
2: THE FIRST TEN YEARS

In his first year ending 31st December 1860 Patterson supplied builders with quantities for 15 works including the new church for the Church of Ireland at Green Lanes, Clontarf by J. Rawson Carroll (cost £2,635). All this business came by favour of either Deane & Woodward or Rawson Carroll, his two principal patrons at that time. Fee income for 1860 was £160 yielding a profit of £78 but in the following year his fees had increased to £757 and net profit to £628.

Over the next ten years the steady flow of work brought in annual revenues of between £1,400 and £1,900 while the office expenses remained at about £320. These amounts look small by late 20th century standards but they must be multiplied by between 100 and 120 to provide rough comparison.

For the first few months Patterson did all the work himself but in April 1860 he took in a pupil named Edward Banks under articles for three years which cost the boy's mother a premium of 100 guineas. This was a substantial amount in those days (about £10,000 at 1990 values) and it was surely somewhat audacious for a mere 23 year old who had, as yet, gained little or no practical experience, to claim such a premium. But it was a very useful way to obtain working capital which was probably not available from family sources since his father, a builder, had died some years previously leaving little. Patterson had written to Mrs Banks:—

In coming to my office your son would have the opportunity of learning my profession [which he described as building measuring and land surveying] as well as of becoming conversant with the practical branches of architecture and if he should entertain any wish to obtain one of the Government appointments in India, his having served with me would entitle him to offer himself as a candidate for appointment and while with me he might readily read sufficiently in the evenings to enable him to pass the required examination.

It is not clear what Banks' duties were but he cannot have been of much assistance for



Sir Thomas Deane

a year or two and indeed he wasn't paid until his articles ran out in 1863 when he received £2 a month. It was August 1864 before anybody capable of preparing quantities was employed. Banks left in June 1866 when his salary had reached £4 a month: he must have become reasonably proficient quite quickly because he had been left in charge of the office in Dublin between 21st March and 6th June 1862 when Patterson was in Oxford and London working on the quantities for the Library at Christ Church, Oxford.

The design competition for the Oxford Library had been won by Newenham Deane who had nominated Patterson to prepare the quantities. Deane worked in conjunction with a London Architect named Bramwell, and Patterson with a London surveyor named Hodgson. Patterson complains in his diary of lack of co-operation from Bramwell but he got on well with Hodgson from whom he learned something of the differences between English and Irish practice. The amount of the accepted tender was £22,000.

In November 1862 Patterson issued the quantities for the new head office for the Provincial Bank of Ireland at College Street, Dublin, for which the architect was W. G. Murray. Patterson had been appointed by Murray, on behalf of the Bank, in January 1862 to prepare the quantities in conjunction with William Doolin. The tender of J. Nolan was accepted in the amount of £20,850 and work started shortly afterwards.

The work was finished in mid-1868 and on 14th October 1868 Patterson was summoned to a meeting with Murray and another architect, J. E. Rogers, who apparently was Murray's partner or assistant. At this meeting Murray, acting on behalf of the Bank, asked him to go through Nolan's final account with Rogers

to examine the Bills as to the fairness of the claims made and as to the pricing of the various items and to report to Rogers.

On the next day he wrote to Rogers agreeing to take up the investigation of the builders' accounts for this work as requested by you and Mr Murray ... but before doing so I think it well that there should be a definite understanding as to the payment for my services ... for doing this my fees will be 1% on the amount of the Bills as they now stand: if my time should be required for the purpose of making check measurements &c... my charge will be five guineas per day in addition to all expenses for assistants &c.

His diary for 15th October records that Rogers called and advised him against writing to the Directors about fees as they would

deal liberally with me — he himself guaranteed to me a minimum fee of £200. I afterwards saw Murray with Rogers in the latter's office: R showed M my letter and he asked me what 1% would come to: I said I supposed about £200 and he said he would at once, on the part of the Bank, guarantee that I should get that amount or up to £220 or £230.

Patterson duly reported to Murray and Rogers on 20th October enumerating his 'objections' to the account and on 3rd November his diary records

Settled my part of the Chancery Bill at meeting with JM and JER and told them for the second time of my view that items not in the Schedule should be priced proportional to Schedule prices and also told them Dudgeon's view of the case and [that I had] asked him if he would establish the principle of proportional valuation at law and he said he thought he could and that he was quite prepared to try it.

Dudgeon was acting for Nolan.

The Bank sued Nolan on the strength of Patterson's report and the case came to hearing on 22nd November 1869: the following extract from Patterson's ledger gives a resume of his part in the affair for the period October 1868 to July 1869:—

Examining into the various claims for extra works as set forth the several accounts furnished in respect of their new offices in Dublin by J. Nolan, builder and in noting objections to same and writing report thereon also for examining into prices charged throughout said several charges and adjusting same in accordance with the Contract Schedule of prices also for preparing affidavit respecting the charges in said several accounts.

On attending one consultation with Counsel. One day in Court and two days attendance at Record and Writ Office examining two boxes of papers lodged by Defendants.

Settling draft of Chancery Bill, reading affidavit of A. Dudgeon and reading affidavits of Defendants in answer to Bill, writing Report on Defendant's answers to Bill, attending one consultation with Counsel respecting the examination of Mr Doolin, attending six days at Examiner's Office during examination of several witnesses also on road from Belfast for Executors of J. Bermingham and returning thereto.

Total £525. 5. 0

This was made up of £32,850 at 1% = £328. 10. 0 for the examination and report plus £196. 15. 0 for the remainder.

He received £400. 0. 0 in June 1870 and called on Murray the next day to ask for an explanation. Murray told him that he 'would pay 1% thankfully' but struck out all other charges except for time at Court and consultations which he reduced to 3 guineas a day.

Needless to say this left Patterson aggrieved and he expressed his anger to Rogers, with whom he had been on friendly terms. Apparently Patterson had written to the Bank directors, over the heads of the architects, claiming his full fees as charged and, apparently making a statement which reflected badly on Rogers who rebuked him in a letter dated 22nd July 1870 for 'stabbing me in the dark'. Patterson replied on the