

2551. You went over them with Mr. Forrest?—Yes.

2552. Over the whole of them?—Yes.

2553. Did you measure the work up with him?—Yes, from our data.

2554. Did Mr. Forrest measure it?—He measured it off the plan, and also measured it off this drawing.

2555. Then he did not actually go with a tape and measure it off the work, but measured it off the plan?—Yes.

2556. He assumed, therefore, that you had put in all the dimensions?—That all the dimensions were put in as Mr. Gore and I set them out.

2557. Although you may have supposed the foundation to be 3ft. wide and 3ft. deep, would it surprise you to know that it was not put in to that?—I do not see how the discrepancy could have occurred. I was always satisfied that the foundations were properly set out.

2558. I suppose you could not be present when all the foundations were put in?—I was there when they were mostly set out.

2559. Did you examine the trenches before the concrete was put in?—Yes; I went down to see what the bottom was like.

2560. Were you always present when the concrete was put in?—I stuck to my place all the time that was at my disposal. I was very seldom away if I could help it.

2561. I suppose your other duties would at times take you away from this part of the work? Were you much away when they were putting the concrete in?—No; we were working on both sides at the one time.

2562. With regard to the north wing, which was specially examined, did you see the concrete actually put in at the bottom of the trenches?—Not all of it; but I fancy I was there while the whole of that in the front there was put in.

2563. In front of what?—In front of that block.

2564. That is under the arches?—Yes; I might almost say that I saw it put in all along the top of the tramway up to the window where it overhangs at the present time.

2565. From the nature of the ground in which the trenches were cut did you find in practice that the trenches closed up, or any bulging in them, any rising up in the bottom, or that they contracted in any way?—They did to a certain extent; but that was mostly on account of the traffic in going about the trenches. The men trod about in cutting, and a good deal of stuff came in at the ends. We had exceedingly wet weather at the time.

2566. In digging out these foundations did you allow anything for the slope? I suppose you did not take it out plumb?—No; we cut them out to a line.

2567. Was the ground wet?—I did not notice particularly. I was quite satisfied with the bottom and with the appearance of the ground right through. There was one or two places bad where it might have been soft, and in those cases we went down.

2568. If the trenches did not contain the correct quantities of concrete might they not have not been cut to the full size?—If the offset was not on the outside it should be on the inside. We were as careful as we could be in setting out the foundations at the start. We set out the main wall, and the trenches were cut, the projection of base and offset beyond; they might vary an inch or so, or the pegs might have been shifted.

2569. Did the water stand in the bottom of the trenches when the concrete was being put in?—In some cases it did.

2570. In the winter?—Yes; but, as a general rule, it was baled out.

2571. Baled out before the concrete was put in?—Yes.

2572. Was the water muddy?—Whatever water was in the trenches always showed clean after it had stood over night.

2573. Did they continue to bale the water out after the concrete was put in?—No.

2574. It was allowed to stand?—If there was any water in it would lay there. It was likely to wash the cement away if baled out after the concrete was put in.

2575. *Mr. Skinner.*] These plans [handed to witness] are your detailed drawings; and this one shows the north wing as it is built at present?—Yes.

2576. Was there at the back wall any drain provided for carrying the water away from the footings? This shows the slope of the ground where it was cut away?—Yes; there were weepers put in there.

2577. Were any proper drains formed to carry off the water?—There were in the centre block, but there were none there.

2578. Why were they not continued right up there to carry the water off the wings?—I do not know. There was an extra allowed for it in the centre block. There was some mention of it at the time, but nothing more was said about it. At all events, I never get orders about it.

2579. There seems to have been great neglect here?—I suggested at the time that something should be done, and the proof of it is that it was done in the centre block; but I never got the necessary instructions.

2580. You, however, think that there should have been a drain there?—Most decidedly, or they should not have put it in the other place.

2581. Now, as to the west gable of the north wing, which has no bond: was that intended to be a temporary wall and to be removed afterwards?—No, it was not. There was no bond in the lower storey. That wall was built 9in.; we took a portion of it down to the lower storey and up above. I think that Mr. John Gore will bear me out in that.

2582. You say that it was intended to be a permanent wall?—Yes; except the gable.

2583. But up to the gable line it was to be permanent?—Yes.

2584. Did you examine the bond?—Yes; on the outside.

2585. There is a crack coming down here [indicating on the plan]?—I saw it.