows this. I may also mention that the foundations were also under consideration, and were altered somewhat on this account. As you will note, what is the central wall of the building now was then understood to be the main back wall. It was on that account that it was not necessary to make it of the exact thickness shown on the section and also on the contract-plan. The back wall of what is now the main building was not intended to be carried down at all points to the full depth, but to be stepped to the bank, as indicated by the dotted lines on the contract plans. But now that that wall has become the main back wall of the building it has been thickened all the way down, so that there is a far greater amount of concrete put into the work than was originally intended. The result, so far as the foundations are concerned, is that the contractor has already received by way of extras the sum of £1,764 3s. 9d. You will therefore see that a much larger amount of concrete has been supplied than there would have been if the building had remained on its original site, and if it had been carried out exactly as shown on the plan. In confirmation of this statement I will read you a letter which I wrote on the 8th December, 1881, and which refers to another matter, which I shall have to touch on later on: "Dunedin, 8th December, 1881.—Mr. A. T. Brindley, Inspector of Works, Seacliff Asylum.—Dear Sir,—I had your last report, of the 2nd instant, along with certificates to Contractor, and I am preparing details for seats, and haffets of gallery, although I do not suppose these will be required immediately. As to the depth, &c., of foundations, I previously informed you that must depend solely on the nature of the ground, and you, being on the spot, must be able better to decide than I can possibly be. In every case, if you have any doubt, rather err on the safe side on this matter; and go down till you feel thoroughly secure; and, again, on the other hand, there is no necessity of going to any extra depth where cuttings are already on good solid bearings. This is a matter which must be left to your own discretion, with above general directions. The concrete item throughout must be kept by itself, and extras on account of same must be charged to change of site and necessity for additional precautions because of Dr. Hector's report. I cannot get up this week, but will be in beginning of next, if I can possibly so arrange.—Yours truly, R. A. LAWSON." I do not think, if I had been writing instructions to-day, I could have been more explicit in order that I might secure firm and good foundations for this Seacliff building. That letter proves conclusively my position as to the foundations, and to the necessity of their being taken by measurement on account of the change in site. There therefore could be no object in Mr. Brindley or in Mr. Gore doing anything to "slum" the foundations, as has been spoken of. There can, I think, be no doubt on that point. I leave myself entirely in your hands, gentlemen, in respect to that matter. I suppose that I had better now take the items in Mr. Blair's statement as they come. First, then, as to the concrete. I think I had better read most of the letters that passed between Mr. Brindley and myself, because they will indicate generally the tone that existed between us, and will show clearly that there was no friction whatever between us during the whole course of the building at Seacliff. I repeat that there was no friction whatever between us. We began in good spirits and ended, as I have already shown, in good spirits. There was no friction other than what honest men will necessarily have. On the 2nd December, 1882, he wrote [letter read], and I looked upon that letter as indicating that he had his eyes open all round the building. With regard to the concrete, I will read you a letter he wrote on the 13th December, 1882.

*Mr. Blair* : Did you answer that letter?

*Mr. Lawson* : Yes; I always answered his letters.

*Mr. Blair* : Did you answer that one?

*Mr. Lawson* : Yes; I replied on the 8th December, and I have read that letter to you already.

*Mr. Blair* : There is no reference in your letter of the 8th December to the cheap men.

*Mr. Lawson* : I did not need to answer every item in Mr. Brindley's letter.

*Mr. Gore* : All I can say is that they were 14s.-a-day men, if that is cheap.

*The Chairman* : You are not going to read the whole of the letters, Mr. Lawson?

*Mr. Lawson* : No, sir; I will spare you that. I will only read these letters that have reference to the points touched on in Mr. Blair's statement.

*The Chairman* : Just read those portions of the letters that you wish to call attention to.

*Mr. Lawson* : I shall read nothing but what is relevant to Mr. Blair's statement. Perhaps my reply to that letter of Mr. Brindley's will be sufficient: "13th December, 1881.—*Re* Seacliff Lunatic Asylum contract.—Mr. A. T. Brindley, Inspector of Works.—Sir,—Referring to your letter of this date, asking for information as to stone packings in concrete walls, I have to state that in no case should such packing bear a proportion of more than, say, one-third of the whole walling. They should not be placed closer together than 12in. from edge to edge, nor should they be so large as to show outwardly, or too thin a crust; otherwise the walls would be weakened by their insertion. The word 'may' has been used in the specification simply to provide that too much of this packing should not be inserted, and you will be good enough to see that the specification in this matter is faithfully carried out. I hope to be up some morning this week.—Yours truly, R. A. LAWSON." My letters show that I was attentive to the building. Now, as to detailed drawings, Mr. Blair has made an assertion that I got Mr. Brindley to do the work of preparing detailed drawings, to the injury of the building—that, in fact, he was kept so much at that work that he was unable attend to his proper work. I totally and emphatically deny that statement. I never asked Mr. Brindley, except once, to prepare me a detailed drawing in connection with the Seacliff Lunatic Asylum, and I have his reply in writing refusing to do so.