

I do not get into a pucker or do anything in haste or anger. I make up my mind as to what is to be done, and then I insist on it being done, quietly and firmly. Mark my words, gentlemen: "I always get contractors to do as I wish best by treating them in a quiet, friendly, and firm manner. I would not recommend any extreme measures, which should only be resorted to for important and serious reasons." And that, gentlemen, is, I think, a very proper thing to do. Is there anything in that letter which justifies the base insinuations which Mr. Blair hurls at me, or in endeavouring to take away my honest name, and to impeach my conduct of my business as an architect? There is a very small point which I think it only right I should insist on being brought under the notice of this Commission. In finishing up this contract Mr. Ussher cut off some three items off my account for work done and passed under my certificates. I claim that this money should be paid now to me, with interest from date of withholding.

Mr. Blair: It was not Mr. Ussher. I did it myself.

Mr. Lawson: He was acting, I presume, on behalf of the Government, and Mr. Blair should have been prepared to see justice done to me. However, the fact remains that those three items were cut off unjustly. They were struck off my account when I sent it in, and they remain unpaid to this hour.

Mr. Blair: Why did not you protest?

Mr. Lawson: I did protest. I am a man of peace, and do not go to extremes if I can avoid it at all. However, I shall say no more on that point. Now, gentlemen, at the very outset of this inquiry I asked Mr. Blair a question to which I did not get an answer—at all events, not a proper answer. I asked him if he could put his finger on any one point throughout the whole of the foundations of Seacliff building where there has occurred $\frac{1}{2}$ in. of vertical settlement. He has not done it, and he cannot do it. There is none, in fact. I challenge any one to point it out here to-day. I have challenged and still challenge the department to point to any vertical settlement at the foundations to-day. Strange to say, we have been told by Mr. Hay, the expert, that the cause of all the damage to the building is a deflection of $\frac{1}{2}$ in. I defy that statement also to be challenged by him. Are we sitting here as practical business men to be told such an absurd thing, when we have before our eyes the cause of it in that slip? Dr. Hector predicted what has actually occurred, and Mr. Hay by measurement has proved it to have occurred by showing that the north wing has gone bodily in the direction indicated by Dr. Hector—it has gone $16\frac{1}{2}$ in. in an easterly direction downhill.

Mr. Blair: I submit that Mr. Hay showed nothing of the kind.

Mr. Lawson: It is stated in his own measurement. We did not require Mr. Hay in the matter. We have got his own measurements to prove it. They are indisputable, and cannot be denied by him. I dare say Mr. Blair is very sorry that the information has come out.

Mr. Blair: Nothing of the sort. I am very glad of it.

Mr. Lawson: He has taken good care that it did not, and it would not he could have avoided it.

Mr. Blair: I protest against such a statement.

Mr. Lawson: At all events he kept that paper back till the very last, and it was only when I insisted on it being produced and laid on the table that it was brought in and laid on the table. Gentlemen, is that fair treatment? As to my statements, I challenge any one of them to be denied. Now as to the calculations made by Mr. Hay. He comes into this Court of inquiry and produces a set of plans showing only one face, and on them he bases his calculations, showing what this wall and this foundation can do and what it cannot do. He may assume anything he likes, but his wonderfully-built-up calculations and assumptions are all based on that one-faced plan; they do not prove the measurements that we must rely on.

THURSDAY, 23RD FEBRUARY, 1888.

MR. LAWSON'S address continued.

Mr. Lawson: I just want to say a few words about the appointment of Mr. Brindley—as to how it came about. On one occasion—I do not remember now whether I was sent for by Mr. Blair or not—I had a conversation with him about this matter of the appointment of an Inspector, and at his request I wrote a private and confidential letter, dated the 15th July, 1879, on this subject. This letter will give you the key to the appointment of Mr. Brindley. It was written, as I have just said, at Mr. Blair's request and after conference with him. It was not dictated by him word for word, but he intimated what I should say; and the reason for it will be shown on the face of the letter itself. I therefore need say no more about that. "*Private and confidential.*—Dunedin, 15th July, 1879.—W. N. Blair, Esq., Engineer in Charge, Middle Island.—Dear Sir,—With reference to the appointment of a Clerk of Works at the present lunatic asylum buildings, Seacliff, I feel called upon to suggest that the Inspector of the temporary building now just completed (Mr. Alexander Cairns) should not be appointed, my reasons for this being that his knowledge of the several works is not sufficient, and that from my experience of him I would have no confidence in leaving him to deal with the Contractor in my absence. In the temporary building just completed extras have been incurred and authorised by him amounting to over 10 per cent. on the contract sum, although, from the beginning of the works and throughout, I have strictly charged him to authorise none. In a large contract such as is proposed such conduct would lead to inextricable confusion and annoyance. As there will be a large amount of clearing, earthworks, and fencing, and formation of ground generally required to be done by the patients on the grounds, Mr. Cairns would be in a far more suitable position directing such works, or any other that may be undertaken by the patients in connection with the buildings and grounds, than in that of Inspector of Works, for which he is practically unsuited. I have felt it my duty to mention this matter, with no wish to injure Mr. Cairns, who is otherwise a faithful workman, and hope this communication will be