

reporter's record of the answer that you gave?—No, sir, I think I recollect the answer that I then gave.

1535. Mr. Blair says that before the contract was actually finished symptoms of settlement appeared in the extreme northern block, and that thereupon the District Engineer (Mr. Ussher) took steps to put in a drain behind the block. Was that drain put in before the contract was finished?—No. That is, you refer to the top drains, which have been called isolating-drains.

1536. *The Chairman.*] There were three drains?—Our contract was finished before any of those drains were started.

1537. *Mr. Mountfort.*] Mr. Blair says that before the contract was actually finished symptoms of settlement appeared; but you say that there were no such symptoms—that the building was quite perfect, otherwise it would not have been taken over?—Yes, with the exception of one crack. There was, as I have already said, one crack through the concrete wall in the ambulatory, south.

1538. *The Chairman.*] In the concrete wall?—The crack that I pointed out yesterday.

1539. *Mr. Mountfort.*] You say that the building was perfectly without flaw, except one crack. Whereabouts was that one small crack?—Through the concrete wall in the centre of the northern ambulatory.

1540. That was the original first crack?—Yes. To speak correctly, that crack occurred before any of the brickwork was put on. The other crack in the floor we noticed when we were building the laundry, but I will not swear when that was.

1541. You say that, as a matter of fact, the Seacliff contract was paid for then?—We were working at the laundry when Mr. Brindley pointed that crack in the floor out to me.

1542. Which was the drain that Mr. Ussher had put in on account of the settlement beginning?—At No. 1. But the contract was off our hands when that drain was started.

1543. *Mr. Blair.*] When was it started, do you say?—That drain was not commenced immediately on the symptoms being observed. There was some time elapsed before that drain was commenced.

1544. *Mr. Gore.*] Was there a book or account kept by you of the bricks made at Seacliff for the building?—Yes.

1545. Have you been through that account?—Yes.

1546. Can you tell me how many bricks were made at Seacliff?—Four million five hundred thousand were made on the ground.

1547. Can you tell me also how many bricks it took in the asylum building?—Less than four millions. I cannot say to a few hundreds, but I think less than four millions.

1548. If you were told by me that three millions five hundred thousand bricks were put in, do you think it would be wrong?—No, I think it might be that. I know it was less than four millions.

1549. Were there many bricks sent from Dunedin?—About 200,000.

1550. So that that makes 4,700,000 bricks altogether?—Yes.

1551. So that, in round numbers, there were 700,000 bricks made more than were actually used in the building?—Yes.

1552. And that you know to be correct from your books?—Yes.

1553. I may say that all my books, even my cost-price book, is open to inspection by the Commissioners. Then there were 700,000 bricks made that were never used?—There must have been. We used the 200,000 that were sent up from Dunedin.

1554. Do you know what became of that 700,000?—We sold a good few in one way and another. We also wheeled a great number over the tiphead. We wheeled over one lot on account of having found some sort of lime in the clay.

1555. With what kind of a machine were the bricks made?—The first lot were made with what is called a wire-cut machine; but latterly they were made—I dare say the majority of them were—with a Craven's patent pressing machine.

1556. Do you know the amount of pressure that that machine puts on a brick?—About ten tons pressure.

1557. On each separate brick?—Yes.

1558. The bricks were made separately, and pressed separately?—Yes, each brick is pressed separately.

1559. From such a machine as that would you expect to get a first-class brick?—Yes; it is a first-class brick. And I have no hesitation in saying that the bricks made with that machine are the best bricks that have ever been made in New Zealand. I may here call attention to the fact that this machine, which made the bricks for the asylum, also made the bricks for the laundry, which bricks, I believe, are still to be seen, as they have not been cemented, nor yet coloured in any way. It also made the bricks for one of the large goods-sheds at Dunedin. All those bricks were made by this same machine.

1560. Mr. Blair has stated that he was on the ground very frequently. Was he there very frequently while you were there?—No. I do not think I saw him there more than three times during the whole of the time I was there.

1561. During a period of how long?—Close on three years.

1562. And you say that you did not see him more than three times?—I did not.

1563. Having heard Mr. Blair's evidence, and having seen it as reported in the newspapers, do you think that that evidence could have been given from his own personal knowledge?—I should say decidedly not.

1564. Then you think it must have been hearsay?—Yes, it is hearsay, or has been gathered from his servants.

1565. *The Chairman.*] I was going to ask you how long the clay was allowed to be tempered before it was allowed to be used in the machine?—We had a gang of men constantly getting and weathering it.