

as a servant of mine, that he had obtained the right quantities, so he wanted measurements for myself in order to return them to the office. Quite right too, and a request that no reasonable inspector of works could have objected to, but it was only after a very great deal of trouble that he obtained it. That is the kind of interference with my men by Mr. Brindley which caused the friction between us. Another foreman bricklayer—he is not in Dunedin now—has told me that on one occasion—Mr. Brindley can deny the statement if he thinks proper—Mr. Brindley said to him that “he (Brindley) would make it hot for Mr. Gore before the work was done.” I had to discharge that man for the reason that I have already given in evidence. I had no real control over the men, whose work was falling off very much. There is no question that Mr. Brindley had occasion to find fault occasionally. I cannot see how a large building like that is to be carried on without differences of opinion arising. He must, however, bear me out in this: that I repeatedly told him that if he had any complaint to make if he intimated to me or to my foreman-in-charge, if I were not present, that it would be remedied at once. As to the condemned 175,000 bricks, I say again there were among them many bricks that were quite fit for this building, and I did feel annoyed at the Inspector of Works condemning them in a mass. It has been insinuated that Mr. Lawson did not indorse Mr. Brindley’s authority. Now, in reference to these very bricks, I wrote to Mr. Lawson, asking that I should be allowed to pick out the good ones, and suggesting that Mr. Brindley should himself pick them out if he would not trust my men to do so; but Mr. Lawson’s reply was that they must all go away, and away they all went accordingly. Can you wonder in the circumstances at my feeling annoyed, when at this very time we did not know what to do for bricks—we could not make them fast enough—and it almost became a question of stopping the works if these bricks were condemned? In reference to Mr. Brindley’s letter in regard to the cement, you know the circumstances under which another brand was used; and there is a letter of Mr. Lawson to Mr. Ussher, who passed it. I have already told you the circumstances under which that letter came to be written, and I shall not take up your time by reading it. There was no attempt to gain any point about the cement. The simple fact was we had to take some other brand or go without. This cement, I must again point out, was not used in the concrete but put in the plaster for the internal and external walls. I now come to the last of Mr. Brindley’s letters, wherein he says that concrete was put in while he was absent. Now, there was a day’s concreting put in in the centre block while he was away; but I do not think that there is any question about the stability of that block. If Mr. Brindley had expressed a desire that no concrete should have been put in whilst he was not there it would not have been done. That is the only occasion I know of, or that we have any evidence of him being absent when the concrete was put in. On the other hand, he was a man who stayed almost entirely at his work; and at this time there was very little reason for him going to town, as the work had just been commenced. When, in giving his evidence on Friday, Mr. Brindley said if the stones had been put in in “nests” while he was away he should not be surprised—for that was his opinion—I ejaculated the remark that it was a scandalous statement. Mr. Brindley then “piled on the agony” by saying: “I have made it; I will make it again, and stick to it.” He went on to mention about some of the concrete having to be shifted, and added: “If it was done when I was there—if that was done in front of me, what would they have done in the other courts when I was not there?” Gentlemen, that is not true. The latter part of Mr. Brindley’s statement is untrue—wholly untrue. No concrete was ever put in “nests” before his face. You have it in evidence that at this particular place I stopped a man who was putting in the packing; and that at this very foundation Mr. Brindley is alluding to he ordered a portion of the concrete to be taken out; but only a small portion of it was taken out, Mr. Brindley himself having stopped any more being taken out because he was quite satisfied that the concrete could carry the weight it had to carry. The statement he made on Friday is not true, and he knows that it is untrue. I would like to mention here a matter that concerns Mr. Brindley and myself. It happened through a man reading in Friday night’s *Star* the report of what Mr. Brindley had said in his evidence. This person said he thought it was a very unfair remark for Mr. Brindley to make, because he (Brindley) was biased against me; that he would tell me why, and that I could make whatever use of his information I liked. He said that Mr. Brindley had told him—it took place in Donaldson’s Shades Hotel the day before Mr. Brindley left for Sydney, and after the Seacliff Asylum was finished—that, conversing in a jocular manner with a friend, the latter had said, “Did Gore give you nothing?” and that he (Brindley) had replied: “No, he did not; but if I ever get the opportunity I will punish him.” Does not that look as if Mr. Brindley wanted “tip.” Does it not show that he had animus against me? The person who told me this is Councillor Henderson, of South Dunedin; and he is prepared, if you summon him, to go into the witness-box and swear to the truth of his statement, which you may take for what it is worth. But does it not account for the strong letters that Mr. Brindley wrote, and the presumption is that they were written without a cause. I have only this to say in conclusion: I leave myself in your hands with confidence. I submit, with all due respect, that there is no case against me; and that it has been shown in evidence that the great “mare’s-nest” which the Public Works Department has found has ended in smoke—that there was nothing in it; that the contract was not “scamped;” and that I did not reduce the size of the foundations in order to make a profit for myself. Now, it has been clearly shown in evidence that reducing the foundations was a loss and not a gain to me, and that the more concrete I put in the more money I made. If you acquit me of these two charges, the third one must of necessity fall to the ground. As I have already said, I can safely leave myself in your hands, feeling satisfied that I shall have every fair play and every justice, and that by your decision my character will be vindicated. Gentlemen, I am sorry to have taken up so much of your time.

MR. BLAIR’S REPLY.

Mr. Blair: Mr. Chairman,—In my opening statement I was scrupulously careful in avoiding personalities and in avoiding attributing motives. I am sorry to find that my example was not