

ment, but he was from first to last, in the matter of the building, entirely under the direction of Mr. Lawson, the architect. The Public Works Department paid his salary monthly, and as a matter of convenience, to avoid circumlocution, he sent in to the District Engineer, monthly, a short progress report, stating what work had been done during the previous month; but beyond that there was not communication of any kind whatever between the Public Works Department and Mr. Brindley regarding the building of the asylum; in fact, the thing is put in a very positive way in the specifications by Mr. Lawson himself. The last clause in the specifications reads: 'The whole works in all their departments to be completed to the entire satisfaction of Mr. R. A. Lawson, Architect, Dunedin, or to that of duly appointed inspector under same.' I wish particularly to direct attention to this, because it has been alleged that Mr. Brindley was acting, or had acted, under the direction of the Public Works Department, which is altogether incorrect. In a very voluminous correspondence, there were only eight letters from the department to Mr. Brindley. One is with reference to his employment, and another as to the transference of the laundry contract from Mr. Gore to Messrs. Gore, Junrs. The other six letters refer to excavation and drainage; there is no allusion whatever to the building. I have a list of these letters here, and they can be produced if required. As I have already stated and shown, the Public Works Department had nothing whatever to do with the carrying out of the works, or in giving directions to Mr. Brindley, or to the contractors, or to anybody else, except Mr. Lawson."

2029. *Mr. Blair.*] Where is the inference there? These are the exact words that were used?—It was an insinuation that I had put Mr. Brindley there to do my will.

2030. Is this a correct inference: does it infer that Mr. Brindley was a creature of yours? Do you now consider that as a fair inference?—A fair inference, but perhaps strong.

2031. Not a fair inference?—Perhaps a person is occasionally inclined to use strong words in a case of this kind.

2032. I now come to this point. You say that you resolved to publish the correspondence in spite of Mr. Blair's warning. You did not resolve to publish Mr. Blair's warning?—I wrote to you informing you, and your warning was of no avail whatever. I was not afraid of it. I have told you the circumstances under which it was published very distinctly—under provocation very strong. If you had a sense of right and wrong, you should know that.

2033. You stated distinctly, to refer to the letters again, that you received no answer. You said, "No reply has been received to any of the foregoing letters"—No, not a reply from Mr. Blair.

2034. Did I get the letter? Would you have taken a letter from Mr. Ussher as a reply?—No, I would not have taken it as a reply from Mr. Blair. I expect the man I communicate with to answer me.

2035. If you addressed a letter to the Minister, would he send you a reply?—That is a different case. I would not expect him to reply.

2036. Was not Dr. Hector's report a distinct commentary on your letters?—In my letters I asked for instructions, and these instructions never came. This I insist upon.

2037. You wrote me with reference to the isolating-drain on the 29th March, 1881. The letter has been put in, I think. Would you mind reading that letter? [The witness read as follows: "Sir,—On my recent visit to Seacliff building, now in progress, I find the work of brickmaking suspended in consequence of scarcity of water-supply; and, as this is a most important matter in connection with the buildings generally, I feel called upon to direct your attention to it without delay, so that the necessary steps may be taken for the storage of water at a sufficient elevation to command the whole building, as originally contemplated. I would further press the expediency of proceeding with the main back-drainage, which has been deemed essential, in order to isolate the whole block or site of the permanent building, so as to prevent any chance of ground-slips. The present dry season gives every facility for this work being done, but should heavy rains set in, without the principal portion of this work being accomplished, the ground around the new portion of the building will be rendered almost impassable, and damage may result to the foundations of work already done. Dr. Hector, in his report, laid much stress on the necessity for isolating the site. Therefore, I deem it the more urgent on my part to press the matter on your attention. The contract for the central block being now considerably advanced, I desire to remind you that it does not contain accommodation for any patients, but consists of reception-rooms, dining and recreation halls, kitchens, stores, and general offices, which are absolutely necessary for any of the wings which may be built for accommodation of patients. The requirements of the institution are very pressing. . . . R. A. LAWSON."]

2038. Would you mind reading the published introduction to these letters; here it is, you will see if it is correct. It is dated 3rd December, 1887. Mr. Lawson says: "Two years before the portion of the building affected by the ground-slip was erected I urged the necessity of drainage-works being carried out in order to prevent the said slip or movement, and pointed out what would occur if such matters were not done. At every available opportunity since I have called attention to this matter, and, although a partial stoppage of the movement was caused for over twelve months by a small portion of drainage-works being carried out, I still urged that the whole work was necessary for the security of the building; and, having previously proved the complete success of similar protective works at the temporary asylum on similar ground adjoining, I have the utmost confidence in asserting that nothing else will save the portion of the permanent building affected from further disaster."

2039. Did you get an answer to this letter of the 29th March?—I am not aware of it.

2040. Did you communicate with me on the subject of the isolating-drain, any time, until the cracks appeared in the building?—I do not remember at this moment.

2041. Have you any idea of having communicated with me at that time; have you any notion of having done so, because it is scarcely possible to have been silent for three years?—No.

2042. And no further attention was directed to the whole thing?—No.

2043. You wrote to me on the 29th March, and no action was taken. Was it not your duty to