

428. Do you not know that Mr. Brindley himself put a drain through the wall there?—I do not.

429. As a matter of fact, there is a drain-pipe there?—Yes.

430. *Mr. Blair.*] Surely not through the wall?—No. If it had been put through the wall you would see the top of the pipe in the floor of the colonnade.

431. *The Chairman.*] But you do not know anything about it yourself. I understand you to say that it was done before you came on to the work?—Yes. Some one must have left a hole through there.

432. *Mr. Gore.*] You say that the first crack in the concrete you saw was what has been called the northern crack?—Yes.

433. Did you notice another crack about here [indicating on plan]?—There was a little crack on the south-west corner of the centre part.

434. Did that appear to be the oldest crack?—The oldest crack is to the north.

435. In the north recess?—In the centre of that recess, in the next little cellar.

436. You say that the building was finished when you noticed it?—You were building the laundry when I noticed that crack.

437. Then, this part of the building [indicating on plan] was finished?—It was finished, but I do not know whether it was off your hands.

438. At all events, the work was finished?—It seemed to be.

439. Were these buttresses put in when you went there?—They (the increased foundations) were put in under my inspection.

440. You did not notice a crack behind the south buttress?—I did not.

441. We have it in evidence that after drain No. 2 was put in the cracking stopped for two years?—I do not think it stopped, but think it has not cracked so rapidly since. I mean that I am of opinion that their progress has been much slower than it would have been had the drain not been made.

442. Then it has commenced to slip again?—Yes, to crack again.

443. Your answers would lead us to infer that the drain got choked up?—Not at all. As I have already told you, the drain did not stop the cracking at all. It has not been in for two years at most. The cracks merely paused or opened slower for a little time; but afterwards we found, during September and October, 1886, that they again opened quicker. We finished the buttresses (increased foundations) in January, 1887.

444. You say that it was not till January, 1887, that it was finished?—Of course, increasing the width of the foundations was finished then, and began in November, 1886.

445. Do not let me misunderstand you. I am speaking now of drain No. 2?—I commenced that drain on the 25th March, 1886, and completed it on the 30th June, 1886.

446. You found when this buttress was put in that it stopped the cracking?—It did not stop it, but they have not opened so quickly since.

447. It, however, checked it?—Yes, greatly.

448. You being so much about the building, did you notice any vertical settlement?—There are indications of vertical settlement—going downwards, according to my view.

449. Have you ever tried the level on it?—I have.

450. Where does it show indications of vertical settlement?—Right in the centre of the airing-court.

451. What parts of the building?—About here [indicating on the plan], in the middle of the colonnade, through the centre of the north wall and the centre of the gable in the north wing.

452. Have you noticed the brickwork above the piers? Have you noticed the window-sills, if they are out of line above the brick piers?—No.

453. You have never looked for that?—No.

454. If this front wall has been pushed forward by any means would it not give you the same indications of cracks as there are at present?—It might; but the bases of the pillars are not of the same level—they seem to have sunk.

455. Then above the pillars you have never noticed any settlement or any irregularity?—Do you mean above the springing arches?

456. I am speaking of the next floor?—I have noticed, but have not taken any measurements of them.

457. And never noticed any inequality of the eaves?—I never examined them by measurement in that way. I have never lined the windows up. Mr. Hay took all these measurements.

JAMES LOUGH sworn and examined.

458. *Mr. Blair.*] What are you?—I am a ganger in the employ of the Public Works Department.

459. Had you anything to do with the putting-in of stone drains at Seacliff?—Yes, I had charge of that one—the one that was put in close to the building.

460. The upper part and lower gallery of drain No. 2?—Yes.

461. How did you put in the stones?—I put them in in accordance with Mr. Hunter's instructions. I put in spawled stones at the bottom. The stones were almost all V-shaped, so that there was plenty of room for the water to go through between them.

462. Were the stones all laid by hand?—Yes.

463. Every one of them?—Yes.

464. And packed in tight?—Yes.

465. What did you put over the stones?—Manuka-scrub.

466. What did you put on top of that?—Nothing. There was no room; it was jammed right against the top of the gallery. Then we rammed it with a pick-handle.