

The Chairman : I think that was done after Mr. Brindley left.

2850. *Mr. Mountfort*.] Suppose that the water got in underneath that floor, do you think, knowing as you do the nature of the soil, that it would go away easily?—I do not think it would go away. The opinion I have always had of the stone-packing, and the materials that it was made of, was that these foundations would always stand full of water.

2851. Practically, then, you think that this water will be found running over the concrete foundations?—Yes; over the top of it. As I said just now about the trap, if it has been built like that it is evidently an oversight.

2852. Then it is not a natural one?—No; it was never intended to be like that.

2853. Then about the fan-lights and the class of glass used in the doors. We found it to be specified as $\frac{1}{2}$ in. glass. Was that put in?—It was not.

2854. It was $\frac{1}{2}$ in. that was used?—Yes.

2855. Was a deduction made for the $\frac{1}{2}$ in. glass?—I cannot tell you unless I refer to the deduction-sheet of the final certificate what arrangement was come to about the glass. I know it was sanctioned at the time by Mr Lawson, or I would never have allowed it to be done.

2856. Speaking now about the floors of the upper rooms of the building, certain of them are 20ft. wide. I see that the joists are put in running 20ft. that way. Was there no girder across these rooms?—No; but I think the joists are thicker—11 by 2.

2857. As a matter of fact there are no girders?—No. A question arose at one time about this matter, and there was some correspondence about it. There are rooms in the roof, in the north and south blocks No. 2, and ceiling joists 6 by 2 were specified. They wanted to put in 6 by 2 joists in this part of the building. It is a peculiarly constructed roof. I wanted 11 by 2 joists, and they were ultimately put in, after a good deal of argument, and some attempt was made to charge them as an extra. A good deal of these things were left to one's own discretion, the specification being so vague. I had often to write in for explanations. Mr. Lawson was not up there very often—not so often as he should have been. He would come up by the 8 o'clock train from town and go back by the 11 o'clock. I do not think he stopped up there more than two hours at any time.

2858. *Mr. Lawson*.] Did you ever complain to me about that at any time?—It was not for me to complain. I had often to come down to town to consult you.

2859. But you never did complain, as a matter of fact?—Is it to be expected that I should go begging to you to go up there, or dictate how often you should visit the works.

2860. Well, that is the first time that I have heard of it?—All I can say is that it was a subject of general remark by Mr. John Gore and myself at the time, that your visits were short and far between.

The Commissioners thought it would be as well to take advantage of the presence in Dunedin of Sir James Hector, by getting him to assist them by giving a little explanation with regard to his reports, three of which have been put in as evidence.

Sir JAMES HECTOR, Director of the Geological Survey of New Zealand, sworn and examined.

2861. *The Chairman*.] You reported on these three different occasions on the site of the present Seacliff Asylum?—Yes. Do you wish the dates of the reports?

2862. We have had the dates already mentioned, and the reports are given in evidence?—I should state that I reported some years ago and that I have not a clear recollection of the circumstances; but I telegraphed to my office to-day, since you asked me to attend, and the reply tells me the dates of the three different reports that are recorded in my office. Those dates agree with the dates just read. The first is the 9th of June, 1880, to the Minister for Public Works through the Colonial Secretary; the second the 19th of June, 1880; and the third report to the Colonial Secretary is on the 4th of April, 1881. I believe there was also some evidence given before some Committee of the House; but whether it was direct or indirect I do not remember. They do not seem to have any record of it.*

Mr. Blair : I do not think it was published.

Sir James Hector : It might have been before the Public Accounts Committee. I gave evidence before a Committee, but what Committee I do not remember.

Mr. Blair : It would be in the records of the House.

2863. *The Chairman*.] In your report of the 9th June, 1880, on the site of the new asylum, which you have there, you pointed out that the position of the building as then fixed upon would have been upon two different formations: the northern end of the building upon boulder-clay, and the remainder on more solid formation?—Yes; the greensand and clay marls.

2864. I think in evidence we have ascertained that the site of the building was moved 5 chains subsequently to that, to the southward; would that still be on the boulder-clay formation?—

Mr. Lawson : Sir James Hector's report of 1880 was after the site was changed.

2865. *The Chairman*.] Well, I was not quite sure of that. Then, in that case, the north-east portion of the building would still remain on the boulder-clay formation. In paragraph 4 of your report you recommend that certain works should be done with a view of cutting off the unstable portion of the ground from the hill and draining it?—Yes.

2866. Well, certain works have been done there. They are shown upon that plan No. 2, perhaps it would be just as well to ask you to look at them. [The plan was here examined.] From the examination you made of the place at the time, you were under the impression that it was unstable ground, I suppose?—Yes; the northern part. Where the northern part was proposed to be made it was very unsafe ground, I thought.

2867. Was it liable to slip?—Liable to slip; liable to continual motion. I think I expressed myself in this, or in a subsequent report, that the motion is not due to water alone but to seasonal

* Since giving my evidence a still earlier record has been found in my office, dated the 3rd April, 1880, and which formed the basis of the instructions given to Mr. Cox, and referred to in his report, and which is also referred to in my own report of the 9th June, 1880. I attach copy of this earlier report.