

appeal to me as a public officer, if you felt so strongly upon this?—I had spoken as strongly as I could have done, and had received no answer. Did you expect me always to be hunting you after the way I had been treated? Do you think I was going to insult myself?

2044. Did you ever complain that you had no answer to your letters until you published this correspondence; did you ever complain to me officially or privately?—It is sufficient. I had good cause for complaint that you gave me no—

*The Chairman.*] I think if you adhered to the matter and replied “Yes” or “No.”

2045. *Mr. Blair*: I ask this question, did you ever, officially or privately, complain to me of not having got answers to these letters?—I do not know that I did. I do not know that it was necessary.

2046. You say you felt insulted?—I felt as any other man, who having written strongly on a subject, and received no answer, would have done; it was not his place to run after the man and hunt him.

2047. You confess that you were always in private communication with me. Would it not, if you were a friend of mine, be a natural thing to say I have not got answers to those letters?—I did not suppose it was necessary to tell you that.

2048. You say you felt strongly on the subject?—I did feel strongly on the subject.

2049. And you cherished this in your bosom, this rankling sore, and still you did not speak a word of it to me?—You were away in Wellington most part of the time.

2050. Can you prove that I was away in Wellington?—That has nothing to do with the slip in any way.

2051. Now, did you give any communication, privately or officially, to the Department or myself, for three years, of your views with reference to the isolating-drain?—I did not, and for a very good reason.

*The Chairman.*] Well, never mind, Mr. Lawson; we shall never get on at all if this kind of thing goes on.

2052. *Mr. Blair*: Did you suppose I would have taken offence if you had said to me that that drain should have been put in?—What more could I have said?

2053. Do you think I would have taken offence if you had suggested to me that the drain was necessary?—I do not know whether you would or not. I did my duty, and that is where I left it.

2054. And you were silent for three years?—Yes, I was silent, and suffering too.

2055. Doing the martyr?—Yes, and the public knows it.

2056. Did you write that letter of the 25th April, 1882—that was in the three years’ silence—commencing “I desire to bring under your notice,” &c. Did you write me that letter?—Yes.

2057. Did you then apprehend damage?—Yes.

2058. Do you consider that that comprehensive drainage-scheme would cure or prevent these indications of unequal settlement?—Yes; by removing the water from the foundations.

2059. Will you please to read my answer to that letter dated 19th May, 1882?—[The witness read as follows: “The full purport of your remarks on the question of drainage did not strike me till this moment, otherwise I would have sent a special reply sooner. I do not concur in the position you now take up in the event of a comprehensive drainage-scheme not being carried out, for you have repeatedly informed me that any indications of unequal settlement were not attributable to the slips or want of drainage; and, furthermore, I understood that both you and Dr. Hector were now quite satisfied of the suitability of the ground. Arrangements have been made for laying a pipe to take away sewage; but, as you pointed out when I was reporting on Dr. Neill’s memorandum, it would not be advisable to put any drains round a building till it is finished. Keeping the foundations free of water during the erection of the building, if that is what you allude to, is clearly a matter for yourself and the Contractor. I shall be glad to get from you further particulars of what you want done.”]

2060. That was an urgent matter when you wrote me?—It was in regard to the foundations; the centre building was then complete, I believe.

2061. It was an urgent matter; the terms of your letter to me implied urgency. It was an urgent matter?—Yes.

2062. In the last clause you say you would not be responsible for the consequences, and that unequal settlements were taking place. That was an urgent matter?—Yes; a matter to be attended to.

2063. Then I answered it after the usual official delay. You will find that in the last part of the letter. I said I shall be glad to get particulars of what was to be done: did you give particulars of what was to be done? Did you ever answer that letter?—I know I answered it.

2064. When did you answer it?—I do not know that I specially answered that letter.

2065. Have you any idea that you answered that letter?—I do not know whether I answered it or not.

2066. You will not swear whether you answered that letter or not, although the matter was urgent. Then, when did you practically answer my question as to what was to be done? When did you bring the matter up again?—I could not say at this moment. I know the complaints were initiated and begun by myself.

2067. That letter was dated the 19th May, 1882. Did you communicate with me with reference to the drainage between that and the 20th March, 1883?—I could not say. I may have communicated with Mr. Brindley.

2068. Did you answer this letter, in which I repudiated all responsibility, and asked you what you wanted done? Did you answer that?—No: that was referring to the comprehensive drainage-scheme wholly and solely.

2069. Did you have any communication with Dr. Hector on or about that time, or have you any recollection of an interview between Dr. Hector and yourself?—No, not at this moment; until my memory is refreshed, I have none.