

about was this wise: There was a kiln of condemned bricks carted out and stacked at the side of the main block. (I may say that Mr. Dick carried on the work till it came up to the first-floor sills of the centre block.) These bricks were standing there, and one day Mr. Dick ran a lot of them in. He put up about two rods of brickwork with these condemned bricks. They were not bricks in fact; they were bats, and were all shattered. Well, he built these rods of brickwork with the bricks that I had condemned, and when I taxed him with it he coolly turned round and said that he would do as he liked with regard to the brickwork, whether I liked it or not. That was open defiance. I asked Mr. Gore what was the meaning of it, and told him that I would not stand it; that he would have to put on another foreman or else remove Dick. When I made that remark Mr. Gore said he could not discharge him. From that it seemed to me that Mr. Dick was a partner in the contract. I referred the matter to Mr. Lawson. At the time I thought Mr. Dick was put there to look after me. I had actually to refuse a month's payment before I could get this man Dick off the place.

2478. To whom did you apply for Dick's dismissal: to Mr. Gore?—To Mr. Gore first of all. The man was acting in open defiance of me. He had told me that he would do as he liked, whether I liked it or not.

2479. You reported that to Mr. Lawson?—Yes, I reported it him afterwards.

2480. *Mr. Lawson.*] You reported to me?—Yes; I came to town afterwards to see you about it. We had a long conversation about it.

2481. *The Chairman.*] What was about the date of this occurrence?—I cannot tell you exactly; but there may be a letter about it in the book.

2482. *Mr. Gore.*] I cannot catch what the witness says. Does he say that he had to stop a certificate before he could get the man discharged?—I do. You will find that I did not pass one month's certificate till the next month. It might be a year or a year and a half after the works were started. I know we went along very slowly at first. If you look over the certificates I think you will find that there is one missed in the early part of the contract; that they will not run in consecutive months like the others do. Most of the other matters I have apparently answered from my notes. I have told you about the bricks and about the overhang of that front wall. There was one other thing in regard to Mr. Dick, to show you the sort of man I had to deal with. The stone-dressings around the windows he would insist on putting in in this manner [described on plan]. They were 9in. by 8in., and he wanted to make them angle-cut instead of square.

2483. That is to say he wanted them to cut one out of the other?—He wanted to cut them across the angle. They were small enough as it was. Did I explain yesterday how the cement brickwork at the bases came to be put in? Mr. Gore did not charge that as an extra.

*Mr. Gore:* I never said anything of the sort. It was never attempted to be made an extra.

2484. *Mr. Skinner.*] I suppose you have seen or had seen Dr. Hector's report before you went far on with the building?—I never saw it. I remember that he came up there one wet Sunday, but that was after the site was shifted 5 chains south. The reason for the change was apparently that there was a kind of blind gully coming right down where the centre block would have been. There was a hollow where after heavy rain the water used to pour down like a stream. On that wet Sunday that Dr. Hector came out he said to me in regard to the site—I will give his words as nearly as I can remember them—that it was "a slithery or slippery valley;" that is what he called it. He also said that the centre and south blocks were on the solid; but he was not certain about No. 1, north, and that No. 2 was not on the solid, in his opinion. It was merely a conversation as we stood in the wet, near the engine-shed.

2485. At the time that you put in the extreme north wing you had not made yourself acquainted with Dr. Hector's report?—I never saw it.

*Mr. Blair:* There is a third report from Dr. Hector.

*Mr. Skinner:* I am referring now to the one of June, 1880.

*Mr. Blair:* That is the one I referred to in my own statement. There is a memorandum of Dr. Hector's dated the 4th April, which I shall put in.

2486. *Mr. Skinner.*] Were you aware of the bad state of the ground in the north wing before you put in the foundations; that is, of the slippery character of the soil?—There were indications of some movement at the back after the excavation was done; but at the time that we put these foundations in I was satisfied with the depth to which we went down. The clay bank at the back of the concrete-wall had wet slippery veins in it, and the clay would come away in lumps, the angle being about 45°, dipping to the front.

2487. Did you consider that the trenches which you dug out were of a character to carry this building?—Yes.

2488. What kind of stuff was it?—It was the same material all through, as nearly as I could judge. It was clay formation with boulders in it.

2489. You did not sink shafts?—There was a shaft put down 40ft. on north side of the centre block [indicating on plan]. I took sections of it and sent it down to Mr. Lawson; also a sample of the clay.

2490. You consider that this portion—where the north wing is—was good enough to build on with the present foundations that are in?—Yes; with the foundations as I set them out.

2491. You do not think that they ought to have been any deeper?—No; I do not think so. There are certain places where we do not go to any great depth.

2492. In the north wing?—I cannot say why we stepped it in many places. I know that in Block 1 we went down some 9ft. or 10ft., but in the majority of cases the excavation was somewhere between 8ft. and 15ft. below the natural surface of the ground.

2493. Where does that apply to?—Right along the whole site.

2494. But not in this particular place that we have been speaking about?—It was only 5ft. or 6ft. at the extreme end there. The bank will show itself there now.