

ment continues to take place in the foundations of the female wing, in which a rent exists from roof to basement. Plaster is constantly falling, and alarming noises are at times heard in the timbers of the roof." (Inspector's report, May, 1885.) Now, Mr. Blair goes on to say, "this is the only matter connected with the asylum that might have assumed a serious aspect. As there is a good deal of slipping ground in the neighbourhood fears were at first entertained that the whole slope of the hill was on the move. I am glad to say these fears are groundless; there is general movement of the land—"

*Mr. Blair:* That is a mistake.

*Mr. Lawson:* Oh! I beg your pardon, it is "there is clearly no general movement of the land." "The total length of the building is 570ft., and out of this there is only some 20ft. or 25ft., where the ground is not quite solid. After a careful examination of the building and ground, I came to the conclusion that, even in the small area affected, there is no great movement in any particular direction. The injury to the building is no more than might have been caused by irregular settlement in the foundations." You see he says they "might have been caused," not has been caused. "That being the case there will be no difficulty in preventing further damage. The impression, however, is that the movement has stopped. Dr. Neill, himself, thinks so, and Mr. Lawson, reporting to Mr. Ussher, the District Engineer, on the 6th July, 1885, says, 'I have now the honour to inform you that, from measurements recently taken on the spot, I am in a position to state that no movement nor further extension of cracks in wall have taken place since, in company with Mr. Blair and yourself, I visited the building and examined the same; in other words my former report as to this matter, of date 26th May last, is absolutely correct, namely, that the fracture in the wall, caused by movement of strata, has not enlarged or extended since a trench was sunk intercepting under-flow of water-drainage, twelve months since, under direction of Public Works Department.' Mr. Ussher, himself, under date 14th instant, says: 'From observations during the past few months, I have come to the conclusion that the cracks in the building have increased but slightly, if at all, during the past year, and I have no doubt the stone drain in its present position has been effective.' As there is an erroneous impression abroad on the subject, I may explain that the damage done to the building by the settlement is very small, not nearly as much as in several large buildings in Dunedin, of which no notice is taken. The north wing is not in any way affected, the whole of the damage being confined to about 25ft. of the ambulatory, between the north and second wings and the rooms overhead. I saw a good many cracks, both in the walls and plaster, but none right through the walls, and, although conspicuous enough on the plaster inside, no one walking past the building would notice the cracks. I cannot, therefore, understand on what grounds the Inspector makes the statement that 'a rent exists from roof to basement.' If such a rent exists, how comes it that I found this part of the building occupied by patients? And so far as I can ascertain, it was so occupied when the report was made. That the Inspector does not really consider the movement in the building serious, is shown by the simple remedy he proposes: 'putting down tar-pavements in the airing-court, and carrying away the rainfall from them.' It is quite clear that the movement in the ground has stopped altogether, or become so small as to be harmless. It would, therefore, be unnecessary to do anything further beyond repairing the cracks, were it not that recent borings show the ground to be soft. The drain put in at the back of the building is not deep enough to intercept all the water. Under these circumstances it is desirable, as a preventative to future settlement, to lower the drain. I think this is all that is required to give security."

*The Chairman:* Mr. Blair, who is the Inspector referred to—Dr. Grabham?

*Mr. Blair:* Yes.

*Mr. Lawson:* He says then, "It is clear that the movement in the ground has stopped altogether, or has become so small as to be harmless;" and he says, "all the repairs necessary could be done for £30."

*Mr. Blair:* That is perfectly wrong; it is a statement which has appeared in the papers, but it is entirely incorrect and false.

*Mr. Lawson:* I understood it was here.

*Mr. Blair:* No; it is not there.

*Mr. Lawson:* Very well; I beg your pardon. I withdraw the statement. I withdraw the statement altogether. In his report Mr. Blair admits that there was a movement in the ground, which he now denies. He further admits, inferentially, in 1885, that the drain put in at the back of the building, that is No. 1 drain, is not deep enough to intercept all the water; and, therefore, that it should be deepened; there is water there you see; and I ask now has he deepened this drain? Instead of deepening it, as he himself said in his report should be done, he permits the water—the very underground drainage which is causing all the damage—to pass along down the hill and by Nos. 2 and 3 drains directs it under the building, close to the foundations of the very building he proposes to save. I do not claim to be an engineer, but I claim to have a fair share of common-sense, for which I am grateful; and I do protest against this undermining of the walls of the Seaciff Asylum, which has been carried out under the direction of the Public Works Department of New Zealand, and that, too, without the knowledge and consent of myself as architect of that building, whose name and fame are connected with it. Gentlemen, you are architects yourselves, you are professional men; is it fair that to such a work with which your name and fame are identified, a thing of this sort should be done against your wishes and without your knowledge or consent. If some day the results consequent upon it should be felt, I am glad I have been able here and now to make my public protest. But, coming back again to the point, when, in June 1885, Mr. Blair became aware of the statements made here of defective foundations, and discovered that they had been scamped, I again ask what was his manifest duty in that case as a responsible public official? Certainly to report it to his department and bring the guilty parties, if there were any, to punishment as they deserved; but, no, he continues in friendly intercourse apparently with the very men who alone could be guilty of the scamping, if any ever existed, which I here and now deny. Mr. Brindley is here, a conscientious man, to speak for himself. I know I could take my