

*Mr. Blair* : That is so.

*Mr. Gore* : I think it would be about June, 1880, that I commenced work.

*Mr. Skinner* : That would be about the time that Dr. Hector visited the ground, accompanied by Mr. Lawson and Mr. Blair, and made his report.

*Mr. Gore* : I had also put a well in the ground.

*Mr. Skinner* : And some of the foundations?

*Mr. Gore* : Yes; some in the central block were put in.

*Mr. Skinner* : That is where the tower is?

*Mr. Lawson* : Yes; but no work was done in either of the outside blocks.

*Mr. Blair* : There was no alteration in the site after Dr. Hector visited the ground.

*Mr. Lawson* : There was an alteration made before that.

*Mr. Skinner* : Was there any alteration after the 10th June, 1880?

*Mr. Blair* : No.

JAMES DONALD sworn and examined.

1. *Mr. Blair*.] What are you?—A ganger.

2. Were you employed in the asylum works?—Yes, sir.

3. What were you doing?—I was at various work. Part of my time I was at the brick-machine, part of the time quarrying, and part of the time excavating.

4. What were you excavating?—Reducing the hill to get the foundations in for the building.

5. Were you excavating the trenches?—Yes.

6. Were you excavating the trenches for the northern end?—For a portion of it.

7. *The Chairman*.] Were you employed as a workman or a ganger?—As a ganger.

8. Under whose orders?—Mr. Gore's.

9. *Mr. Skinner*.] Were you in the employ of Mr. Gore?—Yes, sir.

10. *Mr. Blair*.] How long were you there?—About three years.

11. What was the nature of the ground when you cut out the foundations at the northern end?—It was very soft.

12. Was it wet?—Yes, very wet.

13. *Mr. Skinner*.] Throughout?—More especially at the northern end.

14. *The Chairman*.] Can you describe the distance along the building that it was wet—from what point to what point?—From the central block to the end of the northern block.

15. *Mr. Blair*.] That is, the whole of Block 2?—Yes, the whole of Block 2—the last block.

16. Was it wet at the back?—Yes, very wet.

17. Was it wet at the front?—Hardly so wet in the front: it seemed to get more water in it at the back.

18. What was the nature of it—clayey, boulders, or what?—It was a blue clay, discoloured with a sort of stagnant water principally.

19. From your knowledge of these things would you consider that was a place where there ought to be put in something extra in the way of foundations?—Yes, I should think it ought to have a better foundation. I should say so.

20. Was there a better foundation wanted there than in other parts of the asylum?—Well, yes, I should say it was, because the southern end was stronger, in my opinion.

*The Chairman* : I think you are asking the witness to state things he knows nothing at all about. He is not able to judge whether the foundations were fit or not.

*Mr. Blair* : I asked him if his experience was such as to give him confidence in giving an opinion. I can ask him, I suppose, whether this part of the foundation was softer than the other parts.

*The Chairman* : Certainly.

21. *Mr. Blair* (to witness).] Was this part of the foundation softer, or much softer, than other portions?—Yes, sir.

22. Was that the softest place in the building?—Yes, the softest place in the whole lot.

23. *Mr. Skinner*.] That is, at the back wall of the north wing?—Yes; and more especially at the front here, where there was a swamp.

24. The front of which?—The front of Block 1.

25. *Mr. Blair*.] And the back portion of Block 2?—Yes.

26. The front part of Block 2, you say, was a little better—the front part of this north block?—It was all wet.

27. *The Chairman*.] I should like to ask him, with regard to the foundations of concrete at the back wall, whether that portion of the building was as wet, if not wetter, than other parts. Did more water come in there?—Yes.

28. Did it appear to flow from the cutting at the back, or simply to rise from the bottom? Did you see any flowing in?—It was from the bottom—seeping from the bank.

29. Was there so much water that it necessitated baling?—Yes.

30. Did the foundations fill up in one night, for instance?—That I could not say, because it is some time back.

31. Of course, as far as you recollect?—They made a deal of water.

32. *Mr. Blair*.] You said it was seeping from the back: did the water not rise from the bottom of the trench?—Certainly, the water did rise from the bottom as well: it was a swampy portion altogether, that portion.

33. *The Chairman*.] In putting in the concrete wall at the back, there was a bank behind it?—Yes.

34. Was that shored up or retained in any way?—It was shored up.

35. With timber?—It was—a portion of it—and battered on another portion.

36. Did it show a tendency to slip in?—Yes.