

2718. Now, did I ask you to prepare them?—It was inferred.

2719. I do not want any inferences. Did I ask you by word or in writing to prepare these plans?—No, not in writing.

2720. Then by word?—I know you did for the tower.

2721. That is the only one you know of?—They were all submitted to you, more or less, whenever you came up there. You have seen them dozens of times.

2722. That is quite true, for they were in your own house. I do not deny that. But certainly I have not seen all these plans before yesterday. I ask you again: have I, in writing or by word, asked you to prepare them?—You asked me to prepare all the turrets I have spoken of.

2723. These two alone, then, I asked you to prepare?—Yes. There was one about the drains, but that I did not do.

2724. I know I asked you about that: Do you know the reason I asked you?—I do not.

2725. Did I not state the reason: was it not in writing?—Yes. If I remember rightly, you said something about being on the ground.

2726. Did you not write certain opinions on it? Do you remember what they were?—I cannot remember. The best way will be to refer to the letter.

2727. Did I not simply ask you to prepare a sketch-plan showing the position of the outcoming drains—of the sewage-pipes and rain-water drains?—They were not in at that time.

2728. Where they were to come when the building was completed. We could not begin to prepare drainage-plans without knowing the outcoming downpipes' positions?—That was not what I understood by your letter: it implied that I was to prepare a drainage-plan.

2729. Well, that was not my intention?—I am satisfied that your letter implied that I was to prepare a drainage-plan.

2730. That was the only time, was it not, that I ever wrote to you asking for a plan?—Yes; there was another plan that I call to mind now; it was about the ovens. I came to town and measured several ovens, and sent a plan of them down to you; it was, however, lost.

2731. You are quite right. But, with these two exceptions, I did not ask you in writing to prepare any plans; you did them of your own volition?—No.

2732. I will ask you now to say distinctly if, except on the occasion you have referred to, I have ever asked you in writing to prepare plans in connection with the whole Seacliff building?—So far as writing goes, no; but the inference is the other way. There were certain cases in which I asked for details, and they came up after the work was done.

2733. The building was going on for a long time—four or five years would it not be?—It was a very long time.

2734. Now you have said that if there were “nests” of stone found in the concrete you would not be at all surprised: do you really mean that?—I do.

*Mr. Lawson:* That is a very improper statement for you to make.

*Mr. Gore:* I say it is a scandalous statement.

2735. *Mr. Lawson.*] Remember that you were the inspector of that building?—I know that.

2736. Keeping that fact in view, you state that. Do you really mean to infer that that is the truth?—I do. If during my absence “nests” of stones were found there I should not be at all surprised. That was my opinion all through.

2737. Did you ever inform me of that?—I must have done. I am almost certain that I did.

2738. Remember, now, that this is a very serious thing?—I know it is. But that has been my feeling all through.

2739. You corresponded with me frequently, and even recently?—Yes.

2740. If you had entertained such a suspicion, why did you not inform me of it?—I did. Read my letters, and you will see that some of them are very strong.

2741. But in none of them did you speak about “nests” of stone. You know that yourself?—I did not say that they do.

2742. But now you go far beyond your own letters, strong as they sometimes were. Do you think that that is a proper thing to do?—I am speaking from my own convictions.

2743. Manifestly you had that conviction at that time?—Yes. I must have told you of it.

2744. You must have told me of it, you say?—Yes. I must have.

2745. Where is there any proof of it in all the conferences or correspondence that have passed between us. Do you not think that it is very unfair to me that such a statement should have been made at the present time?—In what way?

2746. You ask in what way. Because it is an inference that improper work exists to a very large extent?—Well, it is almost getting too personal now. However, I have made the statement; and I would make it again, and stick to it. There is proof positive of it, because some of the concrete had to be shifted.

2747. I say again that it is a very improper statement for any Inspector to make?—If it was done in that case it may have been done in other cases. These men put it in front of my very eyes, and if they would do that when I was there, what would they do when I was away?

2748. If that fact was within your own knowledge at the time you ought to have put it in writing and sent it to me?—I think I have put it in writing strongly enough.

2749. So they are strong, but they do not contain such a statement. You were perfectly satisfied with the depths of the foundations, and that they would carry the weight they were designed to carry; also, that they were put in properly?—I am perfectly satisfied.

2750. Whose duty was it to see that they were put in properly?—It was my duty.

2751. You have stated also that, from end to end of the building, you are sure it was in line at the main back wall when you commenced to build the brickwork?—Yes; taking it right through.

2752. That was by measurement?—I believe that the south block was about 3 in. or so off a straight line.