

2002. Now we come to the letter which I call a private letter, but which you call an official letter, of the 2nd February, 1886. You say that that was an official letter?—Just as you like to take it.

*Mr. Blair*: Mr. Chairman, I really call your attention to the fact that I cannot get direct answers from Mr. Lawson.

*The Chairman*: I think you might give an answer, "Yes" or "No," to that.

*Witness*: What I said in my evidence was very distinct. I say that these official matters referred to in it lifted it out of the groove of its being a private letter.

2003. *Mr. Blair*.] I ask was it an official letter?—I maintain that it was not a private letter in the strict sense of the word.

2004. *The Chairman*.] What was your intention in writing it?—My intention was to draw his attention to that very thing.

2005. *Mr. Blair*.] Then why did you put it in the shape of a private letter?—Because there were other matters referred to in it.

2006. Was it intended that it should go on the file of the Public Works Department?—It would not have mattered to me.

2007. Why did you not publish the whole of that letter?—There is a blank which refers to other things.

2008. Was not the balance of that letter simply Dunedin gossip and news?—Yes.

2009. Would it have been right and proper to have put it on the records of the Public Works Department, and was that your intention?—I did not have any intention about it at all. I simply wrote the letter. Whether you classified it as a private document or a public document did not distress me at all. It makes very little difference whether you call it public or private so far as I am concerned.

2010. You said quite recently, with reference to this matter, that upon getting my answer to that letter you decided to publish the correspondence?—It was about that time.

2011. Did you not lead us to infer that the matter was open until you got my letter?—No; it could not be, as a matter of fact.

2012. Were these letters not actually printed in the Press before you wrote to me?—Certainly. I told you I intended to publish them, and I sent you them forthwith; and anything you said afterwards did not stay my hand. I do not stay my hand because you ask me.

2013. You referred a little while ago to a private and confidential letter; it had reference to Mr. Brindley's appointment. Was the object of that letter to say that a certain other person whom you and I thought incompetent and unsuitable should not be appointed? Had it anything to do with Mr. Brindley?—It had to do with Mr. Brindley. It was with the object of obtaining him as an Inspector.

2014. Was Mr. Brindley suggested by me as Inspector?—I do not know; I would not say.

2015. Mr. Brindley has been frequently referred to by you as a Government Inspector. Do you look upon him as acting independently to you?—Certainly; quite independently.

2016. And who then was his superior officer? Was I?—Certainly.

2017. Would you have allowed me to interfere with Mr. Brindley?—I never saw you do so.

2018. Would you have repudiated any interference on my part?—I knew very well you would not do such a thing.

2019. Did I or Mr. Ussher, or any other officer of the Department, have anything to do with him?—I do not say the Department interfered with him in any way.

2020. Do you say Mr. Brindley was acting independently of you?—Yes; because he was a Government Inspector.

2021. Could he reject work without your permission?—I do not say he could.

2022. Could he order extra work without your permission?—No, certainly not.

2023. In what way could he act independently of you? I want to know if he could act independently to you; would you kindly tell us in what way he could do so?—I do not intend to tell you.

2024. What were his functions independent of you?—As an Inspector of Government Works, of course.

2025. It is impossible to get answers to my questions. Will you kindly read your letter to Mr. Brindley of 5th June, 1884?—[The witness read as follows]:—"Dunedin, 5th June, 1884. Mr. A. T. Brindley.—Dear Sir,—Mr. Ussher has shown me your telegram re cement; he has made inquiries, and states that that in use by Mr. Gore is quite equal, if not superior, to White's or Knight Bevan's, and sees no reason why it should be objected to. I indorse this view. Please be good enough to remember that it is to me, and not to Mr. Ussher, you are to address any letters or communications as to the contract.—In haste, yours, &c., R. A. LAWSON."

2026. It is not with reference to the cement; it is the latter part of the letter I wish to refer to. [Letter handed in by Mr. Blair (Exhibit No. 26, 5th June, 1884).]—It does not need to be sent in; it is in the book. There are no letters of mine that are astray.

2027. You said that I informed the Commissioners that Mr. Brindley was a creature of yours?—No, I did not say you informed. I say you inferred.

2028. Will you kindly state what words they are, in my statement, you refer to?—If you read you will refer to them and see. I would like that portion of his statement to be read.

*Mr. Blair* read clause in his statement, as follows: "After the contract was entered into, Mr. Lawson applied to have a clerk of works appointed, to live on the ground and superintend the erection of the building in the usual way; but as the building was of so much importance, Mr. Lawson recommended that, instead of having an ordinary tradesman, such as is usually appointed, we should appoint a man of higher standing. He therefore recommended and named Mr. Alfred Brindley, who was his assistant in his own office, and who, I understand, had prepared the most of the plans for the asylum. Mr. Brindley was duly appointed. Mr. Brindley was paid by the Govern-